

Lake Avenue Baptist Church, 72 Ambrose Street, Rochester, NY 14608

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Lake Avenue Baptist Church

E-MAIL:

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OFFICE HOURS

Monday – Friday
10:00 AM to 4:00 PM

SUNDAY SCHEDULE:

10:00 am: Worship for all, & Chin
Worship
11:15 am: Fellowship
11:45 am: Karen Worship
Burmese Worship
Adult Education

CHURCH STAFF

Sr. Pastor
Michael Ford

Associate Pastor
Debbie Bennett Reynolds

Church Moderator
Tom Argust

Music Educator, Chancel Choir
Director and Organist
Lee Foster

Music Educator, Gospel Spirits
Director and Pianist
Isobel Davies

Refugee Coordinator
Hkadin Lee

Karen Lay Pastor
Day Chit

Chin Lay Pastor
Peter Naing

Bumese Lay Pastor
William Lahtaw

Office Manager
Ken Setera

Custodial Services
Lloyd Cuyler

UPCOMING LABC SERVICES

January 25, 2015, 10:00 am Worship for all and Annual Congregational Budget Meeting; we receive our Retired Ministers and Missionaries Offering and our MEEK offering; 11:30 am: Fellowship; 11:45 am: Karen and Burmese worship.

February 1, 2015, Baby Blessing Sunday: 10:00 am Worship & Communion for all. We receive our Fellowship Offering; 11:15 am: Fellowship; 11:45 am: Adult education, Karen Worship, Burmese Worship.

February 8, 2015 10:00 am Worship for all ; 11:15 am: Fellowship; 11:45 am: Adult education, Karen Worship, Burmese Worship.

February 15, 2015 10:00 am Worship for all ; 11:15 am: Fellowship; 11:45 am: Adult education, Karen Worship, Burmese Worship.



February 18, 2015: As we enter the season of Lent, we invite you to join us for our annual Ash Wednesday service at 7:00 pm. Ash Wednesday is a time for us to examine and reflect on our own humanity and a time to reflect on the sacrifice Christ made for us so that we can have eternal life.

February 22, 2015: First Sunday of Lent 10:00 am Worship for all ; 11:15 am: Fellowship; 11:45 am: Adult education, Karen Worship, Burmese Worship.

March 1, 2015: Second Sunday of Lent 10:00 am Worship for all ; 11:15 am: Fellowship; 11:45 am: Adult education, Karen Worship, Burmese Worship.

UPCOMING ADULT EDUCATION OPPORTUNITIES

Sunday, February 1 - “Do This In Remembrance of Me” - As a follow up to our lively discussion on baptism, we will have a Bible study & discussion on Communion and its significance for our Christian faith.

Sunday, February 22: Worship Forum. Join us for a discussion about worship, a chance to share what you like or dislike about past services and what you would like to see in future services, ie: special music, spiritual dance, more involvement of members of the congregation and our youth and children, religious drama, etc.

The adult education offerings for February 8 and February 15 are still in the planning stages and will be announced in our upcoming Sunday bulletins.

MID WEEK ADULT EDUCATION WITH MICHAEL FORD



Our mid week adult education offering for the month of February and March will be a book study on *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass*. The book is an 1845 memoir and treatise on abolition written by famous orator and former slave Frederick Douglass. It is generally held to be the most famous of a number of narratives written by former slaves during the same period. In factual detail, the text describes the events of his life and is considered to be one of the most influential pieces of literature to fuel the abolitionist movement of the early 19th century in the United States.

Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass encompasses eleven chapters that recount Douglass' life as a slave and his ambition to become a free man.

We will begin on Thursday February 5, 2015 at 1:00 p.m. in the conference room (please use the main church office doors). We will meet weekly, covering one or two chapters each week. The book is available as a pdf online, and I will provide the link to anyone who wishes to be involved, and there are print copies available through online book sellers or from local book stores (or libraries).

Please plan to join us for a study of this important book. Any questions can be directed to Pastor Michael.

A NOTE FROM PASTOR

One of my personal goals this year is to work on worship renewal. This means exploring the Biblical foundations for worship, various theologies of worship, and then the practical aspects of worship. A couple of months ago in this column I wrote about what worship is, and what worship is not. I am very excited about spending this time with something that is important to our life as a worshipping community.

