



FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH

Ann Arbor, Michigan

May 3, 2006

Pastors' Annual Report *by Paul and Stacey Simpson Duke*

The longer we serve here, the deeper is our love for this church as a whole and for its members individually. We feel honored and privileged to be partners with you in Christian faith and mission. We are thankful for the many gracious gifts you offer to us and to our family. Overall, we believe this has been a very good year. We sense that we as a church are growing more spiritually healthy and vibrant, and we believe we are only beginning to see the fruits of that in terms of community mission, outreach, and growth.

Last year in our annual report, we stated our concern for the work of outreach and growth in our church. We noted that given all that our church has to offer - meaningful worship, incredible music, strong Christian education for all ages, and a nurturing community of care - we believed deeply in the need to spread the word about our congregation and to think strategically about how to reach others.

Toward that end, we have sought to offer leadership in several ways since our last report. In the fall of 2005, Paul designed and led a three-week second-hour course called "Talking Faith, Talking Church." Stacey has worked closely with the Evangelism Board to develop several initiatives: gift bags for newcomers; baked goods delivered to first-time visitors within 24 hours of their visit; welcome letters to new homeowners in the area; letters to families with new babies, offering a gift baby Bible; a "bridge event" ("Contemplative Knitting") directed at people interested in a particular activity and who may not be Christian or churchgoers; and working towards having Sunday sermons in podcast form for easy download by anyone online. Additionally, we offered another Inquirer's Class in the fall, with great attendance, and, with the exceptional leadership of Sue Ellen and the Board of Christian Education, our church offered its first Vacation Bible School in many years.

Such efforts have not yet yielded the numerical membership growth that we want to see. To many of us, our Sunday attendance has been discouragingly low. We do, however, continue to see and to retain new faces among us. The numerical growth of church membership, though slow, is rising; and the people we are drawing bring strong gifts and commitments with them. We are encouraged. We do remind you again that evangelism and outreach are the work of the entire church, and not merely one board or the staff. We urge and encourage all church members to find ways of inviting and welcoming, and of responding to requests the Evangelism Board makes for help with specific strategic initiatives.

One of the most important efforts our church makes in evangelism and outreach is spiritual, emotional, and physical care to the poor and homeless who already come to our church for various reasons. After a successful revamping and restarting of our Vespers ministry last May, leader Linda Tate, moved away this past fall. Sarah Heidt and Joyce Ann became the new coordinators of this ministry; Sarah coordinates the worship services and Joyce (with significant help from Brandy Kirchner) coordinates the meals. Jerry Suits and Diane Fleming assist in this ministry. Other church members regularly help, as do some members of Northside Community Church. We are grateful to those who have been so faithful in sustaining this effort; it is an important and often thankless ministry. We urge more of you to become involved.

As we minister to the homeless and poor through Vespers on two Tuesdays per month, we are also called to grapple with how we care for them every day. In May, we began a discussion about how our church ought to treat the homeless at our door. We are still in this process, which has proved to be complex, multi-layered, and, at times, emotionally intense. The two of us believe strongly in having honest, kind, direct conversation about this very important issue of how to live our faith as a congregation. We have not been willing for a policy decision to be made too quickly and without deep and wide reflection. An announcement about the next step in the process is forthcoming within the next two weeks.

Our congregation is ideally located to two particular communities to which we are committed to minister - the homeless community and the campus population. In both cases, members of these populations come to us; these constituents of our mission keep coming to us. (Continued on next page)

(Pastors' Annual Report continued from front page)

Your pastors believe that ministry to the homeless and ministry to students both lie at the core of this congregation's identity.

Of course, the church of Christ is always called beyond its own immediate community. Our relationship, now more than 20 years long, with our sister church in Nandasmo, Nicaragua, is one way we continue to be stretched in our understanding of how to live the Christian life. The task group (Scott Diels, Arthur Francis, Ron Gregg, Graham Miles, Anna Moyer, David Moehring, Toni Stearns, and Paul) continues to give good leadership. In January, we launched an ambitious campaign to raise new funds for the Nandasmo ministry; by February, the goal was met and surpassed. Members of our congregation continue to make visits to our sister church; in a few months, we will have the honor of hosting members of that community.

