



# Third Base

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## From the Pastor

Staff Meeting early '90's:

The church purchased a pager: keep with you at all times— pager number is publicized and used in case of emergency. You will hear several loud “beeps”— read phone number on front of pager and return call immediately—you will take turns facilitating this device.

*A few months later...*

I'll speak for majority: pager was spawned from a devil—this alien thing—was your constant companion.

The act of passing pager to another staff member was a cleansing ritual—you are free! I can exit door at home or office —not tethered to this burdensome thing.

And when pager was returned to you— anxiety went up and quality of life went down—soon discovering most calls were not emergencies.

*Summer 2003...*

I purchase cell phone—size fit in palm of my hand—a “flip phone”. The phone rings and I'd flip open—like a crew member of Starship Enterprise. Unlike pager... the phone was a constant companion and friend.

*As the years roll by...*

The phone was transformed into a *necessary device*:

Apps connecting you with preferred sports, entertainment and news, ability to film and edit your own movie, invaluable assistance with directions (in recorded history, nobody was able to unfold and refold map), a question about *anything* - ask Siri.

*Jury Duty 2024*

I am an introvert surrounded by strangers—one of 12 jurors charged with deciding guilt or innocence of two parties involved in civil dispute.

The room is uncomfortably quiet—all heads down—giving attention to iPhones.

More time passes...the introvert took a rare step, especially around strangers, and spoke first—a silly comment about van transporting jurors back and forth from parking lot.

A few chuckles—and slowly heads lifted up—enjoying conversation with other human beings in the same space.

And my mind began to wonder—am I becoming an old man on the porch telling others to get off my lawn? I drifted back 30 years and remembered receiving that pager in 1994. Why was I so repelled? Now...I am connected to technology—*quantum leaps* more than pager.

*I was repulsed by that thing because my brain patterns were different in the pre-1994 world.*

The pager was *unnatural*—an irritating device written into my story. The experience of connection 24/7 to technology *seemed unhealthy*.

~

And after 30 years of technology *rewiring* my brain patterns—connection 24/7 *seems natural*.

Christopher Nolan's, *Oppenheimer*, offers a word of wisdom and warning: *you can't lift the stone without being ready for the snake that's revealed*.

The stone, lifted 30 years ago has increased loneliness, isolation, suicides, depression, and an inability to connect face to face with one another.

And what are the long-term effects of technology, rewiring our brain patterns? Human beings receive dopamine hits when interacting with phones. Consider your level of anxiety when misplacing or losing your phone.

I reviewed a picture (yes, on my iPhone) of a man in London walking a robot dog while wearing *Apple Vision Pro* goggles. The first comment under photo: *This is the end. We are all doomed.*

~

The directionally accurate message of Christians' engagement with culture points toward *whatever is pure, true, noble, lovely and admirable* (Phil 4:8).

Therefore, Christians, exercise courage, asking bold questions in the arena of ideas—as tensions between technology and humanity increase.

The stone is lifted and impossible to place back—requiring watchful eyes for the snake coiled under the stone.

Thirty years went by in a flash—and consider technology's advance and the questions the next generation faces in 2054.

Scripture says:

***For we are God's handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.*** (Ephesians 2:10)

Grace and Peace,  
Tommy

# Family Ministries

Drew Phillips, Minister to Families

## Three Pillars of Lent for Third Families

### Prayer:

Prayer is connecting with the mysterious yet personal and present God. Here is a guided exercise to pray together with the same focus, as a family but as individuals, throughout the day. This exercise encourages using all your senses and stretching how you might normally pray. Here is a list of 40 words. For each day of Lent, except Sundays, begin your day as a family *selecting a word*. Commit to think about, look and listen for, pray with this word in mind throughout the day. Pay attention with your word in mind.

At the end of each day. Spend some family time thinking about where you each encountered this word. Share a picture you took, create an image or writing about this word, or simply share what the word meant to you as you went about your day. Share how this word connects to Lent and Easter. Thank God for the experiences of God this day.

