

# THE TIDINGS

JANUARY 2015



GOOD NEWS FROM

BROWN MEMORIAL  
PARK AVENUE   
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

ALIVE IN THE CITY AND THE WORLD  
www.brownmemorialparkavenue.org

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## PASTOR'S REFLECTIONS

BY REV. ANDREW FOSTER CONNORS, SENIOR PASTOR  
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"As the Father has sent me," Jesus says, "so I send you" (John 20:21). Jesus sends the disciples out two by two to proclaim the arrival of the kingdom of God and offer healing to those in search of it. The Spirit sends the church out to continue the ministry of Jesus.



The word "mission" is a Latinized version of "sending." And it all starts with God the "Parent" who sends the "Son" who, together, send the Spirit, who in turn, sends the church. We worship a missionary God, who is in the business of sending which makes the church a missionary people. Yet I've come to see how the word "mission" means a lot of different things to different people. Not too long ago a church's "missions" (notice the plural, programmatic focus) meant the good things that wealthy, privileged North American congregations did for the

"less fortunate" here and abroad. "Missions" were easily evaluated by the proportion of a church's "benevolences" that went to help others. Alongside that approach, others spoke of the church's mission in terms of how many people were evangelized and ultimately baptized into the faith. Making disciples of "all nations" (Matthew 28:19) was the mission of the church. Both of these models, and combinations of them, continue to function as working models of mission for many churches.

Yet today's missiologists (Yes, there is such a field of study!) focus us back to the missionary nature of God who sends Christ to redeem us and all of creation. When the richness of that theological truth finds legs in the church, we can begin to understand that the church's mission is not simply to "do missions," nor to convert as many people as possible, but to meet God in the world and participate in the healing, transformative work initiated by the sending God we worship and serve.

Dan Hotchkiss, in his provocative article, "What is the Mission of 'Missions'?" says that the church too often sees itself as another nonprofit with a service agenda, or as a hospital where people are healed. We would do better, he says, to think of the church as a medical school where doctors and nurses are trained to be sent to participate in God's work of healing wherever God sends them. Under Hotchkiss' model, the best investment a congregation can make is in the development and equipping of its own people so that wherever they are sent, God's healing and transformation will take place.

How we understand mission has very practical implications for our church in the ways we organize ourselves, the budgets that we create, and the measures that we use to evaluate whether or not we are being faithful and effective to God's claim and call on our community of faith. For that reason, the Session has asked the staff to make some last minute adjustments to our programming in the first of the year to re-engage the congregation in this question of what mission means in 2015 and how Brown Memorial can most faithfully respond to God's mission in the world.

Tim and I will be looking for ways to integrate missional themes into our preaching.

*continued on page 2*



# MUSIC NOTES

By MICHAEL T. BRITT, MINISTER OF MUSIC  
 michael@browndowntown.org

Susan Stroupe, a soprano in our Chancel Choir will be co-directing the premier of a show called:

*The Mesmeric Revelations of Edgar Allan Poe.* It's an "immersive" show that takes characters from Poe's world and puts them in a "dreamworld," the world between the living and the dead. It will be performed in an historic house in Mt. Vernon. The performance will feature Natanya Washer, our soprano soloist who will be performing the role of Virginia Poe. The show will open Thursday, March 26th and run Thursdays-Sundays through May 3.

Natanya Washer will also be starring with the Peabody Chamber Opera in the U.S. Premiere of *Mansfield Park* by Jonathan Dove based on the Jane Austen novel of the same name, celebrating the 200th anniversary of the novel's publication. The performance will be held at Theatre Project from Thursday, February 12-Sunday February 15.

We welcome bass-baritone, ChunFeng Li to Brown Memorial. ChunFeng has performed as an operatic soloist on three continents singing the roles of Bartolo in *Le nozze di Figaro*, Basilio in *Il barbiere di Siviglia* and Masetto in *Don Giovanni*.



