

LAKE AVENUE BAPTIST CHURCH NEWSLETTER

FOR JANUARY, 2020, ISSUE 1, VOLUME 83

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YOUR PASTOR'S ARTICLE



At our recent Multicultural Christmas Eve Service, we celebrated the culmination of Advent with the birth of the Christ-child. The service was full of readings, music, and short messages about the story of Christmas. Perhaps one of the greatest highlights of the service for many, as it was for me, was a dance by our Spirit Dancers. This group of three young girls, led by Lara Ford, rehearsed diligently in the weeks leading up to Christmas, and the piece that they shared with us all on Christmas Eve was beautiful and, for many, a memorable celebration of the joy of Christmas.

I have reflected the last few days on this dance because it has, for me, represented everything I am so excited about as one year comes to a close and another year is about to begin. Over the past year you have heard about the “What’s Next” initiative

where we have explored what brings joy to us about our church community, and where we have articulated where we see God moving in our congregation. The Spirit Dancers brought “What’s Next” to life for me in a very real and tangible way.

These young girls were introduced to a type of activity that they may not have been exposed to previously ... dance, and in particular, liturgical or “worship-focused” dance. They were invited to explore this ministry with a dedicated adult who spent a considerable amount of time with them, helping them learn this new form of artistic expression. Regardless of their age, they were encouraged to grow in this experience and to really see it as an important ministry, not as an “entertainment for the adults.” Our young people want to be involved in ministry in leadership capacities, and this opportunity afforded that to this group of young people. They were invited to lead us all in a meaningful expression of worship, and to invite us all into that experience together, and they did a wonderful job.



“What’s Next” is about where we see God moving us and getting onboard with that movement. It is not about “jump-starting” God, because God is already in motion. What is needed is for us all to open ourselves up to the movement of God and to express a willingness, and a desire, to participate fully in the movement of the Spirit through the life of LABC. This is what our children modeled for us through this Christmas Eve experience, and what I would suggest they model for us through so many other shared acts of leadership that they offer.

The truth is, I think 2020 will be an incredibly exciting year. We have so many ministries for worship, service, education, and mission already up and running. I see people dedicating themselves to participation in these ministries, and growing in faith through their involvement. I invite, and encourage you, to explore what is already happening and either join or continue in some of these ministries.

Further, I encourage you to see where there are gaps or areas to explore that might be something others would be interested in being involved. Our children did that through the interest of one person (Lara) who wanted to introduce some of the young people of our church to her love of dance. A number got involved and found that

not only did they enjoy the process, but they could help us as a congregation grow in our appreciation of their work and to worship together with them. Where is God moving you in 2020?

May God bless you as we move into 2020, and may God bless the ministry of our church community as we continue to share the love of God with those in our community and around the world. Thank you for the continued privilege of serving as your pastor, and I look forward to seeing that God has in store for the year ahead. Join me!

Michael

ALL CHURCH CONGREGATIONAL MEETING TO DISCUSS THE BUDGET

LABC is a Baptist church, which means we make our decisions as a congregation. Every January and June we hold congregational meetings (we hold extra ones throughout the year if/when necessary). Our January congregational meeting is focused around approving our yearly budget. I thought I would share with you how that budget comes to be, so that you have some background on what you will be seeing during that January meeting (which takes place on Sunday **January 26, 2020** immediately following the 10 a.m. multicultural worship and before the 12:30 Myanmar language worship service.

In October of the prior year, the treasurer, in conjunction with the Resource and Support ministry, hands out a draft version of a budget based on the previous years' budget so that each ministry can see where money was allocated and spent. The trustee who is responsible for leadership of an area of ministry (i.e. education, mission, invitation and welcome, resource and support, and worship) take that budget back to their ministry team/committee and work within their team to make budget recommendations for the coming year. They look at the areas where money was spent and look at what they think needs to be focused upon in the upcoming year. Sometimes that means increases in spending, sometimes decreases, and sometimes the amounts stay the same.

At the following council meeting (November) they bring their proposed budget to the church council (your elected representatives for the church) who will discuss the proposed budget and make recommendations for any changes. The trustee can then go back to their committee to discuss any of the recommendations and then, depending on how many things are recommended, the council will pull the entire budget together for a vote at their January council meeting. That budget is then brought to you,

the congregation, for your approval at the congregational meeting at the end of January.

The numbers that the council brings forward are determined by what they feel we as a congregation are called to focus on in ministry. For instance, when you see the budget in January you will see that a large amount of our money is used in mission. You as a congregation value mission spending, and so we want to make sure that what we spend for mission reflects our desires as a church.

