



Third Base

Vol 88, Issue 7 • July 2024

From the Pastor

“You need to come closer, my hearing is shot.”

No kidding. At 101 and 4 months, things begin to break down.

I moved my chair closer to Juanita Wallis. A text from my son Colton: “washing machine can’t be fixed.” Head down, I quietly muttered, “stupid (well, I hope that was word I used) washer.”

“So, you’re having trouble with your washing machine!” said Juanita. Humility is discovered when played by a 101-year-old.

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Juanita carried an hour-long conversation with me. Stories of her husband of over 60 years, married soon after WWII. He was present on D-Day, but never talked about it.

I inquired about her best friend, Betty James.

Reviewing Juanita’s history at Third, joining August 1, 1943, she remained active until admittance into long term care facility eight years ago. Juanita and Betty were foundational members of couples class, recently married and beginning post-war life.

I will take away two treasures from our meeting.

Juanita’s prayer focused on present living:

*God, give me strength in ministering to others in this place, offering hope and the love of Christ.*



And Juanita put feet to her prayers— setting goal of encouraging isolated and lonely residents to get outside their doors, through conversation, chapel, or weekly card games, Thursdays from 6-8 p.m.

The second treasure is *Juanita’s eyes*— bright and alive— *sparkling* with love, humor and a bit of mischief.

Three days later I traveled to Kansas City, dropping in on Betty James , turning 100 on June 21, 2024.

Betty joined Third in 1946 and remained active until transfer to a care facility four years ago.

I was escorted to facility’s dining room and joined Betty for brunch.

Betty did not know I was arriving— she was dressed in usual classy, immaculate manner. I walked up to table: *Hello Betty*. And like Juanita, I saw a broad smile and *sparkle in her eyes*.

Betty also carried an hour long conversation. I showed picture of Juanita; there were tears of joy and wonderful memories. Betty recalled a similar story to Juanita’s— joining Third and beginning couple’s class in the mid- 1940’s.

Betty said with melancholy, but sparkle remained: *Pastor, you know I don’t know if I’ll ever be happy again, but I remain content and blessed.*

*I miss my husband so much.* She opened her purse and passed along two photos: a baby photo from 1924, the year of her birth; and her marriage photo from 1943—Betty was 19, and married over 60 years.

Betty recalled great cloud of witnesses separated by death and distance—written into her story at Third over 81 years.

And recollections were communicated with sparkling eyes. Death had taken away so many — yet hope of a grand reunion remains.



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Another similarity between Juanita and Betty: A constant flow of residents, waiters, and staff arrived at each table, and to a fault, Juanita and Betty recalled each name and something about their story while offering a kind introduction to “their pastor.”

I suspect perspective of blessing under all circumstances produces sparkle in our eyes.

The joy of present living—God can still use me as an instrument of the Gospel (Good News). The proper perspective of “life as a gift.”

Juanita and Betty were written into each other’s story in early 1940’s through Third Baptist Church and in God’s grand plan—their sparkling eyes have witnessed a changing world.



June 1924—the first political convention is broadcast on radio—Calvin Coolidge would defeat John W. Davis in November. And Chick Hafey debuted for Cardinals—inducted to Hall of Fame in 1971.

In March of 1923 (Juanita’s birthday), the first issue of Time Magazine was printed; 32 pages with Joseph G. Cannon, the former House Speaker, on the cover.

Juanita and Betty’s beautiful eyes have witnessed over 100 years of history, seen through the lens of faith in Christ and engagement with Third’s beloved community. For building your life on firm foundations—surviving storms—will keep your eyes fixated on Jesus throughout your story—*sparkling with faithful assurance* that all will be well.

Juanita and Betty, on behalf of your Third family:

Blessed Happy 101 and 100th birthdays!

And I’m thankful Juanita’s hearing continues to improve even after 100.

The eye is the lamp of the body. If your eyes are healthy, your whole body will be full of light (Matthew 6:22).

