



FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH

Ann Arbor, Michigan

July 16, 2008

Pastors' Reflections

by Paul Simpson Duke

I recently rented the first two disks of the made-for-T.V. HBO movie, *John Adams*. It is based on David McCullough's excellent biography of Adams. I knew of the film because Matthew Kirchner had mentioned it to me. I would have wanted to watch it anyway, but Matthew mentioned a scene that especially peaked my interest, and I was eager to see it.

The most moving scene depicts the events of July 2, 1776, when the Continental Congress approved the resolution to declare American independence. The Declaration of Independence would not be signed until two days later, but the matter was decided on July 2 when the Congress approved the resolution "That these United Colonies are, and, of right, ought to be, free and independent states; that they are absolved from all allegiance to the British crown, and that all political connexion between them and the state of Great Britain is, and ought to be, totally dissolved." One after another, all twelve of the voting colonies (New York abstained) declared their assent. Unanimously, they declared independence.

What do you suppose happened in that room when the vote was completed? In the film's depiction, what happened was dead silence. No cheers, no congratulating; not even a smile is in evidence. The camera moves from face to face. Instead of exuberance or even relief, we see that what these men are experiencing is the terrible weight of the decision they have made. They are sobered, pensive, grave. No music undergirds the scene. There is only silence, and the faces of men who are both resolute and stunned.

On the dramatic level, the scene carried far more power than if it had featured beaming faces, handshaking, embracing, or anything like an eighteenth-century high-five. Not only did it carry great power, it had the feel of truth.

There are obvious reasons for the delegates to have reacted in this way. They had guaranteed their own deaths if the cause should fail; likewise their families, if not killed, would be left destitute and disgraced. Even if the cause were to succeed, the risks to these men were enormous. Infinitely worse, their decision meant that huge numbers of people would die. But there were still other grounds for grave silence. They had embarked into the unknown, and were carrying multitudes with them. They would have no sovereign now. They were moving toward untried ways of governance, unheard-of social arrangements, and the risk of anarchy or new, more terrible despotisms. They were shouldering enormous new weights of responsibility and risk, and daring to trust that others would do the same. Gravity indeed!

I am not intending a civics lesson here. I am wondering more broadly about our grasp of the seriousness of our own situation. You and I have many allegiances and concerns pertaining to the world, the nation, our neighbors, our families. None of it is optional, and we are followers of Jesus. The needs around us are monumental. The people closest to us have a rightful claim on our loyalty and consistent kindness. Those who suffer, near and far, have claim to our concern and action. Leaders of the nation are in need of truer voices. The earth needs better care. The church needs more fidelity and courage. It would be absurd and arrogant, of course, to imply that each of us bears personal responsibility to address it all; but all of it matters hugely, and each of us bears a nonnegotiable piece of the larger responsibility and risk. To complicate matters, each of us is hopelessly flawed, and we will not do as we ought without disciplined reliance on God and on each other. And so much is at stake.

I believe in forgiveness, in grace, and in laughter, because God, not we, will redeem the world. But reading the Scriptures, I notice that as full of joy as the faithful may be, they tremble at the seriousness of their calling. We, who have learned to laugh, might serve our calling better if we also lived with an awe-struck sense of the fearsome gravity in it.

NURSERY care is available on the 3rd floor from 9:30 a.m. - 11:30 p.m.

Children and Youth Christian Education

All children are welcome to worship with their families. There is no Children's Worship, so after the Time as Children portion of the worship service, preschoolers - 6-years old may go to the nursery for childcare. Families should pick up children as soon as worship is completed.

First grade and older will stay in worship with their families for the complete worship service.

During the month of July there are no church school classes (children, youth or adult) after worship

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

For the month of July, there are no Second Hour classes

Beginning August 3:

The Life of Meaning: Reflections on Faith, Doubt, and Repairing the World

We will be discussing essays from this book edited and compiled by Bob Abernathy and William Bole with the contributors to PBS's *Religion and Ethics NewsWeekly*.

Copies of the essays will be available to read before each Sunday's discussion.

Other Adult Education Opportunities:

Adult 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

Project Outreach Thank You The congregation has received this note from the staff members of PORT, a dedicated group of people working with the homeless population of Ann Arbor helping them to find and receive services:

"The Project Outreach Team would like to thank you for all of your efforts. We appreciate all that you do. Thank you for your help! You are acting and living examples of Christ's love!"

