



Evergreen Notes

Volume 20, Issue 6



American Baptist Churches USA

BIENNIAL MISSION SUMMIT

An Online Experience | June 24-26, 2021

Delegates will need to attend the Business Session on Friday, June 25 at 5:00 PM ET.

REGISTER TODAY for the American Baptist Churches Biennial Mission Summit. Visit www.americanbaptists2021.com to register.

Regular 4/1/2021–6/24/2021 | Delegate: \$125 | Participant/
Household of Two: \$125

Another Registration Option | Watch Party, 6 or fewer persons:
\$399

Recognize ABCUSA Family Partners?



AMERICAN BAPTIST CHURCHES USA

Serving as the hands and feet of Christ



American Baptist Home Mission Societies
SINCE 1824



Please be sure your congregation is represented by at least two delegates (or however many your church has) at the Business meeting on June 25th, 2—3 PM.

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Pray for Churches Seeking Pastoral Leadership

- ◆ *Filipino-American Christian Fellowship (FACF),*
- ◆ *Fairview Community Church, and*
- ◆ *Mount Zion Baptist Church*

Lakeshore Avenue Baptist Church

Jim Hopkins, Pastor



Rev. Dr.. James Hopkins

Lakeshore Avenue Baptist Church was founded as the First Baptist Church of Brooklyn on the shores of Oak-

land's Lake Merritt in 1860. Over the 161 years of our history, we have changed names (FBC Brooklyn, Tenth Avenue Baptist Church, Lakeshore Avenue Baptist Church, we have changed buildings and we have changed from being an almost exclusively white congregation to being one of Oakland's most diverse congregations. In terms of race, we are approximately 45% African-American, 45% Euro-American, 7% Asian American, 2% Latino/a American and 1% Native-American.

Our diversity is not accidental. It is a gift of the Spirit. It is the result of decisions made over many years. It is the result of making-mistakes and being willing to learn from them. It is the result of vision, courage, determination, resilience and and repentance. It is the result of believing that, as we see in the book of Acts, Phillip from Judea and the Eunuch from Ethiopia belong in the same chariot, the same Bible class and the same waters of baptism.

Some of the decisions that

have helped LABC become, and remain, a diverse congregation are:

- In the 1950's it worked to integrate our neighborhood helping an African-American family buy a home in what had been a "whites only" area of the city.
- In the 1960's it actively encouraged the families of color moving into Lakeshore neighborhood to participate in the life of the church.
- In the 1970's it expanded its welcome to include gay and lesbian persons.
- In the 1980's it began to recognize the importance of hiring ministerial staff members of color.
- In the 1990's it began using community organizing as a vehicle to advocate for local, state, national laws and policies that address racial inequities
- In the 2000's it recognized the importance of a more determined effort to honor diverse styles of worship.
- In the 2010's it welcomed The San Francisco Kachin Baptist Church as a ministry partner.
- In the early 2020's, in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic, it upgraded its technology so that people did not have to come to the church in order to be part of the church."

At this point I need to be very clear. We have not arrived. Many of the decisions listed above remain aspirational. We have much work to do. If we want to move from being diverse to being interconnected, we have a training or two to participate in. If we want to move from being interracial to being anti-racist, we need to get rid of some baggage. If we want to move from being mono-cultural to being truly multicultural, there is some truth we need to hear and changes we need to make. These things can happen but they won't "just happen."

As we move forward, we have much to learn from the Bible. Biblical scholar N.T. Wright says it well. "The church was the original multicultural project, with Jesus as its only point of identity. It was known, and was for this reason seen as both attractive and dangerous, as a worship-based, spiritually renewed, multi-ethnic, polychrome, mutually supportive, outward-facing, culturally creative, chastity-celebrating, socially responsible fictive kinship group, gender-blind in leadership, generous to the poor and courageous in speaking up for the voiceless."

