



FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH

Ann Arbor, Michigan

February 20, 2008

Pastors' Reflections

by Paul Simpson Duke

Yesterday I did something I have done many times before: I sat in a room beside the body of a friend who had just died - dear Zella Willis. Edgar was there, with their daughter and son-in-law. We embraced. We said what could be said. We prayed. As I drove toward home I was grieving. I was also struck, not for the first time, by what a strange and holy privilege I have been given.

I can think of no vocation remotely like that of a pastor. I don't say this with pride; it doesn't make me feel "special" - but it does take me often to a place of reverence and gratitude. Pastors are present at death - with the dying and those who grieve over them. And we are present at birth - cooing over infants with their new parents (have you seen how lucky we are to carry those little ones at their dedication?). We conduct weddings - having spent hours with the couple discussing their shared life, then saying the words of blessing over their love. We are also present to those who divorce, walking with them through grief and regret. Privately we listen to people who seek counsel and support through all manner of challenges - relational, vocational, personal, spiritual. We are with the sick, the lonely, and the jubilant. We have almost daily contact with the poor. We teach, we intercede, we baptize, we offer Holy Communion. And every Sunday we stand before a gathering of people of all ages who live in a wide range of circumstances and bring all manner of concerns and hopes - and lead them in prayer and speak as we are able of the presence of God in their world.

In other words, we get to relate to people in every stage and age of life and are allowed to be present at all major rites of passage, happy ones and painful ones. No other profession to my knowledge is so privileged. And in it all, of course, we are given opportunity to speak of and to embody the presence, the claims, and the love of God.

There are experts now saying that pastors should stop doing much of this. They say pastoral care should be largely shelved in favor of evangelizing and adding to the membership of the church. Otherwise, it is said, the church in these times cannot thrive and in some quarters will die. Plus, there are other necessities. Pastors should be good administrators, managers of the institution, arbiters of the conflicts within it, shapers of the church's ministry, articulators of the church's vision and future.

There is almost no pastor who is good at all of this, or who can give all of it adequate attention. Most of us, including me, carry sizeable guilt about what goes undone - people insufficiently cared for, leadership inadequately given, conflicts poorly managed, sermons off target, details dropped, priorities botched. One of my professors told me, "Son, in this calling you need to choose your guilt" - but it doesn't always feel like choosing.

If this sounds like complaining, trust me, it is not. I mean it instead as a kind of testimony to what moves Stacey and me most about the pastoral calling: that we stand in such holy places in the full range of human lives, and that in so many moments of tender transition or potential change we may point to the mystery, grace, and calling of God. Since you employ us to this end, I thought you should know.

The old word for us is parson. It comes from a Middle English word that simply means "person." Pastors are representative persons, that is all. We are certainly representative of the manifest inadequacies of us all. We are also blessed with extended time to represent the fact that in every life and circumstance, God's presence can be borne in human presence. Which means, of course, that each of you also may live the parson life.



FBCA2 News & Happenings

Welcome New Member, Chantalle Brock!

Chantalle Yvette Brock is a graduating senior at the University of Michigan and plans to pursue a career in clinical psychology. She is an active member of our campus ministry group and has been attending our church for the last two and a half years.



World Day of Prayer, March 7



Church Women United in Ann Arbor would like to invite you to their World Day of Prayer event on Friday, March 7, 2008. The event will be held at Bethlehem UCC located at 423 S. Fourth Ave. More than 170 countries and regions will celebrate World Day of Prayer on that day. The program was written by the women of Guyana for this service. The theme this year is entitled "God's Wisdom Provides New Understanding." The day will begin with fellowship at 9:30 a.m. The service will begin at 10:00 a.m. in the Schmid Chapel.

