



LAKE AVENUE BAPTIST CHURCH NEWSLETTER

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**Black
HISTORY
MONTH**

FEBRUARY IS BLACK HISTORY MONTH and we will be celebrating this heritage during our worship services. It is important for Lake Avenue to recognize the importance of Black History, some of which happened right in our area. Think about Frederick Douglas, Harriet Tubman, and the Underground Railroad. Think about the riots and the conflict with Kodak over employment. Think about our troubled urban schools around the nation. This history belongs to all of us.

Our worship service will reflect some aspects of this history. It is valuable for us to sing spirituals and to hear their stories. Our choirs and two guest vocalists will enhance our musical appreciation. Our pulpit will be graced with two African American guest preachers. And we may be stretched in our understanding of the Gospel as we focus on themes such as liberation, justice, freedom from oppression, and equality.

Liberation or freedom is an overarching theme of our Scripture.

1. The children of Israel were enslaved in Egypt and led to freedom by Moses. It took 10 plagues (trials) for Moses to convince Pharaoh to free the people from slavery.
2. Jesus came into the world to save the lost, free the imprisoned, and to minister to those who are disinherited. He fellowshiped with the worst characters of his time, giving them a place at his table.
3. The church community, in its best moments, offers dignity, equality, and justice to all people without exceptions!

Liberation was lifesaving to the slaves brought to freedom via the Underground Railroad. They began to live with hope and dignity as they were meant to live being one in Christ.

There is no longer Jew or Greek, there is no longer slave or free, there is no longer male and female; for all of you are one in Christ. (Gal. 3:28)

Our GLBT (gay, lesbian, bi-sexual, and transgendered) folk have certainly understood the need for liberation and dignity as they recoil from experiences of prejudice and vicious hatred. God's love has assured them that they are blessed by God just as they are.

So God created humankind in God's image, in the image of God he created them. (Gen. 1:27)

Our members from Burma and Africa who have been refugees know the fear and danger of oppression. God has led them to a place where they now can worship freely.

Let my people go so they may freely worship God. (Exodus 7:16)

Jesus Christ was a religious leader seeking greater justice for the oppressed and occupied people of Israel. His teachings are both an inspiration and a model for us to seek freedom from injustice for all people. **Let us learn and experience such love and acceptance.**

Susan Maybeck
Interim Part-time Pastor for Worship

OUR BLACK HISTORY SUNDAY WORSHIP SCHEDULE

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 5, 2012, We Collect Our Fellowship Offering:

"Darkness cannot drive out the darkness; only light can do that. Hate cannot drive out hate, only love"
Martin Luther King, Jr.

10:00 am: Worship and Communion for All, Preacher: Debbie Bennett Reynolds, "A Communion Meditation", Special Music: Chancel Choir "Behold the Star", Spiritual: "Let Us Break Bread Together"; 11:15 am: Fellowship; 11:30 am: Adult Education, Karen Worship Service, Burmese Worship Service; Chin Worship Service. 4:00 pm: Regional Youth Meeting at St. Lukes Tabernacle

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 12, 2012: "Bringing the gifts that my ancestors gave, I am the dream and the hope of the slave. I rise, I rise, I rise." Maya Angelou

10:00 am: Worship for all, Preacher: Susan Maybeck, Monologue on Hagar (Genesis 21:8-21) Special Music: Chancel Choir: "Ain't a that Good News" Spirituals: "Nobody Knows the Trouble I've Known" and "There is a Balm in Gilead". Chin Worship downstairs. 11:15 am: Fellowship; 11:30 am: Adult Education, Karen Worship Service, Burmese Worship, Chin Worship (Note: The All-Church Birthday Party that was originally scheduled for this Sunday has been moved to a Sunday in March. Details will follow!)

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 19, 2012: 10:00 am: Worship for All with Guest Preacher Rev. Carolyn Lester & special music by guest musician Tom Warfield. Chin Worship, downstairs; 11:15 am: Fellowship; 11:30 am: Adult Education; Karen Worship; Burmese Worship. 4:00 pm: RGR Delegates Meeting at Ebenezer Baptist Church.

PASTORAL CALL EXTENDED TO THE REV. MICHAEL J. FORD



By unanimous vote of the congregation last Sunday, The Rev. Michael Ford has been called to serve as Senior Pastor of the Lake Avenue Baptist Church!

Rev. Ford visited with us over the weekend, meeting with the Vision Coordinating Council, leaders of four ethnic groups within the church, and members of the Welcoming and Affirming Committee. He also attended a "get acquainted" pot-luck banquet at the church on Saturday evening when he spoke at some length about his faith journey, previous pastoral experience, sense of God's call to LABC, and some personal and family background. On Sunday morning Rev. Ford preached on what the New Testament has to say about being the church of Jesus Christ in the world today, and, he told a related story to the children.

