



FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH

Ann Arbor, Michigan

September 26, 2007

Pastors' Reflections

by Paul Simpson Duke

This is not a sports column, but the seed for it came from a sports columnist. On September 7, Jim Carty of the *Ann Arbor News* wrote a piece called "Where's the fun in being a U-M fan?" It was the week after the Wolverines, to everyone's astonishment, lost the season opener to little Appalachian State. The column was not about the loss, however; it was about the fans.

Carty described how the Appalachian State fans, after the historic upset, tore down the goalposts in their home stadium and carried them through the streets of Boone, North Carolina, to the chancellor's house, celebrating all the way. Then he observed: "there's nothing Lloyd Carr and this football team could do to elicit a similar reaction here in Ann Arbor. There's nothing any Michigan team could do, not even win a national championship."

And of course he is right. Given the great athletic program here and the proud history of Michigan football - its legacy of achievement, its legendary heroes, its massive support - the idea of winning is engrained. Success is understood. Our team may certainly lose, as recent seasons emphasize, but the losses come as great disappointments, even as causes for anger, grief, disgust. When we win we cheer, as everyone does in victory, yet the cheering has the ring of *confirmation* ("Yes, we *are* the victors!") or of something like *relief* ("Finally! It's about time!"). In big programs like ours with great histories like ours, though we know we might lose, we wear the invisible badge of, well, *entitlement* to be winners.

Not so with schools like Appalachian State. They play to win, of course; but in a place like the Big House, they bring nothing like entitlement. They bring passion for doing the very best they can - and in the back of their minds perhaps the tiniest gleam of a wild, impossible hope. As a consequence, when against all odds they win, they dance in jubilation unknowable to veteran victors.

In the early centuries of its existence, the church was like Appalachian State: small, unfavored, predicted to lose against prevailing religions cultures and the massive, untouchable empire. Followers of Jesus were poor, not well-educated, politically powerless, and when not being killed were ignored. And they were famous for their implausible, irrepressible joy. Being the designated losers of the world, they flung themselves into the hands of the One who alone gives triumph over established powers, and their jubilation out-danced the predictable parties of the usual winners. Then things changed. Late in the fourth century Christianity was dubbed the official religion of the empire and developed its own sense of entitlement. It wore a sword, advised kings, amassed wealth, baptized everybody - and lost a portion of its heart.

When Christians are poor or otherwise isolated from power, this isn't the case. Among them is often an exuberant joy not so evident in establishment churches. Why is that? Because proud legacies, wealth, and a history of influence create a sense of entitlement for success. When we see ourselves losing (membership, public esteem), we are flabbergasted, since we know we are winners. This notion, unfortunately, happens to be antithetical to the gospel. It also spells the impossibility of unmitigated joy.

What's a church to do? Get on its knees. Beg for mercy. Give away good portions of its power and control. Seek the grace of humility. And get up to start all over again - from the bottom - to serve and strive, to believe and hope, trusting the One who alone may give reason, finally, for unfettered exuberance.

Children and Youth Christian Education

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 worship service, children in preschool - 3rd grade are invited to Children's Worship.

3 and 4 year olds

10:00 - 11:15 Childcare in nursery
11:15 - 12:30 Church School (Room 306)

K - 2nd grade

10:00 - 10:30 Worship
10:30 - 11:00 Children's Worship (202A)
11:00 - 12:00 Church School (Room 202B)
12:00 - 12:30 Grace Notes Choir (Rm. 202A)

3rd - 6th grades and Youth (7th - High School)

10:00 - 11:00 Worship
11:00 - 11:50 Church School (3rd-6th: Room 304; Youth: Room 107)
11:50 - 12:30 Jr. Choir (Room 102)

September 30 – Youth Worship: After the sanctuary worship service, Youth in 4th grade through High School will meet in the Youth Room (107) instead of going to church school classes.

