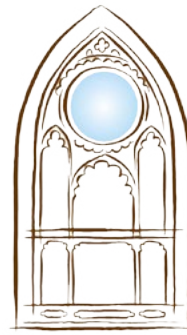


# THE TIDINGS

MAY 2015



GOOD NEWS FROM

BROWN MEMORIAL  
PARK AVENUE   
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

ALIVE IN THE CITY AND THE WORLD  
[www.brownmemorialparkavenue.org](http://www.brownmemorialparkavenue.org)

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## PASTOR'S REFLECTIONS

BY REV. ANDREW FOSTER CONNORS, SENIOR PASTOR  
[andrew@browndowntown.org](mailto:andrew@browndowntown.org)

*"I want to be famous in the way a pulley is famous,  
or a buttonhole, not because it did anything spectacular,  
but because it never forgot what it could do."*

— from "Famous," a poem by Naomi Shihab Nye



Confirmation Sunday is May 17 and we are truly blessed at Brown Memorial to have Tim Hughes and his team of Susan Stroupe, Brett Pinder, and Stephen Ruckman leading the effort this year. According to Tim, the confirmation process continues to be one of the most discussed and controversial topics in youth ministry across the wider church. Oversimplifying a bit, the debate centers around the decision point that the church creates in the confirmation event. Some advocates say that the confirmation process, as currently constructed, creates unnecessary pressure for young people, forcing them to make a "choice" when faith is more of a journey. Who's to say that teenagers should be forced to make a choice at a particular age or particular time? Others say, no, this choice is exactly what the church envisioned centuries ago when it set before young people the baptismal promises and required them to decide whether or not to take them on. Those who choose not to be confirmed, they say, can always make a different choice at some point in the future.

As a parent and as one of your pastors I've been impressed at how the confirmation team has navigated our confirmation process. They've been clear about their goals – to give our kids the basic outlines of the Christian faith, historically, theologically, and spiritually with the expectation that they should be able to know and articulate those outlines. The team neither whitewashes the issues raised in this educational process, nor dumbs them down to a lowest common denominator kind of faith. I'm quite certain that some of our 8th graders, for example, are more articulate about atonement theology than many of our adults!

But more than the content, I've been impressed with the way the team has approached the confirmation decision point. As Tim expressed recently, "I think that confirmation is a significant developmental moment. It agitates us all to learn ways to speak about what we believe and what we don't. For some of us, it even forces us to ask questions that seem to move us further away from God. But I do actually think that is necessary developmental work to move toward a spirituality that more fully incorporates doubt, failure, cognitive dissonance, and paradox."

Confirmation, as Tim leads it, agitates us to dig deeper into the nature and the

*continued on page 3*

# MUSIC NOTES

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

## CHANCEL CHOIR

This season, our Chancel Choir will continue to sing at Sunday worship through Sunday, June 7. We invite all those who like to “try out” the Chancel Choir to join us for our final few weeks. The choir rehearses on Thursday evenings from 7:00 – 8:45 p.m. in the sanctuary. Please come; we would love to have you!



## SOULFUL SISTERS

The Soulful Sisters will be singing at worship on Sunday, May 10. This choral ensemble, which was formed last summer by

Kathy Graning, will continue to sing at various times throughout the year. If you would like to become a member of this group, please contact Kathy at kgraning@verizon.net or 410.243.5311.

## SOULFUL REVUE

Please check the bulletin and the June issue of The Tidings regarding rehearsals for the Soulful Revue, which will begin preparations for our September 6 worship service.

## CHOIR CABARET

You are invited to an evening of fun, food and fellowship and of course..... MUSIC!, hosted by our Chancel Choir and other members of our music ministry. Join us on Friday, May 29 at 7:30 p.m. in the Assembly Room.

## *A Musical Celebration*

By ELLEN CARTER COOPER

On April 19, 2015, after two weather-related postponements, Brown Memorial hosted a Tiffany Series Concert to honor J. Spencer Hammond. Over 350 persons packed the sanctuary to show their appreciation for the Florida native. For over 40 years Spencer taught and conducted music in the public schools of Baltimore. At Douglas Memorial Community Church Spencer was the organist and choir director. The program was introduced and hosted by the Revs. Andrew Foster Connors and Chester A. France.

During the celebration Everett Marshburn of Wisconsin Public Television and Singleton Bascom Wyche of the Baltimore City Public Schools spoke about the unforgettable influence the modest musician had on their lives. Eutaw-Marshburn Elementary School is named for Mr. Marshburn's mother; Singleton is the youngest child of Rev. Marion Bascom, the longtime pastor of Douglas Memorial. She shared with the audience how Spencer facilitated her admission to Northwestern University as the first African American vocal music student. James Crockett presented Spencer with a laminated newspaper article. Shirley Parry read a proclamation from Mayor Rawlings-Blake declaring April 19th, James Spencer Hammond Day.

