



Pastors' Perspective by Stacey & Paul Simpson Duke

April 11, 2018

The two of us believe the time has come for our church to consider its stance and its practice concerning people in the LGBTQ community. This discussion has been coming for a long time. You have heard us make reference to this issue from the pulpit, and in recent years we have heard from increasing numbers of church members that the church should be clear and public about our welcome and full inclusion of all people regardless of sexual orientation or gender identity.

Many would be surprised that this is not explicitly the case. For a very long time we have had gay and transgender members, some of whom have served in leadership positions. This has been a non-issue. What we have not done, however, is to articulate our practice and make it known. The result is that people who care about this issue who go to our website, or simply ask around, see no evidence of how welcoming and inclusive we are, with the result that many of them never visit our church. In fact, given the well-known negative position of a host of churches, including plenty of Baptists, the general assumption now tends to be that if a church makes no statement of its full inclusiveness, then it is either not fully inclusive or simply doesn't care. So we are asking the church to have a discussion about it, and to give serious consideration to writing and adopting a statement that indicates in some ways our full acceptance and inclusion of all people, irrespective (for example) of age, gender, race, ethnicity, education, disability, economic circumstance, sexual orientation, or gender identity.

This is a sensitive issue for many people, and in most churches there are disagreements about what is best to say and what the words really mean. So we want a process for this discussion that will be entirely open, respectful, relational, and prayerful, a process in which people really listen to each other and speak their minds and hearts to each other—in hopes of an outcome that is not only faithful regarding the issue at hand, but also faithful regarding *how* a church makes decisions in relation to each other and to the Spirit among us.

The two of us have been gathering with some families who share a common concern on this issue to work together on a process: the Alaniz family, the Foster family, and the Kidd family. The 12 of us, now endorsed by the Executive Council as the Working Group on Welcome and Full Inclusion, decided on a framework based on Micah 6:8, a text used often in our church: "do justice, love kindness, walk humbly with your God." As we see it, the process calls for (1) the element of justice, specifically considering what it means to embody the radical hospitality of Christ; (2) the element of kindness, to be embodied in respectful,

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loving, relationship-based discussions; and (3) the element of spirituality (“walking humbly with God”) to be embodied in Bible study and the prayerful, open-minded pursuit of spiritual learning and growth.

The schedule we have laid out for the process is as follows. Each of the listed dates refers to a Sunday during the Second-Hour time period (11:30-12:30).

- April 15 The Bible and Sexual Orientation/Identity Paul
- April 22 When Churches Declare Full Welcome and Inclusion Panel
- May 6 Stories/Perspectives People speaking from their experience
- May 20 Town-Hall Discussion Everyone
- May 27 Video
- June 3 Facilitated small-group discussions

Most of these sessions will be held in the sanctuary, not only to accommodate the attendance, but so that recordings can be made available to those who could not attend but would like to hear what was said. We would like all youth and adults to be part of these sessions.

The question in the end is whether or not our church will adopt a welcoming statement, and what will it be? The Working Group on Welcome and Full Inclusion will draft a statement for consideration, which will be available by May 20 for the Town Hall meeting. After that discussion, a poll will be taken that basically asks: if we were to vote on this question today, would you vote yes or no? If at least 75% of the membership indicates they would vote yes, then a business meeting would be called for *June 10*, to take a vote. If this meeting occurs, and if at least 75% of the members present vote yes, the statement can be considered adopted.

To guard against people feeling pressured, we envision that a vote, if taken, would be by paper ballots. Our bylaws require that anyone who votes must be officially a member of the church (though people who are active participants in the church but not officially members can certainly contribute to the discussions). Our bylaws make no provision for absentee voting.

We hope that you see the issue as worthy of being discussed, and that you find this proposed process to have integrity, fairness, and opportunity for our congregation to be faithful to one another and to our larger mission. Please be prayerful concerning this process and your own part in it. And join us for the beginning of the conversation this Sunday, April 15, at 11:30.

MOTHERING JUSTICE

ACCOMPLICE ACADEMY
FOR WHITE MOTHERS

FOLLOWING THE LEAD
OF WOMEN OF COLOR

SEVEN 2 HOUR WEBINARS
4TH SATURDAYS
APRIL-OCTOBER
2:00-4:00 PM

FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH
CHILDCARE AND
SNACKS PROVIDED

Through advocacy, leadership development, voter empowerment, and promoting family-friendly advocacy, Mothering Justice, a statewide project will raise the voices of mothers and help them become policy makers and shapers. You can learn more and register for the webinar here. Please let me know if you'll be joining us at FBC to participate in these valuable webinar sessions.

