



**BROWN  
MEMORIAL  
PARK AVENUE**

Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)

Good News from Brown Memorial Park Avenue  
Presbyterian Church

# Tidings

MAY/JUNE 2016

## Pastor's Reflections

**Tim Hughes**

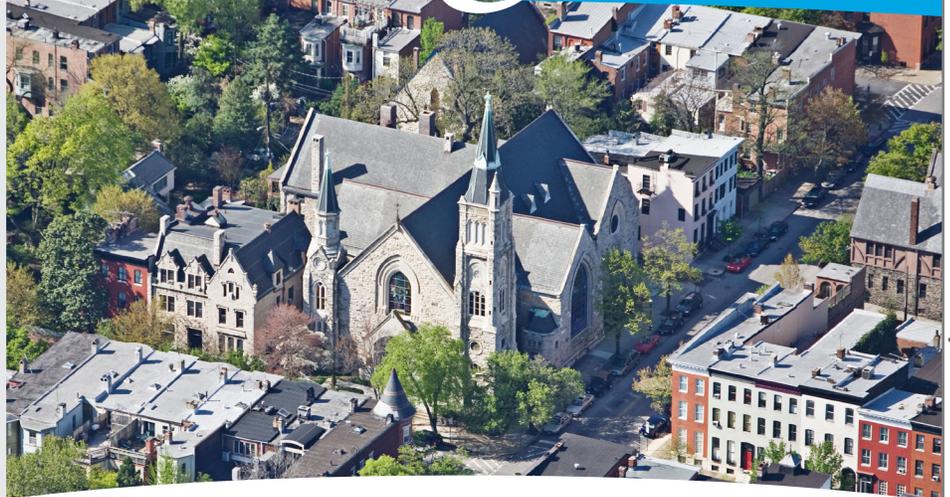
Associate Pastor

**It was no compliment to be called a Lollard in 14th Century England.** The name

was given to men and women who were uneducated and spoke only English. The true mark of an educated person was fluency in Latin, the language of all the highest cultural arts. Simply put, if you couldn't read Latin, you couldn't read the Bible, and probably shouldn't.



Lollards, however, had been influenced by the teachings and translations of an Oxford professor named John Wycliffe. Wycliffe, an early reformer, believed all people should



© J. BROUGH SCHAMP

## Capital Fund Appeal: Improving Our Facility for Ministry

**Andrew Foster Connors, Senior Pastor**

The Capital Fund Appeal is on! Sixty-two families completed surveys, with 87 percent offering a "yes" to move forward. Seven volunteers agreed to serve on the Appeal's Core Team, shaping the details of the plan moving forward. Those members (listed on page 2) were commissioned in worship on April 10.

It's the firm belief of the Session and the Trustees that important ministry happens in and through our facilities, from delivering Meals on Wheels, to tutoring Baltimore City School children, to nurturing the faith of the next generation of followers of Jesus, to sitting at table with members, friends and a multitude of guests who come to our church. Over time, our facilities have taken a beating and are not fully usable to anyone who is unable to climb the stairs. As the Bolton Hill Nursery moves out in 2017, the time is right to make this building more usable for current and future ministry, adding accessibility improvements and repairing our towers at the same time.

*continued on page 2* ➔



A studious fox in a monk's cowl, in the margins of a Book of Hours, Utrecht, c. 1460.

*continued on page 3* ➔

### INSIDE

**The Chancel Choir invites you...** to a musical meditation. See page 4.

**Welcome New Members.** Meet who has joined us. See page 5.

**CCB Tip.** Don't be a "Blank Face Member." See page 6.

**Mission Spotlight.** The EMES Choir is reaching more students. See page 9.

## Capital Fund Appeal

*Continued from Page 1*

The Session's approach to the project has already included a number of decision points, some of which are the direct result of survey responses:

- **Installing handrails now.** The Trustees are soliciting drawings and bids for the installation of handrails in the Chancel, in keeping with the architectural integrity of the space. Several respondents to the survey, noting that we have discussed this for a long time, offered to pay for this immediately. We thank them for their generosity!
- **Moving forward with the tower repairs.** While the immediate safety of the South Tower is not a concern, the wooden bracing installed after a number of stones fell out of the structure is temporary. The tower repair is a multi-step process that requires good weather to move forward. Some repairs to the external structure have already taken place, ensuring no further water damage. Using a new and taller lift in the spring will help determine whether or not scaffolding the structure will be required as the next step on the external structure. Internally, structural engineering contractors have reviewed the space and are de-



**Disrepair inside the South Tower.**

signing a custom steel structure to replace the temporary bracing.

- **Hiring Bob Connolly, a professional fundraiser with the James Company.** The Presbyterian Foundation recommends using a professional consultant anytime a church attempts to raise more than twice its annual giving. Churches that attempt appeals without a consultant often burn out their staff or volunteers with work beyond their expertise and scope, or report campaigns that divide rather than unite the church, raising less money along the way. When an appeal is successful, the fundraising fee ends up as a fraction of the cost of the total funds raised. Bob Connolly has raised more than \$1 billion for churches over his career. A former community organizer, now semi-retired, he only works with churches that are part of the Industrial Areas Foundation, BUILD's parent organization. Bob believes giving is about relationships—our relationship with God and our relationships with each other—and his work is based on that shared core commitment. He is donating \$5,000 of his fee directly to BUILD. The Session is unanimous in our belief that investing in Bob is a smart investment in our future.