All of the selections the BMPA's chancel choir sang during the concert were chosen by the

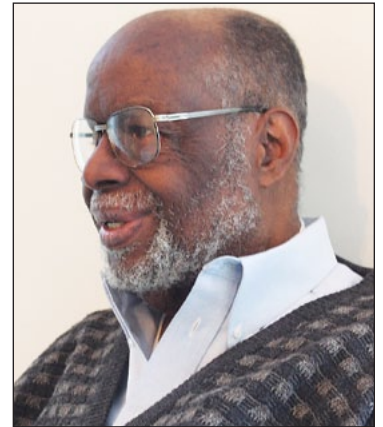
former music teacher.

Chrystie Adams and Rob Tracy assisted in conducting some of the selections.

Michael Britt, Bruce Eicher, and Jim Houston provided piano and/or organ accompaniment. The program included the compositions of Faure, Brahms,

Mendelssohn, and Franck. Included, also, were a group of spirituals arranged by Undine Smith Moore, Wendell Whalum, Robert Morris, (who was in the audience), and R. Nathaniel Dett. “My Lord, What a Mornin” arranged by Harry T. Burleigh, the final selection, was performed by the BMPA choir and members of choirs Spencer has conducted.

Though Spencer is “retired”, he is still active as a substitute organist. He is a member of the bass section of the chancel choir. Additionally, he still conducts a group which he founded, The Douglas Singers. During the reception that followed the concert, Spencer shared some of his experiences with people he had not seen in decades. In the near future his oral history will be housed (courtesy of Shirley Parry) at the Maryland Historical Society.



J. Spencer Hammond

# SESSION UPDATE

The session has been meeting this year on the third Tuesday of each month rather than the second. The following topics were addressed at the regular session meeting on March 24th :

- Facility-use application was approved for Bolton Hill parking pass distribution in the assembly room on March 21st and 28th, 8 a.m.-1 p.m.
- Facility-use application was approved for the Atrium Association's final meeting for 2014-2015 in the assembly room on April 30th, 6:30-9 p.m.
- In accordance with The Book of Order (W-3.3616), the session approved by e-mail vote on February 24-25, 2015, that the youth be authorized to serve communion on Youth Sunday, March 1, 2015.
- The clerk recorded the deaths of Charles Hall, father of Tom Hall, on March 4, 2015, and Kathleen Munds, mother of Phil Munds, on March 20, 2015.
- Elders Baer and Nyweide represent the session on the tutoring commission. The tutoring program now serves 76 students. Pastor Foster Connors commended Elder Baer for her effective representation of the session on the commission and for spearheading the revision of the commission statement.
- Elder Johnston, chair of the Personnel Committee, described a new city program, Live Near Your Work, designed to promote residence in Baltimore City. A sponsoring agent would contribute \$2,500 to a full-time employee who buys a house in the city for the first time; the city would match the grant. A motion was passed for BMPA to become a sponsor of Live Near Your Work, following criteria established by Baltimore City.
- A contract has been negotiated and approved with website developer Theory One Design for \$20,000. Installation is expected to take about four months. A new logo has been designed by Abby Ferretti Jackson.
- The annual BMPA officers' dinner will be held on May 1st at 6 p.m. at Elder Heuisler's house.

- The annual session retreat will occur on May 2nd, 9 a.m.-3 p.m. either at church or at the Center.

- The Next Church conference in Chicago was attended by Pastors Foster Connors and Hughes. Next Church aims to discover how to create a bridge from institutional failure to communal innovation, affirming that participating congregations are in a period of awakening.

- Elders Cook and Imperato spoke at a regional gathering of Next Church at St. Mark's Presbyterian Church in Bethesda on February 21st.

- Thirteen eighth graders are being prepared for confirmation on Sunday, May 17th. The session will meet to hear their faith statements on Sundays May 3rd and 10th at 9 a.m. in the Church House.

If anyone in the congregation would like more information about any of these issues, I welcome questions.

Anne Heuisler  
Clerk of the Session

## PASTOR'S REFLECTIONS

*continued from page 1*

experience of God. The conviction of the church is that when we do that, we also begin to discover who we are and what we are here to do.

