



FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH

Ann Arbor, Michigan

March 14, 2007

Pastors' Reflections

by Stacey Simpson Duke

As much as I rely on computers and related technologies, and as engaged as I am in the internet community, I learn on a nearly daily basis how much I don't know about the digital world. Nothing has taught me this as clearly as my work over the last many months with the Evangelism Board and other volunteers to get our Sunday sermons and services on our church's website in podcast form. I theoretically know what a *podcast* is, and I have a vague understanding of how it works, but mostly this effort has mystified me (and has introduced me to all kinds of technical words I still don't know the meaning of). And as E.T. Crowe, chair of the Evangelism Board, recently said, getting our audio files on our church website has proved to be "deceptively complex."

Still, with the persistence and hard work of Matthew Kirchner (who provides steady behind-the-scenes leadership volunteering at the controls of our sound system each week) and Bob Kidd (who just happened to be interested, knowledgeable, and supremely helpful), we finally pulled it off. As of today, there are three sermons available for download on our church website (at www.fbca2.org/Worship/Sermons); we intend for the latest sermon to be available at the beginning of each week. There are still a few issues to be worked out, and we are working to address those (for instance, ultimately, we intend to offer the option of either downloading the entire worship service or just the sermon). Soon, we will have explicit instructions available about how to use this feature on our site (though please feel free to go ahead and start experimenting with it - it's fairly user-friendly, even if you've never tried such a thing before. Start by just clicking on "Audio" next to any sermon that has such an option, and then see what happens).

It is really exciting to consider how this technology can help support our church's ministry. Want to let someone know what our church is like? Refer them to the podcasts on our website, and they can check out the service from home. Know someone who doesn't live here but might be helped by the message you heard last Sunday? Send them to the podcasts. Did you yourself miss church, or did you simply want to listen again to something you heard? Go to the website. All those students you see walking around campus with little iPod earbuds in their ears? Now they can all be listening to our church's podcasts! (By the way, you do *not* have to have an iPod to listen to the podcasts - you can listen to it right through your computer speakers if you want).

What's more, because our church's new digital recorder (purchased with funds provided from the Hazel Morikawa Memorial Fund) is not tied to our sanctuary sound system, we also have the ability to record other church events: Bible studies, musical offerings, campus ministry studies, youth events, guest lectures - anything that would lend itself to being recorded can be put into podcast form now. It's thrilling to consider how the impact of our church's ministry might be multiplied by taking advantage of current technology.

If everything I have written above reads like jibberish to you, that's okay. Some of you may never once check out our church website, and that's all right. Churches existed for a couple of millennia without them. But if you have friends, neighbors, family members, or co-workers who are engaged with the internet, and especially if those people are unchurched, please don't hesitate to send them to our site. You don't have to know how to tell them what to do. Just show them our website address (www.fbca2.org) and tell them we have podcasts they can listen to if they're interested. They can probably find their way from there. And when we do have little instruction sheets ready, we will make those available to any of you who would like to pass them on to others.

Just as some churches expanded their ministry in the past by reaching out through television and radio, now we have the opportunity to do something similar through the internet - only without additional cost, and with absolutely no regional boundaries (anyone with internet access - in Australia, Nicaragua, Botswana, Japan - can listen to our podcasts). The internet and its ever-advancing technologies and applications are opening up a whole new world - a sometimes overwhelming and mind-boggling world, yes, but an exhilarating one, too, full of new ministry opportunities. So then - onward!

Christian Education for Adults

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. (Note: No class March 18; a special gathering to discuss the ideas that sprung from the small groups will meet instead.)

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). (Note: this gathering will continue March 25th.)

Other Adult Learning Opportunities

Second Sunday Series: Living the Questions ~ Join us Sunday, April 15 (third Sunday due to Easter) 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.

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.

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

Youth

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

Youth Worship (4th grade and older)

March 25, immediately after worship until 11:50 in the Youth Room (107)

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



2007 Annual Program Meeting

The congregation's Annual Program Meeting will be held Sunday, April 22 at 12:30 p.m. in the Fellowship Hall. We will gather together for a potluck lunch followed by the meeting at which we will consider constitutional changes. Proposed changes will be available at the Information Counter this Sunday, March 18. 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. In order to prepare the report for the meeting, Carey would greatly appreciate receiving reports in electronic format by Monday, April 9th.