Our tentative understanding is that Rev. Ford will begin service with us the week after Easter, i.e., April 16. Keeping to this schedule will depend on how long it takes for the U.S. Immigration Service to process Rev. Ford's work visa. In the interim, the VCC has arranged with Debbie Bennett Reynolds to continue as Acting Pastor and with Susan Maybeck to continue as Associate Minister for Worship.

On behalf of the Senior Pastor Search Committee, I want to express our very great appreciation for the warm hospitality extended last weekend to Rev. Ford by members and friends of LABC. He was indeed grateful for being with us and for the very positive responses he received from so many. Our thanks go especially to members of the church staff for their support all through the search process, and especially for their cooperation last weekend. Furthermore, a very special thanks go to Jane Grant and all her team for their exceptional work in planning and providing food for the banquet. You all are terrific!!

As we move into a period of waiting for Rev. Ford to join us, we hope and pray that God will continue to bless us all. We need to continue growing in faith, sharing in building the church community, and being about God's

mission in the world around us. We are confident that with the coming of our new Senior Pastor and with a renewed awareness of God's loving presence and leading in our midst, God will bless us as we continue to grow in faith, in building the church community, and in being about God's mission in the world.

Melanie Duguid May, Chair
Senior Pastor Search Committee

UPCOMING ADULT EDUCATION CLASSES

- **LECTIO DIVINA MEDITATION CLASS** Each week one of the Bible passages from that Sunday's worship service will be used for this time of shared meditation. The group will meet in the Music Room. All are invited to attend.
- **BLACK HISTORY FOCUS:** On February 5 and 12 we will watch documentary video that explores the development of the Black church and Black gospel music out of the African-American experience. Come join us!

OUR CHURCH FAMILY



We extend our sympathy and prayers to **Gail and Alan Newton** as they mourn the death of **Gail's sister Carole** following a long struggle with cancer. Condolences may be sent to 2892 Elmwood Ave, Rochester, NY 14618-2014

- Our prayers are with **Doris Corson** who has been moved to The Sunset House, 3746 St. Paul Blvd. Rochester, NY 14617-2737 for palliative care.
- Continued prayers are with **Eh Paw So** who continues cancer treatment at home.
- **Bue Say** also continues cancer treatment at home. Please keep her husband and children in your continued prayers.
- After visiting his wife in Malaysia for the past two months, **Myint Aung** returned safely on February 2. However, his wife **Dawt Sung** still remains in Malaysia. Plans are being made to work with another immigration lawyer to try to seek her placement in the United States. Please keep the both of them in your continued prayers.
- We continue to keep in prayer the many immigrant members and friends of our congregation who continue to look for work or to obtain better

jobs. If you know of any place that is currently hiring, please let the church office know.

- We also continue to pray for the end of the harassment and violence to our immigrant brothers and sisters in the Maplewood Edgerton area. Meetings of community organizers are currently being planned to address these issues and we hope that our church community will participate when these meetings are announced. During this month when we remember the sacrifices and struggles of our Black Americans, we are unfortunately reminded that prejudice, fear, and hate are still visible and active.



*The honor of your presence is requested
at the Wedding of*
Dee Nar
daughter of Htee Shee and Ka Htoo (deceased)
to
Ler Lar Hay
son of Kath Rin and Po Eh
on Saturday, February 18, 2012 at 10:00 am
at Lake Avenue Baptist Church.
A reception will follow in the social hall.



- **A Thank You:** Greetings to you from Myanmar Institute of Theology! This letter is to acknowledge that we received your kind letter of January 24, 2012, being enclosed with a check of US\$ 200 (US two hundred dollars) for our new building, a donation that as you mentioned comes from the Karen worship community and the Mission Ministry of Lake Avenue Baptist Church.

I, on behalf of MIT, would like to express my heartfelt thanks to you, to the Karen worship community and the Mission Ministry of Lake Avenue Baptist Church for your generous donation towards our five storied building which is now under construction. We pray that God blesses the Lake Avenue Baptist church and the Karen community there as you serve the Lord and His peoples around the world.

Myanmar Institute of Theology (MIT) is a very ecumenical institute, the largest and highest seminary in Myanmar, which is comprised of different Christian denominations, ethnic groups and languages. We have about a thousand students on campus as of today under two educational programs, namely, theology and Liberal Arts education program. There are more than a hundred very committed teaching faculty and staff members (both full-time and part-time) serving this great institute in different capacities. Our new building is extremely in demand as more classrooms, office rooms, faculty rooms, and other seminar rooms are inevitably needed.

Your contribution towards our building will be greatly beneficial to the development of theological education here in Myanmar.

