

LAKE AVENUE BAPTIST CHURCH NEWSLETTER

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**DAYLIGHT SAVINGS TIME BEGINS ON SUNDAY,
MARCH 14. DON'T FORGET TO SET YOUR
CLOCKS AHEAD ONE HOUR ON SATURDAY
NIGHT, MARCH 13.**



YOUR PASTOR'S ARTICLE

At the January 20, 2021 inauguration of President Joseph Biden, youth poet laureate Amanda Gorman offered a very powerful poem. (The poem she wrote and read is included at the end of this newsletter). Chock-full of memorable lines, what stood out to me was her calling that we as a country work diligently to build ourselves up as a country of diversity. She wrote "We are striving to forge a union with purpose, to compose a country committed to all cultures, colors, characters and conditions of man." She claimed, at least as I interpret it, that we are a country that is at its best when it is committed to diversity: cultures, colors, characters, and conditions. Only when we are at our most diverse are we are at our best.

I would certainly agree with her. And I think that the same holds true for the church. I realized that I have been at LABC almost 9 years now (the Sunday after Easter 2012). It is so hard for me to believe that! I think the reason that it is so hard for me to believe is because the things that attracted me to LABC in the first place are the same things that we hold so dear in our values and our practices. At our core is our commitment to diversity: cultures, colors, characters, and conditions. I knew that LABC was a unique place, and I longed to be part of this place. What drew me here was what motivates me each day to engage in the ministry to which we have been called. In the midst of the most trying circumstances that have struck our nation in the past year, we have sought to maintain who we are. I honor that and lift it up to you as something that is care of our identity: diversity, working together for something greater than ourselves.

As we begin a new year, we do not know what the year will bring. In the past month we have heard about more people being vaccinated (or at least getting their appointments for vaccination) against Covid-19. We have seen the inauguration of a new President. We have seen movements in our community and across our nation that I pray will help make us a better people. Things are, we pray, starting to slowly, however slowly, move in the right direction. However, we cannot stop now. We cannot become complacent.

Let us commit as a people of faith to play our part in helping to see Gorman's words come to fruition. We want to do what we have to do to continue to commit to our core values as a church community ... our values of love and diversity. And let us commit to helping to share that which we see exemplified in our church community with the world beyond our walls.

Together may we take up the mantle that Gorman presented us with at the inauguration: a call to diversity. And may we affirm in word and deed, both in the church and the nation, that we too are committed to be a people who acknowledge and live into the fact that "We are striving to forge a union with purpose, to compose a country committed to all cultures, colors, characters and conditions." Diversity. It is who we are. And who we are made to be.

Michael



A Seminary of and for the Community

about the vaccine.

Our panelists will consist of:

- Rev. Melanie A. Duguid-May, PhD, John Price Crozer Professor of Theology at Colgate Rochester Crozer Divinity School, Moderator
- Marielena Vélez de Brown, MD, MPH, Deputy Commissioner of Public Health at the Monroe County Department of Public Health
- Jessica Shand, MD, MHS, Associate Professor Department of Pediatrics at the University of Rochester Medical Center, CRCDS '19

Note: This event will be livestreamed on Facebook Live

To register please go to: <https://www.crcds.edu/finding-hope-a-town-hall-on-understanding-the-covid-19-vaccine/>



FINDING HOPE: A TOWN HALL ON UNDERSTANDING THE COVID-19 VACCINE

Thursday, March 18th, at 7:00pm

This will be an online webinar event. The impact of COVID-19 has devastated our lives and way of functioning day-to-day. As the United States reached the 500,000 count of individuals who have died from COVID-19, many are seeking information about the vaccinations that are being made to the public. Colgate Rochester Crozer Divinity (CRCDS) is hosting a discussion about the COVID-19 vaccine in order to offer hope and clarity. This informational town hall style meeting will help inform our community about the harsh effects of this pandemic on our lives and address questions and concerns

