

Lake Avenue Baptist Church, 72 Ambrose Street, Rochester, NY 14608
www.lakeavebaptist.org, 585-458-5765

CHURCH CALENDAR: To see the most up-to-date calendar of church events please visit www.lakeavebaptist.org.

Lake Avenue Baptist Church

E-MAIL:

lakeavebaptistchurchoffice@gmail.com

OFFICE HOURS

Monday – Friday
9:00 AM to 1:00 PM

SUNDAY SCHEDULE:

10:00 am: Worship for all, Sunday School Children & Youth (Communion every first Sunday of the month)
11:15 am: Fellowship
11:45 am: Adult Education
12:00 pm: Karen Worship
Myanmar Worship

CHURCH MODERATOR

Tom Argust

CHURCH STAFF

Senior Pastor
Michael Ford

Associate Pastor
Debbie Bennett Reynolds

Music Educator, Chancel Choir Director
and Organist
Lee Foster

Gospel Spirits Director and Pianist
Isobel Davies

Refugee Coordinator
Hkadin Lee

Rochester Karen Baptist Church
Day Chit, Lay Pastor

Myanmar Christian Fellowship
Simon Kui, Lay Pastor

Office Manager
Ken Setera

Custodial Services
Lloyd Cuyler

NEW OFFICE HOURS Please note that the LABC office will now be open Monday-Friday, 9:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m. If you need access to the building at others times, please contact the office to arrange to have someone available to open/close.

FEBRUARY IS BLACK HISTORY MONTH

This Is How February Became Black History Month

TIME Magazine Article by Julia Zorthian, Jan 29, 2016

Two very important birthdays helped activists choose when to celebrate



Portrait of American historian and educator Carter Godwin Woodson (1875 - 1950), 1910s. Hulton Archive / Getty Images

It was in 1964 when the author James Baldwin reflected on the shortcomings of his education. "When I was going to school," he said, "I began to be bugged by the teaching of American history because it seemed that that history had been taught without cognizance of my presence."

Baldwin's thoughts echoed those of many before and after him. Half a century earlier, when Carter G. Woodson had the same frustration, he set the foundation for what would become today's national Black History Month, observed each February.

In the early 20th century, while he earned a Master's degree from the University of Chicago and a Ph.D. from Harvard, both in history, Woodson witnessed how black people were underrepresented in the books and conversations that shaped the study of American history. According to the way many historians taught the nation's past, African Americans were barely part of the story—a narrative that Woodson knew was not true. So in 1915, he and Jesse E. Moorland founded the Association for the Study of Negro Life and History (now the Association for the Study of African American Life and History, or the ASALH). The organization would promote studying black history as a discipline and celebrate the accomplishments of African Americans.

"If a race has no history, it has no worthwhile tradition, it becomes a negligible factor in the thought of the world, and it stands in danger of being exterminated," Woodson said of the need for such study.

In 1926, Woodson and the ASALH launched a “Negro History Week” to bring attention to his mission and help school systems coordinate their focus on the topic. Woodson chose the second week in February, as it encompassed both Frederick Douglass’ birthday on February 14 and Abraham Lincoln’s birthday on February 12.

The celebrations and studies spread quickly, as the ASALH tells it, driving demand for teaching materials and spurring the formation of black history clubs. But, though a newfound understanding of black culture and literature was spreading amongst the middle class, the idea of expanding the week to a month did not come until several decades later. During the Civil Rights Movement, Freedom Schools in the South embraced the week and its curriculum message as a way to contribute to the mission. By the mid-1960s, the most popular textbook for eighth-grade U.S. history classes mentioned only two black people in the entire century of history that had transpired since the Civil War—and that problem could no longer be ignored. It was in that decade that colleges and universities across the country transformed the week into a Black History Month on campus.

A number of mayors had already adopted the celebration as a municipal event by the time President Gerald Ford decreed Black History Month a national observance in 1976, on both the fiftieth anniversary of the first iteration and America’s bicentennial year.

“In celebrating Black History Month,” Ford said in his message, “we can seize the opportunity to honor the too-often neglected accomplishments of black Americans in every area of endeavor throughout our history.”

Presidents have issued national decrees with each year’s theme since the 1970s. African American History Month’s 2016 theme is “Hallowed Grounds: Sites of African American Memories.”

