

LAKE AVENUE BAPTIST CHURCH NEWSLETTER

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YOUR PASTOR'S ARTICLE

Cheer.

This has been a difficult year for many people. During a recent worship planning meeting, we were exploring some of the various challenges people have faced, and the way that these challenges have impacted body/mind/spirit. We asked ourselves, "what is it that people need during this Advent and Christmas season?" The answer, we surmised, is a sense of cheer.

By its very simplest definition, cheer is a happy feeling. At a slightly deeper level, cheer means to give hope or to make happier. We need a sense of cheer. We need things that will make us happier and give a sense of hope in the middle of what can be a hopeless time. There are so many things that can burden us, that I hardly need to share a list. You all probably have your own. What is missing is that sense of cheer.

What brings you cheer. What gives you hope or makes you happier? Maybe it's something as simple as the smile of a child, or a word of encouragement. Maybe it's something funny that you see in an email. Perhaps

it's a television show or a movie. Whatever it is, there are things that can bring us cheer.

The deeper question is, do you allow that moment of cheer to bring you that sense of hope that we all need in these challenging times? I know that too often I stand in the way of allowing that sense of cheer to transform my overall outlook. I take these individual instances of cheer to remain just that, individual instances. I don't recognize that all together they can help me realize that there is hope in that darkness.

The Christmas story tells a story about a difficult, dark time, where from that darkness came what we read is "a great light." From that fearful time came a child who would bring hope to the world in a way it had not experienced before. It is a story of cheer. It is a story of a happy feeling that truly brought a deeper sense of hope.

You will find a theme throughout this newsletter. In addition to the information that we know is important to share, you will find things that bring you cheer. Whether it is an article or a poem or whatever it is, these are things we hope will bring you cheer. And our hope, even deeper that momentary sense of cheer, is that you will be able to experience, if only for a moment, from that darkness to light, from hopeless to hope.

May you all, during this Advent and Christmas season, experience cheer.

Blessings,

Michael



Pastor Michael was honored to represent LABC as part of the Transgender Day of Remembrance on Saturday November 20, 2021. LABC was also one of the sponsors of the event, which took place at Martin Luther King Jr. Park in downtown Rochester. The event involved a series of readers, singers, and a time of silence in remembrance of the 46 lives of transgender individuals that have been lost through acts of murder this year. We continue to hold up our transgender loved ones in the Rochester community and across our nation, as they seek to be

recognized, honored, and valued for who they are, beloved children of God.



A Message from Austin Pettigrew, Director of Youth & Children's Ministries

I've been thinking recently of things that make me happy. As we enter this holiday season many of us are reminded of the smells, traditions and fun of this time. This week for Children's Time online, we talked about Martha and Mary. That got me to think about my own sister and brothers. I'd like to share a few stories about my siblings as they have come to mind around my feelings of happiness.

My sister's name is Felicia. She's 3 years younger than me. We attended the same college together and one of the winter's she asked if we could get pictures taken together. We had several taken and one that we both

liked was when she jumped on my back and we were both smiling. When I think of my sister and that picture it always brings a smile to my face.

My brother's name is Garrick. He's 7 years younger than me. Garrick and I bond over old trucks and old technology. He's really technical and his brain works differently than mine. So, anytime I have a technical question or can't get my computer to work, I ask him. It's been really good for me to see him grow up from a kid to a man. He's always there to help and he's very kind.

My baby brother is Mitchell. Mitchell is 12 years younger than me. Mitchell was 7 years old when I left home. He loves learning about philosophy and theology. It's made for some interesting conversations and I feel it has made us closer as brothers. We both really like listening to music too. I really like connecting with him or posing questions about various topics.

So, these are just a few stories about my siblings that make me happy, feel connected to them and cherish the relationships we have. They have been there for me in good times and bad. I think it really shows the care we all have for each other but it's that way because we work at it. We ask for forgiveness when we have wronged each other. We cry with each other when we are crying. We love each other at all times.