As a congregation, when we approve our budget it is indeed our budget. We commit to honoring it and the council commits to using the money we all give responsibly. Please plan to join us for this meeting on January 26th. It is important that we all are part of this process and continue to live into our calling as a church community.

Michael

"GETTING TO KNOW YOU...BETTER"

Occasionally we offer a Church School class entitled "Getting To Know You.... Better." Tom Argust leads this class which focusses on introducing and having a conversation with people in our church. On January 12 and 19, we will focus on our Choral Scholars: Julia Fedor (Alto), Gabriel O'Shaughnessy (Bass) and Alexandra Hotz (Soprano). These skilled young people help provide outstanding music in our worship services as our choir section leaders. During our class, Tom will introduce each of them and ask them a few questions regarding their backgrounds, studies, goals and why they chose to share their skills and talents with us.

Please join us and get to know these talented young people...better.

* January 12: This class will begin with our Choir Director Lee Foster providing an overview of the role of our Scholars and their selection process. Then Tom will interview Julia Fedor leading then to a conversation between the class and Julia.

*January 19: We will focus on our two other Choral Scholars, Gabriel O'Shaughnessy and Alexandra Hotz. .

A MESSAGE FROM YOUR MODERATOR

January 2020

Dear Friends,

Happy New Year! I hope the Advent and Christmas seasons have been meaningful for you. Are we ready to start a new year together? I hope so because I am very excited to see where we go.

Just before Advent I had the chance to share with you in worship the focus that your Church Council has determined should be our priority for the coming year. This priority comes from your responses to the "What's Next" process that we used to listen to everyone's thoughts about the things you believe LABC is being called to by God. This year our priority will be on building and strengthening our relationships with each other. From my reading of scripture in preparing my sermon this is an important thing for us always to be doing. When we do this we grow together and prepare ourselves as a group and as individuals to go out and serve our community. The ways to achieve this goal lay in our worship together, our opportunities to spend time in fellowship together, and in continuing our Christian education..

I hope you will share with me and other members of the Church Council your ideas about what educational, fellowship and worship experiences would help us to know each other in deeper and meaningful ways. We always want to hear what you are thinking!

Peace, *Laura*

More Thoughts From Your Moderator:

I want to share two more things about the priority that the Church Council has set for the coming year.

- 1) Why just this one thing? I take full responsibility for this! As I have served in leadership roles at work I have had the opportunity to read research and attend conferences on what makes organizations successful. Organizations often have grand plans and try to do everything at once. This seems to always fail. Organizations with grand plans that chose a single priority to

focus on and achieve before moving on to the next goal are much more successful. They usually achieve all of their goals over time. I think that we want to be successful at answering God's call to LABC so I have asked the members of the Church Council and am asking you to use an approach that has repeatedly proved successful. I believe that this will help us make all of our goals a reality.

- 2) Historically, this seems to be the last thing a church like LABC would chose as a first priority. We are known for our mission focus. Why would we choose an inward focus? The following are just my thoughts about an answer to this question. I think that historically we have been weakest (not terrible but weak) as a church in the area of knowing and supporting each other in a truly deep and meaningful way. I think that we can best go out to the world when we are intentional about loving and supporting each other. I realize that this is an uncomfortable choice for some of us (me included) but it very clearly comes out of our discussions about where God is calling us. I encourage you to join me in being uncomfortable and yet listening and responding to the current call of God for us as a church.

Thanks for listening, *Laura*

A LIST OF OUR CURRENT CHURCH COUNCIL MEMBERS

| | |
|--------------------|----------------------|
| Laura Tubbs | Moderator |
| John Ganze | Clerk |
| Mike Donatucci | Resource & Support |
| Valerie Ketchum | Christian Education |
| Jane Grant | Mission |
| Sue McMeekin-Davis | Treasurer |
| Susan Maybeck | Worship & Music |
| Ma Mon | Myanmar Fellowship |
| Soe Win | Nurture and Care |
| Chuck Theis | Invitation & Welcome |

REFLECTIONS ON THE NEW YEAR

I am closing my eyes on this past year. I feel like I have had dark glasses on. I have been in physical pain, unable to take a walk in the woods or plant my flowers. I had been in Physical Therapy all year and finally decided to have hip surgery. And it's been a

success. With continued PT this year I will be hiking and gardening. The dark glasses have been removed.

My mood during 2019 have also been covered by dark glasses. The political scene is dismal, in my opinion. Impeachment of the President, whether he is convicted by the Senate or not, is a black mark on his Presidency. Our dialogue about important issues has turned into mean talking and blaming. As I listen to the news and read the paper, I feel like I'm wearing dark glasses.