As we move forward, we have much to learn from the prophets of previous generations such as Howard Thurman. In his book *Jesus And*

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The Disinherited, published in 1949, he writes. "Hatred often begins in a situation where there is contact without fellowship, contact that is devoid of any of the primary gestures of warmth and fellow-feeling and genuineness...it is clear that modern life is so impersonal that there is always the opportunity for the seeds of hate to grow unmo-
lested."

As we move forward, we have much to learn from the current experts in anti-racism, writers like Michelle Alexander, Robin DiAngelo, Ibram X. Kendi, Wendell Griffen, Heather McGhee and Jemar Tisby. These nationally known scholars join with local, regional and national American Baptist leaders such as Natalie Wimberly, the co-chair of the ABCUSA Anti-Racism Task



Force, in urging us to "be curious about our discomfort."

We have reflection to do. We have repentance to engage in. We have reparations to make. In this work we have each other, a congregation that has demonstrated a willingness to work, witness and worship in ways that communicate welcome, acceptance, and appreciation. We have a community that is willing, at least some of the time, to learn of the unconscious ways we communicate "you are a problem" to those

we seek to welcome.

In this work, we are part of a regional family which recognizes that in order for the beloved community to become a reality both hearts and structures need to change and that sometimes structures change before hearts do.

I appreciate Doug's invitation to write this reflection. I pray that it reflects the fact that LABC has learned a few things while still having much to learn. I trust that it communicates an

openness to the "new things" of the Spirit. I hope that it demonstrates an understanding that, if we are to become the beloved community, we must not grow weary.

Peace,

Jim Hopkins
(Jim has been the Senior Pastor at LABC since 1989.)

Evergreen Lay Leaders' Retreat at Camp Burton—Saturday, June 5, 2021; 10 AM—1 PM

Lay Leaders are invited to join in the outdoors and physically distanced event. **Masks are required.** Lunch is provided.

You must **RSVP by May 28th**, so we know how much food to prepare and the amount of space needed.

Our brief retreat will begin at 10AM through lunch. We will be finished with the programmed part of our time together and you will be free to recharge at the camp: Hike, stroll the beach, explore Vashon Island, etc. This is a day of relaxation. Let's stop the languishing!

Click to register

[Event registration](#)

Moving Toward Anti-Racism

God has given those of us in Euro congregations yet another wake up call to take action against racism. Many are using the passion for love and justice that Christ has evoked in us to march, to demonstrate, and to express in other ways our solidarity with our brothers and sisters of color. We have a long way to go to become truly inclusive congregations. Consider these opportunities for moving toward that goal.

You can invite Executive Minister Doug Avilesbernal, along with the Euro Caucus Anti-Racism Team, to hold the weekend workshop, "I'm Not Racist, But We Are." Or, if you feel your congregation isn't ready for that, you can become part of the Euro Caucus Anti-Racism Network of congregations beginning to weave anti-racism work into the culture of your congregation.

Congregants say the workshop gives them great op-

portunity to explore racial bias. Thirty-three people from Salt Lake City FBC and other EBA congregations in Utah gathered to consider white privilege and racism. Anti-Racism Team members showed how white privilege and racial bias operate in society and within each of us, how they develop and what we can do about them.

After her Salt Lake City workshop experience, Jane Nelson had this to say: "I dropped in, not intending to stay, and ended up staying for the entire time. We were encouraged to question and express personal feelings in a safe, loving environment."

And Margaret Cheney added, "Was it worth giving up a Saturday? Absolutely! I thought I knew the meaning of white privilege, but I didn't understand how it starts when one is an infant. Now I have a greater understanding of what

being 'white' truly means in a world full of color."

Executive Minister Rev. Doug Avilesbernal works with this Euro Caucus team assisting congregations in growing toward a more welcoming and sensitive response to everyone coming through their doors. The team focuses on how we can follow Jesus more fully by making each of our churches a place where everyone can find a home.

