

Fountain Street Church – Summer Series Chapel Speakers June 23, 2019 – August 25, 2019



Stephen Wooden – “Where Do We Fit in Between Church and State?”

June 23 – Stephen has had a fundamental relationship with FSC since 2005, when his family moved to Grand Rapids. He admits that this was a difficult place to find spiritual growth in his adolescence. After all, when your father is the Minister, how else can you carry out teenage rebellion? In spite of this, FSC became such a place for Stephen. It is where he came of age, found mentors, reconnected with friends, and continues to find inspiration. When Stephen married Adelyn in 2017, they chose FSC as the location because of the deep emotional connection to this community. Stephen’s spiritual journey is intermingled with his path through politics. As a Student Activist at MSU, he advocated with others for affordable tuition, against the use of coal on campus, and for the rights of workers to organize. He later served as a Staffer in Lansing. There, he helped Legislators push for greater investment in education and access to clean energy. Stephen has the honor of serving much of Grand Rapids’ northeast side and a small portion of Plainfield Township on the Kent County Commission. Serving his first term, he hopes to be a voice for justice and equality.



John Barfuss – “Bridging Two Worlds: A Family’s Faith – Revisited”

June 30 – John has attended FSC his entire life, growing up during the Littlefair years. He attended and participated in Character School, Tower Club, and Fountain Club. He sang in Junior, Tower Club, Fountain Club, and Adult Choirs. He has served two terms on the Governing Board, been a member of the Art Committee and Communications Committee, taught Character School for more than 15 years, and was one of the Co-Founders of the Singles Group in the 1980’s. He’s also helped with exterior landscaping and maintenance. He has owned his own advertising design and marketing firm for more than 35 years, and his firm developed and managed the FSC website for more than 10 years, along with many brochures and Annual Campaigns. He has designed Advent and Christmas Eve bulletin covers in the past, and is now semi-retired, working primarily for non-profits and small long-term clients. He was Festival of the Arts Co-Chair in 1995 and has served on numerous Arts and Non-Profit Boards through the years. He is currently an Assistant Scoutmaster for Boy Scout Troop 334 in Cascade, and has been honored with mentor pins from seven scouts when achieving their Eagle rank. He also serves on the Gerald R. Ford Council Executive Board. For more than 40 years, he’s been making dill pickles and is known far and wide as “Pickleman.” He is married to Evie Philippi and their sons Evan and Tom were raised in both FSC and St. Nicholas Antiochian Orthodox Church. Both sons are Eagle Scouts.



Casey Childs – “Storytelling in the Modern World”

July 7 – Casey grew up in Grand Rapids where he was active with FSC, the Civic Theatre, and the Circle Theatre. He currently lives in NYC, where he founded and has run Primary Stages, an Off-Broadway Theatre, dedicated to new plays by new Playwrights for 35 years. Early in his career, he ran the Artistic Programs for the New Dramatists, America’s oldest Playwrights’ organization. He has also directed and produced many hours of network television. Currently, he is the Producer of the Primary Stages Off-Broadway Oral History Project.



Rev. David Lee Smith – “A Question of Character”

July 14 – David Smith has a diverse religious background with roots in the Reformed and Baptist traditions. He is a graduate of Creston High School, GRCC, and Western Michigan University with a degree in Music Education. After four years in the U.S. Air Force, and 30 years in the Michigan National Guard, he worked in Grand Rapids in the telephone and computer industries. He graduated from the Chicago Theological Seminary with Master of Divinity and Doctor of Ministry degrees. After a 21-year pastorate at the Burlingame Congregational United Church of Christ, he completed three out-of-town Interim Pastor assignments and a Chaplaincy at a local nursing home. Dave enjoys music, genealogy, and exploring issues related to religion, culture, politics, and world affairs. With his wife, Liz, he resides in Grandville.



Jim Anderson – “The Relevance of a 150 Year-Old Church in 2019”

July 21 – Jim, son of the Music Director at a small Presbyterian Church, always attended church as a kid. Like many, he gave up church-going during and after college, receiving spiritual renewal through music - in particular, Choral singing. Upon moving to West Michigan in the late 1990’s, one of the first places Jim and his wife, Lisa, visited was FSC, (the only church that Lisa would attend in West Michigan). Jim will speak on the core pillars that form the heritage of FSC and inform our future.