Yours sincerely in Christ, *Rev. Dr. Samuel Ngun Ling, President, Myanmar Institute of Theology*



**HANDS AND HEARTS
OF
LAKE AVENUE
BAPTIST CHURCH**

You are invited to the first meeting of Hands and Hearts of LABC Baby Blanket Project which will take place on **Saturday, February 25, 2012 from 10:00 am to 2:00 pm** in the church social hall. Hands and Hearts will be making fleece baby blankets to present to the new babies of our church. Everyone is invited....**MEN, TEENAGERS AND WOMEN!** We will need people to help with cutting material, sewing, embroidering, and wrapping. Materials will be provided but we welcome gifts of ribbon, 36 x36" fleece or embroidery floss.

Please respond to the church office by **February 23rd** as to whether or not you plan to attend. Lunch will be provided.



YOUTH SPOTLIGHT

Hi Everyone:

We are planning a Lake Avenue Baptist Church Youth event for Monday, February 20th (Presidents' Day) during the school winter break. We would like to go sledding if there is snow on the ground. If not, then we will probably look for a movie at Movies 10 in Henrietta.

This event would probably be held in early afternoon until late afternoon. We are looking for drivers and chaperones—preferably a person could be both, but not necessarily. The Youth would range roughly between around 12 to 21 years old. We would probably include a snack and/or hot chocolate at the church afterwards (if the church building does not have any other events that would interfere). Please let me know if you can help out. If you volunteer to drive, then let us know how many youth you can transport safely. Also let us know whether or not you can stay for the event itself or if you can only drop off at the event and pick up after the event.

We can always use sleds. Even if you can't participate, if you have sleds we can borrow ahead of time, that would be appreciated also.

We would like to have drivers/chaperones in place 1 ½-2 weeks in advance of February 20th if possible so we don't go crazy looking at last minute or have to cancel this event. Last year we teamed up with Mary's Place and had maybe 50 to 60 people involved. We may not have as many without Mary's Place people, but the potential is still great. Senior high regular and casual Sunday school attendees is upwards of 40 plus and junior high might be 15 plus.

As I have said before, we should feel blessed by the presence of so many youth in our congregation. However, we are also charged for the responsibility to provide Christian formation and fellowship for them. Please consider helping out.

Thanks, Bill Gibbs, your Youth Director

A NOTE FROM REV. MICHAEL FORD

Dear Friends,

On January 10, 2010, I had the opportunity to worship at Lake Avenue Baptist Church. What I found that cold Sunday morning was a remarkably welcoming, diverse, Spirit filled community of believers. It was a worship experience that would remain with me. I recall with clarity saying to myself, and a few others, that if I were ever to be called away from my present pastorate I pray that it would be to Lake Avenue Baptist Church.

Fast-forward two years.

On January 29, 2012, I again had the opportunity to worship at Lake Avenue Baptist Church. This time, however, it was the culmination of a candidacy weekend, where I was presented to the congregation as the recommended candidate for the position of Senior Pastor. I was pleased to once again find a welcoming, diverse, Spirit filled community of believers. It was a most humbling and exciting experience to worship with you, preach for you, and to be extended the call to serve as your next Senior Pastor. As you know, I have accepted that invitation with great excitement and enthusiasm.

LABC has a remarkable history, and committed and dedicated present, and an exciting future. I am looking forward to being part of that future with you all. As I wrap up my ministry in Canada, I look forward to working through the various steps and stages required to allow me to assume my position at LABC in the very near future.

I have a very strong sense of call to LABC. That sense of call has been affirmed first by your dedicated search committee who worked tirelessly on your behalf. That sense of call has been re-affirmed by you extending the invitation to me to serve on the staff of LABC. I would like to thank you all for your hospitality during my visits to Rochester. Thank you for your warm welcome and for making me feel as embraced during the candidacy weekend as I did during my earlier visits. You are truly an amazing group of people and I feel blessed to have been invited to serve amongst you.

Blessings, Michael

OUR COMMUNITY

●**Christian Faith and LGBT Experience Spring Lectureship** presents Jimmy Creech, Former United Methodist Minister as our guest lecturer. This event will take place on Tuesday, February 21, 2012 from 7:00 pm to 8:30 pm at Colgate Rochester Crozer Divinity School, 1100 South Goodman Street in the Ithaca College auditorium. His lecture title is “Adam’s Gift: A Memoir of a Pastor’s calling to defy the Church’s Persecution of Lesbians and Gays”. This lecture is free and open to the public. For further information please contact GP Dickerson-Hanks at 340-965. You can also email her at gdickerson-hanks@crcls.edu.

●**Reaching Occupational Achievement For Residents of Rochester:** The City of Rochester Joint School Construction Board has initiated a training designed to train and place residents in school construction jobs. This is the first program being offered in conjunction with the School Construction Modernization Program. Reaching Occupational Achievement for Residents of Rochester (ROAR) will be accepting applications commencing Monday, February 27th through Saturday, March 3rd, 2012 between 9:00 am to 6:00 pm daily at 1776 North Clinton Ave. This program is geared toward individuals interested in construction training and job placement. Information regarding the application process is available on the Welcome Table in the church narthex. Additional information may be obtained by calling 262-8714.

