



2019

Annual Report



Pastor's Message

"Whoever is on a journey towards God goes from one beginning to another beginning. Will you be among those who dare to tell themselves: 'Begin again! Leave discouragement behind! Let your soul live!'"

So wrote Brother Roger, founder of Taizé, for his New Year's Day entry in one of the devotional books that I have been using as a part of my personal devotions each morning. The entry seemed particularly fitting as we begin together our celebrations and learnings in Brown Memorial's 150th year.

"Whoever is on a journey towards God goes from one beginning to another beginning." Certainly this has proven true for the history of our community. From the founding of the church to its many pastoral transitions to the social and political upheavals that buffeted the congregation through the years, the church has always been on the move from one beginning to another.

Sometimes the congregation was on the leading edge of those changes, actively working for peace in the run up to World War I, worshipping together with African-Americans and Jews precisely at a time when Baltimore's segregationists policies were being created and imposed, becoming a More Light Church and ordaining lesbian and gay elders in the '90s against the intent of church law. At other times, the congregation stayed more to the center, deciding not to become a sanctuary congregation in the 1980s, taking a slow pace in the 1950s at racially integrating a shared recreation program because of the opposition of a sister church, responding to a prominent Baltimore Confederate sympathizer's request to put in the church's charter that it would never sell the building to black people with a practical rejection instead of a principled one.

The good news of the gospel is not that we get every choice right in every moment, but that we have a chance to learn and grow, and, by the grace of God, begin again. Death and resurrection is always a part of our life together. As I read through the many activities and events of 2019, and reflect on recent Session discussions, it strikes me that we may be entering a period of significant discernment over our future together. With the fellowship building renovation completed, the questions shift to, how is God calling us to use this beautiful, functional space to strengthen the congregation to be a blessing to the city? Parents of young children, and leaders of youth



are asking foundational questions about how the faith of the church can best support them in the life struggles and questions that they are experiencing in their own life journeys. The Session continues to discern how to grow our congregation and our generosity together to be good stewards of our community and its many resources, not simply for today, but for years to come. We are on the cusp of many new beginnings.

My hope for 2020 is twofold—first, that we will see the broadest engagement possible of our community in the activities of the 150th celebration. The annual meeting will be organized largely around that objective. I hope you will come and bring your energy, gifts and imagination to what promises to be a community-driven, community-led process of celebration that can lead us deeper into discernment about who God is calling us to be in this moment in history. Secondly, I hope that 2020 is the year when we get serious about sharing what we have created together more intentionally with people outside of our community who need church—a community of people who know they need God's grace to deepen practices of prayer, forgiveness, justice and peace making precisely at a time in our country when those things are in short supply.

God has given this community too many beginnings to count. The same is true for all who are guided by the Spirit. I look forward to new vision and the clarity that comes from it as we walk together, unafraid, in anticipation of God's latest assignments.

Andrew Foster Connors
Senior Pastor

Clerk's Report

We welcomed 18 new adult members: Reginald Carroll, Bruce Curtis, Ronnie Doyle, Sharon Doyle, Allison Hutson, Kathy Kaneda, Peter Kirschgraber and Lisa Logan, Yvette Matthews, Elizabeth Nash and Salvatore Pappalardo, Brad and Suzannah Norris, Brittany and Caleb Soeun, Harry and Carey Thomasian, and Viviane (VI) Thorpe.

We welcomed 11 new youth members: Marcos Calderon, Aidan Connors, Sarah Egan, Will Egan, Luke Inglesby, Annalisa Jenkins, Lizzie Mills, Nellie Mills, Amalie Nohe-Moren, Max Palmer, Alex Reichelt.

We mourned the deaths of members and friends: Wallace W. Anderson (affiliate member), Dorothy Bascom, Ele Bigger, Roslyn Ann Boles, Raleigh "Rollo" Brent, II, Dayvon Brooks, Bessie Carnegie, Mike Cavallon, Roy Christen, Luther Arnold Clark (member), Grace Catherine Fallon, Jack Finnerty, Redmond C. S. Finney, James Spencer Hammond (member), Bruce Hanks, Nina Hanks, Alvin Arthur Hauser, Eleanor Howell, Donald Jenkins, Robert Love, Archie Reed, Imogene Richardson, Mimi Rudman, and Jim Williams (member).

