

Tidings

AUG/SEPT 2016

Pastor's Reflections

Andrew Foster Connors

Senior Pastor

“For truly I tell you, if you have faith the size of a mustard seed, you will say to this mountain, ‘Move from here to there,’ and it will move; and nothing will be impossible for you.”

— **Matthew 17:20**

One summer day, I found myself up on Wolf Rock at Catocin Mountain Park, just north of Frederick, Md. Five hundred million years ago, the rock on which I stood was at the bottom of an ocean where it was formed as layers of igneous rock and sedimentary rock. Two hundred fifty million years later, the North American continent collided with Africa, and the rock rose up off the ocean floor ascending to heights higher than the modern Himalayas. The intense pressure metamorphosed the rock, transforming it into different rock types. Another 250 million years of erosion brought that vast mountain range down in size. Some layers eroded faster than others, leaving harder rock like “Wolf Rock” standing alone above the surrounding rock.



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Kicking Off the New Year: Rally Day Picnic and Windows Tour Sept. 11

Join us for our “back to church” celebratory day on Sept. 11. Worship returns to 11 a.m. with the glorious sound of bagpipes. Meditation Circle continues at 9 a.m. in the Church House Parlor, the Nursery opens at 9:30 a.m. for our families with infants and toddlers, and the Education Hour resumes at 9:45 a.m., with classes for children, youth and adults in the Church House and Fellowship Building (parents will receive a more detailed letter about classes).

We will also hold our first Community Potluck Lunch, a potluck barbeque on the church steps, including window tours in the Sanctuary. We’ll do the grilling and provide drinks and desserts, you bring a side dish to share. This year we’re inviting our Bolton Hill neighbors to join us for the barbeque and window tours, so be sure to take time to welcome visitors. Note: Community Potluck Lunches take place on communion Sundays—the 2nd Sunday of the month. Read more inside this issue about upcoming events, as well as a look back at our busy summer.

— INSIDE —

Ignite Talks. “Catch fire” during our upcoming lunch series. See page 2.

Retreat and Recharge. Spend Oct. 1 with us in the mountains. See page 3.

Saying “Sorry.” Healing the hurt among Native Americans. See page 8.

Alive in the World. Delegation makes connections in El Salvador. See page 15.

Pastor's Reflections

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Surveying the rock and the range, I thought about all of these events that had given rise to this rock and its extraordinary history. The forces that acted on this rock were not quick or short-lived. They were steady over hundreds of millions of years, imperceptible, yet committed to their work.

The staff and Session spent some time over the summer discussing Christian formation at Brown Memorial—what is commonly called “education.” Education is more of a programmatic term, whereas formation recognizes more of a process—a lifelong process—of shaping. It recognizes that followers of Jesus are shaped over a lifetime by forces such as Scripture, prayer, worship, and discipleship. Those forces help shape the church into a body of people with a history and a story stronger than some of the more visible, but short-lived, forces around them. That story—crystallized in the death and resurrection of Jesus—acts on the world, shaping it, toward the neighborhood that God has in mind.

It's important to remember that none of this work—individual work that we do to improve our relationship with God as well as the broader transformative work that the church carries out in the world—happens quickly. It's the process of sustained forces, often imperceptible, committed to their work. In the midst of a world that seems

out of control heading toward one of the most cantankerous presidential elections many of us have ever witnessed, I like to keep Wolf Rock in mind. God's hand is steady. We are invited to “see” this and participate in it not only for our own sake and the sake of our children, but for many generations to come.

I'm excited about some new things in the fall as outlined in this issue of the *Tidings*—some new ways of forming our faith as individuals and as a community. If you've never participated in sustained “Christian education,” I invite you to give it a try. There are “come when you can” classes and opportunities to make a deeper commitment. There are Sunday morning disciplines, as well as weekday opportunities alongside post-church gatherings. The opportunities are many, but only you can decide to prioritize your own formation. I hope you will give it a try! ♦



andrew@browndowntown.org



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THE NEW CHURCHYEAR

Ignite Talks: 4th Sundays Following Worship

Kindle, spark, instigate, excite, provoke. That's just what we hope to do with this year's Sunday Lunch series—Ignite Talks. Ignite Talks are taking media by storm, similar to TED Talks but shorter and accompanied by visual images. They're seven-minute bursts of inspiration in which presenters give quick, tight, thought-provoking presentations using a variety of images designed to spark imaginations and get people dreaming and scheming about issues that are important to them.

