



FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH

Ann Arbor, Michigan

November 19, 2008

Pastor's Reflections

by Paul Simpson Duke

It will be a leaner Thanksgiving than usual. Fewer people will travel far to family tables. Many will sit down to the meal having recently lost their jobs or homes, or both, while others wonder if such losses will soon overtake them. Laughter will be interrupted by talk of hard times. In some homes the meal may be more modest.

What's this holiday again? Thanksgiving? For the "bounty" of our blessings? The very poor have always known the irony of it; millions more of us will join them this year, invited to pause over the meaning of giving thanks.

At its root, the day is an agrarian feast. It's about crops harvested and stored up or sold for sustenance in winter. The good earth and the people who tend it have yielded their yearly provisions for communal life and health. In America fewer of us than ever (2%) live in that immediate relationship with the land, so our thanksgiving for the meal may be a bit abstracted and remote. Still, if we stop to think about it, we are humbled and grateful for the spectacular fruitfulness of the earth, and reminded of our past and present debt to those who have cared for it well. So there is *that* to be thankful for.

And there are those who love us - and those whom we have been privileged to love. Some of them are gone from us now, but the inspiration of their living still breathes in us. To think of loved ones far and near is to know deep reasons for reverence and thanks.

But even as gratitude is a recollection of abundance, it is also a contemplation of scarcity. We are saying thanks for gifts that did not have to come our way, gifts for which there was never a guarantee, gifts that perhaps were once not ours, gifts that we certainly cannot count on keeping, and gifts that countless others in the world do not have and perhaps never will. This is why gratitude and humility are sisters. And it is why uncertain times may actually lead some of us to a richer experience of thanksgiving. When we are stripped of easy assumptions about our security, we may find ourselves pressed into recalling the things that matter most. We may be re-awakened to how tenuous our circumstances have always been - how fragile our lives - and how remarkably blessed, in fact, we have been. We may enter into a livelier sense of the present, with a more appreciative awareness of the people closest at hand and the simplest comforts and our truest privileges.

We may also discover renewed concern for people whose needs are greater and whose future is more fragile than our own. Odd, isn't it? We might expect hard times to make people more focused on themselves, but the opposite often turns out to be true. Good fortune has a way of putting walls around us, but hardship invites us to notice the greater community of need and the multitudes to whom we owe compassion and care.

The "first" Thanksgiving (though others preceded it, including centuries of such feasts by Native Americans) was a celebration of a most welcome harvest. Winters had been hard, provisions had been meager, many had died. The feasting was done with fresh memories of deprivation, with ongoing uncertainties about the future, and with the knowledge that none of them would have made it without a community of old friends and new benefactors. In a sense, it must always be this way. Our best gratitude is grounded in a reverent sense of the past, thankful acceptance of the present, trust in God for the future, and love for the needs and the gifts of community. In days of plenty and of leanness, gratitude is in order. Happy Thanksgiving.

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 or to Tiny Grace Notes. Children in Kindergarten - 3rd grade are invited to Children's Worship. Church School begins after worship (about 11:00).

Preschool or childcare in nursery

10:00 - 10:30 Worship
10:30 - 10:45 Tiny Grace Notes
10:50 - 11:00 Children's Worship
11:00 - 12:00 Church School (in K-2nd grade class)
12:00 - 12:30 Childcare in Room 202A & B

K - 2nd grade

10:30 - 11:00 Children's Worship (Room 202A)
11:00 - 12:00 Church School (Room 202B)
12:00 - 12:30 Grace Notes (Room 306)

3rd - 6th grades

10:00 - 11:00 Worship
11:00 - 11:50/12:00 Church School (Room 304)
11:50 - 12:30 Jr. Choir (Room 102) or
12:00 - 12:30 Grace Notes (Room 306)

Youth (7th - High School)

10:00 - 11:00 Worship
11:15 - 12:30 Church School (Room 107)

Children's Music and Arts Ministry (Sunday Mornings)

Jr. Handbells (Room 306).....9:15 - 9:45
Grace Notes Choir (room 306)..12:00 - 12:30

Tiny Grace Notes (Room 306)...10:30 - 10:45
Jr. Choir (Room 102).....11:50 - 12:30

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

November 23: View DVD, From Jesus to Christ: The First Christians.

November 30: Sermon Discussion

Pastor Paul Duke, leader

Please join us for a discussion of the morning's scriptures and sermon.

December 7: Guest: Rev. Mary Hulst, President, American Baptist Churches, USA

Other Adult Education Opportunities:

Wednesday Bible Study (Memorial Lounge) Ron Tipton, leader

The Bible Study will not meet on Nov. 26, but will resume on December 4.

What does it mean to "meditate" on the Scriptures? This fall the group is studying passages from the Gospel of Luke. We will read the passages not only for information, but also to hear what the words of Scripture are saying to us in particular. With thoughtful reflection, imagination, faith, and open hearts, we will seek personal meaning in the words of Scripture. Join us each Wednesday for fellowship and study. (Coffee and snacks are served)

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

To our Church Family

Thank you so much for your prayers, cards, phone calls and visits. You are a big part of the support we both need as Lloyd moves slowly through therapy, nursing and doctors' appointments toward the day when he can come home again. We both send you our love.

