



FIRST BAPTIST

CHURCH OF ANN ARBOR

Pastor's Reflections by Stacey Simpson Duke

January 11, 2017

We are well into January already, but I find that my mind still keeps returning to my happy Christmas memories. One of those is of our Christmas Day worship, here at First Baptist Church, where a surprising number of people gathered not all that many hours after our gorgeous Christmas Eve service. That morning, we put together a sort of "living nativity" or "Christmas tableau." Anyone who wanted to be an animal, an angel, or a shepherd was invited to be a part of it (the roles of the prophet, Mary, and Joseph were assigned ahead of time). Participants came forward to the chancel in stages, in between reflections on the Christmas story from Paul and me, while we sang carols together.

We heard part of the Christmas story that isn't always told, of the old man Simeon, who had waited his whole life to see God's promises fulfilled. After laying eyes on the baby boy, he announced, "Lord, now you let your servant go in peace: your word has been fulfilled. My own eyes have seen the salvation which you have prepared in the sight of every people; a light to reveal you to the nations and the glory of your people Israel." (Luke 2:28-32) Jesus was just a little baby at this point, still at the very beginning of his life. He had done nothing yet to show God's power except be born, and all Simeon needed to go in peace was to glimpse the *beginning* of the fulfillment of hope.

On Christmas morning, we put on simple costumes and took on roles around the manger. The baby was just the beginning; the story goes on, now. It goes on every Sunday as we gather for worship and for learning more about the Way of Jesus, but it also goes on in your life and mine every day, in the classroom and in the office and in our neighborhoods, when we continue to play our part. We bear God into the world in our own ordinary lives.

The Christmas season is over now, and we are in the season after the Epiphany. This is considered "Ordinary Time," but it can redefine our understanding of what "ordinary" means - it turns out that "ordinary" is what God always uses to show extraordinary grace and power: water, bread, wine, people. In the weeks between the Epiphany and Lent, the Scriptures each Sunday will make it increasingly clear that the truth of the incarnation wants to press further into our lives. It wants to come all the way into the center of our own beings, to shine out our faces and voices and bodies, to become incarnate within each one of us. This, after all, is what "incarnation" is - the divine taking on human flesh. It happened once, in a miraculous way, in the life of Jesus. Is it any less miraculous when *ours* is the flesh that God's love takes on?

Children and Youth Christian Education

NURSERY care for infants and toddlers is available on the 3rd floor from 9:30 - 12:30

CHILDREN AND YOUTH CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

Preschool - 1st grade

10:00 - 10:30 Worship with families
10:30 - 11:30 Church School (Rm. 202A & B)
11:30 - 11:45 Grace Notes music
11:30 - 12:30 Activities

Youth (6th - High School)

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

2nd - 5th grade:

10:00 - 10:30 Worship with families
10:30 - 11:30 Church School (Rm. 201B)
11:30 - 12:00 Children's Choir (Rm. 306)
12:00 - 12:30 Children's Worship (Rm. 201B)

CHILDREN'S MUSIC MINISTRY

Grace Notes (Preschool - 1st Grade) 11:30 - 11:45 Rm. 202, directed by Marissa Alaniz
Children's Choir (2nd - 5th Grade) 11:30 - 12:00 Rm. 306, directed by Shin-Ae Chun

Adult Christian Education

(11:30-12:30)

Simply Jesus
Joe Mortensen, Leader

Memorial Lounge

An examination of Gospel texts and the historical setting of Judaism in Jesus time in order to gain better understanding of his proclamation, ministry, and identity. This study will draw from the insights of N. T. Wright's book, *Simply Jesus: A New Vision of Who He Was, What He Did, and Why He Matters*. This class meets through February 26.

Young Adult Class

Room 108

Knowing God with Heart and Mind - Discussions based on selections from the writings of ancient and modern Christians.

How to Pray: A (Re-)Introduction to the Ongoing Practice of Prayer
Paul Simpson Duke, leader

Room 102

Pragmatic discussions of the basics of daily prayer, with guidance and rationale on the foundational elements of prayer and on different approaches and models for a practice of daily prayer. This is a course for beginners and for those who wish to renew and strengthen their practice of prayer. It meets through February 26.