THE CHURCH MODERATOR'S MARCH 2021 ARTICLE

Dear Friends,

At the last Church Council meeting, in addition to discussing the proposed statement on racism, we discussed and reaffirmed the principles we will use to guide reopening the church for worship and other activities. We had this discussion in light of the effective vaccines that are now becoming available and the changing rules for gathering here in New York State. The Council reaffirmed the decision to be very cautious about reopening because, in our view, the health and welfare of each one of you is of utmost Importance to us. We realize that according to the current NY state guidelines we could technically reopen as a few churches have chosen to do. I am constantly monitoring not only the NY state guidelines but information from the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) on the extent of vaccination, the trends in positive cases, hospitalizations, and deaths, and the emergence of new variants of the virus. I regularly share this information with Pastor Michael (who continues to be amazed that I actually enjoy looking at all of this data) and Mike Donatucci who chairs our Resource and Support committee. So far, the best practice is for us to keep the physical church building closed for worship.

We are so blessed with Pastor Michael's technical skills the have enabled our on-line worship and fellowship as this period of needing to be distant continues. We as a church will continue to be patient and safe despite our deep desire to be together again. Let us continue to keep following the basic rules of mask wearing and distancing, get vaccinated when we are eligible, and continue to pray for each other and our whole world during this challenging time.

Yours in Christ,

Laura

P.S. I hope that if you have questions about the vaccines that you will get all of your questions answered by your doctor or another trusted health care provider. There is much misinformation out there on the internet! Steve and I are looking forward to getting our first dose at the end of this month.

KEN'S KORNER, MUSINGS OF YOUR OFFICE MANAGER



Often times, for no apparent reason, my dog Lilly will jump on my lap and wants to be held and cuddled and feel more secure. Is a sense of security something real or just something for which we hope? Lilly feels secure in my arms but how many of us feel secure? Do we feel secure during this pandemic? I certainly don't. I wear my mask, but sometimes I forget to put it on. To quote John Elderidge, *"Security is not found in the absence of danger, but in the presence of Jesus, no matter what the danger."* And, as Nelson Mandela stated: *"Safety and security don't just happen, they are the result of collective consensus and public investment. We owe our children, the most vulnerable citizens in our society, a life free of violence and fear."*



Have we done this? For instance, the little boy pictured to the left was taken from his parents at the Mexican border and his parents were forced to return to their native country without him. Who is hugging this child now? Who is alleviating his fears? And who is providing the security that he and the other 600 children taken from their parents need?

Can we actually accomplish what Nelson Mandela states in his quote, providing our children "a life free of violence and fear?" What about the children pictured below.

How much violence and fear have they been exposed to and how secure do they feel today?



A child sitting amongst the ruins of what may have been his home in Yemen



Two children sitting in the rubble from a bombed out building in Syria.

And the horrors continue. Look at what's happening in Myanmar today. It's a powder keg just waiting to blow. The following is a picture of the many protests going on in Myanmar today and a picture of the military police who are confronting the protesters.



Myanmar Protestors in Mandalay



Military in Myanmar preparing to confront protestors.

Continued

Myanmar Protesters Undeterred by Military Warnings of Deadly Violence

Headline from an article that recently appeared in the Voice of America News

I don't know how we as individuals can help to provide security and safety to the millions that need it. And, I find this extremely frustrating. I know how I can make my little dog feel secure, just by holding her on my lap. But what about the millions of children and adults in the world who live with violence and fear every day of their lives? Maybe the answer lies in the following quote by Sadhu Sundar Singh, an Indian Christian missionary and mystic who is believed to have died in the foothills of the Himalayas in 1929.

One day after a long journey, I rested in front of a house. Suddenly a sparrow came towards me blown helplessly by a strong wind. From another direction, an eagle dived to catch the panicky sparrow. Threatened from different directions, the sparrow flew into my lap. By choice, it would not normally do that. However, the little bird was seeking for a refuge from a great danger. Likewise, the violent winds of suffering and trouble blow us into the Lord's protective hands.

WE SUPPORT OUR MYANMAR COMMUNITY

We continue to support **Hkadin Lee** and all others in our Rochester Myanmar Community who are so committed and instrumental in protesting the insurrection by the Myanmar military police in their home country. Here are a couple of pictures of the Rochester Myanmar Community protesting downtown.



