



From the Pastor

Why can't someone do something about this? is a tape replaying in my head as I travel from my home in Saint Louis to Third Baptist.

The graffiti has returned to several overpasses and signposts. The type of graffiti with no purpose or message, poisoning my city with ugliness.

A tent city has sprung up near Vandeventer and the on-ramp to Hwy 64.

The red lights bring out usual cast of characters, begging for money or food. The spectrum, in the past several years is widening, those with severe disabilities to young and able.

And the past few weeks I've noticed a rise of Afghani refugee families gathering at intersections, requesting all sorts of assistance.

The problem begins with my question in first paragraph.

It is much easier to stand on the sidelines and blame politicians, society, or any other convenient category. I need to be better than this.

Christ calls us to actively engage with the disenfranchised and "invisible."

Take a moment and read the story of Hagar in Genesis 16; an Egyptian slave girl names God, "El Roi," *The God Who Sees Me*.

I suspect it's a better use of my time and disposition to consider creative options for passing along Hagar's description of God.

(*I'm relying on memory from a long time ago, but I seem to recall this is correct*): I read an archived interview with G.W. Truett, a longtime pastor of First Baptist Dallas. To place in a Third Baptist perspective, Dr. Truett was their Oscar Johnson.

Dr. Truett was asked, "how do you handle pan handlers arriving at your office or begging in the street?" And my eyes moved to the next sentence hoping for profundity and direction from the great G.W. In sum, he said, "well, if they ask for money or food and I have it, I'll usually pass it along."

But Dr. Truett, how do you know their requests are legit, aren't you being taken advantage of? Truett replied, "Not particularly, it just seems the right thing to do, so I give and go on with my life." I remember thinking, thanks for the tip, I would've never thought of that brilliant insight.

Well, I've put on quite a few miles since reading this article, and now find beauty in G.W. Truett's simplicity and a profound faith in God's providence.

Is it worth an internal dialogue of politics and placing blame when another is simply asking for a helping hand? Does it really matter if I'm taken advantage of?

And as my thoughts begin to uncover this dilemma, I recall chapters in my life, when I've received assistance **undeserved**.

Looking out at the invisibles, don't they understand there are consequences. As if I've lived a pristine life and never made stupid mistakes or decisions, leading to bad consequences...

and another lifted me up...and in some cases, undeserved.

Dear ones, I love our church theme, *In the City for Good*, but it can be a tad arrogant. Jeremiah teaches exiles to **love the community** where God has planted you.

Driving downtown and being present and departing to the perceived safety of our homes is not enough. **All** of the city: The dispossessed and the "lepers". The socially connected and those without power. And those who've chosen to tear down, rather than build up.

God calls us to love and embrace.

And I'll try to change my attitude and reflect on a ministry of "little things" to invisibles, because griping and pointing fingers is a waste of time and energy.

Maybe you feel a bit of the same. If so, let's travel together and become better disciples...remaining *In the City for Good*. Not just our physical building, but remaining *here*...bearing the fruits of love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, and goodness.

Blessings all,
Tommy

New Member



Welcome to
Third's beloved
community,
Mawufemor
Amuzu!

Family Ministries

Rev. Drew Phillips, Minister to Families

For the Calendar:

Trunk or Treat: Sunday, October 29th

4:00-6:00 p.m. (see flyer below)

*If inclement weather we'll host inside

Wednesday Youth Group Dinners

at 5:15 p.m. Youth will be in person and Zoom (6:00-6:30 check in).

Youth Event: September 29th

6:00 PM meet at Third, meal provided!
RSVP with Drew

Youth Sunday School at 10:00 a.m.

A chance to check in, talk and listen, and bond. For Sunday, September 10th, our own Avery Brooks, will lead a community building circle following the Restorative Practices Dani Phillips led with the youth last summer. Youth, you'll want to be a part of this!

Godly Play for Children Grades 1-5

We will have Godly Play during worship the second and fourth Sundays of September.

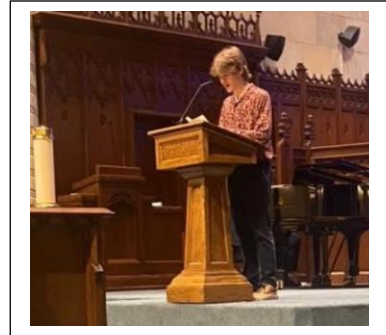
**Needed: If you are interested in teaching 1-5 Grades during Sunday School contact Drew, we have a need and would love your help!

Third family, as school begins, commit to pray for, learn names, and listen to the children and teens in your life. We are such a rich community because we have young people in our presence who work and worship and play with us.

I continue to be thankful for the opportunity to serve with you.

~Drew

Youth-Led Worship Sunday, August 20th



Youth and Leaders, during worship. Left to Right/Top to Bottom: Gabe Thiems, Colton Simons, Gregory Robinson, Katrena Ann, Kaelyn Smithers, and Natalie Thiems.

And post-presentation celebration at Five Guys!

Portia Nartey, MSW '22, MSP '22

Portia Nartey is the first in her family to complete high school, the first to complete college, and the first to attain a graduate degree. She was recently accepted in three competitive PhD programs and has a long-term professional goal to work for the United Nations.



Portia Nartey, MSW '22, MSP '22

advanced doctoral students. The program will provide didactic instruction, hands-on experience in child-focused studies, individualized consultation and mentorship, and ongoing support resources.