- **Re-organizing the facilities planning team to lead the construction planning effort.** A facilities planning team, with Session and Trustee representation, undertook the initial planning work that led to the Session prioritizing an overhaul of the Fellowship Building. They will reconvene (with additional members) to begin moving toward more detailed planning. This diverse team includes architectural and building expertise. The team's recommendations will be reviewed by the Trustees for their wisdom and insights as well. No funds will be spent on further planning until they are raised through the campaign. Many decisions still must be made, decisions that can only be made as more detailed plans emerge and cost estimates become more specific. The Session and Trustees are united in our hope to involve the entire church community in this planning as it moves forward, maximizing value for cost and moving forward our three priorities of improving accessibility, safety and usability of our space.

Brown Memorial members and friends are invited to pray for those volunteers leading the campaign. In the coming

## Capital Fund Appeal

*Continued from Page 2*

weeks, we will all be asked to prayerfully consider what pledges we are called to make to support this important part of the mission and ministry of the church. We will be asked to consider pledges above our annual giving over a five-year period. All members will be given an opportunity to meet one-on-one with someone on the visitation team. Members may also opt out of this visitation at your discretion. In addition, a community discussion will be held on Sunday,

June 5, immediately following worship, to discuss the Capital Fund Appeal. We look forward to a successful Appeal! ♦



**Capital Fund Appeal Core Team:**  
**David Bielenberg, Emily Brown, Rachel Clark, Beth Gregory, Jonathan Hensley, Taylor Stewart, Laura Urban**

---

## Pastor's Reflections

*Continued from Page 1*

be able to access the Scriptures and he eagerly translated the Latin texts into English and other “vulgar” languages. Lollards were known to roam the countryside with tiny, hand-written English manuscripts, small enough to be hidden away in their cloaks to avoid detection, as Parliament decried their “wicked preachings and doctrines” and burned any convicted Lollard at the stake. The church released artwork such as the image on page 1, depicting Lollards as sneaky foxes in monk’s clothing, corrupting the church with texts that could be easily read.

It was dangerous, subversive work to share the Bible with uneducated people. What if they took it seriously?

It can be easy to forget that this brave and radical spirit simmered at the heart of the Protestant Reformation. In addition to theological disputes around the papacy and the Eucharist, there was a populist optimism that poverty and illiteracy should be no barrier to the direct experience of God’s word.

This is the provocative thesis of Marilynne Robinson’s new essay, “Reformation.” She serves up a fantastic quote from our Presbyterian forebear John Calvin, who wrote that while study of the stars can induce wonder in the most learned astrologer, the educated have no monopoly on wonder:

“Since the meanest and most illiterate of mankind, who are furnished with no other assistance than their own eyes, cannot be ignorant of the excellence of the Divine skill, exhibiting itself in that endless, yet regular variety of the innumerable celestial host – it is evident that the Lord abundantly manifests his wisdom to every individual on earth.”

How fitting that it falls to Calvin, a lawyer-theologian

and man of letters if there ever was one, to remind us that the poor and uneducated have as much wisdom to offer as any other child of God. I’m so proud of this prophetic spark at the heart of our Reformed tradition. We have a reputation for being a staid, buttoned-down, and overwhelmingly white denomination. It’s a well-earned stereotype more often than not.

We would do well, I think, to be reminded of our Lollard ancestors, so brave in their embrace of the radical teachings of Jesus. Our tradition treasures education as the means to a democratic and cultured society, but it looks with great suspicion upon anyone who uses their education to claim superior or special status. We can cherish education while respecting the God-given wisdom of all people and the inherent equality that notion demands. Such a stance is no less dangerous in our present moment in Baltimore City than it was in 14th Century London. It has a history of sending shockwaves of love and justice through a culture (both inside the church and out) that has grown quite comfortable with the opposite. May it be so again. ♦

---

Marilynne Robinson, “Reformation,” from her collection of essays, “The Givenness of Things.” Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, New York, 2015.



[tim@browndowntown.org](mailto:tim@browndowntown.org)



[@TimRyanHughes](https://twitter.com/TimRyanHughes)



## Thank You Note

**Brown Memorial's Tiffany windows draw a steady stream of visitors during the week. Visiting the Sanctuary left a particularly strong impression on a group from St. Andrew Christian Church, which sent this thank you note.**

"A note of thanks to you from the group from St. Andrews Christian Church, which visited Brown Memorial Tuesday last.

It's often said we miss the treasures closest to us and travel far away to see beauty and history. Well, we are certain that beauty and history lay side by side in the Brown sanctuary.

The wonderful Tiffany windows are a treasure for generations to come—marking a period when glassmakers created windows produced by genius craftsman. The organ being played also added to the sense of nobility as we moved about!"



## Tiffany Series: The Chancel Choir Invites You to a Musical Meditation

The Chancel Choir invites you to set aside the noise of the outside world and the fears we all carry inside, and allow the musical settings of psalms to wash over you and cleanse your spirit.

We will be presenting "At Close of Day: Songs of Eventide" on **Sunday, May 15, at 3 p.m.** The centerpiece is Mozart's "Solemn Vespers," written in six movements, the first five being based on psalm texts. Each is in a different form. The next-to-last one, "Laudate Dominum," a truly radiant and soaring soprano aria supported by the choir in the background, is considered to be one of the most beautiful musical creations of all time.

