

LAKE AVENUE BAPTIST CHURCH NEWSLETTER

JANUARY 2025, ISSUE 1, VOLUME 88

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FROM THE PASTOR'S DESK

When you work in a church, Christmas hits differently than it does for many other folks. As we approach the holidays, in addition to thinking about scheduling Christmas celebrations and picking up presents, your church staff are also thinking about Christmas Eve services, upcoming Sunday services (so as to let the staff have a couple weeks without our weekly worship planning meetings), Christmas letters to the congregation, those last minute meetings

that people need to have before the year end, other organization Christmas events that we attend, as well as the church fiscal year end. In other words, when you work in a church, Christmas looks a little different than it does for many others.

When I first began in pastoral ministry, this took some getting used to. I used to joke that Christmas never really began for me until the last "Amen" on Christmas Eve. Over the years, and they are indeed piling up, I've come to see the week between Christmas and the New Year as something to be cherished. Over that week I am able to celebrate with family as we exchange gifts. We eat together, and undoubtedly laugh together. After Christmas, on the Canadian Boxing Day, I am able to go see my son Holden, and spend some time with him. While that looks different as he ages, it is one of my most meaningful times of the year. And beyond all of that business, I try to find a time to reset.

It's a time when I am able to spend a few moments reflecting on the past year and look forward to the year to come. I don't use the time to set resolutions, as they have become so common in our world. Rather, I use the time to give thanks for the good experiences of the past year, and to think a bit on the challenges (not to dwell, but to reflect). It's a time for some quiet contemplation.

Finally, I try to set myself in the right head space for that transition into the year to come. I don't know exactly what it will bring with it. I know there will be some things that I will be able to control. There will be many things that I am unable to control. There will be opportunities and there will be challenges. However, through all of the ups and downs I know that I will not be alone. I will continue to have family and friends who care about me, and a God that walks with me as I walk with God. It's a good time to remind myself about what really matters in this world and take that perspective into the year to come.

I am thankful for each of you. I appreciate who you are and who you are becoming in your faith walk with God. As I look back at the year we have just completed, I can see the face of God in the journey of each of you, and I am excited to see what God has in store for us in the year to come. May you spend just a few moments reflecting, and repositioning yourself for 2025. And above all else, may you recommit yourselves to walking in

faith through all that the coming year has in store, and walking with each other as we learn together what it means to follow Jesus who came to earth to dwell and to save.

Michael



LABC has a long history with Cameron Community Ministries. In fact, as some of you will undoubtedly know, LABC was one of the founding churches that brought Cameron into existence 30 plus years ago. In addition to having a couple of LABC members serve as former Executive Director's at Cameron, we have also had a number of LABC pastors who have served on the Board, and many LABC members volunteer there. Finally, we provide significant funds from our yearly budget to the work of Cameron, and many in the LABC community also financially support the ministry. LABC and Cameron Community Ministries are both historically and presently intertwined.

Recently, Cameron Community has faced some challenges. An audit of a County program has brought to light some malfeasance by the former Executive Director (former because as soon as the Board was made aware of these actions she was immediately released from her employment). This has been a difficult time for Cameron and their leadership. Rev. Dr. Sandy Hasenauer currently serves as the Chair of the Board and is doing an absolutely remarkable job helping Cameron navigate this difficult season. She has recently asked me to return to the Board as Vice Chair, and I have readily accepted this invitation.

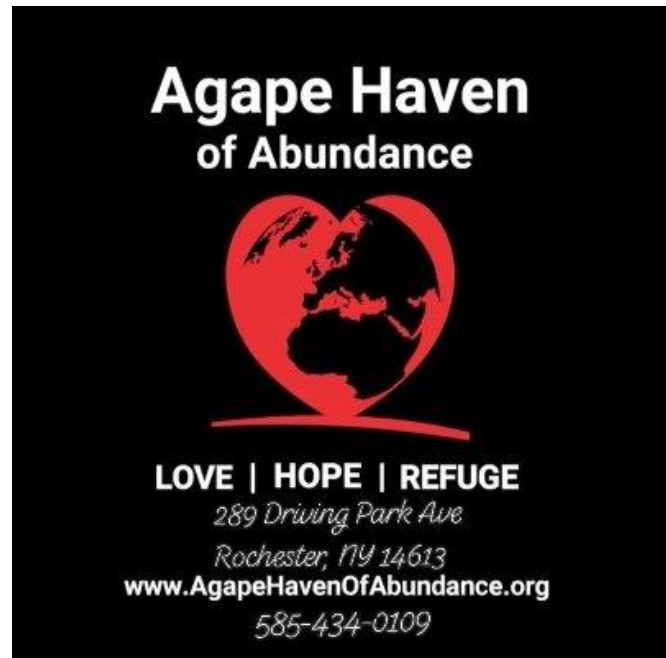
I firmly believe that Cameron will come through this season of challenge even stronger. Here is why. First, we are doing the hard work to strengthen the governance of the Board to ensure this type of action does not happen again. We have a good acting Executive Director who is committed to the work and the neighborhood. We have amazing staff who are working together for the community. I had the opportunity to meet with the staff during their Christmas celebration and left very impressed. Finally, we have supporters who remain dedicated to the mission of Cameron.

