



**BROWN
MEMORIAL
PARK AVENUE**

Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)

Good News from Brown Memorial Park Avenue
Presbyterian Church

Tidings

SEPT. 2015

Pastor's Reflections

Rev. Andrew Foster Connors
Senior Pastor

A 2006 study of more than 1,500 Americans concluded that social isolation has deepened significantly over a 20-year span and continues to grow. More than a quarter of Americans reported they have no one to discuss personal troubles with, a percentage that grows to 50 percent when immediate family members are excluded from the list.



Despite our high-tech connected world, we seem to be more isolated than ever. Studies like this have huge implications for our church. On the one hand, the church becomes more critical than ever in creating spaces for true human connection and relationship.

On the other, we sometimes bring unrealistic expectations for the church to fix our personal alienation when the problem is with all of us and with the culture that

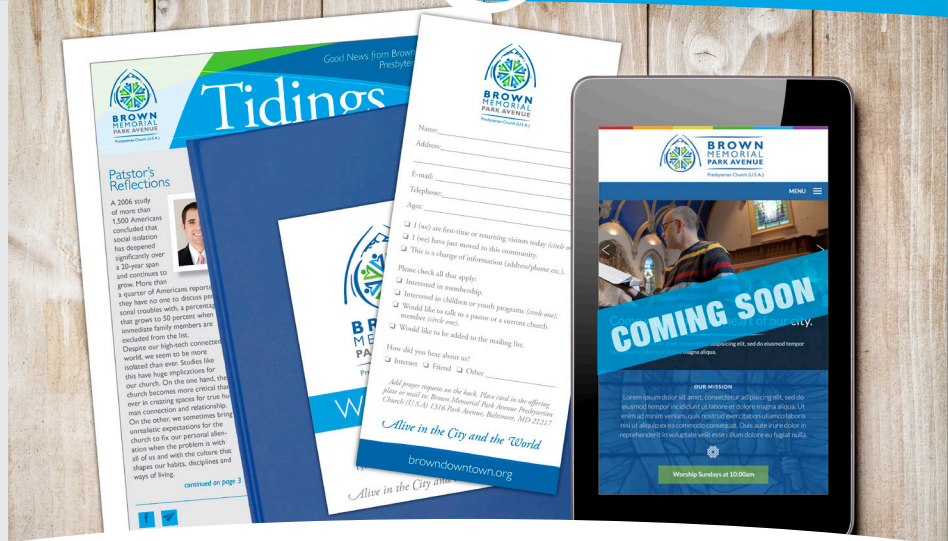
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andrew@browndowntown.org



@pulpit



A New Year and a New Look for BMPA

This month, to coincide with the new church year, we are pleased to officially introduce the redesign of this publication and the redesign of Brown Memorial's logo. You will find BMPA's new "brand" carried through all communications – our stationary, visitor cards, *This Week @ Brown* and eventually the new website (scheduled for launch in November).

We thank BMPA member Abby Jackson, who enthusiastically volunteered her time and professional graphic design skills, to take the former logo (designed by Mary Mashburn) and give it a new spin. The new logo blends the church window illustration, representing the rich history and architecture of BMPA, with symbols of people gathered inside, reflecting our vibrant church community. The blues of the logo mirror the bold blue of the Sanctuary ceiling. We look forward to using this beautiful design as the symbol of BMPA for years to come. ♦

INSIDE

Tutoring Program Kick-Off.

Your support is needed. See page 4.

Soaring Eagles Learning Camp.

See staff and kids in action. See page 5.

Donor Recognition.

John and Audrey DeHoff's legacy. See page 7.

Music Notes.

Ways to lend your talent to worship. See page 9.

Pastor's Reflections

Continued from Page 1

shapes our habits, disciplines and ways of living.

Such deep alienation calls both for new ways of organizing our life together, and for the discipline of individuals to learn new ways of relating to each other. The early church believed the primary significance of Jesus Christ was overcoming the primary divisions of their day. Jesus brought together Jew and Gentile, male and female, slave and free (Gal. 3:23), the primary categories of the time that kept people apart. For this reason, Paul could speak about God reconciling the world through Jesus Christ. Reconciliation is a relational word, a bridging of separation, a coming together.

For the early church, this primary theological affirmation led to some significant reorganization of the church's life together. For example, it upset cherished ways of practicing table fellowship and called for a new, radical way of sharing resources according to the diverse needs of the community. But it also placed expectations on individuals to practice a deeper kind of generosity and a greater sense of mutual forbearance toward others in the one family of God.