Mark your calendars for the 4th Sunday of the month (the Sept. 25 Ignite Talk topic is yet to be determined) and enjoy hearing what's igniting your fellow congregants over a catered lunch in the Assembly Room. Suggested lunch donation - \$5/person.



ig • nite (verb)

Catch fire or cause to catch fire.

“Furniture can give off lethal fumes when it ignites”

Synonyms: catch fire, burst into flames, combust;

- arouse or inflame (an emotion or situation)

“The words ignited new fury in him”

Synonyms: arouse, kindle, trigger, spark, instigate, excite, provoke, stimulate, stir up, whip up, rally, jump-start, incite, fuel

“The campaign failed to ignite voter interest”



THE NEW CHURCHYEAR

What's New With Adult Formation

This year we're switching things up a bit for our adults with a new and broadened Adult Sunday School Class and more focused "Adult Confirmation" class, which will focus on the fundamental doctrines of Christianity.

Adult Sunday School

This year, our Adult Education class will expand its scope to encompass both Bible Study and topical subject matter, with a particular focus on global mission and our partnerships around the world. All are welcome, anytime!

Adult "Confirmation"

We have an intrepid group of 8th and 9th graders at Brown Memorial this year who will commit to meeting regularly to explore the foundations and fundamentals of our faith tradition. This year, we are offering a companion adult course, which will make similar commitments to meet weekly and explore the central doctrines of Christianity. The two groups will occasionally meet together to compare notes, build relationships and write faith statements. The Adult Confirmation class will form in September and then become a closed group for the duration of the program year.

The Adult Education Hour takes place in the Church House every Sunday, 9:45-10:30 a.m. (from the Sunday after Labor Day to the Sunday before Memorial Day)

Rekindle Your Gifts at the All Church Retreat

October 1
9:30 a.m. - 9 p.m.

We're returning to Skycroft Conference Center nestled atop beautiful South Mountain in Frederick County, Md., to rest, re-charge and re-kindle the gifts God has given each of us.

Our Annual All Church retreat is a day-long event (combined with the Annual Fall Youth Retreat) for everyone—children, youth and adults—featuring lunch and dinner, games, workshops, s'mores and the return of Quiz Night!

Cost is \$25 a person. Registration will open shortly through Creating Connections at Brown (CCB), our internal church website.





THE NEW CHURCHYEAR

Join Our Music Ministry

by Michael Britt, Minister of Music

The Music Ministry at Brown Memorial offers opportunities for everyone, regardless of age and experience. Our choirs and ensembles are an important part of the worship life of our congregation and the community.

In September, rehearsals for these ensembles will begin as they prepare for the weekly worship service, as well as special services and concerts throughout the year.

Won't you consider being a part of the Music Ministry? Listed below are the choirs and ensembles along with their director and contact information. If you would like additional information regarding any one of these choirs, please contact the director or the music office.

Watch for additional information regarding rehearsal times and dates in the bulletin announcements and our website.

Chancel Choir: First rehearsal on Thursday, Sept. 8, 7 p.m. First service on Sunday, Sept. 11, 11 a.m., Rally Day. Contact Michael Britt, michael@browndowntown.org.

Handbell Choir: Rehearsals are scheduled on Sunday's after worship in the Labyrinth. Contact Mary Maldarelli, Director of Handbells,



mary.e.maldarelli@gmail.com


Children's Choir: Children's Choir will begin its season preparing music for the annual Christmas Pageant. Contact Rob Tracy, Director of Children's Music, robdtracy@gmail.com.

Soulful Sisters: Rehearsals are scheduled as needed for each service. Contact Kathy Graning, Kathryn.graning@yahoo.com.

Instrumental Ensemble: Rehearsals are scheduled as needed for each service. Contact Michael Britt, michael@browndowntown.org.

Soulful Revue: Soulful Revue will be leading the music for worship

on Sunday, Aug. 28 at 10 a.m. Contact Taylor Branch, Director, mail@taylorbranch.com. ♦

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

THE NEW CHURCHYEAR

Tiffany Series: Organ Concert Celebrates John Walker

by Shirley Parry

The Tiffany Series is proud to launch its 2016-2017 season with an organ concert honoring John Walker, Brown Memorial's much-loved Minister of Music Emeritus. The concert is **Sunday, November 6 at 3 p.m.** in the Sanctuary. A reception will follow.

Flying in from Paris to play is famed organist Marie-Louise Langlais; she will be joined by organists Eileen Morris Guenther (past president of the American Guild of Organists), Henry Lowe and Michael Britt. They will be playing Brown's historic 1931 Skinner Organ. As part of the concert, Brown Memorial's Chancel Choir and soloists will premiere works commissioned in John's honor by Daniel Gawthrop, Alfred Fedak and JoyAnne Amani

Richardson.

