LABC
Worship, Witness and Work
...Striving to embody peace and wholeness in a broken world.

TRANSMITTER

OF THE LAKESHORE AVENUE BAPTIST CHURCH
3534 Lakeshore Avenue, Oakland, CA 94610

OUR LIFE TOGETHER

December, 2023

The Dead Have Work To Do

Camille Parker was born Camille Jabbie (pronounced Jay-Bee) on November 9, 1926 in Amite, Louisiana. On September 1st she died at her home in Castro Valley. The last lines of the obituary written by her son, John, read, "Camille and Warren (her husband) enjoyed their children, grand children and great grand children. She was called home on September 1, 2023 at 96 years old after a long life well lived."

At her burial, I built her eulogy around three words. Smile, Sunshine and Supplication. Camille had a beautiful, light up the room, brighten your day smile. When she smiled the world instantly became a better place.

For many years, Camille was the Sunshine Chairperson of her Sunday School Class. This meant she sent get well-cards, birthday cards and thinking of you cards. It meant she called those who were absent, listened to those who were down and comforted those who were grieving. It was her ministry to be a ray of sunshine. She shined brightly.

Supplication is to offer prayers for the well-being of others. There are many who were greatly helped by the knowledge that Camille was praying on their behalf. Her supplication was diligent, consistent and heart-felt. When Camille said, "I will pray for you," it was more than a nicety. It was a promise. It was a message that she was doing all she could do to go to bat for you.

I like to think that Camille is still praying, making supplication, for usl. It may be more a hope than a deep conviction, but doesn't it makes sense to say that in eternity she is doing more than resting in peace. She is loving us the best way

she knows how. She is holding us in hope, holding us in care, lifting our needs before the Almighty.

There is some biblical support for the idea that the dead have work to. In the ancient sermon that is the Book of Hebrews, the writer encourages his/her audience - *Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses…let us run with perseverance the race that is set before us.*

The members of the cloud of witnesses are those faithful who have died before us and, apparently, they have work to do. Yes, they are watching us but more than that, they are cheering us on, encouraging us, helping us stay the course and not give up. When we see a team respond well to the cheers of the crowd at a game, we get a sense of the value of the great cloud of witnesses that surrounds us. The dead have good work to do.

In the earliest of the New Testament writings, Paul's first letter to the Thessalonians, we read the apostle responding to a question about the dead. He assures the community that the living and the dead have an equal share in the promises of God. His poetic vision, much less than a literal time line, is - *The dead in Christ will rise first…Then we who are alive, who are left, will be caught up in the clouds together with them to meet the Lord in the air; and so we will be with the Lord forever.*

It seems that the living will join with the dead in a magnificent welcoming committee tasked with meeting the Risen Christ as he returns to earth and joining with him as he completes his work of bringing heaven to earth. Again, the dead have good work to do. They have the work of making sure that the Risen One is appropriately welcomed, as well as the work of bringing heaven to earth.

Back to Camille. We greatly miss her for she greatly blessed us. Smile. Sunshine. Supplication. Doesn't it bring a smile to think that her supplication for us has not come to an end. Good news. The dead have good work to do.

Pastor Jim

Tyrone and I thank you for the warm celebration of our birthdays!

Public Witness

This fall has been a season filled with grief. Personal grief as I visited my dad for what I feared (accurately) was the last time, and then gathered with family to begin the process of mourning. Collective grief as the world watched in horror the slaughter of innocents, the taking of hostages, and the subsequent bloodbath of bombs, forced displacement, and the very real threat of genocide. Professional grief as I've been working for an end to the root causes of violence in Palestine and Israel only to see the further disillusion of hope that they will be addressed in non-violent ways, or that many will live to see a day of peace with justice. The numbness of grief and the fog of war intermingle as I, my family, and my multiple communities, try to find our way forward.