We celebrated four baptisms and one blessing: Avigail Elizabeth Fulton (blessing), daughter of Nicole and Kirk Fulton; Silas Alexander Norris, son of Suzannah and Brad Norris; Max Palmer (youth); Soeuth Caleb Soeun (adult); and Abraham Gravis Taylor, son of Lyndsay and Matthew Taylor.

Elders David Nyweide and Paul Robie completed their service on Session. Other Session members in 2018 included: Anne Arnold, Gayle Barney, Liz Bowie Fesperman, Elizabeth Reichelt, Kelsie Riegel Morgan, Michael Reed, Jody Shaw, Taylor Stewart, Laura Urban (clerk), John Walker, and Michele Ward. Youth elders Annika Brockman and Evan Cunningham also served. Rev. Andrew Foster Connors and Rev. Michele Ward serve as moderators.

Trustee Bill McConnell completed his term of service. Others who served as trustees were George Brown (co-chair), Alex Hagen, Jonathan Hensley, Beth Gregory, David Miller (co-chair), and Malinda Peeples.

Deacons Lucile McCarthy completed her term of service this year. Others who served were: Kathy Arnold, Page Campbell (co-chair), Jim Cox, Rebecca Crew, Kirk Fulton (co-chair), Ryan Moran, Amy Munds, and Eddie Satterfield.

Staff transitions: From May to August, Rev. Andrew Foster Connors participated in a sabbatical, supported with a grant from the Lilly Endowment, to study and recharge his ministry. While he was away, Rev. Michele Ward served as head of staff. Rev. Gretchen van Utt served as sabbatical support clergy from May to August.

Submitted by Laura Urban (Clerk of Session) and Staff

BROWN BY THE NUMBERS

342

Members on Active Role
December 31, 2019

29

New Members

155

Average Attendance at
Worship Services



HIGHLIGHTS Congregational Life

In 2019, we deepened our connections and spiritual practice together through expanded small group fellowship, learning and team-building exercises in our newly renovated space.

- The year began with the much anticipated completion of the Fellowship Building renovations that have greatly increased the function and use of that building.
- The renovation completion also brought the return of community lunches on the first and third Sundays of the month. Our inaugural lunch featured a panel discussion on transgender awareness. Other lunches this year included topical discussions on stories of risk, pushing the limit, team building, civil rights (past and present), the Green Amendment, a look at accessibility beyond the elevator and the history of racism in Baltimore City.
- Youth Sunday 2019 was inspired by the game Family Feud and included sermon reflections on forgiveness, reconciliation and the importance of relationships.
- “Rhythms for the Journey” was our theme for Lent. Each week we explored a different spiritual practice through daily email devotions, the education hour and worship.
- The Tri-Church Lenten education series featured discussions on how our traditions are portrayed in comedy, cinema and television to explore what some of our biggest sins are as traditions and how we can become better reflections of the Church and of Jesus going forward. Activities for children were also added to this year’s program.
- Our weekly (Thursdays, 5:30 p.m.) and special prayer services (Lent and Advent) continue to be meaningful opportunities for personal and corporate reflection.
- Confirmation Sunday this year included the baptism of one confirmand and the confirmation of 12 youth with a celebratory reception that followed.
- We welcomed many guest preachers during Andrew Foster Connors’ sabbatical summer: the Rev. Gretchen van Utt, minister and yoga instructor; McKenna Lewellen, feminist and assistant director at The Center; the Rev. Naomi Washington Leapheart, womanist and community organizer; Katherine Atkins, death row advocate; and the Rev. Dr. Ken Evers Hood, author and minister.
- Artscape weekend’s Church in the Park turned into Church *Not* in the Park due to extreme heat. Nevertheless, members participated in fun team-building activities led by Outward Bound facilitators in the comfort of our air conditioned buildings, while children enjoyed splashing around in the Bolton Hill Swim and Tennis Club.
- Andrew Foster Connors and Michele Ward led worship with a September sermon series focusing on teams and leadership. Their October series focused on environmental justice and started off with guest preacher Rabbi Nina Beth Cardin, activist and thought leader on the climate crisis in Maryland.
- A team of retreat leaders from re:create, a ministry of the Arts, Recreation, and Worship Conference at Montreat Camp and Conference Center, came to Brown and led our fall All Church Retreat on the theme of teams and playfulness.
- Our Music Ministry, which includes our Chancel Choir, Handbell Choir, Soulful Revue and Soulful Sisters, continue to enhance our musical and liturgical experience at worship. A generous gift, given in honor of Brown Memorial member Lynda Burton, enabled us to commission a new choral piece that premiered in November. This donation will also create an ensemble chorister position in our Chancel Choir. We welcomed our organ scholar, Mi Zhou, who is a student of Minister of Music *Emeritus* Dr. John Walker.
- The Silent Film Series to benefit the Capital Campaign continued in 2019, featuring the films “The Kid Brother” and “The Circus,” with live organ accompaniment by Michael Britt.