Other Adult Education Opportunities:

Wednesday Bible Study: Pastor Paul is leading *Studies in the Prophets*. We will discuss the work of the prophets in their historical context and will examine selected texts for closer understanding. Please join us! No classes on December 28 and January 4. Class will resume on January 11.

Adult Small Groups: We have continuing small groups centered on study, sharing, prayer, worship and mission meeting at various times. See Stacey, Paul, or Sue Ellen for information on how to join an existing group or form a new group.

College/University Students: **The Gathering** is for undergraduates and graduate students. We gather every Wednesday during the school year, 5:30-7:30p in the Campus Center, for a free, home-cooked meal and study. If you would like to be added to the email list for regular updates, please email Stacey at staceyduke@gmail.com.

Follow us on Facebook! If you aren't already a fan of FBCA2 on Facebook, come on over and "Like" our page: facebook.com/fbca2. We post regular updates there about what's going on around here, along with the occasional devotional thought. You can post on our wall as well. If you are already a fan, did you know that you can easily share certain FBCA2 posts with your own Facebook friends? Events and links that can be shared will have a "Share" button (in addition to the usual "Like" and "Comment" buttons). Click "share" and the event or link will show up on your own Facebook page for all your friends to see. It's a great way to get the word out about special happenings at our church.



FBC News & Happenings

FBC Stewardship Campaign 2017: Generations of Generosity

We are very pleased to report that FBC's 2017 stewardship campaign has reached a very successful conclusion. 76 pledgers have committed to give \$434,049 to FBC next year. This represents a 4.8% increase over the amount pledged last year and it is 99.8% of the way to our goal of a 5% increase. Thanks to all of you who have pledged in support of furthering FBC's vital work in our world this year.

- Marissa Alaniz and Bob Kidd, Co-Chairs, 2017 FBC Stewardship Campaign

Resources for Personal Devotions

We hope that one of your New Year's resolutions is to spend a quiet time each day with prayer and scripture. The Board of Christian Education invites you to use *The Secret Place* or *Disciplines*. *The Secret Place* is available at the Information Counter (free). It is published quarterly and is offered in regular and large print editions. The Upper Room publishes *Disciplines* which has one-page daily devotions for the entire year and the scriptures are based on the lectionary. Each week you can read and meditate on the scriptures that will be usually be included in the upcoming Sunday's worship service. *Disciplines* books are available from Sue Ellen for \$5. If you would like information on other resources (including online resources), please contact Sue Ellen.

Warming Center Collection

In February, we will be once again hosting the daytime warming shelter. We are once again collecting warm clothing including gloves, hats, mittens, and socks (look for sales!), plus personal products like toothbrushes and toothpaste, deodorant, shampoos, pocket tissue packs, combs, soap, etc. There will be a basket near the Information Counter each Sunday.

Volunteers needed!

Please check the Information Counter for assorted volunteer sign-up sheets. We can always use your help and no experience is required. If you have any questions, please contact Beverly Inbody. ***We particularly need help with communion on the first Sunday of each month. If you can help, please sign up at the Information Counter.***

The 2017 Flower Calendar

The signup calendar is now posted on the downstairs bulletin board near the Lounge door. The flowers are placed on the chancel for each service. The cost is \$30 and your dedication goes in the bulletin. The flowers are yours to take after the Sunday morning service. Please sign up early to secure your date(s).

2016 Year-End Contribution Statements

The year-end personal contribution statements are ready for you to pick up. They can be found at the Information Counter on Sundays or in the office during the week.

Warming Shelter Ministry at FBC and FCC in February

Dear congregation.

We have the opportunity to work with First Congregational Church of Ann Arbor in hosting a Warming Shelter for the month of February. **The Warming Shelter will be open at First Baptist Church on Tuesdays and Thursdays during the month of February, 9:00 am to 3:00 pm.** FCCAA will be the host on Mondays, Wednesdays and Friday, 9:00 am to 3:00 pm.