Also on the program is Mozart's "Ave Verum Corpus," the well-loved motet that we sing in the Tenebrae service every year. Its text concludes with a prayer for Jesus to be with us, to guide and protect us, in the hour

of our death.

"Phos Hilaron" (Hail Gladdening Light) was specially commissioned for this concert. Rebecca Jones Trout has composed a setting of the earliest known Christian hymn, a 3rd Century Greek work praising the fading light at close of day. Finally, the program also includes "The Day You Gave Us, Lord, Has Ended," by noted American composer Carl Schalk.

A chamber orchestra (four violins, viola, cello and bass) and the organ will occasionally accompany the Choir for this concert.

We hope you will join us for this special Tiffany Series concert of choral music set in the glow of the setting sun. ♦

** Tickets are \$15 (\$5 for students) and are available on the church website and at the door. "Contributor" and "Patron" tickets also available.**



©J. BROUGH SCHAMP

# Welcome to our Newest Members

by Andrew Foster Connors



## Matt & Amy Dahl

Matthew Dahl is a PK (preacher's kid), having grown up in the Southern Baptist Church pastored by his father in Pittsburgh. He first moved to Baltimore at age 9. He grew up in the "born again" tradition but was given plenty of room to formulate his own opinion. Matt's journey includes learning to live with doubt and questions intact, concluding that, "God doesn't need me to defend God." Recognizing that his faith is reasonable, but not certain and becoming content with that reality, has been his important work. As Matt says so eloquently, "God does not need our worship, but knows that we need it." Matt is married to Amy, who grew up Catholic and was nurtured through a Christian youth organization, girls' Catholic school, and fellowships and retreats in Emmitsburg, Md. Though she has struggled with some of the doctrinal positions of her church, she is also grateful for the faith of her childhood. She and Matt resisted the church of a

different tradition that did not accept her infant baptism as sufficient. Their son, Emmett, is 10 months old. Amy was particularly taken on her first visit to Brown with the rocking chairs near the church front doors that sent a message that "children are welcome here."



## Lucy & Chris Dawson

Lucy and Chris Dawson are both teachers passionate about helping young people think about who they want to be. Lucy is the daughter of a retired Presbyterian minister. She grew up an active part of the church in Charlotte, NC, engaged through its service and mission. She attended seminary as an exploratory effort, briefly overlapping with Tim Hughes. Working in Washington, DC, teaching English, brought her back to faith. Chris also grew up in the church but disliked what felt like an abstract exercise that never seemed to engage what was happening in the world around him. Chris finds Brown Memorial's engagement with the world refreshing and relevant and shared with the Ses-

sion ways in which his experiences at church changed his teaching approach at school. Lucy is the director of character education in the upper school at McDonough. Chris teaches English at Gilman. Their daughter, Eleanor, is 18 months. The Todd family first invited them to visit Brown. Unfortunately for us, they just learned they are moving to Raleigh this summer where Chris will be the head football coach at his alma mater, Broughton High School.



## Jacob & Buffy Illum

Buffy Illum (pronounced "EE-lum") grew up in Columbia, Md., with her mother who raised her in the Baha'i faith with a deep respect for social justice and equality. Wishing to learn more about her Swedish roots (her father is Swedish), she attempted to travel there after college but made it as close as Denmark where she lived for 13 years and met her husband, Jacob (pronounced biblically, "YA-kuv"). Like most Danes, Jacob grew up Lutheran, but secular. He felt he had to denounce everything religious because

*continued on page 6* ↪

that's what one did in his culture. Still, Jacob was drawn to the Christian message and, in particular, to the message of Jesus, trying to become a better person, coming together as community and creating a better world together. They have two children, Alex and Ruby, ages 3 and 6.

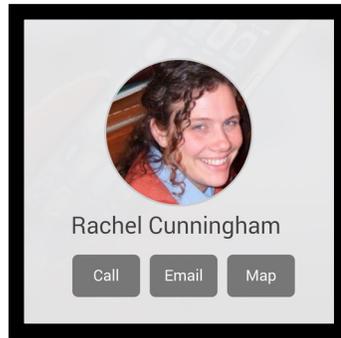


### Ryan Moran

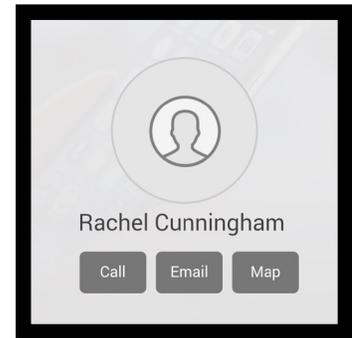
Ryan Moran is yet another PK, the son of a Pentecostal preacher in a rural, West Virginia town of 75 people (now 74). His father owns and operates a beef cattle farm in addition to leading his congregation. His parents' emulated the strong and loving community that he is grateful for. Questions about belief and identity led him away from the church of his youth in search of a community that he could claim as his own. Teaching first grade Sunday School in a non-denominational church reshaped and strengthened his faith as he watched the children learn the most important parts of the faith—"God loves you, share and don't hit." He was first introduced to the Presbyterian Church in Cincinnati where he discovered it was the kind of Christian mantle he could assume. Ryan relocated to Baltimore to work in health administration for MedStar Health and also serves as a volunteer ambassador of special offerings for the Presbyterian Church (USA), which has led him to visit a plethora of churches. ♦

## CCB Tip: Uploading a Profile Photo

by Rachel Cunningham



Hi, I'm Rachel Cunningham and I have a CCB profile picture.