So my challenge to you is that you do that for your loved ones and friends. Are we choosing to love in times of difficulty? Are we letting grudges stand in the way of that love?

I'm reminded of a quote by Dorothy Day, "I really only love God as much as I love the person I love least." May love and care for each other be our mantra and guide.

Austin

UPCOMING ADULT EDUCATION: Mark your calendars! Austin Pettigrew through Zoom will be interviewing Lar Say Wah and Gay Doh Htoo on Sunday, December 12 at 11:30 am in classroom 1. Both Lar Say Wah and Gay Doh Htoo are studying International Global Studies in their college undergraduate classes. The focus of the discussion will be why they both decided on this major and why they have a passion for it. We hope you can make this special adult class.



LABC has a long commitment to education. We were founded as a Sabbath School, and an important part of that model was to have an active library. Helen Barrett Montgomery, a member of LABC, was the first woman elected President of the Rochester School Board. This doesn't even begin to touch on the many members who have served as teachers within our city schools. LABC and education are deeply related.

To celebrate the 150th Anniversary of LABC, and to honor our commitment to education and mission, the Mission Committee has decided to collect 150 books and provide them to School #5. The Committee has received a book list from the literacy coordinator at School #5, and has vowed to collect 150 books on that list. It's a tall task, but one that we believe we are all up to accomplishing.

Throughout the Advent season, we invite you to go to the Book Challenge table in the narthex where you can make a cash or check donation of money that will be used to buy these books. In return for your donation, paper "book" ornaments will be hung on the tree (one ornament to represent each of the books your donation will buy). You will also receive a paper gift card that you can give to someone at Christmas to let them know you have bought a gift in their honor. This is a great way to help take care of that hard to buy for person in your life.

This is a big challenge, but also a great opportunity for us to celebrate our 150th Anniversary in the spirit of

LABC ... through a commitment to education and mission, and make a difference in the lives of children in School #5. We invite you to join us in the 150th Anniversary Book Challenge!

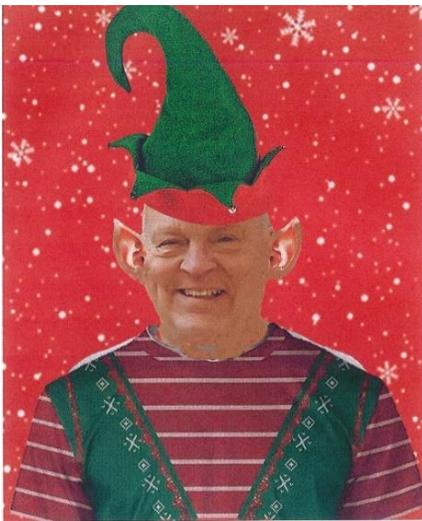
CHILDREN'S Sunday School

A NOTE FROM VALERIE KETCHUM

Our Sunday school leaders and our students have settled into our new children's church time. We are meeting as one class in the Myanmar Fellowship room. We have been having fun learning about God's creation and planting Mums for beauty in the fall and planting Tulip bulbs for beauty in the spring.

We also enjoyed the retelling of the creation story with a parachute! Our second unit is all about prophets and the children searched the room to find the names of eight prophets that we will be studying. The children enjoyed snacking on multigrain bread topped with honey following our story of Ruth collecting grain from Boaz' field.

Although we didn't have our annual Halloween party, we did have treat bags to hand out on Sunday.



Santa's Elf Lee



By Lee Foster, Organist and Choir Director

The church year begins with Advent, this year on November 28. The four weeks leading to the birth of Christ is a time for reflection and preparation. At this time of shortened days, I enjoy bot poetry and music of the season better than the music that we hear in shopping malls and elevators. Some of my favorites include Wendell Berry's beautiful poem, "*The Peace of Wild Things.*"

The Peace of Wild Things

When despair for the world grows in me
and I wake in the night at the least sound
in fear of what my life and my children's lives may be,
I go and lie down where the wood drake rests in his beauty
on the water, and the great heron feeds.