Prior to Brown Memorial, John served as Minister of Music at Shady-side Presbyterian Church in Pittsburgh and The Riverside Church in New York City. He is a member of the organ faculty at Peabody Conservatory of Music and is Distinguished Visiting Professor of Organ at the Shanghai Conservatory of Music.

John's active performance schedule has taken him throughout North America, Europe and Asia. He has performed three times at Notre Dame Cathedral in Paris and also at St. Paul's Cathedral in London and other cathedrals and churches in England, France, Holland, Switzerland and Sweden. On the eve of the millennium, he appeared

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Attention Music Lovers.

Tiffany Committee Needs You!

The Tiffany Committee is an out-reach ministry at Brown Memorial. Each season, the Tiffany Series, produced by the Committee, offers diverse musical experiences and a notable speaker on an issue of importance to the Baltimore community. Typically, three or four events are presented a year (fall-spring).

Proceeds from these events, beyond what the Series needs to be self-sustaining, are donated to Session to support Brown's mission work. Last year, Session established the Tiffany Mission Dream Fund to get new ideas for projects that carry out the church's mission of social justice. The first recipients were the Baltimore Youth Organizing Project, a team of young people in West Baltimore organizing for justice and social change), which received \$3,000 from the fund, and a Cuba Study Trip, which received \$500.

The Tiffany Committee meets monthly to plan and organize events. The committee welcomes Brown members who have an interest in music; experience in event planning, fundraising or public relations or simply a desire to help promote Brown to the wider community through music and discussion of social justice issues.



Contact Shirley Parry,
shirlzepearl@gmail.com,
or Khoa Nguyen, khoatonyn-guyen@gmail.com for details.



Tiffany Series

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on nationwide television in Taiwan during a four-hour marathon concert at the National Concert Hall.

John earned a Doctor of Musical Arts degree at Stanford University, where he was also Assistant University Organist. He holds two Master of Music degrees cum laude from American Conservatory of Music in Chicago. John just completed a

very successful term as President of the American Guild of Organists (2014-2016), having previously served the Guild in numerous other capacities.

We hope you will join us to honor our dear friend, who has given us the gift of so much beautiful music through his music ministry. ♦



Tickets are \$20 for adults and \$10 for students. Purchase yours at browndowntown.org, at the Church Office, or at the door (since we expect a large audience, advance purchase is recommended).

SPOTLIGHT ON:

Mid-Week Prayer Service, Thursdays 5:30-6:15 p.m.

by June Fletcher-Hill

Walk into the Sanctuary on a Thursday at 5:30 p.m. and an immediate calm descends upon you. The lights are dimmed, a candle on a table welcomes you, and chairs arranged in a circle before the chancel steps invite you to take a seat. The Thursday Prayer Service is about to begin.

During this weekly event, people gather to offer prayers on behalf of the congregation, our friends and neighbors, and the world at large. A leader begins the service with an opening prayer and then distributes prayer cards to those in attendance so that all might share in the reading and saying of prayers.

Three categories of prayers are offered: Lament (for those grieving death or loss), Healing, Guidance and Discernment (for healing, making decisions, asking for direction; for peace, justice and reconciliation), and Thanksgiving, Praise and Gratitude.



In addition to reading the prayers written on prayer cards, time is also allowed for individual prayers to be raised, whether spoken or in silence. The leader concludes the service by inviting all to join in the saying of the Lord's Prayer, concluding with a final prayer before all depart for the evening.

The Thursday service is open to all—members of the congregation,

friends and neighbors. Prayer cards are available in the Sanctuary and in the blue welcome folders in the pew. ♦



Contact Rachel Cunningham, rachel@browndowntown.org, with a prayer request or for more information about the Prayer Service.

THE NEW CHURCHYEAR

Tutor a Baltimore City Student This Year

by Martha Socolar

Now is the time to consider becoming a reading tutor for a struggling Baltimore City Public School student. The Brown Memorial Tutoring Program staff is excitedly planning for the new tutoring year. No prior teaching experience is required to be a tutor.

Opening Day for all tutors is **Wednesday, September 14, 9:45 a.m. to noon**, followed by a luncheon provided by the tutoring program. Recognizing the fact that many of our students have focusing problems, we thought it would benefit all of us to learn more about Mindfulness. The Holistic Life Foundation, a nonprofit that partners with some of Baltimore City's public schools running after-school programs, is sending us Jamar Peete to speak about Mindfulness and facilitate an hour long workshop.