●**Board of Education Black History Month Events:** ■*African Storytelling and Dance by Kuumba Consultants*, Saturday February 11 from 12-2 pm at the RCSD Central Office, 131 West Broad Street, 3rd floor room 3A/B. ■*A Taste of Soul*, Friday, February 3 5:30 – 7:00 pm East High School, 1801 East Main Street featuring creations prepared by East High School Culinary Students. ■*Board of Education Black History Month Observance*, Thursday, February 16, 5 – 6:30 pm at the RCSD Central Office.

●**A Free Concert, “Peter DuBois and Friends”** at First Baptist Church of Rochester, 175 Allens Creek Road, Rochester, NY 14618, (585) 244-2468 www.fbcrochester.net Concert is free and open to

the public, with a suggested minimum donation of \$5. Join us for this special performance of solo and chamber works for organ by critically acclaimed "world class talent", Peter DuBois. As Music Director/Organist at Third Presbyterian Church, Director of the Sacred Music Diploma at the Eastman School of Music, and host and producer of the nationally syndicated radio show "With Heart and Voice", Mr. DuBois epitomizes great Rochester talent.

Joined by soprano Caroline Miller and cellist Kathleen Murphy Kemp in a program of works by J. S. Bach, Dan Locklair, Olivier Messiaen, Craig Phillips, André Previn, Sergei Rachmaninoff and Charles-Marie Widor, this is a concert not to be missed!

A DESIRE FOR HEALING AND PEACE IN BURMA A Note from Rev. Dr. Saw Simon

A Time for Healing and a Time for Peace. The Desire of our Karen People.

The Bible tells us that there is a time for everything, and a season for every activity under heaven: a time to **kill** and a time to **heal**, a time for **war** and a time for **peace**. Ecclesiastes 3:3,8. Today, January 31, 2012, as we celebrate the 63rd Anniversary of the Karen Revolutionary Day, we want to humbly request all our brothers and sisters around the world to help and pray for us that Peace, Justice, and Freedom will be restored to our people and country.

A Time of War and Killing.

The civil war between the central government of Burma and the ethnic nationalities started just one year after the British left Burma, giving independence to Burma on 4th January, 1948. Thus it is now a 63 year old civil war (1949-2012) between the Burmese and the Karens (P'Yaw and Pwa K'Nyaw) and Burmese/Burmese and other ethnic groups: Arrakanese, Chin, Kachin, Shan, Mon, Karenni) and is **long enough for killing and warring** against each other and is claiming hundreds and thousands of lives from all sides and many becoming handicaps and causing lost and damages of lands and properties, destruction of villages with all buildings (houses, schools, churches, monasteries, roads and bridges, etc.,) and costing lot of money spent on arms and ammunitions and military spending. Consequently Burma/ Myanmar which was once a developing country now becoming one of the least developed countries in the world and one of the poorest countries in the world. Many people becoming refugees or displaced people in the neighboring countries (India, Bangladesh, China, Thailand) and still many have to live as internally displaced people in their own lands and many already resettling and living in the third country. And many have to leave the country and work as migrant workers in other countries.

It is Time for Healing and Peace.

As human beings created in God's own image, we want to live in peace, justice, and freedom and enjoy all the rights as human beings. We thank God and praise Him for opening the door and making it all possible for President U Thein Sein to take daring steps to lead the country toward national reconciliation, peace and democratization by talking with Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, the NLD leader and opening the door for NLD to be registered and run in the upcoming election, opening talks with different ethnic groups and already signing ceasefire agreements with some ethnic groups (including our KNU), releasing more than a thousand prisoners, including many political prisoners, etc. With the helps and supports of the International Communities such as UN, US, EU, ASEAN and others and the cooperation of the parties concerned and the prayers and support of the Churches, we believe that God will bestow His blessing, even life for evermore when brothers live together in unity. Please pray and help in ways and means you possibly can. Hope to see you all soon in our beautiful Land of Kawthoolei and Union of Burma/Myanmar where brothers (Arrakanese, Chin, Kachin, Karen & Karenni, Mon and Shan, etc.,) live together in unity. Humanly speaking, the road may not be as easy as we think, but with God everything is possible, for nothing is impossible with Him. Come and help when time comes for rebuilding our lives in our own Land of Kawthoolei. Praise the Lord and may God bless you all.

Sincerely yours in Christ's ministry among the displaced Karen people in the camps and the IDP areas,

Rev. Dr. Saw Simon
KKBC/KKBBS, Mae La camp.