



# FIRST BAPTIST

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## CHURCH OF ANN ARBOR

Pastor's Reflections by Stacey Simpson Duke

February 8, 2017

One of the ways Baptists have historically attempted to live our Christian witness is through our advocacy for religious freedom; the Baptist movement was, in fact, born out of resistance to state-mandated or state-privileged religion. This dissent was rooted in an understanding that each person must stand alone before God, to answer only for himself or herself, and that any authentic following of Christ must be personal and voluntary, never coerced.

From the beginning, Baptists were persecuted for their convictions about religious liberty, both in England and in the New World. Here, when the Puritans exiled Roger Williams, he founded not only the first Baptist church in America, but also the colony of Rhode Island, the first colony to offer freedom to people of any religion (or no religion). Williams insisted that good citizenship was not limited to Christians, but also to "Jews, Turks, [Muslims] or anti-Christians..." Despite resistance and persecution - including public flogging, imprisonment, ridicule, and fines - Baptists continued to lead the struggle for religious liberty. It was Baptist minister and evangelist John Leland who persuaded James Madison to craft an amendment to the new Constitution guaranteeing religious liberty - thus making the United States of America the first nation in history to provide full religious freedom for all its citizens.

Freedom has always been at the very core of what it means to be Baptist. This conviction provides the soil and the air that allow us to grow into individuals and congregations who claim our own personal, authentic, vigorous faith. At the same time, our commitment to freedom of conscience has made us bold to fight for the rights of others, to shelter individuals and communities from harm or discrimination, and to support and advocate for respect for the faith and conscience of others.

At First Baptist, one way this commitment has taken shape is in our partnership with the Interfaith Round Table of Washtenaw County, an organization we have supported since its inception more than twenty years ago. One of our previous pastors, the Reverend George Lambrides, has directed the organization since 1998 (for the last five years, he has served as Co-Director along with the Reverend Dr. Susan King). The Interfaith Round Table focuses on providing spaces for people from across faith traditions to come together to address the deep, divisive issues facing our world, seeking to create a culture of understanding and inclusion.

This past Tuesday, Paul and I attended a special meeting of the Interfaith Round Table to explore meaningful ways to stand with and support our local Muslim brothers and sisters, during a time of increasing anti-Muslim rhetoric. The local Muslim community expressed to our group that many people have been reaching out to them, and they have felt the support of the wider community during this time. They've indicated that they welcome this attention and support, and that one of the ways we could stand in solidarity with them is to continue to make sure our own faith communities are well-informed about our Muslim neighbors and the issues they are facing. Here at First Baptist, we have tried to learn about Islam and to support the Muslim community in a variety of ways over the years (most recently by participating in the One Human Family banner campaign, as well as by attending an Open House at the Ann Arbor Islamic Center). In 2013, we also hosted the Reverend Dr. Charles Kimball, whose area of expertise is comparative religious studies with a specialization in Islamic studies, as our Morikawa lecturer. I am currently rereading his book *When Religion Becomes Lethal: The Explosive Mix of Politics and Religion in Judaism, Christianity, and Islam*, and I would recommend it to anyone who seeks a deeper, more nuanced understanding of the issues at hand.

As we grapple with difficult issues locally and nationally, our congregation has a vital role to play. Leaning into the best of what it means to be Baptist Christians, we have the chance now to advocate for freedom, respect, understanding, and protection. In the coming days and years, we will likely have specific opportunities to lead our community in supporting our Muslim neighbors, and I hope we will find ways to do so. In the meantime, let's keep talking, reading, learning, and praying - for our neighbors, and for ourselves, that we would be bold in our faith and in our love.

## 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 - 1<sup>st</sup> 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 (6<sup>th</sup> - 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

An in-depth, discussion-based Bible Study of the Gospel of Mark that will run through February 26.

### How to Pray: A (Re-)Introduction to the Ongoing Practice of Prayer

Room 102

Paul Simpson Duke, leader

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!

**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](mailto:staceyduke@gmail.com).

# FBC News & Happenings

## Welcome New Members: Xan & Kevin Morgan

Xan, Kevin, Emmanuel (9), Asher (7) and Piper (4) Morgan all love learning, playing and living in Ann Arbor. Xan and Kevin met their freshman year at U of M and got married the month they graduated. Xan grew up in the Episcopal Church and is the daughter of two pastors. Christian formation for children and families has always been a part of her work life - first as a middle school math teacher at Ann Arbor Christian School, then for the last nine years as Director of Children and Family Ministries at St. Clare's, and now as Director of Children's Ministries at FBC. Kevin received his bachelors in Architecture and his masters in Construction Management. In his work as the manager of a team in the Office of Campus Sustainability he values the importance of caring for God's creation. Xan and Kevin delight in their role as the primary faith formers in their children's lives. They look forward to being a part of this community at First Baptist Church as they grow in faith and act for justice as a family.