The foundation describes Mindfulness as "a combination of awareness, centering, and being present." By using their strategies, we hope to minimize external distractions and help

students stay centered in all situations.

On **Thursday, September 15, 9:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m.**, we will offer an Orientation for new tutors when we'll give a tour of the materials, describe tutoring procedures and teach some of the fundamental components of effective tutoring.

Then, **September 20-21, 9:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m.**, our very own expert, Maryann Povell, will lead training sessions on the basics of Orton Gillingham. This is a multi-sensory, phonetic approach to reading instruction that has been invaluable for our work with children who have learning difficulties.

Please join us for a rewarding and mutually beneficial experience of helping a child achieve academic success. With eight sessions a week, Monday through Thursday, you can select one that works with your schedule. ♦

 **For information, contact Director, Martha Socolar, 410-467-2195, or martha.socolar@comcast.net.**




Session News & Notes

Submitted by Anne Heuisler
Clerk of Session

The session took the following actions since the previous *Tidings* report:

- Submitted and received approval of 2015 session minutes at the annual Presbytery reading of minutes.
- Commended the Capital Appeal leadership team for the efficiency of the Appeal and the positive reaction from the congregation; suggested that more explicit information be provided regarding transferring investments.
- Advised and consented with Pastor Foster Connors' plans for creating a core team to supervise construction.
- Advised and consented with the ministerial staff's plans for classes, events and opportunities for 2016-2017.
- Approved Treasurer David Nyweide's plans for a financial review and the appointment of check signers for Brown Memorial.

 **For information about any of these issues, contact Anne Heuisler, ah Luisler@comcast.net. Session minutes are kept in the Session Minutes Book in the church office and are available for perusal upon request.**

SUMMER NEWS ROUND-UP

The Journey to Say, "We are sorry."

by Chrystie Adams
Baltimore Dakota Learning Camps
Steering Committee Chair

This past June at the Presbyterian Church (USA)'s 222nd General Assembly, Brown Memorial members Chrystie Adams and Don Peeples culminated years of work to successfully lead the unanimous passage of the Apology Overture to Native Americans by the Social Justice Committee. Here, Chrystie explains the history behind the effort.

The year was 2005 and the event was a trip to the Carlisle Indian School in Carlisle, Pa., with our friends from the Dakota Presbytery, Rev. Asa and Tresita Wilson. It is certainly an understatement to say that Don Peeples and I were surprised and dismayed by what we learned that day as we viewed the displays at the Cumberland County Historical Society.

These displays told the history of this first Indian Boarding School founded by Captain Richard Henry Pratt in 1870. He believed "white ways" were superior to Indian ways and popularized "kill the Indian and save the man." We learned about the Grant administration's cultural assimilation policy that supported the philosophy of the school and read about the ways our government tried to deal with the "Indian problem."

The most dramatic and memorable was the cemetery where many Indian children were buried. Some tombstones identified them by name, others as "unknown." These children were taken hundreds of miles away

from their families by train. They were given clothes nothing like their familiar clothes, had their long hair cut off and were prevented from speaking their own language, very often with severe punishment. They spent hours each day learning the "white ways" and received some education, but were in all reality being trained to be servants in the non-Native world.

Shock and dismay and a very unsettled feeling stayed with us after that trip.

Fast forward to 2008 when Baltimore Dakota Steering Committee (BDSC) sent Don and me to the Lake Traverse Reservation to meet with new learning camp partners. Rev. Clifford Canku introduced us to six Dakota Presbytery churches on the reservation. In our conversations with him, the subject of an apology to the Native Americans came up and Clifford said, "No one has ever said they are sorry."

Don had received an email prior to our visit about the Australian government's apology to their Indigenous



Chrystie Adams with past participants in the Pejuhutazizi Family Learning Camp in Minnesota.

As the BDSC became more involved with our Dakota Presbytery partners ... we learned about the personal histories of many folks in the churches and the communities that they serve. It became clear there were many past hurts, injustices and incidents of racism.

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Journey to "We are sorry"

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peoples and then we became aware that the Canadian government had followed suit. A seed was planted and we began the conversation with the BDSC about the possibility of our group authoring and submitting an apology to Native Americans for the PCUSA's part in the Indian Boarding School Movement.

As the BDSC became more involved with our Dakota Presbytery partners at our various learning camps, we learned about the personal histories of many folks in the churches and the communities that they serve. It became clear there were many past hurts, injustices and incidents of racism.