This year has not been without pain for our congregation. Many in our church have faced significant difficulties, and we have sustained some great losses through death, including our longest-term member and a mother of young children. Such losses leave their marks on us as individuals and as a congregation; they also have the potential to strengthen our bonds and our love. We have been moved to see the love and care this congregation pours into families in this church who grapple with illness, disaster, death, and grief.

We have undergone two changes in personnel this year. In June, we welcomed Carey Viviano to our staff as Administrative Assistant. Carey's warmth, enthusiasm, skill, and work ethic, have quickly made her an invaluable part of our staff. Her job is demanding and complicated, involving many different skills and tasks. She has not only done it all with aplomb, she has initiated many administrative improvements. We are grateful to her beyond words.

In August, we welcomed the wonderfully talented Carole Ott as our Director of Music. Though technically filling a part-time role, Carole has brought a full-time energy and skill to the job. In addition to being a gifted musician and conductor, she is simply a delight to work with and has quickly become an integral part of the church staff team. She is a gift.

Our other colleagues continue their diligent and inspired work. Sue Ellen, now in her 15th year as Director of Christian Education, works tirelessly to coordinate all aspects of our church's efforts at spiritual formation. Her love for this congregation is visible and profound, and we are privileged to be partners in ministry with her. Joel, our unparalleled organist, gives not only of his gift but of his faith. It is awe-inspiring to work with someone who is not only talented beyond measure, but who is such an embodiment of Christian humility and servanthood. We are blessed to be led in worship by him.

There are others who lead our church in ministry - Brandy Kirchner as Youth Director, Bonnie Kidd and Deb Snyder as Directors of children's and handbell choirs, and Joyce Arnn who does a special work of outreach as our Wedding Coordinator. We are regularly blessed by the work and dedication of these women. Of course, the bulk of the ministry of the church is done not by those of us who are paid, but by the church itself. Many volunteers do massive amounts of work for this church. (We shouldn't start naming names for fear of slighting anyone, but we should at least pay special tribute to Annabel Erskine, our main office volunteer, and to David Robbins, our tireless fixer-upper.) The work done by our many volunteers is not just about the "running" of the church, but about the ministry and witness of this part of Christ's body. When we consider the many ways members of this church give of themselves, we are grateful and proud.

Though we cannot name everyone who serves in different capacities, we would be remiss if we did not name one. John Reed has now completed his three-year term as Moderator of this church and will step down at the end of Annual Meeting. The title "moderator" fits him perfectly, as he is a moderating influence if there ever was one. He runs a meeting beautifully, supports the work of this church and its ministers wholeheartedly, and brings a sense of balance and calm in times of crisis and conflict. We deeply appreciate for his service these past three years and are sorry to see him leave the post. We know, however, that John is a natural leader and we trust that our church as a whole, and the two of us personally will continue to benefit from his wisdom and love for the church.

Thank you, First Baptist Church, for another fine year. Our hearts overflow with love for you and with excitement for our future together. We are grateful to God for allowing us the privilege of being your ministers and friends.

CHILDREN & 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 - 3rd grade are invited to Children's Worship.

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 - 11:50
Younger Youth (7 th - 9 th)	Room 107	11:00 - 11:50

Children's Music & Arts Ministry

Jr. Handchimes	Sanctuary	9:15 - 9:45
Grace Notes (preschool - 2 nd grade)	Room 305	12:00 - 12:30
Jr. Choir (3 rd - 7 th grades)	Room 102	11:50 - 12:30

*** Please note that "Children and Youth Worship" is Sunday, May 21st. ***

ADULT CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

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

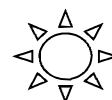
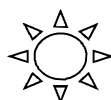
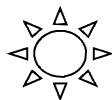
Discussion Leader: John Reed *(Memorial Lounge)*

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 ***(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).