For us, it means rethinking the way we organize our life together, the ways we invite each other into the ministry and mission of the church, the ways we worship and serve. Because we are the body of Christ and not the building, or the institution, or the statue of Christ, we are necessarily always growing and always changing. Just as a growing child requires new clothes and shoes, we have to always adapt to the changes occurring within the church.

We're making some changes this fall to keep the church's organizational wardrobe current to the needs of the body. For each change or activity, I'd like to accompany it with a personal challenge.

Church Effort: Rally **Sunday, Sept. 13**, the "back to church" celebratory day that marks a return to 11 a.m. worship and educational programming at 9:45 a.m., we'll celebrate with a cookout following worship. Church potlucks continue on the second Sunday each month and we'll shift our celebration of the Lord's Supper to coincide with these communal feasts.

Individual Effort: Introduce yourself to at least one person you do not know! Find out what led them to Brown Memorial and what keeps them here.

Church Effort: Community Connection Fair – **Sept. 20** – Small groups, committees, mission teams, and everyone else leading a ministry will setup displays about their ministries in the church.

Individual Effort: Find one place where you might "inhale" the grace of God in learning or spiritual development, and one place where you might "exhale" God's grace in service or mission support.

Church Effort: City Love Speaker Series: Challenge and Opportunity in Baltimore – **Sunday, Oct. 18** and the subsequent fourth Sundays in the fall. Over lunch we'll feature educational events addressing significant challenges facing Baltimore in the wake of the unrest.

Individual Effort: Sit at a table with at least one person you do not know! Learn from them how long they've been living in Baltimore and how the Baltimore uprising affected them.

Above all, come back to church in the fall ready to try new ways of relating to each other as we continue to resist a culture of alienation and loneliness in favor of a community of relationship and hope. ♦

News of Note from the Session

- The **Tiffany Committee** has submitted \$3,500 to the session for distribution to mission. The session is most appreciative, and recommendations are being considered for allocating this gift.
- **Rev. John Russell Stanger**, Executive Director of Parity, sent a letter of appreciation to BMPA for its \$200 gift to the 2015 Emerging LGBTQ Pastors Retreat.
- **Tom Waldron** and Elders **Deb Baer** and **David Nyweide** have formed a subcommittee to establish Tutoring Commission members' term classes and rotation. They will draft a plan for session approval.
- **Andrew Foster Connors** has enlisted help in revising various statements used to describe BMPA's mission for posting to the new church website.



The next Session meeting is **Sept. 15, 7 p.m.**, in the Church House. Docket items include: the Stewardship Committee's report on its fall campaign; the Facilities Planning Team's report and recommendations; the budgeting process for 2016; and rollout of the website.



Contact, Anne Heuisler, aheuisler@comcast.net, Clerk of the Session, for information or questions.



BUILD Update

by Patti Flowers-Coulson

Brown Memorial had a terrific turnout at the July 23 BUILD One Baltimore Strategy Session at St. Matthew's Church (thanks to Anne Heuisler for her help signing people in). BUILD One Baltimore aims to end the divide of riches and safety for some Baltimore residents, and the poverty and violence suffered by others.

With an eye to the 2016 mayoral elections, BUILD organizers and leaders are beginning a citywide canvassing effort asking residents to support the BUILD One Baltimore Campaign to: create quality jobs, opportunities for youth, and safe communities, and to call on candidates for citywide elected offices to make these issues their top priorities in 2016.

City residents also commit to vote in the 2016 elections. BUILD is looking for help registering people to vote and recruiting volunteers to help with voter registration and Get Out The Vote efforts. ♦



Mark your calendars for Oct. 1 as the next action date. Contact Patti Flowers-Coulson (flowcoul@verizon.net) to help canvass.



Please Pray For...

Mission worker **Leisa Wagstaff**, BMPA's former partner in Cameroon, and her work in South Sudan at the invitation of the Presbyterian Church of South Sudan. In the *Mission Connections* newsletter published by PC(USA), Leisa describes her mission work:

It is in the small pockets of peace in the country that the education component of the South Sudan Education and Peacebuilding Project (SSEPP), a partnership initiative of the PC(USA) and the Presbyterian Church of South Sudan (PCOSS), is engaged. Though the calm in these areas are sometimes fragile and tenuous, communities have started to resettle themselves in the land they fled. Our ministry is to walk alongside our brothers, sisters and children wherever they are and join them in their looking forward to going home and rebuilding their lives. ♦



Connect with Leisa at

leisa.wagstaff@pcusa.org.
Read more about her work at pcusa.org/leisa-wagstaff.