The idea of an apology from the PCUSA for its role in the Indian Boarding School Movement in America became a goal that the BDSC discussed at great length and voted to pursue. We tasked Don, BDSC Member-At-Large, as the primary author and researcher for such a document.

We spent many hours reading and revising the apology document as members of the BDSC. After more than six years of work, we arrived at our hoped for final goal of presenting the apology to the Commission on Reconciliation of the Presbytery of Baltimore.

January 2016 started the journey for our apology to become an actual overture to the General Assembly of the PCUSA. I was the

representative to the Commission on Reconciliation from the BDSC and presented our apology to the members.

Don and I worked with Susan Krehbiel of the Presbytery of Baltimore to perfect the format and language. In February 2016, the apology overture went to our Presbytery for approval and was accepted. Now we needed a concurring vote from another Presbytery, which we were able to get from the Upper Ohio Valley Presbytery. They have a partnership with the Dakota Presbytery and called a special meeting to vote on the concurrence for the apology overture.

The concurrence vote was unanimous! Then the overture journeyed to Louisville to the Office of the General Assembly where several groups read it and commented. All of the comments were positive and the overture became known as Overture 065.

The Presbytery of Baltimore selected me to be the Overture Advocate and so I travel to Portland, Ore., to attend the 222nd General Assembly. So many Presbyterians gathered in one place was an awesome site and it was uplifting to see and hear so many engaged in doing the "work of the church."

Our Apology Overture was re-numbered as 11-08 and was under the consideration of the Social Justice Committee. The overture was opened to comments and discus-



July Birthdays

07/03	Howard De Hoff
07/03	Peter Hoffberger
07/03	Lehn Robinson
07/03	Tom Waldron
07/05	Will Fesperman
07/05	Frederick Lazarus, V
07/06	Michael Britt
07/06	Hannah Milcarek
07/06	J. D. Robinson
07/09	Charlie Obrecht
07/12	Anna Connors
07/12	Rose Glorioso
07/13	Andrew Babb
07/15	Dan Hale
07/16	Ann Teaff
07/18	Rachel Emerick
07/19	John Boumgarden
07/19	Rachel E. Clark
07/21	Hilbert Byers
07/22	Wells Obrecht
07/24	Doug Adams
07/25	Gerald Shields
07/27	Ellen B. Williams
07/28	Erin Bobango
07/30	Matthew Dahl
07/30	Spencer Hammond
07/31	Valerie Hinkle



Brown on Facebook

Visit [facebook.com/BrownDownTownBaltimore](https://www.facebook.com/BrownDownTownBaltimore) and "like" us, "share" our posts and "check-in" when you visit us.



August Birthdays

08/01	Deb Milcarek
08/01	Malinda Peeples
08/02	Beverly Hensley
08/04	Bill McConnell
08/04	Neal Naff
08/05	Chuck Holland
08/08	Adam Forward
08/09	Donald McPherson
08/11	Mehran Armand
08/12	Gilly Babb
08/13	Edward McCarthy
08/13	David Todd
08/14	George Brown
08/14	Mike Reed
08/15	Cecelia Reichelt
08/15	Sallie Robinson
08/17	Elizabeth Lee Williams
08/20	Jack McManus
08/20	Betsey Todd
08/21	James Egan
08/21	Tim Hughes
08/24	Nick Conti
08/24	Carol Graves
08/24	Laura McConnell
08/26	Evan Cunningham
08/26	Xóchitl Mota-Back
08/26	Theresa Veatch
08/27	W. Courtland Robinson
08/28	Susan Flanigan
08/28	Andy Imparato
08/29	Oliver Schmickel
08/30	Sharon Lucas
08/31	Gareth Imparato
08/31	Henry Waldron

sion on June 20. Several members of the Native America Consulting Committee (NACC), with whom I had met and talked, signed up to speak about the importance of the overture and its acceptance by the committee.

After nine hours of listening to and discussing other overtures, our overture finally came to the floor for consideration by the Social Justice Committee just before 8 p.m.

Listening to our Native American friends speak passionately about the overture of course brought tears to my eyes. However, my turn was next and I needed to present myself to the committee in a focused manner so they would know who I was, why I was chosen as the Overture Advocate, how and why the overture was important for them to consider, and what our recommendations were if it was accepted.

I spoke to the gathered commissioners and every eye was focused on my face. All ears, hearts and minds seemed to be open to my words. Some language amendments were made and then it was time for the vote. It received unanimous acceptance. Then the tears flowed! I still feel that awesome joy as I write these words.

The overture then traveled from the Social Justice Committee to the Plenary. As the final vote during the last hour, the 222nd General Assembly accepted the overture, with a minor adjustment to one sentence.

