Pastor’s Article: My Back Pages

I’m looking outside my office window, except for a desk lamp, all lights are off.

The first snow of the Christmas Season began to fall a couple hours ago. I’m listening to my three favorite Christmas albums—Elvis’ Christmas Album, A Christmas Gift for You by Phil Spector and Philip Barnes’ favorite Christmas album—Christmas In The Heart by Bob Dylan.

Growing up in Houston, I still get a rush of joy, checking the phone and seeing an icon of a snowflake. Of course, by February I do a 180 and plead with God—please don’t call me farther north than Saint Louis.

Does the snow have a calming effect on you? Sitting on your couch, looking out your window and witnessing snow dance to the ground.

Quite honestly, I long for anything that slows me down a bit and offers a few moments of quiet reflection and perspective.

~

Drew Phillips offered a bit of snow for me this morning. As always, I listen to sermons on Facebook for those I’ve asked to preach. I cannot listen to myself, but I am thankful for mom who checks “like” every week on Facebook. I am guaranteed one thumbs up per week.

Drew began his sermon with unexpected emotion welling inside his soul. The reason? In previous places of service Drew preached as a representative of his role at a university. The difference? Now, Drew was preaching to his beloved community. A place Drew and Dani can call home—he was communicating to a household of faith.

~

As we navigate and vote on budgets, nominating committee and all sorts of administrative matters. May we never forget God’s blessing and grace on our dear community—gifting us with relational and financial health. And a realization we live in a culture which connects electronically but does a horrible job with relationships on a human level.

~

As we travel through Advent—2020 budgets are approved—nominating committee has selected an exceptional group of leaders—stewardship pledges are ahead of last year.
Let’s remember why we gather in the first place?
*It’s all about relationships.*

Our relationship with God and one another—encouraging and supporting one another through life stages.

Do you know someone who desires this type of community?
Offer an invitation to our table... I believe God can do remarkable things with a sincere communication of hospitality.

Dear Ones, Merry Christmas!
And Let it Snow, Let it Snow!
(but taper off around February)

Grace and Peace,
Tommy

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We welcome Robin Ebert to our beloved community!

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**Christmas Eve Service**

Tuesday, December 24
5:00 PM
Sanctuary
Advent Sermon Series

December 1—The Candle of Hope ~ What are we hoping for?
December 8—The Candle of Peace ~ How will peace be realized?
December 15—The Candle of Love ~ The Love of God in sending his only Son
December 22—The Candle of Joy ~ Why should we be joyful in 2019?
December 24—Service at 5:00 PM
Wednesday Night Discipleship for Adults
December 4, 11, 18
(Regularly scheduled events will return January 8)

Walking Through the Bible:
A Journey by Land through the Five Books of Moses
Bruce Feiler will guide our discussion. The author set out on a 10,000 mile journey retracing Moses through the desert. His story is a brilliant combination of archaeology and spiritual exploration.

We will also tie in truths discovered from previous series on Archaeology and the Bible.
Dinner at 5:00 PM
We begin our discussion at 6:00 PM
Johnson Hall

The annual Christmas Baskets Toy Drive is Here!
Now through December 15th:

New toys are needed for children ages 0-12, to be selected by Food Pantry family members while picking up their Christmas meals on December 21st. It is a blessing to be able to provide both food and fun to these families at the holidays. Toys can be dropped in the big, wrapped box outside of the church office on Sunday mornings, or left in the office.

If you'd prefer not to shop, checks may be made out to Third Baptist Church (note Toy Drive in the memo).

Operation Christmas Child
Thanks to everyone who filled a shoe box for a child this year! We filled approximately 75 shoe boxes to be sent to children around the world.
Showing God’s Love: From Saint Louis to Haiti to India

Our goal for this year’s offering is $15,000.

