



FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH

Ann Arbor, Michigan

January 10, 2007

Pastors' Reflections

by Stacey Simpson Duke

I am discovering that one of the great joys of parenthood is watching the emerging personhood of each of my children. It is a delight to observe the unfolding of their unique interests, preferences, and talents, and to see how much of it is completely their own, and not necessarily related to anything that Paul and I encourage or model. Rob is our little engineer, endlessly fascinated by opening and closing doors, turning lights on and off, and investigating how things work. He also has a particular fondness for all manner of accessories - hats, glasses, shoes, earrings, necklaces, hair clips, and (after seeing both my father and Paul's mother with one of these at Christmastime) canes. Charlie is our mimic, our clown, our dancing boy, always on the move, eager to run, jump, twirl, and do anything for a laugh, and with exuberance. When we turned on a CD of Handel's *Messiah* for the first time last month, he hopped off the couch and did a dancing interpretation of it, the likes of which neither Paul nor I had ever seen.

Of all the interests they have developed, though, the one that perhaps gives us the deepest delight (aside from their great love of books) is their shared appreciation of music. That they both love to sing, to listen to music, and to attempt to play any instrument they can get their little hands on, is a tremendous source of pleasure for us both. That they seem to have a natural talent for music is icing on the cake. Lately, one of their favorite songs to sing at bedtime is "Jesus Loves Me." It is one of the tenderest moments of each day for me - to hear those little voices singing that sweet old song.

The funny thing is, Paul and I didn't teach it to them. They learned it first at church. Every Sunday morning, they spend part of their nursery time with Deb Snyder and some volunteers, learning to sing some of the great children's songs and getting to shake little jingle bells. They *love* it. And we love what they are learning there.

I am so proud of what our church has to offer children in the way of musical instruction, engagement, encouragement, and role-modeling. I am so grateful for our paid music leaders and the volunteers who assist. Remembering my own experience as a child and teenager in church music programs, I know that the ministry of those who lead such programs will go far beyond the few years each child is in the program. I believe that I got as much spiritual foundation in church music programs as I did in church education programs. There is something about music that gets to the heart more deeply than mere words, so that religious instruction that comes in that way may go deeper than all the teaching we try to do.

Beyond the children's music program, I am grateful for the wider musical ministry of this church. To receive those gifts in particular abundance on Christmas Eve night at the Lessons and Carols service - under Carole's inspiring leadership, Joel's inspired playing, and the soloists' and choir's gorgeous singing - was like getting a Christmas gift directly from God. How fortunate we all are, to have not only the exceptional leadership of our paid musicians, but to have so many generous volunteers, who give so many hours each week to the music ministry of this church. I believe it is one of our church's greatest gifts.

As proud as I am of our musical heritage and ministry here at First Baptist Church, I am prouder still of our congregational community as a whole. As I sat in the Fellowship Hall one Sunday morning last month with many of you, watching our church's children sing and play bells, and following them as they led us in carols, and laughing with you at Charlie's enthusiastic, "Yay!!!" after every song, my heart was full-to-overflowing. This may be the church at its best - a multi-generational community, singing, laughing, loving, leading our children and being led by them, being energized by music and worship and fellowship to go out into the world to spread that love. I'm so grateful to be a part of this particular family of God, and so grateful that my boys are being raised in such a family as this.

Christian Education for Children and Youth

(Nursery: 9:30 -11:30 a.m., room 307)

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 in room 202A until 11:00 a.m.

Preschool - 2ND grade

10:00 - 10:30 Worship (Sanctuary)
10:30 - 11:00 Children's Worship (room 202A)
11:00 - 12:00 Church School (room 202B)
12:00 - 12:30 Grace Notes (room 305)

3rd - 5th grades (3rd graders may attend Children's Worship, 10:30-11:00 a.m.)