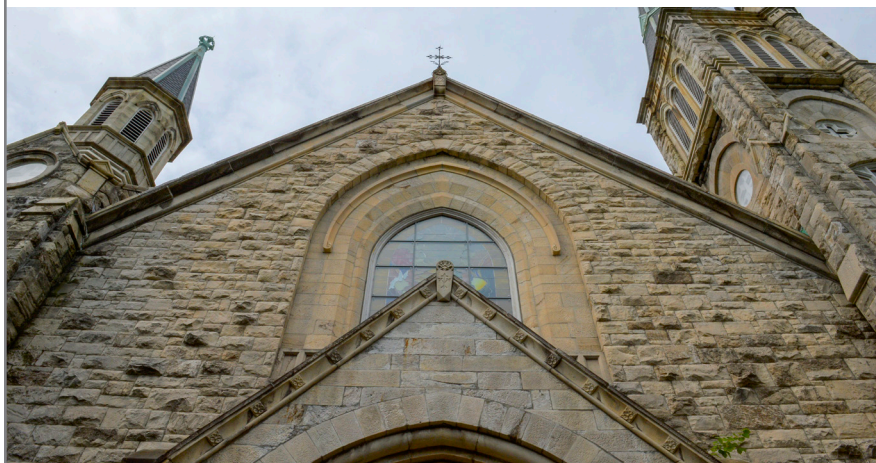
This was the first recommendation of the overture. The next three can now be put in motion. They read:

Recommendation 2: That the Moderator of the PC(USA) share this Apology with the 95 PC(USA) Native American congregations on behalf of the denomination. The means of sharing this Apology shall be coordinated with the Presbyterian Mission Agency's Native American Congregational Support Office and with the PC(USA)'s Native American Consulting Committee (NACC).

Recommendation 3: That the Office of the General Assembly share this Apology with Native-American tribal authorities in the United States. The means of sharing this Apology shall be coordinated with the Presbyterian Mission Agency's Native American Congregational Support Office and with the PC(USA)'s Native American Consulting Committee (NACC).

Recommendation 4: That the General Assembly commend this Apology to the entire PC(USA) in all its expressions for their use in the work of reconciliation among all peoples.

The journey to say "We are sorry" has begun and I am confident our PCUSA will honor the recommendations so that healing can begin for many of our Native American brothers and sisters and our denomination can know what part it played in this terrible story in U.S. history. I am humbled and honored to have played a part in the journey for the Apology Overture and will continue to support and assist in the months ahead. ♦



SUMMER NEWS ROUND-UP

Capital Appeal Update

by Andrew Foster Connors

In June we launched our Capital Fund Appeal seeking to raise \$1.4 million over the next five years from commitments made over and above regular annual giving.

We thank everyone for their enthusiastic response to the Appeal and their pledges, bringing us 80% closer to our goal!

We continue to seek responses from some members and friends. Please pray and consider what gift you are called to bring to the effort.

The Session and Trustees are in the process of assembling the construction team that will take the

priorities outlined in the Capital Appeal and shape them into plans for action. Trustees Betsy Nix and George Brown have agreed to co-chair this effort.

Look for a community gathering sometime this fall to make clear the construction process, including a timeline, key dates and opportunities for input from the congregation along the way. We look forward to transforming the commitment of Brown Memorial members into some important changes to the accessibility, safety and usability of our facilities. ♦




COMMITMENTS

**87 (pledges or gifts) totaling
\$1,121,684.51 from 86 households**
(as of August 9)



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	Ed Richardson
09/25	Mia Goodwin Davis
09/25	Sabine Goodwin Davis
09/25	Grace Peng
09/28	Keiffer Mitchell, Jr.
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.**

SUMMER NEWS ROUND-UP

Choir Camp

Participants Experience the Joy of Singing Together

by Elden Schneider

“Draw the circle wide ... No one stands alone.” The inspirational words of the closing song, voiced by the combined choirs that encircled the audience in this first-ever EMES Choir Camp Concert, reverberated through the sun-bathed Sanctuary of Brown Memorial Church on the evening of July 14. As Camp Music Director John Sall observed, “The room where we gathered to share all this was a joyful expression of love for one another in singing together.”

