



# FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH

Ann Arbor, Michigan

March 19, 2008

## Pastors' Reflections

by Paul Simpson Duke

Our church may now be undergoing its most promising moment in years. In recent months, various initiatives have been taken and new commitments made, with outreach as their common theme. We've decided to become the home of a great co-op preschool for the community. We've expanded our outreach to the homeless. A new series of "Second Sunday" events draw people from outside our congregation into stimulating fellowship with us. Our Morikawa Lectures Committee is planning a conference on faith and the Palestinian/Israeli conflict, promising constructive interaction with many people. We are even about to begin a congregational discussion to explore the possibilities of changing our name for the sake of reaching more people.

The effectiveness of any of these initiatives in fulfilling the church's mission and experiencing faithful growth cannot be predicted or assured. But I am impressed by the fact that such new outreaching initiatives have emerged and that they have appeared among us almost simultaneously. Combine them with our existing programs of mission and ministry, and you get a clear sense of a fresh and living zeal among us to make more difference in the lives of more people for the gospel's sake. With new energy and commitment, this church is doing more to reach out.

There is one new initiative that I haven't even mentioned yet, one that I believe shows tremendous promise for the life and outreaching love of this church. Most of you know of it, and many of you are excited about it. I am referring to the proposal before us now to call a Minister of Youth. Fresh talk about this possibility emerged during the "visioning" process through which our Executive Council led us last year.

Here is the reality as many of us see it. Our staff and volunteers have done an excellent job in nurturing the young people of our church in recent years. What we have been able to offer these youth, however, has been necessarily limited by the time-availability and funding for these leaders. Can we - should we - be offering more to the youth of this congregation and of the community at large? We believe that we can and should, and that a great deal may depend upon it.

We are asking for a dedicated half-time position in which someone with youth ministry experience and training can devote significant energies and time to ministry with adolescents (and, by extension, with their families). The person would be committed not only to developing an expanded range of programming for our young people, but to give energy and time to reaching teenagers without a present church relationship. Most importantly, this person would function in a pastoral way for the youth - building strong personal relationships with them, offering spiritual guidance, counsel, and friendship. (He/she would function not as youth *director* but as youth *minister*.) The hoped-for results would be young people with deeper faith, stronger commitments to Christ, and enduring connections with the church - and that more young people would find a home in our church, new life in Christian faith, and great, nurturing friendships among us.

For now, such a ministry position cannot be funded through our regular budget. We are asking for pledges above and beyond present giving in order to fund this position for the first three years. I am pleased to announce that the first full year has already been pledged by one individual. We need for many others to offer active support, financial and otherwise, to this endeavor.

Meanwhile, the church needs to approve it. An enthusiastic church-wide discussion has already occurred. Final discussion and vote are scheduled for Sunday, March 30, during second hour. I hope this worthy dream will receive warm and full support. It could be a crucial investment in the future.

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**

***Please note:*** No church school classes or choirs on Easter Sunday, March 23. Childcare will be offered during worship for children in 1st grade and younger.

### 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)**

No classes on Sunday, March 23, Easter

### **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.

# **Holy Week**

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

***Community Good Friday Service: March 21 at 12:00, 12:30 & 1:00 p.m. at First United Methodist  
(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***



# FBCA2 News & Happenings

## **2008 Annual Program Meeting**

The congregation's Annual Program Meeting will be held Sunday, April 27 at 12:30 p.m. in the Fellowship Hall. We will gather together for a potluck lunch followed by the meeting. Childcare will be provided for the meeting. The Board of Care and Community will need help with set-up and clean-up. And we are planning to have the reports available the Sunday before the meeting (April 20), therefore Carey would greatly appreciate receiving (electronic) reports by Wednesday, April 9th.

## **2008 Directory Proofing**

The new edition of the church directory will be available Sunday, April 13. If you will be at church, please review your information and make corrections at the table near the Information Counter the next couple of Sundays. If you are unable to attend church in the next couple of weeks, but would like to update or have your contact information added to the directory, please e-mail the office ([office@fbca2.org](mailto:office@fbca2.org)) or call at 663-9376. Thank you!

## **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!

## **Author Coming to Men's Book Club**

On Tuesday, April 22 at 7:00 p.m. the FBC men's book club will discuss *When Asia Was the World* by Stewart Gordon, an Ann Arbor resident. The author will be attending the discussion and adding to the usual lively discourse. The meeting will meet at 1414 Iroquois Pl. Please contact Scott Diels ([sdiels@aol.com](mailto:sdiels@aol.com), 747-8131) for more information or for directions.

## **FBC Ladies Book Club**

The FBC Ladies Book Club will meet at long last on Tuesday, April 15th to discuss *Flannery O'Connor's Complete Stories*. We will be meeting at Tammy Canell's house at 7:00 p.m. Please contact Janice Stumpf at 663-4871 or [jlstumpf@umich.edu](mailto:jlstumpf@umich.edu) for more information.

