



# FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH

Ann Arbor, Michigan

May 17, 2006

## Pastors' Reflections

*by Paul Simpson Duke*

These paragraphs are mostly an update on my medical condition. I hope I'm not being self-absorbed. One outcome of any long illness can be self-absorption, of which I can be guilty; but I hope that my words here don't come (much!) from that place. I *have* felt that you deserve more of an accounting of me than we are able to give by other means. My situation seems so bizarre, even to me, that if I were you I would be seriously wondering: what is really wrong with that man? Many of you have told us of your prayers and concern. I want you to know who you're praying for and concerned about.

In 1995 I had a bleed in my brain, from an Arterio-Venous Malformation (AVM), a congenital problem that I won't go into here. Surgery followed for repair. I was told to expect a full recovery. Some losses remained, however: there were gaps in my field of vision; I could no longer scan; I'd become a much slower reader. Also, I began, on occasion, to see lights pulsing or flashing in the right side of my vision. I was told this was seizure activity due to the AVM or to scar tissue from the surgery. Sometimes these were bad enough that I lost all capacity to speak and certainly to read. I was put on medications to prevent these neurological events. Finding the right mix took awhile.

In February of 2005 a major series of these events occurred. It was discovered that the original AVM, not fully repaired after all, had grown a new fistula. It hadn't burst but was creating dangerous pressure. It was fixed by a process called embolization, which was apparently a great success. Medications were adjusted upwards again.

Three weeks ago, I started seeing lights again. Briefly I lost speech, then my symptoms generally improved; but the low-level "events" kept coming. Finally, I was told to come to the hospital. The same tests were administered as before, this time with different results. Nothing structural was there to cause the problem. (Pass it on: they looked inside one of your pastors' brains and couldn't find anything!) So something less measurable, less determinable, is now my cause of trouble. After years of medications for the brain and years of scar tissue in the brain doing whatever it does, the biochemical mix has arrived at some new need for readjusting. That's their best guess.

Getting the right new mix is a matter of some guesswork too. They've raised the medication levels to high degrees, but I don't seem to be much better than when I left the hospital a week and a half ago. The light-shows still come at times. My reading is poor. Fatigue is a problem, no matter how much sleep I get, due mostly, I think, to the meds themselves. So more tinkering will be done – slowly – until I am better.

I'm very much aware that my situation could be a great deal worse. I have no deadly disease. I am not in pain. No one I dearly love has just died. I would choose my troubles over many others. But I won't withhold the truth that my own bizarre little case of trouble has been maddening to me, and that it brings me once more to what feels like the core of the human condition: a not-knowing of *so* much and a pointed knowing of my need. Time spent on such terrain could make someone a better person and a better pastor. I'm hoping that it will.

I've started back to work, though in fits and starts. I intend to preach on May 21 and 28. Pray for Stacey, who once more is pulling more than her share of the load. Thank you for your patience with me and for your beautifully evident love for us both.

## *CHILDREN and YOUTH CHRISTIAN EDUCATION*

Nursery

Room 307

9:30 - 12:30

All children are welcome to worship with their families. After the "Time as Children" portion of the service, preschool - 3<sup>rd</sup> grade are invited to Children's Worship.

\* For May 21st, Children and Youth Worship: Preschoolers - 1st grade may leave for childcare. Second graders and older are invited to stay for the complete worship service. \*

The following Church School classes begin at 11:00 or when worship concludes:

|  |           |               |
|--|-----------|---------------|
| Preschool - 2nd grade                              | Room 202B | 11:00 - 12:00 |
| 3rd - 6th grade                                    | Room 304  | 11:00 - 12:00 |
| Younger Youth (7 <sup>th</sup> - 9 <sup>th</sup> ) | Room 107  | 11:00 - 12:00 |

### *Children's Music and Arts Ministry*

The CMAM will celebrate the end of their program year with a party on Sunday, May 21st from 12-12:30 p.m. All Children and Youth are invited for pizza and treats! Beginning next week and throughout the summer, church school will extend until noon with group activities from 12-12:30 p.m.

## *ADULT CHRISTIAN EDUCATION*

### **Lessons from the Wisdom Literature of the Bible: "What Do You Think About Job?"**

Discussion Leader: John Reed

(Memorial Lounge)

Using the Judson Bible Journeys curriculum we will explore selections from the Wisdom literature of the Old Testament in relation to questions of the meaning of life, suffering, and divine presence in the world. The curriculum also highlights our unique American Baptist heritage and mission. Student booklets are available in class.

### **Share and Prayer Group**

Facilitated by Stacey Simpson Duke

(Room 108)

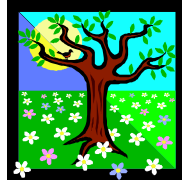
A time for sharing, singing, silence, centering, and group prayer. Together we will engage in a ministry of prayer for our church, for other members, for specific concerns, and for local and world events, as well as having time to become more connected to one another and more personally grounded and 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:** The Bible Study Potluck Luncheon, which marks the final Bible Study class of this season, will take place at Weber's next Wednesday, May 24 at noon. Please join us for fellowship, learning and great food!