It's been hard to sit and think – for the realities of my grief threaten to consume me. Yet, it's been comforting to gather at church, where I feel loved and supported. It's been empowering to gather in the streets, where masses of people are demanding a ceasefire. It's been heartening to see protests throughout the country and world that disrupts the warmongers, callous politicians and indifferent onlookers.

And now, it's time to turn our eyes toward Advent. Thank God. For Advent, which begins with lament and longing, acknowledges the suffering in the world, and makes space for grieving hearts. According to liberation theologian Kelley Nikondeha, "grief work is the seedbed for Advent hope. We cannot grasp the fullness of the Advent narratives to come without attending to the brokenness of our world." She continues, "In Advent, we learn that God is always coming to our troubled times." Come quickly, O God.

I plan to spend some time this season with Kelley Nikondeha's recent book *The First Advent in Palestine: Reversals, Resistance and the Ongoing Complexity of Hope.* I'll share more from her wisdom when I preach on Dec. 3, during the Public Witness Bible Studies Dec. 5 and 6, and in various Advent reflections I'll be writing. This Advent season, may the God of hope, peace, joy and love meet us where we are at – wherever we are at – and lead us to the incarnation of God dwelling in our midst.

Pastor Allison

Pastor of Christian Education — Carolyn Matthews

John 1:10-13 (NRSV)
10 He was in the world, and the world came into being through him; yet the world did not know him. 11 He came to what was his own,[c] and his own people did not accept him. 12 But to all who received him, who believed in his name, he gave power to become children of God, 13 who were born, not of blood or of the will of the flesh or of the will of man, but of God.

The season of Advent is a time of waiting and not a passive waiting but an expectation of an important event. During this time we are in preparation for that event – a celebration of the birth of Jesus, or as Christina Rossetti wrote in her poem: "Love came down at Christmas." For some this preparation means extra rehearsal time in preparation for a big Christmas Eve musical service. And of course there is the shopping, making plane reservations, what we are going to eat, who is making the dressing, and on and on. Even if we complain about the busyness, we look forward to the end result and the time spent with family and friends.

Is it possible to hold on to this joyful anticipation when the world around us is in turmoil? How about when we are experiencing our own inner grief and hurt? We pray for peace and love to make itself known and it seems those prayers go unanswered.

A few years ago I was gifted with the book, *Rise Up Shepherd!: Advent Reflections on the Spirituals*, by Luke Powery. In one of the entries he uses the words to the spiritual, "I've Been Buked," and asks the question, "How do you respond when grace seems to have taken a vacation?" My question is, "how long do we wait?" which is fitting for this Advent season. But perhaps a better question is, "what do we do while we are waiting?" We continue to press on; continue our journey, our life, as God leads and guides us.

In the song, we find these words, "Dere is trouble all over dis worl,…" and then these hopeful words of testimony, "Ain' gwine lay my 'ligion down." While we wait, while we press ahead, we testify that we will not lay aside our religion, our faith, the gift granted us by God, that of salvation and the gift of family. Let us collectively determine to refuse to give in to hopelessness and doubt and instead hold on to the gifts of grace, salvation, and the knowledge that we are God's children and He always holds us in His hands.

Growing Together in Christ,
Pastor Carolyn

December 2023 Preaching Schedule
Lakeshore Avenue Baptist Church
Morning Worship at 10:00 a.m.

December 3 (First Sunday of Advent, Candle of Hope, Communion)
Pastor Tanner will preach
"Hope in Hopeless Times"
Isaiah 64:1-9
As Advent begins, we look with hope to the saving power of God. Yet it is important to remember that God was birthed in the midst of hopeless realities.

December 10 (Second Sunday of Advent, Candle of Peace,)
Pastor Jim will preach
"The Best Is Yet To Come"
Mark 1:1-8
John the Baptist instructed his followers to look ahead with the belief that the best was yet to come.