Camping is not just for kids! One of the most popular camps is the *American Baptist Senior Adult Jamboree* at Lake Louise in August. The website lists this as "Non-stop fun! Talent show, field trips, boat rides, good food, fellowship, worship, choir, shuffleboard, bocce ball and some time alone with God." If you're interested, please ask Sue Ellen for a brochure and registration form.



FBC News & Happenings

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. So look for more announcements in late June.

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.

MacGregor-Stitt Circle: Schedule Change

Please note that there has been a change to the next MacGregor-Stitt Circle meeting Thursday, May 18th at 1:00 p.m. It will be held at the home of Joan Blunt and the program will consist of planning for next season. This is different than what was originally planned for this month.

Scholarships Available

Scholarships are available from the Robert Johnson Memorial Fund to aid those attending conferences at the American Baptist Assembly at Green Lake. Funds are also available from the Chester and Vi Loucks Memorial Fund to those pursuing post secondary education-college, graduate school, or educational conferences. Applications for both scholarships will be available at the information desk beginning April 23. They must be returned by May 21. Please return completed applications to Mary Davis, 1414 Iroquois Pl, Ann Arbor, MI 48104.

ABWM Annual Report Deadline

In order to allow enough time to put together the ABWM Annual Report, which will be distributed at the Garden Party on June 6, Carey requests that all individual reports are submitted to her by May 22nd, please.

Newsletter Delay

Due to new rules at the post office, if you reside in Ypsilanti, Chelsea, Whitmore Lake, Pinckney, Manchester, or Dexter, you may find that you've recently been receiving your newsletters later than usual. We apologize for the delay, however it's out of our hands. We recommend picking up the latest copy from the brochure racks after church on Sunday or everyone is invited to click on the newsletter link on the front page of the website (www.fbca2.org) to view an electronic copy.

WELCOME

to the following new members:

Patricia Baldwin moved to Ann Arbor from Jackson, Michigan and has been attending First Baptist since July of 2005. She received a Bachelor's degree in Youth Ministry from Moody Bible Institute and is currently working at a day care center. She is currently pursuing international missions with a focus on the international population of orphaned, abandoned and neglected children.

David Bucholtz is a lifelong resident of Washtenaw County. He grew up on a farm in Manchester, and then returned after college to pursue his career as a Large Animal Veterinarian. While in practice, David did graduate research in reproductive physiology, and was awarded a Ph.D. from the U of M Medical School. David recently sold his private veterinary practice and enrolled at the Ecumenical Theological Seminary in Detroit, where he is working towards his Master of Divinity degree in preparation for ordination in the spring of 2008. For recreation, David enjoys inline skating and sailing his catamaran. He and Jennifer Wells will be married here at First Baptist Church in September.

Zoë McLaren grew up in Montreal, Canada and moved to the U.S. to attend Dartmouth College. After graduation, she worked in Boston for four years before coming to Ann Arbor to begin a doctoral degree in Economics and Public Policy at the University of Michigan. She is focusing on international development and her research involves working with African governments to devise policies to reduce poverty and disease. She is currently studying the economic impact of AIDS in Sub-Saharan Africa, and she will be spending most of the coming summer working with policy makers in the capital city of Botswana. When she is not working, Zoë enjoys hiking, traveling, and listening to music.

Jennifer Wells is a native of Oklahoma and currently lives in Ypsilanti. She works as a small animal veterinarian in Westland and will begin a Masters of Public Health degree program in the fall. In her spare time, she enjoys road cycling, gardening, playing French horn, and long-distance running. She and David will be married here at First Baptist Church in September.



I've been Moderator only a few days, and already I am asking you to do something! Because of the way our congregation is set up, most of our ministries - from care of the building to international missions - are organized through the various boards and committees. Therefore, I am asking you, as you pray for our church, to select a particular board or ministry and to pray for that group and its work. We have many challenges before us as a congregation and as a denomination. As the body of Christ in the world and as a family, we must seek to discern the best ways to move forward and the strength to be bold on our journey.

