



Pastor's Perspectives by Stacey Simpson Duke September 13, 2017

Last month, at our "Radical Hospitality" event led by our Board of Outreach, we discussed practical ways each of us can welcome newcomers to church on Sunday mornings. Marissa Alaniz invited us to imagine the concrete ways our congregation might embody the vision of the Board of Outreach: a congregation that bears witness to God's limitless love by inviting, welcoming, and including others. It was an excellent interactive and intergenerational event, with lots of positive energy in the room. If you missed it, please look for the "tip sheet" Marissa handed out at the event, elsewhere in this newsletter.

The hospitality we seek to offer as a church ought to be *radical* in at least three ways. One meaning of the word *radical* is "revolutionary" or "innovative." To welcome others as Christ has welcomed us is a revolutionary, countercultural act in a world that often teaches us to respond to the stranger with indifference, judgement, or fear.

A second meaning of the word *radical* is "thorough" or "pervasive." The hospitality we are talking about is meant to infuse everything we do as a congregation - whether that is greeting people in worship on Sunday morning, offering a hot meal to hungry people on Tuesday night, or making space for addiction recovery groups throughout the week. Ultimately, hospitality ought to pervade our entire way of being as individuals, too, so that the way we treat others in our daily lives is marked by a profound sense of respect, honor, and acceptance of others.

A third meaning of the word *radical* is "essential," "fundamental," or "at the root of." The practice of hospitality is *at the root* of Christian faith. It is the bright core of scriptural witness, running through the Bible from the Hebrew Scriptures, where God reminds Israel to welcome the stranger because they, too, were once strangers in the land of Egypt, through the entire New Testament, exemplified best by the witness of Jesus, whose whole life was a revolution of welcome.

All of us have had experiences where we felt unwelcomed, or worse, judged and rejected. For many people, the church has been first and foremost a strong voice of judgement and rejection. Not only has this had the effects of damaging people's understandings of God and of themselves, and of tarnishing the church's identity in our world, but it is actually a violation of our calling as God's people. In Jesus, God's word to the world is, "Yes! I love you! I accept you! I embrace you!" As Jesus' people, we are meant to be representatives of that "Yes!"

We practice being signs of God's "Yes!" every Sunday, and then we go out into the world to keep showing that loving acceptance and affirmation in every way we can. At the Radical Hospitality event, Marissa invited us to imagine what our congregation would be like if we truly dedicated ourselves to being a place of authentic welcome and acceptance. Let's take it a step further - imagine what our community, our country, and our world would look like if you and I and all the rest of Christ's followers devoted ourselves every day to being living signs of God's love. The world needs this! What will you do this Sunday to welcome newcomers at church as our honored guests? And what will you do today to show someone else deep respect, genuine attention, and nonjudgmental acceptance?

Children and Youth Christian Education and Music

Children's Ministry for the new year begins this **Sunday!** We are excited to spend time experiencing God's love together in worship, church school and choir. For information about the year ahead, please click [here](#) for the letter parents received.

Our Sunday morning schedule:

Children are an integral part of our worshipping church family; children of all ages are welcome in worship. Staff and volunteers transition the kids during the morning. Our goal is to make it easy for parents to participate in "Second Hour," our adult class offerings.



Blessing of the children and their backpacks

Infant - 3-year-olds:

- 10:00 Worship with family, nursery available
- 10:30 Families may choose to have kids go to the nursery following Time as Children for a time of praying and storytelling in the nursery. Snack will be provided.
- 11:30 Children and nursery staff go to another play space (room 202 A) for Friendship Time.
- 12:30 Parents come to pick up kids in room 202A (Children's Ministry wing) after 2nd hour adult classes.

4-year-olds - 2nd grade: room 202A/B

- 10:30 Church School: connecting, praying, storytelling, responding
- 11:05 Snack
- 11:15 Grace Notes Choir with Marissa Alaniz
- 11:30 Friendship Time staffed by Kathryn Gregg and nursery volunteer
- 12:30 Parents pick up kids after 2nd hour adult classes.

3rd - 6th Grade: Room 201B

- 10:30 Snack
- 10:45 Church School: connecting, praying, storytelling, responding
- 11:30 Children's Choir with Shin-Ae Chun (music room)
- 12:00 Friendship Time with Xan Morgan
- 12:30 Parents pick up kids after 2nd hour adult classes.