If you want to learn more about or schedule an Anti-Racism Workshop, or help your congregation move toward anti-racism by becoming part of the Euro Caucus Anti-Racism Network, contact Wim Mauldin at wim_mauldin@hotmail.com.

Pastor Jeff Barker, Advocate For Justice



Fremont Baptist Church's Pastor Jeff Barker stands with the Black Lives Matter protests; asserting Black Clergy Matter and encouraging those who will to Hire Black Folks! Pastor Jeff invites us to 'Be mindful of our "Collective Need" to pray more and fight one another less'. Speak truth to Power, Pastor!

Mount Zion Baptist Church invites you to join in Celebrating the 40th Year Anniversary of Ordination for the Rev. Dr. Patricia Hunter!

The celebration will happen during 10:30 AM worship service, June 5, 2021—the first Sunday in June.

Endowment Task Force

As caucuses are identifying representatives for the Evergreen Endowment Task Force, please use this preliminary/draft outline as a guide to begin conversations:

Time Frame Each representative will be asked for a one year commitment. There will likely be monthly meetings the first four months, and members will reassess frequency depending on progress. Meetings will be no more than 1.5 hours.

Tasks

To create the structure for grants to include structure, granting schedule, requirements for application, follow up, etc.

To develop criteria for a rotating granting committee that will review grant applications.

To create a job description for a coordinator to support grant recipients (church cohorts and pastors).

Happenings Around the Region

The Martin Luther King, Jr. Memorial Baptist Church EXTRA MILE MINISTRY: Outreach Opportunity supporting the REACH Center of Hope, a day center and night shelter for homeless women by collecting and delivering purses filled with women's toiletries and a handwritten note of hope. Your financial donation or gently used purses in good condition with handwritten notes will help provide women with a sense of pride, confidence, dignity and self-worth. **Bring the purses on Saturday, June 5, 11 AM -1 PM, to MLK Baptist Church, 4519 NE 10th St, Renton 98059.** For additional information, contact Helen Jones, Director, at mlkemm@mlkbaptist.org

*******Grace Baptist Church—Tacoma Gracefully Good Coffee** You are invited to email us to place an order at gracefullygoodcoffee@gmail.com

If there is a bulk order from a congregation or church that will make any shipping or delivery much easier. But people can still order individually as well.

Donation suggestion is \$12 per pound of coffee. We offer whole bean and ground coffee (from coarse to fine grind), in medium and dark roasts.

Info from our website: <http://www.gracebaptisttacoma.org/gracefully-good-coffee.html>

*******Evergreen Resource Ministers** are a support provided by the Evergreen region. Receiving thousands of resource links when one is getting started or one is stuck can be paralyzing. So, Resource Ministers can come alongside the church into discovering their call, who they are and what process, resource, etc. might help them best in their context.

Children Ministries	JC Mitchell, revjcmitchell@gmail.com Patrick Green patrickgre@comcast.net
Youth/Family Ministries	Angeline Lau alau.jbc@gmail.com Anita Peebles anita@seattlefirstbaptist.org
Houselessness	Chris Boyer mcboyer@gsbchurch.com
Worship	Victoria Carr vcarr@thenbcf.org
Media	Mindi Welton-Mitchell media@ea-abc.org

*******American Baptist Women of the Pacific Northwest SAVE the date—October 1-3, 2021**, Howard Johnson Hotel, Yakima. The following elections are official: Regional President—Gail Aita; Literature Chair—Lorna Flannery; Coordinator of AB Girls—Gaythoo Thaw and Coordinator of Young Adult Women—Ehlertha Win. Additionally, the North Puget Sound Area Board and the Far West Area Board determined to merge and become one body with the Region ABW.

Please keep **Nzunga and Kihomi** in your prayers as they travel to their beloved Haiti to transact some business.