I come into the peace of wild things who do
not tax their lives with forethought
of grief. I come into the presence of still water.
And I feel above me the day-blind stars
waiting with their light. For a time
I rest in the grace of the world, and am free.

Wendell Berry from *Collected Poems* (Counterpoint 2012) Copyright 2012 by Wendell Berry reproduced by permission of Counterpoint

If you would like to hear Wendell Berry reading this poem with a video, click on the following link.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-ewB0WL3bNw>



Among my favorite choral groups are the boys' choir Libera from SE London and VOCES8. Libera was formed to give disadvantaged boys an opportunity to learn and sing. They have since travelled around the world singing for adoring audiences.

Click on the videos to hear some amazingly beautiful singing from these groups, first *Libera* singing "Carol of Bells," then VOCES8

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=l6x-pjVL67A>

A STEWARDSHIP REMINDER

We are finishing up our annual stewardship effort in support of our many ministries and programs upcoming for 2022. We ask that you take this time of year to reflect on what you can do to express your faith in living out the good news of God's kingdom amongst us. This is a reminder to please let the church know of your pledge by submitting your pledge card or fill out the form below and send it to the church.

We each have different motivations and capacities for giving, and every gift and pledge is gratefully received. Our one hope is that your support for our ministries comes from a profound sense of gratitude and joy for all you receive through your relationship with God and the members and ministries of our church.

We are also processing our year end business and ask that you submit your 2021 (this year's) pledges by Friday, December 28, 2021.

Thank you for your support and prayers during this season.

Peace, Mike Donatucci, Chair, Resource and Support

	LAKE AVENUE BAPTIST CHURCH 72 Ambrose St. Rochester, NY 14608 Date: _____	FINANCIAL COMMITMENT <i>"But since you excel in everything--in faith, in speech, in knowledge, in complete earnestness and in the love we have kindled in you --see that you also excel in this grace of giving"</i> <i>2 Corinthians 8:7</i>
Name(s): _____		In gratitude to God, I/We pledge the following for the year 2022
Address: _____		\$ _____ per
City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____		<input type="checkbox"/> Week <input type="checkbox"/> Month <input type="checkbox"/> Year
Phone (s): _____		
Email: _____		
Signed: _____		

Please print this pledge card and return via mail to the church office. If you wish, and have the ability to do so, you are welcome to email it to lakeavefinancial@gmail.com

Our Church Family:

● **In Memoriam: Dale Robert Sessions** passed away at the Heritage at Lowman in White Rock, SC on November 10, 2021. Dale was the Associate Pastor at Lake Avenue Baptist Church in the late 1970's and early 1980's and served with Pastor John Wilkes. Throughout his ministry Dale was engaged in social justice issues and was honored by the American Baptist Churches of NJ for his pastoral leadership and community engagement, receiving the Homer J. Tucker Christian Service Award in 1984. He was the first minister to participate in an American Baptist Churches program called "Learning from Black Churches." Dale is survived by his wife Norma Sessions and nieces and nephews. Memorial donations may be made to the Alzheimer's Association, Attn: SC Gift Processing, 4600 Park Road, Ste 250, Charlotte, NC 28209 or to Lutheran Hospice 200 Ministry Drive, Irmo, SC 29063.

● **A Letter to Everyone from Anne Callahan, 225 N. 56th St. #508, Lincoln, NE 68504-3519.**

"Merry Christmas and Happy New Year greetings to all of my family and dear friends! Last month was beautiful here in Lincoln with warm temperatures and sunny skies. Even December has been lovely so far with temperatures in the 50s and 60s! I've been lucky enough to occasionally walk outdoors and enjoy the landscape here at Gateway Vista

It's been a wonderful year for me as I've recovered quite well from the wrist and hip injuries resulting from the tumble I took 19 months ago, and I'm back at daily exercise classes which I so look forward to. The staff here

continues to work very hard to keep all the residents safe from the virus, and we're grateful for their help. Of course there have been less opportunities for us to gather and socialize, but we manage to visit as I walk the hallways and pop in at open door ways. Everything is beautifully decorated for Christmas.