This year’s World Missions Offering will support three ministries:

♦ TBC’s ministry to college students in Saint Louis led by Dr. Edem Dzunu

♦ Ministry to college and seminary students in Haiti led by Kihomi Ngwemi & Nzunga Mabudiga

♦ Scholarships for students attending North East Christian University in India
From TBC Families

Our youth had a St. Louis food themed progressive dinner November 16 with stops at the Loop, the Hill, and the new Wheel at Union Station (and of course Ted Drewe’s). Our next event will be a lock-in at the church December 20-21. We’ll conclude Saturday morning by assisting with Christmas basket distribution.

Our children will have a Christmas Party, Saturday, December 7 from 10:00 AM-1:30 PM at church. We’ll have food, a movie, advent readings as well as be making cards for our Christmas Basket recipients.

I’m increasingly impressed with our young people. Reading and acting out scripture with them, and engaging in the ministry of “hanging out” (I learned a long time ago there is no such thing as “just” hanging out, time with a student is a gift and instructional) has only reinforced what I hoped and believed to be true: we have gifted students who are eager to learn, willing to participate, and want their faith to matter outside the walls of the church.

I’m grateful for them and for our broader church family who sees and hears them, gives them opportunities to serve and lead, and invests in them. May their tribe increase!

Thanksgiving gives us time to celebrate, to indulge, to be with family, to express thanks, and to share. I ask that as one of our expressions of thanks and sharing that our church family adopt students to pray for and with, take a moment to encourage, offer a hug, get to know a student or two. They are delightful and we are richer that they are a part of our family.

I am thankful to God for my church family and for our students,

Drew
December Events

1  First Sunday of Advent, Regular Sunday Schedule
3  WMS Meeting, Staff Meeting
4  Regular Wednesday Schedule
8  Second Sunday of Advent, Regular Sunday Schedule
10 WMS Meeting, Staff Meeting
11 Regular Wednesday Schedule
13 Staff Christmas Party
15 Third Sunday of Advent, Regular Sunday Schedule
17 Staff Meeting
18 Regular Wednesday Schedule
19 Christmas Basket Set-up
20 Christmas Basket Set-up, Youth Lock-in
21 Christmas Basket Distribution
22 Fourth Sunday of Advent, Regular Sunday Schedule
24 Christmas Eve Service
25 Christmas Day, Church Offices Closed
26 Church Offices Closed
29 Regular Sunday Schedule
31 Staff Meeting

December Birthdays

7  Leslie Schultz
10 Candace Owen
11 Karen king
13 Hermon Leroy
14 Kelly King
20 Carson Wright, Johnny Jay, James Robbins
23 Tim Harrison
26 Mary Burns
28 Rowena Haywood
29 Gabi Moore, Bill Pearson
30 Connie Vohsen

Sunday Schedule

9:30 AM  Doughnut & Coffee Fellowship
9:45 AM  Sunday School
11:00 AM  Worship, Sanctuary
Noon  Fellowship, Pillsbury Threshold

Wednesday Schedule

3:30 PM  Third Readers
5:00 PM  Fellowship Dinner
6:00 PM  Adult Bible Study, Children’s Activities, Youth Activities
7:00 PM  Choir Rehearsal
In the city for good!

620 North Grand, St. Louis, MO 63103
Church Office: 314.533.7340
third-baptist.org

Dr. Tommy Simons
PASTOR

Rev. Maria Stinnett
ASSOCIATE PASTOR FOR MISSIONS & COMMUNICATIONS

Dr. Edem Dzunu
ASSOCIATE PASTOR

Rev. Drew Phillips
MINISTER TO FAMILIES

Dr. Philip Barnes
DIRECTOR OF MUSIC

Ella Banks
RECEPTIONIST/OFFICE ASSISTANT

Byron Greer
BUILDING SUPERVISOR

Timothy Harrison
CUSTODIAN

Karen Stewart & Linda Freiburghaus
CHURCH HISTORIANS

Brent Johnson
ORGANIST

Tom Kurtz
BUSINESS MANAGER

Lansin Lim Kimler
PIANIST

Christine McCarthy
FINANCE

Raymond Murphy
CUSTODIAN

Sally Stevenson
PARISH NURSE

Staff