Blue Christmas Service – 11:45

December 17 (Third Sunday of Advent, Candle of Joy)
Pastor Jim will preach
"Listening To The Light"
John 1:6-8, 19-28
The Light of God shines into our lives in many beautiful ways.

Children's Program – 11:45

December 24 (Service of Carols, 10:00)
Pastor Jim will preach
"What Might An Angel Say To You?"
Luke 1: 26-38
Gabriel's words to Mary are well known. If the angel were to visit us, what might he say?

Evening Service (6:00)
"The Music of the Season"
Music by Voices of Lakeshore, LABC Handbell Ensemble, LABC and Guest Musicians
Reflection by Pastor Jim – "See the Child, See the Children"

December 31 (New Year's Eve)
Reverend Sydney Webster will preach

Church Calendar for December

Department Meetings

Educational Ministry December 3, 8:45 Zoom
Stewardship December 10, 12:30 Zoom
Social Concerns December 13, 6:00 Zoom
Worship and Congregational Care December 26, 7:05 Zoom

Other Meetings and Events

Advent Decorating December 3, 11:45
Public Witness Bible Study December 5 and 6, Library, Zoom
[Ceasefire Walk December 8, 6:00 First Mt. Sinai, 1970 86th Ave, Oakland]
[Flick Flack will not meet in December.]
Forever Young December 9, 12:30, Family Room
Leadership Breakfast December 10, 8:30, Family Room
Blue Christmas Service December 10, 11:45, Sanctuary
Sanctuary Working Group December 13, 7:05 Pastor Tanner's Zoom
[Ceasefire Walk December 15, 6:00 At Thy Word, 8915 International Blvd.]
Cole Stanford Organ Concert December 16, 6:00, Sanctuary
Church Council December 19, 7:05 Zoom
Staff Christmas Lunch December 20, 12:00
Christmas Eve Worship Service December 24, 10:00 and 6:00
LABC Reads December 30, 9-10 Zoom

Weekly Meetings

Sunday at 11:45 a.m. - Adult Bible Study, Church Library, Zoom
Tuesday at 10:30 a.m. - Staff Meeting, Zoom
Tuesday at 6:00 p.m. - Bible Study, Zoom
Wednesday at 10:30 a.m. – Bible Study, Zoom
Thursday at 6:00 p.m. - Handbell Ensemble Rehearsal
Thursday at 7:00 p.m. - Voices of Lakeshore Choir Rehearsal
Saturday at 10:00 a.m. – Time for Prayer, Zoom

December 3 LABC Outreach Offering supports the Fellowship Fund

The church office is closed on Fridays. Pastor Hopkins' day off is Friday.

The deadline for January *Transmitter* input is December 10.

The January *Transmitter* will be mailed December 28.

Children and Youth Corner

Sharing Christmas Joy

"But the angel reassured them. "Don't be afraid!" he said. "I bring you good news that will bring great joy to all people. [11] The Savior—yes, the Messiah, the Lord—has been born today in Bethlehem, the city of David! [12] And you will recognize him by this sign: You will find a baby wrapped snugly in strips of cloth, lying in a manger."
[13] Suddenly, the angel was joined by a vast host of others—the armies of heaven—praising God and saying, [14] "Glory to God in highest heaven, and peace on earth to those with whom God is pleased." (Luke 2:10-14)

Advent and Christmas greetings to you all:

We hope Thanksgiving was a good time spent with family and friends. Right now we are in the time of Advent – the time when we wait for the birth of the baby Jesus – God come down to earth.

One of the ways Lakeshore prepares for Advent and Christmas is by decorating the church – "the Hanging of the Greens." On December 3, after church, we will participate by making ornaments and decorating trees and other places in the home. Last year we took pictures and used them for the decorations. We can make new ones again this year.