The Crabtrees

CHILDREN'S CALENDAR SALE

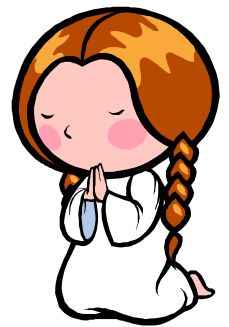
The church school children are once again selling God's Creation calendars to raise money in order to provide two scholarships for children in Nandasmoo to attend our Sister Church's school. We know you get many free calendars in the mail but these are heavy-weight, beautifully photographed calendars which have a great surface for writing down all those appointments and activities. Plus there are scriptures for inspiration each time you glance at the calendar during your busy schedule! At \$8 they are a real deal compared to other heavy-weight calendars found in stores - and these calendars make great gifts! The children will sell them before and after worship, or you may contact Sue Ellen and she will mail you one (or two or three).



2009 Calendars and New Greeting Cards Annabel Erskine is collecting those 2009 calendars you have received, but can't use and those packets of Greeting Cards. Church Women United collects these every year for the boys at Maxey boys' Training School. Thank you. — Annabel

A Prayer of Thanksgiving written in Children's Worship on November 16:

Thank you God for giving us all these things that make us happy!
Thank you for animals - reptiles, amphibians, polar bears and giraffes, and all pets (especially cats!)
Thank you for toys like Care Bears and dolls.
Thank you for all of the outdoors - snow and trees and rivers.
Thank you for music - for horns, violins, violas and pianos.
Thank you for all the things that we can do - camping, fishing, singing, playing.
Thank you for warm clothes and food (sushi, cheese, popcorn, ice cream and Teddy Grahams)
Thank you for family and friends, teachers, peacemakers and peace and love.
Thank you for Jesus and for God's love and care.
Thank you, God, for EVERYTHING and EVERYBODY!



(Mali, Calvin, Daniel, Tian Tian, Rob, and Charlie)



Experience the Journey to Bethlehem The First Baptist Church of Ypsilanti invites you to begin your Christmas celebration by attending our presentation of our *Living Nativity*. Experience the true meaning of Christmas through this pageant reenacting the beautiful story of the birth of Jesus Christ with live animals, music, authentic-style costumes, and your friends portraying the infant Jesus, Mary, Joseph, angels, shepherds and the wise men.

The *Living Nativity* will be presented on the church's east lawn (1110 W Cross Street, between Oakwood and Wallace) Sunday through Tuesday, December 14, 15 and 16. There will be three presentations each evening: 6:30, 7:00 and 7:30.

The *Living Nativity* is presented free of charge, and everyone is cordially invited to attend. We welcome your participation in singing along with the carols or petting the animals between presentations. Refreshments will be served in the social hall throughout the evening. Share this Christian experience with your family and friends.

YOUTH COLLECTING WARM CLOTHING

The Youth are collecting warm clothing for our Vespers guests and others in need. A basket will be out for the next several Sundays for your donations. Socks, hats, gloves, mitten, long-underwear and any other warm clothing will be greatly appreciated!



THE INTERFAITH ROUND TABLE OF WASHTENAW COUNTY will hold its fourteenth Annual Interfaith Thanksgiving Celebration on Sunday evening, November 23th, at 7 p.m., at the Church of the Good Shepherd, 2145 Independence, in Ann Arbor. 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 (424-1535) or Laurie Gailunas at 662-3654.



2008 Christmas Celebration — You may begin to bring in your finished craft projects anytime to the church office or to the information counter on Sunday mornings. Please be sure to have your name on the item and a suggested price, and give us an idea of the variety of items and any display needs. Presentation is important to help catch the eye of the buyers. Another part of the bazaar is the ever popular Gently Used Holiday Decorations. If you have holiday decorations which are no longer of use and would like to donate them, we will be very happy to take them off your hands. Again, you can bring them in anytime to either the information counter or to the church office. This is not to be confused with the Rummage Sale in September. Remember that the money raised will stay with the ABW Ministries to support our many projects. — Beverly Inbody (904-5750)

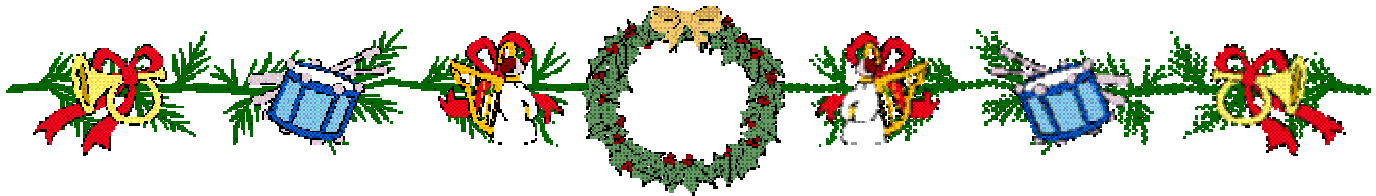




Cooks Needed for The Gathering – Volunteers are needed to cook meals for our campus ministry program, The Gathering. This is a much-appreciated ministry of hospitality for students who are away from home and don't often get a home-cooked meal. Please sign up at the Information Counter and take an instruction sheet with you.