- |             |               |             |                  |
|-------------|---------------|-------------|------------------|
| 1. Beauty   | 11. Water     | 21. Wait    | 31. Eat          |
| 2. Hope     | 12. Joy       | 22. Despair | 32. Want         |
| 3. Strength | 13. Witness   | 23. Fire    | 33. Hunger       |
| 4. Light    | 14. Noise     | 24. Walk    | 34. Justice      |
| 5. Fear     | 15. Desert    | 25. Run     | 35. Mercy        |
| 6. Love     | 16. Kindness  | 26. Purple  | 36. Want         |
| 7. Peace    | 17. Sacrifice | 27. Meal    | 37. Lonely       |
| 8. Freedom  | 18. Friends   | 28. Cross   | 38. Presence     |
| 9. Dark     | 19. Strangers | 29. Grace   | 39. Silence      |
| 10. Alone   | 20. Heaven    | 30. Gift    | 40. Resurrection |

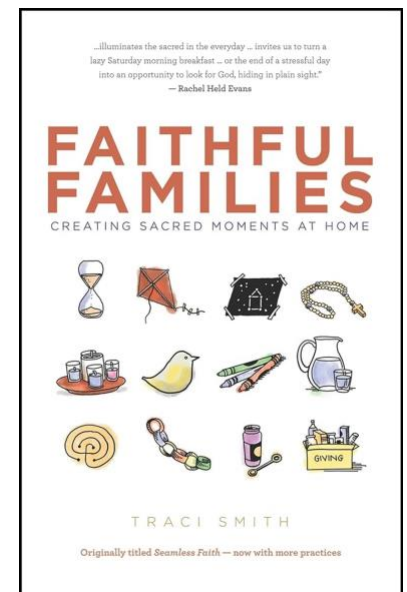
If you miss a day, simply pick up where you left off.

If you need to adjust to a nightly assignment, you may do so.

### Fasting:

This most acknowledged Lenten practice includes giving up something. For some it's meat on certain days, for others it's a habit. For our families this year, I'm going to suggest a screen fast. The purpose isn't to give it up something for the challenge of it, though it may be a challenge, or to feel holy, though that may happen, but rather to focus on God in the absence of whatever we've given up.

1. Decide how long your family screen fast will be. Be sensible, it's not reasonable to avoid technology the entirety of the Lenten season. But, if every day after school you play the game for thirty minutes, during Lent take 15 of it to pray, read, or reflect.



If every night you all use your phones after dinner, take 20 minutes to talk to one another, ask about your days and where you saw God.

2. Decide together and set rules together (what happens if there's an emergency call during the fast—I hope you take the call!). How will you gently remind someone having a hard time keeping the fast, what will we do to celebrate when it is over?

This is difficult. It should be hard. It should also be encouraging and filling, it would not be uncommon over this Lenten Season to increase the time of your fast and find enjoyment in it.

### Almsgiving

Giving to the poor is an especially important tenant of Christianity. For ages, Christians have emphasized this practice during Lent.

Our churches neighborhood is adjacent to “healthy food deserts.” Hunger is a real threat to our community. Our church serves once a month to help bring food and hygiene to anyone who comes from wherever they live with whatever need they have. I’m asking families to start their own collections during lent that they can give to Third’s Food Pantry. These can be brought weekly or on Easter Sunday.

When you shop for every ten items you get for yourself, select one for the food pantry, or instead of getting the extra snack you’d like, get something that you can bring to share with others. Give out of your sustenance, not your excess. And give what you feel led to do!



In recent years, TBC has reserved a block of tickets for members to attend a single performance of Take Two performance, offered at a discounted price.

Now you can choose which show you want to attend by visting their site - or QR code! Just plug in one of the promo codes at right to get your discounted tickets.



[www.taketwoproductions.org](http://www.taketwoproductions.org)

take two productions  
PRESENTS

# SEASON 21



April 19-27



July 19-27



Sept 27- Oct 5

## TBC MEMBER EXCLUSIVE

To purchase your tickets,  
visit the Take Two website for the following offers

SEASON TICKETS	INDIVIDUAL TICKETS
 <p>USE PROMO CODE “TBCSEASON” For \$25 off</p>	 <p>USE PROMO CODE “TBCTICKET” For \$10 off</p>



**Gateway180's Mission:** Gateway180 is the largest Residential Emergency Shelter in the state of Missouri, serving women, children and families experiencing homelessness. We empower adults and families to become independent and permanently housed.

### History

Gateway180 began as Christian Services Center started by a member of Third Baptist Church. Its goal was to provide shelter, food, and a bed - getting people off the streets. Since its founding in 1977, Gateway remains first and foremost a shelter but continues to grow its services empowering individuals and families to become independent.

**2023 was a peak year for Gateway180's rehousing numbers, with 485 adults and children moved into their own homes.**

### Service – Ways to Help:

- Follow and like on social media, Facebook, Twitter and Instagram.
- Check the Amazon Wish List for items needed for client use.
- Brown Bag lunches are provided by a number of churches and organizations to meet needs of clients. TBC participates in this ministry.
- A variety of programs come to Gateway from churches or organizations who:
  - Host a meal for the clients periodically
  - Provide birthday parties for the children each month
  - Holiday events or parties
  - Childcare
  - Help sort and organize donations and the G180 Client store.