As we move closer to Christmas Day, we celebrate Jesus, God's gift to us. Jesus not only taught us with words but also by His actions. Just as Jesus showed love, concern, and compassion for others, he wants us to do the same. Our church shows its love for others through the Hunger Task Force, "Sponsor a Family" program. Gifts and food are given to help a family celebrate Christmas. If you and your family would like to help, please contact Ms. Sheila. Gift wrapping will take place on December 17 and delivery on December 21. Again, Ms. Sheila can answer any questions you may have.

As we continue to move into the days ahead, may you know the love, grace, and peace that Christ brings to each of us and may you have the opportunity to share that same love, grace, and peace with someone else.

With Joy,
Pastor Carolyn

Upcoming Department of Education Dates and Events

The following are events sponsored and/or supported by the Department of Christian Education

December 3 – Hanging of the Greens - after worship enjoy the stone soup, crafts for the children and decorating the Family Room.

10 – Leadership Breakfast – 8:30 am – for current, new, and returning Department members

Two items still in planning stages:
Christmas program

Christmas Eve activities (Christmas Eve is on a Sunday this year)

Grief and Loss Ministry

"My flesh and my heart may fail, but God is the strength of my heart and my portion forever." (Psalm 73:26, NRSVUE)

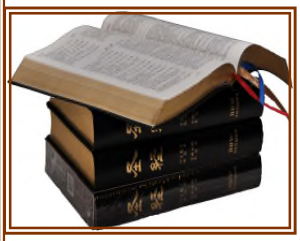
"Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and the God of all consolation, [4] who consoles us in all our affliction, so that we may be able to console those who are in any affliction with the consolation with which we ourselves are consoled by God." (II Corinthians 1:3-4)

People bear the pain of loss from a variety of circumstances and in a variety of ways. It is not only the physical loss of a loved one that can bring grief, but also the loss of relationships, jobs, homes, pets and mobility can bring on feelings of loss. We would like to provide a place where we can share with one another and support one another. To this end we invite you to participate in the grief and loss ministry. Meetings will take place during the Sunday School hour, 11:30 (or 45) on the second Sunday of the month - in person in the church library and on the church's Zoom beginning in January. As the words of the song remind us, "We are here to help each other, walk the mile and bear the load."

Department Members Leadership Breakfast

On December 10 at 8:30 am in the Family Room, there will be the leadership breakfast for members of the departments of Lakeshore: Education, Stewardship, Worship and Congregational Care, Outreach and Membership, Hospitality, and Social Concerns. All current, returning, and new members of the listed Departments are invited to meet and use this time to select various leadership positions, plan meeting times, and calendar events. We hope you will take this opportunity to get ready for the coming year.

Sunday Adult Bible Study



As we move closer to Christmas, we also begin a new series of lessons for the quarter. We are each aware there is much going on in the world. At times, just getting through the day "in our right mind" can be a victory in itself. Our lessons this quarter will help us address some of these feelings. From the editor of the series: *The lessons in the quarter invite us to be active change agents, intentionally showing up and witnessing God's love, justice, and peace to a broken world in need of healing. One candle gives forth great light in darkness; a community of believers united in the Spirit can be a collective beacon brighter than any darkness that seeks to mute our message or harm humanity.* As the song says, "this little light of mine/I'm gonna let it shine."

I would also like to tell you there will be a change in structure in the class. We are making a place for the "Grief and Loss" ministry group to once again meet. Please see the article on page 8 of this issue of the ***Transmitter*** for details.

December 3 **COMMUNITY**: already, but not yet! (1 Corinthians 1:3-9)
December 10 **Blue Christmas Service** (the lesson for the day is: Hope: Good News from God, Isaiah 40:1-11. Even as we remember those who have passed on, we can find confidence in the fact that God gives us hope)
December 17 **RELEASE**: the year of the Lord's favor (Isaiah 61:1-4, 8-11)
December 24 **SURPRISE**: God's mission possible (Luke 1:26-38)
December 31 **COMMITMENT**: the importance of showing up (Luke 2:22-40)

Cole Stanford Christmas Concert

Save the date. December 16, 6:00 in the Sanctuary

Lakeshore is pleased to present our organist, Cole Stanford in concert. Cole is a blessing to our weekly worship service, playing the organ and piano and, sometimes singing with the Voices of Lakeshore. For the concert, he will play and sing Christmas favorites and wintery works by Brahms, Debussy, Messiaen and others.

