From the Pastor:
Friends on the Left and the Right

August marks Simons’ 5th anniversary at Third. And we are in the midst of the most bizarre few months of my ministry years. I was hoping heat of the summer would “burn off” Covid and we’d return to a degree of normalcy. As of this writing, it’s certainly not the case—infections are rising and there’s chatter of another lock down.

Yet, in the midst of this crisis you have been quite remarkable. The finances are steady and we’ve done our best to stubbornly continue to meet, serve and teach—in person or through social media.

The wise gift of an anonymous donor two years ago—has offered Third an opportunity to broadcast clear, quality worship services. Third’s worship averages around 1,000 views and 200 through plays.

The Innovations Committee has met several times during this season. Jerry Bryan continues to guide our committee with wisdom, organization and clarity.

The building has received an excellent face lift (thank you Tom Kurtz, Caren Simons, Matthew Watson, Mona Harrison and Andre Jackson) . Throughout the summer an innumerable number of closets/rooms have been cleaned out and organized. And in the wake of the plague we will celebrate Maria’s doctorate and arrival of Julius in a few months (Dani and Drew’s baby boy on the way!). Thankfully, we are working on quality improvements and renovation to our preschool area—we will be ready for you young Julius!

Thanks to the joy and irritation of Zoom, Third continues with important administrative duties—Church Council and Business Meeting (Juan Moore, Third’s Executive Chair, is a grace gift during these interesting times).

Rachael Barnes (chair of family ministries), Drew Phillips and Maria Stinnett continue to plan and coordinate quality options for our families. Philip and our music team have done a superb job dealing with constant changes caused by Covid. The worship music and planning is excellent. Judy Parham continues our missions structure and emphasis.

Alexandria Hamilton and Monica McDaniel continue to facilitate and organize monthly Food Pantry—there is no stopping this train!

Yet...

I find myself hosting and throwing pity parties from time to time—the momentum of gaining new members and guests—took a back seat upon Mr. Covid’s visit to town. So, I need to remind myself of the blessings we’ve received at Third—God has been good and gracious! But from a selfish viewpoint, I do miss seeing all our family together on Sunday morning.

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Finally...
Here’s a take-away on traveling with you for 5 years.

I have good friends on the left and the right.

I receive articles, emails and questions from conservative, moderate and liberal members of our beloved community (religious and political) on a frequent basis (that is a compliment).

And here’s a good gauge of relational health—it’s purpose is to inform and persuade—arriving from a place of mutual respect and friendship.

Third is a place of dialogue, not diatribe.

Robert Kyser penned my favorite metaphor for church:
The church is a community of faith, on the way home, stumbling in the light.

Third, thank you for grace offered during times of success and stumbling over 5 years—as we all travel one step closer to home.

Grace and Peace,
Tommy

**Reflections from Deborah Watson**

When Frank and I first joined Third, Jonathan was 6; Matthew was a week shy of 5. How they've grown, and their family at Third has embraced them, literally and figuratively, encouraged them, taught them, and showered love on them. As older parents, bringing up two boys was often tricky, but Frank would always say, when I felt discouraged, how much God had blessed us with our church family at Third. Our sons are 18 and 20 now, and all their good habits, I'm convinced, were acquired at church. I'm pretty sure they didn't come from us!

We had been planning to build and move into our dream retirement home for about 5 years before the ground was broken on the building site, and then suddenly and unexpectedly, Frank passed away. Third again covered the boys and me with an abundance of kindness and love (and food!). We'll be moving in just a week or so to Frank's beloved Dexter, but keep two things in mind. First, there is no church like Third, so I'll be watching services on Facebook. Second, we're not that far away. A quick three-hour drive and you'll be welcomed into the Watson country mansion!
Worship at Third

July 26
The Three Sections of the Hebrew Bible: Torah (Book of Moses)

August 2
The Three Sections of the Hebrew Bible: Ketuvim (Writings)

August 9
The Three Sections of the Hebrew Bible: Nevi’im (Prophets)

August 16
Prophets and Loss: John Bunyan

August 23
Prophets and Loss: Moody and Sankey

August 30
Prophets and Loss: St. John the Divine

Guest Speaker: Dr. Maria Stinnett
Dr. Stinnett will be blessed, recognized and honored for completion of doctorate.
Wednesday Night Adult Discipleship

Each Wednesday night we will discover a contemporary prophetic voice—what are they “saying” to our present culture and chaos? All voices arrive from various backgrounds/life experience/perspective—and each have a common faith in Jesus Christ.

All are invited to join by Zoom—each Wednesday from 6pm-6:45pm.

Prophetic Voices of our Era

Cornel West is Professor of Religion at Princeton University. Dr. West’s work regarding racial and economic justice—through the lens of a Christian—will be explored and examined.

John Perkins is founder and President Emeritus of the John and Vera Mae Perkins Foundation. Dr. Perkins’ passion is reconciliation and an excellent guide for those seeking to minister in urban areas.

Douglas Campbell is professor of New Testament at Duke Divinity School. Dr. Campbell continues his distinction of an accessible, practical theologian—for his review of Paul’s life and ministry. His conclusions are powerfully relevant to today’s climate.
So, it is July and you see our obligatory youth in front of the van picture. Only we are not at camp and we are all masked.

You also see a picture of our younger students doing “Godly Play” only not in the wonderful Children’s space on the ground floor at church—we are wandering through the Jesus stories and church calendar, praying for one another, our church, and our world online.

I tell you this not to reiterate what a strange summer it is but to bear witness: look at our young members engaged in the work of the church! They are playing and praying, meeting together even if it is through masks and distance or on a computer screen. We carry on the wonderful work of being church. At this point we have had at least 16 different youth participate in at least one of our Youth Group Zoom meetings and 6 different children participate in Godly Play on Zoom.

