



FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH

Ann Arbor, Michigan

April 2, 2008

Pastors' Reflections

by Stacey Simpson Duke

As many of you know, my 24 year-old cousin Blake died three days before Easter, in an explosion on my aunt and uncle's farm. He had been helping my uncle clear some junk out of the old chicken house - junk his father (my first cousin, who died three years ago) had accumulated and stored there over the course of a few decades. Blake loved to take things apart, to see how they worked. In clearing out the junk over these last three years, he would often find something that intrigued him, and he would take it outside to disassemble it. On this particular day, whatever it was he found and tried to take apart - apparently some kind of explosive military device that no one knew was there - exploded, killing him instantly. It was horrifying news to get, and I set out on Easter afternoon with the boys, to attend the funeral in North Carolina.

It was difficult to pull up to my aunt and uncle's house, knowing that Blake would not be coming out to greet me. It was one of the things he did often and best - greeting people, reaching out to people, making people feel special. He was the Conrad Juchartz of the little Methodist Church there - always making a special effort to welcome every single person, and with enthusiasm. The church considered him their goodwill ambassador, and some joked at his funeral that Jesus would let St. Peter retire now and have Blake take over at the pearly gates.

Blake didn't smile for the first two years of his life, which was the first indication that there was something not quite right about him. It's hard to believe now that there was ever a time he didn't smile, because as he grew up I never knew him not to be happy and smiling. It turned out to be true that there was something not quite "right" about him - some would say that it was he kept the mind of a child, even as an adult. The truth is, though, that he was gifted with the heart of a child, as well - and that made him different. Special. Extraordinary. To me, it actually seemed like the heart of God was beating in him. He was as sweet and kind a person as I have ever known, and absolutely without guile or malice. His grandmother, my aunt, said that in his entire life she never heard Blake say anything bad about anybody. He loved people with an unstudied affection and inquisitiveness.

Though his death is devastating, I am left in awe by his life. His witness makes me want to be a better person. I want to be the kind of person who chooses goodness over meanness, and gentleness over spite, and friendship and love over all.

Recently, when my father was telling his doctor the story of Blake's life and death, the doctor responded by saying, "Thank you for telling me about him. His life was a sermon." It's true, it was. As one of the speakers at Blake's funeral noted, Blake's life was like a letter written from God to those of us who knew him, about how to receive and love others with the Spirit of Jesus.

But isn't every life a sermon of some sort? Our lives are saying something every day - something about us, but also something about our God. Are our lives saying something true and good about the love of Christ and the worth of every person? Do our lives preach the good news of grace, and forgiveness, and hope? What sermon is your life delivering, every day? What sermon is your life delivering today?

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

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)

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 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)

New Adult classes, beginning Sunday, April 6:

Religion and Peacemaking in the Middle East (Lounge) Ron Gregg and Sarah Heidt, facilitators
This series of presentations by local Arabs, Jews and Christians will examine the possibilities for a peaceful outcome of the Israeli/Palestinian conflict from a variety of perspectives, especially the religious. A time for questions and discussion will follow each presentation.

APRIL 6: The Psychology of the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict

With polls showing that a solid majority of Israelis and Palestinians support a two-state solution, why is peace so difficult to achieve? Professor Aaron Ahuvia argues that basic human psychology, and a well-founded lack of trust on both sides, have been significant contributing factors to the continuation of the conflict. This talk provides an accessible explanation of current psychological research, shows how this causes biases in the way both sides look at the other, and suggests practical ways of getting past these obstacles to achieve a lasting peace.

Aaron Ahuvia is a Professor of Marketing at the University of Michigan-Dearborn and teaches Social Marketing at the University of Michigan Ross School of Business. Aaron does research, teaches and consults on consumer psychology and related topics for governments, non-profits, universities and corporations around the world. He is a former Area Editor of the *Journal of Economic Psychology*, and has been quoted in *Time*, *The New York Times*, *The Wall Street Journal*, major publications in Europe and Japan, has been heard on National Public Radio talk shows, and has even appeared on television's *Oprah Winfrey Show*. Aaron serves on the executive committee of *Brit Tzedek v' Shalom: The Jewish Alliance for Justice and Peace*. Brit Tzedek is pro-Israel and pro-Peace and has quickly become America's largest Jewish peace group, with over 38,000 supporters in over 40 chapters nationwide.

