



FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH

Ann Arbor, Michigan

April 19, 2006

Pastors' Reflections

by Stacey Simpson Duke

What a rare treat to see the weeping cherry tree in the memorial garden in full bloom on Easter morning. It faithfully produces blossoms every April, but it hasn't coincided with Easter Sunday since Paul and I have been here. I found the symbolism of a barren (?) cherry tree - especially a *weeping* cherry - bursting into bloom in time for Easter particularly thrilling.

Now it is Monday morning, and there is a light breeze, and every time I walk by the memorial garden I see more blossoms blowing in the wind. Soon, all the flowers will be gone and the tree will be green instead of white. That is the way it goes every year - a sudden explosion of blooms followed by an equally quick dropping of those blossoms. I'm always sad to see it turn, knowing it will be another whole year before we can enjoy its ephemeral beauty.

It's easy to think of Easter the same way, I suppose. There is such a long build-up, with the six weeks of Lent before it happens, not to mention the three months (or more!) of darkness and cold. Then Easter Sunday comes, and it's like the sun shines on us all for one glorious day. The gorgeous music, the joyful proclamation, the new clothes, the excited children, the happy fellowship. It is the crowning of the Christian year, and the joy of the day throbs beneath most everything we do. And then Monday comes, and it's back to life as usual.

As Christians, of course, Easter is not just a day - it is our reality. We are living in the gracious truth of post-resurrection life. That is supposed to mean freedom, and joy, and peace. Every Sunday, and not just Easter Sunday, is meant to be a little celebration of that. In fact, the 50 days following Easter Sunday represent an entire season of Easter, where our attention each Sunday is focused more acutely than usual on the reality of the resurrection and what it is supposed to mean. But beyond the Sundays of Easter season, or just Sundays in general, we are meant to be living a new life every ordinary day. The question is, how?

I suppose that's the question we spend our whole lives answering. It is part of our life's work as Christians, to keep capturing with our actions and our attitudes the reality of the grace that we claim. This is not about mere emotions, which run high on special days like Easter and Christmas, but can then fail us at other times (and can even fail us on those special days too!). The meaning of Jesus' life, death, and resurrection is not about our *feelings*. It is about our reality, and our dispositions, and our discipleship.

Just as with Lent there are certain disciplines we can practice in order to focus ourselves on renewal and spiritual growth, perhaps there are disciplines we can practice to help us more fully claim our Easter joy. I think we do a fine job with one particular discipline - fellowship. Is it strange to consider fellowship a discipline? I don't think so, especially for those of us who tend to be guarded, well-defended, impatient, intolerant, or shy. True Christian fellowship entails a giving of oneself that can be costly - it can mean a sacrifice of time and energy, for one thing. It can mean carrying one another's burdens, celebrating other people's good news, grieving for other people's sorrows. I delighted in the fellowship we had following our Easter service - what fun to see my boys zipping through the rooms around adults' legs, to see the newest part of church family (Robert MacGregor) nestled in his mother's arms, to see long-time members and news visitors and family from out of town all chatting and laughing and enjoying the few moments together.

(Continued on next page)

(Pastors' Reflections continued from front page)

If fellowship is a discipline, and I think it can be, then it is a perfect discipline for the season of Easter - to remind us of the joy and personal growth to be found in the kinship Christ has made possible.

Other possible Easter disciplines come to my mind, and they all require a similar stepping outside of oneself. Hospitality, which always directs our attention away from ourselves and towards others (elsewhere in this newsletter, please notice an Evangelism Board invitation that calls for this discipline). Gratitude, which beckons us away from self-focus and towards focus on the goodness around us. Joy, which requires a kind of strength of will that refuses to accept the darkness of our world as the final reality. Servanthood, which was Jesus' command of love on his final night, that we would do for others as he has done for us.

