



## FROM THE PASTOR

*“2020 has an odd ring to me and I feel a tinge of anxiety...”*

*-Pastor's article from January 2020*

I am officially resigning as prophet and offer no predictions for 2021!

I am writing this January 2021 issue of Third Base on Wednesday afternoon, December 9th. The question for discussion in staff meeting:

Christmas Eve Service—  
*Sanctuary or parking lot?*

I believe this query sums up 2020.

I know it's been a hard season for many in our church family.

The world-wide pestilence has caused physical and emotional disconnection. I grieve for those navigating isolation and inability to visit loved ones.

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The prophet Jeremiah challenged God: *Why are you like someone taken by surprise, like a warrior powerless to save?*

Continued on page two

Philip Yancey sums up:

*To the prophets, God seemed to be farther and farther away from his creation. Why do godless nations flourish? Why so many natural disasters? Why such poverty? Why so few miracles? Where are you God, break your silence!... For God's sake, literally, act!*

How does God speak up? He responds with passion—you are vitally important to me. Take a moment and read the prophecy of Hosea. God agonizes over consequences of sin, yet the bond is everlasting.

*I have been the Lord your God ever since the land of Egypt, you know no God but me, and besides me there is no answer (Hosea 13:4).*

Jesus said, *No one can come to me unless it is granted by the Father.* This was a bridge too far and many dropped out and decided not to follow Jesus. Jesus turned to his 12 disciples and asked, *Do you also wish to go away?* Peter spoke up (of course!) **Lord, to whom can we go?** *You have the words of eternal life.*  
(John 6:60-68)

I like Peter's response because it's grounded in reality.

Bottom line, amidst all our prophetic cries of woe and despair—God's covenant with his people remain. And Peter's answer is a good reminder—we are blessed with an *eternal* relationship.

**Scripture does not offer magical formulas to alleviate plagues and other manifestations of evil.**

**The truth of the matter—*spiritual maturity and progress is tied to our response to hard times.***

**Beloved, you have nowhere else to turn during these days—thank God (literally).**

As we head into Third's **170th year of ministry**—remember John Claypool's description of God—*The Great Alchemist*.

In this season of drought Third has been blessed with unexpected rain and discoveries of an oasis here and there.

The financial and relational health of our church is strong. Church leaders have leaned into creativity and flexibility—in order to remain connected. Adult, youth and children's connections remain strong through Zoom. The 2020 pledges matched 2019. Third's budget was unanimously approved and an outstanding team of leaders were enlisted by Nominating Committee.

*Now, saying all that...* I dearly miss Third gathering together in full strength. And I believe it will be awhile before we take a simple fellowship meal for granted!

I hope we'll be able to gather Christmas Eve—in Sanctuary or parking lot (*Connie will need to be quite creative with advent decorations if the latter*) at 5pm.

And as we bring 2020 to a close:  
For all that has been—*thanks be to God.*  
For all that will be—*Yes!*

Beloved, thank you for the honor of traveling with you five and a half years.  
And a Merry Christmas to all!

Grace and Peace,  
Tommy



# Family Ministries

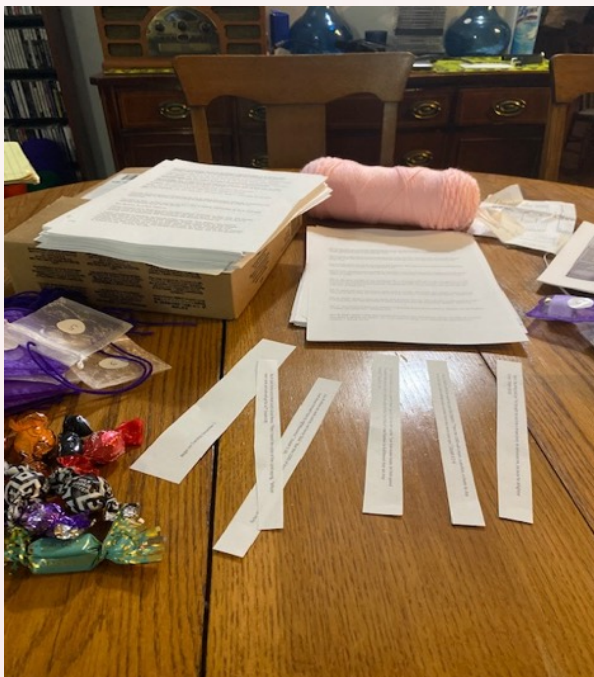
I thought DIY Advent Calendars were a thing only for Etsy artists and artistic missionaries raising funds. I had no idea how much fun (and work) they would be to create for our families. I am hopeful that they enhanced your waiting as we move through Advent.