A real highlight of the year was my **100th BIRTHDAY!** ...still a bit hard to get used to. Well over 100 birthday cards arrived from all of you, and I thank you so much for the lovely greetings and messages. I was able to have a "socially distanced" party arranged by my daughters, son and their spouses, and some nearby family as well. My Gateway Vista friends and staff celebrated with me and helped make the whole event even more special. The local TV news showed up (!) and did a nice report about my reaching this milestone. Their news clip can still be found at this web address:

<https://www.1011now.com/2020/07/21/lincoln-woman-gets-surprise-100th-birthday-party/>

The pandemic has certainly changed our world, but with the promise of the vaccine, I pray we can return to normal again soon and that God continues to bless us, for we are the only hope of the world.

I have five dear great-grandchildren: 3 boys - Cal is 5, Orin is 2, Wyatt is 20 months; 2 girls- Maura is nearly 4, her little sister Kiera is 21 mos.

May you all have a wonderful Christmas and New Year!"



You are invited to **Blue Christmas** or a **Service of Light at 7:00 pm on Thursday, December 16**. This will be a special worship time when we acknowledge the conflicted feelings we have during this Advent time. Every year we experience the darkness in the shortest day and the longest night of the year. But this year is unprecedented. Our experience with the pandemic has caused considerable disruption of our lives.

That is why I invite you to a Service of Light that helps us to pause, acknowledging our grief, our lostness and remembering our hope. We will share reflective music, recognizing that we are entering the season of joy with ambivalence. We will invite everyone to reflect on losses and grief. And we will remind ourselves by lighting candles that our hope is fulfilled with the birth of the Christ Child.

God is with us and around us continually. I pray that you will find hope and comfort in this Service of Light.

Susan Maybeck, Assisting Pastor



With the creative help of our "angelic" Refugee Coordinator Hkadin Lee, the Myanmar Community decorated the front of the church with a wonderful Thanksgiving display for their Thanksgiving service and following dinner. (They have been doing this for quite a number of years.) All the foods that were used in the display were given away following the service. This is a wonderful tradition of thankfulness for God's bounty and sharing this bounty with others.

A GIFT OF POETRY FROM SUSAN MAYBECK



I would like to share with you some of my favorite Christmas poems. I hope you enjoy them as much as I do.

The Work of Christmas

Howard Thurman

When the song of the angels is stilled,
When the star in the sky is gone,
When the kings and princes are home,
When the shepherds are back with their flock,
The work of Christmas begins:
To find the lost,
To heal the broken,
To feed the hungry, To release the prisoner,
To rebuild the nations, To bring peace among others, To make music in the heart.

What do I want for Christmas

Ann Weems

What do I want for Christmas?
I want to kneel in Bethlehem,
the air thick with alleluias,
the angels singing
that God is born among us.
In the light of the Star,
I want to see them come,
the wise ones and the humble,
I want to see them come
bearing whatever they treasure
to lay at the feet
of him who gives his life.
What do I want for Christmas?
To see in that stable
the whole world kneeling in thanks
for a promise kept:
new life.
For in his nativity
we find ours.

Christmas Is Waiting to be Born

Howard Thurman

Where refugees seek deliverance
that never comes
And the heart consumes itself as if
it would live,
Where children age before their
time
And life wears down the edges of
the mind,
Where the old man sits with mind
grown cold,
While bones and sinew, blood and
cell, go slowly down to death,
Where fear companions each day's
life,
And Perfect Love seems long
delayed.
CHRISTMAS IS WAITING TO BE
BORN:
In you, in me, in all mankind.

I Will Light Candles this Christmas.