There are many more ways to practice mindfulness of our Easter reality, to actually embody the freedom and grace of that reality, and to become more fully Christ's disciples. I offer just these few - fellowship, hospitality, gratitude, joy, servanthood - as starting points for celebrating Easter every ordinary day. The main thing is that we choose to do it, each morning to get up all over again and consciously choose to be Jesus' people, people who have been set free to love, to laugh, and to live new lives.

CHILDREN & YOUTH CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

Nursery	Room 307	9:30 - 12:30
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All children are welcome to worship with their families. After the "Time as Children" portion of the service, preschool - 3rd grade are invited to Children's Worship.

Church School classes begin at 11:00 or when worship concludes.

Preschool - 2nd grade	Room 202B	11:00 - 12:00
3rd - 6th grade	Room 304	11:00 - 11:50
Younger Youth (7 th - 9 th)	Room 107	11:00 - 11:50

Children's Music & Arts Ministry

Jr. Handchimes	Sanctuary	9:15 - 9:45
Grace Notes (preschool - 2 nd grade)	Room 305	12:00 - 12:30
Jr. Choir (3 rd - 7 th grades)	Room 102	11:50 - 12:30

ADULT CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

Lessons from the Wisdom Literature of the Bible **(Memorial Lounge)**

Discussion Leaders: Mary Davis, Scott Diels, and John Reed

Using the Judson Bible Journeys curriculum we will explore selections from the Wisdom literature of the Old Testament (Psalms, Proverbs, Job, and Ecclesiastes) as this literature relates to such questions as "Why would God care about me?," "How do I deal with suffering?," and "What's the point of life anyway?" Are there answers to these questions or is just the asking important? The curriculum also highlights our unique American Baptist heritage and mission. Student booklets are available at the Information Counter.

Share and Prayer Group **(Room 108)**

Facilitated by Stacey Simpson Duke

A time for sharing, singing, silence, centering, and group prayer. Together we will engage in a ministry of prayer for our church, for other members, for specific concerns, and for local and world events, as well as having time to become more connected to one another and more personally grounded and rooted in God. This is not a class about prayer, but a time for actually engaging in prayer together (no one will be obligated to pray aloud, but anyone who wants to will be welcome to).

FBC News & Happenings



Spring Rummage Sale

The AB Women's Ministries Spring Rummage Sale will take place Friday, April 28 and Saturday, April 29, with the set up on Thursday, April 27. As you do your "spring cleaning" please save your gently used items that you no longer plan to use, and donate them to our sale. Please keep in mind that while we cannot accept computer equipment and large furniture, baby furniture is much appreciated.

Habitat for Humanity

Habitat for Humanity First Baptist Work Day is set for Saturday, June 3. We need about five volunteers to work construction and two volunteers to help with lunch. On our Saturday work-day we will be working with Ann Arbor Calvary UMC. The house is on Jackson Road in Ann Arbor. There will be a sign up sheet at the Information Counter, however you may contact Scott Diels at 734-747-8252 if you have any questions or are interested in volunteering.

Annual Business Meeting

The church's annual business meeting will be held on Sunday, April 30, following a luncheon at 12:30 p.m. The principal items of business will be (1) consideration of the printed reports of boards and committees; (2) action on proposed amendments to our constitution; and (3) election of officers and board members for the year 2006-07. The luncheon has been planned by the faithful members of the Board of Care and Community, who will provide meat, bread, and beverages, and also plates, tableware, and napkins. Each of us, however, is asked to bring a dish to share (vegetable, salad, dessert).

Men's Book Club

Men's Book Club is scheduled for May 2, 2006 at 7:00 p.m. at the home of Scott Diels at 1414 Iroquois, Ann Arbor. The book being discussed is "His Excellency George Washington" by Joseph J. Ellis.



