



# Third Base

Vol 89, Issue 12 · December 2025

## From the Pastor



Heinrich von Hess , Boniface Cutting Down Tree of Thor, 1834

Tertullian wrote:

*You are the light of the world, a tree ever green, if you have renounced the heathen temple.*

The evergreen tree retains green foliage through the year.

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Pope Gregory II sent Boniface as missionary to Germany in 716AD.

German Chieftan Gundar was offering Prince Asulf a bloody sacrifice to Thor—supposedly living in a huge oak tree (sacrifice in foreground above).

Boniface took an ax to the tree and a “bloody oak” fell to the ground—and standing next to oak was an evergreen tree.

Boniface pointed to the Evergreen Tree and said –

*“This is the word and this is the counsel. Not a drop of blood shall fall tonight, for this is the birth-night of Saint Christ, Son of the All-Father and Savior of the world.*

*This little tree, a young child of the forest, shall be a home tree tonight. It is the wood of peace, for your houses are built of fir. It is the sign of endless life, for its branches are ever green.*

*continued on next page*

*See how it points toward heaven!  
Let this be called the tree of the Christ  
Child; gather about it, not in the wild  
woods but in your homes; there it will  
shelter no deeds of blood, but loving gifts  
and lights of kindness."*

In 1520, German Reformer Martin Luther was walking home on Christmas Eve and noticed innumerable stars twinkling in the night sky.

Luther returned home and set up an evergreen tree and placed candles on its branches.

The evergreen and lights were used as visual lessons—teaching his beloved children—the story of Jesus Christ, the Light of the World, and whose birth had illuminated the night sky in Bethlehem.

Luther then set up nativity scene under the tree, so lights from candles would glow as stars above the place of Christ's birth.

In 1850 (inaugural year of Third Baptist) Richard Storrs Willis published "It Came Upon a Midnight Clear."

Imagine Third's founding members gathered Christmas Eve on Market Street, singing final stanza from the original lyrics:

*For lo! The days are hastening on,  
By prophet bards foretold.  
When, with ever-circling years,  
Shall come the Age of Gold;  
When peace shall over all the earth,  
In ancient splendors fling,  
And all the world gives back the son,  
Which now the angels sing.*

And after Joseph Walker's benediction, walking down two flights of stairs, Third's congregation walked out into cold St. Louis night: "Merry Christmas Brother Joseph" "Merry Christmas Sister Mary"—final blessings and hugs on a blessed Christmas Eve.

How could Third's 1850 congregation have imagined, as the days are hastening on toward conclusion of 2025—a few blocks north—Third Baptist is alive at Grand and Washington, working as unto the Lord, until the Age of Gold arrives.

Beloved, Merry Christmas!  
Tommy

#### Mark Your Calendars:

**Sun, December 21st:**  
Christmas Pancake  
Breakfast, 9:45 a.m.



Christmas Music and  
Celebration Review/Discussion and Vote on the  
2026 Unified Budget, Nominating Committee  
Recommendations

**Weds, December 24th:**  
Candlelight Christmas Eve Service  
5 p.m.

#### Art Hill, 1905



# Family Ministries

Drew Phillips, Minister to Families

MARK YOUR CALENDAR! DECEMBER 17TH:

Instead of Youth Group gathering, family pop-in for walking tacos at Drew and Dani's house, 5 – 7:30 p.m.

From our American Baptist Youth retreat in Bloomington, IL:



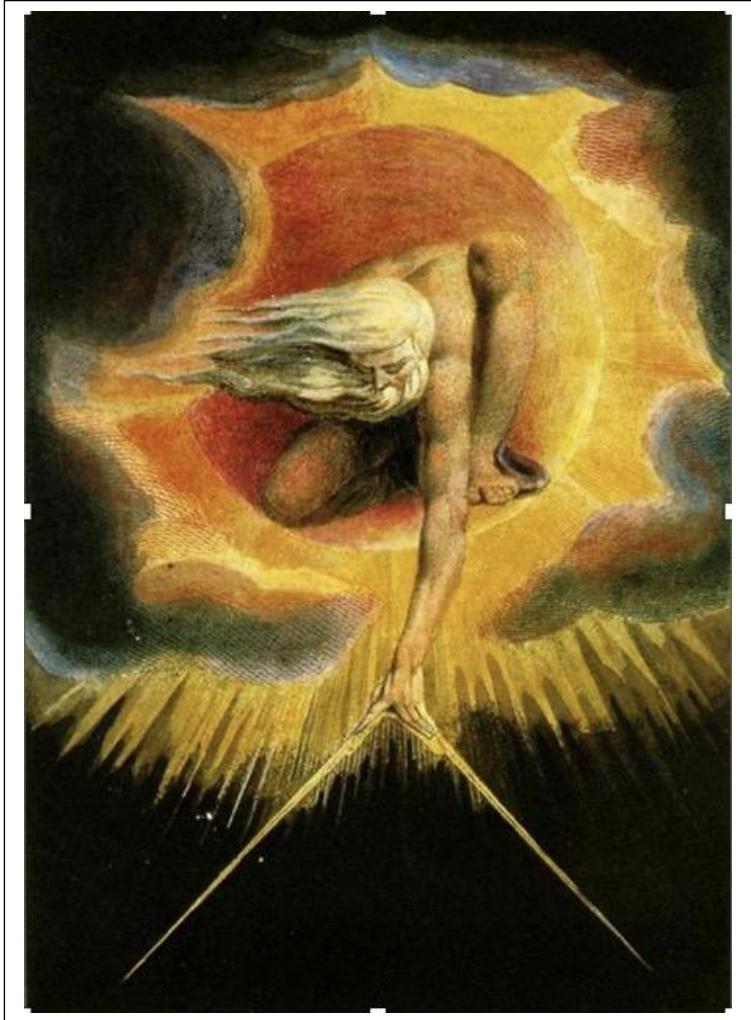
Family hayride in Forest Park:



