

With the air filled with a brisk breeze, passionate supporters, family and friends of Myanmar convened in front of the Embassy of Myanmar in Washington, DC. When the clock read eleven-thirty on the morning of February 12, 2021 the District of Columbia Baptist Convention (DCBC) hosted a peaceful prayer vigil with pastors and ministers of the DCBC, church members, including youth and senior citizens, from DCBC churches of Myanmar/Burma heritage, Rev. Dr Patricia Hernandez of American Baptist Churches, USA and a member of the DCBC Burma Workgroup, the past Executive Director/Minister of DCBC, Rev. Dr. Robert Cochran, along with the present Executive Director/Minister, both members of the Burma Workgroup.



# Hear The Voice of MYANMAR

PRAYING PEACE AND JUSTICE

Rev. Stephen Price of First Baptist Church Hyattsville and a member of the DCBC Burma Workgroup rallied those present to sing songs of protest and hope, including songs from South Africa, the African American anthem – Lift Every Voice and Sing, along with other great hymns of the faith. Readings from the Bible and loud cries for victory for brothers and sisters in turmoil were declared. Approximately fifty people stood in solidarity with others all around the world who are deeply concerned for the situation in Myanmar/Burma.

Earlier in the month, the DCBC sent a letter to President Biden urging him to intercede for peace and justice in Myanmar.

The letter also explained how our nation has benefitted greatly from the contributions of immigrants from Burma. They work, pay taxes, vote, and raise families of faithful, productive citizens of the United States of America. Seven percent of DCBC churches are comprised of people from Myanmar/Burma and DCBC has a longstanding relationship with Baptists there. In the midst of the coup, DCBC was teaching classes via Zoom to seminary students in Burma.





During the vigil, Dr. Patricia Hernandez, ABCUSA Associate General Secretary for Women in Ministry and Transition Ministries reflected, “200 years ago Ann and Adoniram Judson were sent as missionaries to Burma (Myanmar). Thus began a relationship that has continued today, with many refugees coming to the USA to escape religious and ethnic persecution and finding themselves at home with American Baptist churches. Given the recent military coup, we honor this long-standing relationship and stand in solidarity with our Burmese brothers and sisters.”

As people were departing the Embassy, a young person stated, “Thank you [DCBC] for organizing this. We, mostly young people, were here a few days ago and we wondered where the Americans were who would stand with us. Thank you very much.”

Facebook live was used to share the gathering with others, including those living the horrors of the coup. Many viewers responded and joined in the prayer and the call for peace, freedom and democracy. Pastor Rollin Van Bik, a DCBC pastor of Lai Baptist Church, said passionately, “thank you all who were involved in showing the whole world that we are not alone for this movement. Your prayers were heard loud and clear across Myanmar as a voice for peace and justice.”



Photo Credit: Patricia Hernandez