



# FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH

Ann Arbor, Michigan

February 28, 2007

## Pastors' Reflections

*by Paul Simpson Duke*

Two weeks ago, when heavy snows hit Pennsylvania, the state's response systems functioned poorly, unduly inconveniencing and endangering many people. The governor made a public personal apology. To my ears, he sounded more genuine than most public figures do in such moments. We hear words like, "If anyone took offense at my remarks, I apologize," which, of course, is not an apology for the remarks at all. Or we witness something like this: after wrongdoing is discovered in a corporation or government agency, the head hauncho says, "I take full responsibility." Then nothing happens to indicate that any responsibility, in fact, was ever taken.

What would it mean for anyone to "take responsibility" for a failure? It would seem to mean at least three things: an attitude of contrition, the making of all possible amends, and the changing of behavior so as not to keep repeating the failure. The first of these is a matter of the heart that is inwardly painful; the second is a making of restitution that may be outwardly painful; the third is a positive course correction made with conviction and hope.

We are in the season of Lent, a time set apart for the kind of self-examination that would lead to taking responsibility for our failure - or, in biblical language, repenting of our sins. Of course we can't confine the issue of repentance to one season of the year, but Lent is a particularly apt time, since we are moving toward a fresh remembrance of the cross of Jesus and reconsidering what it means to follow him.

We are living in a culture of blame. We spend inordinate energy in private and public finger-pointing: what's wrong with everything is somebody else's fault. It's a nifty distraction from coming to terms with our own contributions to what is wrong with us and with the systems we live in.

Can we actually change and be instruments of positive change where we live? The gospel insists that we can. But such change cannot occur apart from taking real responsibility for our failure, by means of contrition, the making of amends, and clearly-made choices toward new behavior. If this strikes you as pretty much impossible, I'm inclined to agree. Maybe this is why the Bible doesn't speak of changing, but of *being* changed. Assistance from beyond ourselves is required.

Among the central declarations of Christian faith is that we are not alone in the business of taking responsibility for our failure. This is signified most powerfully in the death of Jesus. In his suffering he takes responsibility for sins he did not commit, and God is doing so with him and in him. To lean one's life into the astonishing claim of that gift is to find strength for taking one's own responsibility. This is a crucial part of what it means to follow Jesus.

But there is one more thing, more radical perhaps. We may be like Jesus also in taking responsibility for sins we did not commit. Our repentances need not concern only our independent personal failures. We may stand spiritually beside others who have done harm in our families, our nation, our world. We see ourselves in them. We ask forgiveness for us all. We open ourselves to change in behalf of us all. This is a ministry of identification. It is the final work of repentance, and the furthest reach of God's love in us. It could move us - and others - down the road that leads to Easter.



**Berniece M. Fister** of Ann Arbor, MI Age 90 passed away on Wednesday, February 7, 2007. She was born on July 27, 1916 in Bagley, Iowa, the daughter of Bert E. and Ferne (Hall) Smith and moved to Ann Arbor in July of 1941. She is survived by a son, Ervin, two daughters, Lillian and Sandra, nine grand-children: Margie, Steve, Ken, Tony, Bill, Teri, Robert, Penny Sue and Mary Elizabeth, twelve great grandchildren: Jennifer, Samantha, Katie, Rachel, Kayla, Travis, Max, David, Anna, Jimmy, Charlie and Sebastian. She was preceded in death by her husband of 51 years, Russell D. Fister. Berniece was a life long member of the First Baptist Church in Ann Arbor. She retired from the Ann Arbor Public Schools where she worked as a librarian. After retirement, she became the librarian at Parkway Meadows where she resided for the past 15 years. She was an active member of the Red Hat Society and a long time Avon Representative. The funeral service was held Monday, February 12, 2007 at Muehlig Funeral Chapel in Ann Arbor. Burial followed at Washtenong Cemetery.

**Dante Pierantozzi**, Ann Arbor, MI Age 89 died Friday, February 9, 2007. He was born January 30, 1918 in Cossignano, Italy, the son of Filippo and Guglielma Pierantozzi. Dante retired from Ford Motor Company after 37 years as a tool machinist. Survivors include his loving wife Maria, his children, Elizabeth (Daniel) Rauser, Paul Pierantozzi, grandchildren; Daniel Rauser and Richard Rauser, his sister Erminia Stracci and brother Florindo Pierantozzi, as well as many loving nieces and nephews. In addition to his parents he was preceded in death by his siblings, Giovanni, Giuseppina, Maria and Mariano. Dante's family received friends at the Nie Family Funeral Home, in Ann Arbor, on Sunday, February 11, 2007. A funeral service was held on Monday, February 12, at 10:00 a.m. at the funeral home. Entombment followed at Washtenong Memorial Park. Memorial contributions may be made to Arbor Hospice or to a charity of choice.