Adult Christian Education

The Jesus Class (Memorial Lounge)

Ron Gregg & Sue Ellen Glover, leaders

In recent decades there have been new conversations, speculations, questions, and convictions -- among scholars and in churches -- about Jesus. There has been new dialogue about his identity and his mission, a re-visioning of traditional understandings of what we mean when we say "God is in Christ." This class is examining the issues and questions that are currently being raised. It is a safe place to think, ask questions, and exchange views about important theological and spiritual issues. We don't expect everyone to agree on one theological position, but we will thoughtfully engage each other on the issues.

Young Adult Bible Study (Campus Center Living Room)

Marlene & Arthur Francis, leaders

We are undertaking a study of the books of the Hebrew Bible known as "The Minor Prophets." The name speaks to the relative length of the books and not to their importance. In these often-overlooked writings are to be found some of the earliest articulations of the principles of justice and compassion which today are essential elements of the Christian Gospel. We will begin by considering how the moral and ethical decay which began soon after Solomon's kingdom was divided led not only to the prophetic calls for repentance, but also to the eventual conquest and exile of the peoples of both Israel and Judah. A brief manual, giving dates, some historical and biographical background and a summary of the basic message of each book will be available.

Other Adult Learning Opportunities

Second Sunday Speaker Series

Each month will feature scholars and visionary church leaders addressing theological and social concerns, through a lecture and discussion period. On October 14 at 6:30 p.m., Dr. Richard Rosengarten, Dean of the Chicago Divinity School will present "A Good God is Hard to Find: Flannery O'Connor's Unstinting Theological Realism." On November 18 (3rd Sunday), we welcome the Rev. Riah Abou El Assal, retired Anglican Bishop of Jerusalem.

Wednesday Bible Study (Memorial Lounge, 1:30–2:30 p.m.)

Beginning today, September 26, Pastor Paul will lead an in-depth study of the Gospel of John, chapters 12-21. This is an excellent opportunity for interested persons to attend and increase their knowledge of the Holy Scriptures in an informal setting.

Small Groups (ChristCare) - Centered on Bible study, fellowship, mission, prayer and worship, we currently have two groups: one which meets monthly and the other which meets every other week. See Stacey, Paul or Sue Ellen for more information about joining a group.



FBCA2 News & Happenings

Rummage Sale

The Fall Rummage Sale takes place this Friday, September 28 from 9-5 and Saturday, September 29 from 9-1. Set-up day is Thursday, September 27 beginning at 9:00 a.m. Remember that the money made from the sale will allow the AB Women's Ministries to continue their work for our church and supported groups. Contributions are still accepted by 5:00 today.

Ann Arbor Co-op Nursery Proposal and Vote

Negotiations with the Ann Arbor Co-op Nursery concerning a proposal that their program be housed in our building have progressed to the point that our congregation should now discuss the proposal and vote on it. A discussion meeting has been scheduled for Sunday, October 7, during Second Hour. Final discussion and vote will occur on October 14. It has not yet been decided whether the October 14 business meeting will begin at 11:30, or immediately after worship, at 11:00. In order for you to be as fully informed as possible in advance of the meetings, printed copies of the proposal in detail will be available next Sunday, September 30, and will also be distributed by e-mail.

CROP Walk 2007 - Sunday, October 7th

The CROP Walk is October 7th, with registration beginning at 1:30 p.m. Walkers of all ages who are interested in participating will find forms at the Information Counter before worship. Contributions will be accepted there as well. Any questions regarding the walk should be directed to Scott Diels or Bev Inbody.

Ministerial Services Survey

The FBCA2 Pastoral Relations Committee would like to remind members and friends that the Ministerial Services Survey is due by this coming Sunday, September 30, 2007. Please return your completed survey in the provided postage-paid envelope or to the drop-box in the church office. Your input is very important to the PRC. 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 and take an instruction sheet with you.