# OUR IMPACT

- 29,298 diapers distributed
- 364 hours of on-site mental health counseling provided
- 240 gifts distributed on Christmas
- 180 Easter eggs dyed
- 87 families signed a lease and receiving the key to their home
- 46 new backpacks issued to kick off the new school year
- 36 children who celebrated their birthday parties in shelter
- 29 pairs of new school shoes
- 29 first days at new jobs
- 9 newborn infants born and arriving home to our shelter
- 2 nursing and 1 EMT licenses achieved
- 1 retirement celebrated

**268 INDIVIDUALS WHO HAVE MOVED FROM HOMELESSNESS TO THE DIGNITY AND COMFORT OF THEIR OWN HOME**

### Why support Gateway180?

1. **We are Missouri's largest family shelter** - We have 110 beds to house women, children, and families with additional space for overflow during inclement weather.
2. **85.3% of FUNDS donated go directly to our mission** - Almost \$0.86 of every dollar donated to Gateway180 goes directly towards our programs and support for our clients.
3. **We are on a mission to empower** - We have a vision of ending family homelessness in the St. Louis community by empowering our women and families to become independently and permanently housed.
4. **We are more than just a shelter** - Our Case Managers & Program Service Committee work to offer our clients mental health counseling, housing navigation, empowerment classes & much more! We encourage our clients to maintain their relationship with Gateway180 for the purpose of post-move case management and access to our supply and food pantry.

# Adult Discipleship

March 6th and 20th:  
The Good and Beautiful God  
*James Bryan Smith*

March 13th:  
Facilitated by Michael Ramsay  
Michael will lead discussion  
about William Sheppard, with  
Revival School's Congolese  
artists—sharing songs and  
stories of violence exploitation  
of natural resources that  
Sheppard stood against

"When the Spirit has changed our  
narratives sufficiently, we begin to think  
differently. As a result we begin to believe  
in and trust a good and loving God  
who is strong and powerful."



5:15 p.m. Dinner  
5:45 p.m. Discipleship  
Email [tsimons@third-baptist.org](mailto:tsimons@third-baptist.org)  
for dinner reservations



## Holy Week: On The Way to The Cross

Palm Sunday  
March 24th - Worship 11 a.m.

Seder Meal and Service  
Wednesday, March 27th  
5:30 p.m.

Good Friday Service  
Friday, March 29th 7 p.m.

Easter Sunday  
March 31st  
9:45 a.m. Breakfast for all Ages  
11 a.m. Easter Worship





Deacons and Church Council  
are honored to rename the  
Food Pantry's Christmas  
Basket ministry to  
become the  
Alexandria Hamilton  
Memorial Christmas Basket  
Ministry of  
Third Baptist Church



*Carol Fleming Pillsbury  
Memorial Ladies' Tea  
April 6th  
11:00 a.m.  
Tickets on sale  
March 3rd*

## March Podcast: *Lessons Along the Road*

Third members share challenging  
chapters written into their story and  
the spiritual resources assisting their  
journey – sharing wisdom,  
assisting your journey  
along the road

[https://www.buzzsprout.com/  
1750498](https://www.buzzsprout.com/1750498)

## MARCH BIRTHDAYS

### *Happy Birthday to...*

- 01 🎁 Michelle Robinson
- 02 🎁 Kaionta Dabney
- 03 🎁 Juanita Wallis
- 04 🎁 Maria Bradford  
& Dennis Reinard
- 08 🎁 Virgil Dickinson
- 09 🎁 Nancy Furgerson
- 10 🎁 Brent Johnson
- 11 🎁 Tom Kurtz  
& Steven Spencer
- 16 🎁 Marquis Johnson
- 17 🎁 Naomi Thiems
- 20 🎁 Lynn Spencer
- 22 🎁 Richard Stevenson
- 25 🎁 Tena Thompson
- 29 🎁 Don Wainwright



third-baptist.org/guest

# Third Baptist Church

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## Third Baptist Church Staff

**Dr. Tommy Simons**  
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**Dr. Philip Barnes**  
DIRECTOR OF MUSIC

**Ella Banks**  
RECEPTIONIST/OFFICE  
ASSISTANT

**Brent Johnson**  
ORGANIST

**Lansin Lim Kimler**  
PIANIST

**Sally Stevenson**  
PARISH NURSE

**Tom Kurtz**  
BUSINESS MANAGER

**Christine McCarthy**  
FINANCE

**Robert Hubbard**  
FACILITIES MANAGER

**Timothy Harrison**  
CUSTODIAN