■ Our Summer Concert Series and Hymn Sings continued to be a draw in our community in 2019. The concerts featured not only our own church members, but also talented musicians in and around Bolton Hill.

■ Our Tiffany Concert Series, in its 12th year, featured renowned organists Mickey Thomas Terry and Christopher Creaghan. Our Chancel Choir performed Leonard Bernstein's "Chichester Psalms" along with the choir from Beth El Congregation. The concert was conducted by Tom Hall and included an interview with Alex Bernstein, the son of the composer. The program also presented a commissioned choral work, "Psalm 24," composed by Cantor Thom King. This past December, Minister of Music Michael Britt presented a "Holiday Pops Concert" on the Skinner organ, which showcased sacred classics and holiday songs in the "theatre organ" style.

■ This past fall, our Chancel Choir sang with the Beth El Choir at Beth El Congregation to remember the Jews that lost their lives during Kristallnacht.

■ Michele Ward and Rachel Cunningham, along with eight others, embarked on a Spiritual Formation Listening Campaign. The goal was to meet with all families with children, birth through high school, to learn about their desires for their children and their faith.

■ Over the summer our youth participated in the Massanetta Middle School Conference (two youth), the Montreat High School Conference (seven youth) and a mission trip to the Pejuhutazizi Learning Camp in Minnesota (five youth). Sunday Night Live, Brown Memorial's monthly youth gathering, met throughout the year with youth and adults from Memorial Episcopal and Corpus Christi churches.

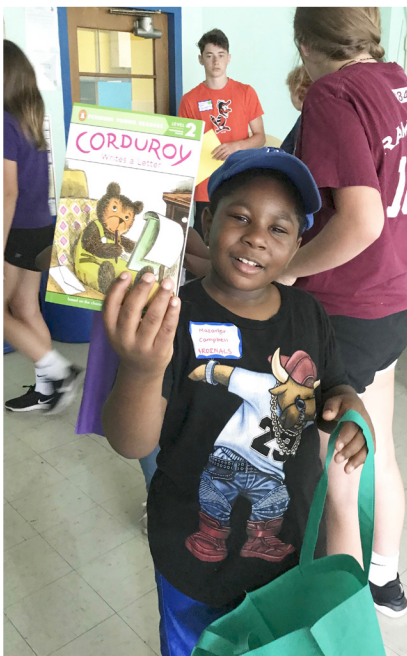
■ Multiple small groups continue to meet monthly, providing a time of fellowship and learning beyond what takes place on Sundays.

■ On the practical side, to continue to keep our congregation healthy on all fronts, we reviewed our existing Safe Church policy and implemented key updates this fall, including background checks for all volunteers and CPR and first aid training for staff, youth leaders and program leaders. We also now have an automated external defibrillator (AED) onsite in the Assembly Room.