Thus ended a highly successful four-day experiment that involved the collective efforts of many volunteers from Brown who served in a variety of capacities; the Abington Presbyterian Church (Pa.) Youth Choir whose members served as camp counselors; The Center and its director Kate Foster Connors along with intern Veronica Allen who served as hosts; the adult volunteers from Abington Church; Meal Team Director Julie Hanks and her crew who served two meals each day, plus a dinner on the final day; Camp Director Chrystie Adams whose vision and organizational gifts made the experience possible; and, most importantly, the children of the EMES Choir and their supportive families who have faithfully and loyally completed another full year of music making.

In a carefully orchestrated schedule, daily activities included organized walks to camp, musical rehearsals and exercises divided by age groups, games and art work, breakfast and lunch each day, van rides back to school and the culminating dinner and concert for the choristers' friends and families.

The Camp Concert featured three different choral groups who performed with their directors John Sall, Rachel Clark and Rob Tracy. In addition, two different ring and sing groups performed with chimes under the direction of Nick Imparato. Michael Britt served as music and program facilitator, accompanist and all-purpose trouble shooter.

On Friday evening July 15, Michael played an organ



accompaniment for a Buster Keaton silent film following a special concert sung by the Abington Youth Choir for Artscape 2016. When all was sung and done, no one who participated in or attended the concerts could doubt that the performers all followed the psalmist's directive to “Make a joyful noise!” ♦

Racial Diversity in Church

Why has it taken so long to get there?

Education series ponders question.

by SueJeanne Koh

Despite the snow coming down during a chilly January evening earlier this year, 17 people came out to Theology on Tap to talk about race and ethnicity in the church.

Sensing the Spirit's movement and a hunger for more conversation, a small group of us met for several months to plan a larger discussion series for the church community, which started in June. The goal of our discussions has been simply to provide a hospitable space for people to share their experiences with race, especially as it has intersected with their faith journeys.

While we may preach and believe God loves all people, and that the church is a space where people are not "judged by the color of their skin but by the content of their character"—to crib Martin Luther King Jr.'s famous phrase—both history and personal experience often painfully point to otherwise.

Theological ideas and visions are often an ill-fitted match to our embodied realities, taking a lifetime to grow into. And so our Christian faith has often aided and abetted racism in both subtle and explicit ways, so that such racism often functions like a heretical way of being that infects our life together. The result



is that our churches also reflect the brokenness of the society in which we live, operating according to the world's economy rather than the ecumenical (oikoumene, from which we get "economy") vision of Pentecost.

The trouble about race is not just a problem outside of church doors, but also inside of them. We do not know how to commune together, let alone live together: According to a recent Pew Research Center report, our own PC(USA) denomination is overwhelmingly 88% white, and 5% black, 3% Asian and 4% Latino. If we do in fact believe that racial diversity in our congregations is vital to our faith and growth as disciples of Christ, then why has it taken so long for us to get there?

Our three discussion in June and July specifically focused on explor-

ing the concepts of implicit bias and color blindness as a way to get handles on how racism plays out on both the individual and structural levels. But in our short time together we have also had spirited and honest exchanges touching upon the optics of white privilege, cultural appropriation, microaggressions, public policy and school segregation.

We have also connected these theoretical concepts back to our own experiences. If racism is the inability to tell your own story because society has told it for you based on the color of your skin, then part of breaking that power is being able to narrate your own story to others, of witnessing to the textures and nuances and influences of God's history in your history. As a relative newcomer to Brown and as a fairly new resident of

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SUMMER NEWS ROUND-UP

Soaring Eagles Learning Camp

Snapshots of Eutaw-Marshburn Elementary students participating in our camp, June 27-30



Racial Diversity in Church

Continued from Page 13

Baltimore, I have found it heartening and challenging to hear others talk thoughtfully and transparently about their histories and experiences of awakening to racial issues.

On another level, it seems that such conversations around race could not be more timely. Local and national events have been mapping gun violence and race with deadly predictability and regularity. I often feel helpless, and frustrated, by my sense of helplessness in the onslaught of news and yet another hashtagged name. I often do not know what to pray; and yet, I also know that the Spirit intercedes with groanings too deep for words (Rom. 8:26).

I believe too that the Spirit is interceding in these gatherings so far. As Andrew preached on Pentecost Sunday, the gift of the Spirit was to unravel the logic of Babel so that we could listen to each other speak in our own languages. For me, the experience of hearing others share their perspectives on and experiences of race has been an example of unraveling the tangled weave of racism and helped to create a hospitable space in the midst of a world that seems to insist that such a space is an impossibility.

