



# FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH

Ann Arbor, Michigan

October 10, 2007

## Pastors' Reflections

by Stacey Simpson Duke

For the last two months, the topic of Halloween costumes has found its way into our conversation at home regularly. The boys love to talk about what they're going to be - and their thoughts on the matter seem to change almost daily. An owl, a shark, Shrek, a cat, a monster, Buzz Lightyear, and even a princess have all been mentioned as possibilities (they completely ignore my pleas to name only things that I could make myself). Who knows what they will finally decide on (or if I will have enough time by then to make it!). I have been told by Charlie that I must be a kangaroo. We'll see.

With all the talk of the coming of Halloween, I find myself reminded of what fun it always was as a child to get the chance to wear a costume. Truth be told, I still find it a little fun as an adult, too. I know I'm not alone in that - I have pictures from one of our church's anniversary celebrations a few years ago to prove it!

There is something very appealing about the opportunity to try on another persona. For children, it is an experiment in testing possibilities for the future. "Maybe I will be a ballerina someday. Or a police officer. Or a pilot." For adults, it isn't so much about actual possibilities as it is about playing with other realities, ones that don't find much expression in the lived reality of daily life - one day a year we get to be a hero, or a queen, or even a witch, if we want to.

Putting on a costume is about dabbling in an alternate reality, and that act can be a powerful one. I find myself wondering how actual reality would shift if we continued to put on the costumes after Halloween. Would the woman in the witch hat begin to act more witchy? Would the man in the superhero cape begin to act more heroic? Would the child in the royal robes begin to order people around?

In Christian circles, we tend to place a lot of emphasis on internal matters - the heart, the mind. We place importance on really feeling our faith, on an emotional level, and ascribing to our beliefs, on an intellectual level. We do talk about acting out our faith as well, but we hasten to add that such action must come from the heart.

Considering the power of *putting on* - whether it's just a costume or a nice new outfit - I think there's some value in occasionally looking at faith matters from the opposite perspective. *Putting on Christ*. What would life look like if every morning we actively chose to put on Christ? To choose again every day to act in ways that mirror his way - love, gentleness, mercy, kindness, justice, fidelity, purity, compassion. Our hearts and minds would be shaped by such intentional choices, just as such actions would continue to be shaped by our inwardly-held convictions. The writer of Ephesians, in chapter 6, uses the language of *putting on* to relay the power of choosing the way of Christ daily. He saw this regular and intentional choice as the way to stand firm in the faith, especially when encountering spiritual struggles.

Sometimes trying to live like a Christian does feel like a kids' game of dress-up. We are not the people we want to be, and trying to act like Christ towards each other can feel false. At the same time, the identity we have been given in Christ is our true identity - not a costume - and we can only keep growing into it by continuing to choose to wear it. What power, and what freedom, to put on his life, his truth, his way, every day.

## Children and Youth Christian Education

Nursery: 9:30 -11:30 a.m., room 307

All children are welcome to worship with their families. After the Time as Children portion of the worship service, children in preschool - 3<sup>rd</sup> grade are invited to Children's Worship.

### 3 and 4 year olds

10:00 - 11:15 Childcare in nursery  
11:15 - 12:30 Church School (Room 306)

### K - 2nd grade

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

### 3<sup>rd</sup> - 6<sup>th</sup> grades and Youth (7<sup>th</sup> - High School)

10:00 - 11:00 Worship  
11:00 - 11:50 Church School (3rd-6th: Room 304; Youth: Room 107)  
11:50 - 12:30 Jr. Choir (Room 102)

**Next Sunday, October 14**, the children K-6th will be combined in Room 202A & B until the Congregational meeting is completed. Youth (7th - High School) will meet in the Youth Room immediately after worship, unless they wish to stay in the Sanctuary for the meeting. When the meeting is completed, church school classes and/or Children's Choirs will meet until 12:30.