I am enjoying wondering through Advent with our children on Zoom on Sundays at 4:00.

Godly Play is such a hands on interactive approach to telling the Bible stories, I worried it wouldn't translate to zoom, but it does! Our students have been patient and persistent as we wonder and wander about the Jesus stories.

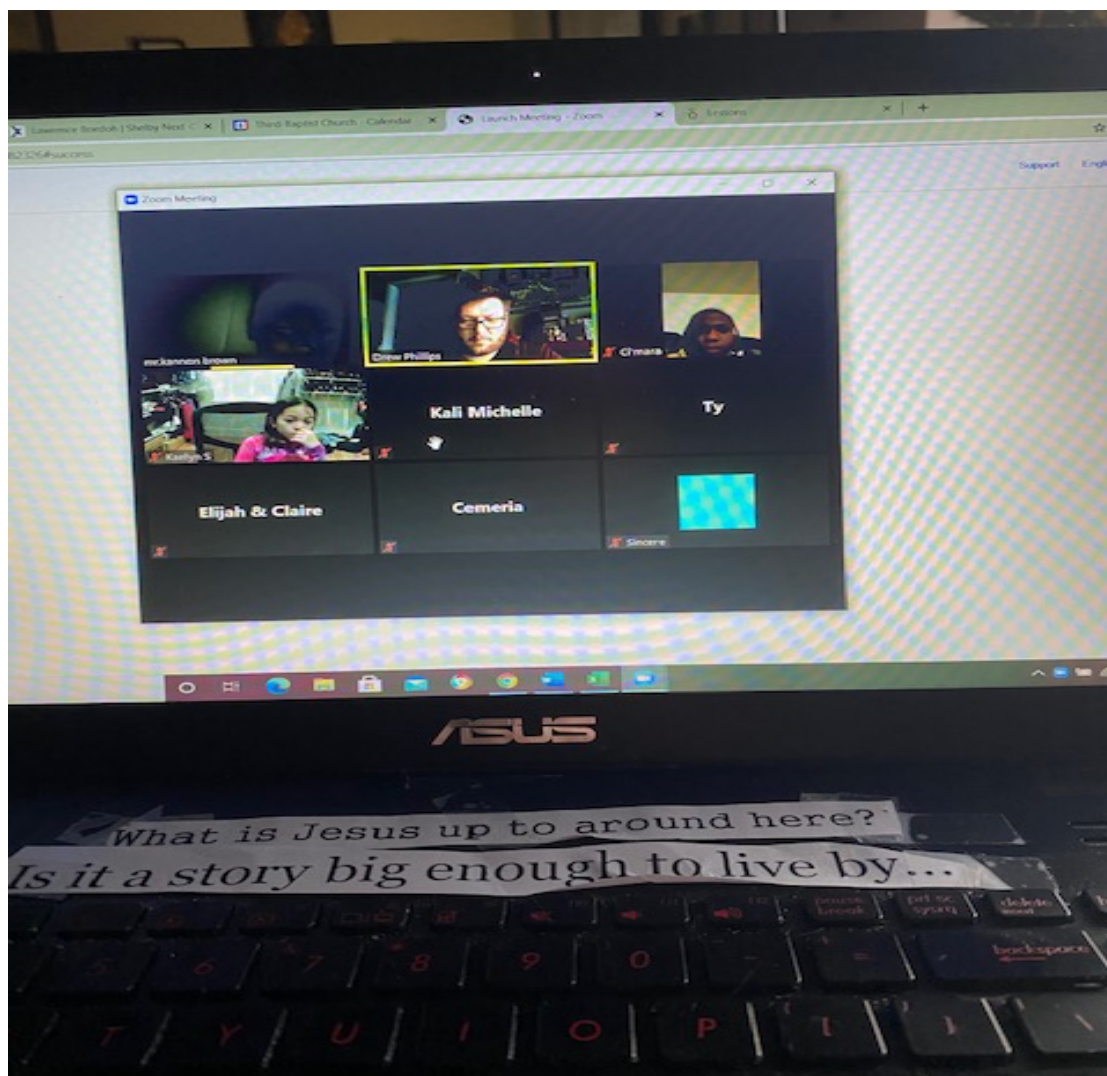
Know I am praying with joy and thanks that I get to serve with you,