Howard Thurman

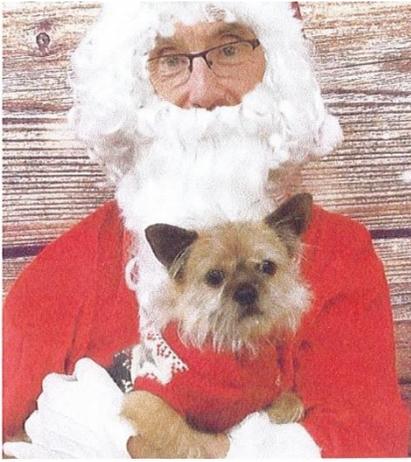
"I will light candles this
Christmas.
Candles of joy,
despite all the sadness.
Candles of hope where
despair keeps watch.
Candles of courage where fear
is ever present.
Candles of peace for tempest-
tossed days.
Candles of grace to ease
heavy burdens.
Candles of love to inspire all of
my living.
Candles that will burn all the
year long.

Into This Silent Night

Howard Thurman

Into this silent night
as we make our weary way
we know not where,
just when the night becomes
its darkest
and we cannot see our path,
just then
is when the angels rush in
their hands full of stars.





KEN AND LILLY'S KORNER, MUSINGS OF YOUR OFFICE MANAGER

LILLY'S SAGA

Lilly's story begins about 6 years ago, when my Burmese son Myint Aung brought his wife Thang Wua from Burma to live with him in the United States. Once she settled into Myint's house, she felt very alone especially since Myint worked every day and she knew very few people in Rochester. One day when I was visiting her, she asked me if I could look for a small dog so she could have some company during the day.

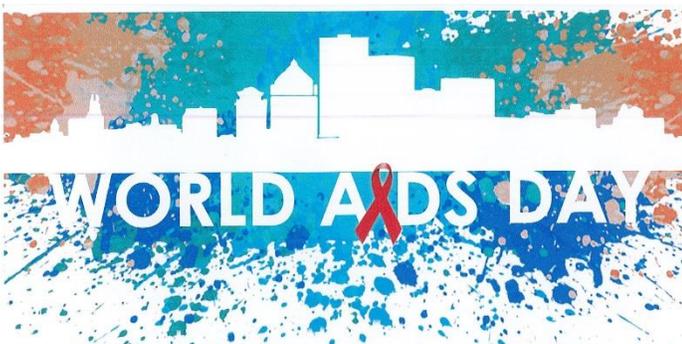
The search was on. I checked a number of rescue shelters but could only find large dogs. (It is very hard to find small dogs in the shelters because they are in such demand!) I was getting frustrated and thought, well, maybe I should check Craigslist to see if anyone had a dog for sale. Sure enough, there was a small dog for sale. She had a sweater on and the sweetest little face. I called the seller immediately and I happened to be the first call she received. The price she was asking was \$75 which also included the dog's bed, clothes, toys, and dog crate. She even offered to let me take Lilly for a week to decide if I wanted her. I jumped at this opportunity. The seller worked in the city and met me at Myint Aung's house so that I could show her to Thang Wua. Thang Wua and I fell in love with her as soon as we saw her and bought her on the spot.

Lilly stayed with Thang Wua for several months and then Thang Wua became pregnant. Lilly continued to stay with Thang Wua during her pregnancy. But, when the baby was born, Thang Wua's husband was afraid that the baby would be allergic to the dog's hair and Thang Wua realized she did not have the time to spend with Lilly now that she was caring for a newborn. Myint and Thang Wua knew I liked the dog and asked me if I could keep her for "a while". That "while" turned out to be four plus years. My partner and I had always wanted a dog but thought we would wait until one of us retires. It so happened that my partner retired 5 years ago.

My partner and I both love this little dog and probably spoil her a bit too much. When I come home from work she is always there, wagging her tail, to greet me. On Sunday afternoons when I come home from church, she will curl herself up next to me in my armchair and lay her head on my lap. Needless to say, I love this.

When I look at her, I think how fortunate I was to find her. Was it just coincidence that I happened to check out Craigslist on the particular day and time that I did? Or, was it something more? As it is said, "God works in mysterious ways."