Youth (7th-12th grade): Room 107

- 10:00 Worship
- 11:00 Fellowship Time (Fellowship Hall)
- 11:30 Church School (Room 107)



Worshipful Play Bags:

Beginning this Sunday we'll have Worshipful Play Bags available for children to grab on their way into worship. These bags provide activities for children to engage with worship and to play quietly while their ears are listening - even if it doesn't seem like it, they are! There are two categories of Worshipful Play Bags, those for pre-readers and for readers. I hope your kids will enjoy these bags and that you as parents will find the materials helpful.

- Xan Morgan, Director of Children's Ministries

Heroes of the Bible (Astrid Beck, leader)

Library

Astrid Beck will continue leading the discussion on Heroes of the Bible. We will look at great men and women, outstanding leaders in the biblical account, who are foundational to our faith, who not only defined it, but who also taught the values inherent in our faith practices. In the Spring, we began with Moses and continued with Elijah (highlighted again in the Gospels of Mark and Luke in the Transfiguration account; why those two?). We will continue to study major men and women in the Old Testament and the New Testament. No background readings required. Bring your favorite Bible or use one of ours.

**Sabbath-Keeping: Let Go, Behold, Sing
(Heather Entrekin, leader)**

Memorial Lounge

Trusting that God's commandment to "remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy" speaks to the weariness, dysfunction, and anxiety of our day, this class seeks a deeper understanding of the meaning of Sabbath-keeping, explores experiences of and resistance to Sabbath habits, and participates in Sabbath practices such as letting go, mindfulness, and worship. This series will include these intentions: relax; be a safe place, a grace place; take care of yourself and others; plant seeds to nourish, deepen, and restore vocation and purpose; know yourself to be God's beloved, just as you are; keep Sabbath.

Young Adult Class (William van Geest, facilitator)

Room 108

This class is studying the Gospel of Mark. Interested members of our class take turns sharing leadership of the study. Though we are working chronologically through the book, each Sunday is a stand-alone session, so newcomers or sporadic participants are always welcome!

Other Adult Education Opportunities:

Wednesday Bible Study will resume on September 20. Pastor Paul Simpson Duke will lead a study of the Gospel of John.

Small Groups: We have continuing small groups centered on study, sharing, prayer, worship and mission meeting at various times. See Stacey or Paul 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 during the school year for a free home-cooked meal, friendship, and study. If you would like to be added to the email list for weekly updates about gatherings and service opportunities, please email Stacey Simpson Duke at staceyduke@gmail.com

New Small Group forming for families with children: Are you interested in growing together while deepening friendships among parents and kids? Whether you're a solid yes or on the fence, you're invited to the Morgans' house (2614 Page Ct) on Friday, September 15th from 7:00-8:30 pm. We'll talk about when and how often the group will meet, what to study and how to make it easy for families with children. And we'll eat dessert too! Please let Xan (xan@fbca2.org) know if you are coming.

Looking for a New Wedding Coordinator!

I have been the Wedding Coordinator for First Baptist for about 12 years. I would like to pass the baton to someone who would like to add this job to their resume. The church has about four to eight weddings a year, mostly non-member. It can really be a lot of fun. You meet many wonderful people. I would be working with you the first couple of weddings, teaching you all the responsibilities. This is not a Wedding Planner position, you coordinate what happens in the church the day of the wedding. Please contact me by phone if you have any interest in learning more about this opportunity. Thank you. Joyce Robbins (734-678-3353)

FBC News & Happenings

The MacGregor-Stitt Circle next meets on Thursday, September 21, at the home of Roberta Hause (co-hostess Jill Damon). The Program is a Subway Lunch, followed by "Summer Memories."

The Beecher-Brewer Circle next meets on Tuesday, September 19, at 1pm at Brookhaven Manor. The program is a summary of FBC mission activities, given by Betty Doman.

Focus on Our Church Family

The Board of Care and Community is starting a new newsletter feature. We regularly print information about new members in our newsletter, but we realized that we don't offer the same opportunity to newcomers to know about families/individuals who have been part of the congregation for a few, or many, years. So in order for all of us to become more familiar with our church family, we will highlight a family or individual in our newsletters. You will be contacted and invited to submit a paragraph or two describing interests, background, and anything else you would like us to know.

