



Pastor's Reflection by Stacey Simpson Duke

May 23, 2019

As you know, in August 2017, our church was selected as one of 146 congregations from across the nation to receive a National Clergy Renewal Program Grant. This competitive grant program, funded by Lilly Endowment Inc. through its Center for Pastoral Excellence, allows congregations to support their pastors with the gift of extended time away from their ministerial duties and responsibilities. Our congregation received \$49,575 to fund a pastoral sabbatical, with nearly \$15,000 of this designated to cover pastoral duties in our absence and provide resources and opportunities for the congregation's renewal.

As you also know, Paul and I weren't able to take the sabbatical last summer as planned. After my metastatic cancer diagnosis in January 2018, my treatment schedule made it impossible to travel out of the country for several weeks. The loss of our dreamed-of sabbatical - one more casualty of my horrifying diagnosis - was disappointing, but we remained hopeful of being able to make it happen in 2019. The grant coordinators made it clear to us that the grant money would remain available to us, and they graciously extended that promise through the end of 2020, in case we needed more time.

Now, at last, the time has come! After several harrowing months in the life of my family, everything has finally lined up to make a sabbatical this summer possible. I am doing very well on my current chemo regimen (my CT scans last week were my best yet) and my oncologist supports my taking a chemo break long enough this summer to travel to Europe as planned. We're thrilled!

Paul and I will be on sabbatical June 3 through September 3, using our time away to engage with great works of art and reflect on the role of the visual in nurturing authentic spiritual experience. The theme of our renewal program is *Seeing the Word: The Gospel through the Visual Arts*, and we are seeking to discover new insights for the renewal of our spirits and of our ministry by exploring the intersections of art, spirituality, theology, relationships, and travel. On the morning of June 18, I will have one last chemo infusion before we travel; late that evening, the four of us will board a plane for London. We will spend the next 45 days in England, the Netherlands, France, Germany, Austria, and Italy, visiting art museums, cathedrals, churches, other sites where works of religious art can be experienced, and other cultural and geographic sites that we think will nourish our sense of wonder and spiritual reflection. We will return on August 3, in time for Rob and Charlie to attend Pioneer band and choir camp, while Paul and I rent a cabin nearby and do some reflecting and writing to process our travel experiences. After camp, the four of us will spend the remainder of our leave in Michigan and in the South, using our time for rest, reflection, recreation, and relationships. We anticipate returning to First Baptist refreshed, renewed, and reenergized for a new season of ministry with you.

While we are away, the Reverend Dr. Heather Entrekin, First Baptist Church member, retired American Baptist pastor, and retired professor of Congregational Health, will be serving as interim minister. You already know that Heather is an eloquent preacher, a powerful pastoral presence, a transformative teacher, an effective leader, and a compassionate co-collaborator in the ministry of this church to the world. Now you will get to experience an even fuller range of her rich gifts and creative ministry. Paul and I are so grateful to Heather and so thrilled for First Baptist Church. We are also grateful to our extraordinary and ever-generous colleague Xan Morgan, who will also be stepping up to take on additional ministry tasks during our time away. We hope that you, the members and friends of First Baptist Church, will support both Heather and Xan this summer with your presence, your prayers, and your willingness to serve and lead as needs arrive. We have been working with Paula Burton, chair of the Personnel Committee, and our Moderator, Bill Foster, to ensure that everything runs smoothly during our absence. Don't hesitate to reach out to Heather, Xan, Paula, or Bill, as needs, concerns, or questions arise. On Sunday, June 2, we will mark our leave-taking at the end of worship; after worship and fellowship time, we will share in more detail about our sabbatical plans.

Thank you for your ongoing prayers for us - you have shared in our sorrows and burdens, and it makes it all easier to bear. Thank you, too, for sharing in our joy at having this sabbatical experience. We are ever grateful for your partnership and love, and we look forward not only to this summer, but to the next chapter in our shared life with you!

A.C.T.