## **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.

## Holy Week and Easter: The Beginning of a New Church Year

By Wilda K. W. Morris (condensed by Sue Ellen Glover)

(The Rev. Wilda K.W. Morris, Ph.D., is editor of "The Children's Corner," a publication by National Ministries, ABC-USA).

If we celebrate Holy Week with a series of special services, we are participating in a tradition that is about 1,680 years old! Yet these celebrations represent new life given to us by Jesus through his death and resurrection. For more than two centuries after the death of Jesus, the church was subjected to periodic persecution. After the emperor Constantine legalized Christianity in the fourth century, shrines and churches were built to mark sites associated with Jesus' ministry. Before this time, celebration of the Crucifixion and Resurrection was carried out in one Easter service. Aware that there were many pilgrims coming to Jerusalem, Cyril, the bishop of Jerusalem, initiated the first expanded celebration of Holy Week. Pilgrims took this practice back to their home communities.

Younger children think episodically, but by age seven or eight most children can begin to absorb the sequence of events during Holy Week. These events include Palm Sunday (Jesus' entry into Jerusalem), Maundy Thursday (when Jesus ate his last supper with his disciples), Good Friday (when Jesus was crucified), Saturday (when Jesus was in the tomb), and Sunday (when Jesus rose from the dead). Children — especially those who have been baptized—should be encouraged to attend Holy Week services.

**PALM SUNDAY:** Children can catch some of the spirit of celebration that accompanied Jesus' entry into Jerusalem by marching into the sanctuary waving palms and distributing them to the congregation. Indeed, the entire congregation may choose to process to the church from another location—a practice that was common in the Middle Ages. An Italian custom is for worshipers to give their palms to those with whom they have quarreled, as a sign of reconciliation.

**MAUNDY THURSDAY:** Our Maundy Thursday services recall Jesus' Last Supper with his disciples, which was a Passover celebration (see Luke 22:1-14). Passover is a commemoration of God's act of liberating the Israelites from slavery in Egypt (Exodus 2:12-15:21).

God heard the Israelites' cries and sent Moses to lead them to freedom. But Pharaoh would not free them, so God sent a series of plagues against Egypt. The tenth and last plague was the death of firstborn sons. Each Israelite family was instructed to kill a lamb and smear some of its blood on the doorposts and lintel of their home, and thus their firstborn would be spared. They were to roast the lamb, bake bread (without taking time to leaven it), and be dressed and ready to escape. Finally Pharaoh said the Israelites could go. As they headed for the border, though, Pharaoh sent his army after them. Miraculously, the Israelites crossed the sea on dry ground, but the pursuing soldiers were drowned. Even today the Jewish people celebrate this deliverance—this new start for their people—by observing the Passover, or *Pesach* (Exodus 12:1-13:16). The Gospel of John interprets the crucified Jesus as the Passover lamb (John 1:29, 36), as does Paul ("Our paschal lamb, Christ, has been sacrificed," - 1 Corinthians 5:7, *NRSV*). Since the fourth century, many churches have observed Maundy Thursday with a simple meal or Jewish-style seder (Passover meal) and a Communion service. Some also include foot washing in their observance (see John 13). The term Maundy comes from the Latin *mandatum*, which refers to the new commandment (*novum mandatum*) given by Jesus during the Last Supper ("I give you a new commandment, that you love one another," John 13:34, *NRSV*). Children will learn most from participating in a seder or from observing a dramatization of the Last Supper. Children can understand Jesus celebrating a traditional feast with his disciples. By second or third grade, they can also identify with Jesus' pain in being betrayed by a friend and can begin to explore the meaning of the new commandment.

**GOOD FRIDAY:** Traditionally, on Good Friday, the Communion table is stripped of decoration—a reminder that Jesus was stripped of his clothing. The service is generally solemn. Candles are extinguished until the sanctuary is as dark as safety allows. These symbolic practices will often touch the heart of even a child who doesn't fully understand the meaning of Holy Week. Scripture is central to the service, which generally includes passages from Isaiah concerning the Suffering Servant.

**EASTER:** The joyfulness of Easter services will have a strong impact on children, especially those who have attended Good Friday services. We celebrate the resurrection of Jesus and his triumph over death and sin, singing joyous hymns in a sanctuary decorated with flowers. Children will hear the Bible stories, feel the joy, revel in the beauty of the sanctuary, and say with the congregation, "Christ is risen! Alleluia!" Many congregations hold sunrise services, often outdoors where one can watch the sun brighten the sky. Because of the unusual time and location, sunrise services help children sense the special importance of Easter. A breakfast at the church may add to the celebration.

It is crucial that we take children into account while planning Holy Week and Easter observances. Carolyn Brown suggests that if we do not let children participate in Maundy Thursday or Good Friday observances, and thus protect them from "the darkness of the Passion," we diminish their experience of Easter joy. As children grow, it is important for us to share with them the symbolic significance of Easter eggs and other symbols used in the celebration.



