



FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH

Ann Arbor, Michigan

January 13, 2010

Pastor's Reflections

by Paul Simpson Duke

One of my newsletter columns last June was "In Praise of Summer . At the end of it I said I might one day write In Praise of Spring and In Praise of Fall, but I would have to leave it to someone else to write In Praise of Winter . Well, "someone else" took the dare and did. She is Lindsay Ambrige, a doctoral student who has attended worship here for several years and is very involved in our campus ministry. She is a Canadian, naturally! I think the piece is wonderful, and given the current weather , it helps! Here's what she wrote:

I've often wondered where my love of winter comes from. It's true that I've spent my entire life living in northern climes, but I doubt that nationality or heritage is the reason for my love of the cold. My mother lived in Ontario much longer than I, and fled permanently to Florida at the first opportunity. My older sister discovered the more temperate climate of Vancouver, and fled as well. I suspect that what I love is the character of the season: the textures and the smells, the colors and the light.

Praise for winter clothing! Elegantly cut jackets in tweeds and wools, cashmere sweaters and soft flannel sheets; clothes that come in shades of chocolate brown and burnt orange and cool grey. Praise for bright scarves and soft leather gloves!

Praise for cold-weather food that warms the heart and belly: chowders, ciders, and pumpkin pie. Turkey with gravy just smells better when the air outside the kitchen is icy.

Praise for the silence, solitude and reflection that winter can bring. A heavy snowfall muffles sound; closed windows allow a silence to settle that the sunny chaos of summer never concedes. The harsh sound of cars and busses on the busy street right outside my house is lessened after a dusting of snow. And in the quiet of winter , we can hear ourselves think. We may even talk less and reflect more. The sun sleeps longer too, waiting a few more hours before it starts beating through our window. And when the light does appear , it's muted but crisp - and somehow honest in its revelation of trees stripped bare, of frost along the window-pane and ice on the eaves.

Praise for the winter landscape! A blanket of snow lends a new sense of vastness to an otherwise familiar scene; the air is fresh and bracing, free of the humid stagnation of August. The breathtaking cold can bring sensations into clearer , sharper focus than at any other season. As author Connie Willis writes of a Medieval winter scene:

It had stopped snowing, and the stars had come out. The village lay silent under its covering of white...the dilapidated buildings looked different, the staggering fences and filthy daubed huts softened and graced by the snow. The lanterns caught the crystalline facets of the snowflakes and made them sparkle, but it was the stars that took Kivrin's breath away, hundreds of stars, thousands of stars, all of them sparkling like jewels in the icy air. "It shines," Agnes said, and Kivrin didn't know whether she was talking about the snow or the sky. The bell tolled evenly, calmly, its sound different again out in the frosty air - not louder, but fuller and somehow clearer.

I could never have said it that well. When shivering violently, I might still take some issue with it; but on balance my response is: Yes! There really is a time for every season under heaven, and every season under heaven has remarkably good gifts to give that no other season can. Thanks, Lindsay , for writing in praise of winter. "And all the people said.... 'Amen!' - and 'Brrrr!'"

All children are welcome to worship with their families. After the Time as Children portion of the worship service, preschoolers may go to the nursery for childcare and children in Kindergarten - 3rd grade are invited to Children's Worship.

Children and Youth Christian Education

NURSERY care is available on the 3rd floor from 9:30am - 12:30pm.

K - 2nd grade:

10:30-11:30 Children's Worship and snack (Rm. 202A)
11:30-12:30 Church School (Rm. 202B)

Youth (7th - High School)

10:00-11:00 Worship
11:30-12:30 Church School (Room 107)

3rd - 6th grades

10:00-11:00 Worship
11:00-11:10 snack (Room 202B)
11:10-11:40 Jr. Choir (Room 102)

Adult Christian Education 11:30 - 12:30

Beginning January 17:

The Gospel of Luke: Good News for All
Sue Ellen Glover, Leader

Lounge

Luke's Gospel was written in a time of persecution for the followers of Jesus, addressing a community in turmoil and constantly at risk. In the midst of all these difficulties, the author professes that the Good News Jesus brought was open to all and is filled with hope.

Young Adult Class
Paul Simpson Duke, Leader

Room 108

This class consists of conversational Bible study, discussing the letter to the Philippians and its application to our living. "Young adult" is defined as mid-twenties to 40(ish!).

Other Adult Education Opportunities:

Wednesday Bible Study (Wednesdays, 1:30—2:30 pm; Memorial Lounge)

Pastor Stacey Simpson Duke leads a study of the Gospel of Mark. Join us for fellowship and study.

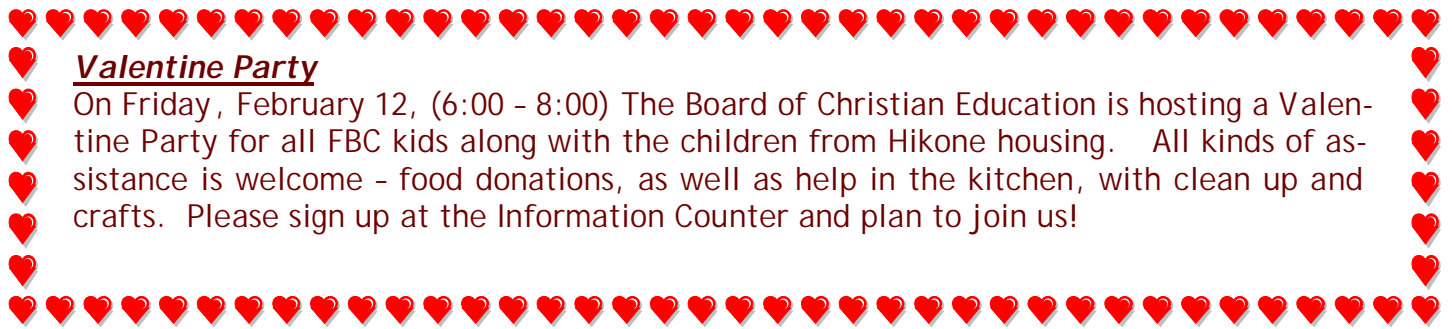
Adult Small Groups (ChristCare):

