



# FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH

Ann Arbor, Michigan

March 5, 2008

## Pastors' Reflections

by Stacey Simpson Duke

March 20<sup>th</sup> marks the 5<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the war in Iraq. It is shocking to me to consider that for as long as my sons have been alive (and longer), our country has been at war. But what is more shocking (and appalling, frankly), is that it hasn't remotely seemed like it.

How is it that our country has been engaged in war every day for five years, and those of us who aren't directly connected to people stationed there can just move blithely forward in our own lives? I am ashamed that I live in such happy ignorance of other people's daily pain, and that in my country we have the freedom to think of the war only as a political issue. We hear about it plenty in terms of how much of an election issue it will be, and whether or not the surge has been effective, and who has what plan for how to resolve the situation. But other than these largely political issues, the war seems to have very little impact on our actual lives, unless we happen to know someone fighting in it.

On the other side of the world, there is a woman just like me, trying to raise young children. Only when she goes to bed each night, she has to worry about whether a bomb is going to tear through her house, or whether gunmen will ambush her family on their way home from a religious ceremony, or whether the bus they take to run errands each week will be blown up. She has already had to comfort her little children more times than she can count. She tried for years now to answer their unanswerable questions of "Why?" and "How long?" Multiply her family by the thousands, or by the hundreds of thousands. How many men, women, and children live every day in fear we can scarcely fathom?

I don't want to think about it. That's part of the problem.

Meanwhile, the young men and women who serve our country in battle have no choice but to think about it, nor do their families. They, too, live with a daily sadness and fear that I can only imagine. Almost 4000 service members have been killed since this war began, each one with a family still mourning while the rest of the nation mostly acts like life is normal. That number - 4000 - is staggering, but it is dwarfed by the truly staggering reports of the tens of thousands of Iraqi civilian casualties. *Civilians*. Can you imagine the outcry in our nation and in our world if that kind of civilian loss of life were happening on our soil?

Whatever our politics, as Christians we are always called to be peacemakers and witnesses to peace. What does that mean in such a situation as we are in now?

At the very least it means we don't forget. We don't pretend there aren't people fighting every day on our behalf. We pray for them. We pray for the Iraqis. We pray for our country's leaders and our world leaders. We pray for peace, and we don't ever forget those who don't have it, or even the hope of it.

On Saturday, March 15<sup>th</sup>, I am going to join with other people of faith and conscience in offering such prayers, and I invite you to come as well. The Interfaith Council for Peace and Justice (ICPJ) will be holding an Interfaith Prayer Service for Peace in Iraq at 2:30 at St. Mary's Student Parish. You can read more about it and other activities in observance of the 5<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the war at the ICPJ website ([www.icpj.net](http://www.icpj.net)). I would love to see you there.

We follow One who was intimately acquainted with suffering and death, and who also beckoned us towards compassion and peace. May we be faithful in that calling, and mindful of those with whom he always identifies - the suffering, the broken, the demoralized, the fearful, the hopeless, and the children. When we pray for them, we stand with them, and we stand with Him.

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 - 3<sup>rd</sup> 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)

### 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)

### 3rd - 6th grade

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

### 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 <sup>rd</sup> grade)	12:00 - 12:30	Room 202A, middle level
Jr. Choir (4 <sup>th</sup> 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**

This small group is meeting during Lent. Participants 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 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! (Please note: David Bucholtz will teach class today, Wednesday, March 5.)

**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.



# FBCA2 News & Happenings

## **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. Thank you to all who have signed up thus far!

## **2008 Flower Calendar**

There are still a wide choice of dates available on the 2008 Flower Calendar which is posted on the downstairs bulletin board. The arrangements are from Tom Thompson's Florist and cost \$30. The dedication appears in the bulletin the week you host them. You are welcome to do whatever you wish with the arrangement following the service.

## **MacGregor-Stitt Circle**

The next meeting of the MacGregor-Stitt Circle will be Thursday, March 27 at 1:00 p.m. at the home of Maria Pierantozzi. The program is "Inspirational Irish Jokes and Songs of Music." Please wear the color green!

## **Communion Servers and Greeters**

If you are interested in greeting folks Sunday mornings before Worship and/or serving communion some future Sunday, please visit the Information Counter where sign-up sheets reside. Filling both of these roles is an on-going need and the Board of Worship very much appreciates everyone who participates.

## **One More Volunteer Cook Needed**

One more volunteer is needed to cook a meal on April 9 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.