This past Sunday we announced that Dr. Lee Foster has been named as our permanent Music Educator, Organist, and Chancel Choir director. He now joins Isobel Davies in making up our Music Ministry team. I am excited to have Lee on staff on a permanent basis, and to see him use his gifts for ministry here at LABC.

One of the things that we did early on in the interim period (after Rob Kerner's retirement after many, many years of faithful service) is hold a couple of music forums where people were invited to come together and explore what worship means for them and for the life of the church. It is out of these forums that we expanded Lee's position to include an intentional educational component. In the months since Lee has been working with our children and teens to help broaden their exposure too and appreciation of western church music. This has been a great marriage of Lee's skills and the needs of the church.

I suspect one of the questions that people are asking now that we've hired Lee on a permanent basis is "are we done evaluating our existing approach to worship and expanding who we are as a worshipping community?" The answer to that question is an emphatic "no!"

The Music and Worship ministry at LABC believes it is very important that we develop an ongoing process of evaluating our existing worship and music offerings, and explore new and innovative ways to worship together as a diverse community. But we need your help!

On February 22, 2015 in our adult education class we will be having a music and worship forum where we will gather together and talk music and worship. We will chat about things that are meaningful for us as individuals and as a community of faith. We will share things we hope for in terms of an expanded music and worship ministry and we will determine what we need to make things happen as we feel called to do.

I am excited about our future as a worshipping community. I am also very excited about having opportunities for us to come together and share about something that is so important to so many of us. Please plan to be present on **Sunday February 22, 2015 for our Music and Worship Forum** (also, please note that this will be the first of a series of regular forums, and we will also provide opportunities for ongoing feedback and ideas for those who are not able to make the forums, by way of written contributions).

Michael

A NOTE OF APPRECIATION FROM THE ROCHESTER CHIN CHRISTIAN CHURCH

By Pastor Peter Naing

As you are probably aware, the Rochester Chin Christian Church, which has been worshiping in the large room downstairs for the past seven years, will soon be leaving us. They have found a vacant church that they will be moving to and which they will establish as their own church. On January 4th Pastor Peter Naing and the Chin community provided a special lunch in appreciation of Lake Avenue Baptist Church and our congregation. During the service that morning, Pastor Peter Naing shared the following appreciation letter with us:

“First and foremost, I would like to give thanks to God for giving me this opportunity to speak here today and for everyone who is here today. I praise God for working through Pastor Alan Newton in letting us have the (vacant) church building. Words can't describe how much we appreciate each and every one from this church for their love and support for us. It is a bittersweet feeling to be leaving this church family who took us in as their own and showed us the love of Christ.

We came to the United States from Burma as refugees. We are of the Chin ethnicity and would like to share something about our people. The Chin state is located in Northwest part of Burma bordered by India. We live in the mountainous area away from other ethnic Burmese and enjoyed freedom a care-free way of life.

However, we were not able to fully enjoy our freedom and independent life-style due to the dictatorship of the military regime that took over the government. The government took control of everything, especially our right to freely worship the Lord. The army destroyed our churches, making sure to burn down all the crosses, the symbol of our Christian faith.

So we fled to neighboring countries like Thailand, India, and Malaysia for refuge. However, we were not able to live peacefully because we were discriminated in every way as foreigners in these countries. By the grace of God, UNHCR provided an opportunity for us to come to America.

More than we wished and hoped, we loved it here in Rochester. We feel the love and care from all of you, LABC. But, most importantly, we are able to praise and worship God freely. It is all possible because of the LABC family and we are very grateful for your kindness and generosity. You gave us the entire downstairs to freely use for worship and fellowship. You helped us to find jobs, took us to various appointments, and taught us how to pay bills. We didn't even know how to pay RG&E.

Ken, Lisa, Hkadin Lee and others made themselves available to us and helped us with our every need.

Pastor Michael, Pastor Debbie and others were always there to help us with all church-related needs and with communions.

You even helped us in the little things. That's why we see you as our own parents.

That's why we have all these mixed emotions when we heard that we will be able to move to the new building. We discussed many things but one in particular is that, will we ever find a community that loves us as much as LABC. That is why even as we part and will physically be in another place, our hearts will always remain with you.

We ask you to please keep us in your prayers and to continue to extend your love and generosity toward us whenever we have any church-related problems as we establish our own place of worship. We hope that your friendship, care, and support that you've always shown to us will continue in the future.

We will always think of you as our parent church and again thank you for your love and kindness toward us and hope that our mutual respect and love will continue throughout the years to come.”