My family and I wish to thank all of you for your many prayers, concerns, visits, cards, and phone calls during these last few months of hurt and sadness, leading up to Dante's death. I am humbled by your generous expressions of sympathy, offers of help and support. Know that all this sharing of your love has given me much strength in the Lord without whom this burden would have been much heavier. Your kindness in taking the time to show you care means so much to me and my family. God bless each one of you.

In gratitude,  
Maria Pierantozzi, Elizabeth and Paul



**World Day of Prayer**, a Church Women United event, will be held Friday, March 2 at the Bethel A.M.E. Church, 900 John A. Woods Blvd., in Ann Arbor. Esperanza Barcelona, Residence Director of the Ecumenical Center/International Residence will give the message. The day will start with refreshments and fellowship at 9:30 a.m.

# FBC NEWS & EVENTS



## **Rotating Shelter**

The FBC Mission Board will once again host this year's Rotating Shelter beginning the evening of Monday, March 19 running through the evening of Sunday, March 25. The shelter program provides sleeping arrangements for homeless men throughout the cold months. FBC has participated in this program since its inception many years ago and considers it to be an important part of our mission outreach. At least two volunteers, preferably three, are needed each evening to spend the night as hosts. If you are able and willing to help out this year please sign up at the Information Counter.

## **MacGregor-Stitt Circle**

The next meeting of the MacGregor-Stitt Circle will be Thursday, March 15 at 1:00 p.m. at the home of Maria Pierantozzi. Please wear green and bring inspirational Irish jokes!

## **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 where instruction sheets are provided. *(Also, for anyone who has already provided meals, please stop by the card table next to the Information Counter to claim your dishes. Thank you!)*

## **Fellowship Time Hosts Needed**

Patty Simmons has a special request regarding Fellowship Time. She is again asking some of the men of the church to step forward and volunteer to make coffee. Following is a partial list of men who've made coffee in the kitchen and have survived: Arthur Francis, Les George, Richard Bates, Ray Counsell, Jim Stearns (with the help of Jack & Owen), John Floyd III, Scott Diels, David Robbins, Mr. Scott, Larry Lewis, Ron Tipton, and Wayne Lamerson. If you're still hesitating, let's all take a moment to remember one of the dearest men of all time, Orrin Inbody. There will be a sign-up sheet at the Information Counter. Thanks, from Patty!

## **Communion Servers and Greeters**

If you are interested in greeting folks Sunday mornings before Worship and/or serving communion some future Sunday, please visit the Information Counter where sign-up sheets reside. Filling both of these roles is an on-going need and the Board of Worship very much appreciates everyone who participates.

## **FBC Book Clubs**

The FBC Ladies Book Club will meet Tuesday, March 6th at 7 p.m. at Mary Gregg's house to discuss "Bel Canto" by Ann Patchett. All church ladies are welcome! Please contact Mary (769-3127) or Janice Stumpf (663-4871 or [jlstumpf@umich.edu](mailto:jlstumpf@umich.edu)) for further information.

The next meeting of the FBC Men's Book Club will be held Tuesday, March 13, at 7 p.m., at the Drake home. You'll enjoy a lively, rewarding discussion on books and topics of interest, along with refreshments. The book that will be discussed is "The Devil in the White City" by Erik Larson.

## Adult Christian Education

**Addressing Contemporary Issues in the Study of Women in the Bible (Lounge)** led by Astrid Beck  
Women are some of the most distinctive, unforgettable, and diverse characters in the Bible. Women, led by their faith in God, used their wits to defeat their circumstances. They were spunky, smart, and assertive. It is important for our understanding of the Bible, and for our faith, to study the women who speak so eloquently, to note their implications for the masculine and feminine paradigms, to hear their voices. During Lent, we will study Jesus and some of the women surrounding him.

March 4: Jesus and his interaction with women

March 11: The Woman at the Well

March 18: Mary Magdalene

March 25: The Women at the Cross

### **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).

## Other Adult Learning Opportunities

**Second Sunday Series: Living the Questions** ~ Join us Sunday, March 11 from 5:30 - 7:30 p.m. Following a simple potluck and time of fellowship, we gather in the Memorial Lounge for a time of engagement with some of the most challenging issues of the Christian faith. After viewing a 30-minute DVD of clips of leading theologians, biblical scholars, sociologists, and church leaders, we will have time for in-depth discussions of the issues they raise. Childcare is provided. Please sign up at the Information Counter if you plan to attend.