11:00 Church School (room 304)
3rd graders leave at 12:00 for Grace Notes (room 305)
4th & 5th graders leave at 11:50 for Jr. Choir (room 102)

Youth (6th - high school)

10:00 - 11:00 Worship
11:15 - 11:50 Church School (room 107)
11:50 - 12:30 Jr. Choir (room 102)

Children's Music and Arts Ministry

Jr. Handbells	9:15 - 9:45	room 305, upper level
Tiny Grace Notes (preschool)	11:00 - 11:15	room 305, upper level
Grace Notes (K - 3 rd grade)	12:00 - 12:30	room 305, upper level
Jr. Choir (4 th grade and older)	11:50 - 12:30	room 102, lower level

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. They comprise the foundation of the early society in the Bible. This winter we will continue with women from the Old Testament:

Women in Judges: Jan. 14 Deborah and Jael - Judges 4 and 5
Jan. 21 Samson and Delilah - Judges 13-16

Women in the Day of the Kings: Jan. 28 Michal, Saul's daughter - 1 Sam 18:2-19:17;25:44;
2 Sam 3:13-16; 6:16

Feb 4. Abigail, wife of King David - 2 Sam 25 (Sue Ellen or Paul)

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

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.

Men's Book Group - Lively, rewarding discussion on books and topics of interest, along with refreshments. The next meeting will be held March 13, 7 p.m., at the Drake home. (The title of the book for March's discussion will be announced later.)



FBC NEWS & EVENTS

2007 Annual Financial Meeting

The congregation's annual financial meeting will be held Sunday, January 28 at 12:30 p.m. in the Fellowship Hall. We will gather together for a potluck lunch (the fun part) followed by the meeting at which we will consider and approve a budget for 2007. Please plan to attend. Childcare will be provided for the meeting. The Board of Care and Community needs help with set-up and clean-up. Please let Donna Tipton know if you can help out with either or both. Also, if you owe Carey a report, please have it to her (preferably via e-mail) by Friday, January 19. Thank you!

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 for you to take with you.

January MacGregor-Stitt Circle Meeting

The next meeting of the MacGregor-Stitt Circle will take place next Thursday, January 18, 1:00 p.m. at the home of Eva Kelly. The program will be "Favorite Scriptures and Why."

2007 Flower Calendar is up!

If you are interested in hosting the chancel flowers a certain Sunday in 2007, the new calendar is up and ready to be filled in. The arrangements are \$30 and you may choose the type of flowers you'd like, as well as the dedication which appears in the bulletin the week you host them.

Successful Christmas Celebration

The AB Women's Ministries 2006 Christmas Celebration was a success beyond what we had hoped for. Our gratitude goes to the many contributors of the items for the bake sale and bazaar and to the musical talents of our children. We want to thank the members of our congregation for their support and generosity and know that the results will mean the women can continue their many church programs. Thank you to everyone.

It's not too early to begin planning the 2007 Celebration. As projects are finished in the coming months, they can be stored at church, and remember that any ideas or suggestions are most welcomed.

~ Helen Johnson and Bev Inbody

Newsletter Options

If at anytime you should decide you'd like to change the way you receive this bi-monthly newsletter (choices are via e-mail, mail, or picking it up Sunday morning), please let the office know, keeping in mind that it saves the church money if you choose e-mail or picking it up.

Happy New Year! I am thankful for the cards and prayers I've received while recuperating. I miss everyone and long to see all of you.

*God Bless,
Iris Martin*

We want to thank everyone for your prayerful support of our **Vespers Ministry** to the homeless and hungry in our community. A special thanks also to all who have volunteered in the kitchen and to those who have given devotionals at the worship service. We had a tremendous turn out for our Christmas service on December 19th. The Secret Santa gift exchange worked better than we could have expected, and we want to thank you all for your generosity. Many people were helped, and deeply touched by the gifts. The following is a note of thanks received from one of our guests:

"To all at First Baptist -
Thank you for the great dinner and service.
Also thanks for the gifts, in particular the Bible.
Very thoughtful at a tough time of year for the homeless,
a ray of sunshine greatly appreciated. Merry Christmas!
~ Steve Carnes

PS: Wonderful message as well!"

The Board of Christian Education would like to thank **Chuck and Betsy Suits, and their family - Carl, David, John and Sarah** - for the generous gift of a new DLP Data Projector from the Joseph Suits Memorial fund. The new projector had its first use on Sunday as Stacey displayed beautiful photos from her retreat in Italy. In addition to photos, the projector can also be used in teaching and in entertainment. It can clearly project DVD's, movies and videos in a small room like the Lounge as well as for distances over 30 feet! Thank you to the Suits family for this gift!

