

Tidings

SUMMER 2020

The Spirit of Our 150th Anniversary Celebration

by Gayle Barney

Even though our daily lives have changed so dramatically in light of the current public health crisis, our drive and desire to look to our past as a way to find our footing in the future remains firm. At our recent Session retreat in February, we were divided into small groups to consider various lessons from scripture. Looking at the story of Jesus healing the paralytic (Mark 2:1-12), my group was asked to focus on the verses 3 and 4 which are as follows: "Then some people came, bringing to him a paralyzed man, carried by four of them. And when they could not bring him to Jesus because of the crowd, they removed the roof above him; and after having dug through it, they let down the mat on which the paralytic lay." Our group dialogue raised many insights and observations about these four people who "tore up the roof."

We thought about how these four people had to find the tools as best they could and how little training they likely had for such a task. But more importantly we reflected on the courage, drive, and faith that they found to remove the roof and create access to Jesus for the paralytic. We raised the question, "For what do we (the community at Brown Memorial)

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Pastor's Reflection:

Have You Ever Had Your Plans Unravel?

by Michele Ward, Associate Pastor

"What can we do other than try to remind one another that some things can't be fixed, and not all wounds are meant to heal? We need each other to remember, to help each other remember, that grief is this multitasking emotion. That you can and will be sad, and happy; you'll be grieving, and able to love in the same year or week, the same breath. We need to remember that a grieving person is going to laugh again and smile again. If they're lucky, they'll even find love again. But yes, absolutely, they're going to move forward. But that doesn't mean that they've moved on." ¹

"What happens when our world falls apart? What does it look like to search for God in the gray area of our lives? How do we press onward when our tightly-knit plans unravel into loose threads? Sometimes we need to be

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Pastors' Reflections

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unraveled—from shame, fear, patterns, or identities that cause harm. To unravel is to acknowledge and grieve what has fallen apart to allow God's newness to unfurl.” --Excerpt from *A Sanctified Art, Unraveled: Seeking God When Our Plans Fall Apart*

Have you ever had your plans unravel? The people in the Bible surely had. I know I surely have. And I imagine, if you are being honest, you have too. My senior year of college, my plans unraveled. I had received the coveted “ring by spring” at my Presbyterian liberal arts college, and I was planning a wedding for that summer with my boyfriend of four years. I was graduating a year early, and we had plans to start seminary in the fall together. We had both received our acceptance letters to the seminary of our choice, and my five year plan was going according to schedule. I remember feeling invincible—nothing could hurt me or stop me from meeting my goals and fulfilling my dreams.

Then, in early spring, I learned my fiance had drained his finances and was using heroin and cocaine. His family could not find him for multiple days and called me to find out where he was. I also had not heard from him and was scared something had happened. At almost 21, I was overwhelmed. My childhood faith and my campus pastor had not prepared me for this scenario. Where was God in all of this? What was I supposed to do?

Looking back, I can see he was in deep pain and self-sabotaging. And, he was sick—addiction was and is an illness he will carry with him his entire life. His struggle with addiction started in middle school when he would take

more adderall than prescribed for his ADHD; his drugs of choice became more risky from there. We had known each other for five years, and I had only known him when he was clean. We met overseas on a mission trip and fell in love while living in Russia. He wanted to teach New Testament Greek; I wanted to be a pastor. Seemed like God had lined everything up.

I flew from my college town to visit him in rehab in a nearby state. We were supposed to celebrate my 21st birthday; instead, I spent my birthday with him in rehab. I remember feeling so confused about where God was. My heart was broken for both of us and all the plans we had made for our lives. Why would God let this happen? I ended our engagement. I felt so betrayed and afraid. I could not see where God was. My plans for my life turned upside down; I had no concept of what life would look like. But God sure did, and did not abandon me. Yet, I needed to learn how to love others through their illness.

In 2016, I moved to Philadelphia and was ordained at Broad Street Ministry, a faith community that also served as a place full of radical hospitality for guests experiencing homelessness, addiction, mental illness, and for returning citizens. God had called me to this church full of ragtag people who were much more like me than I thought. Broad Street Ministry unraveled my built up defenses. I learned to love and to pastor people whose lives had been torn up because of their illnesses, their circumstances, and the choices they made to survive. I learned how to administer Narcan, the life-saving

drug that reverses an overdose; and how to practice mental health first aid and de-escalate someone having an emotional or psychological crisis. I learned to truly listen while others actively unraveled their wounds.