Drew



Rev. Drew Phillips  
Minister to Families





## Missions Moment

Dear friends at Third Baptist,

Thank you so much for your partnership! This past year has been a strange one for us all, but God is still at work. Though we cannot travel right now, your gift of \$690 goes a very long way. Cornelia, an independent missionary in Romania, translates [Davar educational materials](#) into Romanian. Alina, a Romanian living in Sweden, records these translations. Keith dubs this into [Davar instructional videos](#). Vasilita, a Romany believer in Moldova, uses these videos in a bi-weekly children's Bible club. Zoltan, an SIL/Wycliffe team member in Romanian, also uses them in his weekly children's Bible club in Transylvania. Mary has been meeting online with Zoltan since 2017 to discuss Davar and pray for his work.



Your gifts to our programming fund pay for things like translation fees and our internet connection. Your gifts to CBF's Offering for Global Missions pays for our continued presence in the field, so that Mary and Keith are here to talk with Zoltan, coordinate these translations, connect Vasilita with Davar materials, and dub and create materials like the Davar videos. Thank you for making all of this possible, through your gifts and your prayers!

Yours in Christ,

Mary VanRheenen & Keith Holmes  
CBF Romany Ministries, Europe

P.S. You are most welcome to try these games out yourself. And if you are even willing to film one for an instructional video, please let us know! [holmes@cbf.net](mailto:holmes@cbf.net)



Romany Bible Club in Moldova

### **Lebanon's brothers and sisters need your assistance.**

Third's Global Christmas offering is directed toward American Baptist's Lebanese Society for Educational and Social Development.

Your offering will assist with distribution of "Camp-In-A Box" packages for children and youth ages 6-15. The box contains items required for Baptist Children and Youth Camps throughout Lebanon.

### ***Why is the need critical?***

Particular focus is directed toward children and youth effected by massive explosion in the Port of Beirut—displacing thousands of children. The cost for each box is \$35.

Please make check payable to Third Baptist Church and mark on your check "BCYM Lebanon." Mail to Third Baptist in care of Christine McCarthy, or place in the offering upon our return to public worship on Christmas Eve at 5 p.m.

The Global Christmas offering will continue through Sunday, January 9th, 2021.

# The Music Department

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With all but two of the Friday Pipes concerts canceled this year, and no plans to schedule more in the immediate future, the music department has been working on ways to keep our guest organists busy and to keep Third's pipe organ playing during the week. The result has been a series of mini-recitals recorded after-hours when the building is empty and the streets are quiet. Titled "Midnight at Washington and Grand," the series of mini concerts are streamed every Wednesday evening on the church's Facebook Page as well as our YouTube channel, and all past performances can still be viewed there as well. There are links to the videos on the Third Baptist website as well. Our own organist Brent Johnson kicked off the series, and other local organists, as well as some from as far away as Illinois, Indiana, and Kentucky have been enlisted to help keep music playing in the empty building.