Those who remember **Grace and Ruth, the daughters of Chet and Vi Loucks**, may be interested in news from them (relayed by Ed Voss from his sister, who roomed with Ruth their freshman year in college):

"Ruth Loucks Johnston sounds good, is still working 2 days a week, and going to a gym 2 or 3 times a week. She and her sister Grace went on an Elderhostel trip to Molokai, Hawaii. Ruth's son Scott was in Iraq for 8 months this year, with the Medical Stress Unit in Fallujah; he came home safe in September. Ruth spent Thanksgiving with Grace and her family in Denver."

The Interfaith Round Table once again has tickets to sell for an outstanding UMS winter event, "The Chieftains" which takes place 4:00 p.m. Sunday, January 21, 2007 at Hill Auditorium. One of the hottest acts in the folk world today, the Chieftains are the most enduring and influential creative force in establishing the international appeal of Celtic music. They have collaborated with such names as Van Morrison, James Galway, the Rolling Stones, Sting, Los Lobos, and a variety of country music stars. Ticket prices: \$42, \$32, \$24. Great gifts for the holidays. For more information call 424-1535 or email gbrides@umich.edu.



Partnership between ABC-USA and Habitat for Humanity

December 4-8 found Scott Diels and Mary Davis with four staff from the National Ministries office as the first official ABC volunteers for this joint project. ABC has partnered with Habitat to build seven houses in Gautier (pronounced Go-shay), MS over the next several months. We did not actually start on one of these houses during that week but rather helped complete two houses that are almost ready for their families. We painted and caulked and cleaned and hung ceiling fans and also did a bit of siding work on the first day. Habitat and the Gulf Coast need all the volunteers who can come. In the two counties near Biloxi, the local Habitat affiliates want to build 100 houses a year for the next four years. Clearly, this is a goal which can only be reached with our help as contributors of both money and time, especially time. They have set up a volunteer village in Biloxi. It's a lot like going to camp, complete with bunk beds, shared bath facilities, and food on a tray. For the cost of transportation and \$100 for a week's room and board, you can help a family, learn a little about construction, and meet some really wonderful people from all over the country. Both individuals and groups are warmly welcomed. They even have some RV hook-ups. Southern hospitality wasn't swept away by Katrina. We think we'll be going back sometime in 2007. Who will join us?



YOUTH VALENTINE SALE

It's time for the Youth Valentine Sale - a chance for you to show your love, friendship and appreciation to those in your church family. Starting Sunday, January 14 (through February 4) the Youth (and parents) will be selling the blank valentine cards (\$1 each) at tables near the Information Counter and the Fellowship Hall, before and after worship. After you fill out your cards, return them to the Youth, who will compile the cards and deliver each one to your chosen Valentines on February 11, along with a special treat. Remember - everyone will receive a treat from the Youth - what you are purchasing are the cards to express your sentiments, which will be joyfully delivered by the Youth. If you would like assistance in filling out your cards, the Youth will be glad to help. (All profits from this sale will be donated by the Youth to a charity.)

If you are unable to be in church the next few weeks, please call, email or send the following information to Sue Ellen or Brandy:

Person ordering: _____ Phone #: _____

Who would you like to send cards to (full name please) and what would you like the card to say?

1. _____
(recipient's name)

(message)

2. _____
(recipient's name)

(message)

3. _____
(recipient's name)

(message)

Please mail this list along with \$1 per card to Brandy at First Baptist Church, 512 East Huron, Ann Arbor, MI 48104, or you may call or email Sue Ellen (663-9376; sueellen@fbca2.org).



2006 Christmas Celebration



First Baptist Church
512 East Huron Street
Ann Arbor, MI 48104
734-663-9376
www.fbca2.org
office@fbca2.org

The Reverends Paul & Stacey Simpson Duke, Co-Pastors

Next Deadline:

Sunday, January 21, 2007



Second Sunday Series: Living the Questions

January 14, 5:30 – 7:30

Following a simple potluck and time of fellowship in the Fellowship Hall, 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 will be provided. Please sign up at the Information Counter and pick-up your copy of the participant's guide for Lesson 5: *Evil, Suffering and a God of Love*. Plan to join us January 14 for dinner, dialogue, and discovery!