



Pastor's Perspective by Stacey Simpson Duke

May 9, 2018

As you know, our congregation has been discussing our church's stance and practice regarding members of the LGBTQ+ community for a few weeks now. The sessions so far have been well-attended by a wide cross-section of the congregation, and we have received positive feedback about both the process and the content of this conversation. This past Sunday, we had a session focused on the stories and perspectives of members of our church family. We heard from nine different individuals, each of whom shared their personal and sometimes painful experiences around sexual orientation/gender identity with respect to church and faith.

As I looked around the sanctuary during this last session, I felt so proud of the people in the room. We don't all come to this issue from the same background, and we don't all see eye-to-eye now. It's not particularly easy to listen to people with whom we disagree - hence the current terrible fractures in our nation. The gulf in our country grows wider as we listen to each other less and less while shouting our own convictions more and more. Civic life depends on civility (i.e., respect, consideration, kindness), and we seem as a nation to have lost that art.

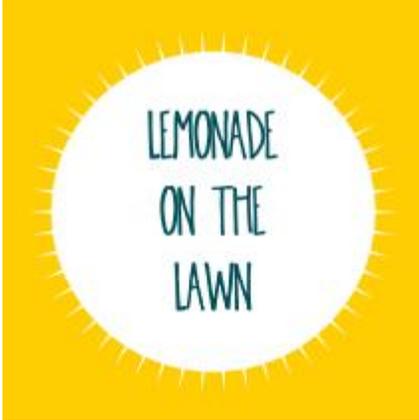
Inside the church, however, we seek to live towards not mere civility but actual community. As a Christ-based community, we give ourselves to relationship with each other in humble, trusting, open-hearted ways. We open ourselves to listening, to learning, to being challenged, to being changed. The shape of our community is cruciform (in the form of the cross), which is to say that it involves self-sacrifice and pain, but also redemption, resurrection, and transformation. As we die to our individual selves, we are born again as the community of Christ.

It is in this context that we are having our current conversations. For some in our congregation, even being in the room for this kind of conversation feels too difficult or risky. Perhaps this issue hits too close to home. Or maybe there is fear of being judged for an unpopular opinion. Some may feel it's wrong to even have this kind of conversation in the church. Whatever might have kept you away, there is still room for you in this conversation and in this congregation.

First, please be aware that our next two sessions - a town-hall style meeting on May 20 and small-group discussions on June 3 - are designed for anyone and everyone to express their opinions, concerns, and questions. But beyond those opportunities, and preceding them, if you have not participated in the conversations so far, Paul and I would like to invite you into a different kind of conversation. If you have been feeling tension, unhappiness, or just general disagreement with the direction these sessions have gone, the two of us would like to invite you to drop in to one or more smaller group conversations with us next week. We have three different day/time options we would like to offer: Monday (May 14), at 6:00pm, Tuesday (May 15) at 11:00am, Thursday (May 17) at 3:00pm. We will be available in the Campus Center living room to chat with whomever comes. The two of us want to hear your concerns, your objections, and/or your questions. We want to listen and we want to learn. If none of those days or times work for you, we would love to find another time to meet with you. Please give this invitation serious consideration.

Being the church together requires that all points of view can be freely spoken and heard, that any question and concern can be raised in a context of trust, that every one of us is to be respected, and most of all that we love each other in the way of Jesus. What a calling, what a responsibility, and what a *gift* it is to be church together!

## Children's Christian Education and Music



Several times this summer we'll have Lemonade on the Lawn. This Sunday we kickoff the season following our Children and Youth Sunday. There will be lemonade, goodies and yard games on the Huron Street lawn. There will be coffee and goodies in the Fellowship Hall as well. We look forward to the time spent snacking, playing and connecting!

## *FBC News & Happenings*

### **From Ozone House and The Education Project:**

Thank you for your past support of the Education Project which supports students in Washtenaw County experiencing homelessness or housing instability. As graduation season approaches, we want to celebrate the 75 seniors engaged with our programs on their exceptional achievements and would like to provide each one with a graduation card and gift card. We invite you to be part of this celebration!

We are collecting gift cards (\$5, \$10, or \$25) from grocery stores, fast food and other restaurants, clothing stores, and general MasterCard or Visa cards, and blank graduation cards. Please give your donation to Sue Ellen (or leave in the church office) by May 20. On behalf of the students and families with whom we have the privilege of working, thank you for your support!

### **AB Women's Ministries Donation Bake Sale**

The next donation bake sale will be on Sunday, May 20th, immediately after the worship service. This has been a very successful fundraiser for our many projects. Any donations of baked goods are greatly appreciated. If you have something particularly on your wish list, please let your special baker or the ABW ladies know and they will try to meet your needs.

**The MacGregor-Stitt Circle** next meets at 1:00pm on Thursday, May 17, at the home of Phyl White. Carolyn Hillebrand is co-hostess and the program is the "One Pound Auction," with auctioneer Roberta Hause.

### **AB Women's Ministries Collection**

We continue to collect used purses and items to fill them (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 Roberta. Thank you, in advance, for helping us.