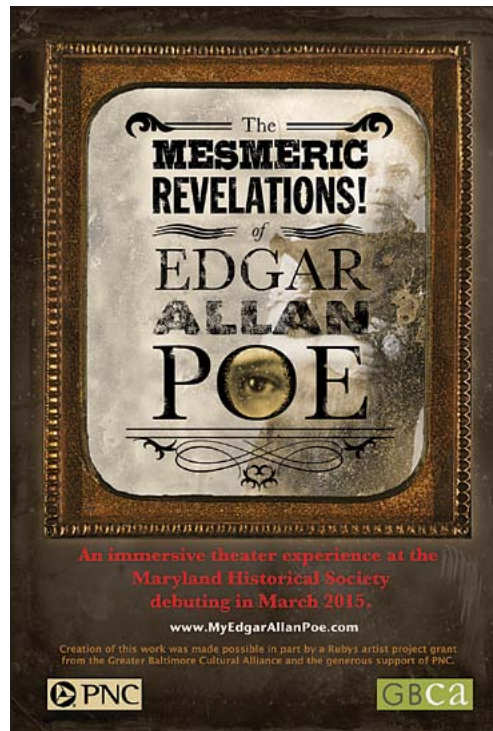
Susan Stroupe



Natanya Washer



ChunFeng Li



ChunFeng won a silver award in the Jilin division of the CCTV National Young Singers' Competition organized by China Central Television in 2010. He was the recipient of the award for Best Performance at Italy's

Orvieto International Vocal Competition in 2007; the same year, he participated in the Marmande International Vocal Competition in France and obtained a full scholarship from Marseille Opera Institute where he received private coaching with Jean Paul from the Paris National Conservatory of Music.

ChunFeng graduated from Guangzhou Xinghai Conservatory of Music with a Bachelor's Degree in Vocal Performance. He currently attends the Peabody Institute as a Master of Music student under the tutelage of Dr. Stanley Cornett. This year, he will perform Osmin in *Die Entführung aus dem Serail* with Peabody Opera Theater.

## PASTOR'S REFLECTIONS

*continued from page 1*

I am contemplating leading a book study for anyone who wants to dig deeper into this topic. On the last Sunday in January, the Rev. Aisha Brooks Lytle, pastor of a church redevelopment project, will bring her own first hand experience of mission where she serves in Philadelphia. These are just a few of our emerging ideas. If you are already part of a small group and want to explore how your group might dig deeper into this topic, contact me, Tim, or Rachel and we'll help you get started. Then later in the Spring we'll look for a time when the whole congregation might come together and share what we've learned about this on-the-move God who continues to send us into the world to participate in God's redeeming work.

# COMMUNICATIONS UPDATE

A construction project is underway at BMPA. The blueprints are being drawn and the foundation laid for a new website. Brown's current online home at [browndowntown.org](http://browndowntown.org) has served the church well for many years, but the time



has come for a renovation to bring the site's structure and design up to current online standards. Session has approved funding for the development

of the new website in 2015, and a committee of church members and staff started working in October on the project. So far the committee has held discussions about the target audiences and goals for the site and how best to reorganize the site's content to appeal to and inform potential new members and the community at-large, as well as to

serve as a more useful resource for the current congregation. At the start of this year, the committee plans to finalize and submit an RFP for the web development project, review proposals as they are submitted, and then select a web design firm to build the new site. The website committee's goal is to have the new site completed and launched in late spring. The website committee is also simultaneously overseeing the development of an updated BMPA logo that will be incorporated into the design of the new website and across Brown's publications to create a more consistent "brand" that represents the spirit of BMPA. Website committee member Abby Jackson has been generously donating her time and professional graphic design skills to this effort. The committee is looking forward to sharing her work for feedback as we finalize this portion of BMPA's rebranding efforts. If you have feedback and ideas for Brown's new website, the committee would love to hear them. Email Jennifer at [jmichael@browndowntown.org](mailto:jmichael@browndowntown.org).

## AN INVITATION FROM THE GLOBAL MISSION COMMITTEE



The Global Mission Committee would like to welcome the congregation to join them in a small group study using the book and study guide *When Helping Hurts*. (How to Alleviate Poverty Without Hurting the Poor and Yourself) The units we will be considering this year are:

Unit 1 – Reconsidering Poverty – Sunday, September 28th

Unit 2 – Seeing God at Work – Sunday, November 9th

**Unit 3 – Understanding Why Good Intentions Are Not Enough – Sunday, February 8th**

Unit 4 – Joining God's Work – Sunday, April 26th

The format for each of these Sunday meetings from 12:30 p.m.-2 p.m. is as follows:

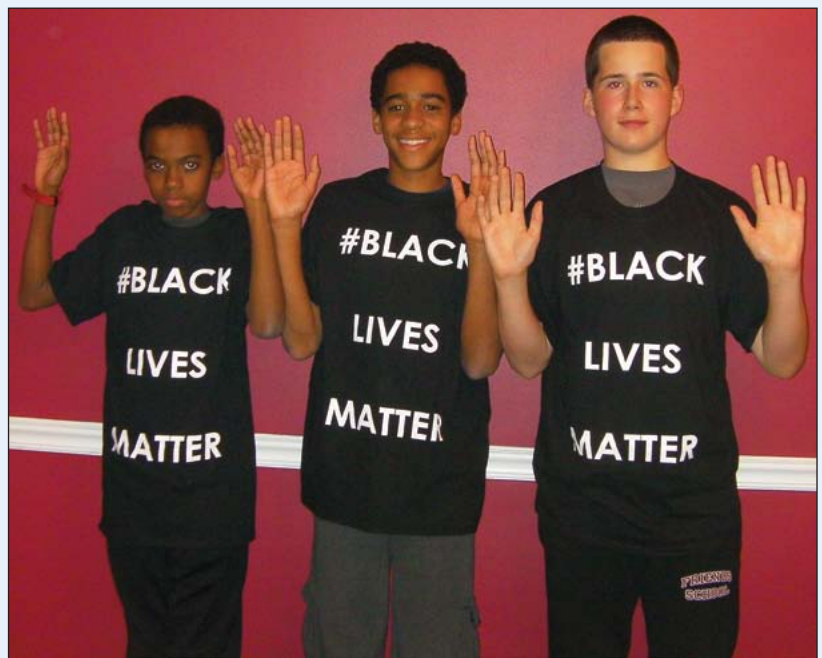
12:30 p.m. Roundtable Global Mission Updates

1-2 p.m. *When Helping Hurts*

- Opening questions from study guide – 10 minutes
- Watching – the online video – 15-20 minutes
- Applying – A time to reflect and share about the video and the opening questions
- Closing – Praying and a closing thought – 5 minutes

Materials will be provided. Please mark your calendars with these dates and join us in the Church House after worship. Feel free to bring some food to share. Please contact Grace Peng if you have any questions: [grace.cy.peng@gmail.com](mailto:grace.cy.peng@gmail.com).

# MARCH FOR JUSTICE DECEMBER 13



Rev. Tim Hughes organized a group of families and youth from BMPA who traveled to Washington, D.C. to attend the March for Justice on Saturday, December 13. The March featured speakers including the Rev. Al Sharpton and the families of Michael Brown and Eric Garner.

# “YOU GOTTA HAVE ART”

BY ELLEN CARTER-COOPER

Perhaps you have seen a bumper sticker with the words, “You gotta have art.” Sheldon Gruber-Liebowitz certainly believes this. As a child in Randallstown, Maryland, he started drawing. Sheldon recalled, “Beginning in the first grade I always loved to draw.” His interest in art was influenced by his grandfather, an



Sheldon Gruber-Liebowitz

émigré from Russia, who constantly doodled and sketched.

In addition to his grandfather, Sheldon reminisced about other people who have shaped his life. His work ethic was shaped by watching his father. Mr. Lebowitz was a plumber who

worked from 6 a.m. to 6:30 p.m. Rarely did he take a day off. Another person who affected his career choice was his 11th grade social studies teacher who encouraged him to follow his dreams.

Sheldon’s curiosity and talent in the field of art led him to MICA where he earned a BFA in illustration and design and later, an MAT in art education. His eagerness to share his skill and fondness for art motivates him to teach the subject in the Baltimore County Public Schools.

As a child, this artist attended a reformed tradition Jewish synagogue. His conversion to Christianity occurred in 1990. He was baptized at the Milford Mill United Methodist Church in 1991. Sheldon mused that oddly, some people still regard him as Jewish, but he describes

himself as “thoroughly Christian, baptized and reborn.”

In 2009, Mark Gruber and Sheldon traveled to Connecticut to unite in marriage. In 2012, they became members of Brown Memorial. Sheldon describes the church as “a sacred space.” Of course the Tiffany Windows inspired this artist. Additionally, he was drawn to join the church because of the “thoughtful sermons and the worshipful music of the choir.”

It did not take long for Sheldon to use his talents at BMPA. He has designed some of the bulletin covers. In his short stint as a member, he has participated in the church as a liturgist, a greeter, an art teacher for the Vacation Bible School, a member of the LGBT group, and a member of the Feasting in Faith group.