The group MISSION is overseeing the Warming Shelter Ministry. They will be providing many of the volunteers to work this important ministry to the homeless. Each church hosting the Warming Shelter is invited to participate in any number of ways, such as: 1) Volunteer your time to mix and mingle with those using the Warming Shelter; 2) Bring some snacks (**nothing with peanuts**), or food to share with the guests; etc.; 3) Sign up at the information desk, or church office to prepare and bring a luncheon dish to serve 35 people (NO Peanuts in food). We will need at least 2 dishes (serving 35 each dish). The Warming Shelter has been averaging about 70 people.

It's been very cold in recent days and staying warming is essential. **FBCAA is responsible for February on Tuesdays (Feb. 7, 14, 21, 28) and Thursdays (Feb. 2, 9, 16, 23).** Your prayers presence and support are welcomed. You don't have to sign up to volunteer. Just come and let God share His love through you." - Mission Action Board FBCAA

Certain clothing items are greatly needed, such as: Long Underwear (LX, XLX); Socks; Mittens/ Gloves. You can bring these items and drop them off at the Information Desk in the designated clothing box on Sunday mornings.

Contact Kent Jennings (kentjen31@gmail.com; 734-732-6802) or Ron Gregg (rgregg@patientfocussystems.com) for more information.

FBC e-Connection and Newsletter Email Distribution

Over the past couple of months, the office has heard from quite a few people that they didn't get word of various events. Here is a quick summary of how to get your email added to one or both of the distribution lists...

The church office sends out two communications electronically. FBC e-Connections are sent out with important news about happenings at the church and the concerns of church members, such as prayer concerns, birth and death announcements. We also send the FBC Newsletter out by email to anyone who wishes to receive it that way.

If you aren't currently subscribed to either list and wish to be, please email the church office at office@fbca2.org and we will send out an invitation to subscribe to either or both lists. When you get the email invitation, click on the link to finish the subscription process. ***In order to prevent complaints about spam, the distribution program doesn't allow us to simply add an email address to the list.***

We have also heard some gmail users that their service is routing e-connection emails to the "promotions" folder, rather than the "primary" folder. If you are a gmail client and it appears that you have suddenly stopped receiving e-connections, give the church office a call and Kat will work with you to fix the situation.



2017

FACES OF FAITH

Sunday, January 15, 4-6 pm

(along with other national Religious Freedom Day observances)

Come hear the stories of local clergy & other designated religious leaders from 6 traditions. This year each will speak to the whole group and follow-up conversations will be probing and engaging.

Islam

(Imam Yahya Luqman)

Judaism

(Rabbi Robert Dobrusin)

Christianity

(Rev. Marie Duquette)

Sikhism

(Jaspreet Singh)

Unitarian Universalism

(Rev. Lindasusan Ulrich)

Baha'i

(Eric Bell & Amy Whitebell)

Zion Lutheran Church (Host)
1501 W. Liberty, AA (\$5 suggested donation)

First Baptist Church of Ann Arbor
Coffee Break Concert Series, 2016-2017 ③
Free Concert and Open to the Public

PIANO CONCERT

February 9, 2017
Thursday at 12:15 pm
Rajung Yang



Associate Professor of Piano at University of Idaho

Program:

Partita No. 2 in C Minor, BWV 826 by Johann Sebastian Bach
A Little Suite for Christmas, A. D. 1979 by George Crumb
Embraceable You by George Gershwin-Earl Wild
Variations, Op. 41 by Nikolai Kapustin



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The Reverends Paul & Stacey Simpson Duke, Co-Pastors

Next
Newsletter
Deadline:
Sunday, Jan 22



Congregational Meeting on Sunday, January 29

Our annual financial meeting will be held after fellowship time (11:30) on January 29. After the business meeting we will enjoy a potluck lunch. Please plan to attend. There will be a sign-up sheet at the information desk and in the church office during the week. The Board of Care and Community will provide chicken, rolls, and beverages. If your last names begins with A-D, please bring a potato, rice, or pasta dish; last names beginning with E-J, please bring fruit or a dessert; last names starting with K-Z, please bring a salad or some kind of vegetable.