LABC Reads Schedule

December 2023 – April 2024

The Book of Longings, Sue Monk Kidd – December 2023

The Great Dechurching: Who's Leaving, Why Are They Going, and What Will It Take to Bring Them Back? Jim Davis, Michael Graham, Ryan P. Burge – January 2024

African American History Month Book TBD

The Unlikely Pilgrimage of Harold Fry, Rachel Joyce – March 2024

December Children and Youth Birthdays

4	Kamari Lee	19	Cassie Leichter
17	Sydney Smith	25	Henry Hopkins
		30	Emma Schelin

Family News

Prayers of comfort for LeAnn Snow Flesher as she mourns the death of her father.

Prayers of congratulations for Margaret Alexander in celebration of Tayani's graduation.

Prayers for Pastor Allison as she mourns the death of her father.

Prayers for Leslyn Henry as she mourns the death of her father.

Congratulations to John Claassen for receiving the "Rotary Hero" award for so many years of good works inside and outside of Rotary.... Free Bus passes for Oakland Youth; Corndogs for Corpus Christi; Lakeshore Baptist and Laney College as well as many others; COVID vaccines for Seafarers; working on Homeless Housing and his core value belief that every person has gifts and

Thank You for the Harvest Festival

A sincere and heartfelt "thank you" for all who volunteered and participated in the Harvest Festival. This event for the community took place on October 28, when Lakeshore once again played host to a gathering of creatures real and imagined. The event was held in conjunction with the Lakeshore Business District. It was great weather and we had a nice group of participants. There were plenty of cupcakes to ice (with a variety of frostings), crafts, corn dogs, snacks, and drinks. This could have only taken place with the help of so many who took the time to bring this gift to the community.

Honoring Baptist Women's World Day of Prayer - November 6, 2023

On November 5, 2023, the following Benediction was offered by Alice Kabaganwa, Berkeley School of Theology Intern at LABC)

Thank you Jesus for using the Lakeshore Avenue Baptist Church to transform me from one degree of glory to another. We thank you for each one who is here and all who are following service online. Jesus we thank you for all your gifts. We thank you for the gift of your forgiveness and mercy which brings us into friendship with you and our neighbors. May your grace help us to live as people of faith, hope and charity, trusting in your forgiveness and mercy. The apostle Paul, wrote that he considered everything he'd lost to be rubbish compared to the surpassing greatness of knowing you. Help us to continue to trust in you to accept the full forgiveness and teach us to forgive everyone anything while we pray for one another. I pray in Jesus name.

A PRAYER FOR VETERANS

Dear Lord,
Today we honor our veterans, worthy men and women who gave their best when they were called upon to serve and protect their country.

We pray that you will bless them for their unselfish service in the continual struggle to preserve our freedoms, our safety, and our country's heritage, for all of us.

Bless them abundantly for the hardships they faced, for the sacrifices they made for their many different contributions to America's victories over tyranny and oppression.

We respect them, we thank them, we honor them, we are proud of them. We pray that you will watch over these special people and bless them with peace and happiness.

By Joanna Fuchs

December Flick Flack

Flick Flack will not meet in December.

Hunger Task Force Corner

Christmas Program

Many thanks for supporting our Thanksgiving program. Now on to Christmas! This year, we're sponsoring 31 families (so far) and 25 seniors from City Team, Family Support, Ceasefire, LABC, and St. Mary's. If you are interested in Sponsoring A Family or purchasing gifts for an individual for Christmas, or if you can help shop for items we'll be distributing to families, please email LABCHungerTask@gmail.com or call Sheila Sims at 510.205.8185. We're also taking donations of $25 gift cards to Walmart and grocery stores, as well as $25 Clipper Cards. We will have a sign-up table in the family room on Sundays in December. On Sunday, December 17, we will need help wrapping gifts after church until 2:30 PM. We might need drivers to help deliver gifts to City Team when we're done.

