

LAKE AVENUE BAPTIST CHURCH NEWSLETTER

FEBRUARY 2026, ISSUE 2, VOLUME 89

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FEBRUARY IS BLACK HISTORY MONTH!

Black History Month is celebrated in February to honor African American history and achievements, founded by Dr. Carter G. Woodson in 1926 as Negro History Week and expanded to a month by President Gerald Ford in 1976, intentionally chosen for the birthdays of Abraham Lincoln and Frederick Douglass, building on existing community traditions. It's a time for recognizing Black contributions, learning about struggles, and promoting ongoing study and celebration of Black culture.



MIXON'S MUSES

A note from our Interim Pastor, Rick Mixon

I have been in Rochester long enough now to make a few footprints in the snow (of which there is plenty, thank you!) However, I am still finding my way around and getting acclimated. Weather notwithstanding, I am delighted to be here and looking forward to working with you all as you move into God's future for Lake Avenue Baptist Church.

I was sorry we needed to cancel last Sunday's service, but I believe it was a wise decision for us all. I am trusting Mother Nature will allow us to gather this Sunday as we begin to celebrate our life together for this time of transition. After several years of interim work in different locations, I am well aware that times of transition can be challenging. Change is rarely easy, but inevitable over time. After the years of Michael Ford's able leadership, you are now at a place of asking "What's next for LABC?" In fact, that is my sermon title for Sunday. Using Matthew's account of the calling of the first disciples (Matthew 4:12-25,) we will explore what comes after the dramatic calling of the four fishermen. What's next for any and all of us as we answer Christ's call to discipleship?

As with me, I am sure you are keenly aware that we live in deeply troubled times, especially in the USA. Among other things, I have been following what has transpired in Minneapolis the past several weeks. What friends and colleagues are reporting of the actions of the federal government for me look like evil. Part of wondering what is next is reflecting on how faithful our

witness is to the love, peace, justice, compassion that are fundamental for followers of Jesus. It adds another dimension of challenge to the work of transition.

I am eager to journey with you into whatever lies ahead. LABC has a rich history of faithful witness. Let's be open to exploring what that means in this period of the congregation's life and let's move willingly and lovely into the future of God's Beloved Community.

Blessings on the journey,

Pastor Rick

**The Aging Gracefully and Joyfully Group
will meet this Monday, February 2nd at 1:00 pm in the Conference Room.
ALL ARE WELCOME!**

MISSION

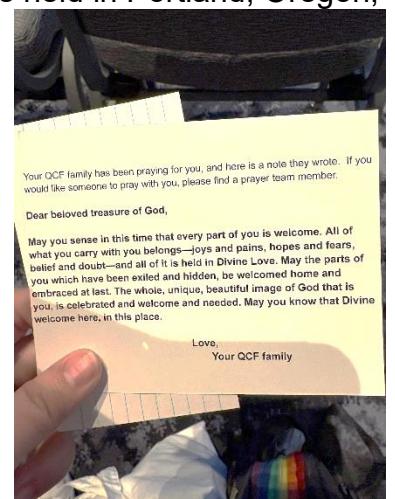
For the month of February, the Mission Committee has decided to continue with the collection of hygiene items for those in need. This includes shampoo, soap, hand sanitizer, tissues, Chapstick, lotion, toothpaste, toothbrushes. Please

do not bring razors or mouthwash that contains alcohol. Again, these items will be dispersed between Cameron and other homeless shelters.

THE QUEER CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP CONFERENCE By Evann Hasenauer, Director

I was privileged to be able to attend the QCF Conference, which was held in Portland, Oregon, from January 22 to January 26. The conference is a time for queer Christians and allies to come together in fellowship and worship, while learning about new topics in the field of queer theology and queer life. The Conference began on Thursday with a series of "affinity gatherings," times for people to gather in small groups of people with similar identities, backgrounds, or experiences. For example, I attended gatherings for ministers and clergy, trans and gender-expansive folks, and conference first-timers. They also had gatherings for seminary students, college students, every category of LGBT+ individuals, disabled folks, allies, and several other groups (too many for me to keep track of all of them). Thursday ended with a general session wherein everyone joined in for a worship and welcome ceremony, centered around the weekend's guiding verse, Hebrews 6:19-20A: "We have this hope, a sure and steadfast

anchor of the soul, a hope that enters the inner shrine behind the curtain, where Jesus, a forerunner on our behalf, has entered." All of the general sessions and workshops centered around the idea of hope being an anchor in today's world.