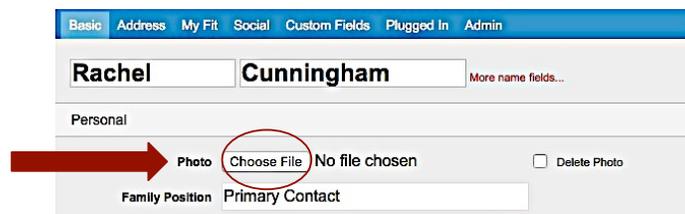


And I'm Blank Face Rachel Cunningham and I don't have a profile picture. Not having a picture hides my identity and keeps people from putting names with faces. It's a game of Guess Who all the time. I like games, don't you?

Don't be like Blank Face Me. Upload your profile picture today! Visit [browndowntown.org](http://browndowntown.org) and click on the "CCB Login" button at the bottom of the homepage.

**Step 1** – Login to CCB; click on your name in the upper right hand corner; click Edit Profile.

**Step 2** – Click Choose File next to the first item—Photo; select the photo you wish to use from your files; click Open. The name of your photo will appear next to the Choose File tab.



**Step 3** – Scroll to the bottom of the page and click Save.

**i** A pdf of the Church Member and Staff Directory is located on CCB's homepage after you have logged in.

# Youth News You Can Use



Matias Calderon, Dever Cunningham and Katie Egan were among the youth who represented Brown Memorial at the No Boundaries Coalition's Block Party, April 16.

## Summer Mission Outreach: Baltimore, El Salvador, Minnesota, North Carolina

### Sun. May 15, Noon-2 pm – Youth Car Wash

This summer we are sending young people to El Salvador, Minnesota and the Montreat Youth Conference in North Carolina. They are working hard to raise funds for each trip. They will wash cars on Park Avenue and provide the main dish for a potluck lunch on the front steps in exchange for donations. Please come and support our youth!

### Sun. May 22, The Last Week of Sunday School

12:30 pm - Pejuhutazizi Family Learning Camp (PFLC) Training

### Wed. May 25, 6 pm – Senior Dinner

The Todd family hosts a dinner celebrating our graduating high school seniors. Talk with Tim for more information.

### Sun. May 29, 5:30-8 pm

#### The Sunday Night Live! Indoor Olympics

Our final youth gathering of the school year will bring the nations of the world together for an epic clash of games and sportsmanship. Also, dinner and worship. All 6th-12th graders are welcome!

### June 1, El Salvador & Montreat trip payments due

Scholarships, payment plans and work opportunities are

available. Talk to Tim for more information.

### Sun. June 5

10 am - Worship Commissioning of El Salvador, Soaring Eagles and PFLC Delegations

11:30 am - PFLC Training

6-8 pm - Salvador Training

### Sat. June 11, 6-8 pm – Salvador Send-Off Dinner

Our Salvador Delegation gathers with family at El Salvador Restaurant (207 S. Broadway) for a send-off dinner!

### Sat. June 18 - Sun. June 26

#### The El Salvador Delegation

### Sun. June 26, 6-8 pm

#### Soaring Eagles Camp Training

All teachers and counselors should attend this orientation and training for the Learning Camp, which begins the following morning.

### Mon. - Thur. June 27-30, 8 am-2 pm (7:30 am Day 1)

#### Soaring Eagles Learning Camp

Staff will meet to prepare for the day of camp and evaluations. Youth 7th graders and older can participate as counselors. Talk to Chrystie Adams if interested.

# Soaring Eagles Learning Camp

by Chrystie Adams

**It is hard to believe we are planning for year five of the Soaring Eagles Learning Camp (SELC). What a blessing the learning camp has been to all involved each June. Many friendships will be renewed again this summer and new friendships will be formed during the camp, June 27-30, at Eutaw-Marshburn Elementary School.**

Grateful hardly seems adequate in describing how we all feel at the end of our camp week. The blessings abound each day and we would like to invite new Brown folks to experience some of these blessings this year. We partner with the Church of the Reconciliation Youth Group from Chapel Hill, NC, and they are all excited about returning to Baltimore again this June. Here are the details about ways you can be involved with SELC.

**Camp Counselors:** We have five camper groups ranging from grades 1 to 5 and always have at least five or six counselors with each group. This summer, youth counselors will need to be going into 7th grade to sign up. We need adults to be counselors as well. Mandatory staff training is held at Brown on June 26, 6-8 p.m., with supper provided. Camp times are 7:30 a.m. – 2 p.m. on Day 1, and 8 a.m. – 2 p.m. on Days 2 -4. Community service hours are available.

**Station Leaders:** We have a wonderful group of Station Leaders

but can always use more hands. Consider being a part of one of the following SELC stations this summer: Math Games; Hands on Science; Creative Writing; Robotics; Jazzercise; and Book Nook.

**Breakfast Sponsors:** We have a “Breakfast Fairy” (a.k.a. Barbara Francis) who buys all of the breakfast items for the campers. Folks who want to sponsor a breakfast are asked to provide the funds for a breakfast. Breakfast sponsors are also most welcome to come to camp on your sponsor day and help serve breakfast. It is great fun to see the campers and the staff each morning and be sure to stick around for the “5 B’s Rap” that we do each morning to start our camp day.