This last comment was clear to me by a recent fundraiser that I led. We have been repairing and patching our walk in refrigerator for years (we dealt with it when I chaired the Board over 5 years ago). It finally died. It needed to be replaced in order for us to continue to provide the more than 30000 meals each year that Cameron provides the community. Our goal was \$13000. In less than one week we raised over our goal! And I cannot express my thanks enough to the community who stepped up (including many of you ... thank you so much). I was so proud of our broader community who, when facing a need, met that need (exceeded it!). Cameron has a long and significant past, and will have a great future. Please continue to hold the ministry in your prayers, if you are able to volunteer they are always looking for volunteers, and if you have been or are a financial supporter, please continue to do so. Together we will continue to impact our community greatly through the amazing work of Cameron Community Ministries.

Welcome to Agape Haven of Abundance and Worship Experience Ministries

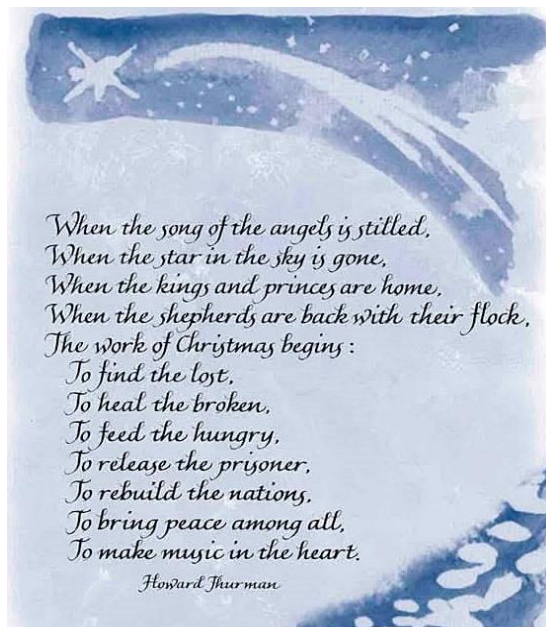
A number of months ago, Jane Grant introduced LABC to the work of Agape Haven of Abundance. Located on Driving Park Ave., Agape Haven of Abundance provides a range of services to the community including children and youth programs, food giveaways, backpack giveaways etc. They are looking forward to an expansion of their current site, and so were looking for a temporary location for some of their upcoming programs (particularly during Spring Break and Summer Break). We look forward to welcoming them to LABC for these temporary events and will share news about those events as they come upon us.

Through these conversations, we were introduced to a church fellowship that is in the process of formation under the umbrella of Agape Haven of Abundance. Worship Experience Ministries, led by Pastor R. V. Mills 3rd. Agape Haven of Abundance serves as the fiduciary for Worship Experience Ministries, who have been worshipping in a temporary space in Charlotte. Their connection to Agape Haven of Abundance, and their commitment to the Edgerton/Maplewood neighborhoods means a closer location would be preferable. Your church council considered the opportunity, and have entered into a 6 month trial period where Worship Experience Ministries will use the LABC sanctuary on Sunday's from 1-3 p.m. They hold as one of their core values the idea of churches working together in ministry. This is one of LABC's values, and we look forward to welcoming them to LABC, and to finding ways to partner with them in mission and service.



MISSION Ministry

Thank you to everyone who was able to donate to our Mitten Tree this December. Thanks to your incredible generosity, we have been able to receive, and distribute, quite a few hats, mitts, scarves, and socks. Any remaining at the end of the month we will keep in the office in order to distribute to those in need. Your generosity has helped to keep people warm and safe this Christmas season. Thank you!



During the month of December, we received a very special gift from Mothers In Need of Others, which is being absorbed by Foodlink at the beginning of the year. Maria (Wehrle) had many items that did not fit into the mission of Foodlink. She was very gracious to gift these items to Lake Avenue Baptist Church. Many were samples. We were able to create dozens of hygiene bags for our populations that find it challenging to purchase these items. According to Michael, these are very useful and sought-after, especially in winter months. Thank you so much to Maria Wehrle and the volunteers here at LABC that helped us pack these bags. (See pictures above and to the right.)