Reaching Across Differences: Conversations that Matter in Today's World

Some have asked, "How do I talk with people who see life from such a different points of view?" Others have said, "I just want to be a better listener." And still others wonder, "Are there better ways to connect with those who don't think like me, look like me or practice like me?"

A current crisis in our society is our ongoing struggle to truly hear each other and to help each other discern what sits at the heart of our beliefs, our fears and our desires for a wholesome life. What are some deep listening and inquiry practices that can bring us closer together rather than further apart?

The IRT invites you to come explore and practice conversations that will expand our ability to listen more deeply and discover what truly matters at the core of any conversation. How can we reflect each other's sacredness in ways that can help each of us see our true beauty and each other's heart's desire to thrive and live a blessed life?

- Four October evenings (7-9 pm): 3 Tuesdays (3,10,17) & 1 Thursday (26)
- Themes: four core attributes (trust, hope, love and clarity/light)
- Approach: self-examination, small and large group discussion
- Location: Zion Lutheran Church, 1501 W. Liberty, Ann Arbor
- Facilitator: Rev. Susan King, IRT Co-Director
- Cost: \$40 (includes all materials)

Reserve a place by registering via email at gbrides@umich.edu

Volunteers Needed! No Experience Needed!

- **Communion Servers:** On the first Sunday of the month, volunteers are needed to help prepare, serve, and clean up for Communion. **Sunday Morning Greeters:** This is a great time to see friends and meet new people.
- **Sound System:** Help with recording the Sunday worship service and other services. See Clay Scott for more information.

All of the above positions are a great opportunity to meet people, help your church, and become more involved. Sign up sheets can be found at the Information Counter.

10 tips for being more welcoming



1 Wear your nametag! If you don't have one and would like one, let us know.

2 Observe. Before or during the service, look around you and take note of people you're not sure you've talked to before!

3 Smile! We communicate with more than just words. Coming to a new church can be nerve-racking. No matter how someone looks, how a child is behaving, how someone prays or worships...they are welcome here, and they should not feel judged.

4 Circle of 10: Greet anyone, member or guest, who comes within ten feet of you. Make a special effort to greet the people you don't already know within your Circle of 10.

5 Rule of 3: Try not to talk to other members for the first three minutes after the service. Talk only to those you don't know and to people that you know are guests.

6 Be brave. Start a conversation. Your smile, welcome, compliment, invitation, or listening ear could be exactly what someone needs. For extra support, "buddy up" and go with another church member to talk to someone you don't already know.

7 Ask, listen, and find common ground. Ask open-ended, conversation-provoking questions (see examples). Try to find a way to say "me, too!" Relate what they say to yourself, your family, your kids, or your grandkids.

8 To help you remember a person's name, repeat it, or introduce them to someone else. Don't be embarrassed if you're greeting a regular church-goer and don't know that person's name. Don't be offended if someone doesn't remember your name. We need to offer grace to one another, just as we would to visitors.

9 Extend an invitation. Invite someone to Fellowship Time. Look in the bulletin or grab the latest newsletter to equip yourself with other events and activities (see examples).

10 Make introductions. Make it a goal to introduce someone you just met to someone else, especially if they tell you that they're new here!

Bonus: Sign up to join our Welcoming Ministry!

Ask open-ended, conversation-provoking questions:

- Where are you from? What brought you here? Have you gotten a chance to go to _____ yet?
- What do you do? What does that entail? What's your favorite part of your job?
- What are you studying? How long is your program? What's the most interesting class you've taken in that field?
- How old are your kids? What schools do they go to? Are they involved in any extracurricular activities?
- What do you like to do for fun? Have you taken any fun trips recently?

Extend an invitation:

Upcoming Events:

- **Ice Cream Social - Sunday, September 10th.** Contact: Xan, Board of Christian Education.
- **Saturday of Service – September 23rd, 2-4PM.** We will be volunteering at Food Gatherers, sorting or repackaging food for our neighbors in need of food. Contact: Stacey or Marissa.