Telling God one’s plans is a recipe for humility. So while we travel in the new for a while we will continue to gather (virtually), pray, and play (safely) as we follow God’s Spirit. Let’s keep our connections we have fostered going and continue growing together.
Music at TBC

COVID-19 rules?
As many of you will have noticed, we have been adapting our musical offerings at church in order to observe the new reality of COVID-19. Our piano and organ selections have largely remained true to what we had previously posted on our website, but our vocal selections have had to change. Current guidelines suggest that congregational singing should not be a part of in-person worship, and indeed that we should limit the number of singers and songs at each gathering. So, while our choir is on an extended sabbatical of sorts, we have featured one or two individual singers who use microphones to offer an anthem, a hymn and – when we celebrated communion – a couple of short responses for the Bread & the Cup. If you would like to find out more about the music at each service, please consult the TBC Music web pages – we'll try to keep them up to date!

Streaming etc.
We welcome to the AV booth in the balcony Hannah Gallop and, when his schedule allows, Brian Mund. Both are recent graduates of the audio engineering program at Webster University, and as such have familiarity with both the PA system in church, and the online streaming services outside. With their help, and invaluable input from Brent Johnson & Tom Kurtz, we’ve begun trailing our Sunday morning streaming with details of the upcoming service; during the service itself we also project these on the screen. Streaming is challenging & can be exasperating because the software for services like Facebook and YouTube use AI ‘bots’ to detect possible infractions of copyright; if they suspect that we are in breach, they interrupt or mute the streaming without any prior warning. An example of this occurred in early July when the AI identified Lansin’s playing of a Tchaikovsky piece as being that of the great Russian virtuoso, Sviatoslav Richter! It’s a compliment to her, of course, but it frustrated those joining us in worship from their homes. With all of this in mind, it’s a comfort to know we can utilize the skills of so many at TBC, but we do ask for your understanding and patience when things ‘go wrong’!

Adieu to Nathan Brown
At the end of July we bade a fond farewell to our tenor section leader, Nathan, who has served Third so well in the past few years, and especially since we adopted our new COVID-19 format. But we hope our farewell is only temporary, because Nathan promises to be back from Iowa City, where he will be studying for a master’s degree at the University of Iowa, when his schedule allows; so we have already asked him to be with us during Advent & Christmas.

TBC commission gains ‘legs’
The simple yet beautiful A New Heart that was written expressly for TBC by Philadelphia-based composer, Melissa Dunphy, continues to enjoy success outside St. Louis. Following its publication by MorningStar Music, it has entered the repertoire of many choirs. For those of you who are enjoying the ‘virtual choirs’ that have sprung up on the internet during this time of COVID-19, here is one of the latest interpretations of ‘our’ Dunphy piece:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dGkJrMJ58Gs

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... and more Dunphy!
The Saint Louis Chamber Chorus has just released its latest CD, a collection of eleven works commissioned expressly for the choir from composers around the globe. Copies of ‘Saint Louis Premieres’ may be obtained from the choir’s website, www.chamberchorus.org, and for those of you who prefer to download your music, all seven of the choir’s recordings with the British label, Regent Records, are now available through Itunes and Amazon music.

And now there’s yet another way to hear the choir, which is directed by TBC choir director, Philip Barnes, as one of Melissa Dunphy’s pieces for the Chamber Chorus has been chosen for a Spotify playlist. “If I Can Stop One Heart From Breaking” has been included in the ‘Voces8: The Classical Takeover’ collection which already has over 46,000 subscribers!

Recently, STL Village received a grant from the Des Peres Fund Baptist Church Endowment Fund for Inner-City Ministries. Below is a thank you note from their executive director.

Dear Peggy,

On behalf of STL Village, we would like to thank Third Baptist Church for your generous donation of $5,000.00. This donation will support the services, activities and programs with the operations of STL Village. Specifically, these funds will enable us to provide subsidized membership to underserved seniors in our community. We greatly appreciate your contribution for it is through people like you that we can offer programs and services to seniors.

Sincerely,
Madeline Franklin, Executive Director

Karen Hoshino is one of our college students. Currently, she is with her family in Brazil.

Hi Pastor Tommy!

I hope you and your whole family are safe and healthy! I miss you all so much!

I am writing this email to let you know that I won't be going back to SLU this fall semester due to the pandemic situation in both U.S. and Brazil. My parents and I decided that it is not a good time to be traveling.

I hope you are all well, and I look forward to seeing you all when this is over!!!

Many hugs to everyone in the church!!!
Karen

August Birthdays

2  Natalie Thiems
4  Maggie Jackson, Gwen Tyson
5  Ken Blanton
7  Jeanene Moritz
9  Cynthia Dickinson
10 Rachael Barnes
12 Edem Dzunu
13 Jerry Campbell, Julie McDaniel
19 Nicholas Fay
20 Edna Betts, Rachelle Jay, Evelyn Kurtz
25 Samuel Governor
27 Pat Blake, Frank Stevens
28 David Stevenson
29 Iris Davis
Staff

Dr. Tommy Simons
PASTOR

Dr. Maria Stinnett
ASSOCIATE PASTOR FOR MISSIONS & COMMUNICATIONS

Rev. Drew Phillips
MINISTER TO FAMILIES

Dr. Philip Barnes
DIRECTOR OF MUSIC

Ella Banks
RECEPTIONIST/OFFICE ASSISTANT

Timothy Harrison
CUSTODIAN

Karen Stewart & Linda Freiburghaus
CHURCH HISTORIANS

Brent Johnson
ORGANIST

Tom Kurtz
BUSINESS MANAGER

Lansin Lim Kimler
PIANIST

Christine McCarthy
FINANCE

Sally Stevenson
PARISH NURSE