CARE AND COMMUNITY — The Board of Care & Community would like to make sure we are reaching all homebound folks who would like to have visitors. Please let us know if you or someone you know would like to have occasional friendly visits from members of our team. Trained servers are also taking Communion to people on Communion Sunday afternoons. If you have not yet been served and would like to, please call Mary Gregg, 769-3127 or Barb Griffin, 994-3499. We would also like to have more volunteers to serve as friendly visitors.

Being More Inviting

One of our major goals. Ease of finding us is a key part of being inviting. Have you ever given someone our Huron Street address then spent the next five minutes telling them how to find parking on Washington St? I have. That just doesn't seem very inviting. Also, in these days of Googling and Mapquest directions, typing in 512 Huron Street doesn't really help someone get in the door. After a discussion which took place over a couple months, the Executive Council has decided to use our Washington St address as the official one. (According to the city, we already have the 517 East Washington Street address, so changing isn't too complicated in that respect.) The more important things to consider were the history of being a Huron Street church and the fact that the Huron Street entrance is more attractive and feels a bit more like entering a church. Making it easier for people to find us was, in the final analysis, the overriding concern. Thus, as of August 1, our address will start showing up as 517 East Washington. In addition, the Board of Outreach is working on ways to make the Huron Street entrance and sign more inviting so that more folks will want to come in that door as will. The board will be happy to have your ideas and help.

— Mary Davis, Moderator

Scholarships Awarded

The Chester and Vi Loucks scholarships have been awarded to Becky Miller, Jackie Snyder and Ethan Wright. Becky is pursuing her goal of becoming a Bible translator at a summer program in Grand Forks, North Dakota. Jackie and Ethan are both students at Eastern Michigan University. Ethan is completing a degree in history and planning to become a teacher. Jackie is in the Social Work program heading toward a career in pastoral ministry. We congratulate them and wish them success in their endeavors.

— The Scholarship Committee

The Art Fairs are here! Almost all the parking lot space is being used for the artists and their trucks, trailers and motorhomes. Please do not park in the lot unless you are on church business and then be sure to ask the volunteer where you should park. We always make room for our congregation to park for shopping at the fairs (you will need to make a donation, leave your keys and return by 9pm). We still need a few volunteers to supervise the lot. Please call the office for the shifts that are still open. You will be helping to raise more than \$2000 for our Youth and our Sister Church in Nandasmoo. In addition to our gratitude, volunteers "earn" a free half-day parking spot to be used any time during the Fairs!



Fall Rummage Sale (Sept 18-20th) – Reminder to all basement, garage and closet cleaners...The stage is available to take clean clothing, working small appliances (please no computers), books, household goods and other treasures for this fall's sale. If you have any questions, please ask Annabel Erskine.

Friendship House Birthday Bags

Thank you to all who donated funds, items and bags for our 180th birthday celebration gifts of birthday party-in-a-bag. The Children's Worship children had great fun distributing items to the bags. We went over our goal of 18 bags by two for a total of twenty bags!! With some renovations going on in their storage area, Director Linnea Berg has asked that the bags not be delivered until August. Which gives us time to collect some other items... In the latest Friendship House newsletter, they wrote that they have lots of school items for their back-to-school backpack give-away, but they need BACK- PACKS. Since school items will soon be on the store shelves, please consider picking up a back-pack and bringing it to church for Friendship House! (You can leave it at the Information Counter or on the tables by the coat racks.)



Our Habitat for Humanity Good News house for 2008 has just broken ground. Again this year FBC is joining with 21 other churches to make a family's home ownership dream

come true. As in the past eight years, our support involves providing funds to buy the construction materials, volunteers and supplying lunches at the work site. You and members of your family are invited to participate in this annual local mission opportunity. August 2nd will be our FBC workday. We will be working with volunteers from Bethel AME on that day. We will also need volunteers from FBC to provide lunch for workers. If you wish to volunteer, go to the Good News house website <http://www.goodnewshouse.org/housevolunteers>.

2008 Christmas Celebration – It's never too early to start planning those special baked goods for the Bake Sale. Cakes, cookies, candies, canned goods, snack foods, breads are all welcomed. Please do not send anything which requires refrigeration. Also, the presentation is important as some of the goodies may be used as gifts. It is very helpful to have a suggested price and indicate any special ingredients which we need to be aware of. The Bake Sale has grown in the past years and many look forward to it.