And yet I needed to learn how to love others through their illness and our mutual unraveling. As an extrovert, pastor, and program staff, I thrived off the congregation's energy. I also felt the tug to sit with multiple someones a day, each with their own deep well of pain, to be present to them and offer kindness in the midst of difficulty. In this ministry context, the typical barriers that keep people from coming to their pastors with their unravelings did not exist. My congregants had no walls or barriers to shield themselves from the spiritual needs they carried. Their vulnerability and bravery invited me to acknowledge my own; they taught me how to name my need and how to risk sharing that need with others.

I remember co-teaching a poetry class for our guests with our local writers. Seeing the tenderness and joy emerge from the group were moments of weaving and unraveling simultaneously. At first, I didn't write. But the local poets had a rule that everyone, even the facilitators, participate in the poetry exercises. One in particular we wrote was about the power of community. Each of us wrote one line, until we created a poem that represented us individually and collectively. Community wove us together through the power of love, and this poem reflects some of that power:

“Community Is”

Community is having people support you when you need it.

I think community is being grateful.

I like being in community.

Believing in something that is greater than myself.

Community to me is love.

Belief in a truly universal love.

All made possible by someone above.

We rejoice in our shared love—

A love that is boundless,

A love that is enduring,

Like a mirror reflecting the light in us all

To pass on with love.

My ex-fiance would come to mind sometimes when I was pastoring there. I would see his face in someone familiar at the table or mistake his walk when another guest would come through the red church doors. If God had told me six years beforehand I would marry an actor, move to the East Coast, and become an inner city Presbyterian pastor,

I would not have believed them. And yet, as my plans for my life unraveled, God gave me new ones. Better ones.

But first, I had to grieve. My anger had to unravel. My judgment and distrust had to unravel. So much within me had to unravel for God to work on my heart. I had to let God into those places to do the necessary and painful work of healing. It took me years to realize the anger, judgment, and distrust I carried inside was getting in the way of building authentic, vulnerable relationships in my present here and now.

God was not through with me yet, and God is not through with you yet.

All of our lives we will be unraveling and knitting our lives back together. We will do this one stitch at a time. Our worship series, “Unraveled: Seeking God When Our Plans Fall Apart,” will be our guide through this specific season of unraveling and knitting. We are walking with biblical people like

Job, who lost everything but his faith; Rizpah, who lost her sons; Peter, who lost his faith; the mother of Moses, who lost parenting her child; Saul, who lost his blindness.

Consider what you need to allow to unravel and how God may knit you back together in a new way. Consider what unraveling you need to acknowledge for healing to take place. Our God is a God of surprises, and does not abandon us when life unravels around us. God is with us wherever we are in the unraveling and unraveling of our circumstances and our hearts. Our God is eternally creative, with us always, and weaving us together in ways we cannot fully imagine or anticipate. ♦

¹ “We don’t “move on” from grief. We move forward with it.” Nora McInerny, TEDWomen 2018, November 2018. Accessed April 30, 2020. https://www.ted.com/talks/nora_mcinerny_we_don_t_move_on_from_grief_we_move_forward_with_it

Session News & Notes

submitted by Laura Urban, Clerk of Session

The Session took the following actions or received these reports since the previous Tidings issue:

■ Approved a plan to establish a Covid Relief Fund (within the church general operating monies) to financially support established partners. As of May 13, \$5,541.23 had been contributed by Brown congregants. The money is only available to current ministries and partners of Brown, defined as organizations who have received money directly in a current or previous annual budget, regularly use our facilities, have raised money or volunteers through announcements in the church, and/or are a partner of an established committee or team within the church. Groups interested in receiving funds should email a request to covidrelief@browndowntown.org. Session will disburse funds

on a rolling basis, as available. The congregation will receive a weekly update about the activity of the fund.

■ Authorized Sharon Lucas and Andrew Foster Connors to apply for the federal Paycheck Protection Program loan. The congregation received a forgivable loan of \$122,630 from the federal stimulus program to cover payroll and some other expenses (e.g., utilities).

■ Considered a history of racial relations and actions by Brown Memorial, prepared by member Tom Waldron. Formed a Working Group to identify a process for the congregation to consider this history, how we finish writing it, and how we respond to it. (The Working Group will provide ideas and a recommendation for next steps to the Session in June.)

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MUSIC NOTES

by Michael Britt, Minister of Music & Organist

I will always remember April 12, Easter Sunday 2020. The very first Easter at Brown that I wasn't "flooring" our fabulous Skinner pipe organ during the hymns or accompanying our glorious Chancel Choir while Tom Hall conducted. The only "live" musical offering on April 12 was the Postlude, the "Toccata" from Charles-Marie Widor's *Symphonie #5* which I somehow managed to play without the skillful page turning by Doug Adams (no easy feat, I might add!). There were some tears shed on my behalf for more than a few moments during that service.