"We the church don't need any confirmation that God loves them and that they are sealed in that love. That's not what is being 'confirmed.' Confirmation is about learning to be a good dance partner with God, and that is a lifelong task that incorporates powerful moments of faith and devastating moments of doubt. That's why it can only be accomplished in community. That's why we go to church, and why I hope all of them will stick around, regardless of whether or not they sign on this particular dotted line."

I couldn't have said it any better. I celebrate the thirteen young people who have invested a great deal of time in the confirmation process, their leaders, and the church that continues to show forth the faith of Jesus Christ in the clay jars of our lives for the generations to come.

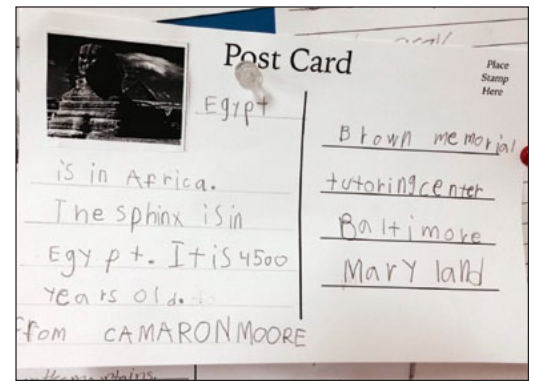


# COME! SEE WHAT IT'S ALL ABOUT!

The end-of-year party for the Tutoring Program will be held later in May, and you are invited. Watch the weekly announcements for the date, and come and help celebrate the accomplishments of the students.

Festivities start with supper for the students and parents in a very crowded Assembly Room. The tutors provide hot dogs, sandwiches, fruit, and veggies. The program provides pizza, juice, and dessert. The event moves to the sanctuary where a kid-friendly entertainer performs. Then the students have their turn. As a group, they sing a song reflecting the theme of the year. This year it was the seven continents. Each student is recognized and given a yearbook containing a composition from each child in the program. Additional awards are given for completing a book list and report.

This is a happy occasion. The students and tutors have worked hard for the entire school year. The party is a good time to see the students and their accomplishments. Warning! You may be inspired to become a tutor. For details contact Tom Waldron (410-323-5966) or Carol Graves (410-366-4662).



*The Tiffany Series Concert with James David Christie has been rescheduled for the 2015-16 season. We shall notify you about the new date!*



# NEW ONLINE COMMUNITY

BY JENNIFER MICHAEL, COMMUNICATIONS MANAGER  
jmichael@browndowntown.org

Brown Memorial's Online Community Has Launched:  
Take a Look Around at <https://browndowntown.ccbchurch.com>

This month, Brown Memorial Park Avenue is officially launching our new Online Community. The web page is



a members/friends-only site that serves as our internal database, as well as a way to enhance communication and interaction within our church community. The site is powered by the Church Community Builder web-based

software and is only accessible by a username/password.

BMPA staff worked throughout the winter to set-up and receive training on using the Online Community, including entering the names, addresses and phone/email information for all of the families within our church community. We now invite you to visit the Online Community and review the profile we have set-up for you and familiarize yourself with this powerful relational tool.

## WHAT IS THE ONLINE COMMUNITY?

Brown Memorial's Online Community is intended for both administrative and church member use. The site serves as an online, pictorial directory of everyone within the church community. Once you are logged in, you can update your information so that our records are accurate, access your giving information/statements, view the church calendar, search for and connect with other BMPA members, find and contact groups to serve in, and list your passions and abilities. For groups, the Online Community allows members to easily communicate with one another, create "needs" lists and forms, post open positions and share files.

If you decide you don't want to be part of the Online Community, you can at any time adjust your privacy settings to be "unlisted." For now, everyone is defaulted as "listed," and we encourage all to visit and take a look around the site.

## HOW TO BEGIN

Here is a step-by-step guide for first-time users of the BMPA Online Community:

- Go to <https://browndowntown.ccbchurch.com>. Or visit [browndowntown.org](http://browndowntown.org) and go to the "Backstage" page and click on the link for the Online Community.
- Under the login box, click on "Sign Up." Enter your name, email and phone number. If you are an active

member/friend, the system will likely find a match for you within the system and immediately send you a username/activation link. If we do not already have your email in the system, a member of BMPA's staff will send you a username/activation link.

- Once logged in, read the welcome message on the homepage. Links are here for a "Basic User Walkthrough" article, and two short videos – "Viewing/Updating your Profile," and "Editing Your Own Settings." Please also review the "Online Community Guidelines."

- To view and update your profile, you will see your name in the upper right corner of the Online Community homepage. Click on your name and a dropdown menu will appear where you can click on "Profile." Once in your profile, links on the right side of the page allow you to edit your profile (This is where you can also upload a photo of yourself.), set communications preferences, change your username/password and update your privacy settings.