Volunteers Needed: A Ministry of Outreach and Hospitality

Have you been looking for a way to express concrete hospitality to people who visit us on Sundays for worship? We need volunteers who would be willing to bake (or buy) cookies or bread and deliver it to newcomers within 24 hours of their first visit. We would like to have enough people sign up for this so that each person would only be responsible for one Sunday every few weeks. This is a great way to show people that we care about them and are delighted to have them visiting our church. Please consider being a part of this important outreach effort (if you are interested in baking but not delivering, or in delivering but not baking, that will work too!). Please contact Stacey (663-9376, stacey@fbca2.org) or Sarah Heidt (sarah@SarahHeidtPhotoCraft.com) if you are interested. **So far, we've only had one person sign up for this. Please help! Our outreach to newcomers needs to be a full church effort.**

Scholarships Available

Scholarships are available from the Robert Johnson Memorial Fund to aid those attending conferences at the American Baptist Assembly at Green Lake. Funds are also available from the Chester and Vi Loucks Memorial Fund to those pursuing post secondary education-college, graduate school, or educational conferences. Applications for both scholarships will be available at the information desk beginning April 23. They must be returned by May 21. Please return completed applications to Mary Davis, 1414 Iroquois PI, Ann Arbor, MI 48104.

Memorial Book

If anyone should happen to know the whereabouts of the FBC "Memorial Book" which has been missing in action for quite some time now, or if anyone thinks they have a hunch as to where it may be, please contact the church office or Linda Dicks. It may have been in the possession of a former Chairperson, but we have been unable to locate it thus far. Thank you!

Annual Spring Salad Luncheon - AB Women's Ministries

On Thursday, May 4th at 12:00 p.m. in the Memorial Lounge the American Baptist Women's Ministries will host an Annual Spring Salad Luncheon. They will be sharing fellowship with women from other AB churches in Ann Arbor and Ypsilanti. The speaker will be Sherry Retucci. Her topic will be "Container Gardening," with demonstrations. All women of First Baptist are invited. Please let Lois Crabtree (668-6958) know by May 1st if you plan to attend.

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CORRECTION - I need to apologize to Bob Kidd for leaving his name off the list of Rotating Shelter volunteers. Bob has volunteered for years and has often stayed for more than the one night when needed. Sorry, and thank you, Bob.

Camps and Conferences

Family Connections Encounter, August 6 - 12, 2006

* Take the time to reconnect *



Relax, refresh, renew, reconnect with those who matter the most and let someone else cook and do the dishes! A week of fun with your family including daily programs for each family member.

The Easter Event was great fun! Many thanks to the Board of Christian Education (Maryann Bowen, Mary Davis, Bill Foster, Emily Rahim and Janice Stumpf), and to Cesar Alaniz (Chief Easter Bunny), Madeline Drake, Sarah Drake, Beth Foster, Bev Inbody, Bob Kidd (photos), and Nehal Rahim.



Happy Easter



American Baptist Senior Adults of Michigan Annual Spring Frolic

ABC-MI Senior Adults from across the state will gather Thursday, April 27 for the annual Spring Frolic at First Baptist Church, Mt. Morris. This gathering is open to all ABC-MI senior adults for only \$6, payable that day. Reservations may be made by calling the First Baptist Church of Mt. Morris @ 810-686-6767. The schedule for the day is as follows:

- 9:30 a.m. - Registration, coffee and donuts
- 10:00 a.m. - Get acquainted mixer
- 10:15 a.m. - Presentation by Dr. Joe Mortensen - "Baptist History Guides Us Through Current Issues"
- 11:00 a.m. - Worship with Message from Dr. Mortensen
- Noon - Lunch
- 1:00 p.m. - Meeting with special guests: Rev. Karen Horsman of the American Baptist Foundation and Mr. Dave Johnson from Camp Lake Louise

HOPE CLINIC'S Annual Spring Banquet will be held on Thursday, April 27 at Washtenaw Country Club on Packard Road in Ypsilanti. The evening will feature the presentation of the Daniel D. Heffernan Humanitarian of the Year award to Dr. Wally Niemann. Entertainment will be provided by "The Cornerstone." This trio has performed at Power Center for the Performing Arts, banquets, retreats, TV shows and more. Their tongue-twisting, fast-moving songs with a humorous storyline maintain a sweet vocal sound with light harmonies. Visit www.thehopeclinic.org for more information on the banquet. Contact Judy Tice, 484-2989, jtice@thehopeclinic.org, for ticket information or to make reservations. This is a great way to support Hope and have an enjoyable evening out.