The quiet, contemplative artist still sketches. He enjoys reading, movies, and the theater. A connoisseur of good food, Sheldon and Mark regularly can be seen at various restaurants in Baltimore City and Baltimore County. These days Sheldon is content playing with Ronan, the couple’s new puppy who has added a new dimension to both of their lives.

## *Meditation Circle*

Please join us for a time of silence and community **every Sunday, 9:00-9:30 in the Church House**. All are welcome. Using a few words or an image to bring us to a place of stillness, we sit together in a circle of meditative quiet, ending with prayer. Through stilling our minds and opening our hearts, we find community with one another and with God. For more information or to be added to an email list for the Meditation Circle, please contact June Fletcher-Hill at [fletcherhill@msn.com](mailto:fletcherhill@msn.com) or 410-367-0995. Plan to arrive a few minutes before 9:00 as we begin our time together right at 9:00.

# JANUARY BIRTHDAYS



01/01 Fred Lazarus  
 01/01 Lisa Willis  
 01/02 Deborah Baer Reed  
 01/02 Pauline Piper  
 01/03 John Warmath  
 01/04 Emily Burton  
 01/05 Elden Schneider  
 01/09 Yari Armand  
 01/09 Rebecca Thomson  
 01/10 Katie Shaw  
 01/11 Hailey Willis  
 01/12 Elizabeth "Lizzie" Mills  
 01/12 Meredith "Nellie" Mills  
 01/13 Emily Bishai  
 01/13 Richard Cook  
 01/13 Hadicha Murat-bekova  
 01/14 Taylor Branch  
 01/16 Kathy Smith  
 01/17 Elena Kirkpatrick  
 01/17 Shelby Willis

01/18 James Forward  
 01/19 Elizabeth Wagner Cavallon  
 01/20 Michael Hughes  
 01/21 Kristi Satterlee  
 01/22 Chrystie Adams  
 01/23 Horace Liang  
 01/24 Charles McManus  
 01/25 David Bielenberg  
 01/25 Shayna Blinkoff  
 01/26 Sean Artes  
 01/26 Mark Gruber  
 01/27 Rebecca Adams  
 01/28 Charles Joseph Reichelt, II  
 01/30 Ben Anderson  
 01/31 Maya Goldsby-Allen

Note: If you wish to have your birthday listed in The Tidings, please contact Sharon Holley, church secretary, at 410-523-1542, or via e-mail at Sharon@browndowntown.org.

## GIFTS OF STOCK

The giving of Stocks or other Securities, which have appreciated in value, may provide a tax advantage to you, the donor. If you would like to make a gift to the church in this manner, please provide the following information to your broker.

**DTC #0235**

**RBC Wealth Management**

**A/C #313-81881**

**Account Name – Brown Memorial Park Avenue Presbyterian Church**

**Contact: Geoffrey Brent or Lisa Vetter**

**Phone Number: 410-316-5319**

Please also inform Sharon Lucas, our Financial Administrator: slucas@browndowntown.org

## DECEMBER RESPONSIBILITY SCHEDULES SUNDAY WORSHIP SERVICE

For an itemized list of Responsibility schedules at BMPA, please click on this link: <http://www.browndowntown.org/index.php?s=backstage>

*If you would like to participate in one of the areas of responsibility, please contact Sharon Holley at (410) 523-1542 or via email at sharon@browndowntown.org.*

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**Timothy Hughes, Associate Pastor for Youth.**