**Lunch Sponsors:** Consider providing lunch for one of the camp days. Folks have teamed up to be the lunch providers for the day and some folks have asked us to order pizza

and have it delivered. We need lunch sponsors for Monday – Wednesday. We provide lunch for the campers and the staff and dietary information will be provided. Thursday is Family Day at SELC and the Church of the Rec youth make all of the sandwiches for this HUGE lunch bunch. We can always use hands to help serve on this day.

**Book Drive:** Please bring new or very gently used books to Brown Memorial and put them in the book collection bin. We need everything from board books to chapter books. The campers LOVE to take the books home each day and keep them for their very own. ♦

 **To sign up and for more information, contact Chrystie Adams, [cladams22@verizon.net](mailto:cladams22@verizon.net), 443-474-2200.**



**Serving as a camp counselor is just one way you can help out at this year's SELC.**

PHOTO BY: PAUL NEWILL-SCHAMP

## Spotlight on Mission:

# The Eutaw-Marshburn Elementary School Choir

by Jennifer Michael

**D**enise Reid remembers the day her daughter Jaazaniah, who was normally very shy, came home from school with a smile beaming across her face. She had come from choir practice at Eutaw-Marshburn Elementary School, where choir director Chrystie Adams had praised her for how well she had sung.

“She said I did awesome,” Jaazaniah excitedly told her mother.

Reid credits the Eutaw-Marshburn Choir, run by Brown Memorial volunteers, with helping build Jaazaniah’s confidence and creativity. Jaazaniah has been a member of the choir since its inception in 2012. The 4th grader now loves to sing, as well as to draw, write and read.

“They are just absolutely phenomenal and truly a blessing from God,” Reid says of the choir volunteers. “With their gentleness, they just pulled the essence out of [Jaazaniah].”

Eutaw-Marshburn’s music teacher Ericka Jackson came up with the idea of having a school choir and asked Chrystie Adams if she could lead it. Chrystie, a retired music teacher of 37 years, was already a regular volunteer at Eutaw-Marshburn. She agreed to do it, as long as she didn’t have to do it alone. Michael Britt, Brown’s Music Director, stepped in and said he would assist.

Seven students participated during the choir’s first year. This year, more than 30, from grades 1 to 5, attend practice each Wednesday afternoon. Chrystie directs the choir and Michael provides accompaniment. Many more volunteers from Brown Memorial help out during the homework help and snack time that follows practice.

“It’s certainly grown and developed into something quite special,” says Michael, adding, “To me, it’s not so much about the music but the relationships we have with



**The Eutaw-Marshburn Elementary Choir sang before their largest audience at the Youth Forward Black Tie Gala in April.**

*Photo courtesy of the Druid Heights Community Development Corporation.*

this community.”

The only requirement to join the choir is for the students to know how to read. They are given word and music sheets at each practice. If students have more than four absences, they can no longer participate.

Chrystie says she teaches the basics of singing in a choir, such as posture, volume, tempo and watching the director. The choir has performed during school assemblies and plays, at Memorial Apartments and during Brown Memorial worship services. In April they sang at their largest event yet—the Youth Forward Black Tie Gala at the Baltimore Hilton, hosted by the Druid Heights Community Development Corporation.

“I think they are proud of the way they sound,” Chrystie says.

During rehearsal a few days before the Gala, the students practiced the songs they were to sing—“We are the

*continued on page 10* ↪

## Mission Spotlight

*Continued from Page 9*

World,” “Prayer for Peace” and Eutaw-Marshburn’s school song. Chrystie reminded everybody to use their “best manners” and look at the “magic dot” on her head during the performance, not the audience.

Afterwards, first grader Dy’niah admitted she was nervous. “I never performed in front of a hotel,” she said. Jaazaniah, on the other hand, said she was only a “teeny bit” nervous because she had sung in front of large groups before.

Asked what she likes about the choir, Zara, a 4th grader, said “How to crack out of your shell more and how to get into singing position.”

First grader Kyara said, “I love singing. I wish I was on a real stage by myself.” When Kyara’s mom, Lacrosha Morris, picked her up, she said she was happy that Kyara was learning to read music as a choir member, and also learning to be more patient.

Though it can be hard to see progress when the choir practices just 30 minutes a week, Brown’s volunteers say the real benefit is simply the structure the choir provides, as well as the opportunity for the students to stay after school with their friends and siblings for the homework and snack time.

A couple years ago, Chrystie recalled having the students sit around her in a circle on the last day of practice and asking them what they got out of the choir that year. One boy said, “This is the only place that I feel happy.” That student was a 5th grader and the following year he returned each week to the school for practice, even though he attended Mt. Royal Middle. ♦



**Brown Memorial and its music ministry will host the very first Eutaw-Marshburn Choir Camp, July 11-14, 8:30 - 3 p.m., at Brown Memorial to include daily choral rehearsals, introduction to ringing handbells and choir chimes, and other musical activities.**

**The highlight will be a dinner for the choir and their families followed, by a concert in our Sanctuary on July 14, 7 p.m.**

**In addition to the music staff, the Youth Choir from Abingdon Presbyterian Church (Philadelphia), under the direction of John Sall, will provide assistance. This choir will sing at Sunday worship July 10, and will also perform at Brown on July 15, as we begin our ARTSCAPE festivities.**

---

## Brown Partners with Community to help Mt. Royal

by Andrew Foster Connors

Part of being a good neighbor is looking out for your neighbors, especially when they need a little extra help.