Introducing a new ministry team! This spring, a few members of the Music & Arts Board, in coordination with the pastors, launched a new initiative: the Art in Church Team (ACT). The goal of the ACT is to incorporate thoughtful art into the physical space and ministry programming of First Baptist Church. The team, composed of Dan Barry, Scott Diels, Paul Simpson Duke, Stacey Simpson Duke, Heidi Goodhart (chair), Ashley Mangrum, and Kristin Reynolds, had its first meeting in late April. The team worked on visioning and goal-setting, identified short-term and long-term projects, drafted a project timeline, and reflected with the pastors on ways to incorporate their sabbatical learnings into the larger life of the congregation (see below). The ACT will be working to implement its first project later this year. Stay tuned!

The Pastors' Sabbatical Focus and Its Application for the Church

The subject matter of our sabbatical is "The Gospel in the Visual Arts." Traveling in Europe (portions of England, the Netherlands, France, Germany, Austria, and Italy), we will spend substantial time in art museums, cathedrals, and other sites where the fine arts are displayed. Our time away will include reflections on what we see plus focused reading on the subject. Our goal is to make greater use of the visual arts in the spiritual nurture, growth, and outreach of the church. We have envisioned, among other things, the following:

- o Incorporating the visual arts in Christian Education programs and events, including Second-Hour classes and weekly Bible study.
- o Incorporating the visual arts in worship through their use in sermons, worship bulletins, and displays.
- o Creating seasonal devotional resources (e.g., for Advent and Lent) that include guided reflections/meditations on selected works of art.
- o Sponsoring the creation of works of art for display in the sanctuary and elsewhere for the purpose of reflection and meditation, again with a seasonal emphasis (e.g., contemporary representations of "The Stations of the Cross" during Lent.)
- o Incorporating experiential/hands-on art-making as a path for exploring spirituality and community, perhaps in a day retreat with our artists helping people explore various media (painting, drawing, photography, mixed media) as an avenue for spiritual discovery and reflection. A sort of intersection of spirituality/creativity/community type events.

We welcome additional programs/events/methods as suggested by the Arts in the Church Team, and are grateful for this new creative partnership.

We have limited our plans to the visual arts because (a) some limitation of our own focus is necessary, and (b) we see a particular connection between these media of expression and the contemporary accent on the visual as vehicle of communication and community. This does not mean that we want to exclude other art forms (e.g., poetry, music) from increased attention, but we do envision beginning with an accent on the visual arts in particular.

Paul and Stacey

Children's Christian Education

Children and Youth are an important part of our life together at First Baptist Church. All children are welcome in worship. If you are visiting and would like more information about our ministry with kids and youth, please connect with our Director of Children's Ministry, Xan Morgan (xan@fbca2.org) or our Youth Minister, Stacey Simpson Duke (staceyduke@gmail.com).

Join us for VBS - a great way to start the summer for kids and parents alike! Kids (pre-K through 5th grade) are invited to participate in this fabulous faith formation experience on Tuesday, June 18 through Thursday, June 20 from 9:30-12:15 pm. Invite your friends to join you! You can register online at www.fbca2.org/vbs. Connect with Xan if you have questions. It's going to be a great time!



PARENTS ,
IT'S TIME TO CELEBRATE YOU
AND GET YOUR FEEDBACK!
YOGURT PARFAIT BAR
SUNDAY, JUNE 9 11:30-12:30
INBODY GARDEN
KIDS WILL BE HAPPILY ENGAGED
WITH SUPERVISION.
RSVP :
WWW.FBCA2.ORG/CELEBRATION

FBC News & Happenings

The ABWM Board next meets on Tuesday, May 28, at 9:30am in the Lounge. We will be planning for the 2019-2020 Program Year.

The MacGregor-Stitt Circle next meets at 1:00pm on June 20 at the home of Shelley Alton, with co-hostess Joyce Robbins. The meeting will focus on program planning for 2019-2020.

The AB Women's Ministries Garden Party will be held in the Lounge on Thursday, June 27, at 1pm. The officers for 2019-2020 will be installed and a collection for the Women and Girl's Fund will be taken up.