GINGERBREAD HOUSE MAKING PARTY

Saturday, December 21st

The Gingerbread House Making Party was enjoyed by all the children that participated and the numerous adult who helped in the "construction" of the houses. The mortar was vanilla frosting and the construction material were pieces of graham crackers, pretzels, and many different candies. (Of course, the candies were often sampled by those present!) Here are some pictures of that event.



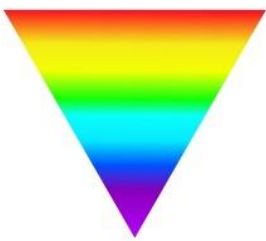


"Aging gracefully
means finding
beauty in each new
season of life."
— Unknown

THE AGING GRACEFULLY & JOYFULLY GROUP WILL MEET TOMORROW, MONDAY JANUARY 6 AT 1:00 PM. For those planning to attend, please remember that this will be an "Epiphany, 12th day of Christmas" party with each person bringing some finger foods to share.

Our Church Family

- We continue to keep in our healing prayers **Peter Jameson and the Jameson family** as Peter undergoes treatment for a serious illness.
- Congratulations to former active members of LABC, **Doris and Bill Perkett**, who recently celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary. If you would like to send a note to them, their address is 7418 Spring Village Drive, Apt. 402, Springfield, VA 22150

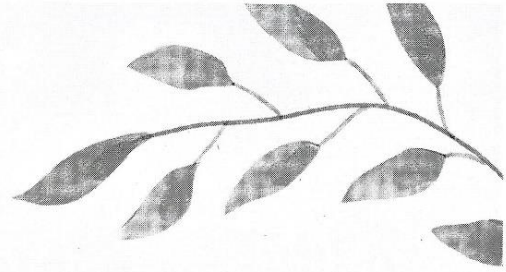


THE "BE YOU" MOVIE SERIES

The Be You movie presentation for the first Saturday of December has been cancelled due to schedule conflicts. However, the movie series will continue on **Saturday, January 4, 2025 at 6:00 pm.** The movie which will be shown is entitled "Uncle Frank". Uncle Frank is about a gay literature professor who, accompanied by his niece, reluctantly returns home to attend his father's funeral. We hope you will be able to make it. There will be popcorn and drinks available.



Thank you for your generous support of the recent Myanmar community thanksgiving celebration. Over \$1500 was raised to assist in the ongoing needs in Karenni state in Myanmar. Hkadin was recently able to make a presentation to Karenni leadership in Rochester. We look forward to our continued work with the local Karenni community and to help in whatever ways we can with the global Myanmar community.



Finding Solid Ground

We are offering a 6-week therapy group for adult survivors of childhood sexual trauma (prior to age 18). This group is a safe place to learn about how you've been impacted by what happened to you, to learn ways to cope with the effects, and to gain solid footing for healing and growth.

The group is offered from 4:30 - 6:00pm from January 9 through February 13. Participants must commit to all 6 (90-minute) sessions, as consistent attendance is important to creating a safe group.

Group co-led by Lynn Acquafondata, LMHC & Jennifer Bateman, MHC-LP.

"Group Therapy for sexual trauma helped me to heal from this journey and led me to a new and enriched life."

"Being with others really helped. I don't feel so alone anymore."
- Past participants

As with all our offerings, there is no cost to participants.
For more information contact Amy at 585-325-1186, ext. 114
or at contactmentalhealth@spirituschristi.org

Spiritus Christi Mental Health Center
121 N. Fitzhugh St Rochester, NY 14614

585.325.1186
scmentalhealth.org

CHURCH RENEWAL: COMMITMENT TO A PROCESS

BY WILLIAM R. NELSON

THE FOLLOWING IS THE SECOND INSTALLMENT OF THE ABOVE ARTICLE WHICH WAS SHARED BY OUR HISTORIAN GARTH BROKAW IN THE DECEMBER 2024 NEWSLETTER.

THE INITIATORS OF RENEWAL

One key lay person stands out as the catalyst for change at a time when a series of important decisions about the future of the church were being made. When Ray Kicklighter learned about the common interest of ABHMS and CRDS in developing a laboratory for church renewal under the auspices of a strong urban church, it was his analogy of research and development projects in industry which helped our congregation to step out in faith on January 8, 1964. Then he became chairman of the Ministerial Selection Committee which was seeking leadership for the new venture in church renewal. Although he is a highly articulate and theologically sophisticated person, he felt a responsibility for working with the neighborhood children. When a staff person was not found immediately for the new position at the church, he became director of the Community Center.