## **Thank You Letter from Friendship House**

Linnea A. Berg, Executive Director of Friendship House, recently sent a thank you letter in response to the generous donations made at the spaghetti dinner which took place in the Fellowship Hall Sunday, February 17. A total of \$525 was collected as well as ten packages of baby diapers and one package of adult diapers, many of which will be distributed to women who will attend a community baby shower on April 11. The following is an excerpt, however the entire letter is posted on the downstairs bulletin board:

"Although the weather was particularly inhospitable, you gave Friendship House the warmest welcome last Sunday. ... I was personally touched that your doors were deliberately opened to some folks from the streets who could use a hot meal. Bravo to you for what you are doing to help your less fortunate neighbors."

## ***Save the Date - Second Sunday, March 16<sup>th</sup>***

Once again our March "Second Sunday" presentation will actually take place on the third Sunday. The program will be the performance of a Passion play entitled "Two Faces in the Shadows." The drama deals with an imagined encounter in the Upper Room late on the first Good Friday between the two disciples, Peter and Judas, who, each for his own reasons, had betrayed their Master less than twenty-four hours before.

The two-person cast is headed by our friend and former interim pastor, Larry Greenfield playing the part of Judas (no comments, please). Larry and his friend William Greene have been staging the play, which Larry describes as "powerful," before Chicago church audiences to much acclaim, and they are eager and excited to bring it to Ann Arbor.

An added attraction for us is that the principal author of the play, written in the early 1990's, is none other than our own Paul Duke, who did not learn of this proposal until it was too late and is still recovering from his surprise. For those who might be interested, copies of the play are still available at Amazon.com.

The presentation will be in the sanctuary and will begin at 7:00 p.m. There will be a brief time of fellowship and refreshment at the conclusion so that we can all congratulate the cast and author.

~ Arthur Francis



### ***Easter Oddities***

As you know, Easter is always the first Sunday after the first full moon after the Spring Equinox (which is March 20). Easter this year is Sunday March 23, 2008.

This dating of Easter is based on the lunar calendar that Hebrew people used to identify Passover, which is why it moves around on our Roman calendar.

Here are some interesting oddities:

Based on the above, Easter can actually be one day earlier (March 22) but that is pretty rare.

This year is the earliest Easter any of us will ever see the rest of our lives! And only the most elderly of our population have ever seen it this early (95 years old or above!). And none of us have ever, or will ever, see it a day earlier! Here are the facts:

The next time Easter will be this early (March 23) will be the year 2228 (220 years from now). The last time it was this early was 1913 (so if you're 95 or older, you are the only ones that were around for that!).

The next time it will be a day earlier, March 22, will be in the year 2285 (277 years from now). The last time it was on March 22 was 1818. So, no one alive today has or will ever see it any earlier than this year!



# 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.

Dear Friends,

In the past, Washtenaw County has had the highest recidivism rate in the state of Michigan. The most recent survey found that 76% of those coming from prison back to our county end up returning to prison within two years. It's this kind of challenge that gave rise to The Michigan Prisoner ReEntry Initiative (MPRI). The MPRI program has now been up and running in Washtenaw County for just over a year. We've been able to get the major social service and governmental agencies in our area to come together and work toward helping people make a successful transition, resulting in a significant impact in the lives of those turning from prison to our community.

MPRI successes include:

- \* Creating a network of landlords willing to rent to our clients
- \* Creating a transitional employment program so those coming out of prison can have immediate work while they begin to readjust
- \* An ever increasing pool of employers willing to hire someone who has been in prison
- \* Receiving a major grant for a pilot project to show the difference it can make when those who are coming out of prison with a serious mental illnesses are provided special supportive housing
- \* A weekly program where over 85% of our clients have met w/ local law enforcement for lunch & support

The success of the MPRI program is a result of its structure as a government/community collaborative. This collaboration is reflected in our Steering Team, whose membership represents a wide range of the public and private agencies that must to work together for returning citizens to be successful. These include: representatives from the prosecutor's office, the public defender's office, local law enforcement, officials from the MDOC, Michigan Works!, and Community Mental Health. It also includes representatives from a variety of citizen groups like Catholic Social Services, local congregations, and the Domestic Violence Project. At every level, our success depends on this kind of private-public partnership to address the wide variety of challenges faced by those returning from prison back to our community.

The MPRI program can have a major impact on the quality of life in our county. The success of our neediest citizens and their families ensures the safety of our community. But the challenges we face are immense. **We need your help.** On Thursday, March 6<sup>th</sup> from 6:30 - 9:30 p.m. at Christian Love Fellowship Ministries International, 1601 Stamford Ypsilanti, 48198, we are having a MPRI Faith Based and Community Organizations Summit. We will present what is currently happening with the Washtenaw County MPRI Program and where and how congregations and community organizations can be of help. In the past, people have repeatedly said they are most moved when they hear directly from our clients. As a result, our speakers will include a number of MPRI clients talking about what has been most helpful to them in their transition into the community, and where they are still facing the biggest challenges.