New School Year, New Opportunities for Tutoring

Program receives \$52,000 gift

by Lisa Hoffberger

The nation's oldest volunteer tutoring program is eager to kick-off its 52nd year and you are invited to participate. Opening Day for Brown Memorial Tutoring kicks off with a keynote address to tutors and friends on **Sept. 10**, followed by tutor training sessions **Sept. 15-17**. Under the dedicated leadership of Executive Director Martha Socolar and Co-Assistant Directors (veteran Coppie MacFarlane and incoming Amy Munds), these sessions provide extraordinary training to volunteer tutors on the Orton-Gillingham approach to reading instruction and lesson-planning. Amy brings a background in teaching and music therapy and has volunteered two years with the program. As luck would have it, former Assistant Director and longtime educator, Maryann Povell, will continue as a tutor, mentor and training-session leader.

The activity level promises to ratchet up **Oct. 5** when the first students arrive for weekly one-on-one sessions focused on reading, writing and expanding their horizons. This year's theme centers on music exploration through the study of musical instruments. You might guess that it is not only fulfilling to help a student overcome significant learning challenges...it is also energizing!

The obstacles facing Baltimore's children are enormous and new tutors are always needed. As a result, we are looking to expand our resources to extend our reach. Building on a legacy of success, the Brown Memorial Tutoring Program is launching an annual giving program this school year, with a goal to increase its funds so that more pupils can be served. To kick-off the campaign, we are excited to announce the receipt of an important gift from The Lila Childress Amsel Foundation (LCAF), which will support tutor training each fall going forward.



City youth will begin weekly tutoring in reading and writing Oct. 5.

Dr. Sheldon Amsel founded LCAF in memory of his wife, Lila—a dedicated Brown Memorial tutor who died in her 40s from cystic fibrosis. LCAF's mission is to support children's programs that were important to Lila, and the tutoring program was one of them.

With LCAF's founder and board members advancing in age, the foundation recently decided to dissolve by dividing its remaining funds between two of its beneficiaries. Our proposal to establish the Lila Amsel Endowment, from which to disperse funds annually, was received whole-heartedly by the foundation. With their gift of roughly \$52,000, we enthusiastically announce the naming of the Lila Amsel Tutor Resource Room, through which Lila will continue to be remembered for her kindness and commitment as a tutor and generous supporter.

Brown Memorial's tutoring program is grateful for the support it receives from a broad cross-section of the community: church members, tutors, foundations and corporations. Watch for more about how you can contribute to the lives of underserved, educationally challenged youth in Baltimore by helping our very own community resource thrive and grow. ♦



**For training session details, contact
Martha Socolar, 410-532-1542, ext. 17,
brownmemoriantutoring@gmail.com.**

BMPA Members Share Love of Learning

Camp has successful fourth year

by Chrystie Adams, Director, Soaring Eagles Learning Camp

Year four of Brown Memorial's Soaring Eagles Learning Camp (SELC), held June 22-25 at Eutaw-Marshburn Elementary School (EMES), saw our largest group of registered campers – 90. This year's participants included a new rising 6th grade robotics camp that students applied for by writing an essay, as well as a few rising 5th graders who were part of after-school STEM activities lead by Beth Goldsby-Allen.

The past four years at EMES have seen a remarkable positive change in the school climate under the leadership of Principal Evon Hewitt Jr. The SELC staff was saddened to learn Mr. Hewitt is leaving the school this year. Mr. Hewitt has worked tirelessly to change the climate at EMES to a place where peace and caring are continuously sought and where learning is valued and honored.

Using a learning station rotation model developed by the Baltimore Dakota Learning Camps, the SELC has put into practice the idea that children thrive when they have attention from young people and adults who share the love of learning with them. The camper-to-staff ratio is usually one counselor to no more than three campers so that campers learn in an environment where they have the help they need and receive positive feedback. The SELC staff of 47 folks was made up this year of Brown Memorial members and friends, Church of the Reconciliation Youth Group members and leaders, and The Center staff.