MISSION, CREATION CARE

Those who care about God's Creation know "all the 'dirt'"

Yes, "dirt" is in the spotlight now in terms of treating God's earth with more care. This is an old idea about soil, brought into the light of present day farming (gardening, too!) and climate change.

If we take care of the soil, the soil will take care of us.

Please join others around our community for a viewing and discussion of Kiss the Ground—a movie that shows the connection between soil care and keeping carbon out of our atmosphere. If you have Netflix, you can watch any time. If you want to watch on your screen with others, mark your calendar for Thursday, March 11 at 6:00 pm. Access a link through our Baptist region: ABC-RGR or the interfaith group—**RAICA.net/events**. Discussion will follow at 7:30 led by Glen Call, our fellow Baptist from Oberlin, OH, and Elizabeth Henderson, local organic farmer.

Another opportunity to watch a movie together is on March 25, promptly at 6:30 pm. Gathering is about Native American stewardship of nature. Pre-register through ABC-RGR “story spaces.” If you forget to preregister, join an ABC-RGR zoom room at 6:00 pm to get a link to the movie. Discussion will follow at 7:45.

These opportunities are sponsored by our American Baptist region’s Creation Care Collaborative which has representation from LABC and several other churches in our ethnically and geographically diverse region

As your representative, I will be interested to hear your reactions to this important film!
Jane Grant

OUR CHURCH FAMILY

•Please keep in your healing prayers **Keith Harrington** following a recent procedure.

•Happy Birthday to **Thekla Raisner** who turned 90 years old on February 22. Cards would be appreciated.

A NOTE FROM YOUR HISTORIAN

Garth Brokaw

John Mason Peck



The pioneer American Baptist home missionary, Peck began his career as a pastor in upstate New York and subsequently served as a postmaster, newspaper editor, author, and pastor. In 1817 Peck was one of the first domestic appointees of the General Missionary Convention; he settled in St. Louis and began work

among free blacks and Native Americans as well as traditional church planting. When Peck realized that an educational institution was needed to raise literacy standards and train Christian workers, he founded Shurtleff College (Illinois) in 1827. His urgent letter of appeal to a Massachusetts pastor led to the formation of the American Baptist Home Mission Society in 1832. As corresponding secretary of the American Baptist Publication Society, he introduced the colporter missionary system to distribute books and tracts. Peck was an advocate of antislavery.



BOOKS, BOOKS, AND MORE BOOKS

Susan Maybeck

It’s March and this pandemic has been going on for 11 months. What have you been

doing to fill your time? I ask myself this often. I go to Zoom meetings, Zoom family gatherings, and Zoom conversations. In the evening I watch movies and series on the Internet or TV. But I also read - often on my Kindle. But what is really relaxing is sitting on my couch with a book in my hand, such pleasure to have time to read. So I thought I would share with you some of the books I’ve been reading.

First, books related to Black Lives Matter

Some of these we have read together in our LABC Anti-Racism group meeting now on Wed. at 1 pm. All are welcome.

White Privilege: Why it’s so hard for White People to Talk about Racism, by Robin Diangelo. An eye-opening look at unrealized attitudes & behaviors of White folk related to racial issues.

How to be an Antiracist: by Ibram K. Kendi. For all who seek to understand more.

Be The Bridge: Pursuing God’s Heart for Racial Reconciliation, by Latasha Morrison. A positive look at helping all of open conversation and action. We are reading this now.

Second, a few non-fiction books I have found interesting

Born a Crime: Stories from a South African Childhood: by Trevor Noah. Night time TV host Trevor Noah tells about growing up in South Africa. (Note: contains adult language)

The Splendid and the Vile: A Saga of Churchill, family, and defiance during the blitz, by Erik Larson.

Daughters of Yalta: The Churchill's, Roosevelt's and Harriman's. A Story of Love and Yalta: by Catherine Grace Katz. Both read for my Book Club. An interesting pair of books.

Third, some fiction

Anxious People: by Fredrik Bauchman. A quirky, funny, sad book by a Norwegian author. I loved it. Also try his earlier book, A Man Named One.