COMMUNITY OPPORTUNITIES

Friends In Deed Annual Fundraising Dinner

*Tuesday, May 2 · First United Methodist Church of Ypsilanti
6:00 p.m. Silent Auction and Punchbowl · 6:30 p.m. Dinner
Entertainment: The Royal Garden Trio · \$35 per person*

The Annual Dinner is a time when FID supporters and congregations come together to show their support for the mission of FID: to prevent homelessness, assist with utility shut-offs, and meet other unmet emergency needs. Sponsorship levels are available. Call the FID office at 485-7658 to make reservations.

"End of Life Decision-making, for Self and Loved Ones"

The Interfaith Round Table of Washtenaw County invites you to attend this most important forum which will take place at 7:00 p.m. Thursday, April 27 at Beth Israel Congregation, 2010 Washtenaw in Ann Arbor. Four University of Michigan Hospital physicians from four different religious backgrounds will talk about their experiences and insights: Richard Swartz, MD, Hasan Shanawani, MD, Susan Urba, MD and Michael Coffey, MD. There will be ample time for discussion. For more information, contact Rev. George Lambrides at 424-1535 or email him at gbrides@umich.edu.



May 2006



Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	1 10:00 Women's ChristCare	2 5:30 Vespers	3 1:30 Bible Study	4 12:00 ABWM Salad Luncheon 6:30 Handbells 7:30 Choir	5	6
7 Communion	8 10:00 Women's ChristCare 7:00 Bd. of Worship 8:00 Bd. of Mission Action	9 7:00 Bd. of Evangelism	10 1:30 Bible Study 7:30 Davis/Diels ChristCare	11 6:30 Handbells 7:30 Choir	12	13 10:00 Contemplative Knitting
14 Newsletter Deadline	15 10:00 Women's ChristCare 12:30 Beecher-Brewer	16 5:30 Vespers 7:00 Bd. of Trustees	17 1:30 Bible Study	18 1:00 MacGregor-Stitt 6:30 Handbells 7:30 Choir	19 6:00 Fun Night Talent Show	20 9:00 Children & Youth Worship Dress Rehearsal
21 Children & Youth Worship 12:45 Campus Foundation Board	22 10:00 Women's ChristCare	23 9:30 ABWM Board	24 12:00 Bible Study Luncheon 7:30 Davis/Diels ChristCare	25 6:30 Handbells 7:30 Choir	26	27
28 Newsletter Deadline	29 <i>Memorial Day</i> (Office Closed)	30	31			



May Birthdays

Ron Gregg	1	Kristen MacGregor	19	Carole Ott	26
Madeline Drake	3	Gary Alton	20	Laura Paul	26
Ruth Kerr	4	Mary Williams	20	John Moyer	28
Robert Shannon	4	Matthew Kirchner	22	Beverly Inbody	29
Kate Zell	8	Noelle Anne Alton	23	Isaac Thompson	30
Bonnie Miles	11	Thomas Scott	23	Nichole Alton	31
Diane Fleming	12	Ashley Harrison	24	Charlie Duke	31
Gregg Magnuson	16			Rob Duke	31

First Baptist Church
512 East Huron Street
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www.fbca2.org

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The Reverends Paul & Stacey Simpson Duke, Co-Pastors

Dated material:

Wednesday, April 19, 2006

Next Deadline:

Sunday, April 30, 2006

FUN NIGHT
Talent Show
May 19 · 6:00 - 8:00pm



★ The Fun Night for May will be a TALENT SHOW. The Youth ★
★ Band, GIG (God is Good) will be the featured act, but ALL ★
★ TYPES of talent from ALL AGES will be showcased. There will ★
★ be two sign up sheets at the Information Counter – one for ★
★ dinner reservations and another one for talent sign-up. ★