If you are a craft person or creative individual and would like to donate to the bazaar – please think of us as you finish your next project. The money stays with the ABW Ministries to support our many projects. – Beverly Inbody (904-5750)

FBC Church Picnic The Church Picnic, with lots of good food, games, fellowship and fun for ALL ages, will be July 27, Noon - 2:00 pm at Allmendinger Park. Chicken and drinks will be provided by the Board of Christian Education. Please sign up at the Information Counter (or in the office during the week) to let us know that you are coming and what pot-luck dish you plan to bring. Also plan to bring your own table setting (non-breakable of course!), blankets or folding chairs, and equipment for any ball game you'd like to play (softball, whiffle ball, badminton, etc.)



A few pictures from last year's FBC picnic



And a couple more from last year's church picnic



The 3rd Annual Friendship House Golf Outing will be held on Saturday, Sept 27, at the Fox Creek Golf Course (Seven Mile and Newburgh Road, Livonia, Michigan).

Continental Breakfast from 8am - 9am, Shotgun Start at 9:00am. Cost: \$85.00 per golfer. 18 Holes of Golf w/electric cart, lunch at the turn and Chicken & Roast Beef Dinner Afterwards. ***PRIZES* *RAFFLES* *ON COURSE CONTESTS*** Call Friendship House to reserve your spot 313-871-7443

ABC-USA Biennial 2009

It's never too early to start planning for the next ABC Biennial! In 2009, ABCLA and ABCOSH will be hosting the denomination in Pasadena, CA and they look forward to sharing with everyone the hospitality of their region. Click below to check out the video they produced to welcome all American Baptists to the next Biennial.

For more detail go to

<http://www.abc-usa.org/biennial/2009pasadena/biennial2009.htm> or

Biennial Contact Information:
1.800.ABC.3USA x2234
biennial.meeting@abc-usa.org



| Sun | Mon | Tue | Wed | Thu | Fri | Sat |
|--|---------------------------------|---|--------------------|-----|-----|---------------------------|
| | | | | | 1 | 2 |
| | | | | | | Paul & Stacey on vacation |
| 3 Rev. Ron Tipton guest preacher | 4 | 5 5:30 Vespers 7:00 Mission Action Bd | 6 *newsletter* | 7 | 8 | 9 |
| Paul & Stacey on vacation | | | | | | |
| 10 Dr. Waldemar Schmeichel guest preacher | 11 | 12 5:30 Vespers | 13 | 14 | 15 | 16 |
| Paul & Stacey on vacation | | | | | | |
| 17 | 18 7:00 Board of Outreach | 19 5:30 Vespers | 20 | 21 | 22 | 23 |
| 24 | 25 | 26 5:30 Vespers 7:30 Executive Council | 27 *newsletter* | 28 | 29 | 30 |
| 31 | | | | | | |



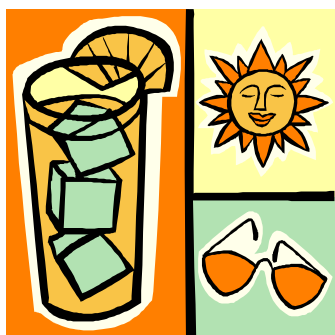
Happy Birthday!



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|------------------|---|-------------------|----|-----------------|----|
| Edie Hurst | 1 | Cindy Harrison | 9 | Fred Munson | 19 |
| Katie Kerschbaum | 2 | Jillian Glover | 12 | Janice Stumpf | 19 |
| Richard Bates | 3 | Jean Amick | 12 | Ray Counsell | 20 |
| Emily Wright | 5 | Melinda Haithcock | 13 | Nancy Rushton | 23 |
| Esther Floyd | 7 | Lynn Lamkin | 16 | Bill McKeachie | 24 |
| Lois Crabtree | 7 | Greg Thompson | 16 | Franklin Willis | 26 |
| Barb Griffin | 7 | Bill Kerr | 19 | Linda Dicks | 31 |

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The Reverends Paul & Stacey Simpson Duke, Co-Pastors



Next
newsletter
deadline:
Sunday, August 3, 2008