One thing that I was able to do during that morning was to sit back and listen without having to focus on playing and/or conducting. Those tears I was mentioning were the product of, yes, feeling VERY lonely up in that chancel but also tears of gratitude and joy as I listened to our fabulous choir sing the "Easter Hymn" by Pietro Mascagni that was recorded on Easter Sunday 2015, I believe. I am grateful to Natanya Washer for providing that recording. Natanya, of course, sang exquisitely as the soprano soloist on that very same piece.

How lucky am I to have the opportunity to conduct such a talented and dedicated group of volunteers and professionals each week at worship. To me, it is a gift from God. My gratitude is certainly extended to the vast wealth of musical talent in our church community: Soulful Revue, Soulful Sisters, the Handbell Choir, and instrumentalists. I am also grateful to those musicians who are not a formal member of any ensemble, but who are so willing to share their gifts by singing and playing whenever I need them, especially the children and youth.

I think I can speak for those in my profession when I say that expressing yourself as an artist/musician is an expression that comes from pure emotion, from the heart. These past few months have certainly challenged us as we try to convey those emotions through "technology" without the benefit of worshiping together in our beautiful sanctuary. I know I speak for Andrew, Michele, and Rachel as well.

What has motivated and inspired us is the feedback and unending support that we have received from you, the members of our congregation, and those who have been "tuning in" from all over the country! Your kind words and encouragement mean more to us than you will ever know. It inspires us and gets our creative juices flowing as we continue to plan ahead during these difficult and uncertain times. Thank you, THANK YOU so much!!

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The Spirit of Our 150th

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need to tear off the roof next?" In other words, to what future projects might we be called to serve God more fully.

As I thought later about that question, it again seemed so clear that continuing our quest to find and tell our 150th anniversary story is so critical. Examining our actions in the past or maybe lack of action in some cases, juxtaposed to current day needs, can help confirm our vision or adjust our vision for the future. Experiencing stories of our past can help us imagine what we would like to read in the Brown Memorial archives 50 years from now. We may need to invent our tools; but we share the courage, faith, and love to decide what roof to raise next. So, that is why I wanted to update you on our progress in discovering and celebrating our history.

In February, we celebrated our LGBTQ history with Rev. Dr. Roger Gench as our guest speaker. Our March program with Bishop Miles on racial politics was cancelled, but will be rescheduled when we can gather again. Our three other "history at lunch" programs for September, October, and November will cover interfaith relations, women in history, and mission. Given the uncertainty in which we live currently, it is possible that we will have to reschedule programs into 2021. But we will be 150 years old until December 6, 2021! So, we have time.

Interviews with long standing members have begun now. We look forward to reading and celebrating these individuals' stories in upcoming months. We still need volunteers who can research an aspect of our history (e.g. interfaith relations, women in the church, and mission) and/or write about it, although social distancing restrictions limit what research can be done at this time. If you have not read "Brown Downtown—Alive in the City," a celebration of the years 1980-2010, it is well worth the time to help us reflect on our past and who we are today—10 years later. If you do not have access to a hard copy, email Gayle Barney at traveltwins@aol.com to have a copy forwarded by email.

So, the spirit of our 150th anniversary is alive and well. We look forward to returning to our goal of unearthing our past to help guide us as we think about "what roof we are called to tear off next." ♦

Reflections on a Pandemic

by Elden Schneider



How fortunate Bonnie and I are to have a home with many of our loved ones nearby, and with the communication tools that bring us close together even when we're separated. How fortunate that these communication tools allow us to be in communion with a loving, supportive church family. How fortunate we are to have reasonably good physical health going into this unsettled time of threatened well-being and even possible sudden death. How fortunate we are to have a source of reliable retirement income, at least so far, and don't have to worry about where the next meal might be coming from, or whether we'll have employment when all this mess is over, if it ever is completely. How fortunate we are that helping children and grandchildren with home schooling is the major challenge of our current lifestyle while first responders and all the people in public service and other essential jobs risk danger every time they leave their homes. Finally, how fortunate we are to have a yard that is large enough for planting trees, flowers, shrubs, herbs, fruit, and vegetables at a time when many people are

confined to small apartments or possibly no shelter at all.

So today we stepped into our backyard to dig up two small Golden Zizia Aurea plants, good self-seeders and Black Swallowtail magnets, for our daughter-in-law Maureen who visits us conscientiously and who is working on a garden of her own in a nearby neighborhood. While we were outside we admired our Doublefile Viburnum in six feet of majestic full bloom, covered with lacy, white flower clusters. At that precise moment a beautiful Buckeye Brushfoot Butterfly, the first sighting this spring, landed on one of the clusters just at eye level, and a tiny wren emerged from a nearby hanging birdhouse to let us know that we were a bit too close for her comfort.