Each camp day started with breakfast provided by Brown member "Breakfast Sponsors" – Michael Britt, Sandra Fink, Barbara Francis and Julie Hanks. Barbara Francis is now the "Breakfast Fairy," as she made daily deliveries of cold Capri Suns, fruit, breakfast bars and cheese sticks. Thanks to all for their generosity!

A morning gathering followed breakfast. Mr. Hewitt gave permission for the SELC day to start with his 4 B's



PHOTO BY: PAUL NEWILL-SCHAMP

Rap – "P, double R, C, S like me, Bet you can't do that like me..." In a huge circle, the campers and staff moved, grooved and rapped.

Then it was time for the learning stations and the new Book Nook, where each group of campers had 15 minutes daily to select books. Thanks to generous Brown Memorial members, we collected 22 big boxes of books containing everything from board books to higher-level books. Family members also selected books on Family Day. At the camp's conclusion, we had three boxes left. Thanks to David Smith, Erin Masercola and Julie Byerley for their excellent organization of the Book Nook.

[continued on page 6](#) ↪

Love of Learning

Continued from Page 5

Campers visited five learning stations on a 25-minute rotation:

- **Math Games** – Julie Hanks, Carol Graves, Don Peoples, Nannette Mitchell and Ryan Cox (nephew of Julie) – Focus was on telling time, money and computation as requested by the staff at EMES. Creating their own paper plate clocks was a fun activity for the campers.

- **Creative Writing** – Elden Schneider and Janice Keating (friend of BDL from Woods Presbyterian Church) – Elden and his puppet friends enticed the campers to share their thoughts about a variety of prompts. Elden put together a SELC Creative Writing Sampler that was sent home with the campers on Family Day.

- **Hands on Science** – Rebecca Adams, Megan Trainer and Johnathan Swann (teacher friends of Rebecca's from Hampstead Hill Elementary) and Ryan Kelly (grandson of Bonnie and Elden Schneider) – Starting with the water cycle and making water bags that were observed and recorded in science journals each day, the campers moved on to building volcanoes, creating edible plant cells and making their own play dough.

- **Art** – Sarah Ramirez Cross, Caroline Cross (Brown) and Kyndra Green and Kristin Alexander Hurst (Church of the Reconciliation, Chapel Hill, NC) – Campers decorated canvas bags to hold their books and projects. They also decorated camper group picture frames and Tiki masks.



PHOTO BY: PAUL NEWILL-SCHAMP

- **Technology** – Brennan Stephens (Church of the Rec) – Campers played math and reading games daily in the EMES Computer Lab.

We had many generous folks from Brown who sponsored lunch – Cheryl Finney, Elena Mills, Rachel Forward and Beth Gregory. Special thanks goes to the Church of the Reconciliation youth who made more than 300 sandwiches served on Family Day. The campers and their counselors seemed so happy to end their day sharing a meal and sharing about their day at camp.

Family Day was a huge success as family members joined their campers for lunch and then visits to the Book Nook and learning stations. The joy campers showed in their faces and active bodies as they shared about SELC with their families was a joy to witness.

Thanks goes to all staff members of the 2015 SLEC for another great year of learning, renewing friendships and making new friends. ♦

The counselor groups for the 2015 SELC were as follows:

1st/2nd Grade - Bonnie Schneider, Anna Connors, Elias Stephens, Kyra Alexander-Hurst, and Katie Eagan.

1st/2nd Grade - Robyn Davis-Stephens, Jenny Hockenberry, Yaheem Thomas, Randy Burnett and Annie Schindler.

3rd Grade - Steve Unhrue-Lead, Caleb Jones, Ali Thomas, Anna Stewart and Evan Barrett-Carlson.

4th Grade - Keana Davis, Jack Koonce, Jeb Byerley, Nick Forward and Adekunle Arije.

5th Grade - Tim Hughes, Jackson Mills, Major Bonin, Ben Blue and Will Fletcher-Hill.

5th and 6th Graders - Justin Seifts and Bennett Byerley.

Donor Recognition:

The Legacy of John and Audrey DeHoff

The work of Brown Memorial is made possible in large part by the generosity of those who have included us in their wills. Did you know that approximately 45% of our annual operating budget is funded through our endowment? *The Tidings* will publish a series of articles in the coming year that highlight individuals or families whose bequest to Brown Memorial has helped build our endowment to where it is today. Valued at approximately \$6 million, we have engaged the qualified individuals at Brown Advisory Group to manage a large portion our resources.