FEBRUARY WORSHIP SCHEDULE

Sunday, February 5 2017: 10:00 am: Worship & Communion for all; Sunday School for Children and Youth; 11:15 am: Fellowship; 11:45 am: Adult Education, Conference Room; 12:00 pm: Karen Worship, Sanctuary and Myanmar Worship, Downstairs Sanctuary

Sunday, February 12, 2017: 10:00 am: Worship for all; Sunday School for Children and Youth; 11:15 am: Fellowship; 11:45 am: Adult Education, Conference Room; 12:00 pm: Karen Worship, Sanctuary and Myanmar Worship, Downstairs Sanctuary

Sunday, February 19, 2017: 10:00 am: Worship for all; Sunday School for Children and Youth; 11:15 am: Fellowship; 11:45 am: Adult Education, Conference Room; 12:00 pm: Karen Worship, Sanctuary and Myanmar Worship, Downstairs Sanctuary

Sunday, February 26, 2017: 10:00 am: Worship for all; Sunday School for Children and Youth; 11:15 am: Fellowship; 11:45 am: Adult Education, Conference Room; 12:00 pm: Karen Worship, Sanctuary and Myanmar Worship, Downstairs Sanctuary

LABC SUNDAY ADULT EDUCATION SCHEDULE

Feb. 5 - Working for Justice with 2017 Realities: Session Two – What’s happening in response to the new realities? What are the different ways we as individuals may choose to respond? How do we work for dialogue and show respect to those of different opinions?

Feb. 12 - Working for Justice with 2017 Realities: Session Three – How do we respond as a Church, maintaining the separation of church and state and continuing our legacy of working for justice? What processes do we have or do we need to discern when we act as a church?

Feb. 19 - “Getting Inside the Mind of Dr. Lee Foster” - a conversation on music and worship.

Feb. 26 - The Work of Cameron Community Ministries - Jen Muniga, Executive Director

THURSDAY ADULT EDUCATION: Five Practices of Fruitful Congregations Join Michael Ford on Thursday at 1:00 pm in the conference room for a continuation of the study of the fundamental practices critical to the success of church congregations. Remember, if you can only make one or two sessions please feel free to join us. Any questions regarding the class can be directed to Pastor Michael.

Our Pastor's Article

Sometimes it's the little things that make the difference.

Over the last two months I have spent a good portion of my waking moments thinking about budgets. Your church council has been diligently working on developing a responsible church budget, which was presented this past Sunday (January 22, 2017) for your comment and approval. I want to thank you for being part of the process, and for approving our 2017 church budget.

One of the biggest challenges that we face as a church is one that is faced by many religious organizations – doing more with less. In order to make sure that all of the money that you have contributed to LABC for the work of our shared ministry is used most responsibly, we have been looking at ways to save costs on the everyday, little things that, when compiled, truly do add up.

It's a small thing, but LABC used to have three phone lines (one our main line, another our second line, and a third for our fax machine). A simple phone call to our phone provider let me cancel our third line and merge the fax line onto our second phone line. For anyone calling the office, or faxing us anything, you will notice absolutely no change. Further, the change for the staff is virtually unnoticeable too. This one little change will save us about \$400 a year. We are looking for more small adjustments within the church office (and in many areas) to try to make more little savings – because they do add up.

From a personal perspective, I'd like to share a story. I just got a notice from our home alarm company that told me of a \$6 increase to each bill this coming year. It doesn't seem like much, but that's \$72 a year - \$72 that can be spent somewhere else. I looked online and saw that the company offered remarkable savings to new customers, and then, buried deep within the website was a number to call for existing customers that would get them the best existing customer discounts. 10 minutes on the phone and my bill was reduced by \$20 a month (not to mention not paying the additional \$6 increase). One phone call will save me about \$250 a year! The little things do add up.

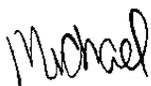
I wanted to share these stories for a few reasons. First, I want you to know that when you approve a budget for the church, we continue to look for ways to make that money stretch as far as possible so that our ministry impact can be the greatest. Second, I want to encourage you to look at your own bills and see if there are places where some small changes can make a big impact for your own financial situation. It may be well worth your time. Third, and most importantly, I wanted to illustrate the power of small changes that can make a big impact.

Sometimes we think we need to make big changes or big statements or gestures to have an impact. Sometimes, it's the little things that count. And when you have many people doing many little things, combined they can have a significant, lasting impact on the object of their actions.

What little things are you doing to share God's love? What little things are you doing to expose people to the beauty of a relationship with Jesus? What little things are you doing to serve our Lord in the world in which we live? These all matter ... more than we may ever know!

Sometimes it's the little things that make the difference.