**Small Groups (ChristCare):** Centered on Bible Study, fellowship, mission, prayer and worship; there are currently two groups meeting once or twice a month. See Stacey, Paul or Sue Ellen for more information about joining a group.

## *FBC News & Happenings*



### **ABWM June Garden Party**

On Tuesday, June 6 at 1:00 p.m. the June Garden Party will take place in the Memorial Lounge. We will have a tea party followed by a business meeting and installation of officers for 2006-2007. The Board hopes to see you there.

### **VBS Volunteer Sign-up**

Join the fun of VBS June 26-30! Extra hands are always appreciated. Please sign up at the Information Counter to help with crafts, snacks, transportation, lunch, childcare or to help with preparation at home. Registration will begin June 1st.

### **Habitat for Humanity**

Habitat for Humanity First Baptist Work Day is set for Saturday, June 3. We need about five volunteers to work construction and two volunteers to help with lunch. On our Saturday work-day we will be working with Ann Arbor Calvary UMC. The house is on Jackson Road in Ann Arbor. There will be a sign up sheet at the Information Counter, however you may contact Scott Diels at 734-747-8252 if you have any questions or are interested in volunteering.

### **2006 Church Picnic**

Traditionally, the Board of Christian Education sponsors an all-church picnic the second Sunday in June. This year, we have decided to move the picnic to Sunday, July 30, from 12 - 3:00 p.m. - to avoid all the June recitals, open houses, etc. and to give us something fun to do in the middle of the summer. Please look for more announcements in late June.

### **New address for Nick Dodson:**

Nick Dodson  
c/o Powerhouse  
715 W. Worthey Rd.  
Gonzales, Louisiana 70737



*Greetings from Scotland! I wanted to drop a line from the Lochs to everyone. The Alma College Choir is having a great time singing and exploring. We are here from May 8th to May 19th, so there are many days to explore Scotland. Thank you to everyone who helped get me here. I am taking lots of pictures and I already have a lot of memories.*

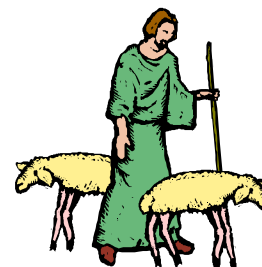
*With Love,  
Missy Snyder*

## Family Ministry Corner

(adapted by Sue Ellen from the *Taking Faith Home* newsletter by Pastor Greg Priebbenow)

### Psalm 23; John 10:11-18; 1 John 4:7-21

**Table Grace:** *Jesus our Good Shepherd:  
 In your good gifts we all rejoice ---  
 Strengthen us by them to hear your voice ---  
 Guide and lead us in your way ---  
 In all that we do and all that we say. Amen*



**Faith Talk:**

- In your life, whom do you trust? Who do you listen to and why?
- How do we listen to Jesus' voice, and how can we grow to know him better?

**Rituals and Traditions:** Make Psalm 23 part of your family bedtime rituals this week. Parents, read it to and with your children as you settle them to bed. Make it your goal to memorize the psalm with them.

**Service:**

1 John 4 says that we show that we have the love of God in in us by helping other Christians who have physical needs. Prepare or purchase a frozen meal this week to donate to someone in your church family who is going through a difficult time or has special needs.

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### *When you thought I wasn't looking ...*

*When you thought I wasn't looking, I saw you hang up my first painting on the refrigerator, and I wanted to paint another one.*

*When you thought I wasn't looking, I saw you feed a stray cat, and I thought it was good to be kind to animals.*

*When you thought I wasn't looking, I saw you make my favorite cake for me, and I knew that little things are special things.*

*When you thought I wasn't looking, I heard you say a prayer, and I believed there is a God I could always talk to.*

*When you thought I wasn't looking, I felt you kiss me goodnight, and I felt loved.*

*When you thought I wasn't looking, I saw that you cared, and I wanted to be everything that I could be.*

*When you thought I wasn't looking, I LOOKED....*

*Thank you for all the things I saw when you thought I wasn't looking!*

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FREE copies of *Davey and Goliath's* devotions (for Families on the Go) are available near the children's mailboxes. These booklets have four fun-filled pages of Bible, prayer, worship and service activities for each week, and will usually be based on the scriptures being used in our worship services. Perfect for our summer schedules. I think these are very good family resources - let me know what you think!

~ Sue Ellen Glover



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Non-Profit Org.  
U.S. Postage  
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Ann Arbor, MI  
Permit 542

The Reverends Paul & Stacey Simpson Duke, Co-Pastors

Dated material:

*Wednesday, May 17, 2006*

Next Deadline:

*Sunday, June 4, 2006*

## ***LISZT EXTRAVAGANZA***

**A Concert of Original Compositions by Franz Liszt**

***Played by pianist Joel Hastings***

**Wednesday, June 7, 2006 at 7:30 p.m.**

**First Baptist Church of Ann Arbor**

**Suggested Donation: \$15/\$10 students**



***Joel's newest CD "Liszt Transcending," a live recording made here at First Baptist last August, will be available for purchase at the June 7th recital, or can be purchased from Joel at anytime. The price of the CD is \$15.***