2008 March of Dimes March for Babies

As some of you know our family has become very aware of the danger of premature birth ever since Max tried to appear a couple of months early back in 2001, and then Sammy tried the same trick in 2004. However, thanks to the grace of God, the marvel of modern medicine, and the March of Dimes I was able to hold onto both of my little miracles, and deliver full term, healthy baby boys. We are walking for the 5th year in the March of Dimes March for Babies, to raise money for and awareness of the dangers of prematurity. To celebrate the miracle of every moment and milestone that we almost didn't have, and to raise funds for, and awareness of premature birth, its causes, and ways to fight it! It affects 1,305 babies a day in the United States. Those who survive may have lifelong health problems. And premature births are on the rise -- up to 27% since 1981. Please consider joining Team Max & Sam, or supporting us by going to: <http://www.marchforbabies.org/mommydumax>.



Thank you!

Jeanette, Geoff, Max, and Sammy Halliday

Liberty Street Structure (across from church parking lot)

We've recently been informed that the structure across from the church parking lot off of Washington Street no longer offers parking meters for parking during the week (previously used during weekday funerals, etc.). There is still open parking available in the structure after 3:00 p.m. Monday–Friday and all day Saturday for a \$2 fee, and free parking is still available on Sundays and holidays.

2008 Rotating Shelter

The Mission Board will once again host this year's Rotating Shelter beginning the evening of Monday, March 24 running through the evening of Monday, March 31 (please note: there is one added evening making a total of seven full nights this year). The men arrive at 8:00 p.m. each night and leave the next morning at 7:00 a.m. The shelter program provides sleeping arrangements for homeless men throughout the cold months. FBC has participated in this program since its inception many years ago and considers it to be an important part of our mission outreach. At least two volunteers, preferably three, are needed each evening to spend the night as hosts. If you are able and willing to help out this year please sign up at the Information Counter.

World War II Panel of Veterans

John Reed recently brought to our attention an article in the "University of Michigan Retirees Association" newsletter which featured three long-time FBC members speaking on a panel of veterans about their WWII experience. They are as follows:

"**Bill McKeachie** [Lt. Senior Grade, Destroyer Squadron 45] quickly went from a conscientious objector to a radar officer on a destroyer in the South Pacific who was a witness to the Kamikaze attacks near Okinawa.

Mildred MacGregor [RN, 1st Lt. U.S. Army Nursing Corp, 3rd Auxiliary Surgical Group] had her nursing skills used almost immediately by the army and in December '42 she was sent overseas into the Africa/Sicily theater of operations where her devotion to the wounded in her care earned her a Silver Star.

Vernon Jensen [Staff Sgt., U.S. Army-Air Force 463rd Bomb Group, 775th Bomb Squadron, 429th Squadron] was a January '41 high school graduate who had to overcome a color-blindness diagnosis to be allowed to enlist after which he became a member of a B-17 bomber group in North Africa who survived being shot down over Italy in 1944."

Cooks Needed for The Gathering

A few more volunteers are needed to cook meals for our campus ministry program, *The Gathering*. This is a much-appreciated ministry of hospitality for students who are away from home and don't often get a home-cooked meal. Please sign up at the Information Counter where instruction sheets are provided. Also, if you have already cooked a meal for the students please remember to pick up your dishes, pots and pans in the Campus Center kitchen Sunday mornings.

America for Christ Offering 2008

America for Christ gifts support Christ-centered ministries that are transforming lives across the United States and Puerto Rico—from building new homes on the Gulf Coast and resettling refugees violently driven from their homelands to providing training in evangelism and developing resources that help Children in Poverty.

WWW.ABC-AFC.ORG

*The America for Christ Offering 2008 will be received throughout the month of March.
Please give generously.*

Nursery care is available on the 3rd floor from 9:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.

All children are welcome to worship with their families. After the Time as Children portion of the worship service preschoolers may go to the nursery for childcare and their church school class starting at 11:00 a.m. Children in kindergarten - 3rd grade are invited to Children's Worship.