Friday started out with another general session, followed by several workshops. These workshops were educational, while also providing us with more opportunities to get to know the other people at the conference. During each block of workshops, 3-4 different workshops were offered in person, with 1-2 others being offered via zoom. Among the workshops I attended was one centered on finding kinship and anchorage in the people and places that give us hope. This workshop was a reminder that kinship doesn't just mean those people we're biologically or legally related to but can include the friends who uplift and love us, and the places that we feel bound to. I also attended a

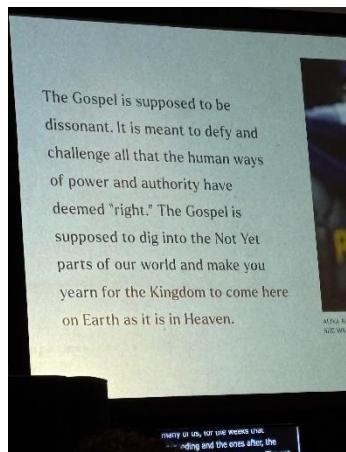
workshop focused on our sacred stories, and how “telling stories from the margins is part of our resistance.” A reminder that, for many of us who face oppression and whose stories are habitually erased, just standing up and telling our story is an act of rebellion against our oppressors.

Following the workshops, we were divided into age groups (each one representing roughly six years) and sent to find dinner. The age group I was in, made up of those born in 1992-1996, was one of the larger groups, but we were fortunate enough to be able to find a Mexican restaurant nearby. This dinner gave us an opportunity to connect based on mutual experiences. The majority of our age group were queer, and bonded over the unique experience of figuring out our sexualities and genders during the height of the same-sex marriage debates (New York State legalized same-sex marriage the day I graduated high school, 4 years after I started to come out to friends as gay). The dinner was followed by another general session, then a board game night in the hotel lobby.

Saturday morning had been set aside for a donor reception, so my day at the conference didn’t get started until the afternoon. There were two more blocks of workshops; I attended one centered around the practice of *lectio divina*, a practice where you read the same bible passage three times, diving a little deeper into the passage on each reading. We focused on Jesus the Good Shepherd, and the conversation centered around how we each felt Jesus shepherding us through a time when we all feel we need protection the most. The second workshop I attended was an arts and crafts workshop where we were invited to embrace our inner child and make collages that spoke to who we are as individuals (based upon a common project children do in early elementary school).

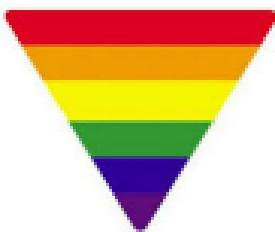
Sunday was the final day, where we had a liturgical worship service, followed by the closing ceremony. The preacher for the service preached on the idea that Christianity, and especially the gospels, are focused on the hope of the “not yet” parts of our lives. He shared a story about women in Seoul,

Korea during the Korean War. He explained that Seoul experienced a great deal of destruction, with estimates being around 85% of the city being destroyed. As a sign of hope, the women would wash white linens in the morning and hang them up to dry, knowing that the ashes of war would make them dirty again by the end of the day, but hoping for the day that the linens would stay clean until nightfall. He encouraged us to practice similar practices of hope and faith that a better future is coming.



The conference ended with all attendees standing in a large circle around the room, holding hands. We were invited to reflect on the community we had built over the weekend and remember that the existence of the conference and the people who attend can be our anchor for the coming year. It was a powerful ending to the weekend, especially knowing how many people are going back to homes where they have no one to support them. Many of the people I met over the weekend are in the closet by necessity, and I was reminded of how privileged I am to live in an area where inclusion feels like the rule, not the exception.

THE WELCOMING & AFFIRMING “BE YOU” MOVIE SERIES



The next movie in this series will be shown on **Saturday, February 7 at 6:00 pm** in classroom 1 (the conference room). The movie being shown is *Rocketman*. This is a biographical musical fantasy about the life and career of British musician Elton John. The movie is free. Come to the office door and ring the doorbell. Someone will let you in. (Because many of the movies have adult themes, they may not be appropriate for children.)



Our next community dinner will take place on **Wednesday, February 18, 2026, at 6:00 pm.** (This also happens to be Ash Wednesday and the beginning of Lent.) We will be having baked ziti, salad, and dessert. A sign-up sheet will be available on Sunday, February 8th. Everyone is invited to attend.



A Valentine for Women who are Weary of Winter Weather!

Saturday, Feb. 14, 2026

1:00 – 3:00 pm

In the LABC Fellowship Hall



Join us for Fellowship, conversation, games, refreshments, and a take-home craft!

A NOTE FROM OUR HISTORIAN, GARTH BROKAW

After the signing of the Emancipation Proclamation many now free slaves escaped to Island 10 north of Memphis in the Mississippi River which was held by the Union Army. Populated mostly by women and children, supplies were scarce as the war raged on. Joanna P. Moore, a student at the Rockford Female Seminary in Rockford, Illinois, after hearing a lecture by a missionary about the plight of the freed folk on Island No. 10 found her calling and gave her life to the lifting up of a freed people. One could say that this was the beginning of the Baptist Home Mission Society's response to the needs to help a freed people lift themselves out of all they had known, slavery. The new exhibit in the cabinet in the Narthex pays tribute to the educational opportunities the Home Mission Society created across the South from Virginia to Texas. Some still continue as colleges, universities, and other levels of education. Some continue as faith based, some as public entities, but all with faith-based roots.