Blessings,



A Letter from Your Associate Pastor, Debbie Bennett Reynolds

Dear Friends,

I am going to take the risk of trying to write a bit about what is going on in our country right now. As a pastor, especially a Baptist pastor, I am very conscious of the vital role that separating church from the state plays in protecting our democratic processes and our religious freedoms. But at the same, as your pastor, I know that all of us are being affected by the political and social events of the recent election campaign and the events happening in Washington, D.C. every day. I want to try to offer a word if I can that might be helpful.

We have entered a new era in America. Whatever your political leanings, I think we all can probably agree the inauguration of Donald Trump as President and all the events that happened last weekend signal that we are in for interesting and tumultuous times. A lot is happening very quickly, and I find myself feeling many emotions and trying to sort out what I think and believe in a whole new way. I personally believe these times call for us as individual citizens to take a hard look at the privileges and responsibilities of citizenship.

But, we also have to consider what these times mean for us as a church. We have a long, rich history as a church that is grounded in the Social Gospel tradition. The foundation of our work for justice and peace is based on our faith in Jesus Christ and the words of the Old Testament prophets. To name a few examples: Helen Barrett Montgomery didn't just preach and teach Sunday school here; she was elected to the Rochester School Board (before women could vote) and worked to improve conditions for poor children in Rochester and became the first woman President of our denomination. We helped found Fairport Baptist Homes because seniors needed care and support. Dr. Gene Bartlett and others took risky positions in response to the race riot of 1968 to stand for justice for African-Americans in our community. We worked with Salvadorans seeking sanctuary, and we have provided welcome and support to refugees from around the world. We have been racially inclusive for many years and took a stand almost 20 years ago to be fully Welcoming and Affirming of LGBTQ people. We stood with members of the Muslim community after the 9/11 attack and have been part of Muslim-Christian and Jewish-Christian dialogue for years. Peter Carman was arrested for civil disobedience in protest of plans to invade Iraq, and I don't believe Jean Bartlett or Bill and Lois Davis ever missed a peace march or rally unless they were physically unable to be there. This just names a few of the causes and persons that are a part of our history. This is who we are as Lake Avenue Baptist Church.

So, in this interesting and challenging time we are called to prayer and discernment. Where are we? What are the realities we are facing? What are the issues and actions we are called to as individuals? How can we respond in ways that do not alienate but instead build bridges for dialogue with those who are at a different place? What are we called to do as a church and how do we decide those actions in the best ways? I have faith that God is always working for good in all that occurs. Obviously, that doesn't mean all that occurs is good, far from it. But, the power of God's love is always greater than circumstances and human actions. We can believe that and we can trust that. We can trust that God will lead us forward in these tumultuous, divisive times - toward justice, toward kindness, toward humility and toward love. Let's be in prayer and conversation together about where God is leading us.

Peace to each of you, to your country and to our world.

HISTORIAN'S NOTE: Recently while in Alabama I had the opportunity to catch up on some reading. On June 16, 2016, in the D & C, Emily Morry who is a local freelance writer wrote an article entitled, "Monument to first desegregated school". School 13 was organized in 1842. By 1849 Frederick Douglas had petitioned the School Board to allow his children to attend #13 which was closest to their home. The Board agreed and so #13 became the first desegregated school in Rochester. The edifice that housed the

school soon became too crowded so was replaced in 1904 with a larger building with many added amenities. With the new building came a new name, Horace Mann, a noted education reformer. Then she writes, "Applauding the re-branding, school Commissioner Helen B. Montgomery noted... "Horace Mann worked for the ideal instead of the dollar. He did not go with the crowd, but ahead of it. He loved children with all his heart and worked for them all his life."

Helen B. Montgomery was a lifelong member of Lake Ave. Baptist Church. She was the first woman to be a School Board Commissioner and would go on to become the first woman president of the Board. Eventually the elementary school on Seneca Ave., School # 50 would be named after her. One could easily say, Helen B. did not go with the crowd either, but ahead of it in so many ways. Her shoulders are among the many on which we stand today at LABC.

OUR CHURCH FAMILY

- We continue to keep in our prayers **Harry Stoneham** during his recuperation at Fairport Baptist Homes.
- Our prayers are with **Susan and Ed Maybeck** as they adjust to Ed's recent move to Rochester Presbyterian Home where he will be living.
- We continue to keep **Dottie Yoder Foster** in our healing prayers as she continues treatment at home for recent health issues.
- Congratulations to Sidney Taylor** who made the front page of the Democrat & Chronicle ROC Sports section on Sunday, Jan. 22, for his accomplishments in diving as a senior at Pittsford Mendon High School. Sidney has scored as a top diver in Monroe County championships and hopes to qualify for the state championship. Last year, Sidney earned his Eagle Scout award through a service project collecting and distributing soccer equipment to children, youth, and young adults in the refugee community through us here at LABC. He got involved with our youth group through this process. Sidney attends Pittsford Mendon High through the Urban-Suburban program. Best wishes to Sidney as he competes again on Feb. 11! (article with photo is posted in the social hall)

COMING EVENTS FOR ALL WOMEN & OLDER GIRLS OF LABC - MARK YOUR CALENDARS!