Echodale Avenue forms the eastern border of our Lauraville neighborhood, and passing traffic on that east/west thoroughfare reminds us our idyllic garden exists in Baltimore City, not too many blocks from Good Samaritan Hospital. The frequent shrill of ambulance sirens remind us that we are in the midst of a pandemic. ♦

Music Notes *Continued from Page 4*

I would like to extend my sincere thanks to our fabulous soloists who have done exemplary work each week in preparing music for our worship services. It is no easy task. Their extraordinary musicianship and dedication to their art and this church has made this all possible and I am truly grateful to Natanya Washer, Claire Cooper, James Cox, Lorenzo Zapata, Baajah Mohammed, Bailey Galindo, and Rob Tracy. Please keep them in prayer as they navigate themselves as students, performers, and teachers during this difficult time. You are the best!

Finally, my unending thanks to Eric Echols, who spends many late nights recording my organ accompani-

ments, editing them, and emailing them to me so that they can be forwarded to our soloists. After the recording process, they are often sent back to Eric so that he can adjust the balance between vocals and accompaniment. The finished product is then sent to Rachel Cunningham (who also deserves a huge THANK YOU). She synchronizes the hymn texts with the music and seamlessly inserts them into the Sunday service.

It takes a village! I pray that one day soon, our "village" will be back together under one roof, singing and praising God together as one. In the meantime, God bless you all! Peace, love, and a lot of hugs. ♦

Walks in Baltimore During the Pandemic

by Christy Macy and Taylor Branch

Patterson Park: The magnolia and cherry trees were out and the Pagoda was surrounded by color. The famous nature pond was full of mallards looking for a mate. People mostly kept their distance.

Downtown Walk, Mt. Vernon: We parked at the Washington Monument and walked to the Inner Harbor and back. The area was almost totally deserted. It was beautiful and weird, as if we were in a strange movie. We passed so many beautiful historic buildings that we've never taken the time to look at (but some newer ones we wish we could tear down). People were not so careful about keeping their distance at the bus stops. The area around the monument and the center of Mt. Vernon has to be one of the great urban spaces anywhere.

Mt. Washington: We walked up South Road to Greenspring Avenue and then small winding roads up to Pimlico Road. Many of the trees were beginning to flower and people were working in their gardens. Very quiet and peaceful.

Lake Roland: One of our favorites. Past the Light Rail parking lot to the dam, then up through the park and over the Light Rail tracks to wooded trails alongside the extended lake.

Cylburn Arboretum: We took the Old Spice Trail to the right, past the Nature Center, down into a small valley with a river running through it. A very nice walk that gives you a workout. We watched a wedding take place near the Mansion—a photo of it was on the front page of the *Baltimore Sun* the next day. Very touching with no one attending except the photographer and the couple's dog.

Walk from Mt. Washington to Cylburn: New path starting at the playground on West Rogers and passing the sports fields on your left, across the Northern Parkway footbridge to Cylburn.

Walk through Sherwood Gardens: Huge swaths of daffodils and grape hyacinths greeted us. People were having sheltered-space picnics and taking dogs for walks. It's a glorious peaceful place.

Druid Hill Park: We parked at the Stieff Silver building and behind it explored the old stone house neighborhood for millworkers and then crossed the bridge over the JFX into Druid Hill Park. Turned right at the swimming pool and followed trails through the woods and then back across the bridge.

Poplar Hill: Started at Falls Road behind the car repair place, across the Kelly Avenue bridge, and walked up winding roads and old



Cylburn Arboretum



Sherwood Gardens



Lake Montebello



Green Mount Cemetery

Clifton Park: Easy wanderings around the golf course, with red buds illuminating the hillsides with brilliant flashes of pinks. Taylor discovered a nearly hidden statue called “On the Trail” by Baltimore artist Edward Berge who was affiliated with MICA. The statue, donated by Peabody, was of a Native American holding three arrows in his hand.

Woodberry Neighborhood: We walked to the small community on your left over the tracks (Seneca Street) at the Woodberry Light Rail station and explored the quiet neighborhood nestled there and took a path at a dead end street. The path took us through a lovely forest with a small river and on a paved road to the right that had a fence on the left surrounding the zoo. We took that road down into the Woodberry neighborhood with the artists’ studios on the right. The contrast between the old, partly renovated urban/industrial buildings and the beautiful forest was memorable.

Stony Run Trail: We parked at the intersection of Cold Spring Lane and Meadow Trail and walked along the stream, visiting friends (from afar) in the Tuscany/Canterbury neighborhood out grilling dinner and surveying their gardens.

