



Pastor's Reflections by Stacey Simpson Duke

January 15, 2020

We're already two weeks into 2020, moving quickly into this new year and new decade, but I'd like to pause for a moment to give a brief wave to a few matters of past, present, and future here at First Baptist.

Let's celebrate the recent past. It may already seem like ages ago, but we have just wrapped up a beautiful Advent and Christmas here at FBCA2. We launched two big new projects during December—the Advent visual devotionals and an additional Christmas Eve service. The printed (and online) devotionals represented some of the learning and reflections Paul and I had as a result of our recent sabbatical. We were both so pleased at how well-received these booklets were, and our plan is to do this again for the next two Advents. .

On Christmas Eve, we debuted a new afternoon worship service, with a different design from our beloved Lessons & Carols service (which had an attendance last year that reached past comfortable seating availability). Understanding that Christmas is one of our best outreach opportunities, our hope was to draw people to the new service while also making more room (and more comfortably) for newcomers at our Lessons & Carols service. We were able to do both of these things while also offering two beautiful services. Our combined total attendance for the two services was 316 (compared to an attendance of 308 at last year's single Christmas Eve service), with many visitors at each service and with room now for both services to grow in attendance in the future. Thank you to Xan Morgan for all her work on the 4:00 service; to Charlotte DeVries for serving as our pianist for the 4:00 service; and to Bonnie Kidd, Shin-Ae Chun, and the Sanctuary Choir for their exceptional offering for the Lessons & Carols service. Thank you also to Kat Becker, who worked at the church on Christmas Eve from before 9:00 that morning until nearly 10:00 that night!

Let's tend to the present. Right now, we are in the midst of wrapping up our budget process so that we can fully fund our ministry plans for 2020. This year's campaign had a big challenge, and last week, Paul and I put out a special call inviting people to help us finish closing the gap between our anticipated expenses and our anticipated income. The congregation has risen to the challenge, and we are very close to being able to wrap up our budget proposal. We're so thrilled and grateful. Thank you for your generous response! Please join us on Sunday, January 26 for the annual financial meeting, when we will vote on the budget for this year.

Also, here is something for you to be aware of as you interact with and pray for our church staff, including our office volunteers. Remember the damage the Campus Center sustained in late October (when torrential rains leaked into our historic building due to inadequate roof covering by the company we had hired to replace the roof)? That damage still hasn't been fully repaired, which means much of our staff and all of our sextons remain displaced. Xan and I have been using the Conference Room as our shared office for the past two months; Marissa Alaniz, who was also going to have office space in the Campus Center, is now sharing the Conference Room with us. Meanwhile, Kat, Lee, and Paula Burton have spent many, many hours dealing with the insurance companies and the repair challenges, with Kat and Lee both shouldering much of the sexton responsibilities since the sextons could no longer easily be onsite. Our four sextons had their academic and work lives disrupted by having to abruptly move into temporary housing indefinitely (they have recently all been able to relocate closer to the church and will now be able to be onsite more than they have been). Though Paul's office was unaffected by the leak, he now works cut off from the rest of the staff and buildings, having to go outside any time he needs access to the restroom, the kitchen, or to staff or visitors. Meanwhile, the Gathering and other groups that meet regularly in the Campus

(continued)

Center have had to find new locations to meet. We've been told that we may not be able to move back in until the end of April. I mention this not only to give an update on the state of this part of our facilities, but to ask your ongoing forbearance with and prayers for our staff as we continue to try to get our work done in a surreal and challenging situation.

Let's look forward to the future. There is so much to be excited about at First Baptist Church in 2020! I want to highlight just two things that are happening in the near future. Over the last couple of years, our children's ministry and youth ministry have both grown in membership to a point that trying to coordinate and plan our annual Children & Youth Sunday had become unwieldy. Among other things, it became difficult to plug every interested child and youth in to a limited number of worship leadership roles. This year, we are trying something new and will be breaking this event into two separate Sundays - a Children's Ministry Sunday (February 23) and a Youth Ministry Sunday (May 17). What a delight, to have so many children and youth eager to lead and serve in worship! Thank you for your prayers and support for both of these ministries.

We also have an exciting event in the works during Lent, when we will be hosting two brothers from the Taizé Community, March 8 through 12. Taizé is an ecumenical Christian monastic community in France, centered on kindness, simplicity, and reconciliation. More than 100,000 people from around the world make pilgrimage to Taizé each year for prayer, Bible study, friendship, and communal work. Heather Entekin and Peter Stover visited Taizé last spring and then shared with our congregation about their experience. Two of the Taizé brothers began making plans to visit an American Baptist church in Denver, and we were offered the opportunity to have them come here on their way there. We are working to make their time here a collaborative, ecumenical event with the involvement of other local churches and campus ministries. Though the itinerary is still being finalized, I want to encourage you to save the date of Tuesday, March 10, when we plan to have the brothers lead evening prayer here at First Baptist. It will be a perfect chance to pause for spiritual centering in the midst of Lent.

This is just a small survey of recent past, present, and near future happenings here at First Baptist. It's a time of robust ideas, spiritual connections, and vibrant ministry. We have so much to look forward to as we love, serve, give, and grow together in this new year!