If you are interested in including BMPA in your own estate planning, please contact Financial Administrator, Sharon Lucas, slucas@browndowntown.org.

The Evening Sun described him as a “quiet, thoughtful man with a willingness to innovate.” John DeHoff termed himself a “worker bee,” and many at Brown Memorial would be inclined to call him a “gadfly,” constantly challenging ministers and congregants to think more deeply about spirituality and social action.

Certainly he was all of these things.

John DeHoff was an active member for 71 years of Brown Memorial Presbyterian Church on Park Avenue, where he was a Sunday school teacher and deacon. With a trademark twinkle in his eye, he loved to greet people at the door of the church, and at least once a week sent letters to various parishioners and to the Session exploring spirituality and social action.

Like his parents, John DeHoff

was a longtime active member of the Theosophical Society in America and, according to his daughter, Susan DeHoff Montgomery, had an active intellectual curiosity that lasted throughout his life. “His byword was ‘listen, learn and look ahead,’” she told *The Sun*. “He also believed in reincarnation and often quoted Voltaire as saying, ‘It is not more surprising to be born twice than once; everything in nature is resurrection.’”

In a more practical vein, he was an accomplished bread baker and supplied loaves for Communion services at Brown. He also commissioned the wooden flower stands still used for our services and crafted by Sam Robinson, a son of Sally and Court Robinson.

A Baltimore internist who later




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continued on page 8 ➔



September Birthdays

- 09/02 **Monica Rakowski**
- 09/02 **Mary Randall**
- 09/02 **Gregory Trimble**
- 09/03 **Hilda Imhoff**
- 09/04 **James E. Cox**
- 09/04 **Ang Robinson**
- 09/10 **Azra Sara Bartell**
- 09/10 **Jacqueline L. Cole**
- 09/10 **Micheline Manus**
- 09/12 **Susan Stroupe**
- 09/13 **Emma Fesperman**
- 09/14 **John Burton**
- 09/14 **Youngmi Song**
- 09/16 **Nannette Mitchell**
- 09/16 **Karen Nelson**
- 09/16 **Jody Shaw**
- 09/16 **Linell Smith**
- 09/18 **Nicole Mitchell**
- 09/20 **Trevor Bishai**
- 09/22 **Lynn Clippinger**
- 09/22 **Dylan Aaron Smith**
- 09/24 **Luke Clippinger**
- 09/24 **Barbara Hull Francis**
- 09/24 **Helen Logan**
- 09/25 **Jack Burton**
- 09/25 **Mia Goodwin Davis**
- 09/25 **Sabine Goodwin Davis**
- 09/25 **Grace Peng**
- 09/28 **Keiffer Mitchell, Jr.**
- 09/28 **Amanda Olmstead**
- 09/28 **Donna Senft**
- 09/28 **Jim Veatch**
- 09/29 **Lisa Hoffberger**

 **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.**

Donor Recognition

Continued from Page 7

served as the city's health commissioner for nearly a decade, Dr. DeHoff earned a bachelor's degree from the Johns Hopkins University in 1935, his medical degree from Hopkins in 1939, and years later his master's in public health from the Bloomberg School of Hygiene and Public Health. During his long career he helped establish the Provident Comprehensive Neighborhood Health Center, taught medicine at the University of Maryland Medical School, and lectured at the Bloomberg School. After stepping down as health commissioner, Dr. DeHoff served as health adviser to Mayor Schaefer for several years,

and was a consultant to the Social Security Administration and the Maryland Board of Physician Quality Assurance, retiring when he was 83.

Several years before his death in 2009 at age of 96, he and Audrey, his wife of 71 years, established two endowment funds at the church: The John & Audrey DeHoff Fund, to be used for lectures, seminars and sermons on spirituality and Christian mysticism. The T. Guthrie Speers Fund, in honor of the former pastor, is designated for social ministry. Audrey died in 2014, but the legacy of their interests lives on at Brown Memorial through their gifts to the endowment. ♦



Meditation Circle

Join us for a time of silence and community every Sunday, 9-9:30 (please arrive a few minutes prior to 9 a.m.), 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.