Directory Proofing

The new edition of the church directory will be available April 22. If you are unable to attend church in the next couple of weeks, but would like to update or have your information added to the directory, please e-mail (office@fbca2.org) or call the office at 663-9376. If you will be at church, please review your information and make corrections at the table near the Information Counter beginning March 25th. Thank you!

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.

FBC Ladies Book Club

The FBC Ladies Book Club will meet Tuesday, April 24 at 7 p.m. at Toni Stearns' house to discuss "The Glass Castle" by Jeannette Walls. All church ladies are welcome! Please contact Mary Gregg (769-3127) or Janice Stumpf (663-4871/jlstumpf@umich.edu) for further information.

New Parking Lot Signs

Thanks to Trustee and all-around super handyman, David Robbins, we have new and improved parking lot signs. The sextons will put them out for occasions such as choir practice, weddings and Bible Study, so that the lot will be reserved for those attending such events. As always, we discourage parking in the church lot during weekdays if you are not here on church business, but when these signs are out we especially need you to park elsewhere unless you are attending the event indicated. Thank you!

Ann Arbor Co-Op Preschool

The Board of Trustees has been approached by the Ann Arbor Co-Op Preschool, currently housed in the Bethlehem United Church of Christ, about the possibility of housing their school in our facilities. The Trustees have just completed a feasibility study, and pending the arrival of three more bids, will be passing the request on to the Executive Council. If the Executive Council decides to explore the option further, the matter will be brought before the congregation for discussion and deliberation.

Dear FBC family,

I'm deeply touched and wonderfully surprised by all the prayers, words of support, nice phone messages, and lovely cards. I'm truly blessed by your respect and warm feelings for my father and I.

- Radka MacGregor



EASTER LILY ORDER FORM

I / We would like to order an Easter Lily (\$15 each) to be given:

In honor of: _____

In memory of: _____

Given by: _____

Enclosed is my check made out to "First Baptist Church" for \$_____, for a total of _____ plant(s), which will be displayed on the chancel Easter Sunday, and may be picked up following the service that day. Paid orders must be received by Sunday, April 1st to be included in the Easter bulletin. If you choose to mail your order to the office please write "Attn: Carey" on the envelope and be sure to write "Easter Lily" on the memo line of your check. Thank you!



"For the love of Christ urges us on..." 2 Corinthians 5:14-15

Your America for Christ giving makes it possible for National Ministries to help hundreds of volunteers connect with mission locations and fulfill their assignments each year. Through hands-on ministry and compassionate presence, they bring the hope of the gospel into the midst of despair-ridden circumstances.

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

EASTER EVENT



APRIL 1

12:30 - 2:30

Lunch followed by crafts,
the Easter story and an egg hunt





Family Activity for Lent: Making Pretzels

by Marcia Floding

Pretzels have an important meaning during Lent. Pretzels were made in the fifth century as a Lenten food in Austria, Germany and Poland. People began to make them on Ash Wednesday, the very first day of Lent. The word "pretzel" is a German word meaning "little arms." The dough was shaped in such a way to look like two arms crossed in prayer.

Pretzels were made to take the place of bread, since milk, eggs, and fats were not used during Lent. On certain days during Lent it was the custom to give pretzels to the townspeople who were poor.

As a family, make some pretzels. Two variations for making pretzels are included at the bottom of this sheet. Enjoy the pretzels and let them remind you that Lent is a time of prayer. Before you eat the pretzels, say a prayer together:

"Dear God, we ask you to bless these pretzels which we are about to eat. Each time we eat them may we be reminded that this is the season of Lent, a time of prayer. Help us to remember to pray for those who need our prayers each day. Keep your loving arms around us, O God, to protect us. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Adapted from "Pretzel Prayer," A Time of Hope: Family Celebrations and Activities for Lent and Easter, Morehouse-Barlow Co., Inc., 1979 (out of print).

Bread Pretzels

1 1/4 cups water (85°)
1 tablespoon dry yeast
1/2 teaspoon sugar
4 1/2 cups flour
1 egg yolk
1 to 2 teaspoons water or milk
Coarse salt



Let yeast and sugar dissolve in water for one hour. Add flour to yeast mixture and beat until smooth. Knead mixture for seven to eight minutes. Place in a greased, covered bowl and let the dough rise until double in size. Divide the dough in half; then divide each half into smaller pieces of equal size. Roll each piece in your hands to make pencil shapes twelve (12) to fifteen (15) inches long. Shape each length of dough into pretzels (see the diagram). Place on a greased baking sheet. Brush with egg yolk and water or milk mixture. Sprinkle with coarse salt. Bake at 325 degrees until lightly browned on top.

