



FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH

Ann Arbor, Michigan

June 27, 2007

Pastors' Reflections

by Paul Simpson Duke

From time to time, it's good to ask ourselves why we do what we do in church. All that we do here should intentionally reflect our faith and its deliberate expression. The problem, of course, is that we lose touch with the reasons behind what we do. We fall into rote repetitions that carry little meaning for us, since we no longer know (if we ever did) why we do them. An ongoing education and dialogue on the why-we-do-what-we-do question is always in order at church.

This column is an attempt to do this on the subject of music in worship. What I want to say has nothing to do with musical styles, but simply with what the music-making portions of worship are for. Let's ask the questions: why does the music occur when it does, and what purpose is it really meant to serve?

We could say there are two modes of music in worship. There is the music that we all make together - i.e., the songs, hymns, or sung responses. And there is the music made not by all of us but by individuals, choirs, or ensembles. Reasons for the first kind are obvious. We are creatures who must offer expressions of our hearts and minds to God, expressions too deep for words alone. So we sing them: our praise, our longings, our hopes, our convictions and intentions. To sing these together unites us, literally and symbolically, and permits us to express more truly together what we might not be able to say individually in words. For example, on a given day it might feel false for me to say, "It is well with my soul," but when we all sing it together, it becomes real to me in a deeper place - a shared, sung place not bounded by the merely rational.

But what about the music offered by only some of us or one of us? Why a prelude and postlude, why two anthems by the choir or performances by handbells or soloists or children's choirs? The purpose of these, like everything else in the service, is to prompt and assist in the worship of God *by us all*. We are all to participate in this music. As the musicians offer themselves and their gifts to God in our presence, our part, as we absorb the music's content and are present to the giving of it by others, is above all to follow their lead - to do in our hearts and minds what they are doing with instruments or voices.

Think, for example, of the offertory portion of the service. In it we give ourselves and our gifts to God in response to what we have heard and received. As we are reflecting, praying, and placing money in the plates, the musicians themselves make an offering, to stir and accompany and lead in the offerings of us all. Their gifts and ours are joined in an act of united worship. The beginning of worship offers the same kind of partnership - the musical prelude expresses approach to God, inviting and assisting our joined entry into worship. The postlude leads and accompanies our gratitude and commitment as we re-enter the world. And so forth. The music not only voices its own praise or prayer or yearning, it opens a door for us all to enter and re-enter those expression of worship.

The point of worship music is not that musicians play or sing while the rest of us sit and listen. Worship is not a course in music appreciation, and we have not come to a concert. We have come to be entirely engaged with God together. A deliberate and responsive passion is in order. To drift into distraction, daydreaming or, worse, judging the music, is to forfeit the gift. To sit passively through it is an abandonment of worship. Something is actually required of us: an inner initiative, the discipline of prayerful, receptive listening, and the making of a conscious choice to let something in us sing along. And that is, in part at least, why music is played and sung in our worship: to gather our hearts and lift them up into wonder, awe, and love, poured out - together - to God.

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, preschoolers are invited to join the childcare provided on the third floor next to the nursery through 11:30 a.m. Parents are asked to pick up their children after worship.

There are no church school classes in July. Children's Worship and Church School classes for all ages will resume in August.

Christian Education for Adults

Sunday, July 1, 11:30 a.m. in the Lounge:

Chat with Pastor Manuel from our Sister Church in Nandasmo and learn about the scholarship fund for the children of the school. All are invited to stay for a pizza lunch at noon.

Second Sunday Series ~ Living the Questions:

Join us July 8 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. Please sign up at the Information Counter and pick up your copy of the participant's guide for lesson 10, *Compassion - The Heart of Jesus' Ministry*.



VBS 2007

ALL GOD'S KIDS

August 20-24, 5-8 p.m.

CRAFT SUPPLIES needed: Shells, seaweed, nets and other ocean items, baby food jars (with tops) and ½ gallon plastic milk containers (without tops).

VOLUNTEERS needed: Please check the long table by the ramp and Information Counter for all the ways that you can help, or return this form.