ABC-USA Biennial 2009

Plans are well underway for our upcoming Biennial in beautiful Pasadena, CA June 26-28, 2009. Hosted by ABCLA and ABCOSH, this will be an event that you don't want to miss! Click on <http://www.abc-usa.org/biennial/2009pasadena/index.htm> for detailed information ... and begin now to plan to attend.



Christmas Card Idea!

When doing your Christmas cards this year, take one card and send it to a recovering soldier. If we pass this on and everyone sends a card, think of how many cards these wonderful special people who have sacrificed so much would get. Please send cards to this address, following the guidelines listed below:

Holiday Mail for Heroes
PO Box 5456
Capitol Heights, MD 20791-5456

Please note that the reference guidelines are important – many contributors have been disappointed in the past to find that they missed the mailing deadline or sent gifts and other types of materials that could not be delivered.

- All cards must be postmarked no later than Wednesday, Dec 10th
- Please ensure that all cards are signed.
- Please send cards as opposed to long letters which delay a quick review process.
- Please do not include email or home addresses on the cards, as the program is not meant to foster pen pal relationships.
- Please do not include inserts of any kind, including photos, as these items will be removed during the reviewing process.
- Participants should limit the number of cards they submit to 25 from any one person or 50 from any one class or group.

Ministry Leadership Certification Program Returns

Are you sensing God's call to professional ministry?

Are you a lay leader who wants to explore the next step in ministry?

Do you want to engage in serious and challenging study as you further explore God's call?

Then the Ministry Leadership Certification program may be for you. This is a serious program with challenging and engaging study. If you want to take ministry seriously, then we are preparing to assist you. For further information and a brochure, click on

<http://www.abc-mi.org/pdfs/MinistryCertificationBrochure.pdf>

25th Annual

A L T E R N A T I V E

Holiday Fair

Sunday, December 7
2 PM - 6 PM

Unique:

- **TOYS**
- **JEWELRY**
- **ORNAMENTS**
- **LEATHER CRAFTS**
- **POTTERY**
- **and More**

*These are handmade
items from third-world
countries.*

Plus:

**FARM ANIMALS,
TREES, and FISH**
*to be sent to
poor farmers
around
the world.*



First Baptist Church

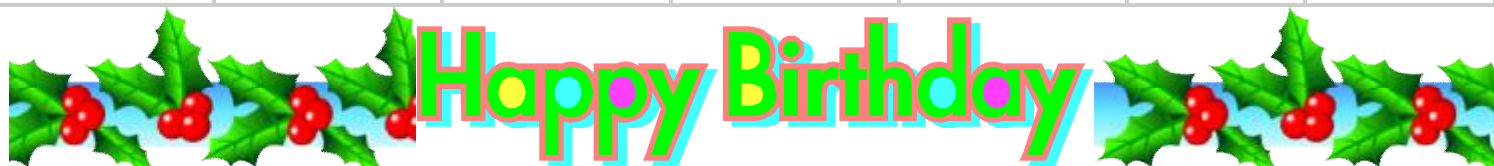
*An alternative way of celebrating the holiday season
by purchasing goods to help others!*



DECEMBER 2008



SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
	1	2	3 1:30 Bible Study 5:30 The Gathering	4 6:30 Handbells 7:30 Choir	5	6
7 2-6 pm Alternative Holiday Fair	8	9 1:00 Beecher/ Brewer 5:30 Vespers 7:00 Bd. of Wor- ship	10 1:30 Bible Study 5:30 The Gathering 7:30 Davis/Diels ChristCare	11 6:30 Handbells 7:30 Choir	12	13 9:00 Bazaar Set-up
14 11:30 ABWM Christmas Celebration & Bazaar	15	16 5:30 Vespers 7:00 Bd. of Trus- tees	17 1:30 Bible Study	18 1:00 MacGregor/ Stitt 6:30 Handbells 7:30 Choir	19	20
21 11:30 Children's Choirs Carol Sing	22	23 5:30 Vespers	24	25 Christmas Day Church Building & Office Closed	26	27
28 (no Second Hour Classes)	29	30 5:30 Vespers	31			



Bill Foster	1	Ray Fullerton, Jr.	10	Bob Kidd	25
Becky Miller	2	John Reed	11	David Bowen	26
Gerald Hodge	3	Mervyn Juchartz	16	Marissa Alaniz	27
Maria Pierantozzi	5	Merilee Magnuson	16	Shelley Alton	28
Irina Steiger	6	E. T. Crowe	17	Colin Barnes	28
Zoë McLaren	7	Omer Robbins, Jr.	18	Grace Crowe	29
David Heidt	8	Sam Kidd	21	Bob MacGregor	29
Ron Tipton	8	Karen Perket	22	Cameron Fortune	30
Kendall Rushton	8	Elizabeth Counsell	25	Barbara Wilkins	30
Larry Dicks	9			Vicki Williams	31

First Baptist Church
517 E Washington St
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,
November 30, 2008*