Grace and Peace,
Tommy

Family Ministries

Drew Phillips, Minister to Families

Summer Youth Calendar

JULY:

Junior High is July 7-13 and the signup link is here: <https://form.jotform.com/240156342247148>

Senior High is July 14-20 and the signup link is here: <https://form.jotform.com/240156436369157>

Please pray for our students and leaders as we head to camp!



AUGUST:

VBS is coming! August 2-4

Let Drew know if you would like to volunteer or need more information: dphillips@third-baptist.org



Missions Moment

Christmas in July

Teen violence swept the streets of East St. Louis when Rev. Chet Cantrell arrived at the Christian Activity Center in 1989. CAC's purpose at that time was to keep kids alive.

CAC's building was three large rooms, ages 6-18 - all together.



There was no structure or funding for curriculum, and no funding to hire educators, counselors, chaplains, or coaches. CAC started with graffiti removal, walking into the heart of street violence and gang wars, and visiting mothers of murdered teens to counsel against retribution. The city was in a downward spiral in this post-industrial era. Congregations fled for safer ground just as East St. Louis's families' need and despair was compounded by dwindling resources in the city. CAC's immediate sphere of influence, the Samuel Gompers Homes ("The Gompers"), had become the acme of violence in what was aptly called: America's Deadliest City.

The desperate city asked Baptists to do something to help stem the tide of juvenile crime and violence in this neighborhood. After a series of attempts to reestablish ministry that included five directors in seven years and a near-closing in 1988, a nationwide search was conducted and the current Director, Rev. Chet Cantrell, was hired to begin work January 6, 1989.

CAC has grown in youth service from 13 teens (1989) to 450+ children & youth - ages 5-18. CAC's base of support has grown from 30 churches and families contributing \$90,000/year (1989) to 1,154 donors contributing \$1.8 million/year.

CAC's supporters have equipped us to raise children's grade point average from 2.10, to 3.30 after 12 months in our care. Additionally, investments by families in our kids impact a 74% college advancement rate (compared with 13% in our city). Donors have additionally enabled CAC to reduce juvenile crime/court involvement from 80% to less than 5%.

With God's increase and His people joining Him on mission here, CAC has transitioned in 2013-14 from an agency minded toward saving lives, to one on a mission to change lives. God's people's investments in His work here have positioned CAC to become a school afterschool - hiring degreed faculty and redesigning space into small classrooms to provide curriculum-based programs in faith, academics and health.

We anticipate the outcomes listed above to grow exponentially under this new program design, and we are ready to carry programming to the places our kids live.

From: <https://www.cacesl.org/about>

A note from the Mission Team: Pastor Drew, Peggy Pittenger, and Jane Russell:

For many years our Women's Missionary Society adopted several CAC children for Christmas by purchasing needed clothing and toys. We see this as a worthy churchwide Christmas effort.

Would you consider helping?