Peggy Pittenger and assistants present a dramatized history of Missions at Third Baptist Church, from our very beginnings to present day:



Malachi 3:1: Luke 1:5-25



*The Ancient of Days, William Blake*

## Advent 2026 The Preparation of the World

Advent I November 30  
The Preparation of the World:  
When History Was Ready  
Galatians 4:4-5

Advent II December 7  
175th Anniversary  
Warren Hoffman

Advent III December 14  
Choir Presentation in Morning  
Worship

Advent IV December 21  
The Preparation of the World:  
Silence Broken

Third Baptist Church Presents:

**“There Really is a Santa Claus”**  
Wednesday, December 10th  
6 p.m.  
in the Greene Room

written and directed by  
David Sanjay

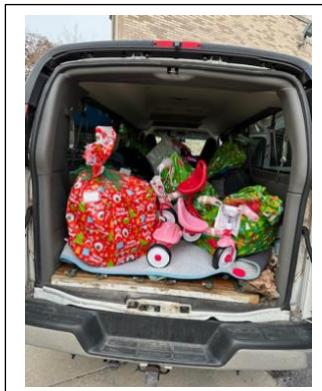


## Mission Focus December: CAC Adopt-a-Child Donations

### CAC Adopt-A-Child for Christmas update:

Your Missions Team and volunteers are busy with our holiday project of providing Christmas joy and tangible gifts to many children who are part of the Christian Activity Center (CAC) in East St. Louis. As of this writing we are working on gifts for 23 children, with the possibility of more as the project winds down. The gifts will be brought to the church by the end of November. We are planning to wrap gifts the morning of December 5<sup>th</sup> between 10:00am and Noon. A blessing of the gifts will be the following Sunday, and on Monday December 8<sup>th</sup> all the gifts will be transported to CAC.

If you are able to help with wrapping, please RSVP to let Jane Russell or Peggy Pittenger know. ([peggypittenger@gmail.com](mailto:peggypittenger@gmail.com) or 314.323.1211)



### Christmas World Mission Offering:

This season brings the opportunity to say thank you to our many missionaries around the world. This offering goes to their support and many projects that are in progress. We support missionaries of both the American Baptists and Cooperative Baptists which totals over 86 individuals or couples with families around the world. Please be generous as you consider your gift to keep them on the mission field. Look for a red envelope available in front of the church office or check "Christmas World Offering" on the church envelope or online.



As our 175<sup>th</sup> year of service to the Lord comes to a close, we think of the great cloud of witnesses who went before us and the generous outpouring of love and support they showed for those who ventured to the mission fields. May we carry that love forward into 2026, and beyond as the Lord is at work around the world.

TBC Missions Chair,  
Peggy Pittenger



## ON LOVING AND STUDYING SCRIPTURE

You are no more than two verses into the Bible when the word "water" appears. In the act of creation the Spirit of God is moving over the face of the waters.

Then, the remainder of the creation stories has plenty to say about the separation of waters and what is contained in them.

When Noah comes on the scene, water is, of course, the major player. Even our pre-schoolers remember and know that. The same is true with Jonah. No water? No story.