Dickeyville: For years we hadn’t visited this very small village of stone houses built in the 1700s. It’s still beautiful. We walked along the stream beside the old but well-manicured houses and explored the nearby parks. We stopped at the trailhead for the Gwynn Falls Trail.

Green Mount Cemetery: We visited this historic and beautiful cemetery that includes the graves of John Wilkes Booth and Johns Hopkins. One marker called two women on the grave “consorts.” We were also impressed at the buildings, new and old, surrounding this quiet, peaceful place. We did not see a single soul during the visit. ♦

houses nestled into the hillsides of flowering trees and wildflowers. We took a nice loop back down, ending at Falls Road opposite Whole Foods.

Lake Montebello: We had never been to this wonderful lake, and particularly liked the turtles sunning themselves on rocks. We loved the old houses looking down on the water and the historic water works station. Tape surrounded the playgrounds to keep people away.

Smith Avenue: We started walking down South Road to Smith Avenue, then up the Terraces, around to Dixon Hill and Pill Hill, and then back up Cross Country and home. Almost two hours!

Walk around the Inner Harbor: Starting at Fells Point we walked along the harbor to Boston Street. Very windy but refreshing to look at the various boats moored across the harbor.

Session News & Notes

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■ Assisted with the Deacons’ effort to reach every congregant to check on the health and well-being of each other in mid-March, when the stay-at-home order was enacted.

■ At our annual Session retreat in February, we used this framing question for conversation: Since we’ve been doing Archive Dives through Brown’s 150-year history, let’s consider 50 years from now— what three “documents” or pieces of evidence do you hope future Brown members will find? We had a wide-ranging conversation about racial diversity and equity, environment, youth participation, and being a prophetic voice in the city.

■ Approved signing the denomination’s Earth Care Pledge, as

recommended by the Green Team, which “calls us to be careful, humble stewards of this earth, and to protect and restore it for its own sake, and for the future use and enjoyment of the human family.” It calls on the congregation to consider how our worship, education, facilities, and outreach can reflect this commitment.

■ Endorsed Chrystie Adams’ grant application to the Presbytery of Baltimore Community Engagement Grant program, requesting \$1,575 for Brown Memorial summer learning camps at Eutaw-Marshburn Elementary School. ♦

“The Bridge Between Starshine and Clay”

by W. Courtland Robinson

While sheltering in place at home, Ang and I both are still working, engaged in the world and in touch with friends and family, but also taking time to walk together, garden, putter around the house, and take up pursuits too long set aside. I have always read and loved poetry, everything from the Psalms to Dr. Seuss. I used to write poetry but set it aside for many years, and only picked it back up recently and started sharing with a few friends.

On Sunday, April 12, the *Baltimore Sun* published a story about UMBC writer-in-residence, Lia Purpura, who put up a chalkboard in front of her house in Radnor-Winston and wrote what she called “poems that buoy us” to share with passers-by. One was Wendell Berry’s “Peace of Wild Things” which read: “When despair for the world grows in me/ and I wake in the night at the least sound/ in fear of what my life and my children’s lives may be/ I go and lie down where the wood drake/ rests in his beauty on the water, and

the great heron feeds./ I come into the peace of wild things/ who do not tax their lives with forethought/ of grief. I come into the presence of still water/ And I feel above me the day-blind stars/ waiting with their light. For a time/ I rest in the grace of the world, and am free.”

The poem in a photo accompanying the story was by Lucille Clifton, Poet Laureate of Maryland, 1979-1985, titled “Won’t You Celebrate With Me”: “won’t you celebrate with me/ what I have shaped into/ a kind of life? I had no model/ born in Babylon/ both nonwhite and woman / what did I see to be except myself?/ I made it up/ here on this bridge between/ starshine and clay/ my one hand holding tight/ my other hand/ come celebrate/ with me that everyday/ something has tried to kill me and has failed.”

Something in her poem sounded inside me and it sounded more like a song. I wrote the lyrics below and a musician friend of mine in Washington is putting it to music. Maybe someday we can sing it together.