 **Join the Meditation Circle email list: contact June Fletcher-Hill, fletcherhill@msn.com, 410-367-0995.**



Music Notes

Lend your musical talent to worship.

by Michael Britt, Minister of Music

As you know, the music ministry at Brown Memorial offers many opportunities for those who would like to be active in the worship life of our congregation. Please consider one of the following:

Chancel Choir. Our Chancel Choir, comprised of talented volunteers and professional musicians, provides leadership each week in the 11 a.m. worship, singing a diverse repertoire of great choral works and anthems. Rehearsals are Thursdays, 7–8:45 p.m. (beginning **Sept. 10**), in the sanctuary. We welcome those interested in joining the Chancel Choir to observe and sing with us during our rehearsals.

Handbell Choir. The Handbell Choir is a multi-generational ensemble that welcomes all regardless of handbell ringing experience. Training is provided. This ensemble rings about eight times annually and performs on a 3 ½ octave set of white chapel bells and a 2 octave set of Malmark Choir Chimes. First rehearsal is **Oct. 4** in the labyrinth following worship.

Children's Choir. Rehearsals for the Children's Choir (open to grades 3-8) are Sunday afternoons following worship until 1:15 p.m. on the third floor of the education building. The choir, under the direction of Rob Tracy, sings about seven times annually, concluding with Easter Sunday. The first rehearsal is **Sept. 27**.



Contact Rob for information, robdtracy@gmail.com.

The following ensembles perform at various times throughout the year, with rehearsals scheduled as needed:

Instrumental Ensemble. Those proficient at a particular instrument are welcome to join. Our orchestra prepares repertoire for worship services four to five times a year.

Soulful Revue and Soulful Sisters. Soulful Revue (men's choral ensemble) and Soulful Sisters (women's choral ensemble) sing a wide variety of music, such as gospel, spirituals and contemporary genres.

Soulful Revue contact: Taylor Branch, mail@taylorbranch.com. Soulful Sisters contact: Kathy Graning, kgraning@verizon.net.

We also welcome the youth and young adults of our church to prepare a vocal or instrumental performance for the fourth Sunday of each month during the prayers of the people/candle lighting.

 **Contact Michael at 410-523-1542, Ext. 16, or michael@browndowntown.org.**



BMPA Calendar

*Alive in the City
and the World*

Sept. 10: Chancel Choir rehearsal resumes, 7-8:45 p.m., Sanctuary

Sept. 10: Tutoring Program Opening Day, Education Building

9:30 a.m. Coffee and Registration

9:45 a.m. Keynote Speaker, Andrew Foster Connors

11 a.m. Mini-Workshops

12 p.m. Lunch

Sept. 13: Worship returns to 11 a.m. start time. Rally Day and Community Potluck Cookout, Noon-1:30, Church front steps (Assembly Room in case of rain). We'll provide the hot dogs, burgers, and lemonade. You bring a side dish or dessert to share.

Sept. 15-17: Tutor training sessions.

Sept. 15: Session meeting, 7 p.m., Church House

Sept. 20: Community Connection Fair, following worship. Join us in the Sanctuary and Assembly Room to learn more about getting connected with a small group or committee this fall.

Sept. 27: Children's Choir rehearsal resumes, Noon-1:15 p.m., third floor of Education Building.

Sept. 27: Sunday Night Live! Youth Group, 5:30-8 p.m. Church House.

Sept. 27: Tiffany Series presents a talk by **Elijah Cummings**, "Building Baltimore's Future,"

3 p.m., Sanctuary
Congressman Cummings will talk about Baltimore's challenges and address the question of what people of good will



and faith can do to be part of the solution. A question and answer session will follow the presentation, moderated by Andrew Foster Connors. Musicians with the BSO's OrchKids program will also perform. *Obtain tickets at browndowntown.org.*

Oct. 1: BUILD Action Date. *Time and location TBA.*

Oct. 2-4: Youth Fall Retreat, Skycroft Conference and Retreat Center

Oct. 3: All Church Retreat, Skycroft Conference and Retreat Center, 9 a.m.-9 p.m.

Oct. 4: Handbell Choir resumes rehearsals, following worship, Sanctuary Labyrinth.

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Published monthly for members and friends of Brown Memorial Park Avenue Presbyterian Church.

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Andrew Foster Connors,
Senior Pastor

Timothy Hughes,
Associate Pastor

Jennifer Michael,
Editor

Send contributions by the 10th of each month to jmichael@browndowntown.org.



 Stay up-to-date with BMPA's news and events all week long. Email Jennifer Michael, jmichael@browndowntown.org, to be added to the distribution list for our e-newsletter, **This Week @ Brown.**



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