A NOTE FROM YOUR CHURCH

MODERATOR, TOM ARGUST.

We have a very exciting...and busy... year ahead of us. In addition to all the important, and challenging work that our church does every day, we have some major efforts planned for 2015. Your Vision Coordinating Council (VCC) has set the following priorities:

* The 2015 proposed **church budget** will go to this Sunday's (January 25) congregational meeting for approval. Once again, our budget reflects how amazingly generous you are. Hope you will make every effort to be at worship this Sunday and to be a part of our meeting.

* For the past six months the Council has worked hard to revise the Church's **By-Laws** (constitution). These are the rules of our church. They will be reviewed and acted on by our congregation after the Lenten season in April or May. I think you will find them to be creative, far-reaching and bold.

* Our church's Personnel Committee and VCC will develop and adopt a new **Staff Policy Manual**. This is a project that is overdue and very important to both our staff and to the congregation. We will have this done by May or June.

* A **2016-2018 Strategic Plan process** will begin in May and be finished for the congregation to review and adopt in November. Lake Avenue Baptist Church is one of very few churches that develop, adopt and implement a three year Plan.

Thank you so much for all your hard work, vision and commitment to our church. 2015 hopes to be a very exciting and productive year. Happy New Year to us all!

A NOTE FROM YOUR ASSOCIATE PASTOR

Dear Friends,

Although still deep in the cold of winter, we will be entering Lent very early this year. Ash Wednesday falls on February 18th. Our word "lent" comes from the old English, to lengthen, and does connect to the lengthening of the days as the dark and cold of winter recedes and light and warmth returns in the spring. The early church first developed this season of Lent as a time for teaching

new converts to Christian faith, preparing them for the new life in Christ, symbolized by their baptism on Easter morning. Lent became a season for repentance and renewal, a time for fasting and confession in some traditions, and certainly a season to examine our lives and to re-commit to living as disciples of Jesus Christ.

Here at Lake Avenue Baptist our Lent traditions include a simple and beautiful Ash Wednesday service at 7 p.m. where we mark our re-commitment by receiving the ashes of last year's palms in the sign of the cross. For 5 Wednesdays after that, we will gather for a simple soup supper and a time of shared study and discussion. This is always a rich time of shared community, and I really hope you will make time for it this year.

This Lent our study will be an opportunity for "Playing with Spiritual Practices," using Bible study and the writings of Cynthia Bourgeault and others. We will explore some of the spiritual practices that can deepen our faith journeys, and we will discuss the ways different people respond to various practices, bringing in some enneagram/temperament type insights. Come play with us, explore with us, and share with us.

Lent brings us an invitation – in the midst of the cold of winter to seek the light and love of Christ's presence. We are invited, we are called, to find spiritual practices that empower us to go deeper, to walk closer, to live more fully and faithfully as Christ's people.

Blessings,



NEEDED: 4 or 5 volunteers to play hand chimes with a Lenten Chancel Choir anthem.

You would be involved in 2-3 rehearsals plus a Sunday morning service, probably March 15. Please speak with Lee Foster if you are interested or call 544-0378, or email bfoster1@rochester.rr.com,

OUR CHURCH FAMILY

●On Saturday January 17th, 2015, 20+ youth and 7 adult

volunteers went sledding. The weather was perfect, and the snow was in excellent condition. The stage was set for an afternoon of fun and excitement. A big thank you to the volunteers who came sledding with us, to those who lent us sleds, and to each member of the congregation who keeps our ongoing youth ministries in their thoughts and prayers.



● **ENGLISH CLASS TRIP TO LAMBERTON CONSERVATORY, by Carolyn Argust** Our recent Library English Class field trip to the Lambertton Conservatory on Wednesday, January 14th was a very happy occasion for all who attended. *Souleymane Balde*, a refugee from Guinea, shared the following: "In my country (Guinea), I always lived in a city and I never saw plants or trees. This is my first time seeing so many growing things." *Jean Claude* was excited to recognize plants from his country. Both of these men live on Dodge St. which is west of Mt. Read Blvd. and they walk to the library!! (2.9 miles)

Many thanks to *Marge Forth* for the wonderful flower ID cards. I saw the students checking them in each room. What a terrific addition for learning. Thank you *Jane Grant* for the word cards and the opportunity to explain about the fee. Thank you, *Hodong* for your amazing parenting of all our little ones, especially *Pooda Bo*. I am so impressed with how well *Governor* is speaking English now and how *Ja Seng's* little girls overcame their shyness and readily went with other adults today without worrying about where Mommy was.

