



FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH

Ann Arbor, Michigan

May 14, 2008

Pastors' Reflections

by Paul Simpson Duke

Lately I am dizzied and bewildered by the speed of the passing of time. "*Tempus fugit*," we used to say - Time flies! I thought I knew what it meant, but I had no idea. I imagined it as the quick flight of a bird. I see it now as warp speed.

It's faster every year. My vocation, like some others, is cyclical. Each year, using prescribed, familiar stories, language, music, rituals, and accoutrements, I lead people by the milestones of Advent, Christmas, Epiphany, Lent, Easter, Pentecost, etc., then repeat. Now the milestones are rushing by so fast they blur. They *seriously* blur. I say to Stacey on Ash Wednesday, "Didn't we do this last month?" I could swear that Christmas Eve comes quarterly. The same is true with nature's seasons. I used to dread the Michigan winters, but rounding toward last winter I thought: It'll be gone before you know it - and it was. Now I look up at the delicate new leaves and think: Autumn winds will take them soon. They will.

What has happened to me? Am I so busy and driven that *I'm* the one flying, not time? Or is it my poor, failing brain? Sleep deprivation? Fatigue? Madness? Or is this simply part of what it means to age? Put enough seasons and years behind you, and you realize how fast it all blurred by - then suddenly you look up and notice that the present and the future are in full stampede. I was talking the other night with a good friend who is about my age (which is to say, not all that old!). We spoke of how fast life goes by and she said, laughing, "I will die tomorrow even if I live to be a hundred!" Well said!

It doesn't mean, of course, that everything zips by. Not by any means. Some experiences and events insist on maintaining turtle-speed, dragging on forever. The Democratic primaries, for instance. Or being on hold when you've called a business office and have already trekked through the phone-tree and must now listen to unending bad music interrupted by pre-recorded assurances of how important your call is. Any day or night can seem to last forever if we are doing work we don't like, or if we're waiting for something or someone important to us, or if we're alone and grieving. It's odd isn't it, how the days can be so long and the years so short.

"You've got to stop and smell the roses," they say. I'm tempted to answer that this would be easier if the roses lasted long enough to be seriously sniffed. But of course the roses are here long enough. And the truth is that the faster the seasons and years rush by, the more essential it becomes to pause, to notice the kindnesses of the day, to savor what is life-giving and lovely, to make room for receptive silences, to pray, to extend what daily love it is our privilege to give to someone near us.

Psalm 90 is the great biblical meditation on time. It's the one that speaks of a thousand years being like a day in the sight of God, and of how our years come to an end like a sigh. The line that I've heard quoted most often is verse 12: "Teach us, O Lord, to number our days, that we may gain a heart full of wisdom." I take it to mean: be carefully mindful of each day's opportunities and graces, and let each day be filled with intentional gratitude, good purpose, and love. Lately I have wanted to add: "Number my days? God, I can't count that fast anymore!" But this very confession may finally be part of the wisdom urged by the psalm. To number our days is precisely to see how swiftly the years and seasons fly, and so to regard each incremental day within them as priceless and unrepeatable treasure. This is far more than wisdom gleaned from aging; it's the secret at the center of human life. It won't slow down the years; but might make the days within the years far richer - and make the speeding years more luminous.

NURSERY care is available on the 3rd floor from 9:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.

Children and Youth Christian Education

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.

On May 18: Children 1st grade and younger are invited to stay for worship or leave for childcare after the Time as Children portion of the worship service. There will be brief church school classes starting after worship and an end-of-the-year celebration and pizza lunch for all children and Youth, starting at 11:50 in the Fellowship Hall.

Beginning May 25, church school classes will begin about 11:10 (after worship) and extend through 12:30, with group time in room 201B at 12:00-12:30 on most Sundays

3 and 4 year olds

10:00 - 11:00 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 - 12:30 Church School (room 202B)

3rd - 6th grade

10:00 - 11:00 Worship

11:00 - 12:30 Church School (room 107)

7th grade - high school

10:00 - 11:00 Worship

11:00 - 12:30 Church School (room 107)

Children's Music and Arts Ministry

Beginning May 25 there will be no children's music rehearsals.

Adult Christian Education (11:30—12:30)

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.

May 18: *Peacemaking in Judaism* — Rabbi Nathan Martin

Rabbi Martin was ordained at the Reconstructionist Rabbinical College (RRC), and currently works as an assistant director at the University of Michigan Hillel. He has had a long term interest in interfaith and intercultural dialogue, and recently helped organize a Jewish/Muslim alternative spring break trip to New Orleans for U of M students.



May 25: *Pilgrims of Ibillin* — 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.

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.

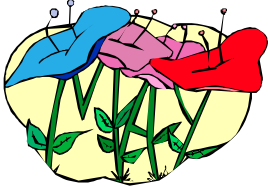
Other Adult Learning Opportunities

Wednesday Bible Study

On May 21st, we will celebrate the end of the year with a special lunch at Weber's starting at 12:00 o'clock. The regular Bible Study classes will resume in the fall.