Ongoing Activities and Groups:

- **The Gathering (for College/University Students) – resumes Wednesday, September 6th.** Graduate and undergraduate students gather on Wednesdays from 5:30-7:30PM during the school year for a free meal, friendship, and study. Contact: Paul, Stacey, or any Gathering attendee.
- **Sanctuary Choir – rehearsals resume Thursday, September 7th.** The choir rehearses each Thursday evening from 7:30-9:00PM. The ability to read and sight-sing music at a high level is not a requirement for joining the choir, but rather the love of singing and the desire to worship God through music. Contact: Bonnie Kidd.
- **Shared Suppers – next is Saturday, September 9th.** These potluck-style dinners with small, rotating groups happen on the second Saturday of every other month. Contact: Mary Davis, Board of Care and Community.
- **Church School Classes and Children's Choirs – resume Sunday, September 17th.** Contact for families/kids: Xan. Contact for adult classes: Paul or Stacey.
- **Adult Small Groups:** We have continuing small groups centered on study, sharing, prayer, worship and mission meeting at various times. Contact: Paul or Stacey.
- **New Small Group forming for families with children:** Are you interested in growing together while deepening friendships among parents and kids? Contact: Xan.
- **Join our Facebook group:** to stay updated with church members. It is called "First Baptist Church of Ann Arbor" and is a public group. Contact: Stacey or Marissa.
- **Men's and Ladies' Book Clubs:** Small groups to enjoy books, community, discussion, and refreshments with church friends. Contact Men's: Cesar Alaniz; Ladies': Janice Stumpf.

Sign up to join our Welcoming Ministry:



Saturday of Service

**September 23, 2:00p-4:00p
Food Gatherers**

Intergenerational service opportunity

Sign up at church this Sunday!

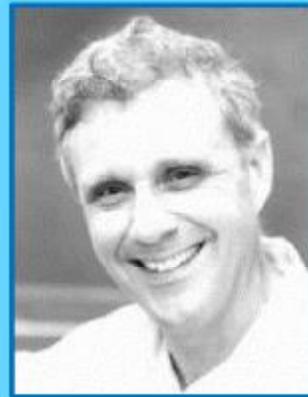
**Questions? Contact Marissa Alaniz
malaniz@umich.edu**

First Baptist Church of Ann Arbor
Coffee Break Concert Series, 2016-2017 ①
Free Concert and Open to the Public

The Flemish Harpsichord

October 5, 2017
Thursday at 12:15 pm
Edward Parmentier

Professor Emeritus of Harpsichord
University of Michigan



- Program -

Music by Byrd, D'Anglebert, Bull and Frescobaldi



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ART-BREAK Studio

CALL FOR VOLUNTEERS – ART SUPPLIES – DONATIONS !!!!!

ArtBreak Studio is a weekly drop-in art program for those experiencing homelessness and other disadvantaged individuals. We believe that art should be accessible to all, and that the ability to express oneself creatively is a significant factor in enhancing self-esteem and supporting mental health.

Our classes are at the Delonis Center (Shelter Association of Washtenaw County) September through May from 1:30-3:30PM on Wednesdays, and provide a welcoming, supportive and safe space where participants can establish their own direction, pace, and depth of self-exploration in a weekly "class" led by a local artist who will guide them in a creative project. We explore a variety of mediums – paints, colored pencil, textiles, charcoal, etc. Each class will have several assistants (**no artistic experience required!**) to offer encouragement, guidance, or just a kind and non-judgmental presence. ABS facilitators interact honestly, respect and adapt to each participant's needs, maintain boundaries, and emphasize the creative experience. Creative self-expression inspires joy, feels productive, and allows a positive outlet for what's pent-up inside – and it is good for the soul!

We are a community effort non-profit, dependent on local resources of art enthusiasts, volunteers and donors. We welcome you to participate with us in making ArtBreak Studio a success. This is a great opportunity for retired art teachers or amateur artists, and we would love it if you would partner with us in this community effort. Sign up for a week, once a month – several times a year – whatever is convenient for you. To volunteer or donate art supplies or funding, please go to www.artbreak.studio to see further details.

Questions??

Becki Spangler

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The Reverends Paul & Stacey Simpson Duke, Co-Pastors

Next
Newsletter
Deadline:
Sunday, Sept 24

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 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 have a separate distribution for the FBC Newsletter, and can send it 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.***