

## From the Pastor COVID AND KATRINA: LESSONS FROM A FRIEND



*Photo of Third during pandemic at usually busy intersection of Grand and Washington (Jerry Campbell)*

Gary Long was written into my story in 2002. I remember wearing a Texans jersey to his pastoral installation—which occurred the same night Texans played their first game against the Cowboys.

I received permission from Gary to wear jersey and take off soon after he was officially installed. *Lord, a breath of fresh air, thank you...*

God writes certain people into our story, during various chapters of life. Some stay for a brief season, others for a life time. In each case—they are grace gifts from God.

I'm writing this article, day after Easter services, in a very quiet building... and I'm thinking of Gary... and Hurricane Katrina.

I learned several lessons from Gary, whom as Pastor of Willow Meadows Baptist, navigated wise responses to Katrina refugees. And I believe those principles apply— as Third travels through the “year of the plague.”

**Move forward— with plan A, B, C and D.**

This is a time to leave pride and hyper self- criticism at the curb. As we respond to crisis, we do what we can with resources available. And the story and problems are in constant flux.

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Do you remember the scene in *Apollo 13*—engineers gathered around table trying to prevent disaster.

An engineer opens the door and throws a wide variety of items on the table.

“Here’s what we have onboard command module—these are the only resources we have to save our crew—figure it out.”

Churchill quotes seem to surface during moments of crisis: It’s not enough to do a good job; you must do what is necessary.

## 2. People want to help

The organizational idea for assisting our community with food, medical supplies and cleaning supplies arrived from an anonymous church member soon after this crisis. I’ve received numerous emails—who can I call? what do I need to buy at Target? Can I help pay someone’s rent? How can we creatively distribute food and cleaning supplies and stay within guidelines?

## 3. Laughter and Patience

If you want to make God laugh, give him your plans for tomorrow. The easy will become complex. And crises lends itself to a master class on patience (I know, I don’t want to attend this seminar either... too busy).

The laughter arrives due to our inability to control all parameters and variables. And as I write this— James Taylor is singing one of my favorites: *The Secret of Life is Enjoying the Passage of Time*. I know, not exactly a deep philosophical thought... but consider...

The Lillies of the Field...

The time we are gifted... gone like dew in the morning.

Therefore, for whatever reason, in *God’s Big Story* we are charged to respond in Christlike fashion to a world-wide pandemic.

And we will move on with wisdom, patience and a bit of good cheer. We’ll continue to mourn and travel beside those who suffer loss and sickness.

And for such a time as this: it’s a reminder of why we do what we do in the first place.

Well,

Who knows the state of the world when you read this article written April 13? And thank you Gary for wise lessons learned so many years ago.

Jerry Campbell, thanks for the photo.

I do hope silence is broken soon—and I'll be able to listen to the beautiful noise of people and our little part of the world coming back to life.

Finally, Pastor, what guidance do you have concerning Public worship returning along with other ministries? Here's what I do know: Third will broadcast worship live through May 10. And I'll communicate any updates through all church email and Facebook.

And Third welcomes Dennis and Nancy Reinard to our beloved community, joining over Facebook Sunday morning! A good metaphor about going to plan B and C, when first options are not available.

Grace and Peace,  
Tommy

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### Call for Proposals – Urban Ministries Projects

The board of the *Des Peres Baptist Church Endowment for Inner-City Ministries at Third Baptist Church* is seeking proposals for financial support toward delivering “compassionate and relevant ministries ...that address spiritual and physical needs” of our neighbors here in the center of the St. Louis area.

A bit of background: Des Peres Baptist Church (DPBC) was established in 1955 with financial assistance and manpower support provided by members of Third Baptist Church. As all earthly bodies have a life cycle – even churches – in 2008 the membership of Des Peres Baptist Church recognized it was time for them to disband. Appreciating their historic linkage to TBC and valuing our strategic location, DPBC Church chose to distribute \$550,000 to us from their remaining assets. They asked that we use their gift to establish an endowment fund to be known as The Des Peres Baptist Church Endowment for Inner City Ministries, the net proceeds from which was to support inner-city ministry programs.

Please apply! Application forms, with guidelines, are available by contacting endowment board chairperson Peggy Pittenger ([peggypittenger@sbcglobal.net](mailto:peggypittenger@sbcglobal.net)) or Maria Stinnett ([mstinnett@third-baptist.org](mailto:mstinnett@third-baptist.org)). Deadline to receive applications will be May 1, 2020.

#### May Birthdays

- 3 Jonathan Watson
- 6 Gary Thompson
- 15 Stephen Gray, Craig Robinson
- 18 Berneice Donnelly, Eunsil Stevenson,  
Sally Stevenson
- 27 Julie Bruenger



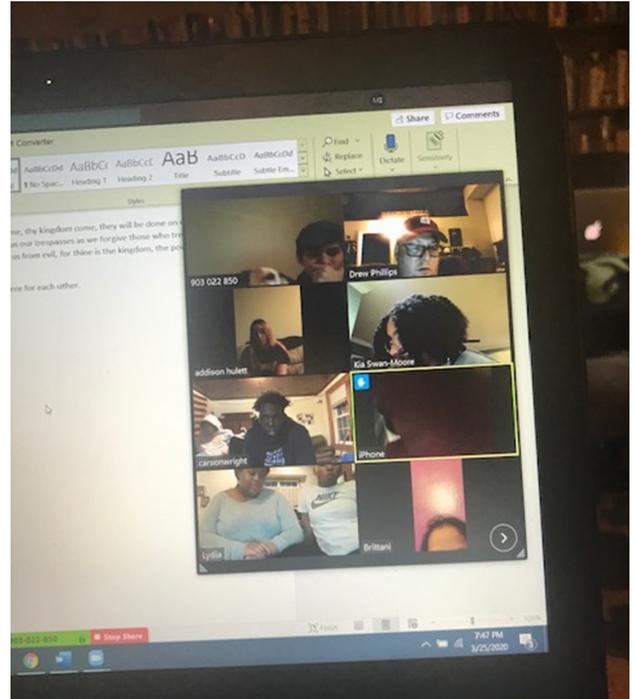
## Rev. Drew Phillips Minister to Families

“The world for which you have been so carefully prepared is being taken away from you, by the grace of God.”

This quote from Walter Brueggemann has been a source of (dis)comfort for me for years—usually whenever I encountered cultural or vocational change or found myself clinging to the obsolete. And yet, as a minister, it’s never rung truer than it has these past few weeks.

In lieu of not being able to gather in the same place at the same time churches are engaging creativity and technology in a way that for many of us is a challenge. And yet we are making it work.

Here you see a picture of one of our Wednesday night Zoom Youth Group meetings?



We’ve met weekly since the first week of quarantine and played games, caught up with one another, and prayed together. These have been holy moments that were not on my calendar much less radar in January and yet, look like they will be part of our new normal.

I hope you’ve been able to see the Easter decorations our youngest members created to share with you (they are posted on Third’s Facebook page). I didn’t hear any complaints that our Easter Egg hunt was cancelled and only heard excitement from our children to decorate and share with their Third Family.

I have found myself looking forward to checking in and praying with different beloved members each week and am encouraged as I hear how we are taking care of and looking after one another. Please know how deeply you are loved and how committed we are to being church family—keep checking your emails and answering texts!

Grateful to serve with you,  
Drew