- I can help with craft preparations now (July)
- I can help with transporting kids from Hikone and back again (4:45 - 5:30 and/or 7:50 - 8:30)
- I can help with supper (4:45 - 6:15 p.m.)
- I can assist one evening (or more?)
- I will provide food
- I can do craft preparations
- I can provide childcare for the children of volunteers
- I can help with set-up (mornings)
- I can help with clean up (8:00 - 8:30 p.m.)

NAME _____

CHURCH PICNIC

(sponsored by the Board of Christian Education)

Sunday, July 29, Noon - 2:00 at Allmendinger Park

Please sign-up at the Information Counter



Communion Servers are needed for August and September.
If you can help with this special service please sign up at the Information Counter.

~ The Board of Worship



*Interfaith Council
for Peace & Justice*

We are very pleased to have Pastor Jason Crosby leading our Vespers service on Tuesday July 3rd. Jason is currently finishing up his work as Program Coordinator for the Interfaith Council for Peace and Justice. Many of you also know Jason's wife Kate. She recently graduated from the University of Michigan Law School. At the end of July, Jason and Kate will return to Kentucky. If you come to Vespers on Tuesday the 3rd you will have the opportunity to give him your well-wishes in person, and hear Jason proclaim the good news from God's word.

I wanted to also personally endorse the good work that ICPJ does and encourage those of you who may be interested to investigate becoming supporters/members of the organization.

<http://www.icpj.net> You can also sign up for their email newsletter which will keep you up-to-date on important peace events, interfaith perspectives on justice, and action alerts to build a better world.

At ICPJ they rely on donated office supplies. That keeps costs down, but it also makes for some creaky chairs, wobbly tables, and stained carpets. If you've got any of the following lying around, ICPJ will be more than happy to put them to good use:

- * Area rug, 12' x 18'
- * Office chairs in good condition
- * Conference table
- * Power-point projector

To donate, contact Chuck Warpehoski at chuck@icpj.net, 734-663-1870

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(* = Chair)

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(Numbers in parentheses denote first year elected - six years consecutive service on one board permitted)



July 2007



Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
1 Communion	2	3 5:30 Vespers	4 <i>Independence Day</i> (church and offices closed)	5	6	7
8 11:30 Board of Trustees 5:30 Second Sunday (Newsletter Deadline)	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17 5:30 Vespers	18	19	20	21
	Art Fair Parking →					
22 (Newsletter Deadline)	23	24	25	26	27	28
29 12:00 Church Picnic	30	31				



Happy Birthday!

Tim Hillebrand	1	Edgar Willis	12	Missy Snyder	21
Wayne Lamerson	3	Cesar Alaniz	12	Joel Hastings	22
Julia Crowe	4	Ricky Rushton	13	Megan Hudson	24
Gail Curtis	5	Marlene Francis	15	Kathryn Gregg	25
Lynn Blunt	6	James Rushton	15	Isabelle Louis	28
Jackie Snyder	10	Charise Hastings	16	Alice Moyer	29
Samuel Halliday	10	Paul Simpson Duke	18	Aleta Schwartzenberger	31
		Elli Barron	21		

First Baptist Church
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The Reverends Paul & Stacey Simpson Duke, Co-Pastors

Next Deadline:

Sunday, July 8, 2007

Summer Vacation



The **Art Fairs** will soon be here - and once again we are renting out the church parking lot to raise funds for the Youth program and our Sister Church in Nicaragua. The artists (and their motor homes, vans, trucks and trailers) begin arriving Monday, July 16, and on that date the church parking lot will be off limits unless you are on church business. (Please ask the volunteer on duty where you should park.) If you want to shop at the art fairs, we always provide parking (for a donation) for our congregation.

Many volunteers are needed to supervise the lot. Please sign up at the Information Counter. You will be helping to raise over \$2,000 for our Youth and our Sister Church in Nandasmö. In addition to our gratitude, volunteers "earn" a free half-day parking spot to be used any time during the Fairs!