FBC Ladies Book Club

The next FBC Ladies Book Club will meet on Tuesday, October 9th, to discuss "The 13th Tale" by Diane Setterfield. We will be meeting at a local restaurant this month. Details will be announced when available. Please contact Janice Stumpf, 663-4871 or jlstumpf@umich.edu, for more information closer to the date. All ladies are welcome!

Unused Calendars and Cards

If you receive complimentary calendars or greeting cards in the mail which you do not want or cannot use, please bring them to the Information Counter on Sunday or the church office during the week. Annabel Erskine will take them to her next Church Women United meeting where they will then be given to the Maxey Boys Training School.

WE'RE GOING TO CELEBRATE!



Save the date, **SUNDAY, OCTOBER 28**, following Second Hour for a **GRAND CELEBRATION** of **US!** The Board of Care and Community recognizes that our church is a wonderful community of caring - for the community and for each other - and we want to celebrate that part of our participation in the life of First Baptist. We will have a few speakers who will share their experiences as givers and receivers of personal care of our fellow church members. We will also highlight various activities and groups in the church that help form bonds and ways that everyone can be connected in a personal way with others. When these personal connections are made and nurtured, we know that we will be cared for by the others in the groups we're in. That's what it means to "BE CHURCH."

Of course there will be **lunch!** We plan on having a chili tasting (we are looking for a few of our superior male chefs who will prepare their special chili recipes) and desserts will be contributed by those who have favorite recipes.

Often we think that the pastors in our midst (did you realize there are others besides Paul and Stacey?) take care of care-giving activities such as hospital visitation, phone calls and visits to the sick and shut-ins and helping the grieving. But we all can, and do, play that role and many other acts of caring and kindness. **WE WILL CELEBRATE OURSELVES AND ALL THE GREAT THINGS WE DO!**

~ Board of Care and Community



Thank you to **Vicky and Ricky Rushton, Jackie Snyder, and Missy Snyder** for their efforts to get church school classrooms organized and cleaned-up. And a **BIG** thanks to **Bob Kidd** who assembled a new kitchen set for the 3 and 4 year-olds' classroom (purchased with funds from the Flossy Feiner Memorial).

Children's Music and Arts Ministry (Sunday mornings)

Jr. Handbells	9:15 - 9:45	Room 305, upper level
Tiny Grace Notes (preschool)	10:45 - 11:00	Room 305, upper level
Grace Notes (K - 3 rd grade)	12:00 - 12:30	Room 202A, middle level
Jr. Choir (4 th grade and older)	11:50 - 12:30	Room 102, lower level



Welcome Fall 2007 Sextons!



Adam Dolson is from Jackson, Michigan and is currently studying American Culture at the University of Michigan. Adam is also taking a class in ancient Greek this semester and is enjoying it very much. He is a Junior and is expecting to graduate in the Spring of 2009. Afterwards, he may continue his formal education. When he is not doing homework, Adam plays his guitar and reads. Adam's birthday is today, September 26.



Ryan Madis is a senior at U of M. He is from Marysville, MI. Ryan is a History major. He recently became engaged and plans to marry next May. Ryan learned of this position through work at Lake Louise Baptist Camp. He has been on staff there for seven years and is currently Assistant Director. He looks forward to the coming year here and is glad to have this opportunity. Ryan joined us in September of 2005. Ryan's birthday is February 6th.



Becky Miller is a recent graduate of the University of Michigan, where she has received her bachelor's degree in linguistics. Becky has been a member of First Baptist since this spring and has been regularly attending this church since 2003. She plans to continue her studies in linguistics and eventually to work in the field of Scripture translation. Becky's birthday is December 2.



Brent Schedeler is from Brooklyn, MI and is a senior at the University of Michigan. He is pursuing a Bachelor of Science in Aerospace Engineering as well as a Bachelor of Arts in Physics/Mathematics. Brent loves all aspects of aviation and spends much of his free time enjoying his pilot's license. He also enjoys playing tennis, golf, and being outdoors. Upon graduating, he would like to obtain a job as an Aerospace Engineer for NASA or an aircraft manufacturer such as Boeing. He is excited and thankful for this opportunity and looks forward to his time here. Brent's birthday is March 29th.