“The Bridge Between Starshine and Clay” (inspired by a poem by Lucille Clifton)

There’s a sickness on the land
Seems like trouble never ending
So take your life in both your hands
And shape an answer for its mending

For all who struggle and are lost
Shut in, shut out, or lonesome, or afraid
For those bonded in Babylon now
bearing the cost
The bill has come due and the piper gets paid

We live in the lightning and the rumbling thunder
We are traveling open and finding our way
And the waters of Jordan go tumbling under
The bridge between starshine and clay

So blessed are the magical, the merciful and mild
And blessed the stranger seeking home
We are looking to cross over, our hopes so high and wild
Living free till we lay our burdens down

We live in the lightning and the rumbling thunder
We are traveling open and finding our way
And these rivers of sorrow won’t tumble us under
Our bridge between starshine and clay ♦



Welcome New Members: Stuart & Christina Mitchell

Both Stuart and Christina were raised in the Christian faith, and Stuart grew up in the Brown Memorial community. They are both physicians at Johns Hopkins Hospital. The Mitchells have a long family history at Brown Memorial, with four family members (Bruggman), in addition to themselves, having been married here. Their daughter Gabriella was also recently baptized during our first Zoom worship service.

SPIRITUAL NOURISHMENT IDEAS

FROM THE BROWN MEMORIAL STAFF

FOR FAMILIES • by Rachel Cunningham

- Create a place in your home for a visual reminder of your family prayers. It might be a prayer tree that you hang the names of individuals from or it could be the front of your refrigerator.
- Share highs and lows of your day, or days, regularly.
- Exercise your gratitude muscles with the Gratitude Game. Roll a die and share your gratitudes:
 - 1 = A person you are thankful for
 - 2 = A place you are thankful for
 - 3 = A food you are thankful for
 - 4 = A thing you are thankful for
 - 5 = An activity you are thankful for
 - 6 = Anything you are thankful for
- Play together!

FOR YOUTH • by Michele Ward

- Check out a daily devotion app: Our Daily Bread: Teen Edition or D365 Daily Devotionals.
- Use a meditation app for the moments when you feel sad or overwhelmed. Michele's favorite is Calm.
- Listen to the Rest Well playlist on Spotify.
- Go on a "prayer walk" around your neighborhood, and pay attention to what you see around you—buildings, trees, houses, animals, etc. What do you notice? What is God inviting you to see or give thanks for right now? Who comes to mind as you walk? Pray for them while you walk, asking God to give them what they need.

FOR ADULTS by Andrew Foster Connors

- Use a daily devotion: Richard Rohr (a favorite among Brown Memorialites!—cac.org/category/daily-meditations), or *A Church for Starving Artists*, by Jan Edmiston (achurchforstarvingartists.blog), or an old-fashioned book meditation. I like *Peace of Heart in All Things*, by the late Brother Roger of Taizé. The reflections are short enough to keep a rhythm and routine and build spiritual muscles. In addition, create a small devotion space or light a candle to set the time apart.
- Take a free, in-depth class on the Christian faith through edx.org, many taught by Ivy League scholars. My 16-year-old recommends the course "Justice," taught by Harvard scholar Michael Sandel.
- Practice keeping the sabbath. As the public/private boundaries have dissolved in our lives, setting time apart to be non-productive, valuing our lives for more than what we can produce, becomes essential. If you



May Birthdays

05/01	Juanita Curtis
05/01	Laura Urban
05/02	Aaron McNabney
05/04	Tom McManus
05/04	Teddy Obrecht
05/05	Elizabeth Reichelt
05/06	Ashley Boumgarden
05/07	David Rollison
05/08	Julian Finney
05/08	Grace Hand
05/09	Charlie Obrecht
05/10	Barbara Clippinger
05/10	Sue Galusha-Bobango
05/11	Khoa Nguyen
05/13	Josephine Finney
05/14	Diane Hodges
05/16	Patreena Parsons
05/17	Margaret McManus
05/17	Andy Ross
05/18	Caroline Anderson
05/20	Carolyn Marks
05/21	Art Hall
05/21	Mary Jane Sokol
05/22	Michael Asike
05/22	Nancy Bradford
05/23	Page Campbell
05/23	Hazel Taylor
05/25	Emily Reed
05/26	Laura McNabney
05/27	Ellen Carter Cooper
05/27	Jackson Mills
05/28	Landon Reiman
05/30	Kim Beers
05/30	Andrew Winters
05/31	Jim Edrington
05/31	Kim Norman