- In addition to customizing your profile, you can search for other people within the system by clicking on the "People" tab on the left side of any page within the Online Community. To search for a group, click on the "Group" tab.

## WHERE TO TURN FOR HELP

Brown's staff wants to make using the Online Community as easy as possible for the congregation. We will be holding regular information sessions after worship to help members login and navigate the site. The first session will be offered on Sunday, May 10, in the Assembly Room immediately following worship. Laptops will be available for member use. Members are also welcome to contact Jennifer Michael at [jmichael@browndowntown.org](mailto:jmichael@browndowntown.org), or 410-523-1542, ext. 25, with questions. We look forward to seeing you online!

## 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.

# BROWN'S WEBSITE REDESIGN IS UNDERWAY

We are happy to report that Brown Memorial has contracted with Theory One Design, a professional web design and development firm, to build the new [browndowntown.org](http://browndowntown.org). Theory One is based in Boston and specializes in designing and building websites for faith communities (view their work at [theoryonedesign.com](http://theoryonedesign.com)). We are currently in the "discovery" phase of the project, with Theory One working to get to know BMPA. The bulk of the design and development of the site will take place in June and July, with plans to officially launch the new website at the start of the church year this fall.

## SMILE FOR THE CAMERA

To build a library of professional, up-to-date photos for our new website that showcase who we are at Brown Memorial, we are working with freelance photojournalist Doug Kapustin. Doug first visited

## "RABBLE ROUSER" OR "TROUBLEMAKER"?

BY ELLEN CARTER COOPER

She describes herself as a "rabble rouser" or a "troublemaker." Perhaps, "one-woman crusader" is a better description of Joy Price. Born in Roanoke, Virginia, she expressed an early interest in aiding less fortunate youngsters. While still in high school, Joy became a member of a club that befriended and mentored orphans. She expressed her ideas by writing for the school newspaper, also.

After graduation from high school, Joy attended the Randolph Macon Women's College. She earned a B.A. degree with a major in religion, but she had no intention of being a minister. Instead she used the degree to build the foundation of her life. "Do unto others as you would have them do unto you" became her guiding



Joy Price

principle. This belief led her to leave Roanoke because of its stance and practices in the area of human rights.

The University of Maryland was Joy's next stop where she pursued and earned an M.A. degree in social work. Following her graduation from the U of M, Joy was employed as a foster care and adoption services social worker in Baltimore County.

Brown during the Christmas holidays and took some beautiful shots of the Christmas pageant and Christmas Eve candlelight service. Doug will be taking more pictures in May, including the education hour and worship service on Sunday May 17. If you have any questions or concerns, please contact Jennifer Michael, BMPA's communications manager, at [jmichael@browndowntown.org](mailto:jmichael@browndowntown.org), or 410-523-1542, ext. 25.

## SIGN UP FOR BMPA'S WEEKLY E-NEWSLETTER

Stay on top of Brown Memorial news by subscribing to This Week @ Brown, our new weekly e-newsletter. The publication is emailed every Thursday and provides details about the upcoming Sunday service and other activities taking place in the week ahead. Request to be added to the e-newsletter list by contacting Jennifer Michael at [jmichael@browndowntown.org](mailto:jmichael@browndowntown.org).

In 1962, the crusader married and moved to Easton, Maryland. A lifelong Presbyterian, Joy became a member a local church. After questioning practices in the church and going to the Presbytery about them, she was "thrown out of the church." She and other members who were "invited to leave" met in parking lots until they found a place to worship in Oxford, Maryland. There they formed an independent community church.

A positive outcome of her sojourn in Talbot County became a crowning achievement. Joy established For All Seasons for adults who were sexually abused as children. Because of her groundbreaking efforts the University of Maryland honored her as the Alumna of the Year in 1991. She worked for the organization for ten years.

The heartbreaking stories Joy heard at For All Seasons took their toll on her. In 1996, she decided to "run away" to New Mexico. There she tried her hand at writing. Her labors produced one published book, *Up One Rung*. During this period, she returned to the Presbyterian Church.

Four years after her respite and renewal in New Mexico, Joy arrived in Baltimore. Knowing her history and personality, a local minister declared she should visit BMPA. On her first visit, she witnessed two gay men joining the church. One of them had been asked to leave his previous church because of his sexual preference. She thought, "This is the place for me."

Joy is a resident of the Erickson Retirement Community in Catonsville. She helps out in the film library and enjoys socializing with her friends there. A prolific reader, Joy has read 80 books this year alone. She really enjoys the Happy Hours at Erickson, also. This lifelong "rabble rouser" wants Brown Memorial to continue to be involved in the community. She enthusiastically stated, "If I designed a church, it would be Brown."