## Adult Christian Education

### **The Jesus Class (Memorial Lounge)**

**Ron Gregg & Sue Ellen Glover, leaders**

In recent decades there have been new conversations, speculations, questions, and convictions -- among scholars and in churches -- about Jesus. There has been new dialogue about his identity and his mission, a re-visioning of traditional understandings of what we mean when we say "God is in Christ." This class is examining the issues and questions that are currently being raised. It is a safe place to think, ask questions, and exchange views about important theological and spiritual issues. We don't expect everyone to agree on one theological position, but we will thoughtfully engage each other on the issues.

### **Young Adult Bible Study (Campus Center Living Room)**

**Marlene & Arthur Francis, leaders**

We are undertaking a study of the books of the Hebrew Bible known as "The Minor Prophets." The name speaks to the relative length of the books and not to their importance. In these often-overlooked writings are to be found some of the earliest articulations of the principles of justice and compassion which today are essential elements of the Christian Gospel. We will begin by considering how the moral and ethical decay which began soon after Solomon's kingdom was divided led not only to the prophetic calls for repentance, but also to the eventual conquest and exile of the peoples of both Israel and Judah. A brief manual, giving dates, some historical and biographical background and a summary of the basic message of each book will be available.

## 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.



# FBCA2 News & Happenings

## **Youth Corn Maze**

The Youth are invited to the Corn Maze at Talladay Farms this Friday October 12 at 7:00 p.m. Please let Brandy Kirchner, Director of Youth, know if you are coming or if you need a ride.

## **Ann Arbor Co-op Nursery Vote**

Negotiations with the Ann Arbor Co-op Nursery concerning a proposal that their program be housed in our building have progressed to the point that our congregation is now in the process of discussing the proposal and voting on it. A discussion meeting was held this past Sunday, October 7 during Second Hour and final discussion and vote will occur in the Sanctuary next Sunday, October 14, immediately following worship. In order for you to be as fully informed as possible, printed copies of the proposal in detail are available at the Information Counter and were distributed by e-mail October 3.

## **Jean Amick's Artwork - Ann Arbor Art Center Exhibition**

An exhibition of the recently deceased Jean Amick's artwork will be on display at the Ann Arbor Art Center from November 15 – December 31. There will be an opening reception Friday, November 16 from 6:00–8:00 p.m. Please contact the Art Center (734-994-8004) for further details.

## **MacGregor-Stitt Circle**

The next meeting of the MacGregor-Stitt Circle will take place Thursday, October 18 at 1:00 p.m. at the home of Doris Fraker. The program will be a "Progressive Halloween Story started by Marge Shannon." Costumes, if you wish.

## **The Gathering ~ Cook Needed**

One more volunteer is needed to cook a meal for our campus ministry program, The Gathering, on Wednesday, November 7. 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 and take an instruction sheet with you.

## **CROP Walk 2007**

Thank you to everyone who helped to make the 2007 CROP Walk a success. The CROP Walkers are to return collected donations to their recruiter by October 21, 2007, so please be sure your pledge has been turned in to them by then. If there are any questions, please contact Scott Diels or Bev Inbody.

## **Third Quarter Financial Statements**

Third quarter statements will be available for pick-up at the small table near the Information Counter every Sunday or in the office during the week throughout the month of October.

## **Unused Calendars and Cards**

If you receive complimentary calendars or greeting cards in the mail which you do not want or cannot use, please bring them to the Information Counter on Sunday or the church office during the week. Annabel Erskine will take them to her next Church Women United meeting where they will then be given to the Maxey Boys Training School.

# Celebration of Care

Join the Board of Care and Community in a **CELEBRATION OF US** on Sunday, October 28 at 12:30 p.m. in the Fellowship Hall. We will begin with a chili-tasting lunch provided by a few of our own talented chefs (Ron Gregg, vegetarian, Bob Kidd and Jose Barrantes, who is in the chef program at Washtenaw Community College). A mild soup, salad and dessert will be provided, too! We will share some stories of all the good things we do to serve and care for each other in our church family and learn of opportunities to form bonds of friendship and caring by being part of a group within the church. We will be celebrating all the great things we are currently doing and talk about some of the new things we will be starting this fall. **Children and youth** are encouraged to attend and **child care** is provided. **THIS IS A FAMILY AFFAIR.**

Sign-up sheets are available at the Information Counter. Please sign up early and let us know if you need child care.