The AB Women's Ministries wishes to thank all the bakers who donated to the bake sale held this past Sunday and also to our generous congregation who purchased these goodies. - Roberta Hause

A Note of Thanks from Wilma Duke

Dear First Baptist Church, I have now had a few opportunities to be present with you again after so many months of challenging illness. Your prayers of faith definitely were needed. Your spoken words of encouragement brought me hope and peace. It is so good to be part of this caring church. Hospital and Rehab persons delivering your cards to me said, "You sure have a lot of friends." I answered, "I have a caring church that prays when prayers are needed." I prayed for First Baptist even before I moved to Ann Arbor. All of us should pray every day that we not miss any opportunity to reach those who need HIM. Thanks again, for helping me.

Join the Sunday Morning Welcoming Team!

No meetings - just come and serve! Our Welcoming Team is one of our most important ministries. On Sunday mornings, volunteers stand in key places in the building to show hospitality to all who come for worship. Sign-up is online at <https://bit.ly/2YRiztS> - it's fast and easy! Sign up on your own, with a friend, with a spouse, or with your whole family. Sign up once or multiple times. Serving on our Welcoming Team is a great way to plug in to ministry at First Baptist and get to know others in our community. Questions? Contact Sam Laidlaw at laidlawsam7@gmail.com.

Several times this summer (beginning June 16th), we'll have Lemonade on the Lawn. We'll have 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!



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.



Hope Clinic Summer Food Drive

This summer, First Baptist will be collecting food for Hope Clinic in Ypsilanti (thehopeclinic.org). Hope Clinic - a non-profit, interdenominational Christian medical and social services organization - is one of the ministries our church supports. It has several food programs, one of which is a pantry where persons in need may select nutritious food, including fresh produce, for their households.

When school closes, many children in our community go hungry just as food pantry supplies get low. We want to join Hope Clinic in serving kids more by helping to generously stock their shelves with non-perishable items.

Here's our ambitious three month-plan plan:

June - BREAKFAST

- name brand cereals, including whole wheat granola granola bars packets of instant oatmeal

July - LUNCH

- peanut butter (and other nut butters) jelly and jam (including low-sugar) mustard, ketchup, mayo canned tuna