**Wednesday Bible Study (Memorial Lounge, 1:30 - 2:30)** - Rev. Paul Simpson Duke leads a study of Philippians. Join us each week for fellowship, learning and great snacks!

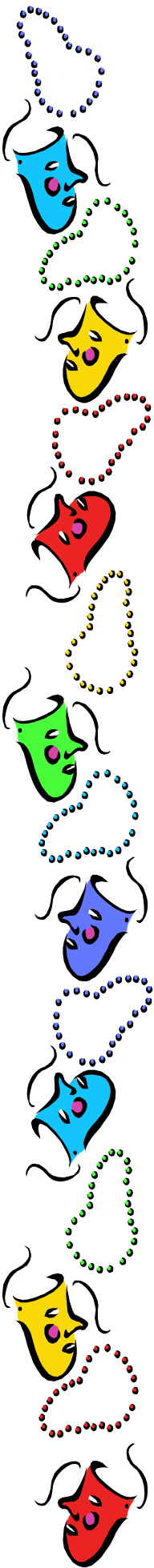
**Small Groups (ChristCare)** - Centered on Bible study, fellowship, mission, prayer and worship, we currently have two groups: one meets monthly and the other meets every other week. See Stacey, Paul or Sue Ellen for more information about joining a group.

## Faith Talk for Families

(adapted by Sue Ellen from *Taking Home Faith* newsletter by Pastor Greg Priebbenow, St. Paul's Lutheran Church, Box Hill, Australia, [www.formingfaith.com](http://www.formingfaith.com) and from Alternatives for Simple Living, <http://www.simpleliving.org/>)

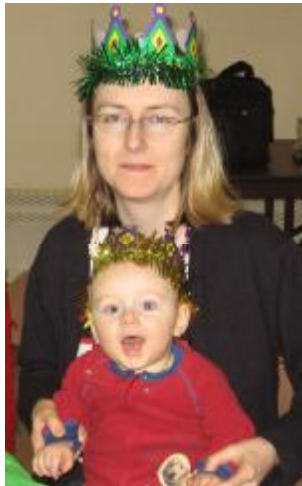
Lent is the period of 40 weekdays from Ash Wednesday to Holy Saturday, and began on Wednesday, February 21 (Ash Wednesday). How will you observe Lent this year as a family? Here are some ideas:

1. At the beginning of Lent have each family member pick out one day during Lent that will be his or her special day. On their special day each member will be expected to be especially helpful, kind and complimentary to the other members of the family.
2. Jesus spent 40 days in the wilderness or desert and was tempted by Satan.
  - a. Think of the temptations that confront you through TV commercials? Keep a count of each commercial you see in the next two days. Give \$1 for each one that makes you want to buy something.
  - b. The desert is a place where we are stripped of distractions. Give 50¢ for every TV program you watch today and tomorrow.
  - c. For the next three days, turn off your car radio and/or tape/CD player as you travel to and from school and activities. Use this time for quiet reflection. How does this affect your life?
  - d. Find a wilderness area or green space near your home, at a park or at a reserve. Visit the area with a few friends or your family. While you are there, spend forty minutes in silence opening your mind and heart to God. Give 10¢ for every wild creature you see. Donate this money to a conservation organization.



# ***FUN NIGHT***

## ***Mardi Gras Style***



*Thank you to Bev Inbody, Nancy, Vicky and Rob Rushton for their coordination, organization and work on the February Fun Night! (We hope to see you all at our next Fun Night, "Cinco de Mayo Eve" on May 4!)*

*~ The Board of Christian Education*



So, we had these **small group meetings**, now what?

First, thank you for participating in the groups. About 50 people from the congregation were able to do so. Speaking for myself, I found the ones I was in quite exciting in terms of getting to know folks better and in the wealth of caring for our church and the creativity expressed. It was wonderful to see both bold, innovative ideas that require the whole congregation to work together and small steps that require only a couple of people. What's next? The executive council will go through the six pages of ideas at its meeting on March 7. Then within a few weeks after that, the whole congregation will gather to see which of these ideas (or others we produce along the way) that we are being led to pursue. So, keep praying and plan to be part of the larger meeting even if you were unable to participate in one of the small groups.

