Pastor’s Article: My Back Pages

1984
2000
2020
Three years which arrived with anticipation and warning.
1984! George Orwell! Big Brother is Watching!
2000! As the clock turns to the 21st century—computers and computer networks around the world will create havoc!

~
I attended Youth Link—a national youth celebration scheduled to be held in the Astrodome in Houston, Texas—December 31, 1999. Thousands of reservations were cancelled because of Y2K fears. The event was moved to a much smaller venue next to the Astrodome.

I walked out to the parking lot around 11:58pm (I was skeptical, but if the world was going to end, I didn’t want to be trapped with 5,000 teenagers) and waited for the countdown. Midnight. Nothing. Yawn. Time to go home.

~
2020 has an odd ring to me, and I feel a tinge of anxiety about this date. I suspect, it’s because the decade of the 2020’s I will navigate the 60’s (born in 1959). Life is a series of hellos and good-byes—and I suspect this decade will sadly bring many good-byes—such is life.

I always travel back to Scripture and writings of John Claypool—in times of melancholy. Claypool’s three word memoir Life. Is. Gift.—rings truer with each passing year. I mean, what did I do to be blessed with this journey in the first place.

~

As a new decade dawns—I hope to pay less attention to exclamation points.

I am outraged! It’s time to fire up the Twitter machine! (I realize it’s not called Twitter machine, this is just for my kids to wince, like they are going to read this anyway).

Republicans! Democrats! Impeach! Don’t impeach! Recession! Depression! Booming economy! Why aren’t you upset about (fill in the blank)?

The Astros have been caught stealing signs! (this last one is my own bias).
I’m not downplaying above concerns; however, in our brief little lives, a nice bit of perspective is always wise.

How many exclamation points, throughout your journey in reality, became periods, commas and footnotes.

As we conclude Advent and begin a new year and decade—a familiar phrase is used over and over again—Do Not Be Afraid.

Third, we will continue to share Gospel and offer exceptional hospitality to all who enter our space. And we will do this from a place of joy and peace—not fear.

We are a household of faith, not a corporate entity, searching for ways to increase our market share. Our guests are not customers, they are seeking real community and an open seat at the table of grace.

Dear Ones, when exclamation points surround you—remember Jesus’ words in John—My Peace I leave with you. My Peace I give to you. Not as the world gives...

Do not be afraid.

I am honored to journey with you into the 2020’s—and for all that has been—thanks be to God—for all that will be— do not be afraid! (that’s an exclamation point worth considering).

Grace and Peace,

Tommy

We welcome Emily Davis to our beloved community!
Worship at Third

EPIPHANY SUNDAY
January 5
A celebration of the Magi’s visit to Jesus.

WRITING LETTERS
January 12- Pliny the Younger and the first Christians
January 19- Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr and Letter from a Birmingham Jail
January 26- Paul and the Epistles
February 2- C.S. Lewis and the Screwtape Letters
Wednesday Night Adult Discipleship
Returns Wednesday, January 8, 2020

5:00 PM - Dinner
6:00 PM - Adult Discipleship in Johnson Hall

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5 Ancient Cities:

Contemporary Lessons and Warnings

754 Frisa
1076 Cambrai
1229 Marburg
1300 Milan
1420 Tarbor
1916 Somme

Thank you for your continued participation, attendance and discussion. Take a mid-week break and join your church family.
Christmas Eve Service
Tuesday, December 24
5:00 PM
Sanctuary

Concerts at Third
Lansin Lim Kimler will be performing a solo piano recital at TBC on Sunday, January 12 at 3:00 PM. Her selections will be punctuated by readings delivered by Phillip Barnes. The performance is free, as a thanksgiving to the church, and it will last one hour.

Chiemi Watanabe (piano) and Kiyo Watanabe (organ) will be in concert at TBC on Sunday, January 26 at 4:00 PM. The Watanabes are church musicians based in Wichita Falls, TX, and among the most sought-after duos in North America. Their performance of Rachmaninov’s Second Piano Concerto at the 2015 Annual Convention of the American Guild of Organists brought numerous standing ovations. The Watanabes will reprise this piece at their concert at TBC in January, inaugurating our new Steinway grand piano.

New Photo Exhibit in Pillsbury Threshold
Thank you to Sylvester Jacobs for sharing his photo exhibit "Images of God," which is now on display in the Pillsbury Threshold. Take a moment before or after worship to experience this moving exhibit.
From Third Families

I’m looking at the calendar for the new year with feelings of excitement and energy. This is the last turn of the calendar I will enter able to say or think, “Well, this is all new to me,” and I’m grateful for the grace with which you have welcomed Dani and me these past months. We are so blessed to join our family to Third’s story.

In planning for the spring and summer, thinking about what is ahead and joying our hands and feet and hearts and minds to where God is at work and leading, I’m doing some reading along with the planning.

From David M. Csinos and Ivy Beckwith’s Children’s Ministry in the Way of Jesus,
“...what really makes a difference in a young person’s life is not just whether a person receives support from nonparent adults, but the number of nonparent adults that support them. According to (research), three is the magic number. Receiving, support, encouragement and guidance from three or more nonparent adults is a key developmental asset. Through intergenerational community, children and youth have opportunities to form these types of relationships.”

Third is in a unique place to foster and encourage these types of life-changing relationships. Children (and for that matter all of us) live up to and down to what the adults around them say about them. Thank you for being a place that speaks grace, peace, kindness, and encouragement over our young folks. I am hopeful that we will all take advantage of the opportunities God give us to serve together in the new year.

Remember as you see opportunities to volunteer and serve with our young people that your interactions and relationships really do matter.

Grateful to serve with you,
Drew

“Receiving, support, encouragement and guidance from three or more nonparent adults is a key developmental asset.”
-David M. Csinos & Ivy Beckwith

Children’s Ministry in the Way of Jesus
January Events

1  New Years Day, Church Offices Closed
5  Regular Sunday Schedule
7  WMS Meeting
8  Regular Wednesday Schedule
12 Regular Sunday Schedule, Lansin Lim Kimler recital
14  WMS Meeting, Staff Meeting
15  Regular Wednesday Schedule
18  Food Pantry
19  Regular Sunday Schedule
20  Church Offices Closed
21  Staff Meeting
22  Regular Wednesday Schedule
26 Regular Sunday Schedule, Piano Dedication Concert
28  Staff Meeting
29  Regular Wednesday Schedule

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

January Birthdays
2  Clara Jackson
5  Leslie Davis
7  Steve Campbell, Margaret Warmann
8  Jimmie Miller
12  Kia Swan Moore
20  Jonathan Watson
26 Lansin Lim Kimler, Tom Puhse, Betty Swyers
27  Charlotte Wilkerson
30  Mike Thiems, Gabe Thiems
Staff

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