Recently, Mt. Royal Elementary/Middle School was forced to weather more than \$400,000 in cuts due to an enrollment drop. (Schools are funded, in part, on a per-pupil basis. Mt. Royal was hit hard after the public housing community on North Avenue closed and residents relocated). In addition to cutting teacher positions, the school had to defund one of its key formative experiences, a summer trip for students entering 6th grade.

Brown Memorial has been the beneficiary of Mt. Royal’s parking

lot hospitality, enabling us to park our vehicles in their lot each Sunday morning. The consistent use of their lot enabled us to begin the van shuttle service a few years ago, reducing parking pressures in the neighborhood and ensuring easy parking for our lot-less church.

So it was a privilege to deepen our partnership, first with a gift of \$1,000 toward their fundraising goal of \$10,000. As one of the first financial commitments, the school was able to use our gift to leverage others.

Working in collaboration with the Churches and Schools subcommittee

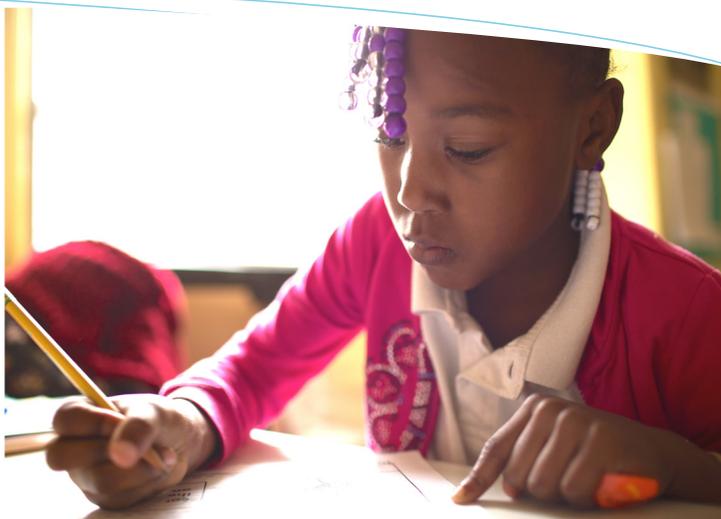
of the Mt. Royal Improvement Association, we offered our Assembly Room to the MRIA to hold a chili dinner on April 19 that raised enough money so that all of the 6th grade could attend its annual summer trip. Thank you to Barbara Francis for her leadership during this initiative.

We are pleased to be able to use our financial resources and facilities to support important anchors in our community. And we continue to look for ways to put our facilities and finances at the service of our mission bearing witness to the love of God in Christ, working for justice and peace.

# Tutoring Corner

*Another school year completed with support from many*

by Lisa Hoffberger  
Brown Memorial Tutoring Program Chair



**Amari, a second-grader, studies during a session of the Brown Memorial Tutoring Program last fall.**

**W**ith Memorial Day fast approaching, another school year will end and we will say goodbye—for now—to the 83 students from Baltimore City public schools who have been coming each week to the third floor of Brown Memorial's Fellowship Building.

These young people in grades 1-5 from three mid-town schools receive intensive reading and literacy instruction through the venerated Brown Memorial Tutoring Program. The instruction they receive often flips a switch, igniting their reading and writing skills, and giving them a far greater opportunity to thrive in school. For students and tutors alike, the end of year will bring an array of emotions: We will revel in the many milestones and reading achievements made by all of our students, however knowing that our fifth graders will graduate toward new horizons armed with their strengthened skills.

Our faithful group of 63 volunteer tutors merits our deep appreciation. Each of them has committed to working one-on-one with a child (sometimes more than one child!) weekly throughout the school year. Our cadre of tutors includes a dozen who are church members of Brown Memorial—a remarkable and growing number. A sincere thank you is extended to all of those who have donated their time, talent and energy to give a student a better chance at success.

We also want to express our deep appreciation to all of our generous supporters. Brown Memorial Church continues to provide significant financial and in-kind support for our program, now ending its 52nd year. Additionally,

the launch of our internal annual giving campaign was a great success in helping to meet our budget requirements, and we rejoiced at the incredible support of gifts under the Christmas Giving Tree in December.

Eighty percent of our budget relies on gifts we aim to attract from foundations, corporate philanthropies, other religious institutions, and, resulting from this year's annual appeal, more than 200 individuals from the Baltimore community. All of them recognize that we must do more to bolster public education in our city and help more children learn to read—and learn to love to read!

Our tutoring results continue to be strong; each year-end 90-95% of our children are assessed as having demonstrated “significant” reading progress. We have durable relationships with the three schools we serve. And we are exploring ways to improve our program while considering how we might one day serve even more children in Baltimore.