And at times, I must admit that I am not seeing or hearing God's message of peace and good will. Even my spiritual life has been read through dark glasses.

It is time to take off those dark glasses as we move into 2020 vision (perfect vision).

It is a time to take seriously God's message of a better world full of love and peace.

It is a time to reach out to others we meet with the heart and actions of Jesus.

It is time to see clearly what is possible. And to do it.

Let's throw away our dark glasses from 2019 and open our eyes to the hope and promise given by God.

May God bless you this new year.

Susan Maybeck
Assisting Minister



When the words "mission" and "church" are in the same sentence, we may imagine the mighty works of faraway missionaries providing medical care or the mechanisms for clean water. Locally, there is important and challenging work done to alleviate hunger and alienation. One may not think of the smallest gestures that connect our congregation to the wider community as mission, but sometimes the tiniest of actions acts as a thread woven into and strengthening our communal "fabric."

Two such small actions occurred this past fall. When we learned about the shooting of a volunteer at a

downtown soup kitchen, we decided to make a visit with a bouquet of flowers and a note of prayerful support for that ministry at Christ Church; a personal visit amplified the gesture and was gratefully accepted. On the same day, two members of the Mission committee visited the local precinct of the Rochester Police Department (located on Parkway).

Morale had been low after the death of a respected member of the force and the maiming of another officer. Our box of donuts (yes, of course!!) was cheerfully accepted as was the note of concern.

There are numerous other small ways that our church staff and members weave our congregation into the fabric of Rochester life. And that is mission! If YOU have an idea for an action, either big or small, your mission committee wants to hear from you.

Contact Michael Ford or any member of the committee.



Last year we needed to cancel church one Sunday morning because of inclement weather. While we hope that we don't need to again this year, it is important that we remind you all about the process we take in order to notify people about Sunday cancellations in advance of a cancellation, so you all know how we will go about letting people know. This is from our newsletter last February, but worth the reprint.

In the case of a need to cancel Sunday service, Ken would send out an email at the end of the week when the storm was expected letting people know when the decision would be made. We decided we would call a church cancellation by 7am the morning of the cancellation. That would allow us to determine if the snow that was expected was actually coming.

Next, we would commit to sending out a mass email to our email distribution list. This would get many people informed about the decision. That said, if you aren't on our email distribution list (which is also used

for things like annual reports etc.) then this might be a good incentive for you to get on the list!

Next, we would inform Pastor Simon who would send out a notification to the 12:30 Myanmar community in the Myanmar language using a text program that they use for communication purposes.

Then, we would update the church website on the main page that would provide the information. Simultaneously, we would post a notice on the Facebook page for the many of you who are on Facebook (if you're not on Facebook you wouldn't see that page). Lastly, we would notify television stations and radio stations.

Above all else, we ask people to contact anyone who you know wouldn't see notifications in any of the above ways. In other words, you may know of someone who doesn't use the internet, doesn't watch tv, doesn't listen to the radio, and doesn't use texting. If you know of those people, we ask you to reach out to them to let them know.

The long and the short of it is this: we don't cancel church very often. We try very hard not to, but if we have to, because of either incredible snow or very unsafe driving conditions, we needed to come up with a system to do it. In many churches, they put something on a website and call it a day. At LABC, we can't just do that. While you may have seen the cancellation notice in one way, please know that like anything at your church it really isn't that simple. However, it's worth it, because your safety is paramount and notifying you of anything significant is the most important thing we can do in such situations.



Dear friends, this is a reminder that an AWAB event is drawing near. In the holiday shuffle, we don't want you to miss this great opportunity to gather with others who share your desire for love and

justice for the queer community. **The Potluck Dinner will take place at Lake Avenue Baptist Church on Sunday, January 12, 2020 from 5 pm to 8 pm. Beverages will be provided. Bring your own place**

setting to honor the earth (thus generate less paper/plastic trash)

Now, I have heard from a few folks and then began to wonder what would we do if there happened to be a **snow or ice emergency**. Since I wouldn't know who was coming, how could I notify them? So, in consultation with Michael Ford, the plan is that we will put a notice on the LABC website if we are cancelling due to weather conditions. Here is the website: www.lakeavebaptist.org.

Meanwhile, in preparation for this evening, I have been gathering information on LGBTQ resources in our community: events, DVD's opportunities for advocacy, education and service. Perhaps you can bring along (either on paper or in your head) resources you know about. We need to share! We are stronger when we work together.

Thanks, looking forward to our gathering!