We will deliver our gifts directly to the families we're sponsoring. We'll be delivering to 10 - 15 families and need between 5 - 10 drivers. Please join us at church on Thursday, December 21 at 10 AM as we get organized and start driving by 10:30. Lunch will be provided back at church afterwards. Please let us know if you can help with driving.

CBSU Drive

As winter is approaching the need for coats, blankets, sleeping bags, and **new** undergarments (boxers, underwear, and socks) is great. We're supporting City Team, St. Mary's, Insight Housing, and Family Support Services.

Harbor House is also asking for donations of **new** toys (under $30, e.g., simple board games, puzzles) and children's books (new or very good condition).

If you have donations, please drop them at the church, and we will coordinate a pick-up.

Earth Stewardship Task Force Corner

December is the last month of an exhausting year. Hopefully, it will be better in 2024. Sadly, we are near the extinction of humanity as we know it, UNLESS positive action overtakes inaction of those who, are unwilling to risk losses and supply wars. Life as we used to know it is changing a lot, with more to come. Many of us will eat differently: less prepared or packaged food and more fresh, (for health!) which could be costly due to water restriction on homes and farms, where most of our food is raised. Many of us, lucky to have yards, will turn gardens from lawn to veggies. For some there is balcony farming. Poisons to kill pests will be banned, and soils will need organic additives. Protein will be delivered mostly from veggies and grains (some in combinations), while we use less meat. Many will skip meat altogether due to cruelty in raising herds, methane eruption in belching, and sewage pools. Those who can will drive electric vehicles, hoping to reduce their carbon footprints. Some will simply drive less and, when possible, will walk, bike, take the bus or train, make fewer trips, or to-do lists that promote efficient shopping. More activity will be local, and long trips fewer. Meanwhile, many engineers and scientists will work on ways for cows to burp less, batteries to weigh less and last longer, and needed materials to be sourced with less difficulty, less pollution and less labor abuse. As products become obsolete, they will be updated or reused in new ways, adapting to a circular society. Packaging will be reduced, and plastic altered to be truly disposable or totally boycotted. We will have fewer things in our house, e.g., less clothing, and not buying, but renting major equipment. Many business ventures will be entirely electronic. Also we will pay attention (again) to population control. All this is slowly happening now, but rather than being issues for a few compulsive crazies, they will become common and necessary for all, like the Green New Deal. The change we can all hope for is that saving our planet is so important that wars will cease, and other global waste like wildfires, heat and floods will be under control and finally stopped. But for now—have a Merry Christmas!

—Mary Sue Meads

DECEMBER BIRTHDAYS

Happy birthday to all December birthday folk!

1	Barbra MacNair	10	Derrick Nesbitt		
2	Nellie Buffin	16	Sydney Webster		
3	George White		Judson LeRoy Day II		
4	Carolyn Person	19	Sondra Price		
6	Khalilah Beal-Uribe	20	Jill Nesbitt		
8	Larry Hutchings	27	Carol Norris Travis		
	Larry Sims	28	Innocent Osajindu		
	Tamara Thienes	31	Julian Nesbitt		

Christmas Blessings

Save the Dates:

The following are important upcoming events that we hope you will not miss:

December

3 Hanging of the Greens
9 Forever Young, 12:30
10 Leadership Breakfast, 8:30
Blue Christmas Service, 11:45
17 Hunger Task Force Gift Wrapping after worship service
21 Hunger Task Force prepares to deliver gifts, 10:00
24 Worship Service at 10:00 and 6:00

TRANSMITTER

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