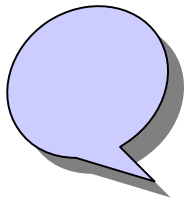
"A Good God is Hard to Find:

Flannery O'Connor's Unstinting Theological Realism"

Join us on October 14th
at 6:30 pm
for a talk by

Dr. Richard Rosengarten

Dean of the Chicago Divinity School



Former Pastor Alan Brehm recently e-mailed the office with the following message:

Please make a note that my e-mail address has changed to alanb1961@comcast.net. Please also pass along my warmest greetings to everyone there. It's been 7 years since I had to leave A2, but my heart is still there!

Grace and peace,

Alan Brehm
Pastor, First Presbyterian Church
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832-865-9354 (cell)
www.dickinsonpresbyterian.org
alanb1961@comcast.net
[The Waking Dreamer](#) (my blog)



Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
	1 7:00 Bd. of Evangelism	2 5:30 Vespers	3 1:30 Bible Study 5:30 The Gathering 7:30 Executive Council	4 7:30 Choir Practice	5	6
7 Campus Ministry Sunday Communion 11:30 Nursery Proposal 5:30 Youth Parents Dinner (Newsletter Deadline)	8	9 5:30 Vespers 7:00 Bd. of Worship	10 1:30 Bible Study 5:30 The Gathering 7:30 Davis-Diels ChristCare	11 6:15 Handbell Practice 7:30 Choir Practice	12 7:00 Youth Corn Maze	13
14 11:30 Nursery Proposal Vote 6:30 Second Sunday	15	16 1:00 Beecher-Brewer Circle 5:30 Board of Christian Educ. 5:30 Vespers 7:00 Board of Trustees	17 1:30 Bible Study 5:30 The Gathering	18 1:00 MacGregor-Stitt (Fraker's) 7:30 Choir Practice	19	20
21 (Newsletter Deadline)	22	23 9:30 ABWM Bd. 5:30 Vespers	24 1:30 Bible Study 5:30 The Gathering 7:30 Davis-Diels ChristCare	25 6:15 Handbell Practice 7:30 Choir Practice	26	27
28 12:30 Celebration of Care Lunch	29	30 5:30 Vespers	31 1:30 Bible Study 5:30 The Gathering Halloween Party			

Happy Birthday!

Rob Snyder	1	Graham Miles	8	Marion Welch	20
Tom Glover	5	Marian Carter	9	Scott Diels	22
Cynthia Redinger	6	Lauren Gariepy	10	Carol Van Dyke	24
John Floyd, III	7	Deb Snyder	15	Hannah Foster	24
Julien Heidt	7	Bret Rushton	16	Wanda Finn	26
Dan Siler	7	Virginia Lau	19	Carolyn Hillebrand	30

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



Next Deadline:
Sunday, October 7, 2007



The Vespers Ministry is Growing!

During the summer, a group of church volunteers met with Pastor Paul to discuss the possibility of expanding the Vespers Ministry here at FBC. It was decided Vespers would take place every Tuesday (as opposed to the first and third Tuesdays of the month) and that guest churches would be invited to oversee some of the meals and worship services. So beginning this month, First Baptist takes care of the first Tuesday of the month, Vineyard Church handles the 2nd and 4th Tuesdays and Northside Community Church handles the 3rd and 5th Tuesdays.

Please contact Sarah Heidt, sarah.heidt@gmail.com, if you are interested in being a Devotional Speaker in October and/or November. And please remember that all are welcome to help prepare and serve the food, as well as visit with the guests and attend the worship service. The meal is served at 5:30 (food prep begins around 4:30) and the worship service follows the meal.