# Easter Event 2008



## ***Congregational Discussion: Sunday, March 30 at 5:00 p.m.***

Dear FBC Family,

The Executive Council and I have come to believe that it is time for our church family to consider a topic that has been floating around for at least 10 years and came up again last spring as we talked about ways to be more inviting. I told you then that we would discuss it, and the EC believes that it is time now. The topic is whether another name for our congregation will help us reach those who have no spiritual home. For me, it's all about outreach! I believe that the real issue in all we do is that we are called to spread the Good News. Is our name a stumbling block to those who might otherwise find a home here? Does simply having "Baptist" on the sign cause people not to visit? Certainly, we ourselves are the best witnesses for our congregation, and we all can find ways to let people know about us. On the other hand, we can't meet everyone who moves to town or "Googles" Ann Arbor churches. A lot of people are looking for an open and supportive place to find spiritual direction and for a community. Our congregation offers those things — does our name say so?

The EC has set March 30 as the date for our first congregational conversation about this issue. (Yes, it's the same day, though not at the same time, as the vote on the Youth Minister proposal. That is partly because that day works the best and partly because both are about new ways to reach out to the community in Christian witness. Kind of a theme, don't you think!) Please know that this is about the words in our name, not about being Baptists or about being connected to ABC-USA. Much of our identity and history are wrapped up in our name, so such a discussion may not be easy. We also know that our congregation is strong and loving, that we can be open and respectful as we share our thoughts and feelings and make decisions. As a start, whether your reaction to this has been either "No way, never" or "I'll buy the new sign with the new name," think about the opposite view. Do you know someone who might not agree with you about this? Seek to understand that person's view.

Right now, I am asking you to do a few things. First, I ask you to open your mind and heart to God's leading in this matter and to other ways we can share the Gospel with people who live here or who may be moving here. Second, I am asking you to do what the Executive Council did in January. I gave them the assignment of asking three people who haven't attended here what the word "Baptist" evokes. Of the people who responded, there were a number who had no immediate reaction. The rest of the responses were of the "rigid, conservative, Bible thumping, sexist, anti-intellectual" variety. I don't feel that really describes us-or what it really means to be Baptist, either. I challenge you to take on the same assignment as we prepare for this discussion. Of course a change of name isn't magic. No matter what's on the sign, we must have strong worship and mission and ministries to be an authentic, viable congregation.

The details: We will begin at 5 p.m. Anyone is welcome to speak, though there will be a time limit per person. If you can't come or hate speaking in front of a group, I will read any written statements. Then we will adjourn for dinner and conversation around the tables. (I'm making soups, please bring a salad, bread or dessert.) Finally, we'll report out on those conversations. This is not a meeting for voting but for listening and talking together. We will be done and cleaned up by 8 p.m. as our shelter guests start arriving by then. Childcare will be offered though we hope the youth will participate in the discussion.

Grace and peace,

*Mary Davis*

Mary Davis, Moderator



# April 2008

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
		1 5:30 Vespers	2 1:30 Bible Study 5:30 The Gathering	3 6:15 Handbell Practice 7:30 Choir Practice	4	5
6 Communion	7	8 5:30 Vespers 7:00 Board of Worship	9 1:30 Bible Study 5:30 The Gathering	10 6:15 Handbell Practice 7:30 Choir Practice	11	12
13 Newsletter Deadline	14	15 1:00 Beecher-Brewer 5:30 Vespers 7:00 Board of Trustees 7:00 Ladies	16 1:30 Bible Study	17 12:00 MacGregor-Stitt 6:15 Handbell Practice 7:30 Choir Practice	18	19
20	21	22 9:30 ABWM Bd. 5:30 Vespers 7:00 Men's Book Club	23 1:30 Bible Study	24 6:15 Handbell Practice 7:30 Choir Practice	25	26
27 12:30 Annual Business Meeting Newsletter Deadline	28	29 5:30 Vespers	30 1:30 Bible Study			



## Happy Birthday!!



Bonnie Jensen	4	Ethan Wright	9	Kate Edwards	16
Ivy Marzano	4	Robert MacGregor	9	Eva Kelly	17
Jim Hause	5	Andrew Lee	9	Brandy Kirchner	17
Jack Stearns	6	Ola Jeanne McCullough	12	Tom Barron	17
Joan Blunt	9	Lev Kelly	14	Jim Stearns	18
Dee Drake	9	Carol Rees	15	John Syler	25
		Jim Suits	15		

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

Next  
Newsletter  
Deadline:  
*Sunday, March 30, 2008*



## **America for Christ Offering 2008**

**“The Children in Poverty initiative is made possible by generous support of the America for Christ Offering. Support the 2008 offering with a joyful heart—and help to meet the needs of mission on our doorstep with the love of Christ that urges all of us on.”**

**“For the love of Christ urges us on...” 2 CORINTHIANS 5:14-15**

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