Earth Crammed With Heaven (Room 108) Ron Tipton, leader
Using a book by Elizabeth Dreyer, a laywoman who is concerned about a "spirituality of everyday life," we will follow a small group format. Participants will commit to consistent attendance and preparation each week (reading portions of the book), with group time spent in sharing and growing through spiritual disciplines. The book will be available in class.



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. We will elect officers and board members for the coming year and be updated on activities and work of various groups within the church. We will also act on a constitutional proposal from the Board of Evangelism to change its name to the Board of Outreach. The members of the Board believe that this more inclusive term better reflects the work of the board. The Board of Care and Community will need help with set-up and clean-up. Childcare will be provided for the meeting.

Also, we are planning to have the reports available the Sunday before the meeting (April 20), therefore Carey would greatly appreciate receiving reports (via e-mail) *by Wednesday, April 9th*. Thank you!

2008 Directory Proofing

The new edition of the church directory will be available Sunday, April 13. If you are able to be at church this Sunday, April 6 (the 3rd Sunday the proof has been made available), please review your information at the tables near the Information Counter. You are welcome to make corrections or to write "OK" if the information is correct. Please be sure to fill in missing birthdays, e-mail addresses, work numbers, and cell phone numbers if you'd like them included. *It has been updated with corrections and additions so you may want to visit one last time to make sure the info is accurate.* There are also blank pages if you'd like your contact information added. If you are unable to attend church, but would like to update or have your contact information added, please e-mail the office (office@fbca2.org) or call 663-9376. Thank you!

MacGregor-Stitt Circle

The next meeting of the MacGregor-Stitt Circle will take place Thursday, April 17 at 1:00 p.m. at the home of Bonnie Bates. The program will be "Story Telling" by Lyn Davidge.

Summer Sextons Needed

The church is in search of a couple students to work and live here at the Campus Center this summer (and possibly into the fall). If you are aware of a hard-working student who is in need of housing this summer, please have them e-mail Carey at office@fbca2.org. Thank you!

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, 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 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.

Thoughts from the March 30th Congregational Meetings

In keeping with the Gospel lesson for the day, our congregation gathered not once but twice to consider ways to follow the teachings of John 20:21 in which Christ said to his disciples, "As I was sent, so I send you." During second hour we discussed and overwhelmingly approved the proposal to hire a half time Youth Minister with a congregational commitment for a minimum of three years. This minister will not only work with our youth but will also lead our outreach to the youth of our community. (Note that I said "lead," not "do"; such a ministry will require a substantial commitment of prayer, time, and dollars by our church family.)

Later in the day we met to begin to consider whether or not having First Baptist Church as our name accurately identifies us and draws people or keeps people who might find a home here from coming. That issue is far from decided. To me, these events and the ministry and outreach which will arise from them are a sign that we are moving forward as a congregation. We are taking some risks; we are looking outside ourselves to reach out to those in our community who need a community in which they can worship, or seek, or doubt, or all three. I appreciate your participation in these aspects of our FBC family life. I am glad that we can deal with complex and sometimes difficult issues with care and respect.

A summary of the ideas expressed at the meeting regarding our name will be available Sunday, April 6 at the Information Counter or by mail from me (email or regular).

Mary Davis,
Moderator



2008 Rotating Shelter Report

The 2008 FBC Rotating Shelter ended Sunday night, March 30, and was a success thanks to our great volunteers: Elli Barron, Annie Barron, Maryann Bowen, Bob Kidd, Annabel Erskine, Ron Gregg, Greg Cartee, David Bowen, Graham Miles, Jen Niece Teh, Jackie Snyder, Bryan Arias, Mary Davis, Scott Diels, and Beverly Inbody. A special thank you to Bill and Ginny McKeachie and Jerry and Carol Rees who were ready to fill in for anyone unable to spend the night. Our guests were a nice group of men and the entire week went well. It was a good experience for everyone.