We extend our heartfelt sympathy to the families of **Renée Nicole Good** and **Alex Pretti**. Both recently died as a result of a depraved response by several ICE agents in Minneapolis, Minnesota.

We also extend our condolences to the family of **Andrew Brooks** who passed away on Tuesday, January 27th from natural causes.

Andrew lived for many years on Ambrose Street across from the church. He was a person who helped many people in the neighborhood as well as helping staff at the church.

A THANK YOU FROM awab

Association of Welcoming & Affirming Baptists

As we begin a new year together, we want to pause and offer a heartfelt thank you to AWAB member churches, supporters and friends. Your generosity and commitment helped us do more than any of us could have done on our own.

This winter AWAB set an ambitious goal: to raise \$25,000.00 which would be matched dollar-for-dollar by generous donors. Thanks to the collective response of this community, we not only met that goal but exceeded it.

Together, you raised \$36,759.00. With matching funds included the total of this campaign

came to \$61,759 in support of AWAB's mission.

We are deeply grateful for every gift and every way you continue to show up for this work. As we step into this new year, we do so encouraged, resourced and reminded that when we move together, real transformation is possible.



The Baptist Peace Fellowship of North America, Inc. is opening early bird registration for Peace Camp 2026. This is your first chance to secure your spot at the lowest rate and start counting the days toward a week of community, growth, and transformative peace making. The early bird deadline is February

28, 2026. The Peace Camp will take place at the University of Guelph, Guelph, Ontario, Canada. Early bird registrations may be made at

<https://wl.donorperfect.net/weblink/weblink.aspx?name=E350288&id=11>

When Winter is Bleak...

Mental Health First Aide Training
with Tiffany Bloss of
Suicide Prevention & Crisis Intervention
Services of Tompkins County

DATE & TIME: February 28, 2026, 9 AM to 4:30PM EST
LOCATION: Virtual Online via Zoom

This FREE training is not just for professionals, but for anyone wanting to learn how to help a struggling friend or family member.
Certificates given upon completion.

Registration

ANNOUNCEMENTS FROM OUR EXTENDED COMMUNITY

VALENTINE'S DAY CONCERT, GREAT LOVE SONGS: Pianist John Williams will delight us again with a one-hour narrated piano program of love songs, old and new. Come celebrate Love and the Valentine's Season on February 4th at 7:00 pm at the United Church of Pittsford, 123 S. Main Street, Pittsford. The concert is free and free parking is available. A free will offering will be taken.

LABC CALENDAR OF EVENTS AND MEETINGS FOR FEBRUARY 2026

(As Currently Scheduled as of January 31)

Abbreviations: Conf. Rm.-Conference Room, S.H.-Social Hall; Sanc.-Sanctuary;

DAY	DATE	TIME	EVENT	LOCATION
Monday	Feb. 2	1:00 PM	Aging Group	Conf. Rm
	Feb. 9	6:00 PM	Church Council	"
Wednesday	Feb. 4	7:30 PM	Choir rehearsal	Sanc.
	Feb. 11	7:30 PM	Choir rehearsal	"
	Feb. 18	6:00 PM	Community Dinner	S. H.
		7:00 PM	Ash Wed. Service	Sanc.
	Feb. 25	7:30 PM	Choir Rehearsal	Sanc.
		7:30 PM	Choir Rehearsal	Sanc.
Saturday	Feb. 7	10:00 AM	Know Your Rights (Immigration)	Conf. Rm
		6:00 PM	Be You, W & A Movie	"
	Feb. 14	1:00 PM	Women's Valentine Fellowship	S.H.
	Feb. 21	10:00 AM	Know Your Rights (Immigration)	Conf. Rm.
		10:00 AM	Worship Experience Ministries	S.H.
Sunday	Feb. 1	10:00 AM	Worship Service	Sanc.
		11:15 AM	Congregational Mtg. Budget 2026	Sanc.
		11:30 ish	Reception for Interim Pastor	S. H.
	Feb. 8	10:00 AM	Worship Service	Sanc.
		11:15 AM	Fellowship	S.H.
		11:30 AM	Adult Ed.	Conf. Rm.
	Feb. 15	10:00 AM	Worship Service	Sanc.
		11:15 AM	Fellowship	S.H.
		11:30 AM	Adult Ed.	Conf. Rm.
	Feb. 22	10:00 AM	Worship Service	Sanc.
		11:15 AM	Fellowship	S.H.
		11:30 AM	Adult Ed.	Conf. Rm.