**Ellen Carter Cooper, Editor.**

**Laura McConnell, Graphic Designer.**

Send contributions by the 15th of each month to **edccooper58@hotmail.com.**

# JANUARY 2015 AT BMAPA\*

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
<p><b>28 DECEMBER</b> Meditation Circle 9:00 a.m. Service of Worship 11:00 a.m. Deacons Standing Meeting 12:30 p.m.-1:30 p.m.</p>	<p><b>29</b> Tiffany Committee Meeting 11:00 a.m.</p>	<p><b>30</b> CHURCH OFFICE CLOSED</p>	<p><b>31</b> NEW YEARS EVE CHURCH OFFICE CLOSED New Year's Eve Prayer Service 5:30 p.m.</p>	<p><b>1 JANUARY</b> HAPPY NEW YEAR 2015! CHURCH OFFICE CLOSED Meditation on the Hill AA Meeting 5:30 p.m.</p>	<p><b>2</b> Feasting in Faith 6:30 p.m.</p>	<p><b>3</b></p>
<p><b>4</b> Meditation Circle 9:00 a.m. Education Hour, Choir Warm-Up 9:45 a.m.-10:45 a.m. Service of Worship 11:00 a.m. Handbell Choir Rehearsal 12:20 p.m.-1:20 p.m. Potluck Lunch 12:30 p.m.-1:30 p.m.</p>	<p><b>5</b> Tiffany Committee Meeting 11:00 a.m.</p>	<p><b>6</b> Staff Meeting 10:00 a.m.</p>	<p><b>7</b> Midweek Bible Study 10:30 a.m.</p>	<p><b>8</b> Meditation on the Hill AA Meeting 5:30 p.m. Chancel Choir Rehearsal 7:00 p.m.-8:45 p.m.</p>	<p><b>9</b> Feasting in Faith 6:30 p.m.</p>	<p><b>10</b></p>
<p><b>11</b> Meditation Circle 9:00 a.m. Education Hour, Choir Warm-Up 9:45 a.m.-10:45 a.m. Service of Worship 11:00 a.m. Handbell Choir Rehearsal 12:20 p.m.-1:20 p.m.</p>	<p><b>12</b> Tiffany Committee Meeting 11:00 a.m.</p>	<p><b>13</b> Staff Meeting 10:00 a.m. Session Meeting 7:00 p.m.</p>	<p><b>14</b> Midweek Bible Study 10:30 a.m.</p>	<p><b>15</b> Prayer Shawl Ministry 1:00 p.m.-3:00 p.m. Meditation on the Hill AA Meeting 5:30 p.m. Chancel Choir Rehearsal 7:00 p.m.-8:45 p.m.</p>	<p><b>16</b></p>	<p><b>17</b></p>
<p><b>18</b> Meditation Circle 9:00 a.m. Education Hour, Choir Warm-Up 9:45 a.m.-10:45 a.m. Service of Worship 11:00 a.m. Handbell Choir Rehearsal 12:20 p.m.-1:20 p.m.</p>	<p><b>19</b> MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR. BIRTHDAY HOLIDAY – CHURCH OFFICE CLOSED</p>	<p><b>20</b> Staff Meeting 10:00 a.m.</p>	<p><b>21</b> Midweek Bible Study 10:30 a.m.</p>	<p><b>22</b> Meditation on the Hill AA Meeting 5:30 p.m. Chancel Choir Rehearsal 7:00 p.m.-8:45 p.m.</p>	<p><b>23</b> Feasting in Faith 6:30 p.m.</p>	<p><b>24</b></p>
<p><b>25</b> Meditation Circle 9:00 a.m. Service of Worship 11:00 a.m. Annual Congregational Meeting 12:30 p.m.-2:00 p.m.</p>	<p><b>26</b> Tiffany Committee Meeting 11:00 a.m.</p>	<p><b>27</b> Staff Meeting 10:00 a.m.</p>	<p><b>28</b> NEW YEARS EVE CHURCH OFFICE CLOSED New Year's Eve Prayer Service 5:30 p.m.</p>	<p><b>29</b> Meditation on the Hill AA Meeting 5:30 p.m. Chancel Choir Rehearsal 7:00 p.m.-8:45 p.m.</p>	<p><b>30</b> Youth Winter Trip</p>	<p><b>31</b> Youth Winter Trip</p>
<p><b>1 FEBRUARY</b> Meditation Circle 9:00 a.m. Education Hour, Choir Warm-Up 9:45 a.m.-10:45 a.m. Service of Worship 11:00 a.m. Youth Return from Winter Trip Handbell Choir Rehearsal 12:20 p.m.-1:20 p.m.</p>	<p><b>2</b> Tiffany Committee Meeting 11:00 a.m.</p>	<p><b>3</b> Staff Meeting 10:00 a.m.</p>	<p><b>4</b> Midweek Bible Study 10:30 a.m.</p>	<p><b>5</b> Meditation on the Hill AA Meeting 5:30 p.m. Chancel Choir Rehearsal 7:00 p.m.-8:45 p.m.</p>	<p><b>6</b></p>	<p><b>7</b></p>

\* For a more detailed and up-to-date BMAPA Calendar, please go to <http://www.mychurchevents.com/calendar/calendar.aspx>.