-Xan (xan@fbca2.org)

FBC News & Happenings

Our Annual Program Meeting will be held after fellowship time (11:15) on April 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.

The Needling Gang is a new group forming for “needlers” of all types: knitting, x-stitch, embroidery – whatever your specialty or you’d like to try. No experience necessary – there are experts on hand (for at least *some* styles of needlework)! The purpose is to enjoy one another’s company, learn some new techniques/master old ones, and as inspired, make things for special occasions/circumstances and those in need. On March 11, eight needlers (and one baby!) met at Kristin Reynolds' home for a wonderful evening. For more info and/or to find out the location, write to kristinreynolds@comcast.net. Please type “The Needling Gang” in the subject line. Lets get the ball of yarn rolling!

The Board of Care and Community and your congregation want to be available to help in life's difficulties and transitions, but we can only do that if we know your are experiencing them. We can offer visits, help with food, transportation and possibly other needs. If you or your family lets the church office know, we will contact you by your preferred method to see how we can help.

AB Women’s Ministries Collection

Ahead of our May 3rd Salad Luncheon, we would like our church family to help us with the following project: We are collecting used purses and would like to fill them with tissues, lip moisturizer, hand lotion, nail clippers, note pads, pens, etc. The filled bags will go to a local women’s shelter. Any questions, ask Robert. Thank you, in advance, for helping us.

The Interfaith Round Table of Washtenaw County will present this year’s unique interfaith music event - ***Voices of Children: Be the Change***. Given the current climate in our country and in celebration of the sacredness of the planet, here is a beautiful way to show our support for diversity, gratitude and inclusion. This year’s four children’s choirs are from -- the Hindu Chinmaya Mission, Temple Beth Emeth, St. Clare’s Episcopal Church and The First Unitarian Universalist Congregation. There will be an opportunity to donate to the work of the IRT.

Date: Sunday, April 22, 2018

Time: 4 pm (doors open at 3:30)

Location: Genesis, 2309 Packard Street (Temple Beth Emeth and St. Clare’s Episcopal)
For more information, call 734-424-1535 or email gbrides@umich.edu

Emergency Contact Forms

There may be times when the church office or staff needs to contact a family member of someone in our congregation. If the family member does not attend FBC, we will not have the information we need. We would appreciate each family in the congregation completing an emergency contact form (to be used only by the staff) and leaving it in the offering plate, at the Information Counter, or mailing it to the church office. Forms can be found at the Information Counter or in the church office.

Vacation Bible School Scoop: We partner with other area churches to provide an powerful experience for our kids of what it would be like to live in Jesus’ time. The kids will experience traditional family prayer rituals, a busy marketplace of crafts and snacks and short dramas of the stories of Jesus. Please mark your calendars now for the mornings (9:30-12:15 pm) of Tuesday-Thursday, June 19-21. If the half day schedule makes it difficult for your children to attend, connect with me and we’ll do our best to make a plan. You can register online [here](#). We are looking for VBS volunteers - teens and adults! Please let Xan know if you are able to help serve God and our kids this way. Thanks!



Support Marissa Alaniz in her mission with AMOS Health and Hope

Dear church family,

If you missed it in this week's shared sermon, I am so grateful to announce that in collaboration with AMOS Health and Hope and with this church, I will be journeying down to Nicaragua in September to volunteer on the Development and Communications team at AMOS for a year! I have worked in fundraising for almost four years now. I can't wait to invest my gifts to help AMOS raise money for their mission and programs. Spending a year in another country is a big investment for me, personally and professionally, but I believe that for us to make progress, we have to leap - or be thrown - out of our comfort zones.

This year of service revolves around a three-way partnership with me, AMOS, and you all. This three-way partnership is how it began. So many of you have walked with me to AMOS already. You've donated in support of our projects, you've read about our work, watched a recap video, or seen pictures. Thirty-seven of you have traveled alongside me. I wouldn't be willing and able to make this commitment without the encouragement and support from so many of you.



This three-way partnership is how it will continue. So many of you *will* walk with me to AMOS this time around. You've helped me uncover my talents, you've worked alongside me, and you'll be with me in mind and spirit on the road ahead. I will be keeping in touch by posting photos about my experience, writing to you all about AMOS' work, and occasionally, even flying back to Ann Arbor to update you in person!