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

Chancel Flower Calendar Sign-up

The following dates are available on the flower calendar: June 29, August 10, August 31, October 19, and November 16. The arrangements are prepared by Tom Thompson's Florist, they cost \$30, payable to FBC, and appear on the chancel table during worship service on that Sunday. The dedication appears in the bulletin the week you host them. You are welcome to take the arrangement with you following the service.

Congratulations to Kathryn Gregg, who will be graduating from Washtenaw Community College on May 17th with a degree of Child Care Professional Associate in Applied Science.

Kathryn writes: Upon my graduation this month from WCC, I want to thank all of you at First Baptist Church for helping me learn with the children, support from many people in the church, and the scholarships throughout the years. The church has had a positive impact on my college years.

I am in the process of looking for full-time employment in the child care area, my preference would be in a supervisory/director capacity of a child care center or a nanny position. I hope to open up my own child care facility in the future. Please pray for me during my search and, of course, if you know of anything, please let me know (734)904-0415.

Paul Dossabhoy has drawn our attention to a special project started by two U of M student runners in coordination with Running Fit stores and Soles4Souls, a non-profit organization that sends shoes to developing countries. Beginning June 1, customers who drop off used shoes at any of Running Fit's seven locations will receive a discount on their next purchase. The used shoes will be donated to Soles4Souls. Check the Running Fit website for more details <http://www.runningfit.net/>



Congratulations to Maryann Bowen who recently received the Girl Scouts USA Honor Pin for her many, many years serving the Girl Scouts in Saline as a leader, troop services director and council delegate



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 Kat at office@fbca2.org. Thank you!

UPDATE FROM CARE & COMMUNITY: Our service of communion to the homebound on Communion Sundays has been well received. We want to make sure we are getting to all who want to be served by this program. If you wish to receive communion at home or know someone who would benefit from this service, please call Mary Gregg at 769-3127 or e-mail her at cooper-m@dv-tech.com.

We are also looking for a few more communion teams. If you would be interested in this ministry, please let me know. In the next few months we will be training another group of servers. Our current servers are: Ron & Donna Tipton, Arthur Francis and Clay Scott.

– Mary Gregg, Chair Care & Community

A Note of Thanks from former Administrative Assistant, Carey Viviano:

Dear FBC Congregants,

I am deeply grateful for the generous farewell gift of money several of you contributed to! What a wonderful surprise that was! My husband and I are very fortunate to have been showered with gifts by family and friends, however we were still in need of a couple of bigger items which your gift took care of, with a little left over for the baby's "piggy bank." Nesting is well under way and I'm thoroughly enjoying these last few weeks before the baby arrives.

Again, I am very thankful for the opportunity to have served at FBC. I miss you all and I promise to visit with the baby!

Love,
Carey



Interfaith Round Table of Washtenaw County



"DINNER THEATRE: SACRED STORYTELLING"
Sunday, May 18, 2008 at 5:30 p.m.

The Interfaith Round Table invites you to the final performance of the original interfaith play, *Sacred Storytelling*. Based on conversations with over a hundred high school students from ten local faith communities, this play is designed to stimulate interfaith dialogue and understanding. In addition, enjoy a delightful Indian meal prepared by our Hindu friends at the Chinmaya Mission. Tickets: \$15, \$30, \$50, \$75 / children under 12, \$8 (charitable contribution receipt with \$30, \$50 & \$75 tickets). Location: The Chinmaya Mission, 4760 Packard, Ann Arbor



A Brief History of the First Baptist Church 1828 - 2008

The First Baptist Church of Ann Arbor was organized in 1828, when Ann Arbor was a struggling pioneer village. The church began as a handful of loyal Baptists meeting for worship in a room over a store. In 180 years, it has developed into a stronghold of Christian faith and service in the Ann Arbor community.

In its long history, the church has had three locations. Its first building was a chapel built in 1835 with \$500 and seating less than a hundred people. It was located in the area known as the Lower Town, north of the Huron River. In 1849 a second, larger building was built on Catherine Street in the more prosperous Upper Town on the other side of the river. In 1881 the church dedicated its current building, a fine stone church on Huron Street, midway between Main Street and the University of Michigan main campus. There have been numerous renovations to this structure and two major additions of educational facilities, in 1952 and 1961.

First Baptist Church has been served by many outstanding pastors and lay leaders. Two of the longest pastorates were those of Samuel Haskell (1871-1888) and Chester H. Loucks (1939-1960). Under Haskell's leadership the present building was built and the church established as a major Christian presence in the community. When Loucks came, the church was at a low point in finances and membership, and he and his wife Violet led in restoring the church's strength and influence. More recently, Jitsuo Morikawa (1978-1982) came to the church after a distinguished career in national Baptist work and brought to the church and the university community a number of renowned scholars and theologians such as Hans Kung, John Cobb Robert Bellah, and Gustavo Gutierrez.