Jaralu's little boy *Daniel* was so happy that he sang in the car on the way home - the first time in my driving him that he has made any sound besides crying protests. The entire experience felt like such a

blessing. One more bonus - a man who was there when we came in asked Marge what group we were and when she said we were from the Maplewood Library and the trip was sponsored by Lake Avenue Baptist Church and many of the students are from Burma. On hearing this he said "Oh, *Adoniram Judson*". What a small world! We encouraged him to visit our church.

● Sharing God's Love



On Monday January 19, 2015, a number of LABC youth decided to use their day off from school to help those in need. *Jetherena Tong, Thaw Tong, Eh Gay Doh Tong, May Dar and Hser Kamwee Paw*, with some adult assistance, made blankets and took them to the gym at Downtown Presbyterian Church/Spiritus Christi, which has become a temporary shelter for some of Rochester's homeless. They gave the blankets to those in need, and spent some time with the people who were seeking shelter from the cold. It is a privilege to see our children in service to others, and an encouragement for each of us to look for ways we too can share God's love to the world. Many thanks to our children for setting such a great example of service to others.



A MISSION MOMENT

Mission Ministry – Partner Spotlight – Baptist Peace Fellowship of North America

At LABC we firmly believe in the associational principle, which is a fundamental belief held by American Baptists. This means that we are able to freely partner with others who are able to strengthen both our faith and our witness as disciples of Jesus and as a church community. One of our long-standing associations, one of these partners, is the Baptist Peace Fellowship of North America – *Bautistas pro la Paz* (Baptists for Peace).

BPFNA ~ *Bautistas por la Paz* is the largest network of Baptist peacemakers in the world. This important organization exists to celebrate and support the peacemaking work done by Baptist churches in the four home countries of Canada, the United States, Puerto Rico and Mexico by raising the visibility of these efforts; bringing peacemakers together in regional and international gatherings; and providing resources, speakers and training to our members. The BPFNA – *Bautistas por la Paz* also actively connects with peacemakers from other traditions, faith-based and secular, to build alliances and to work together toward the common goal of a more just and peaceful world.

The benefits of being a partner congregation are great: we have a direct connection to the largest network of Baptist peacemakers in the world, we receive copies of *Baptist Peacemaker*, the award-winning quarterly journal, receive the quarterly e-newsletter, *Model Ministries for Peace Rooted in Justice*, which shares stories of peacemaking programs, projects, and ministries in our Partner Congregations, and receive useful materials such as bulletin insert artwork and other liturgical aids; ideas for mission involvement; calls to action; and BPFNA news releases.

Each year the BPFNA – *Bautistas por la Paz* plans an annual conference, a.k.a. Peace Camp. And partner congregations receive two vouchers to cover the registration costs, meaning that the attendees pay for just room and meals. This is a wonderful opportunity to meet with other likeminded Baptists and to learn from each other in the ways of justice and peacemaking. We are hoping to have a few people from LABC attend Peace

Camp this year, and if you are interested please speak to Pastor Michael or Pastor Debbie.

Our history with BPFNA – *Bautistas por la Paz* is long and rich. And we look forward to exploring various ways that we might deepen this relationship in the year to come.

Thank you to BPFNA – *Bautistas por la Paz* for their leadership and partnership with LABC as we share God's grace and love.



CAMERON COMMUNITY'S ANNUAL BOWL-A-THON

This year the Cameron Bowl-A-Thon will take place on Sunday March 1st from 1:30 to 3:30 pm and again at 4:00 pm to 6:00 pm. The entry fee is \$25.00 per person or \$125.00 per organization/company. Your contribution entitles your group to two games of bowling, shoe rental, pizza and soda and many great prizes! The location will be Clover Lanes Bowling at 2750 Monroe Ave. To register your group or team you may either email ccm.execdirector@gmail.com or send a registration form to 48 Cameron Street, Rochester, 14606. The registration deadline is February 20th. After registering your team, you can start to collect pledges and donations to bring to the Bowl-A-Thon. Each bowler that raises \$50.00 plus will be entered into a drawing to win the grand prize of a pizza party for their team! There will be a winner on each shift. We hope you will take part in this fun fund-raiser for Cameron Ministries.