Children and Youth Christian Education

3 and 4 year olds

10:00 - 11:10 Worship w/ family or childcare in nursery
11:00 - 12:30 Church School (room 306)

3rd - 6th grade

10:00 - 11:00 Worship
11:10 - 11:50 Jr. Choir (room 102)
11:50 - 12:30 Church School (room 304)

K - 2nd grade

10:00 - 10:30 Worship
10:30 - 11:00 Children's Worship (room 202A)
11:00 - 12:00 Church School (room 202B)
12:00 - 12:30 Grace Notes Choir (room 202B)

7th grade - high school

10:00 - 11:00 Worship
11:00 - 12:30 Church School (room 107)

Children's Music and Arts Ministry

Jr. Handbells	9:15 - 9:45	Room 306
Tiny Grace Notes (preschool)	10:45 - 11:00	Room 306
Grace Notes (K - 3 rd grade)	12:00 - 12:30	Room 202A, middle level
Jr. Choir (4 th grade and older)	11:10 - 11:50	Room 102, lower level

Adult Christian Education (11:30—12:30)

During Lent there will be two opportunities for learning:

Foundations of Faith (Lounge)

Leader: Rev. Ron Tipton

Christian life and mission are built on a foundation of personal faith. This class will focus on the spiritual foundation for belief and mission. We will explore such topics as the meaning of personal faith; our relationship with God in Christ; the use of the Bible in guiding and sustaining our faith; the place of imagination, symbols, music, and art in personal faith; the role of the Church as the Body of Christ; and such concerns as may arise from our discussions.

Lenten Small Group (Room 108)

Facilitator: Sue Ellen Glover

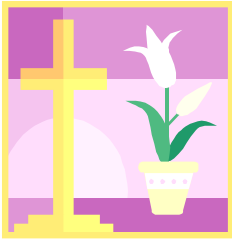
A small group is being formed to meet on Sunday mornings during Lent. Participants will commit to consistent attendance, shared leadership, and preparation each week by reading essays, meditations and sermons (up to 50 pages per week) by writers such as Barbara Brown Taylor, Frederick Buechner, Henri Nouwen, and others. We will use our group time to share the personal meanings these writings had and to share other resources which have impact on our spiritual lives.

Other Adult Learning Opportunities

Wednesday Bible Study (Memorial Lounge, 1:30—2:30 p.m.)

Rev. Paul Simpson Duke leads an in-depth study of the Gospel of John, chapters 12-21. Join us each week for fellowship, learning and great snacks!

Small Groups (ChristCare) - Centered on Bible study, fellowship, mission, prayer and worship, we currently have two groups: one which meets monthly and the other which meets every other week. See Stacey, Paul or Sue Ellen for more information about joining a group.



EASTER LILY ORDER FORM

I / We would like to order an Easter Lily (\$15 each) to be given:

In honor of: _____

In memory of: _____

Given by: _____

Enclosed is my check made out to "First Baptist Church" for \$_____, for a total of _____ plants, which will be displayed on the chancel Easter Sunday, and may be picked up following the service that day. Paid orders must be received by Sunday, March 16 to be included in the Easter bulletin. If you choose to mail your order to the office please write "ATTN: Carey" on the envelope and be sure to write "Easter Lily" on the memo line of your check.

Vespers News

The Vineyard Church held a party on February 3rd for our Vespers guests, which was a big hit. Thanks to Colette and John Szabo and everyone else from the Vineyard who made this happen!



Longtime Vespers friend Paul Lambert enjoying dinner.

The Vespers Ministry appreciates your continued prayers and support. Any donations of warm clothing are welcome during this winter season. The most commonly requested item is socks!

The Interfaith Round Table is pleased to make available tickets for the UMS's *Urban Bush Women*, Friday, March 28th, at 8:00 p.m., at the Power Center. This unique project is setting the performance world abuzz for bringing together two African and African-American dance companies—one all-male and one all-female. Together they weave the cultural and spiritual traditions into life-affirming works that explore untold and under-told histories and stories of people committed to transformation. Tickets: \$22, \$34 and \$38. For information and purchase please call 734-424-1535, email George Lambrides at gbrides@umich.edu or visit www.irtwc.org and click on UMS.

Is an Israeli - Palestinian Peace Agreement Possible *Within a Year*?

The co-directors of the first joint Israeli-Palestinian think tank, IPCRI, are coming to Ann Arbor to share a first-hand assessment of the peace process. While recognizing the challenges that lie ahead, they explain why an agreement is possible, and what we can do to help.