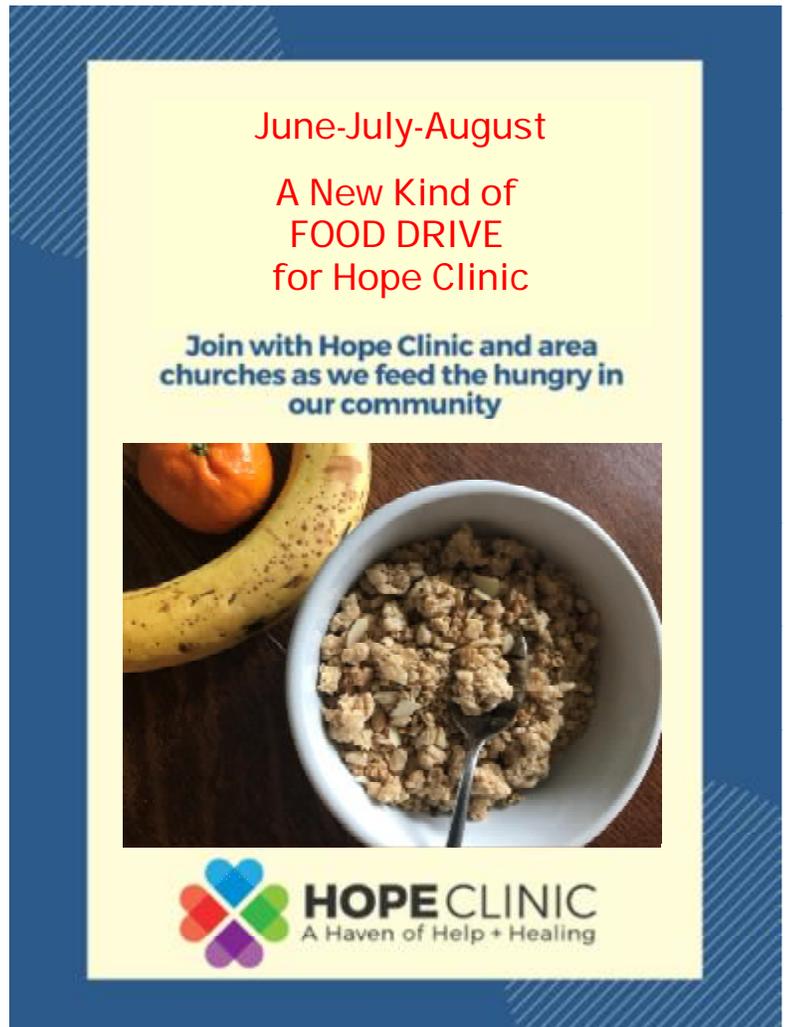
August - DINNER

- hearty soups meal in a can - chili, ravioli pasta sauce canned meat ready rice or lentil packets spices and spice blends (low sodium)

Please note: All non-perishable food items are welcome but healthier foods (whole grains, low in sodium and sugars) and name brands are especially appreciated.

Commercial-sized cans and containers of food are not needed but all other sizes can be used.

You will find a collection table near the Washington Street entrance. Starting June 2 - bring BREAKFAST to church!



Our next Needle and Nosh gathering is fast approaching! We will gather Sunday, June 2nd from 3pm - 5pm'ish at the home of Kristin Reynolds. Needlers of any kind are welcome. Please bring a "nosh" to share. RSVP by 5/31 to: kristinreynolds@comcast.net



Our Coffee Break Concert Series just concluded its eighth season 2018-2019. The final two concerts were much appreciated by the audience. On April 11, despite all the events that were happening in town at the same time, we had a nice crowd of about 50 people who gathered in the beautiful sanctuary at First Congregational Church of Ann Arbor for Meditation II: Music and Paintings. Guided by our own Grace Vandervliet (Education Outreach Program Coordinator at Umma), the audience enjoyed making the connection between the paintings and the musical pieces. With the paintings by Vermeer, Van Gogh, Monet and Postthast projected on the screens, people had a chance to listen to the musical works by Forberger (organ), Debussy (piano), Bovet (organ) and Burton (flute and piano). Thanks to the kind co-sponsorship by FCC, people also enjoyed the beautifully arranged refreshments afterwards. On May 16, the series took another outreach trip to Bethlehem United Church of Christ. About 70 people gathered to hear The Well-Tempered Clavier, Book I (Preludes only) on three keyboard instruments (Keith Hill Harpsichord, Casavant Frères Organ and Boston Piano), which were arranged together in the front of the beautiful sanctuary. Three local musicians, Alice Van Wambeke (Music Director and Organist at St. James Episcopal Church, Dexter), Gail Jennings (Organist at Bethlehem UCC) and Shin-Ae Chun, put forces together, making a variety of sounds from each instrument and music interpretation. The audience enjoyed listening to all 24 preludes in one concert, hearing them on three different keyboard instruments and even watching the movements made by three musicians from one instrument to next. People also had a nice time at the reception which three musicians prepared. The next season 2019-2020 will begin in October. The schedule will be available in late August. Thank you all for supporting the series! Have a wonderful summer!

We are deeply saddened to report the death of Jim Suits

James (Jim) Suits passed away peacefully with family at his side on Sunday, May 19, 2019 at StoryPoint Assisted Living in Saline.

Jim was born on April 15, 1930 to Emil Suits and Hazel Puff. Jim graduated from Ann Arbor High School in 1948 where he met the love of his life, Jerry Feiner. Jim played football in high school and also got his pilot's license. He took Jerry flying on their first date in 1948. They were married on July 1, 1950.

He graduated from the University of Michigan with an M.B.A. He began his business career as an C.P.A. at Icerman, Johnson, and Hoffman in Ann Arbor, where he later became a partner. He continued working there as a partner during the firm changes as Touche Ross and then Deloitte. He retired in 2008.