FBC News & Happenings

Simple Soup Supper on Ash Wednesday

Children and their families are invited to church for a soup supper together at 6:00 pm on Wednesday, February 26. Following dinner we'll talk about the season of Lent, introduce a Lenten discipline for the kids and talk about what they'll see, hear and experience during our Ash Wednesday service which begins at 7:00 pm. The service is 30 minutes. Optional childcare will be provided for infants and toddlers. Please let Xan (xan@fbca2.org) know if you're able to come and whether you're able to help make the soup supper happen.

Congregational Meeting on Sunday, January 26

Our annual financial meeting will be held after fellowship time (11:30) on January 26. 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. If your last names begins with A-D, please bring a potato, rice or pasta dish; last names beginning with E-J, please bring fruit or dessert; last names starting with K-Z, please bring a salad or some kind of vegetable dish.

The 2020 Flower Calendar

The sign-up calendar is now posted on the downstairs bulletin board near the Lounge door. The flowers are placed on the chancel for each service. The cost is \$30 and your dedication goes in the bulletin. The flowers are yours to take after the Sunday morning service. Please sign up early to secure your date(s).





Please take a moment to look at the upcoming opportunities to love our neighbors. You can sign up for any or all of the opportunities at www.fbca2.org/neighbors, at the information counter or during Second Hour.

Daytime Warming Center

Our Fellowship Hall is open every Tuesday and Thursday in February for folks who need a place to be during the cold winter days. We are looking for people to provide healthy snacks, provide and serve the noon meal (50 guests) and participate in community activities (hot cocoa bar, letter writing, photo booth, etc). Past providers have both provided home cooked and store bought meals. Connect with Tom Gebhardt if you have any questions (tmgebhardt@att.net or 734.904.7417).

Overnight Rotating Shelter

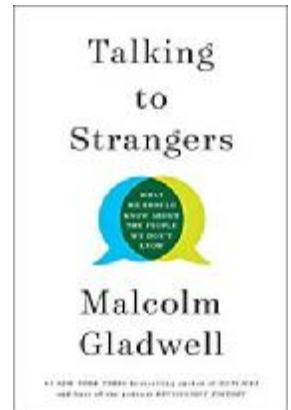
We will host the Delonis Center Rotating Shelter for seven nights in March beginning Monday, March 16 through Sunday, March 22. Two or three volunteers serve each night as hosts arriving at 7:30pm and serving overnight until 7:00am the next day. The volunteers work shifts; each volunteer takes a shift during the night. We have a shower onsite for those who plan to head to work from church. Questions? Contact Pete Stover (petestover@me.com or at 816-830-1041).

Loving our Neighbors: It's Undie Sunday

During the month of January, we are celebrating Undie Sunday! Our goal is to collect 200 pairs of new men's underwear and 100 of women's in January. Any size, style, or brand is useful. Women's feminine hygiene products are all welcome. These sorts of items are rarely donated and are in short supply among our Vespers, Rotating Shelter, and Warming Center guests. There will be a collection basket in the main hallway throughout the month. If you buy online, you can have items shipped directly to church (attn: Mary Davis, 517 E. Washington, Ann Arbor, Mi 48104). We'll be wrapping up the collection on Sunday, January 26th.

New Book Club

Scott Diels is hosting a book club meeting for Tuesday evening, Jan 28th at 7:00 PM at 1414 Iroquois, Ann Arbor, MI 48104 to discuss Malcolm Gladwell's "Talking to Strangers". This book club is open to anyone who is interested, men or women. Please invite anyone outside of FBC who you think may be interested. Food and beverages will be provided. For more information contact Scott Diels- hscottdiels@att.net, 734-649-2787



The MacGregor-Stitt Circle next meets at 1:00pm in the Memorial Lounge. The program is "The Life of the Preacher's Spouse."

Year-End Personal Contribution Statements can be picked up at the Information Table on Sundays or in the office during the work week.

Youth Christmas Party

After the carol sing on Sunday, December 22, the youth enjoyed a Christmas party and Secret Santa exchange. In addition to the gifts the youth exchanged with each other, Pastor Stacey was able to give out gift bags to each youth because of a special contribution from a church member. The church member wrote a note about how important they feel church youth group is for kids this age, at a time when they may be "very much questioning Christianity, making good choices, dealing with many pressures, how they fit in, etc." Thank you to this special church member, and to the whole congregation, for your ongoing support in making a safe, warm, fun, hospitable space for teens and preteens to wrestle with questions of faith, friendship, and life. (Stacey has gift bags for those youth who were not able to attend the party, so make sure you see her to receive yours!)

Resources for Personal Devotions

The Board of Christian Education invites you to use *The Secret Place* or *Disciplines* for your daily devotions. *The Secret Place* is available at the Information Counter (free). It is available in regular and large print editions and published quarterly. *Disciplines* has one-page daily devotions for the entire year and the Scriptures are based on the lectionary. Each week you can read and meditate on the Scriptures that will be usually be included in the upcoming Sunday's worship service. *Disciplines* books are available from Sue Ellen for \$10.

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 you 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.