HIGHLIGHTS Mission in the City

Our urban witness in Baltimore extends from community organizing to monthly casseroles, but all of it is rooted in a sense of God's love for the city.

- We continue to volunteer at Eutaw-Marshburn Elementary School (EMES) throughout the year, including co-sponsoring "Pictures With Santa" with the EMES Positive Behavioral Intervention and Supports (PBIS) Committee—a reward activity event for December. Police officers from the Baltimore City Police Department provided Santa, elves and several other helpers to talk with the children.
- Soaring Eagles Learning Camp began year eight with new partners from the Oak Hill Presbyterian Church in St. Louis, MO, and First Presbyterian Church of Allentown PA. Sixty children attended and 50 youth and adults served as staff.
- The Brown Green Team, which is committed to advancing environmental education and stewardship, joined Baltimore Blue+Green+Just, an alliance of environmentally-minded non-profits and community activists holding a common vision for health, safety and prosperity for all Baltimoreans in this new epoch of climate emergency. The Green Team also held an informative and well attended Zero-Waste Lunch.
- We continue to help address hunger in our city by supporting the Samaritan Community with "green bag" food donations, and Our Daily Bread with monthly casseroles—more than 200 made by Brown members this year.
- We are participating in actions by Baltimoreans United in Leadership Development (BUILD) to organize Baltimoreans across race and ethnicity toward violence reduction across neighborhoods. Brown hosted a relational meeting training in September, as well as a three-week citizens power training series, and both events trained a total of 250 leaders. Twenty-four congregants attended a public education funding action in October 2019 to secure increased funding for Baltimore City Public Schools.
- During Lent, the Opioid Addiction Awareness Team welcomed activist and artist Peter Brunn to share his story of how this disease has touched his life personally and the congregation was invited to participate in his Beyond Beautiful One Thousand Love Letters Project.
- The Eutaw-Marshburn Elementary School (EMES) Choir sang at Brown Memorial and Linden Hall Apartments. The choir is in its eighth year with nearly 40 participants. The students rehearse every Wednesday after school.
- Brown Memorial hosted its third EMES Choir Camp in July. The music camp, which featured a concert at the end of the week, was staffed by members of Brown, as well as members of the youth choir and youth group at Westminster United Methodist Church. Eighteen children attended and 25 youth and adults served as camp staff.
- The Brown Memorial Tutoring Program has provided one-on-one tutoring for Baltimore City public school children for 56 years! It has maintained strong relationships with four partner schools—Mount Royal Elementary/Middle, Dorothy I. Height Elementary, Eutaw Marshburn Elementary and The Baltimore Montessori Public Charter School—and is currently serving 91 students because of a dedicated and caring staff of 75 volunteer tutors. In 2019, nearly all students made measurable progress and 75 percent made significant or outstanding progress, meaning they advanced by at least one grade level and they showed great improvement in their phonics skills. The Tutoring Program is excited by the impact tutoring is having on this year's children, both emotionally and academically.



HIGHLIGHTS Mission in the World

What does it mean to be in cross-cultural partnership, both abroad and at home? One thing we continue to learn at Brown Memorial is that it is complex, challenging, richly rewarding work.

■ Session approved a recommendation to sign a three-year partnership agreement with the church in Camajuani. In 2019, Brown Memorial's Cuba team visited the Presbyterian Church in Camajuani, Cuba and returned excited about the partnership agreement that the two churches signed during that trip. In March 2020, a delegation of seven people from Brown, including Michele Ward, will travel to Cuba to visit Havana and the church in Camajuani.

■ Thanks to all who support the Godparent Program in El Salvador. Members of Brown Memorial are currently godparents to 20 children. The Brown Memorial Ministry of Welcome is considering an adult trip to El Salvador in May 2020.