Growing up in Ghana, Portia saw how cultural barriers hold women back. Instead of developing a pessimistic view of the future, she chose to test those limits. "I grew up in a community where I didn't see women doing so many big things, but I really wanted to do big things," Portia says. Her mother couldn't complete high school, but she encouraged Portia to lean into every educational opportunity.

In college, Portia began to work with girls in rural Ghana, providing one-on-one tutoring, mentorship, and public health guidance. Helping deconstruct cultural taboos around menstruation—and keeping girls in school by teaching them to make inexpensive reusable sanitary pads—is what she considers her greatest success from that time.

Her passion for empowering the underserved, particularly women, led Portia to the Brown School, where she pursued Master of Social Work and Master of Social Policy degrees with a concentration in international social and economic development. Portia has gained invaluable tools and experiences from WashU—leadership opportunities, applied practicums, and connections with professors, peers, and alumni. This summer, she will participate in the Brown School's Researcher Resilience Training (RRT) program designed for

Congratulations to Portia Nartey, recent graduate!

Read more about Portia, her accomplishments, and her goals, in this [Washington University Alumni Profile](#).

Third Baptist Church
Trunk or Treat
October 29th
4 p.m. - 6 p.m.
Everyone is invited!
Volunteers needed:
to participate with your vehicle,
contact~ Drew Phillips
dphillips@third-baptist.org

A Halloween-themed graphic with a dark purple background. It features a large orange moon in the top left, several black bats flying across the middle, and two orange pumpkins at the bottom. A small witch character is positioned between the two pumpkins. The text is in various colors (white, orange, red) and fonts, including a large, stylized 'Trunk or Treat'.

Missions Moment

Look for a box in the church office: for the month of **SEPTEMBER** we will be collecting... any hygiene item you can bring in! **Shampoo/condition, toothbrushes/toothpaste, washcloths, bar soap** – everything is a blessing to the community receiving these items.

On Sunday, October 15th, after worship, the Missions team will pack boxes to be sent to Corbin, KY, where CBF Field Personnel, Scarlett Jasper, serves in one of the most economically challenged areas in the U.S. In addition to this, the region suffered a once-in-a-generation flood last year.



Adult Discipleship



September 6th:

Dr. Tisha Brooks' review and discussion of her book, *Spirit Deep: Recovering the Sacred in Black Women's Travels*

Contact Tommy Simons for dinner reservations: tsimons@third-baptist.org

Wednesday Night Discipleship

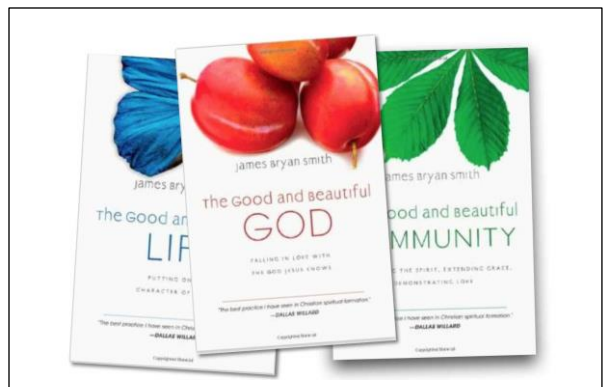
September 13, 20 and 27th:

Facilitated by Rob Lamb, Creative Director of Trellis Advertising & Pastor

Continuing *The Good and Beautiful* series of studies

5:15 p.m. Dinner

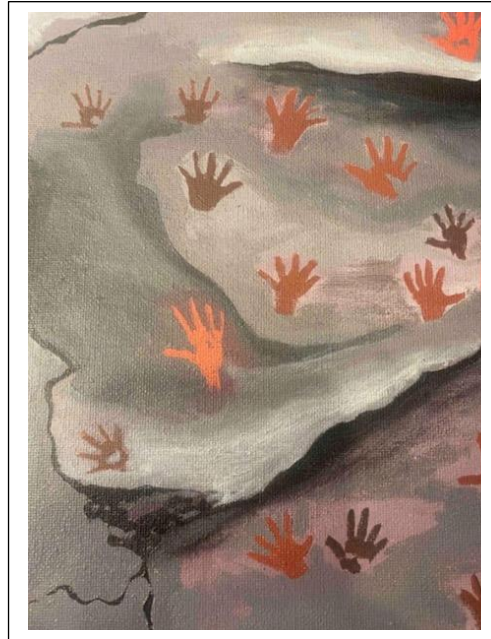
5:45 p.m. Adult Discipleship



Gallery of Hope
by Sydney Bailey

Pillsbury
Threshold

Beginning Sunday,
September 10



*Nathan Avakian Organ Presentation
hosted on August 4th*



AUGUST BIRTHDAYS

Happy Birthday to...

- 01 🎁 Demetria Bryant Austin
- 03 🎁 Lela Jones
- 08 🎁 Danny Lawrence
- 11 🎁 Andre McDaniel
- 12 🎁 Juan Moore
- 14 🎁 Lera Bryant
- 17 🎁 Willard Swyers & Dani Phillips & Harrison Gordon
- 22 🎁 Demetrius Bryant
- 24 🎁 Judy Vansickle
- 27 🎁 Portia Nartey
- 30 🎁 Mary Wainwright



In the city for good!

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third-baptist.org

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

Thomas Finger
PIANIST

Sally Stevenson
PARISH NURSE

Tom Kurtz
BUSINESS MANAGER

Christine McCarthy
FINANCE

Robert Hubbard
FACILITIES MANAGER

Timothy Harrison
CUSTODIAN