## Thank you for your warm welcome on Sunday.

I am honored to be part of the staff team and the greater faith community at First Baptist. I look forward to what God has in store for our work together. Blessings, Xan Morgan

## Volunteers needed!

Please check the Information Counter for assorted volunteer sign-up sheets. We can always use your help and no experience is required. It's a great way to meet people at church and get plugged in! If you have any questions, please contact Beverly Inbody.

## Any Unwanted Christmas Ornaments?

A reminder from the AB Women's Ministries...as you are storing your winter decorations, if you find some gently-used ornaments that you are ready to part with, the ladies are already collecting for their 2017 Christmas Celebration ornament tables. You can bring them in now and they will store them until December. Please bring them to the church office or to the Information Counter on Sunday mornings. Any questions, please call Beverly Inbody in the office at 734-663-9376.

The MacGregor-Stitt Circle next meets on Thursday, February 16th, at 1pm at the home of Eva Kelly. The program will be "Food Gatherers" with Marissa Alaniz.

The Beecher-Brewer Circle next meets on Tuesday, February 21st, at 1pm at Brookhaven. The program will be a mission update from Betty Doman.

## Can & Bottle Drive Youth Fundraiser

On June 18, our Youth Summer Mission Team will head to Spirit Lake Nation in North Dakota to work with the United Methodist mission there on the reservation. Every Sunday between now and the trip, the youth group will be collecting cans and bottles to take in to receive the deposit money on; this money will be used to help offset the costs of travel to North Dakota. You can help by bringing in your cans and bottles any Sunday (or every Sunday!). It's an easy way to make an important contribution to the service and learning of our youth group. Thank you!

Diana Butler Bass will speak at First United Methodist Church of Ann Arbor on Saturday, March 25, from 9:00 a.m. – 2:30 p.m. in the downtown sanctuary.

“Relocating Faith” - Finding God in the horizons of Nature and Neighbor

- How do we live as a people of faith?
- What does it mean to take the Incarnation seriously? What if God isn't so far away?
- Our vibrant, progressive church does not talk much about “being saved.” What are other reasons to come to church?



This event is free. To help us plan, please pre-register at <http://tinyurl.com/Mar25-DBB>.

The event will include a 45-minute lunch break. Box lunches are available to purchase. Box lunch purchases may be made until March 12 or until sold out.

Information about our downtown location, parking, accessibility, and other events can be found elsewhere on our church website: <http://www.fumc-a2.org>.

Diana Butler Bass is an author, speaker, and independent scholar specializing in American religion and culture. She holds a Ph.D. in religious studies from Duke University. After a dozen years teaching undergraduates, she became a full-time writer, independent researcher, educator, and consultant. Her work has been cited in the national media, including TIME Magazine, USA TODAY, and the Washington Post, and she has appeared on CNN, FOX, PBS, and NPR. Diana is the author of nine books. Her most recent book is “Grounded: Finding God in the World — A Spiritual Revolution.” She comments on religion, politics, and culture in a variety of media.

First United Methodist Church of Ann Arbor  
120 S. State St., Ann Arbor, MI 48104  
734-662-4536  
[www.fumc-a2.org](http://www.fumc-a2.org)

For more information about this event contact Director of Adult Education, Debbie Houghton, <mailto:debbie@fumc-a2.org>



# FUNDRAISING NIGHT

Help support

## **ANN ARBOR FIRST BAPTIST YOUTH GROUP - THE CROSSING**

**April 11, 2017  
4:00 P.M. - 8:00 P.M.**

**at the Panera Bread bakery-cafe at  
3205 Washtenaw Avenue  
Ann Arbor, MI 48104**

**Bring this flyer when you dine with us and we'll donate a portion of the proceeds from your purchase. Please hand in a hard copy or show an electronic version of this flyer upon placing your order. Purchases of gift cards are not counted towards the event. It's a great way to combine great taste and great fun - for a great cause.**

**Learn more about Fundraising Nights at Panera Bread at:  
[www.PaneraBread.com/fundraiser](http://www.PaneraBread.com/fundraiser)**

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The Reverends Paul & Stacey Simpson Duke, Co-Pastors

Next  
Newsletter  
Deadline:  
*Sunday, Feb 19*

### **Warming Shelter Ministry at FBC Volunteer Sign up & Warming Center Collection**

We are working with First Congregational Church 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.

We are collecting warm clothing including Long Underwear (LX, XLX), 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.

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.

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