### **The Interfaith Roundtable of Washtenaw County**

*Tastes of Faith - II: Fundraising Dinner Celebrating Father's Day and Indian Cuisine*

Date: Sunday, June 17, 2018

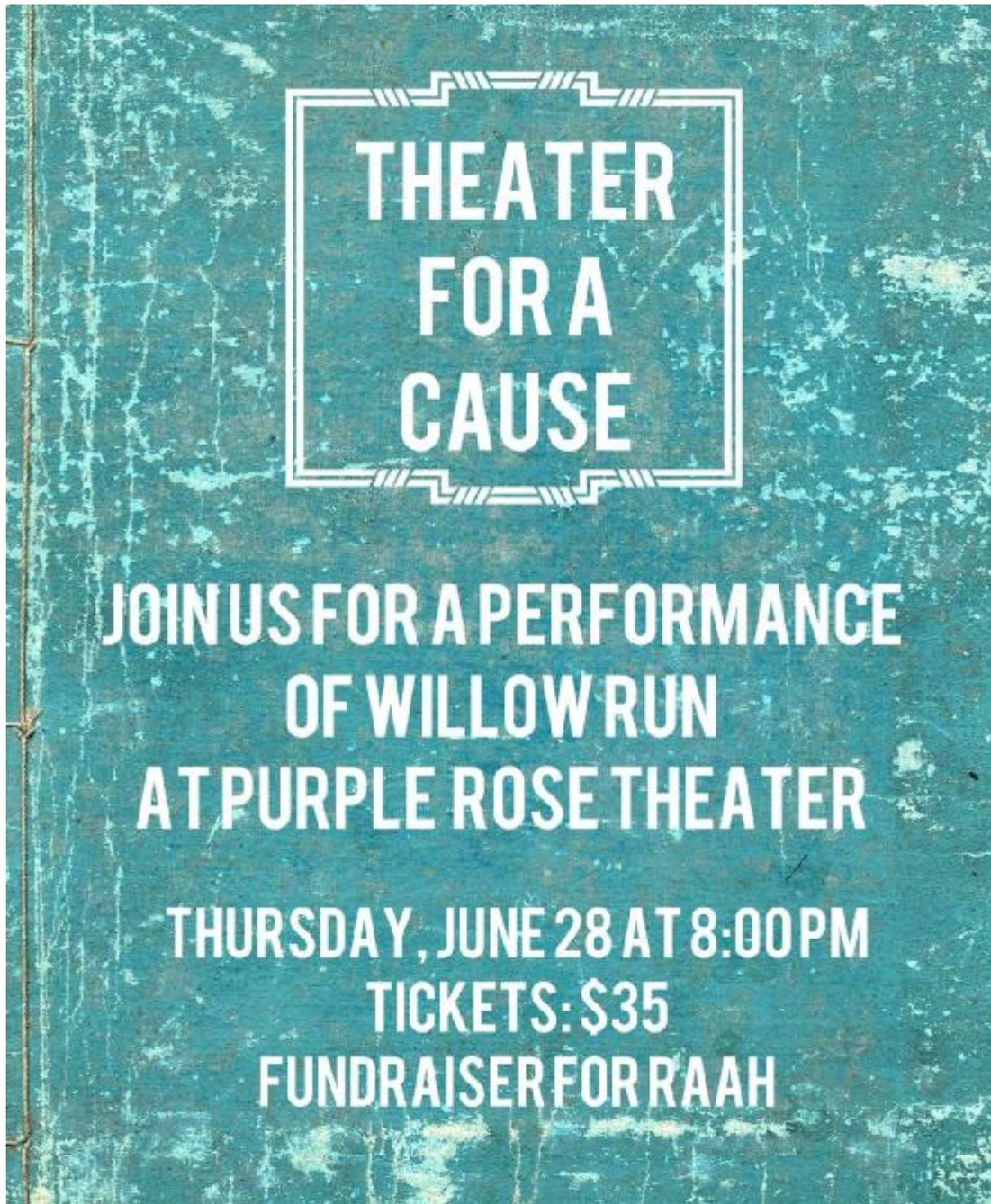
Time: Doors open at 5 pm, dinner and program from 5:30 to 8 pm  
(meal prepared and provided by the Chinmaya Mission)

Place: The Hindu Chinmaya Mission, 4760 Packard, Ann Arbor

Tickets: \$25 (meal only) - children 5 and under free, \$60 (family ticket)  
\$50 (Friends), \$75 (Sponsors), \$100 (Patrons)

For more information, call 734-649-0107 or 734-678-5616 or email [gbrides@umich.edu](mailto:gbrides@umich.edu)

Come support the work of the IRT that focuses exclusively on creating a culture of understanding and inclusion.



Join us for an evening performance of Willow Run at the Purple Rose Theatre in Chelsea on Thursday, June 28 to support RAAH, Religious Action for Affordable Housing. Your purchase contributes towards our new campaign to assist local residents with housing. Tickets are \$35 and a check can be made out to RAAH and given to Xan or Edie. If using PayPal ([paypal.me/RAAHfundraiser](https://paypal.me/RAAHfundraiser)), tickets are \$37 to cover the transaction fee.