Friday March 7
7:30 pm
First Baptist Church
512 East Huron Street



Dr. Gershon Baskin has a long history of participation on the Israeli side of negotiations with the Palestinians, and has published books and hundreds of articles in the Hebrew, English and Arabic press on a range of topics related to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

Hanna Siniora has been a member of the Palestinian National Council since 1990. He has a long history of participation on the Palestinian side of negotiations with Israel, and is also the founder and publisher of the Jerusalem Times, a weekly English-language Palestinian paper.

You are also invited to join us for an intimate *donor's dinner with the speakers*, Saturday, March 8, 5:30-7:30. Contact Michael Appel 769-5680, appelkraut@tds.net

This event is part of a ten-city US tour sponsored by *Brit Tzedek v'Shalom: The Jewish Alliance for Justice and Peace* and by *IPCRI: The Israel/Palestine Center for Research and Information*. Friday night's talk is co-sponsored by:

- *First Baptist Church of Ann Arbor*
- *The Interfaith Council for Peace and Justice*
- *Ann Arbor Friends Meeting*
- *Episcopal Church of the Incarnation*
- *Interdenominational Advocates for Peace*

**Hear both
Palestinian and
Israeli
perspectives!**

AMERICAN BAPTIST CHURCHES USA

CERTIFICATE OF APPRECIATION 2007

presented to
**FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH
of Ann Arbor**

**Rev. Paul Simpson Duke
Rev. Stacey Simpson Duke**

Congratulations for raising in 2007
\$28,996.42 United Mission and
\$5,522.72 for American Baptist Mission Support

You are recognized for ranking in the Region's top ten:
American Baptist Mission Support—7th
America for Christ Offering—4th
One Great Hour of Sharing Offering—10th
World Mission Offering—9th
Retired Ministers & Missionaries Offering—3rd

You are recognized for ranking in the Region's top ten of
Per Capita Giving By Worship Attendance:
American Baptist Mission Support—5th



Leo S. Thorne
Associate General Secretary
Mission Resource Development



Region Executive Minister

Thank you for your support of
American Baptist mission.

American Baptist Churches USA, Valley Forge, PA 19482-0851



Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
						1
2 Communion Newsletter Deadline	3	4 5:30 Vespers	5 1:30 Bible Study 5:30 The Gathering	6 7:30 Choir Practice	7	8
9 <i>Daylight Saving Time Ends</i> Memorial Service for Zella Willis	10	11 5:30 Vespers	12 1:30 Bible Study 5:30 The Gathering	13 7:30 Choir Practice	14	15
16 12:30 Easter Event 7:00 Second Sunday Newsletter Deadline	17 <i>Happy St. Patrick's Day!!</i> 7:00 Board of Evangelism	18 5:30 Vespers 7:00 Board of Trustees	19 1:30 Bible Study 5:30 The Gathering 7:30 Executive Council	20 7:30 Maundy Thursday Service	21 8:00 Good Friday Service	22
23 <i>Happy Easter!!</i>	24	25 5:30 Vespers 5:30 Bd. of Christian Ed.	26 1:30 Bible Study 5:30 The Gathering	27 7:30 Choir Practice	28	29
	<i>(Rotating Shelter in the Fellowship Hall: Monday, March 24 - Monday, March 31, 8 p.m. - 7 a.m.)</i>					
30 11:30 Congregational Meeting Newsletter Deadline	31					



Sue Ellen Glover	2	Sarah Drake	14	Iris Martin	22
Mabel Japinga	8	Glen Modell	15	Calvin Floyd	27
Vern Jensen	8	Arthur Francis	16	Andrew Redinger	28
J.T. Knight	9	Mary Gregg	16	Donna Tipton	30
Jeanette Halliday	12	Cameron Crowe	16	Nancy Rhodes	30
George Moyer	14	Kristen Beene	20	John MacGregor	30

First Baptist Church
512 East Huron Street
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office@fbca2.org

The Reverends Paul & Stacey Simpson Duke, Co-Pastors



Next Newsletter
Deadline:
Sunday, March 2, 2008



EASTER EVENT

Sunday, March 16 • 12:30 - 2:30 p.m.

***Lunch, Easter Crafts,
the Easter story,
and an Egg Hunt***