This hospitable space is a small thing in some sense, but a vital one. For this space, this expansive-

ness presses and pushes against the “No” of the world with a “Yes,” remapping the redlined boundaries that have been placed on our hearts and minds. I am hopeful that these conversations at Brown will be an ongoing part, even if a small one, of a new cartography for our souls. ♦

i Discussions on this topic will continue monthly this fall. For more information about the conversations and/or to be added to the "Race and Church" group on CCB where resources and messages are shared, contact SueJeanne Koh, suejeanne.koh@gmail.com.

SUMMER NEWS ROUND-UP

Connecting in El Salvador

by Jake Schindler

In June, a delegation from Brown Memorial traveled to El Salvador and reunited with long-time Catholic parish partner Maria Madre De Los Pobres. The adult leaders were Associate Pastor Tim Hughes and Susan Saudek. The youth were Killian McGinnis, Dever Cunningham, Jake Schindler, Josephine Finney and Olivia Liang. Samirah and Shu'aib Franklin, friends from a local mosque in Baltimore's Sandtown neighborhood, also joined the group. Jake Schindler, a rising senior at the Friends School and a youth elder at Brown, shared what the experience was like for him.

The very last night of our stay in El Salvador, we were asked to use one word to describe what we got from the trip. I spoke up right away, explaining how connections really molded the trip. Whether it was connections between our congregation and Maria Madre De Los Pobres, between our delegation and the "Pastoral Juvenil" (the youth group at Madre), between godparents and their children in the Godparent Program, or just within our delegation, connections were evident in every part of the trip. And I wasn't the only one who thought that. As we went around the circle, the word "connections" kept coming up.

I now am able to see why we have been returning to El Salvador for 30 years. The strength of our connections with the people there are rooted in faith and love, two forces that are impossible to break. This experience has opened my eyes to many different things and I would recommend this trip to everyone in the church community.

 **View more photos taken by Susan Saudek and read Tim Hughes' account of the trip on the "Latest News" page at www.browndowntown.org.**





BMPA Calendar

*Alive in the City
and the World*

Program Year Schedule Begins Sunday, Sept. 11

Worship will move to 11 a.m. and the Education Hour will resume at 9:45 a.m.

Every Wednesday (resuming after Labor Day), Bible Study, 10:30-11:30 a.m. Church House. All are welcome to join in discussion of the lectionary text for the coming Sunday.

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.

Aug. 27, Youth Welcome Back Tubing Trip, 9 a.m.-5 p.m. Shenandoah River, Harper's Ferry. All middle and high school students are invited to celebrate the beginning of a new program year. Cost is \$28. Contact Rachel Cunningham, rachel@browndowntown.org.

Aug. 28, Soulful Revue Sunday, 10 a.m. Sanctuary. Soulful Revue will lead the music for worship.

Sept 8, Chancel Choir Rehearsal, 7 p.m. Sanctuary. Regular rehearsals resume.

Sept 9, Feasting in Faith, 6:30-9 p.m. Home of Rick and Jeanne Thomas. The discussion for this gathering will be on the book "Half Truths: God Helps Those Who Help Themselves and Other Things

the Bible Doesn't Say," by Adam Hamilton. Contact Rachel, rachel@browndowntown.org.

Sept 11, Rally Day/Potluck Picnic/Tiffany Window Tours, 11 a. m. Sanctuary and Church Front Steps. See details on page 1.

Sept 14-21, Tutoring Program Opening Day, Orientation, Training. Third Floor Fellowship Building. See details on page 7.

Sept. 15, Prayer Shawl, 1-3 p.m. Enjoy support and fellowship while making prayer shawls for those in need. Location TBA. Contact Dianne, rossinbalt@verizon.net.

Sept.25, Ignite Talk, Noon-1:30 p.m. Assembly Room. Topic TBA. See details on page 2.

Sept. 25, Sunday Night Live, 5:30-8 p.m. Assembly Room. A monthly gathering of middle and high school youth to enjoy a homemade dinner and discuss a topic related to God, the Bible or current events.

Sept. 30-Oct. 2, Youth Fall Retreat. Skycroft Conference Center, Middletown, Md. Youth will depart Brown Friday evening and return by noon on Oct. 2. Contact Tim Hughes for details, tim@browndowntown.org.

Oct. 1, All Church Retreat, 9:30 a.m.-9 p.m. Skycroft Conference Center, Middletown, Md. See details on page 3.

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

Have an idea for something to include in the Tidings? Email Jennifer Michael, jmichael@browndowntown.org. Upcoming due dates: Sept. 12 (Oct/Nov. issue), Nov 11 (Dec/Jan. issue).

Sign up for our e-newsletter, This Week @ Brown, on the home page at www.browndowntown.org.



**BROWN
MEMORIAL
PARK AVENUE**

Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)