Lay leadership has played a major role in the strength of this congregation. Some of the founders of the church were also founders of the town and major figures in its development. Over the years, university professors who were also Baptist ministers have provided leadership and supplied the pulpit in lean years; notable among these were Andrew Ten Brook who served several interim periods during the nineteenth century; Edward Olney who mortgaged his own home so that the current building could be dedicated free of debt; Leroy Waterman, noted Biblical scholar and translator, who shared his knowledge with generations of Sunday School students. Lay leaders in other professions have contributed as much in other ways: artisans have given materials and built or rebuilt portions of the building; women have used their skills and caring to organize church activities and bring leadership and comfort to church people; business men and women have applied their expertise to the needs of the church and the denomination.

The Ann Arbor church has a strong tradition of involvement in and contribution to American Baptist denominational organizations. Anson Brown, one of the church's

founders, was also a founding trustee of Kalamazoo College, established by Baptists in 1833. Seven pastors and many more lay persons have also been trustees of the College. Members of this church have served Michigan Baptists in many capacities, including president of the convention. Members have also served national Baptist organizations in key roles. The campus ministry program and generous financial support are also ways by which the church demonstrates its loyalty to the Baptist denomination.

The church's location in a college town and its proximity to the University of Michigan campus have helped shape its ministry. Since 1904 the church has supported a ministry to university students, in cooperation with state and national Baptist offices. This ministry has involved at various periods residential, educational, and social facilities for students, Bible study, worship, discussion classes, deputation teams, married student groups, a variety of social activities for undergraduate and graduate students. Initially located in a large house across Huron Street from the church, the ministry moved to the historic Douglas House next door in 1942. This house also served as the Loucks' parsonage and has also at times held a draft counseling program, a student Christian community, and various church offices. Renovations in 1994-95 connected the house to the church itself.

The First Baptist Church of Ann Arbor is a diverse and open community of Christians who believe in Baptist principles and independence. The church supports mission and social action endeavors ranging from local programs for the homeless and hungry to Baptist home and foreign mission efforts and to a sister relationship with a small church in Nandasmoo, Nicaragua. The church has long been known for the quality of its music program and for the diversity of theological views held by members of the congregation. Education is important to church members who support an active Sunday School program for all ages as well as its ministry to university students and to the University as an institution. The congregation embraces the Baptist principle of "soul liberty," but it also attempts to build a community of faithful Christians who aim to serve their Lord within the church and in the wider community of town, state, nation, and the world.

— Marlene Francis



Panel on Religion and Politics at Ann Arbor Book Festival

The Ann Arbor Book Festival is hosting a panel discussion on Religion and Politics. This free panel discussion meets from 2-3:00 p.m., Saturday, May 17 at the Michigan League. The details may be found on the bulletin board across from the office. There will be many other interesting readings and discussions and a showing of the newly-released film "The Life Before her Eyes" based on the book of the same name by local author Laura Kasischke. At the famous Michigan Theater, this event will feature the author in conversation about the movie. Check the festival web Site www.aabookfestival.org/index.htm for all the details or call 734-663-5790



May 11, 2008

To the Congregation of the First Baptist Church of Ann Arbor:

On behalf of the Baptist Peace Fellowship of North America and your sister peace-loving, justice-seeking congregations throughout the continent, we greet you on this day of celebration.

The 180th anniversary of the founding of your church is rightfully a cause for great celebration. We share in your joy this day, and we offer our gratitude for an amazing stretch of faithful ministry in which you have endeavored to live out the call of Jesus in your communal life. Jesus calls us all to make peace and seek justice, and we celebrate the multitude of ways in which you individually and corporately bring that call to life.

This is a celebration of past, present and future. You celebrate what has been and all that has brought you to this moment. You celebrate all that exists within your church this day. And you look forward to the journey you will share together from this moment forward.

May this day be rich and full, brimming with a strong sense of God's continued presence, strength, and grace. May your journey forward be blessed with a lasting sense of God's calling through joy and challenge, hope and pain. May God be real for you all in days of triumph, days of struggle, and all the ordinary days in between. Through it all, may you serve as bearers of peace – to one another and to our aching world.

Know that we share your celebration and joy this day – as we will share your path as together we seek to follow the Prince of Peace.

Peace and Grace to you this day and always,

Evelyn Hanneman
Operations Coordinator

LeDayne McLeese Polaski
Program Coordinator

Bob Spinks
Networking/Development Coordinator

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The Reverends Paul & Stacey Simpson Duke, Co-Pastors



Next
newsletter
deadline:

Sunday, May 25, 2008



During the month of May, ABC-MI churches will have a chance to contribute to our Region to support the many worthy ministries that ABC-MI provides. Money given to this offering, "Sowing Seeds of Ministry," will help support efforts to grow healthy churches, cultivate health in our pastors, and sow seeds of the Gospel in Michigan. Over the next few weeks, you will learn about some of those ministries in the bulletin and newsletter. This offering will be received throughout the month of May. Please give generously.