NAMI Honors Carol Rees

FBC church member, Carol Rees's 80th birthday and retirement as newsletter editor of NAMI's Washtenaw County Chapter will be celebrated Monday, April 14 at 7:30 p.m. at St. Clare's Episcopal Church/ Temple Beth Emeth, 2029 Packard. The event is free and open to the public; light refreshments will be served. Please call the NAMI office at 994-6611 for more information.

NAMI (National Alliance for the Mentally Ill) of Washtenaw County is a non-profit organization that aims to improve the lives of persons affected by mental illness. Those stricken by these biological disorders, their families and friends, mental health professionals, and the broader community can all benefit from the organization's mission: to offer support, education and advocacy for members of the Washtenaw County community.



Religion and Peacemaking

in the Middle East

Can religion help to achieve a peaceful solution in the Middle East? This series of presentations by local Arabs, Jews and Christians will examine the possibilities for a peaceful outcome of the Israeli/Palestinian conflict from a variety of perspectives, especially the religious.

Please join us to listen and discuss.

Sunday mornings from 11:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. at First Baptist Church of Ann Arbor

- April 6** *The Psychology of the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict* -
Aaron Ahuvia, a U of M Professor of Marketing and Executive Committee Member of Brit Tzedek v'Shalom tells how current psychological research suggests practical ways of getting past deep mutual distrust between people to achieve a lasting peace.
- April 13** *Palestinian Realities on the Ground/ Possibilities for Peace* -
Randa Nasir and **Rula Bawardi**, two Palestinian-American women talk about their personal experiences, current realities for their family and friends in Palestine, and what Palestinians can do to work for peace.
- April 20** *Israeli Realities on the Ground/Possibilities for Peace* -
Eyal Dolev, an Israeli-American and an officer in the Israeli army talks about his personal experiences, current realities for his family and friends in Israel, and what Israelis can do to work for peace.
- April 27** *American Arab-Jewish Dialogue* -
Zeitouna Sisters, a group of Arab and Jewish women tell how they build connection and trust through dialogue and support for a sustainable future for Palestine and Israel.
- May 4** *The Qur'an on Peacemaking* -
Ratib Hallal
- May 11** *The Christian Scriptures on Peacemaking* -
Rev. Paul Simpson Duke, First Baptist Church
- May 18** *The Jewish Scriptures on Peacemaking* -
Rabbi Nathan Martin, Hillel
- May 25** *Pilgrims of Ibillin* -
First Presbyterian Church, an American organization supporting reconciliation among the diverse religious groups in the Holy Land talks about Msgr. Elias Chacour's significant educational effort in Galilee.

First Baptist Church, 512 E Huron Ave., Ann Arbor, Michigan 734-663-9376

First Baptist Church
512 East Huron Street
Ann Arbor, MI 48104
734-663-9376
www.fbca2.org
office@fbca2.org

The Reverends Paul & Stacey Simpson Duke, Co-Pastors



Next
Newsletter
Deadline:
Sunday, April 13, 2008

Special Mission Project to Commemorate FBC's 180th Birthday!

On Sunday May 11, our congregation will celebrate the 180th birthday of our church! The church school families are doing a special mission project to commemorate this birthday and invite all of you to join in. Friendship House Director, Linnea Berg, mentioned a fun project that means a lot to their clients who cannot afford a birthday party for their children: a party-in-a-bag. Here's how we get involved - we provide a big party bag (labeled "boy" or "girl" and age range) with cake mix, frosting, candles, party hats, napkins, plates, favors and a toy. I think it would be significant if FBCA2 could provide 18 of these parties-in-a-bag for our 180th birthday. A donation of cupcake papers and cake pans has already been made to get us started. You could provide one complete party-in-a-bag, or you could donate several individual items such as candles or napkins or toys. Your donations can be dropped off on the tables in the Christian Education wing across from the office anytime in the next month.

- Sue Ellen Glover, Director of Christian Education