Book of Longing: Sue Monk Kidd. Imagine that Jesus is married to Ana, an independent woman. Also a book about early suffragettes, the Grimke sisters, Invention of Wings.

Fourth, two challenging books

Caste, The Origins of Our Discontents: by Isabel Wilkerson. Suggesting that America today and throughout its history has been shaped by a hidden caste system, a rigid hierarchy of human rankings. Heavy ideas and beautifully written.

Homo Deus: A Brief History of Tomorrow: by Yuval Noah Harari. A look at the history of the past, present and future. He posits that most of humanity (Homo sapiens) will be replaced by technology, while some humans will become God-like (Homo Deus). For me a dismal picture of the future. This is a fascinating book to argue with. It is rather dense.

I would enjoy hearing what you are reading these days.

Susan Maybeck, Assisting Minister

A REPORT FROM NURTURE AND CARE

Hello, everyone

I hope everyone is doing great. I just want to let you all know that our team, Nurture and Care is doing great. Although our team is small, we are very strong and will continue to serve God. We met via zoom on Feb. 20. Here are several updates:

- Everyone in our team is doing great. We will continue to meet via zoom and keep you updated with any new information.

- Jackie continues to send out birthday cards to everyone who signed their name on the list. If you forget to sign up, it's not too late. Please contact Jackie.
- We will celebrate everyone's birthday (January-December) on Feb. 28 after Sunday worship, obviously via zoom.
- Soup Supper is happening and is organized by Pastor Michael. Please contact him for more information (e.g., day, time, & zoom info.).
- We will continue to have social hour/coffee hour after the service. Thanks, Michael, for splitting us into groups. Everyone seems to enjoy it.

Thanks,

Everyone please stay safe and be healthy.

Soe Win, Nurture and Care Chairperson

NEWS AND EVENTS IN THE LARGER COMMUNITY

•Friends,

We hope that you will join us for "*The Language of Praise and Grief*" on Monday, March 8 from 7-8:30 pm over Zoom. A flyer is attached.

For our annual meeting, we are taking a look at racism and unconscious bias and how they impact mental health and medical treatment.

- Dr. David Paul, a cousin of Daniel Prude, will be in conversation with Rev. Marilyn Cunningham, pastor of Graves Memorial Church. Rev. Dr. William Wilkinson, pastor of First Presbyterian Church of Medina, will moderate.
- Rev. Dr. Sandra Hasenauer, Executive Minister of the Rochester Genesee Region of the American Baptist Church, will be featured in a conversation about the biblical story of Simeon encountering the child Jesus and the recent treatment by police of the 9-year-old girl in our city.
- Through words of praise and grief inspired by Walter Brueggemann and music that evokes both inside us, we will worship and pray, praise and

grieve, together as a community of faith.

We look forward to seeing you for this important conversation! Please share this information, the attached flyer, and the Zoom link below to all in your networks!

You are invited to a Zoom meeting.
When: Mar 8, 2021 07:00 PM Eastern Time (US and Canada)

Register in advance for this meeting:
<https://us02web.zoom.us/join/tZwpf-murT8jGNH0ZpiZnD1G5VCon-utgew2>

After registering, you will receive a confirmation email containing information about joining the meeting.

Blessings,

Rev. Deborah Grohman
Administrative Coordinator
Greater Rochester Community of Churches
Faith in Action Network

The Peg Witmer Memorial Fund for School #4

A partner with the
Rochester Education Foundation



resource to enrich learning opportunities for students at School #4.

School #4 is located in an economically disadvantaged Rochester neighborhood, and students at the school face multiple challenges in and outside of school. Peg always felt a strong sense of dedication to her students and their families, and sought ways to provide support in the classroom and beyond.

About the Fund:

The Peg Witmer Memorial Fund for School #4 will provide students with enriching materials and experiences not otherwise provided by the City School District or other support programs.