Share the Love!

All women and older girls are invited to a time of fellowship and fun on **Saturday, February 11 from 1:00 to 3:00 pm** in the church social hall.

We will gather to make fuzzy, warm fleece blankets to send to some of our beloved members who either have moved away or are no longer able to attend our church. Please bring a snack to share. We hope you can make it.



CELEBRATING AN IRISH-AMERICAN DAY

Join us on **Saturday, March 18 from 1:00 to 3:00 pm** for a "Green Lunch". Please bring in to share any food that is green in color.



MOTHER AND DAUGHTER TEA Saturday, May 6, 1:00 to 3:00 pm. Every woman is a daughter, so every woman and girl is invited!

RECITAL SCHEDULED: On Sunday, February 26, at 3:30 pm our soprano section leader, **Ekaterina (Kat) Gorlova** and our bass section leader, **Ben Escobar**, at the piano will present a concert at Lake Avenue Baptist Church. Kat is on her senior year at the Eastman School of Music and is preparing for her senior recital. Save the date to hear two very talented musicians in concert.

PASTOR MICHAEL FORD'S MESSAGE, SUNDAY, JANUARY 22, 2017

THE LOVE OF CHRIST COMPELS US

A colleague of mine, Rabbi Peter Stein of Temple B'rith Kodesh, shared a letter with his congregation yesterday, that he had written to President Trump on the eve of his inauguration. It was a clarion call to uphold both Jewish religious values and American secular values, and to treat people with love, integrity, and value. It was firm but respectful.

Rabbi Stein inspired me. I too have written a letter. However, my letter is not to President Trump. My letter is to the church. Not specifically to Lake Avenue Baptist Church, but to the church in general. In my letter to the church I am firm, convicting, challenging, and hopeful. I'd like to share my letter with you this morning.

Dear Church,

Today is the day. Today is the day that we have been called into action. Many days like this have come and gone without our recognition. Many days have demanded our attention and we have been too busy with other things. Today is the day that we must pay attention; that we must recognize. Today is the day that we must pay attention to our responsibility as Christians in the world, and we must recognize our calling to be the people of God to this day and age. Today is the day.

The world is an ever-changing entity. Throughout history there have been phases of great unity, and great discord. In the United States, not to mention throughout so much of the world in recent times, there appears to be great division and with it, great pain.

It is fitting that I write this letter during the week of prayer for Christian Unity. I am reminded of the words of Paul from 2 Corinthians 5:14-15 that “Christ’s love compels us, because we are convinced that one died for all, and therefore all died. ¹⁵ And he died for all, that those who live should no longer live for themselves but for him who died for them and was raised again.” In Paul’s words, we as disciples of Jesus are called to be something greater than ourselves. We are called to remember that from God we have the gift of redemption, but with that gift comes great responsibility. Paul challenges us to remember that as a new creation, as a people redeemed, Jesus has “committed to us the message of reconciliation. ²⁰ We are therefore Christ’s ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us.”

I would suggest that we have failed in many ways at fulfilling this task. Individual churches are in disarray, churches often cannot speak to each other because of divisions of history and theology and practice, and in doing so the church has become a mute voice attempting to speak into the chaos of the world. The challenges continue to arise, but the church unified cannot be heard because it is just another voice in the cacophony of voices seeking, straining to be heard.

However, if we take seriously that we are called to be Christ’s ambassadors, taking the love of God to the world, then we also have to take seriously our responsibility to make right our wrongs, and attend to the errors of our ways.

I believe that we have three responsibilities. To adequately respond to the challenges of the day we must do three things.

First, we must look within ourselves. We must look within ourselves to determine who we are, what that means, and what we value. We must come to some sense of our innate value and worth simply as created beings, brought into this world with intrinsic worth and unbridled potential. Every relationship we are in, every bond we form, involves bringing who we are into contact with another person. If we do not have a sense of who we are then we are not able to form complete connections with those around us. We must spend time determining who we are and what that means for us, and what that means we are giving to the world around us.