Mary Davis, Moderator



FBC member **David Heidt**, a resident in general surgery at the University of Michigan, was a lead researcher in the discovery of the small number of cells in pancreatic cancer that are capable of fueling the tumor's growth. The finding is the first identification of cancer stem cells in pancreatic tumors, and the results are the cover article in the February issue of the journal, *Cancer Research*. Cancer stem cells are the small number of cancer cells that replicate to drive tumor growth. The research indicates that current cancer treatments sometimes fail because they are not attacking the cancer stem cells.

By identifying the stem cells, drugs can now be developed to target and kill these cells. This is particularly crucial for pancreatic cancer, which has the worst survival rate of any major cancer type. David plans to pursue a fellowship in transplantation and to continue similar research to identify hepatic cancer stem cells.



Many of you have expressed concern for our niece, Betsy Russell, and her twins, Emma and Owen, who were born very prematurely in November. Thank you for your prayers and concern. Betsy's original due date was Feb 16. They have done quite well. Owen has been home for about 3 weeks and weighs a whopping 6 pounds. Aunt Mary has been diligently contributing to his desire to be held all the time. Emma is a bit behind Owen, but we expect her to be able to come home within a couple of weeks. She's now 4 lbs, 7 oz. and is out of the NICU and in the "feeder/grower" room at the hospital (It sounds like a chicken coop, doesn't it).


~ Mary Davis and Scott Diels



**The Interfaith Round Table of Washtenaw County** will hold another evening forum on the intersection of science and religion on the topic, "The Pain and the Joy of Genomics: Can we see humans as both scientific and spiritual?" Wednesday, March 14, from 7:00–8:30 p.m., at the Ann Arbor Public Library, 343 S. Fifth Avenue. Dr. Sharon Kardia, co-director of U of M's Life Sciences & Society Program, will speak using case studies and practical examples. Four representatives (Muslim, Catholic, Buddhist and Interfaith) will then dialogue with Dr. Kardia, followed by group discussion with attendees. For more information, contact Rev. George Lambrides at 424-1535 ([gbrides@umich.edu](mailto:gbrides@umich.edu)).



# March 2007

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
				1 6:30 Handbell Practice 7:30 Choir Practice	2 9:30 World Day of Prayer	3
4 Communion	5 7:00 Bd. of Evangelism	6 5:30 Vespers 7:00 Ladies Book Club	7 1:30 Bible Study 5:30 The Gathering 7:30 Executive Council	8 6:30 Handbell Practice 7:30 Choir Practice	9	10
11 Second Sunday Newsletter Deadline	12 7:00 Board of Mission Action	13 7:00 Men's Book Club	14 1:30 Bible Study 5:30 The Gathering 7:30 Davis-Diels CC	15 1:00 MacGregor-Stitt Circle 6:30 Handbell Practice 7:30 Choir Practice	16	17 
18	19	20 1:00 Beecher-Brewer Circle 5:30 Vespers 7:00 Board of Trustees	21 1:30 Bible Study 5:30 The Gathering 7:30 Board of Christian Education	22 6:30 Handbell Practice 7:30 Choir Practice	23	24
<i>(Rotating Shelter: Monday, March 19 - Sunday, March 25, 8 p.m. - 7 a.m.)</i>						
25 Newsletter Deadline	26	27 9:30 ABWM Bd.	28 1:30 Bible Study 5:30 The Gathering 7:30 Davis-Diels CC	29	30	31

## HAPPY BIRTHDAY

Sue Ellen Glover	2	Glen Modell	15	Iris Martin	22
Mabel Japinga	8	Arthur Francis	16	Chris Kiver	22
Vern Jensen	8	Mary Gregg	16	Calvin Floyd	27
J.T. Knight	9	Cameron Crowe	16	Donna Tipton	30
George Moyer	14	Kristen Beene	20	Nancy Rhodes	30
Sarah Drake	14			John MacGregor	30

First Baptist Church  
512 East Huron Street  
Ann Arbor, MI 48104  
734-663-9376  
[www.fbca2.org](http://www.fbca2.org)  
[office@fbca2.org](mailto:office@fbca2.org)

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

**Next Deadline:**

*Sunday, March 11, 2007*



National Ministries is transforming lives through ...

American Baptist Homes and Caring Ministries  
Disaster Response and Refugee Resettlement  
Chaplains and Pastoral Counselors  
Volunteer Ministries  
Neighborhood Action Program, Christian Centers  
Ministry to Children and Youth  
Ministries of Financial Aid and Continuing Education

***The America For Christ Offering 2007 will be received  
throughout the month of March.  
Please give generously.***