



Pastor's Reflection by Stacey Simpson Duke

June 13, 2018

This past Sunday, First Baptist Church declared itself to be a "Welcoming and Affirming Congregation," a church which welcomes all people, inclusive of all gender identities, sexual orientations, and other identities, statuses, or backgrounds. We took this action by congregational vote on an official "Statement of Welcome;" the statement passed with 94 percent congregational approval.

Statement of Welcome

We believe that all humanity is created in God's image and is of sacred worth. Therefore, compelled by faith in Jesus Christ, the sign of God's inclusive and boundless love for the world, we joyfully welcome and affirm individuals of any age, race, ethnicity, nationality, physical and mental ability, gender identity, gender expression, sexual orientation, marital status, level of education, economic circumstance, and religious background to participate fully in all aspects of the life and ministry of our church.

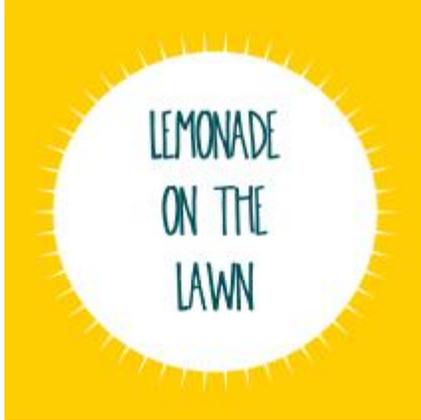
As an inclusive Christian community, our church has a long history of embracing those who have not felt welcomed elsewhere. We took this new step on Sunday in order to be more explicit about our stance and practice, specifically with respect to members of the LGBTQ+ community. Our statement is a counter-witness to the messages LGBTQ people have historically received from churches: messages of condemnation, exclusion, rejection, and even hatred.

Our commitment to inclusivity has also always included a dedication to engaging with and learning from each other, even when we disagree. In our congregation, we hold a diversity of theological and political viewpoints, yet our engagement with each other is marked by respect, open-mindedness, humility, and a willingness to listen. This, too, is part of our counter-witness - a refusal to yield to the easy polarization of our partisan era.

Throughout this process, I have been so moved and inspired by what I have witnessed in our congregation: deep spiritual, relational, and theological engagement, both individually and communally, with a pressing issue. So many people demonstrated real vulnerability and courage in sharing their stories or their viewpoints - and they were routinely met with nothing but acceptance. One of the most powerful moments at the special meeting on Sunday was when one church member spoke about her own struggles with the Statement of Welcome. She acknowledged that she was not in the same place with this issue as the majority of the congregation appeared to be, and she concluded by asking, "If I don't agree with you, will you still love me?" And the people in the meeting immediately began calling out, "Yes!" and clapping.

Every one of us goes through the world with some form of that question underneath everything else: "If I don't _____ (fill in the blank), will I still be loved?" As people who have encountered the truth of God's unconditional love, our answer is always, "Yes!" Thank you, First Baptist Church, for being a voice of love and a place of welcome. I'm so delighted to be taking this new step with you, as part of our shared journey with and towards the transformative love of God in Jesus Christ.

Children's Christian Education and Music



Join us outside following the service this Sunday for Lemonade on the Lawn. We'll have snacks, lemonade and yard games to play. Coffee and goodies will also be in the Fellowship Hall as usual.

We're building our summer Children's Ministry volunteer team!

We're looking for adults and teens (6th grade and older) to learn, pray and play with the children over the summer. Some folks are needed to volunteer in the nursery 2 or 3 times with our paid caregiver, Kathryn Gregg. We are also looking for teachers to lead our church school class for 4-year-olds through 5th grade, 2 or 3 times this summer. Please connect with Xan (xan@fbca2.org) if you are interested and able to serve in this capacity.