The coming of a "Teaching Minister" in September 1965, ended the painstaking period of reflection and began the period of implementation. Since no one could define this new role, freedom was given for the new minister to discover what renewal meant personally and what it could mean in a church which was still operating from a position of strength in the mainstream of Liberal Protestantism. This freedom to struggle during the past four years has resulted in a shift of emphasis from a manipulative, organizational style toward a supportive, enabling style of ministry.²

During the first two years of experimentation, emphasis was put on the development of new forms of ecumenical ministry in the immediate neighborhood. When the direction shifted from the "journey outward" to the "journey inward" during the third year, the task became more difficult.³ Yet it is inescapably clear in the fourth year that an authentic renewal process will eventually have to deal with both the *quantity of doing* and the *quality of being*. Most churches tend to specialize in one or the other. Our renewal process has been a movement from breadth of involvement to depth of commitment.

THE PROCESS OF RENEWAL AS IT FIRST DEVELOPED

A primary requirement of the experiment was that the new minister live in the immediate neighborhood of the church. The first six months were spent in studying the urban laboratory in which I had been called to work. My wife and our two children learned to know and to love many of our Italian neighbors who are mostly Roman Catholics. It was easy to become acquainted with the neighboring priests and ministers in a very casual way as we met on the streets of our common parish. Local political leaders in the community took the initiative to get acquainted since I had cast my lot with them by buying property in their district. It became apparent that the Northwest sector of Rochester in which Lake Avenue is located was the least organized part of the city. There were no effective community action groups and very few club activities for children and youth. The existence of such a vacuum made it easier for the churches of the area to initiate change than in other parts of the city where a proliferation of competing community groups existed.

Back at the ranch, business was going on as usual in the Fall of 1965—except for two things. First, the obvious overlapping of concern in the Board of Social Action and the Board of Missions led, early in 1966, to the approval of a new structure known as the Board of Christian Mission. Its attention was directed toward coordination of our expanding community ministry and strategy planning for renewal in our particular congregation. Secondly, the School of Mission in the Fall of 1965 did not end when the five Sunday evenings dealing with urban problems were over. A core group of 15 persons continued meeting in hopes that a transition could be made from *hearing* the right thing to *doing* the right thing. A local political leader and a leading member of St. Anthony's Roman Catholic Church told the group that Lake Avenue and St. Anthony's were the key stabilizing influences in the area and that they could also be the initiators of community improvement. He agreed to set up a meeting for concerned members from both churches. News of this meeting leaked out in the newly formed Northwest Clergy Association, and four other churches decided to send representatives. The Edgerton Area Neighborhood Association was born in St. Anthony's Church Hall when 110 persons from the 6 churches gathered on January 9, 1966, to discuss the need for a local community organization.

At about the same time, the Area Youth Ministry came into existence. Responding to the requests of street gangs, a teen lounge called "The Place" was opened in the basement of Christ Presbyterian Church. An initial lay staff of 15 persons was recruited from four area churches in order to work at the teen lounge and to engage in street ministry. Staff representatives of four churches in the Edgerton Area: St. Patrick's, St. Anthony's, Christ Presbyterian, and Lake Avenue constituted an informal strategy group. The first program to grow out of this group was Interfaith Dialogue in the Edgerton area in which 40 lay persons from our four churches gathered on 6 consecutive Sunday evenings in the Spring of 1966, for Bible study. Because it was now possible to plan cooperatively for a summer program, the first ecumenical Bible school in the Diocese of Rochester, known as the Neighborhood Interchurch Program, was held for four weeks in August of 1966.

The first year of the renewal process had identified some areas of need in the community which affected adults, youth and children. The churches responded by organizing to meet these needs.

UPCOMING EVENTS IN PITTSFORD IN HONOR OF
MARTIN LUTHER KING JR.

08 7PM
Jan

Herb Smith Jazz Trio
& Youth

15 7PM
Jan

Being Black in America
Film and Panel
Discussion

22 7PM
Jan

Spoken Word
Performance & Open
Mic/Poetry Slam

29 7PM
Jan

Rashaad Parker Film
Screening and
Discussion

02 3PM
Feb

Interfaith
Family Service

MLK Living the Dream Series



Presented by Pittsford CommUNITY
All events held at:
123 S Main. Pittsford NY
pittsfordcommunity.org for more info





Our Christmas 2024 Poinsettia Display