ANNOUNCEMENTS FROM OUR EXTENDED COMMUNITY



GLOBAL SOLIDARITY, SHARED RESPONSIBILITY

The past is local, the present is global, the future is shared

mag.rochester.edu/events/celebration-series. Space is limited. Proof of Covid -19 vaccination is required in the form of a vaccination card or the Excelsior app. Masks are mandatory. A donation of \$5.00 per group is suggested.

You are invited to a World Aids Day event at the Memorial Art Gallery, 500 University Ave from 5 to 9 pm on Wednesday, December 1.

- From 5-6:30 pm there will be a number of community tables with arts and crafts and AIDS posters display
- At 6:30-8:00 pm a concert will be performed by singer and pianist Michael Warfield of Peace Art Productions.
- From 8-8:30 please join us for a reception.

Tickets are required for this event. Register for your free admission ticket that includes museum access at



Holiday Organ Concert featuring Ryan Chan, Friday, December 17 at 7:00 pm at Greece Baptist Church, 1230 Long Pond Road. The program is "A Christmas Meditation" and will feature organ music with a pastorate-theme evoking the world of nymphs and shepherds, as well as the wonders and mysteries of the nativity of Christ. Music will be by J. S. Bach, Olivier Messiaen, Maurice Durufflé. The recital will be slightly over an hour with oral program notes. There will be no admission charge, but we accept donations made toward our Organ Repair Fund. For more information, call (585)225-6160 or email office@greecebaptistchurch.org.

Award-Winning Photographer to Lecture and Exhibit Work at MCC

On Wednesday, December 8th, MCC will host a lecture by international, award-winning photojournalist/documentary photographer Min Ma Naing. This talk will complement a two-week exhibition of Min Ma Naing's photographs of the [2021 anti-coup movement](#) in Myanmar. Please see below for details.

The Artist: Min Ma Naing is a personal documentary photographer from Myanmar who left Yangon, the country's largest city, shortly after the military coup in 2021. A visiting scholar with Cornell's Southeast Asia Program, Min Ma Naing began her career as a press photographer before realizing that she wanted to focus on stories surrounding love and hatred. She has adopted the temporary pseudonym "Min Ma Naing" because of Myanmar's precarious political situation. It means "The King Cannot Beat You."

Exhibition: *Faces of Change: Portraits of Myanmar's Democratic Awakening*
December 1-15. Brighton Campus: LeRoy V. Good Library, 4th floor

Lecture: *Sustaining Self and Community through Political Upheaval*
December 8, 12:00 pm-1:00 pm, Brighton Campus: Bld 5, room 300

Please register for this event at the following web address: <https://www.registerblast.com/monroe-admissions/Event/EventDetailStep/89>

Meet & Greet: December 8, 1:00 pm-1:30 pm, Brighton Campus: LeRoy V. Good Library, 4th floor

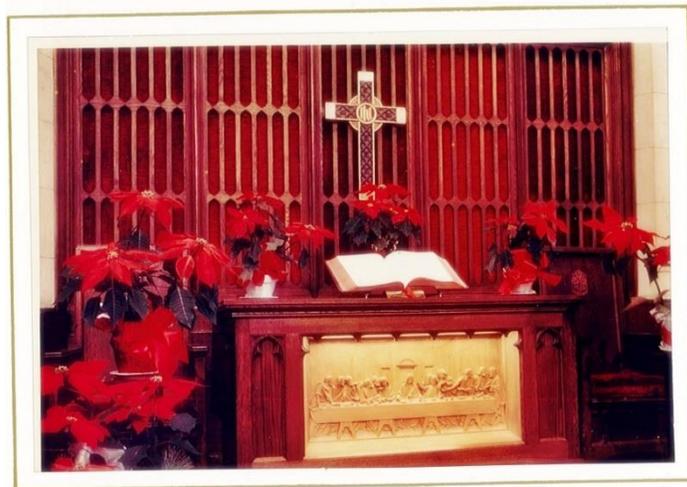
A SMALL COLLAGE OF LABC CHRISTMASSES PAST



Ghost of LABC Christmas Past



Christmas 1921



from the FINCHES-1963



Christmas 1992



Christmas 1998