RAAH is supported by local congregations, including FBC and by their members. Edie Hurst and Xan Morgan both sit on the RAAH board.

A bit about the play:

During WWII the Willow Run Bomber Plant near Ypsilanti was the largest factory under one roof in the world. Some 40,000 employees, mostly women, turned out a B-24 Bomber every 55 minutes. Willow Run follows the journey of four women who migrated from all over America to find new lives at the plant. Along the way they overcome a multitude of challenges, learn to endure new sorrows, overcome deep-seated prejudices and forge new friendships. Winner of the 2017 Edgerton Foundation New Play Award. Original music by Ben and Jeff Daniels.

## 40 Days of Nonviolent Moral Fusion Direct Action

The time is now! In one week, the Poor People's Campaign: A National Call for Moral Revival will launch 40 Days of Nonviolent Mass Action at 40 statehouses, including Lansing, and the U.S. Capitol. We expect over 100,000 people to participate

Our demands are:

- A massive overhaul of the nation's voting rights laws
- New programs to lift up the 140 million Americans living in poverty.
- Immediate attention to ecological devastation.
- Measures to curb militarism and the war economy.

Join us on Mondays beginning on May 14th until June 18th to fight for freedom and dignity. The one exception is that the Mass Action will be on Tuesday, May 29th following Memorial Day. Every week our protests will have different themes. The schedule includes:

- **Monday, May 14th: *Week 1 Theme--Somebody's Hurting Our People: Child poverty, Women, LGBTQ, and People with Disabilities***
- **Monday, May 21st: *Week 2 Theme--Linking Systemic Racism and Poverty: Voting Rights, Ending Mass Incarceration, Treatment of Indigenous People and Justice for Immigrants***
- **Tuesday, May 29th: *Week 3 Theme -- Militarism: The War Economy, Veterans, Education and Our National Priorities***
- **Monday, June 4th: *Week 4 Theme -- Ecological Devastation and Health: Clean Air, Clean Water, and Healthcare for All***
- **Monday, June 11th: *Week 5 Theme -- Everybody's Got a Right to Live: Jobs, Income, the Right to Organize, and Housing***
- **Monday, June 18th: *Week 6 Theme -- A New and Unsettling Force: A Fusion Movement Rising Up***

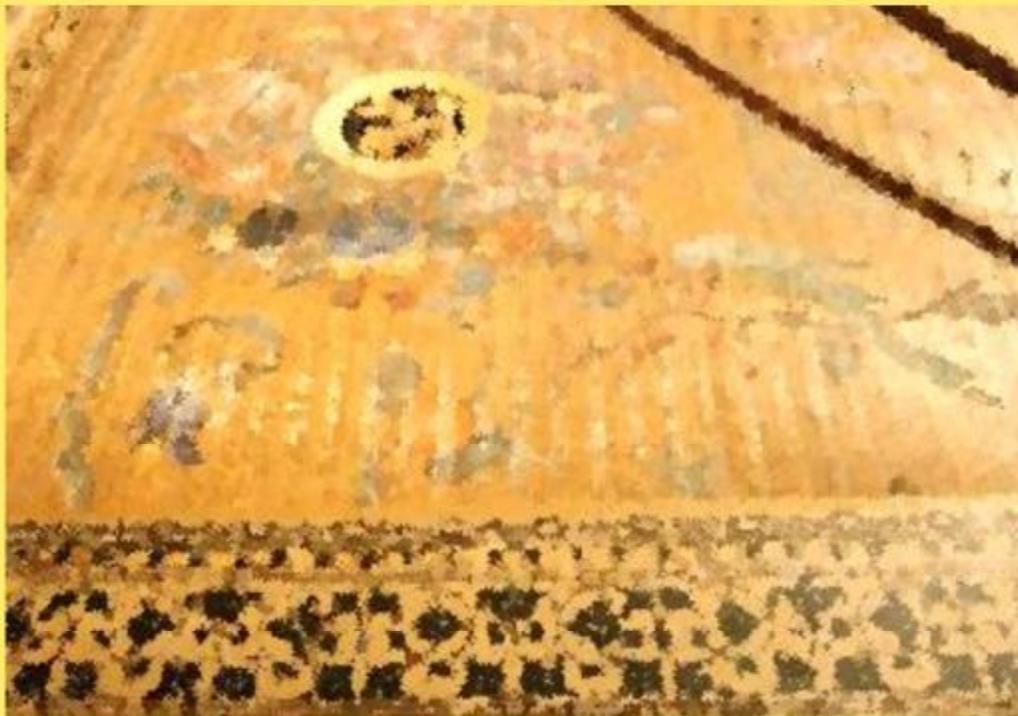
Contact: Ron Gregg [rgregg@patientfocussystems.com](mailto:rgregg@patientfocussystems.com)

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

# Bach<sup>and</sup> 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](http://www.fbca2.org)

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The Reverends Paul & Stacey Simpson Duke, Co-Pastors



**Next  
Newsletter  
Deadline:**  
*Sunday, May 20*