## The Baptist Peace Fellowship of North America invites your participation in a **FRIENDSHIP TOUR TO NEW ORLEANS -- NOVEMBER 10-15, 2007**

It has been more than two years since Hurricanes Katrina and Rita devastated the city of New Orleans. The realities that remain are staggering -- the challenges of rebuilding are immense and yet the spirit of the people is an amazing testimony to strength, grace, and courage under the worst of circumstances.

The Baptist Peace Fellowship of North America invites you to an opportunity to witness the current realities of the city of New Orleans and to befriend the people who continue to work to reclaim it as home.

Our trip will include: Worship with a rebuilding New Orleans congregation, a tour of neighborhoods which will allow us to see which are coming back and which are not and why, meetings with public health officials to hear about the continuing toll of the storms, bible study with storm survivors, meetings with chaplains to hear about the spiritual challenges and triumphs of storm survivors, hands-on work in the restoration of the Lower Ninth Ward, and free time to explore the city on your own.

Come and join us in New Orleans for opportunities to see the realities of post-Katrina New Orleans for yourself · learn what you can do to help · meet storm survivors and hear their stories of hope and struggle · reflect theologically with those who have suffered as they seek to find the meaning of the storms and their aftermath for their lives and their faith · stand in solidarity with the poor and the oppressed who are far too often being ignored and neglected as the city rebuilds itself · become involved in advocacy work that you can do on behalf of those who have returned to the city and those who have not yet been able to do so · add your own efforts to the continued courageous work to reclaim the Lower Ninth Ward · enjoy the company of fellow workers for peace and justice · spend free time exploring a still-lovely and vibrant city · and experience some of what makes New Orleans a city worth saving.

If you are interested or want to learn more, contact LeDayne McLeese Polaski at [ledayne@bpfna.org](mailto:ledayne@bpfna.org) or 704.521.6051.

# ***World Mission Offering 2007***

***Surprised by the Word: Receive. Give. Be transformed!***

"International Ministries (IM) partners with you and others to help people come to Christ, grow in Christ and change the world with Christ through a wide variety of ministries. During the current decade, IM is giving priority to:

**Evangelism and discipleship:** Sharing the gospel of Jesus Christ, urging others to follow Jesus and seeking to become more obedient followers ourselves.

**Christ-like mission:** Demonstrating how the love of God in Christ responds to every human need.

**Equipping leaders:** Encouraging and preparing those whom God calls into leadership in every local setting.

**Mission education:** Sharing with the whole American Baptist family what God is teaching American Baptists and their partners through cross-cultural mission.

**Urban mission:** Seeking transformation in Christ for the cities of our world.

**Mission explosion:** Helping as many American Baptists as possible to join with believers around the world as participants in God's mission to, from and within all the world's continents."

*The World Mission Offering will be received throughout the month of October.  
Please give generously.*



## ***Fall Rummage Sale & 2007 Christmas Celebration***

Thank you to everyone who helped set-up for the rummage sale on Thursday, to those who worked Friday and Saturday, and to those who helped clear everything away on Saturday. The rummage sale was a success because so many of you attended and supported the sale. Thank you!!

Now that the Fall Rummage Sale is over, we're starting to gear up on plans for the Christmas Celebration, which will take place Sunday, December 9th. It's not too late to think about a special project or two to donate to the Bazaar and Bake Sale. Remember that there will also be a table for gently used Christmas and holiday items which you may no longer use but will become a treasure for someone else. Please contact Bev Inbody (904-5750) or Helen Johnson (662-1461) with any questions you may have. Both the rummage sale and Christmas Celebration are AB Women's Ministries fundraisers.

## American Baptist News Service

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### International Ministries Watches With Concern and Prays for the People of Myanmar Valley Forge, PA (10/01/07)

As massive protests in the Southeast Asian country of Myanmar (also known as Burma) enter [the third week], International Ministries, American Baptist Churches USA encourages Christians everywhere to continue to follow events closely and pray for a peaceful resolution.