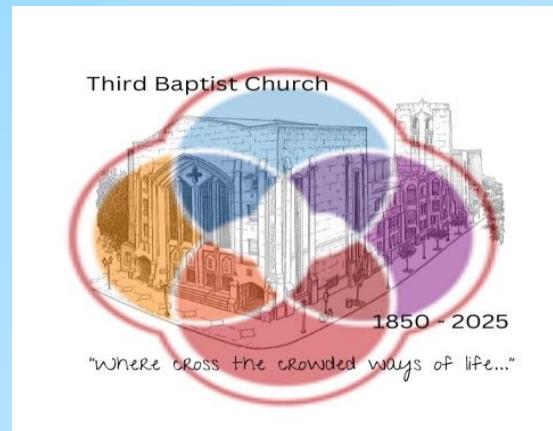
When we get to Jesus, there is his baptism in the River Jordan, his turning water into wine, and Peter's walking on water. Plenty more examples. Water, water everywhere.

It is no wonder that when Wayfarers open the Bible to study, we talk about swimming in the Scriptures. We call on God to buoy us up, to help us out, and to rescue us. It's sink or swim time, and we believe that in the study of his Word God wants to redeem us and teach us.

That's part of what we Wayfarers are about, and we invite you to join us.

Steve and Dawn

# 175th Anniversary Celebrations December 2025



### ***Special 175th Anniversary Celebration Gala Luncheon***

**Saturday, December 6th at NOON**

There is no charge, but for staff to properly prepare,  
please register no later than *November 30th*.

Call the Church office at 314-533-7340

### **Sunday, December 7th**

**WORSHIP 11 A.M.**

Guest speaker: Dr. Warren J. Hoffman  
TBC Senior Pastor from 2005-2013

# Adult Discipleship

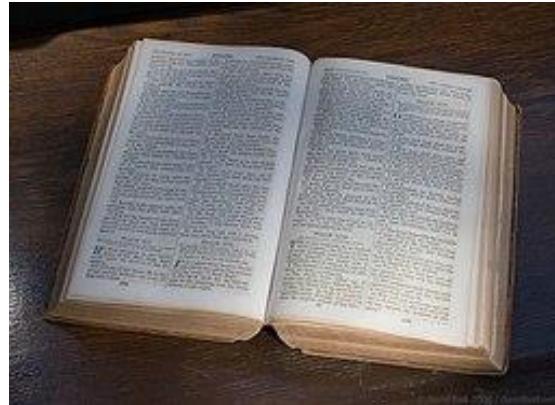
## Continued Study of The Gospel of John

Wednesdays, December 10 & 17

**5:15 p.m. Dinner / 5:45 p.m. Discussion and  
Spiritual Application**

*Sign up for dinner reservations with Tommy:  
[tsimons@third-baptist.org](mailto:tsimons@third-baptist.org)*

\*Discipleship will return Wednesday, January 7th



## DECEMBER BIRTHDAYS

### *Happy Birthday to...*

- 03 🎂 Ezra Estes
- 10 🎂 Candace Thomas
- 11 🎂 Karen King
- 14 🎂 Kelly King
- 17 🎂 Tisha Brooks
- 20 🎂 Carson Wright
- 21 🎂 James Robbins  
& Halona Brown
- 23 🎂 Timothy Harrison
- 24 🎂 Lois Hunsaker
- 28 🎂 Gregory Robinson
- 29 🎂 Bill Pearson
- 30 🎂 Connie Vohsen



**Listen in to Third's Podcasts:**

<https://www.buzzsprout.com/1750498>

You are invited to journey three paths:

- *Good Day! - with the Pastor*
- *Justice and Mercy - with Jerry Bryan*
- *At the Movies – with Ashleigh and Aaron*

### *A request from the Hospitality Team:*

Each Sunday after worship, our Cookie Fellowship is a sweet time of connection and community. As the cost of ingredients continues to rise, and the demand for cookies increase, we're reaching out for help. If you're able, we'd be grateful for donations of **store-bought or homemade cookies, bars, or brownies** to help keep the table full and the fellowship flowing. Whether you love to bake or prefer to pick something up at the store, every contribution is appreciated! Please drop your donations off in Pillsbury Threshold before the service. Thank you for helping us continue this joyful tradition!

Jane, Linda & Monica



# Third Baptist Church

**620 North Grand Blvd  
St. Louis, MO 63103  
Office: 314-533-7340  
Third-baptist.org**

We'd love to connect with you!



third-baptist.org/guest

## Third Baptist Church Staff

**Dr. Philip Barnes**  
DIRECTOR OF MUSIC

**Lansin Lim Kimler**  
PIANIST

**Brent Johnson**  
ORGANIST

**Dr. Tommy Simons**  
PASTOR

**Rev. Drew Phillips**  
MINISTER TO FAMILIES

**Sally Stevenson**  
PARISH NURSE

**Ella Banks**  
RECEPTIONIST/OFFICE ASST.

**Tom Kurtz**  
BUSINESS MANAGER

**Christine McCarthy**  
FINANCE

**Ronnie Winthrop**  
FACILITIES MANAGER