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



Valentine Party

On Friday, February 12, (6:00 - 8:00) The Board of Christian Education is hosting a Valentine Party for all FBC kids along with the children from Hikone housing. All kinds of assistance is welcome - food donations, as well as help in the kitchen, with clean up and crafts. Please sign up at the Information Counter and plan to join us!

Cooks Needed for The Gathering

— Are you looking for a way to reach out to students in an active, hands-on way? We are looking for volunteer cooks who are willing to make one or more meals for our campus ministry students on Wednesday nights. This is an essential and much-appreciated ministry of hospitality to students who don't otherwise get a home-cooked meal very often. In the past, volunteer cooks have typically supplied a salad, a main dish, bread, and a dessert, for 10-12 people. Sometimes two families take responsibility for one meal (for instance, one family supplies the salad and dessert, the other offers the main dish and bread). On Wednesdays when no one has signed up to cook, we have ordered pizza, subs, or burritos, or we have gone to the grocery store and prepared our own meal. If you don't like to cook but would still like to offer hospitality, we would be grateful for gift cards to local grocery stores or restaurants, to help with this effort. We are so grateful for your partnership in this vital ministry to students!



Hope Clinic will be hiring a half-time grant writer

to do grant writing, research and reporting. Some grant writing experience preferred. Anyone interested in applying for this position, should e-mail his or her resume or questions to crobinson@thehopeclinic.org or mail to Hope Clinic, P.O. Box 980311, Ypsilanti MI 48198-0333 by February 1, 2010.

The Interfaith Round Table of Washtenaw County

starts a five part winter/spring series on "The Divine Language of Music" with its first theme, CHANTING, on Sunday, January 24, at 7 pm, at the Interfaith Center for Spiritual Growth, 704 Airport Blvd, Ann Arbor. Three outstanding local performers will sing/demonstrate their chanting and then explore their meanings: Norma Gentile, recording artist/soloist; Ann Arbor's Threshold Choir under the direction of Tammy Corwin-Renner, and a local Sufi chanting group. For more information, call 734-678-5616 or email gbrides@umich.edu. Donations accepted at the door (suggested \$10).

Announcing a Presentation by

Archbishop Elias Chacour

January 26, 7:30 pm

First Presbyterian Church
1432 Washtenaw Avenue
Ann Arbor, Michigan

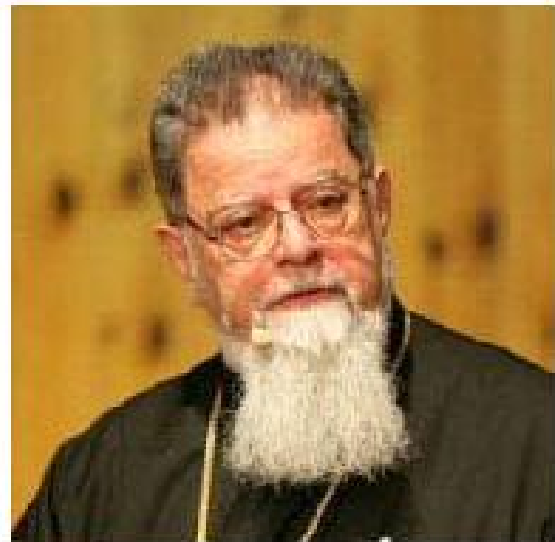
Sponsored by the First Presbyterian Chapter of Pilgrims of Ibillin

Reception in Social Hall following the presentation

The Archbishop will be pleased to autograph his books, BLOOD BROTHERS and WE BELONG TO THE LAND, which will be available.

Archbishop Elias Chacour is the founder of the Mar Elias Educational Institutions in Ibillin, North Galilee, Israel. Ibillin is a small, impoverished Muslim and Christian village. From the schools' inception, all religious faiths and all ethnic groups have been invited to attend as students, staff, and teachers. The schools have had international support that has expedited their expansion and modernization into a high-quality school system that now serves 3,500 students within a 25-30 mile radius.

The Archbishop will discuss some of the problems for the schools and stress the importance, not only of academic studies, but perhaps more importantly, of learning how to love the "other," i.e., to love all neighbors as yourself. This is taught and lived out in the classes of MEEI every day, leading the Archbishop to proclaim: "We are building Peace on top of the children's desks every day!"



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The Reverends Paul & Stacey Simpson Duke, Co-Pastors



Next
newsletter
deadline:
*Sunday,
January 24*



PANCAKE BREAKFAST
Sunday, February 14
8:30 – 9:45am

The Youth will once again be serving breakfast!
Proceeds will be used to begin to rebuild the funds in the youth account which was depleted in order to finance the recent trip to our sister church.

Treat your valentine to a delicious breakfast before worship!