"Our most immediate contribution is to express our concern to all those affected in Myanmar because of these events, and to pray unceasingly for a positive and peaceful outcome," said Dr. Reid Trulson, executive director of International Ministries. "The very existence of International Ministries and American Baptist Churches USA can be directly traced to mission work in what was known as Burma nearly 200 years ago," said Trulson. "We have deep respect for the people of Myanmar and we desire a just and peaceful resolution to the concerns these events have raised."

Baptists in the United States first came together to form what is today known as International Ministries, following the arrival of Baptist missionaries to Burma, Adoniram and Ann Judson in 1813. Baptist work in this Southeast Asian country grew, especially among ethnic minorities in Burma, who have been persecuted throughout the time Baptists have been in the country.

A political change in the government, in the 1960s, forced missionaries to leave, including American Baptist missionaries. But International Ministries maintains strong ties with the Myanmar Baptist Convention, which is over 100 years old.

Presently, International Ministries shares over \$100,000 annually in resources directly in Myanmar for education, development, relief and outreach ministry. The mission also provides over \$100,000 annually in resources and direct services to refugees from Myanmar in Northern Thailand. More than 500,000 have fled Myanmar for the refugee camps due to years of persecution.

Thousands of ethnic Karen and Chin refugees from Burma are now coming to the United States. Missionaries Duane and Marcia Binkley are working both in the U.S. and in the refugee camps of Northern Thailand to help these persons to escape repression and violence, and find freedom and a new life in America.

"We hope American Baptists will find new ways to increase resources available to our partners, who must minister to the front lines of this crisis," said Trulson, "and to help support the thousands of persons, often with Baptist roots, who are now finding their way to the United States, seeking refuge, opportunity and religious freedom." People can [give now](#) to the Myanmar Baptist Convention, other related partners in the region, and the work of Duane and Marcia Binkley, said Trulson.

Formed in 1814, International Ministries is the oldest Baptist mission agency in North America. The organization serves the more than 5,800 churches of the American Baptist Churches USA. Globally, International Ministries partners with more than 500 educational institutions and 125 hospitals and medical facilities. More than 2,200 volunteer, short-term and career missionaries work together with some 15,000 trained national workers, who serve about 22,000 congregations and nearly 3,000,000 baptized members.

# ~ COMMUNITY OPPORTUNITIES ~



The Interfaith Round Table of Washtenaw County will hold its thirteenth Annual Interfaith Thanksgiving Celebration on Sunday evening, November 18th, at 7:00 p.m., at the First Congregational Church of Ann Arbor, 608 E. William. Join us as we give thanks with readings, music, meditations and other unique presentations from a wide variety of faith traditions. Donations accepted for non-perishable food or turkey money to help those in need in our community. For more information, call Rev. George Lambrides at 424-1535 or Laurie Gailunas at 662-3654.

Hope Medical Clinic has opened a new satellite clinic in Wayne, MI. The clinic is located in the Lighthouse Ministry facility at 5403 S. Wayne Rd. We are having a Grand Opening Event on Saturday, October 13. You are invited to stop by anytime between 11:00 am and 2:00 pm. Come see the new facilities, learn more about Hope, and celebrate our Grand Opening with us! Need more information? Call Mary Dekker 734-710-6688 or visit our website at [www.thehopeclinic.org](http://www.thehopeclinic.org).



Dear Friends of Washtenaw County,

The Washtenaw Youth Mentorship Coalition (WYMC) is in need of mentors to serve youth within Washtenaw County. The WYMC is a mentorship collaborative comprised of 27 mentoring organizations working to meet the needs of youth. We ask that you join us in this effort to recruit more mentors. Please do not hesitate to contact me, Anna Dusbiber, if you should have any questions. You can also go to our website at [www.washtenawmentoring.org](http://www.washtenawmentoring.org).


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

Next Newsletter &  
November Calendar Deadline:  
Sunday, October 21, 2007

**"A Good God is Hard to Find:  
Flannery O'Connor's  
Unstinting  
Theological Realism"**



Join us on October 14th  
at 6:30 pm  
for a talk by  
***Dr. Richard Rosengarten***  
*Dean of the Chicago Divinity School*