We hope that you, or some representatives from your congregation or community organization, will join us this Thursday evening, March 6th. Please RSVP by calling Caitlin Graziano at (734) 929-6509 or at [Caitlin.mpri@gmail.com](mailto:Caitlin.mpri@gmail.com) by Wednesday, March 5th (*which is today*).

We look forward to hearing from you,

The Rev. Joseph H. Summers, Community Co-Chair, Washtenaw County MPRI Program



## Zella C. Willis, Ann Arbor, MI

Age, 93, died at Arbor Hospice from complications of pneumonia on February 17, 2008. She was born on January 30, 1915, in Toronto, Canada, the daughter of Rev. Harry R. and Carrie (Knight) Nobles. Rev. Nobles was for 25 years the senior pastor of the Temple Baptist Church in Windsor, Canada. Zella had three sisters who predeceased her. In 1938 she married Edgar E. Willis, now a Professor Emeritus of Communication at the University of Michigan, who survives her. In 2007 they celebrated their 69th wedding anniversary. She is also survived by two sons, Richard of Alpena, MI, Franklin of Oklahoma City, and a daughter, Andrea (Weaver) of Perrysburg, OH, eight grandchildren and 19 great-grandchildren. Zella was a graduate of Detroit's Grace Hospital Nursing School and before her marriage, served for a year as a registered nurse at the Pontiac Osteopathic Hospital. In addition to her skills as a nurse, Zella was an exceptionally fast and accurate typist. She was of immeasurable help to her husband in his professional career. She typed his Ph.D. dissertation, all of his books, and the scholarly articles he wrote as a university professor. She was a member of the First Baptist Church of Ann Arbor. For many years, she was a leader in the Christian Education program, focusing her efforts on teaching a Sunday school class of middle-school children. In addition to her teaching, she also arranged additional activities and outings which reflected her ability to initiate projects certain to attract and excite youngsters. She was also active in other community affairs. She was the leader of a Girl Scout troop in which her daughter participated, and for 13 years worked once a week in the library of the Ypsilanti Psychiatric Hospital, a service that ended only when the state closed it down. In disposition she was extremely charitable, always putting others' needs before her own. She possessed a whimsical sense of humor that often provoked laughter from her family and friends. An example was her comment that while her husband was earning his Ph.D., she was earning her P.H.T. - which stood for "Pushing Hubby Through." Even when she was very ill, she often sent nurses, aides, and any visitors who happened to be present into gales of laughter with her unexpected and sometimes quirky responses to the events of the moment. On Sunday, March 9 at 3:00 p.m., a memorial service celebrating her life will be held at the First Baptist Church, 512 E. Huron St. in Ann Arbor with the Reverends Paul Simpson Duke and Stacey Simpson Duke, officiating. In lieu of flowers it is requested that contributions in her honor be made to the Flower Fund of the First Baptist Church of Ann Arbor. Arrangements entrusted to the Robison-Bahnmler Funeral Home in Saline.



## America for Christ Offering 2008

Affluent and influential as it is, the United States remains a mission field, as challenging and in need as almost any across the globe. Indeed, on our very doorsteps lie just the sort of people whom Christ comforted, healed, and empowered. And if we assume the responsibility to be ambassadors for Christ, we will eagerly move out into the world — our towns, our cities, our neighborhoods— sharing and caring in his name.

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



# EASTER EVENT

MARCH 16

12:30 - 2:30

Lunch followed by crafts,  
the Easter story and an egg hunt



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734-663-9376  
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*The Reverends Paul & Stacey Simpson Duke, Co-Pastors*



Next Newsletter &  
April Calendar  
Deadline:  
*Sunday, March 16, 2008*

# Holy Week

***Easter Event: Sunday, March 16, 12:30 - 2:30 p.m.***

***Second Sunday: March 16, 7:00 p.m. "Two Faces in the Shadows" play  
in the First Baptist Sanctuary***

***Maundy Thursday Service: March 20, 7:30 p.m.  
at Northside Community Church***

***Community Good Friday Service: March 21 at 12:00, 12:30 & 1:00 p.m.  
at First United Methodist Church next door  
(The FBC Choir and Organist, Joel Hastings will perform at the 1:00 service)***

***Tenebrae Service: March 21, 8:00 p.m. in the First Baptist Sanctuary  
(childcare provided)***

***Easter Sunday: March 23, 10:00 a.m. in the First Baptist Sanctuary***