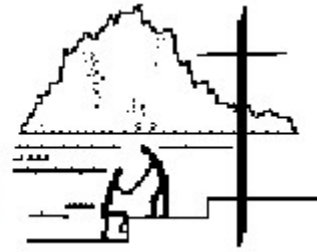
If you have not yet given to Evergreen this year, please go online to www.ea-abc.org and click on "Give" to donate.

We are grateful for your continued support!

First Baptist Church—Mountlake Terrace *Closing*



First
Baptist
Church



We are sad to share that First Baptist Church—Mountlake Terrace will be closing their doors permanently. Yet, we are thankful and rejoice in the remarkable ministry that was carried out by First Baptist since 1952.

And at the same time, we are honored to announce that though their physical ministry and presence in Mountlake Terrace is ending, their ministry continues through a large gift which will allow the Region to help other churches revitalize through innovative ministries that will help them reach out to our current and future communities.

First Baptist Church—Mountlake Terrace's doors will be closing, but their ministry will continue into the future in substantial ways.

From the Pastor's Desk, May Spire

by Pastor Anita Peebles

Excerpted from Seattle First Baptist Church, Spire, May 2021

... Sometimes we can wonder if the disciples really knew what they were getting into when they put down their nets and quills and money, when they left their families. I wonder if they had that “on the edge of something big” feeling, knowing that their lives would never be the same again. And yet — what was ahead of them was participating in a movement opposing the powers and principalities of this world and welcoming all people into the kin-dom of God. Beloveds, we are on the edge of something big. As a church, we have turned our vision to the future, contemplating so many different questions and ideas as Long-Range Planning task forces do their work. But even as we are at the precipice of the something “bold, different and

better,” we cannot forget to be present with each other right now. And right now, we have mourning to do. People of color are continuing to be murdered by police all over this country. Despite the guilty verdicts in the case of George Floyd's murderer, we must remember that accountability is different from justice. Justice would be if George Floyd was still alive to raise his daughter. And as we continue in this pandemic, over half a million people mourn the loss of loved ones gone too soon due to COVID-19. Communities of color have been disproportionately impacted by the pandemic, and disproportionately work essential jobs that keep many on the front lines of confronting this illness. And, Black, Indigenous and People of Color (BIPOC) members of SFBC are underrepresented in leadership roles in this church

community. That is something this whole community must commit to addressing and changing. As a community of faith who follow the Way of Jesus, we are not perfect. We hurt each other. We act and speak thoughtlessly. Sometimes we even need to step away for a while to heal. But also, as a community of faith, we must act together to confront the harm we do to each other as well as the harm outside the walls of our church. We must commit to loving each other so well that we listen deeply and learn fully; reflect on our own complicity in systems of oppression; and center those who have been harmed and marginalized within our community as we commit to repairing harm. We are always on the precipice of loving each other better, and we must choose to go forward doing justice.



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Return Service Requested

Evergreen Notes, the newsletter for member churches, ecumenical partners, national affiliates, and friends of the Evergreen Association of American Baptist Churches is published monthly.

Please submit articles by the 20th of the month prior to expected publication.

You are encouraged to copy and/or reprint information and articles for your congregation and community.



Rev. Douglas Avilesbernal
Executive Minister

Building Bridges, Resourcing Churches & Translating Our Unity

Calendar of Upcoming Event

Executive Committee meets monthly on the second Thursday at 6:30 PM via Zoom during the Corona Virus pandemic).

Association Board Meetings, Quarterly:
August 14, 2021; and
October 8-9, 2021 (Annual Meeting)

Annual Meeting; In Person—October 8-9, 2021, Olympia First Baptist Church. **Theme:** Rooted & Repurposed; **Scripture:** Colossians 2:6-7; **Preacher:** Rev. Dr. Cheryl Dudley, Executive Minister Metro New York

Mission Statement

Being a culturally diverse people who are one in Christ and who value the liberties of our American Baptist Heritage, the Evergreen Baptist Association will

Build bridges between communities;

Provide resources to **equip member churches** to share Christ and teach God’s word; and

Translate our unity to the world.