Mary Lou Smith – “The Four Corners”

July 28 – Mary Lou has been a Fountain Streeter since childhood, whose church resume includes Character School, Fountain Club, Junior Choir, Adult Choir, (since 1970), Governing Board, 2002 Envisioning Committee, plus Archives Committee, Music Committee, and Religious Services Committee. Her academic background includes a BA in French from Aquinas College, with post-graduate studies at Bank Street College of Education, (NY), Manhattan School of Music, and MSU. Her career history

includes being an elementary Teacher in GRPS for more than 35 years, a professional Accompanist for theater, opera, and ballet productions, and a free-lance Voice and Video Performer. She has extensive experience in all aspects of theatrical production, a Singer in GR Symphony Chorus, and Arts Advocate and past Board Member for major local organizations. She loves to reading, traveling, history, (anybody’s!), writing, and anything that’s good enough to make her laugh.



Ginger Hensley – “9-5 Love and Then Some”

August 4 – From the rural soil of Southern Illinois, in the depths of evangelical conservatism she was born some six decades ago. Upon her northern migration to Southeast Michigan, she began to live and experience the delights and challenges of life. Her passion for ice cream flourished as did her love of MSU. Her proudest achievements are her three daughters, (who are quite fabulous), not running away from compassion and religion, her Springer, Kingston, and often landing on her feet when facing adversity.

Jackson Community College and MSU were Ginger’s educational and party places. She volunteered and served on AYSO Soccer Boards, FSC Committees and Character School, Local First, NNAF Board, (National Network of Abortion Funds), numerous Democratic Campaigns, Grand Rapids Osteopathic Hospital, and assisting in events for West Michigan Spartans. Her work has covered time well-spent as Church Administrator at FSC and Character School Supervisor, Multi-Unit Manager for Coldstone Creamery/Kahala Corp., and currently the General Manager for Laketown Golf & Conference Center. Time well-spent is with her family, friends, her front porch and yard, the lake/beach, and trying to be, and bring, some joy to the world.



Carol Kooistra – “David’s Journey: Remembering the FSC Era of David O. Rankin 1982-1998”

August 11 – Carol began singing in the FSC Adult Choir in 1986 and had the privilege of “singing for her soul” with Music Directors, Beverly Howerton and James Culver. Carol has served in many roles in her 33-year FSC membership and is currently serving her 2nd six-year term on the Governing Board. Between her and her late husband, Bill, they served a combined 18 years on the Board, both serving as Chair. That may account for why she has so many memories of the church. Carol is a mother of four, grandmother of seven, and great-grandmother of six. As she prepares for her sermon about the era of David Rankin, she recalls the exciting day that her and her husband, Bill, had white water rafted down the Salmon River in Idaho with David and Ginger Rankin.



Jim Ayres – “The Times They Are a Changin’”

August 18 – Jim oversees all business operations for the North American affiliate of Amway. He leads the affiliate’s efforts to grow its business by increasing brand awareness and launching exceptional new products through partnership with IBO’s support and service. Jim has more than 35 years experience at Amway. He began as an R&D Technician in 1982. From 1986-1990, he was R&D Personal Care & Beauty Formulator. Jim was Group Leader, R&D Beauty Product Development, from 1990-1994, Manager of R&D Beauty Product Development, from 1994-2000, Manager, Project Management from 2000-2003, and Director, Global R&D Regulatory Affairs, from 2003-2009. Jim was

Vice President, Global Quality Assurance and Technical Services from 2009-2013. He earned his Bachelor of Science degree in Biology/Biological Sciences from GVSU and his MBA from Davenport University. Jim is a Board Member of Mental Health Foundation, Literacy Center, US Dream Academy, Kinzler Foundation, and FSC. He has also been involved with Special Olympics as a Board Member and Volunteer for over 30 years. He teaches Global Diversity in Business for a variety of community and business groups. Jim and his wife, Nancy, have two children and three grandchildren.



Kristin Mayer – “Chemistry, God, Life, the Universe, and Everything”

August 25 – Kristin grew up at FSC participating in Character School, Tower Club, Coming of Age, and Fountain Club. She received her degree in Education with a major in Chemistry, then moved to NYC and then to Seattle, Washington to teach high school Chemistry. While teaching in Seattle, started working on education research and curriculum resources for Science classes. This work lead her to get

a PhD in Curriculum, Instruction, and Teacher Education with a specialization in Science Education. She now teaches at East Kentwood High School and is passionate about developing Science classrooms where students’ ideas and experiences are heard and honored, and where everyone realizes that they are a natural Scientist rather than a learning Scientist, which is an elite group. After traveling and exploring, she is happy to be back home at FSC and has even recently started as a Governing Board Member to give back some to this community that gave so much to her.