OUR CHURCH FAMILY

We keep *Alison Jameson* in our healing prayers as she recuperates at home from recent surgery.

KAREN NEW YEAR CELEBRATION



The Karen Christian Fellowship will be having their New Year Celebration of the year 2759 at Lake Avenue Baptist Church on Saturday, January 11, 2020 from 9:00 am to 1:00 pm. **Karen New Year** is celebrated on the First Day of Pyathoe on the Lunar calendar, which is generally the end of December or beginning of January. It marks the end of the harvest of one rice crop and the beginning of the next rice crop. Karen New Year is the largest celebration in the Karen community and is celebrated nationally throughout Burma. .All are invited to attend.

SPECIAL EVENTS FOR JANUARY AT LAKE AVE. BAPTIST CHURCH

Wednesday, January 1, 2020: 11:00 Myanmar Christian Fellowship New Year Celebration

Sunday, January 5, 2020: Worship and Communion for all.

Saturday, January 11, 2020: 9:00 AM: Karen Community New Year Celebration

Sunday, January 12, 2020: 5:00 PM: Pot-Luck Supper, Association of Welcoming and Affirming Baptist Churches in Rochester

Monday, January 13, 2020: 7:00 pm: Church Council Meeting, Conference Room

Sunday, January 26, 2020: Congregational Yearly Budget Meeting immediately after the 10 am service.

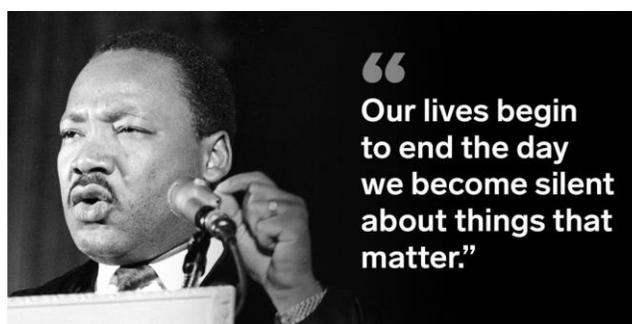
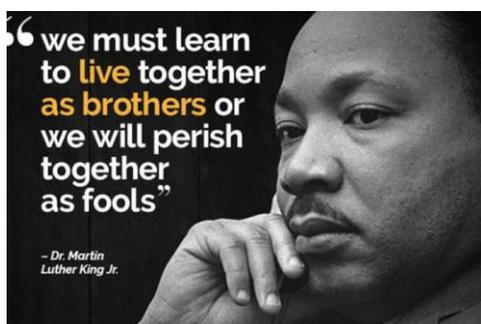
Monday, January 27, 2020: 7:30 pm: Invitation and Welcome, Conference Room

ONGOING WEEKLY EVENTS IN JANUARY

Every Sunday in January: 10:00 am: Worship Service for All and Children's Sunday School, 11:15 Fellowship, Social Hall; 11:30 Youth Sunday School, 11:45 am: Adult Education Classes, Conference Room.

Every Monday in January: 6:30 pm: Pass It On AA Group, Social Hall

After many years of faithful use of our church building, the Tuesday night AA meeting has decided to merge with the new Monday night group. Started over 20 years ago to offer a Tuesday AA group in the community, attendance has been waning over recent months (due in part to the closure of the transitional housing building near our church - for renovations, not permanently). Leadership of this group has decided that it made the most sense to merge the two groups to ensure a critical mass at the Monday group, and to engage the two communities. We thank the AA group for their use of the building and have extended an open invitation to them should they, or any other AA group, choose to return. Blessings to all who have participated in this group over the past years, and may God continue to bless those who are in recovery at any stage of their journey.



Martin Luther King, Jr. Day is on Monday, January 20th, 2020. In celebration of this day the Greater Rochester Martin Luther King Jr. Commission will be holding a community

wide celebration at Kodak Hall of the Eastman School of Music. One of the guest speakers will be Rev. Dr. Angela Sims, the new President of Colgate Rochester Crozer Divinity School. The program is free and open to the public and begins at 9:00 am. We hope you can make it.

Church Moderator: Laura Tubbs

Church Staff: Sr. Pastor: Michael Ford; Music Educator, Chancel Choir Director, & Organist: Lee Foster, Good News Singers Director and Accompanist: Julia Fedor, Refugee Coordinator: Hkadin Lee; Director of Youth and Children's Ministry: Austin Pettigrew, Myanmar Christian Fellowship: Pastor Simon Kui; Assisting Minister - Susan Maybeck, Church Accountant: Bonaventure Moulogho; Office Manager: Kenneth Setera; Custodial Services: Lloyd Cuyler