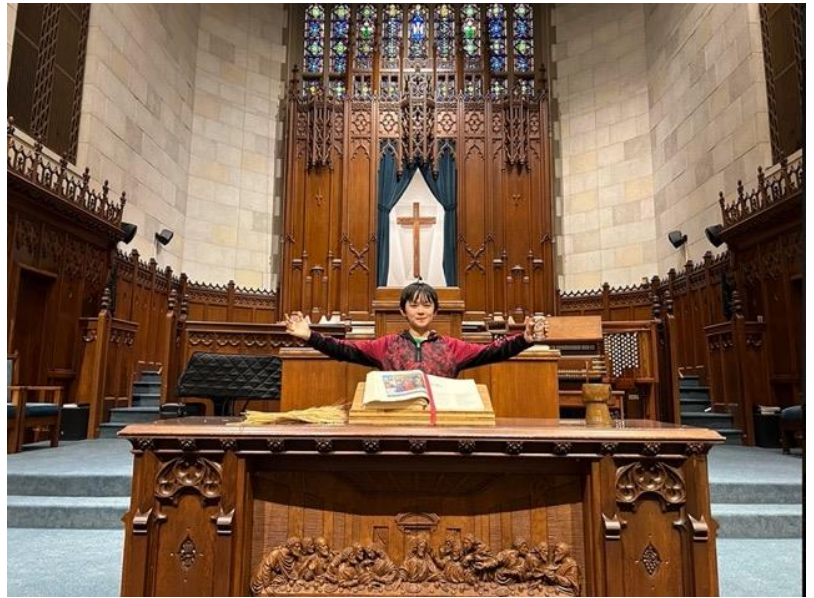
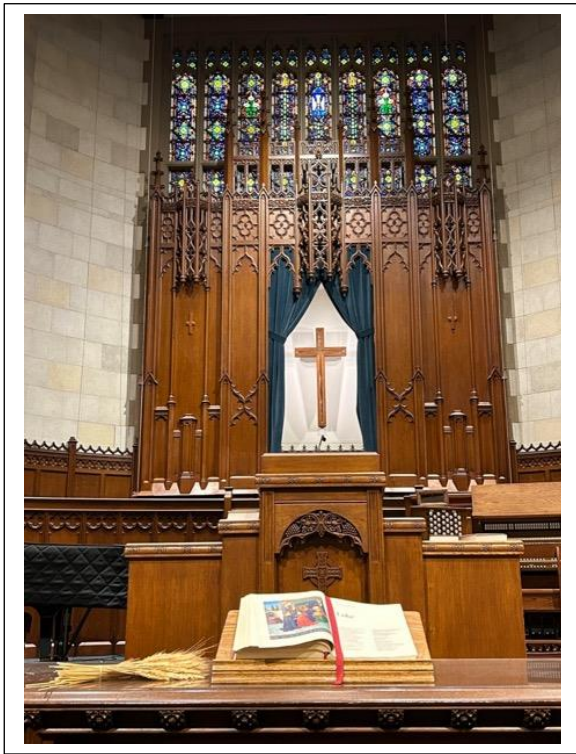
CAC requests we spend \$150.00 per child. Would you consider adopting a child? There are many creative ways to help. If you or perhaps a group (families, friends, Sunday School Class, Choir, Board or Committee) would like more information, please see one of our team members.

Contact Peggy Pittenger at 314-323-1211 – or email: peggypittenger@gmail.com to discuss further.

Please take a look at our CAC presentation on the TV in Pillsbury Threshold!



Come see the recent updates to TBC's sanctuary!



Adult Discipleship

Biblical Perspectives
on Servanthood

Wednesdays:

July 10, 17, 24 and 31

Dinner is served at 5:15 p.m.

Discipleship 5:45 p.m.

Contact Tommy Simons for
reservations: [tsimons@
third-baptist.org](mailto:tsimons@third-baptist.org)



JULY BIRTHDAYS

Happy Birthday to...

04 🎁 Linda Roos

06 🎁 Tommy Simons

10 🎁 Harold Jackson

14 🎁 Arris Harris

& Alice Worrell

15 🎁 Elizabeth Hoffman

16 🎁 Lynda Sharpe

17 🎁 Elijah Kimler

18 🎁 Marvelle Johnson

19 🎁 Andrea Banks

21 🎁 Simon Bailey

& Ruth Adikorely

22 🎁 Karen Stewart

25 🎁 Gerri Robins

29 🎁 Dea Hoover

Sunday Morning Volunteer Call

Come hang out with us! If you're interested in helping with extended session care from time to time (on a rotation with other volunteers) your help would be welcome.

To get on the schedule, please contact
Ella Banks at
ebanks@third-baptist.org





Third Baptist Church

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Third-baptist.org

We'd love to connect with you!



third-baptist.org/guest

Third Baptist Church Staff

Dr. Tommy Simons
PASTOR

Rev. Drew Phillips
MINISTER TO FAMILIES

Dr. Philip Barnes
DIRECTOR OF MUSIC

Ella Banks
RECEPTIONIST/OFFICE
ASSISTANT

Brent Johnson
ORGANIST

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BUSINESS MANAGER

Christine McCarthy
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Ronnie Winthrop
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Timothy Harrison
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