He served as Treasurer of the First Baptist Church of Ann Arbor for over fifty years. Jim was an accomplished water skier and spent many summers skiing with family and friends at the family cottage on Portage Lake. He was known for his no hands, slalom trick! He loved model trains and Corvettes. He was a carpenter and craftsman, planning and building porches for both his home and the cottage. He was a lifelong University of Michigan sports enthusiast, attending basketball and football games and wrestling meets. He loved classical music and a good book, and could be found with music blaring and his head in a kindle right to the last week of his life. He loved dogs, especially dachshunds.

Jim is predeceased by his wife Jerry, brother William D. Suits, and grandson Joe. He is survived by his three children, Lynn M. Suits, (David Lamkin), Kathy Suits Keeping (Alan), and Charles Suits, (Betsy). Also surviving are grandchildren Martin McDonald (Gina), Karl Suits, David Suits, (Marcha), John Suits, (Ellen), Scott Siler, Sarah Suits Obenauf, (John), and Daniel Siler. Great-grandchildren include Keira McDonald, R.J. Suits, Jimmy Suits and Emma Suits.

Private service will be held at Forest Hill Cemetery. A special thank you to the staff at StoryPoint Assisted Living and Kindred Hospice. Donations may be made online at <https://dachshundhausrescue.org/> or mailed to Dachshund Haus Rescue, 13375 Cloverlawn Dr., Sterling Heights, MI. 48312. To leave a memory you have of Jim or to sign his guestbook please visit www.rbfhsaline.com.

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.



Please join Food Gatherers at Grillin' 2019 - the best picnic of the year! Come enjoy gourmet food, dance to groovy tunes, and peruse the silent auction while supporting your community. One in seven people in Washtenaw County struggles with hunger, and proceeds from Grillin' help Food Gatherers distribute 14,500 meals a day to adults, seniors, and children in need of food. Grillin' features live music, a cash bar

with Michigan microbrews and wines, kids' games, complimentary massages, and more!

Join us June 9, 3:00 - 8:00 p.m. (rain or shine) at the Washtenaw Farm Council Grounds, 5055 Ann Arbor - Saline Road, Ann Arbor, MI 48103. Tickets are \$75 in advance, or \$85 at the door. Kids' tickets (ages 3-13) are \$10, and children under 3 are free.

Visit foodgatherers.org/grillin to buy tickets and learn more.



Xan and Edie invite you to join us for an evening performance of *Welcome to Paradise* at the Purple Rose Theatre in Chelsea on Thursday, June 27 to support RAAH, Religious Action for Affordable Housing. A portion of your ticket purchase goes 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), 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:

Welcome to Paradise, set in the Caribbean, centers around two people, who, despite their age difference, find love and acceptance in each other. With a generation gap (or more) between them, they discover they have more in common with each other than they thought. At what age can one find one's soulmate? Are there boundaries to true friendship and affection? What, exactly, is the meaning and nature of love?

June 2019

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
						1
2 10:00 Worship 11:30 Leave-Taking 3:00 Needle & Nosh	3	4 5:30 Vespers	5	6 7:30 Choir	7	8
9 10:00 Worship 11:30 Parent Party & Feedback	10	11 1:00 Mission Action 5:30 Vespers	12	13 7:30 Choir	14	15
16 10:00 Worship 11:15 Lemonade on the Lawn	17 7:00 Racial Just. Book Grp.	18 9:30 VBS 5:30 Vespers	19 *newsletter* 9:30 VBS	20 9:30 VBS 1:00 MacGregor-Stitt Circle 7:30 Choir	21	22
23 10:00 Worship	24	25 9:30 ABWM 5:30 Vespers	26	27 1:00 ABWM Garden Party	28	29
30 10:00 Worship						



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The Reverends Paul & Stacey Simpson Duke, Co-Pastors

Next
Newsletter
Deadline:
Sunday, June 16

Fellowship Time Volunteers Needed

It's almost summer and we are needing lots and lots of volunteers to prepare and clean up our fellowship time. All food and supplies are provided as well as "training" and assistance. Families are welcome, especially during the summer! The time required is approximately 45 minutes before worship and 45 minutes after. You may choose either preparation or clean-up or both "shifts". Please choose a date or two and sign-up at the Information Counter or in the fellowship hall.