Second, we must look at the church. Not just a cursory glance but a long, hard look. We must look at what the church has been, with all of its strengths and weaknesses, all of its blessings and blemishes. We must look at what the church is. We must be willing to use a critical lens to examine ourselves as a community of faith. And we must be willing to work together to be the best that we can possibly be. That means building on our strengths and working to alleviate our weaknesses. It means seeking unity within our community. I have heard it said that our responsibility as the church is to be a community celebrating with God (and one another) while together building our relationships. In doing so we will more fully express the unity which is God’s gift for us to share. Though please note, this is not the task of clergy and pastors, because if we pass on these tasks to such people we abdicate our own responsibility in the task of making the church a better place. This is the responsibility of each of us who call the church home, and who are committed to the tasks of reconciliation and restoration.

And when we look at the church our gaze must extend beyond our own congregations, but to the relationships between communities of faith. We have, in part, lost the ecumenical spirit because we have been too comfortable with a “you in your small corner and I in mine” mentality. We have become complacent and have bought into the idea that we do not need to work together for change. If there is a time to refute this notion it is now. We must seek to come to consensus on values and positions on issues. This means really speaking with one another. This means really engaging with one another. This means expressing a willingness to share various ideas and attitudes and, where they do not line up one with the other, work through our positions in respectful dialogue. We do not all need to agree on everything, but we need to engage with one another to finally be able to articulate what we do agree on and to faithfully share with love and care those places of divergence. Too long we have put having those conversations aside because of an unwillingness or an inability to have them in civil society.

If we wish to be the church, if we wish to speak out and have voices that are heard, we must find ways to speak together in new and meaningful ways.

Third, we must look to the world around us. We must look to the world around us to determine where things “are not as they should be.” There are too many instances where things are not as they should be, but if we are unwilling to look then perhaps we miss them. And in doing so we miss opportunities to speak into those situations with love and truth.

Now is the time for us to look inward, look around, and to look outward. Now is that time that we as people of faith are called upon to issue a new challenge to the church to seek unity within itself in order to speak into the challenges of the world around us. If we do not take up this challenge then I believe that we are relinquishing our responsibility as Christians and as people of faith to take the gospel of love into the world.

There will be many, many instances that will demand our attention. No matter what political party you may endorse, no matter what gender you may identify with, no matter your age, your social class, your sex, your sexual orientation, your cultural background. No matter the things that appear to keep us apart and different from one another, we must seek to look past those things and rather identify the myriad of things that unite us. Our faith, our values, our morality, our simple fact of being part of this thing called humanity. When we find unity we find strength. When we find unity in the midst of our diversity, we find potential. When we find unity in our potential, we find a voice. Not only a voice that can be heard, but one that can be impactful and bring about real and meaningful change.

I believe that today is the day. It is not the day to get everything accomplished, but it is the day to get started. It is the day to say that we have a responsibility as Christians to the work of change in our world. It is the day that we get started at restoring the unity that has been broken, in our lives, our churches, and our communities. We have all played a role in breaking the unity, and we all have a role to play in helping to put it back together.

We cannot take this calling lightly. May we know, however, that in the midst of the challenge is the love of a God who is ever present and loving, and who will bless us as we begin this journey of restoration.

May we start this journey ... today.

Sincerely,

Rev. Dr. Michael Ford
Lake Avenue Baptist Church

COMMUNITY RALLY IN SUPPORT OF REFUGEES AND IMMIGRANTS

Catholic Family Center is supporting and promoting this event which is organized by ROCitizen on **Friday Feb. 3rd at 5pm** at 30 Church Street (outside of City Hall) See ROCitizen’s Facebook posting of this event for more details at: <https://www.facebook.com/events/144566272715014/>

The APAA, Asian/Pacific Islander/American Association of Greater Rochester invites you to the

ANNUAL ASIAN LUNAR NEW YEAR LUNCHEON

Friday, February 10, 2017 from 11:30 am to 1:30 pm at the Hibachi Sushi Buffet/Jade Garden at 2222 W. Henrietta Road, in South Town Plaza. Join us for a cultural experience: conversation, networking and raffles. Reserve your seat today! \$18.00 per person prepaid by Wednesday, February 8 or \$25.00 after February 9 and at the door (cash only). Checks must be postmarked by Saturday, February 4, payable to APA-HIP, APAA/New Year Lunch. Mail checks to APA-HIP, APAA/New Year Lunch, P. O. Box10503 Rochester, NY 14610. Please include attendee names, email addresses (for confirmation) and phone number. To pay by credit card or PayPal, go to: apaaroc.org/events.