Special thanks go to this year's program staff and to past chair, Tom Waldron, whose leadership steered the Tutoring Program to new heights. On behalf of the entire Tutoring Commission, I offer our profound thanks to all of those who have contributed to the program this year and during the past half-century. We look forward to welcoming a returning group of eager learners to the third floor next fall. ♦

 **To volunteer, learn more or make a financial contribution, visit [browntutoring.org](http://browntutoring.org) or contact the tutoring program through the Church Office.**



## May Birthdays

- 05/01 Laura S. Urban
- 05/02 Aaron McNabney
- 05/04 Tyler Hoffberger
- 05/04 Tom McManus
- 05/04 Teddy Obrecht
- 05/05 Elizabeth Reichelt
- 05/06 Ashley Boumgarden
- 05/07 David Rollison
- 05/08 Julian Finney
- 05/09 Charlie Obrecht
- 05/10 Barbara Clippinger
- 05/10 Sue Galusha-Bobango
- 05/11 Khoa Nguyen
- 05/13 Josephine Finney
- 05/17 Margaret McManus
- 05/17 Andrew Ross
- 05/18 Caroline Rose Anderson
- 05/19 Daniel Burton
- 05/20 Carolyn Marks
- 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 Jim Edrington
- 05/31 Kim Norman

**We apologize to Tida Nelson for our omission of her March 7th birthday and would like to extend to her a very happy belated birthday. Happy Birthday Tida!**

# Session News & Notes

submitted by Anne Heuisler, Clerk of Session

### Session actions since the last issue of *The Tidings*:

- Authorized \$5,000 for roof repair following January blizzard, balance to be covered by insurance.
- Affirmed faith statements of new members, all having previously been baptized: Amy Michele Apperson Dahl, Matthew Alan Dahl, Buffy Johnness Lundgren Illum, Jacob Illum, Amos Christopher Dawson, Lucille Wood Dawson and Ryan Bruce Moran. New members were received during worship on February 21.
- Approved PCUSA 2015 Statistics Report submitted January 20 (posted under the Files tab in the Church Community group in CCB).
- Complied with the TRF (The Reinvestment Fund) Development Partners request that Brown Memorial return the 2015 interest payment of \$500 (on Brown loan to TRF) “to help us continue our mission in East Baltimore.”
- Toured church facilities during April meeting, led by Facilities Manager Rob Brown; inspected pointing, leak damage, termite damage, the South Tower deterioration, kitchen, broken or missing parts of window frames, etc. Rob led elders through the courtyard, the kitchen, Jenkins Alley, Bride’s Room, Sanctuary, South Tower, basement and three floors of the education building, explaining needed repairs and conditions that present potential future problems.
- Approved report from Taylor Stewart, Stewardship Chairman, about

organizational plans for the Capital Fund Appeal.

■ Approved progress of South Tower repair, led by Charlie Obrecht, Wells Obrecht and George Brown. Materials and labor thus far have been donated. The Session has committed to fund half the repair, with the remainder to be reimbursed by the Capital Appeal.

### Deaths

- Alice Berney Hoffberger, mother/mother-in-law of Peter and Lisa Hoffberger, on February 4.
- Robert Berry Haldeman, friend of Brown, on February 10.
- John Stem, brother of Steve Stem, on February 28.
- Katherine Macy, mother of Christy Macy, on March 8.
- Rob Baillie, brother of Joanne Egan, on March 15.
- James S. Johnston, father of Andy Johnston, on March 21.

### Baptism

Beverly Rose Hensley, infant daughter of Nadia and Jonathan Hensley, born August 2, 2015, on March 6, 2016.

### Transfer of Membership

Mark and Sheldon Gruber Leibowitz to Foundry United Methodist Church in Washington, DC, on January 21.

 **For more information about any of these issues, contact Anne at [ahuisler@comcast.net](mailto:ahuisler@comcast.net).**



## June Birthdays

- 06/04 Will Brockman
- 06/04 Sarah Reiman
- 06/05 Emy Urban
- 06/06 Lorrie Liang
- 06/07 Lydia Beasley
- 06/10 Erika Brockman
- 06/10 Cal Riorda
- 06/10 Adrienne Williams
- 06/11 Loretta Byers
- 06/12 Erin Emerick
- 06/12 Abby Jackson
- 06/12 Peggy Obrecht
- 06/12 Mary Obrecht
- 06/13 Will Coulson
- 06/13 Robert Marshall
- 06/14 Fado Yoon  
(JaYoung Yoon)
- 06/15 Noah Todd
- 06/17 Will Rogers
- 06/18 Madison Riorda
- 06/19 Rain Hall
- 06/19 Trevor Hoffberger
- 06/21 Lily Bradford
- 06/21 Andrea Schanbacher
- 06/21 Joe Schindler
- 06/21 Dale Terrill
- 06/22 Nancy Bandiere
- 06/22 Peter Coulson
- 06/22 Rebecca Crew
- 06/22 Taylor Jackson
- 06/22 Tom Stewart
- 06/22 Jihar Williams
- 06/23 Paul Forward
- 06/23 Rachel Forward
- 06/23 Beth Goldsby-Allen
- 06/23 Richard "Rocco"  
Willis
- 06/24 Patti Flowers-  
Coulson
- 06/26 Graham Bishai
- 06/26 Madora Henson
- 06/26 Kerry Johnston
- 06/28 Maggie Johnston
- 06/28 Jack Mitchell
- 06/28 Geralyn Schroth
- 06/28 Nancy Warner
- 06/30 Paul Newill-Schamp

# Reflection on El Salvador

by Betsy Nix

Looking ahead to the Brown delegation traveling to El Salvador this summer, we share this reflection written during Lent by Betsy Nix as part of our Lenten E-Devotional series. The reflection is on the following passages from Lamentations 1: 17-22 – *"The Lord has commanded against Jacob that his neighbors should be his foes."* *"My maidens and my young men have gone into captivity."* *"In the street the sword bereaves, in the house it is like death."*

This June, Brown Memorial will send a delegation of adults and youth to El Salvador, marking the 30th anniversary of our congregation's relationship with Maria Madre de los Pobres in San Salvador. This year, preparations must take into account the gang violence that plagues the community, mirroring the biblical curse in today's Old Testament reading.