■ As the northward migration of Central Americans continues, we are being called upon to accompany our brothers and sisters through Brown Memorial's participation in the Sanctuary movement. Brown and Sacred Heart of Jesus Catholic Church shared a meal in March to discern how to move forward in action in our city and build relationships. We formalized this participation by naming the group the Brown Memorial Ministry of Welcome. We participated in a BUILD action with the Archdiocese and Sacred Heart in June on a weekend of scheduled raids in Baltimore by U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement. We marched in solidarity through Highlandtown with Sacred Heart members in July. We recently provided winter coats, clothing and gift cards for families. We shared a lunch of tamales and told stories while meeting the families in December. We are also lending our skills by teaching or helping at newcomer orientations for immigrant families and attending the language exchange program at Sacred Heart.

■ The year 2019 marked the seventh year of the Pejuhutazizi Family Learning Camp (PFLC) at the Upper Sioux Community in Granite Falls, Minn. Six Brown Memorial families (13 individuals) participated. PFLC is one of four learning camps hosted by the Baltimore-Dakota Presbytery Partnership.

■ Fern Cloud, pastor of the Pejuhutizizi Presbyterian Church, was the featured Open Space leader at the November Presbytery Gathering and preached a sermon at Brown titled "Old Testament Stories" that same weekend. Fern also danced at the Baltimore American Indian Center Powwow at the Timonium State Fairgrounds.

■ We continue to pray for our friends in Cameroon as they navigate political issues within the country and also for, Leisa Wagstaff, PC(USA) mission co-worker, stationed in South Sudan, working with teachers in very rural and somewhat dangerous situations. The Mbengwi Schools had to be closed due to lack of funds and danger to staff.



OPERATING BUDGET

BMPAPC 2020 Session Approved Budget

	<u>2020 Budget</u>	<u>2019 Actual</u>	<u>2019 Budget</u>	<u>2018 Actual</u>	<u>2018 Budget</u>
REVENUE					
General Fund/Pledge and Plate	622,000	589,495	642,000	580,862	602,000
Rent/Use/Miscellaneous	14,075	16,261	13,835	12,735	11,260
Endowment Income/Draws	418,638	375,265	437,429	377,875	436,135
TOTAL REVENUE	\$ 1,054,713	\$ 981,020	\$1,093,264	\$ 971,472	\$1,049,395
EXPENSES					
Personnel	640,091	632,931	641,378	569,609	605,657
Salaries	384,808	374,336	379,933	350,792	374,998
Health/Pension/Worker's Comp	145,687	144,999	147,562	127,769	133,429
Personnel Committee	600	3,552	-	3,936	10,000
Housing Allowances	67,250	67,250	67,250	50,562	45,000
Payroll Taxes	30,496	30,630	34,133	27,433	32,130
Professional Expenses	11,250	12,165	12,500	9,116	10,100
Christian Education	23,500	18,659	23,500	18,048	23,700
Children & Families	3,500	2,246	3,500	2,981	3,500
Youth Groups	13,500	13,013	13,500	11,403	13,500
Shared Christian Ed	5,000	2,763	5,000	3,297	5,000
Adult Education	1,500	637	1,500	366	1,700
Congregation/Worship	23,100	28,207	25,190	24,170	27,485
Congregational Care	10,100	4,556	3,100	2,730	4,400
Music	7,500	7,995	7,850	7,850	7,850
Worship	5,000	5,266	5,450	6,059	6,445
Diversity	500	10,390	8,790	7,530	8,790
Mission	92,363	90,125	92,163	85,320	87,420
Tutoring Program	37,000	31,000	31,000	28,000	28,000
General/Presbyterian	24,363	29,363	29,363	28,120	28,120
Global	9,000	6,762	8,500	6,500	8,500
Urban/Local	22,000	23,000	23,300	22,700	22,800
Operations	275,659	299,156	311,033	289,576	305,133
Session	-	-	-	228	-
Office	35,000	38,578	36,600	40,459	40,700
Communications	10,659	16,878	17,295	13,916	17,295
Building/Facilities	230,000	233,409	244,410	222,244	234,410
Debt Service - Satisfied in 2019	-	10,290	12,728	12,728	12,728
TOTAL EXPENSES	\$ 1,054,713	\$1,069,077	\$1,093,264	\$ 986,723	\$1,049,395
BALANCE	0	(88,057)	0	(15,250)	0