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June Birthdays

06/02	Billy Clippinger
06/03	Mary MacLeod Kelly
06/04	Will Brockman
06/04	Sarah Reiman
06/05	Emy Urban
06/06	Lorrie Liang
06/07	Lydia Beasley
06/09	Kelly Knock
06/10	Erika Brockman
06/10	Exel Estrada
06/10	Cal Riorda
06/11	Loretta Byers
06/12	Erin Emerick
06/12	Abby Jackson
06/12	Mary Obrecht
06/13	Gregory Brightbill
06/13	Will Coulson
06/13	Robert Marshall
06/14	Fado Yoon
06/15	Jacob Thompson
06/15	Noah Todd
06/17	Will Rogers
06/18	Madison Riorda
06/19	Rain Hall
06/19	Gretchen van Utt
06/20	Jakob Lucas
06/21	Lily Bradford
06/21	Joe Schindler
06/22	Nancy Bandiere
06/22	Peter Coulson
06/22	Rebecca Crew
06/22	Tom Stewart
06/22	Jihar Williams
06/23	Max Palmer
06/24	Patti Flowers-Coulson
06/25	Annette Jones-Wilson
06/26	Graham Bishai
06/26	Emmett Dahl
06/26	Madora Henson
06/26	Kerry Johnston
06/28	Hervey Evans
06/28	Maggie Johnston
06/28	Jack Mitchell
06/28	Ella Palmer
06/29	Judson Arnold
06/30	Paul Newill-Schamp

Spiritual Nourishment

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have trouble marking off an entire day, try a morning or afternoon block. During that time, do not check email, initiate or receive non personal phone calls, or do housework. You might start this practice with a devotion to remind you that God views us as gifts first. We are loved for no other reason than God loves us.

- Watch and discuss a film with “faith vibes.” I tend to stay away from those with sappy, sanitized, moralistic themes. Here’s one decent list: journeywithjesus.net/film/film-review-index. A couple of my favorites from the past— *Chocolat* (if guilt and shame don’t make a person good, then what does?)—and *The Matrix* (what about our world do we receive as “reality,” which is, in fact, a construction of other powers to keep us submissive? And is the suffering of reality preferable to the pleasure of ignorance?). I like to watch a good film, then google reviews with faith in the search to see what others have to say. I just watched the *Devs* streaming on Hulu. It’s layered with questions about the multiverse, the possibility of choice, God, and big tech.
- Read a good memoir. Some of my personal favorites:
 Anne Lamott, *Traveling Mercies: Some Thoughts on Faith*
 Sara Miles, *Take this Bread: A Radical Conversion*
 Christian Wiman, *My Bright Abyss: Meditations of a Modern Believer*
 Kate Bowler, *Everything Happens for a Reason and Other Lies I’ve Loved*

GAME IDEAS

FROM THE BROWN MEMORIAL MEMBERS

Fictionary, also known as Balderdash, The Dictionary Game, or simply Dictionary • From Barbara Cook

This is a word game in which players guess the definition of an obscure word. During each round, players select and announce a word from the dictionary, and other players compose a fake definition. On Zoom, each player sends his/her fake definition by private chat message to the player with the real definition. Once all definitions are received, the player reads them and each person decides which is the real definition.

If you want to keep score: Three points if you guess the correct definition; if you chose the word, then one point for everyone you fooled; if players guessed your fake definition was the real one, one point. Our family loves this game.

Zoom Family Chopped “episode” • From June Fletcher-Hill

One member of your family purchases and sends the same three ingredients to all the households. No one is allowed to open them until they gather together on Zoom. When they gather they will all create something using the three items and whatever they have in their household. If judging isn’t involved, there are sure to be some laughs.

Brown Memorial Tutoring Program

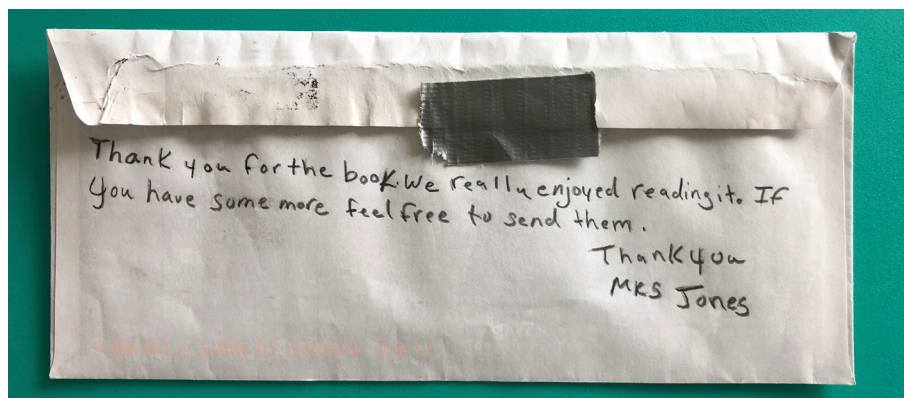
Staying Connected

by Mary Obrecht, Brown Memorial Tutoring Commission Chair

On behalf of the Brown Memorial Tutoring Commission, I want to say how much we truly miss our wonderful tutoring community—our staff, students, and tutors. We've had to suspend the program due to the pandemic, but our dedicated staff, Martha Socolar and Amy Munds, are working hard to find ways to stay connected until our one-on-one tutoring can resume. Through emails, letters, and phone calls, they have reached out to partner schools and families to let them know that we want to be a resource.