If you'd like to invest your gifts in helping the most vulnerable people in Nicaragua by supporting my journey, I invite you to visit my fundraising page at <http://donate.amoshealth.org/marissa>. I am grateful for you - especially for Stacey, Xan, my family, everyone with whom I've traveled across our four AMOS delegations, and my friends at AMOS - for walking together with me to make this three-way partnership a reality. Thank you for supporting my journey!

Love,

Marissa Alaniz

COFFEE WITH THE PASTORS

**A GATHERING
FOR THOSE WHO ARE NEWISH
TO FBC AND WANT
TO LEARN MORE**

SUPERVISED FUN FOR KIDS TOO

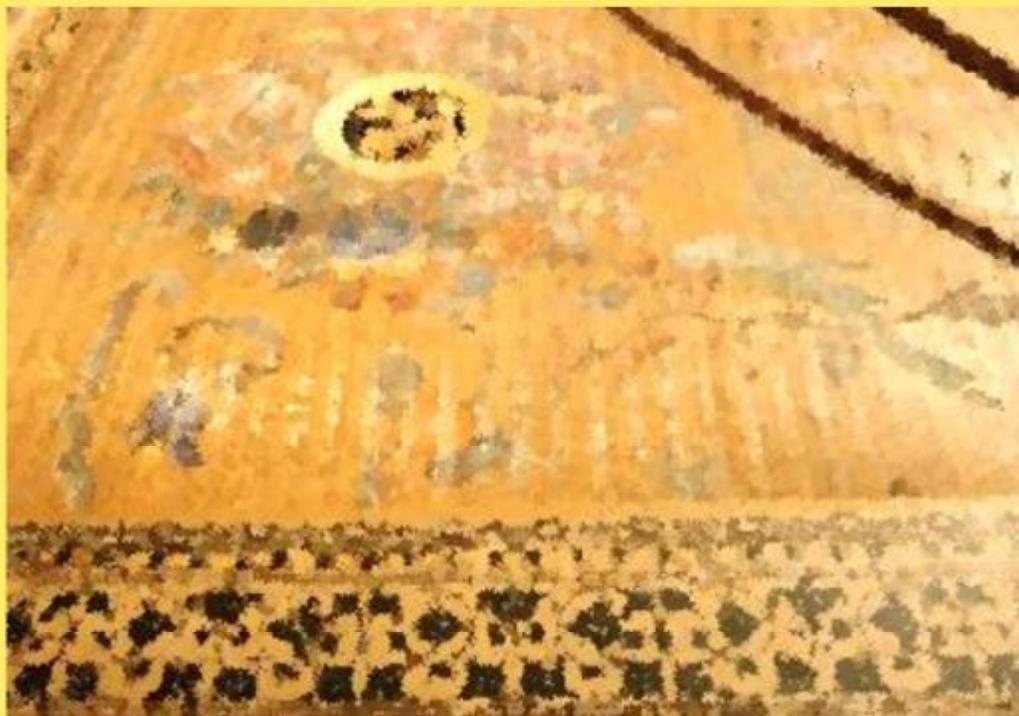
**SUNDAY, APRIL 29
3:00-5:00 PM
AT XAN AND KEVIN'S
2614 PAGE CT
RSVP: XAN@FBCA2.ORG**

First Baptist Church of Ann Arbor
Coffee Break Concert Series, 2017-2018 ⑦
Free Concert and Open to the Public

Bach^{and} Handel

Harpsichord Concert

by Shin-Ae Chun



May 10, 2018
Thursday at 12:15 pm

517 E. Washington St., Ann Arbor, MI 48104
734) 663-9376 / www.fbca2.org



MCA
THE MUSLIM
COMMUNITY
ASSOCIATION
of ANN ARBOR

*The Islamic Center Invites you
to the Mosque Open House*

- Tour the mosque
- Learn about Islam
- Have your face painted
- Decorate your hands with henna
- Have your name written in Arabic
- Meet your Muslim neighbors
- Try on a beautiful scarf
- Taste delicious food from around the world

**Mosque
Open House
April 15**

When: 3:00pm to 7:00pm

Where: 2301 Plymouth Rd. Ann Arbor, MI



First Baptist Church
517 E Washington Street
Ann Arbor, MI 48104-2015
734-663-9376
www.fbca2.org
office@fbca2.org

The Reverends Paul & Stacey Simpson Duke, Co-Pastors

Next
Newsletter
Deadline:
Sunday, April 22

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.