Frozen Bread Dough Pretzels

Thaw one loaf of frozen bread dough. Let the dough rise according to directions on the package. Divide the dough in half and place on a floured board. Cut each half into eight (8) equal pieces. Roll small pieces into strips about eighteen (18) inches long. Shape into pretzels (see the diagram). Place on a greased baking sheet. Brush the tops of the pretzels with beaten egg yolk mixed with one (1) tablespoon of water. Sprinkle with coarse salt. Bake at 350 degrees for twenty (20) to thirty (30) minutes or until lightly browned on top.

Marcia Floding serves as education director for Third Reformed Church in Holland, Michigan.

Church Visioning and Renewal Process

Be there March 18 and April 1!

Those are the dates for the next phase of our church visioning and renewal process. The time is during Second Hour, 11:30–12:30. While this is difficult for the church school teachers and children’s music leaders, it seems to be the best time to get the most people involved. Below you will find a summary sheet from the first part of our process. It includes four categories related to what we want to be. Under those are themes, in italics, into which many of the ideas brought forth in the small group meetings fit. Then there are a couple more specific ideas from the big list, just to serve as examples. I haven’t distributed the entire list as it might seem overwhelming, but we will talk about many of those items on the 18th and 1st. (If you want a copy of the whole list, I’ll have some available then.) Some of the ideas represent extensions of what we already are and do, some are bold new ventures, some are small projects that can make a big difference. I urge you to come to these meetings and to come with the outlook of helping to discern God’s leading for our congregation and for your involvement.

Mary Davis, Moderator

What do we want our church to be in 5 years?

MORE

Spiritually Vital	Connected w/ One Another	Involved in Local Mission	Inviting
<p><i>Worship Enhancements</i> Ex: Home worship Taize/Evensong Words of witness Two or more services Lay worship planning</p>	<p><i>Keeping contact</i> Ex: Circles of concern Visitation/communion to shut-ins Revitalize prayer chain</p>	<p><i>Hands on</i> Ex: Mission project idea fund Habitat or other housing</p>	<p><i>Reaching out to the Community</i> Ex: Intentional inclusiveness Take Baptist out of the name Podcast the services</p>
<p><i>Education</i> Ex: Bible studies Classes about spiritual disciplines Relationship building</p>	<p><i>Help/Support</i> Ex: Support major life events Bulletin board for things individuals need help with</p>	<p><u><i>Target groups</i></u> <i>Students</i> Ex: Student-member links</p> <p><i>Youth and Children</i> Ex: Tutoring/mentoring Assist w/ Neutral Zone Kids at Hikone-VBS, etc</p>	<p><i>Facilities</i> Ex: Aesthetics/maintenance Outside use Better directions for parking</p>
<p><i>Opportunities for private and group prayer and meditation</i> Ex: Prayer groups Sanctuary open Retreats</p>	<p><i>Intergenerational events/ Fun</i> Ex: Dinner groups Book clubs Work together</p>	<p><i>Poor people</i> Ex: Expand vespers - more interaction</p>	<p><i>Personal outreach</i> Ex: Personal outreach to friends Reach out to new dorms/condos Through playgroups, book clubs</p>
<p><i>Theological engagement within the community</i> Ex: Second Sundays</p>			<p><i>Special Events</i> Ex: Concerts Morikawa/Waterman events re: modern issues of Christianity Student targeted events in the fall</p>

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The Reverends Paul & Stacey Simpson Duke, Co-Pastors



Next Deadline:
Sunday, March 25, 2007

As anyone owning an older home knows, there seems to be an endless list of "to do's." Our church home is no different. The trustees are putting together a Capital Improvement Plan and would like your input.

The major item on our list is the critically overdue need to replace the sanctuary cornice, gutters and downspouts. (We've been told the roof should last at least another 5-10 years.)

The committee is also considering:

- * refinishing & repairing the pews
- * replacing most non-sanctuary windows (to help lower energy costs)
- * carpeting in hallways & foyer
- * brighter lighting in sanctuary
- * creation of a Washington St. foyer (to save energy and block the cold weather)

Your input is vital to our plan. Please feel free to contact any one of the committee members. We welcome your suggestions.

Linda Dicks Graham Miles Anna Moyer David Robbins
Capital Improvement Planning Committee