Martha and Amy have also harnessed their creativity and passion to establish new ways of working. They are providing virtual programming to connect students with tutors and are mailing books to keep students engaged and reading. In addition, our committed tutors are reaching out to their tutees to provide literacy support. We are eager to do all we can in this incredibly challenging time.

In the weeks ahead, we will learn more about how we can best partner with our families and schools. We miss gathering in the Fellowship Building, but we will continue to stay connected to our students and find ways to live out our mission. We are all in this together and appreciate your support. Now, more than ever, it will take our collective effort to advance literacy during this historic time. ♦



July Birthdays

07/02	Parker Matthews
07/03	Howard De Hoff
07/03	Peter Hoffberger
07/03	Stuart Mitchell
07/03	Henry Owens
07/03	Jennifer Simmons
07/03	Tom Waldron
07/05	Will Fesperman
07/06	Michael Britt
07/06	Joyce Edington
07/09	Charlie Obrecht
07/10	Chuck Brown
07/12	Anna Connors
07/12	Rose Glorioso
07/13	Andrew Babb
07/14	Eric Echols
07/15	Whitney Boles
07/15	Dan Hale
07/16	Ann Teaff
07/18	Rachel Emerick
07/19	John Boumgarden
07/19	Rachel Clark
07/21	Hilbert Byers
07/22	Reginald Carroll
07/22	Wells Obrecht
07/24	Doug Adams
07/24	Veronica Nash-Pappalardo
07/25	Gerald Shields
07/27	Ellen B. Williams
07/28	Erin Bobango
07/29	Ian Munds
07/30	Matthew Dahl



To have your birthday listed in the *Tidings*, contact Sharon Holley, church secretary, 410-523-1542, or sharon@brown-downtown.org.



BMPA Calendar

*Alive in the City
and the World*

Summer Schedule Begins Sunday, May 24

Worship will move to 10 a.m. on Sunday, May 24, through Sunday, Sept. 6. Education classes will take a break during this time.

VIRTUAL WORSHIP & GATHERINGS

The Church, in its most basic, original incarnation, is the web of relationships that God brings together across time and distance. Please join us as we bridge this distance virtually, each week, and continue to gather for worship, prayer, study, and fellowship.

SUNDAY WORSHIP: Join us live on Zoom via your computer or phone. Visit browndowntown.org to access the Zoom links, passwords, and dial-in phone numbers. Links are also provided for the hymns and bulletins.

PAST SERMONS: View past worship services on our YouTube channel.

OTHER GATHERINGS: On the website homepage, sign up for our weekly email for the latest news and Zoom links for small group and committee gatherings.

SUMMER TRIPS: The Soaring Eagles Learning Camp and Pejuhutazizi Family Learning Camp are both cancelled.

SUMMER MUSIC: Tiffany Concerts will hopefully resume in the fall. Check the church calendar at browndowntown.org for live streamed concerts by Michael Britt and for scheduled outdoor music concerts this summer.

SUMMER BOOK CLUB: Check the church calendar for more information to come, or email andrew@browndowntown.org.

Tidings

*Good News from Brown
Memorial Park Avenue
Presbyterian Church*

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

browndowntown.org

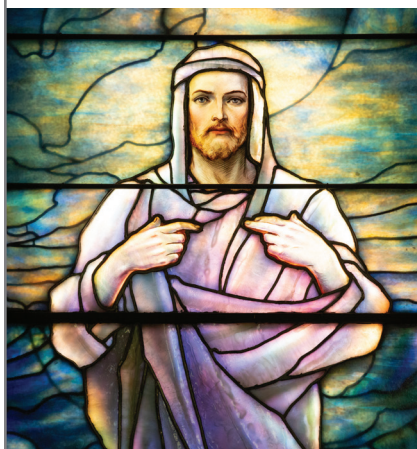
Andrew Foster Connors,
Senior Pastor

Michele Ward,
Associate Pastor

Jennifer Michael,
Editor

*To submit Tidings articles, email
Jennifer Michael, jmichael@browndowntown.org. Due dates this year:
July 10 (Aug./Sept. issue), **Sept.
10** (Oct./Nov. issue).*

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



TOUR THE SANCTUARY ANYTIME, FROM ANYWHERE

Even if you can't be with us in person, you can still visit Brown Memorial and learn more about the windows, organ, and wood carvings in the sanctuary using our audio tour— **410-630-4298**.

View photos for each audio tour stop at
browndowntown.org/tour-the-church.



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**BROWN
MEMORIAL
PARK AVENUE**

Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)