BAPTISM AND MEMBERSHIP AT LABC

On the Baptism of Jesus Sunday we spoke in worship about the meaning and practice of baptism. After that service, and in the weeks since, some of you have approached Pastor Debbie or Pastor Michael and expressed interest in exploring baptism a little further. Some of you have also expressed interest in being baptized in the near future. We are planning to hold baptisms again on Easter Sunday, April 5, 2015. If you would like to explore the possibility of being baptized on that date, please make sure to speak to Pastor Michael or Pastor Debbie and they would be more

than happy to discuss it with you in advance of that day of celebration.



Please join us for our Lenten Soup Suppers beginning at 6 p.m. on Wednesday, February 25 through March 25th followed by a time of study and sharing from 6:45 – 7:30 p.m. This Lent our study will be an opportunity for “*Playing with Spiritual Practices*,” using Bible study and the writings of Cynthia Bourgeault and others. We will explore some of the spiritual practices that can deepen our faith journeys, and we will discuss the ways different people respond to various practices, bringing in some enneagram/temperament type insights. Come play with us, explore with us, and share with us.

The soup suppers are organized by our Nurture and Care Ministry. These suppers are wonderful times of fellowship. Several people have already volunteered to bring soup for the first soup supper on February 25th but volunteers are requested to bring soup on the following Wednesdays. See Kha Tom Sorrels if you are interested in volunteering.

AN IMPORTANT MESSAGE FROM THE AMERICAN BAPTIST WOMEN’S MINISTRIES.

This week word was received of the brutal rape and murder in Myanmar (Burma) of two Kachin Baptist women who were volunteer teachers in the Kachin Baptist Education Mission. Maran Lu Ra, aged 20 and Tangbau Hkawn Nan Tsin, aged 21 were commissioned by the Kachin Baptist Convention to teach in a village school and had been doing so for about two years. They were attacked in their hostel bedroom on the Kachin Baptist Church campus by soldiers of the Burma Army the night of January 19.

AB Women’s Ministries grieves every act of violence against a woman; and at this moment we particularly grieve with our Kachin Baptist sisters as they mourn the death of these young women. AB Women’s Ministries will be sending a letter of condolence and prayer support to the Kachin Baptist Convention Women’s Department. **You are invited to add your name to this letter so that the Kachin Baptist women may feel wrapped in a web of love and prayer by their American Baptist sisters.** To add your name to the letter please email info@abwministries.org. Please do so by **Monday, January 26** so that the letter may be mailed promptly.

A letter of protest and advocacy for the protection of the rights of the vulnerable in Burma will also be sent to Secretary of State John Kerry; this letter will be posted on the ABW Ministries Facebook page when it is complete.

Please be in prayer for the family and friends of Maran Lu Ra and Tangbau Hkawn Nan Tsin during this time of great grief and loss; please also be in prayer for the Kachin Baptist Convention as they hold memorial services and seek God’s guidance in the days to come. Pray for the Kachin people as they continue to struggle for justice in their homeland, and be in prayer, particularly, for women throughout the world who live with fear every day.

OUR LARGER COMMUNITY

- **RGR ABWomen’s Ministry Annual Workshop, Saturday, January 24, 2014 at Mt. Olivet Baptist Church.** The guest speaker is the Rev. Angel Sullivan. Cost is \$16.00 per person.

- **Nazareth College presents: Kim and Reggie Harris in a free concert on Wednesday, January 28, 7:00 pm** in the Linehan Chapel at the Golisano Academic Center at Nazareth College. This performance is open to the public.

- **On February 4, 2015 from 7 to 9 pm the Hickey Center for Interfaith Studies and Dialogue will be holding an extraordinary program on “The Role of Sacred Music in Healing and Harmony”.** This will be presented at the Nazareth College Schultz Center in celebration of UN World Interfaith Harmony Week. There will be sacred music presented from the Hindu Temple, Temple Sinai, the Buddhist Center, the Gurdwara of Rochester (Sikh), the Islamic Center, the Sisters of Saint Joseph, the Sufi Order of

Rochester, and Christ Community Church. The event is free and open to the public.

●**First Sunday Candlelight Concert Series of Christ Church, Rochester will take place on Sunday, February 1 at 8:30 pm.** The guest organist will be Robert Poovey who will be playing the Craighead-Saunders Baroque Pipe Organ and the Hook and Hastings American Romantic Organ. The organ concert will be followed by a service of Compline at 9:00 pm sung by the Christ Church Schola Cantorum. A reception will follow. This event is free and open to the public.