Some examples of supports the Fund will provide include:

- board and card games to aid in socialization, and in math and language skill learning
- educational field trips, with a focus on Rochester history, the real-world application of STEM skills, and fine and performing arts
- manipulative objects to support math concept learning
- classroom instructional charts and cards as supplementary visual learning supports

To donate:

Please go to: rochestereducation.org/pegsfund

or mail a check (with 'Peg Witmer Fund' in the memo line) to The Rochester Education Foundation, 250 Mill Street, Rochester, NY 14614

**The Witmer family and the School #4
community thank you for your generous
donation.**

The **Rochester Education Foundation** is an independent, not-for-profit organization whose mission is to improve learning and success for all Rochester public school students through the provision of programs and cultivation of partnerships with educators, businesses and the community.

For further information, go to:
<http://www.rochestereducation.org>
or call 585-571-5790.



Dear LABC Family and Friends,

I am writing to you today to give you an update on the proposed Statement on Racism (copy on back of this page) that I wrote to you about in mid-November. As planned, an open forum was held on November 23rd to answer questions about and to discuss the proposed statement. As this conversation progressed it became clear that many members of our congregation will need the time to learn more about the history of racism in this country and then the opportunity to reflect on the biblical foundations that led the study group on anti-racism to propose the statement. As Baptists we hold dear our congregational beliefs that we should make decisions as a group. We will need to take the time needed for all members of the congregation to feel fully informed and to participate in making decisions about our response as a congregation to the Statement on Racism. At the same time, we also feel the urgency of this moment in responding in some way to the issues of systemic racism in this country and around the world.

Your Church Council has discussed how best to respond to the need to take time for education and informed decision making, and the desire to share our thoughts and process as a church in a public way in order to respond to the current events in our city and nation. Our decision was to share the proposed Statement on Racism on the church website with an explanation of how it came to be written, that it had been accepted by the Church Council, and a description of our ongoing education and discernment process. We feel that this is in keeping with the long history of response to the issues of racism by LABC and to the foundation of the congregation as a memorial to peace.

I look forward to our continuing to educate ourselves and to reaching the point where we are ready to come together to vote formally on a statement on racism. The church staff and the Church Council will be working to provide all of us the opportunities for learning and bible study that will allow us to reach this goal.

Yours in Christ,

Laura Tubbs

LABC Church Moderator

P.S. If you wish to respond to this letter, or have questions or comments, please use the following email address: lakeavebaptistchurchfeedback@gmail.com

Not Here By Chance!

Phone: 585-458-5765, Fax: 585-458-5766; Email: kenadmin@rochester.rr.com; Website: www.lakeavebaptist.org

LABC Statement on Racism

I. Preface

Over several weeks of study, prayer and conversations, a group of church members have discussed ways we can make a difference within and beyond our congregation regarding the sins of White privilege and racism. We hope that you will join us as peacemakers and anti-racists as we seek to ensure that as a congregation we will honor and support People of Color.

One of our first actions as a group has been to develop a draft Statement on Racism for the Church Council to consider adopting on behalf of or in consultation with our congregation. That proposed Statement follows.

II. Statement on Racism

We, the people of Lake Avenue Memorial Baptist Church, Rochester New York, publicly affirm that White privilege and racism are sins that pervade our culture and our church communities. We hear the call for justice and for the dismantling of systems of oppression from those who cry out that “Black Lives Matter.”

We also acknowledge that White privilege and racism affect us spiritually, interpersonally, institutionally, and throughout society. Therefore, we seek to make plain in word and deed the way of justice and righteousness for all of God's people.

Scripture tells us that God shows no partiality (Acts 10:34); that we must love and care for our neighbor as our self (Luke 10:27). We join with the Old Testament prophets in condemning greed, abuse of power, abuse of the poor, injustice, and haughtiness since we realize that all of these exist within racial inequities and White privilege. In short, we stand with the prophet Micah who proclaims that we are called to act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with God (Micah 6:8).

We make this Statement because to remain silent is to give agreement to prevailing social norms that support racial injustice. As a congregation, as individuals, and as the body of Christ, we commit our time, education, resources and caring concern to actionable and accountable ways of following our God in the paths of peace, equity and justice.