# THE WORSHIP COMMITTEE NEEDS YOU!

Could you devote some time on the first Sunday of every month to help clean up the communion elements?

When the Deacons updated their mission at the beginning of this year, the responsibility for the communion elements shifted to the Worship Committee. Two congregants, GERALYN SCHROTH and Jeanne Thomas, stepped up to help out every month. Things have been going smoothly so far this year in the preparation of communion, but we need some assistance cleaning up after church. The timing of the clean-up conflicts with the handbell choir rehearsal and the monthly

potluck, so keep that in mind if you are willing to volunteer.

On the first Sunday of each month, we need volunteers to:

- bring the chalices, baskets and decanters into the kitchen from the sanctuary
- wash the chalices and decanters
- put away clean and dry baskets, chalices and decanters
- wash and iron the linens at home

Please contact Betsy Nix ([betsy.nix@gmail.com](mailto:betsy.nix@gmail.com)) if you would be willing to help with these monthly tasks.

## MAY BIRTHDAYS



05/01	Juanita Curtis
05/01	Laura S. Urban
05/02	Aaron Joseph Neblo McNabney
05/04	Tyler Hoffberger
05/04	Tom McManus
05/04	Teddy Obrecht
05/05	Elizabeth Proctor Reichelt
05/07	David Rollison
05/08	Julian Finney
05/08	Grace Hand
05/09	Charlie Obrecht
05/10	Barbara Clippinger
05/10	Sue Galusha-Bobango
05/11	Matthew Fedderly
05/12	Martha Errens
05/13	Josephine Finney
05/16	Susan Zieman
05/17	Margaret McManus
05/17	Andrew Ross
05/18	Caroline Rose Anderson
05/18	Laura Filipp
05/18	Alice Logan
05/19	Daniel Burton
05/20	Carolyn Marks
05/20	Anna Marie Brennan Taylor
05/21	Art Hall
05/21	Mary Jane Sokol
05/22	Nancy Bradford
05/23	Page Campbell

05/24	Fiona Zabel
05/25	Emily Reed
05/26	Laura McNabney
05/27	Ellen Carter Cooper
05/27	Jackson Mills
05/28	Landon Reiman
05/31	Christopher Brennan Taylor
05/31	Jim Edrington
05/31	Kim Norman

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](mailto: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](mailto:slucas@browndowntown.org)

# BMPA CALENDAR

*The following is a reminder of our weekly schedule, as well as a list of upcoming events this month. For a more detailed calendar and description of events, visit [browndowntown.org](http://browndowntown.org).*

## WORSHIP SCHEDULE THROUGH MID-MAY

### Worship and Weekly Schedule through Sunday, May 17

#### Sundays

- Meditation Circle, 9-9:30 a.m.
- Children's and Adult Education Hour, Choir Warm-up, 9:45-10:45 a.m.
- Worship, 11 a.m.
- Handbell Choir Rehearsal, 12:15-1:15 p.m.

#### Wednesdays

- Weekday Bible Study, 10:30-11:30 a.m.
- Meditation on the Hill, 5:30 p.m.
- Chancel Choir Rehearsal, 7-8:45 p.m.

## SUMMER WORSHIP SCHEDULE

### Summer Worship and Weekly Schedule, Sunday, May 24-September 6

- No Education Hour. Worship 10 a.m. All other activities remain the same.

## SPECIAL EVENTS IN MAY

- Youth Organizing Project, "Bus and Bowling" Trip, Friday, May 1, 4:30-8:30 p.m.
- Community Potluck, Sunday, May 3, 12:30 p.m.
- Tiffany Series – James David Christie, Organist, Sunday May 3, 3 p.m.
- Theology on Tap, Tavern on the Hill, Tuesday, May 12, 7:30 -9:30 p.m.
- Confirmation Sunday, May 17
- Prayer Shawl Ministry, Location TBA, Thursday, May 21, 12:30-1:30 p.m.
- Choir Cabaret, Assembly Room, Friday, May 29, 7:30 p.m.
- High School Youth Lock-In, Saturday, May 30, time TBA

## MAY 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](mailto:sharon@browndowntown.org).*

## THE TIDINGS



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**Andrew Foster Connors, Senior Pastor**

**Timothy Hughes, Associate Pastor**

**Ellen Carter Cooper, Editor**

**Laura McConnell, Graphic Designer**

Send contributions by the 15th of each month to  
**[edccooper58@hotmail.com](mailto:edccooper58@hotmail.com).**