MEMBER ANNIVERSARIES

50 Years & More

Charles Wagandt, II (76 Years)
Margaret (Peggy) Obrecht
(67 Years)
Nancy Warner (62 Years)
Ann Middaugh (61 Years)
John Burton (53 Years)
Lynda Burton (53 Years)
Juliette Hanks (53 Years)
Ernest Imhoff (53 Years)
Hilda Imhoff (53 Years)

25 Years

James Schuman

20 Years

Liz Bowie Fesperman
Ellen Williams

15 Years

Linnea Cheseldine
Nichole Mitchell
Joseph Schindler
Susan Schindler
Betsey Todd
David Todd
John Walker

10 Years

Erika Brockman
William Brockman
Emily Brown
George Augustus Brown, Jr.
Rachel Clark
Hannah Murphy Buc
James Veatch
Theresa Veatch

5 Years

Benjamin Anderson
Erin Anderson
David Bielenberg
Kirk Fulton
Charles Morgan Riegel
Kelsie Riegel Morgan
Paul Robie
Jody Shaw
Katherine Shaw
Gregory Trimble

OFFICERS

Session Elders

CLASS OF 2019

David Nyweide*
Elizabeth Reichelt
Kelsie Riegel Morgan
Paul Robie
Annika Brockman (youth)
Evan Cunningham (youth)

CLASS OF 2020

Gayle Barney
Mike Reed
Taylor Stewart*
John Walker*

CLASS OF 2021

Anne Arnold
Liz Bowie Fesperman*
Jody Shaw
Laura Urban* (Clerk)

Trustees

CLASS OF 2019

Bill McConnell*
David Miller
Malinda Peebles

CLASS OF 2020

Beth Gregory

CLASS OF 2021

George Brown
Alex Hagen
Jonathan Hensley

Deacons

CLASS OF 2019

Jim Cox
Lucille McCarthy*
Amy Munds

CLASS OF 2020

Kirk Fulton*
Rebecca Crew
Ryan Moran

CLASS OF 2021

Kathy Arnold
Page Campbell
Eddie Satterfield

Nominating Committee

Grace Peng
Elden Schneider
Susan Stroupe
Betsey Todd
Laura Urban
(elder rep)
Page Campbell
(deacon rep)

*Denotes officers who are serving their second term. Each term is three years, and officers may serve only two consecutive terms. Youth elders serve for one year only. The Nominating Committee is a two-year term.



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browndowntown.org

*Alive in the City
and the World*

Clergy & Staff

Andrew Foster Connors: Senior Pastor

Michele Ward: Associate Pastor

Michael Britt: Minister of Music

Rachel Cunningham: Christian Educator

Sharon Holley: Administrative Assistant

Sharon Lucas: Financial Administrator

Robert Tracy: Director of Children's Music

Tamara Crooms: Caregiver

Tida Nelson: Caregiver

Henry Owens: Custodian

Martha Socolar: Tutoring Program Director

Amy Munds: Tutoring Program Assistant Director

John Walker: Music Minister *Emeritus*

Stay Connected

Websites:

Public: browndowntown.org

Internal: browndowntown.ccbchurch.com

Newsletters: (sign up at browndowntown.org)

Weekly E-Newsletter: *This Week @ Brown*

Bimonthly Print Newsletter: *Tidings*

Social Media

Public Facebook Page:

facebook.com/BrowndowntownBaltimore

Brown Memorial Facebook Group:

Email andrew@browndowntown.org



OUR MISSION

Emboldened by the life and teachings of Jesus Christ, we strive to bear witness to the reconciling love of God by nurturing an inclusive community, wrestling with Scripture and tradition, and working for justice and peace.