FBC kids shopped, prepared and served lunch to the Habitat for Humanity volunteers this past Saturday. The kids were empowered by the task and had a lot of fun doing it. One six year-old said, "I even got to ask for the ham!" A big thank you to Ashley Mangrum, to all those who worked onsite and to those who helped cover the cost of lunch.



FBC News & Happenings

Habitat for Humanity - Good News Houses 2018

Dates have been set for our weekend and weekday workdays with Habitat for Humanity. The next congregational work day is Saturday July 14, starting at 8:30 AM and ending at 3:00PM. For those members with flexible weekday schedules, our other work date is Friday Aug 3.

The Good News Houses for 2018 are to be the renovations of two 1950's ranch houses in Ypsilanti. The houses are at 679 and 830 Calder. We will also need lunches on those dates.

Please contact Scott Diels at 734-649-2787(Cell) or hscottdiels@att.net if you are able to participate.

Thanks, Scott Diels

Art Fair Parking Lot Supervision

Summer is finally here and there are only a few more Sundays until the Art Fairs are here! Once again we are renting out the church parking lot to raise funds for Youth mission trips and our Vespers program. The artists have already made their reservations so now we need volunteers to supervise the lot. It is not difficult work and you are able to spend it sitting down (in the shade). Please sign up at the Information Counter. In addition to our gratitude, volunteers "earn" a free half-day parking spot to be used any time during the Fairs!

The Crossing: Celebrating Youth Milestones

Rites of passage help a person or group of people navigate the transition from one stage of life to another. Such rites, or milestones, can help create intentionality and purpose during a time that might otherwise be confusing, ambiguous, or anxiety-provoking. The intentional, communal celebration of milestones offers an opportunity for faith formation, both for the individual and for the congregation. These celebrations bring the generations together, help us build community, and offer an opportunity for us to nurture and support faith in the midst of life transitions. To mark such milestones in worship is to acknowledge God's presence throughout the different stages of life; it's a chance to see the connection between our lives and our faith.

In worship on Sunday, June 10, we welcomed three new youth into our youth group, celebrated rites of passage for our preteens and teenagers, and blessed all our youth and their parents. We gave each youth a Bible and affirmed our commitment to partnering with them in faith, learning, and service, with the following words:

We are your family. We will love you, pray for you, encourage you, and walk with you in the way of Jesus, that we may all shine together as light for this world.

The MacGregor-Stitt Circle will meet at 1:00 p.m. on Thursday, June 21, at the home of Shelley Alton. The group will work on planning for 2018-2019.

The Beecher-Brewer Circle will meet at 1:00 p.m. on Tuesday, June 19, at Brookhaven Manor. The group will work on planning for 2018-2019.

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

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, June 24

Anti-Racism 101 Series at the Ypsilanti District Library

The Board of Mission Action invites you to join ICPJ and the Ypsilanti District Library for their Anti-Racism 101 series, facilitated by La’Ron Williams who is an award-winning storyteller and anti-racist educator.

The first event, titled “**Putting Racism on the Table,**” on Sunday, June 17th, will be a structured discussion and film showing to help participants gain a basic understanding of certain key concepts critical to anti-racism practice. In this selection Robin DiAngelo, former professor of education and Author of “What Does It Mean to be White?” discusses white privilege.

In July’s selection, on **Sunday July 22nd**, Dr. Tricia Rose, professor of Africana studies and director of the Center for the Study of Race and Ethnicity in America (CSREA), at Brown University, will speak on “**How Structural Racism Works,**” – what it is, and how it shows up in our everyday lives. By using specific examples, stories, and overwhelming evidence, Dr. Rose explores how to transform a condition of relative public indifference into one of concern and commitment to undoing chronic and widespread racial disparities.

When: Sunday, June 17 at 2 PM and Sunday, July 22 at 2 PM

Where: Ypsilanti District Library, Whittaker Road Branch, at 5577 Whittaker Rd.

Cost: Both events are free and open to the public.

For more information, call 734-663-1870 or email Chuck Warpehoski at chuck@icpj.org.