These things are only possible through prayer.

Thank you.

Mary Davis



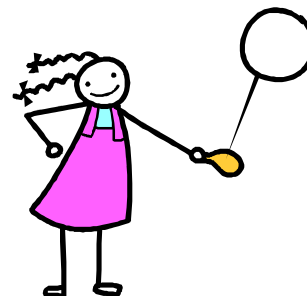
VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL

Volunteers Needed

We invite you to join the fun of VBS! Extra hands are very much needed and always appreciated. A couple of you have already offered your assistance on a form that we ran in a February newsletter - but we need many, many more people. Sign up for a shift or two and come play with us; offer to help with lunches or snacks; volunteer for one or more transportation times; or how about spending time with Rob and Charlie so that the pastors can lead VBS? There are lots of little details that you can take care of that will be a BIG help - and an important ministry to the children we are serving. Please sign up at the Information Counter or return this form to the church office. Thank you!!!

Here are the details:

- VBS will be held **Monday, June 26 thru Friday, June 30** from 10:00 am - 1:00 pm
- We are inviting children from the community and will be offering a special invitation to the children in the Hikone housing development off of Packard Road
- We will transport the children to and from Hikone
- We will offer snacks and lunch



How are you able to help?

Help every day _____

Help one day _____

Provide transportation at least one shift _____ (9:30 - 10:00 a.m.; 1:00 - 1:30 p.m.)

Provide food for snacks and/or lunch _____

Help with publicity _____

Assist with preparations (crafts, etc.) at home _____

Help with set-up at least one day _____

Help with childcare at least one day _____

Help with clean-up at least one day _____

Other _____

NAME _____ PHONE _____

Thank you!!!

Family Ministry Corner



Faith Talk:

- Share about a time when you felt really close to your family or to another group of people.
- What is "fellowship?" What does it mean to have fellowship with God?
- How does our fellowship with God give us fellowship with other people?



Rituals and Traditions: What does your family stand for? What gives your family a sense of togetherness or unity? Take time out to discuss these questions with each other. Then design a Family Shield, incorporating symbols that reflect your family's unique identity and purpose. You may wish to include reference to a bible verse such as Psalm 133:1. Place your finished shield in a prominent place and use it to help you remember what is most important in your family life.

Service: Live out your fellowship with others in your church community by inviting someone you don't know very well for a meal at your home. If you can't think of anyone to invite, ask your pastor or a church staff member for names of persons who would appreciate an invitation.

International Ministries ~ Ellen Brown



Ellen ministers to missionary families and their children, which includes pre-field orientation, re-entry into the U.S. culture, educational issues, missionary kid (MK) networking, connecting MKs with U.S. kids and educating American Baptist churches regarding the needs of missionary families. Ellen plans and coordinates programs for the MKs during their U.S./Puerto Rico assignment. She is also involved in the screening process of new missionary family candidates. Ellen can be reached at Ellen.Brown@abc-usa.org.

American Baptist International Ministries has over 100 MKs living around the world. They range in age from infants to college age and live in more than 20 countries. Many of them have spent a considerable portion of their developmental years in another culture. For them, the United States is a foreign culture.

International Ministries is committed to providing our MKs with resources and support in the field, as well as to helping them with re-entry to U.S. life and culture. They are unique individuals with rich cross-cultural experiences and have much to contribute to our American Baptist family.

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The Reverends Paul & Stacey Simpson Duke, Co-Pastors

Dated material:

Wednesday, May 3, 2006

Next Deadline:

Sunday, May 14, 2006

May Fun Night = Talent Show

May 19 · 6:00 - 8:00 p.m.



You are invited to our next FBC Fun Night! The Youth Band, GIG (God is Good), will be the featured act, but ALL TYPES of talent from ALL AGES will be showcased. There will be two sign up sheets at the Information Counter – one for dinner reservations and the other is to sign-up up if you'd like to show off your talent.