The typical Salvadoran youth struggles each day knowing that "his neighbors should be his foes." There are streets he can't go down, literal bridges he can't cross to attend school because "in the streets the sword bereaves." The situation has reached the point where our delegation will stay only a few days in San Salvador, will take buses around the city instead of walking, and will invite their godchildren into the parish compound instead of visiting them in their homes.

There are risks in going to El Salvador this year, but how different is their community from ours? In Baltimore, the sword bereaves. In some

rowhouses, it is like death. Shootings are up. Murder rates rise. All of our young people are captive to the violence they face every day, moving through a city where neighbors can be foes.

The church offers us an alternative to this terrible vision of community. Brown is present in our city, listening, crossing boundaries, working on solutions. In El Salvador, the Maria Madre de los Pobres parish opens its compound gates all day every day, inviting the community to its clinic and its school. Brown's delegation will be the recipient of that brave hospitality this summer. The church shows us that in times when it feels as if God has turned away from our communities and maybe even cursed them, the connections between believers become even more essential. ♦



# BMPA Calendar

*Alive in the City  
and the World*

## Summer Schedule Begins Sunday, May 29

**Worship will be moving to 10 a.m. soon – Sunday, May 29, through Sunday, September 4. Education classes will also be on break during this time period.**

**Every Thursday, Prayer Service,** 5:30-6:15 p.m. Join us for this time of prayer, worship and community in the Sanctuary. We sit in a circle around a candle, share in the reading of prayer requests, and add other prayers from our hearts, aloud and silently.

**Every Sunday, Meditation Circle,** 9-9:40 a.m. Church House. A time of silence and community. Join the MC email list: contact June Fletcher-Hill, fletcher-hill@msn.com, 410-367-0995.

**May 10, Theology on Tap,** 7:30-9:30 p.m. Tavern on the Hill, 900 Cathedral St. Explore theological topics in a casual setting. Contact Chip and Kelsie Riegel, riegelmorgan@gmail.com.

**May 13, Feasting in Faith,** 6:30-9 p.m. Enjoy a potluck dinner at a member's home followed by a discussion of a topic of interest related to our faith. Contact Rachel, rachel@browndowntown.org.

**May 15, Youth Car Wash,** Noon-2 p.m. *See details on page 7.*

**May 15, Tiffany Series Concert: At Close of Day, Songs of Eventide,** 3 p.m. *See details on page 4.*

**May 19 & June 16, Prayer Shawl,** 1-3 p.m. Enjoy support and fellowship while making prayer shawls for those in need. Held at home of Carol Graves on May 19, and home of Dianne Ross on June 16. Contact Dianne, rossinbalt@verizon.net.

**May 20, Choir Cabaret,** 7:30-9:30 p.m. Assembly Room. This is a fun, informal evening of music making, fellowship and food. Entertainment will feature sacred and secular classics. Bring an hors d'oeuvre to share. Donations collected to help our youth with transportation costs on their trips to Montreat, El Salvador and the Pejuhutazizi Learning Camp.

**May 25, Senior Dinner,** 6 p.m. *See details on page 7.*

**May 29, Confirmation Class Information Meeting,** 11:30 a.m. Church House. For young people and families interested in learning about the 2016/2017 confirmation class. Confirmation is generally for students in grades 8-9 to learn the basics of our faith tradition and consider membership in the church.

**May 29, Sunday Night Live! Olympics,** 5:30-8 p.m. *See details on page 7.*

**June 5, Worship Commissioning of summer mission trips and camps;** 10 a.m. **PFLC Training,** 11:30 a.m. **Salvador Training,** 6-8 p.m. *See details on page 7.*

**June 11, Salvador Send-Off Dinner,** 6-8 p.m. *See details on page 7.*

**June 18-26, El Salvador Delegation**

**June 26, SECL Training,** 6-8 p.m. *See details on page 7.*

**June 27-30, SECL,** 8 a.m.-2 p.m. (7:30 a.m. Day 1). *See details on page 7.*

**July 11-14, EMES Choir Camp,** 8:30 a.m.-3 p.m., Sanctuary. The choir will perform July 14, 7 p.m. *See details on page 10.*

## Tidings

*Good News from Brown Memorial Park Avenue Presbyterian Church*

1316 Park Avenue,  
Baltimore, MD, 21217.  
410.523.1542.  
browndowntown.org.

Andrew Foster Connors,  
*Senior Pastor*  
Timothy Hughes,  
*Associate Pastor*  
Jennifer Michael,  
*Editor*

*The Tidings is now published bimonthly. Due dates for the rest of the year are: June 10 (July/Aug. issue), Aug. 10 (Sept./Oct. issue), Oct. 10 (Nov./Dec. issue) and Dec. 12 (Jan./Feb 2017 issue). Please send articles, photos and content ideas to Jennifer Michael, jmichael@browndowntown.org.*



**BROWN  
MEMORIAL  
PARK AVENUE**

Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)