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.



February 2020

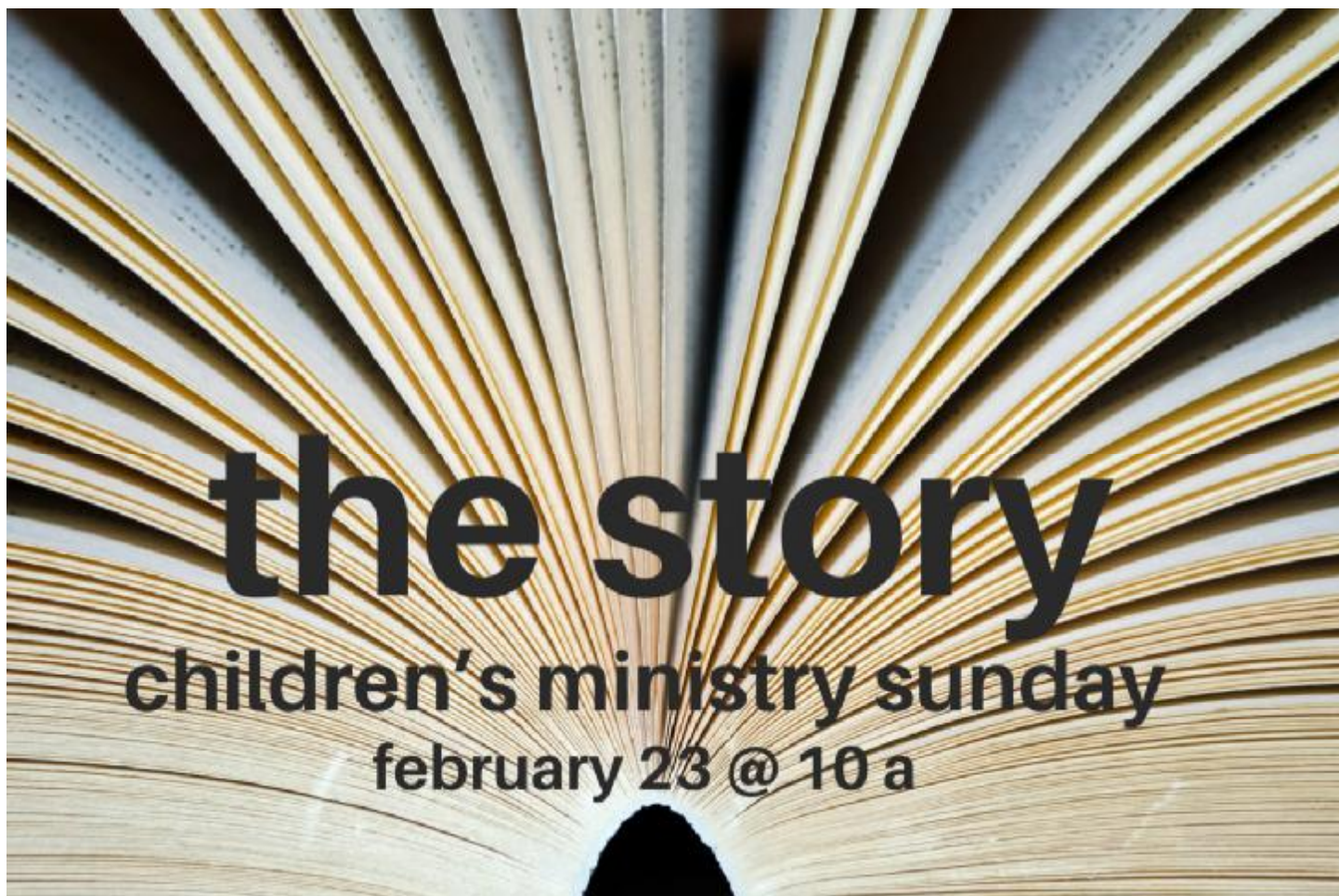


Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
						1
2 10:00 Worship 11:30 2nd Hour	3 5:00 Outreach	4 Daytime Warming Center 5:30 Vespers	5 1:30 Bible Study 6:30 Gathering	6 Daytime Warming Center 7:30 Choir	7	8
9 10:00 Worship 11:30 2nd Hour	10	11 Daytime Warming Center 1:00 Mission Action 5:30 Vespers	12 1:30 Bible Study 6:30 Gathering	13 Daytime Warming Center 7:30 Choir	14	15
16 10:00 Worship 11:30 2nd Hour	17 7:00 Monday Night Book Group	18 Daytime Warming Center 5:30 Vespers	19 1:30 Bible Study 6:30 Gathering	20 Daytime Warming Center 7:30 Choir	21	22
23 10:00 Worship 11:30 2nd Hour	24	25 Daytime Warming Center 5:30 Vespers	26 1:30 Bible Study 6:00 Soup Supper 6:30 Gathering 7:00 Ash Wed. Service	27 Daytime Warming Center 7:30 Choir	28	29

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The Reverends Paul & Stacey Simpson Duke, Co-Pastors

Next
Newsletter
Deadline:
Sunday, Feb 9



the story
children's ministry sunday
february 23 @ 10 a