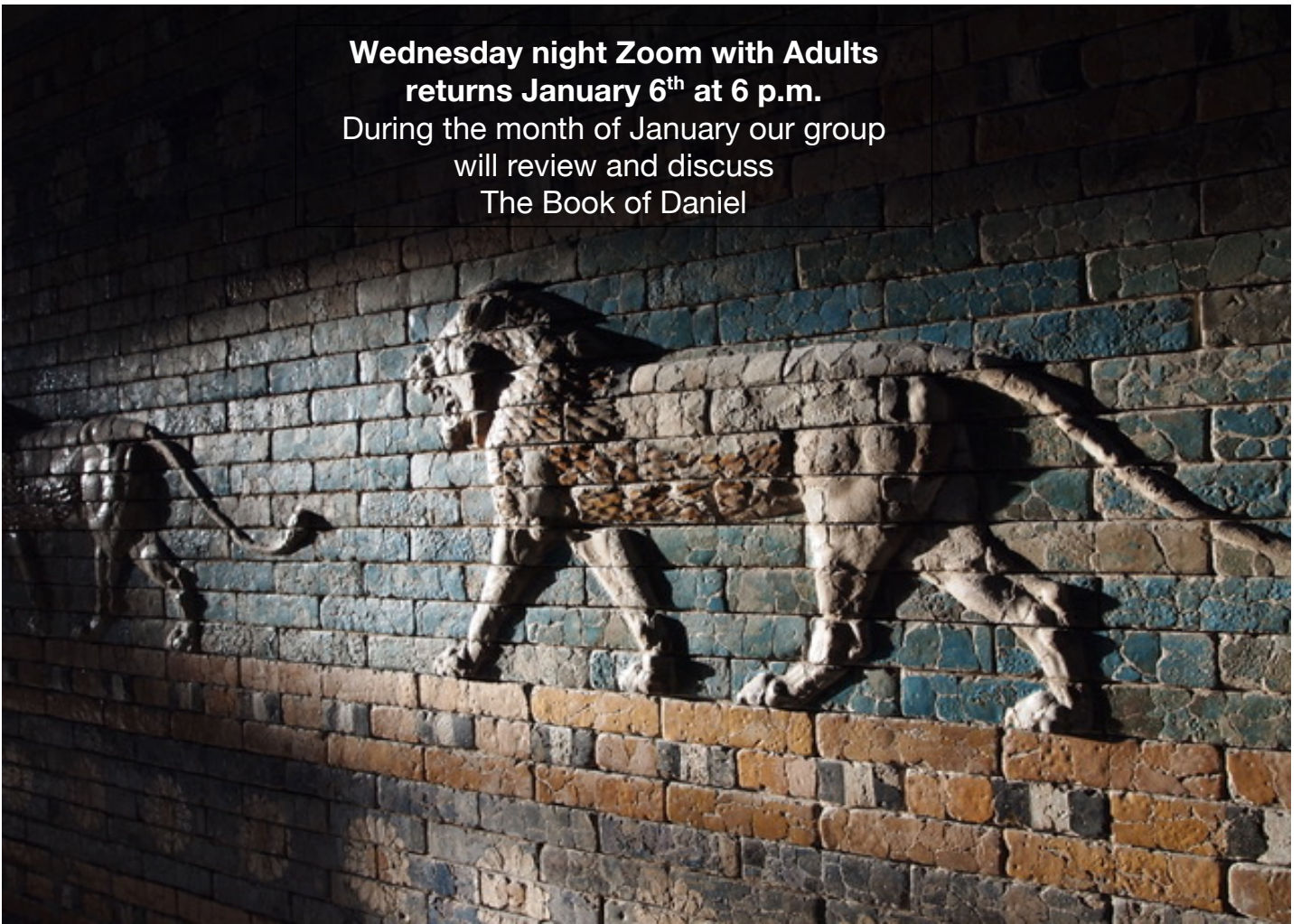
The musical ministries of Friday Pipes and Midnight at Washington & Grand are special programs here at Third Baptist, unlike any other around St. Louis, and contributions to help fund future events are welcomed. If you would like to help support these video concerts, as well as an eventual return to live performances, mark your contribution to the church for "Friday Pipes."

We hope to see you online Wednesday evening!





**Wednesday night Zoom with Adults  
returns January 6<sup>th</sup> at 6 p.m.**  
During the month of January our group  
will review and discuss  
The Book of Daniel



*Christmas Eve  
Celebration  
of Lessons  
and Carols  
5 p.m.*

## Birthdays in January

- 2 • Clara Jackson
- 5 • Leslie Davis
- 7 • Margaret Warmann
- 7 • Steve Campbell
- 12 • Kia Moore
- 20 • Matthew Watson
- 26 • Thomas Puhse
- 26 • Betty Swyers
- 26 • Lansin Lim Kimler
- 27 • Charlotte Wilkerson
- 29 • Robert Hoffman
- 30 • Mike Thiems
- 30 • Gabe Thiems



**In the city for good!**

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