



**BROWN
MEMORIAL
PARK AVENUE**

Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)

2020

Annual Report



— 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.

Pastor's Message

"Keep awake, therefore, for you know neither the day nor the hour."

Since we seem to be stuck in the season of Advent for at least another six months, this text continues to speak its maddening wisdom. Jesus speaks these words in the gospels, words that apparently were echoing through the early church already, reminding them that regardless of present circumstances, Jesus and his kin-dom would be coming. The church has tended to preach these words exclusively as warning—judgment is coming at some point in the future so don't get caught sitting on your hands or worse. But I think they can also be heard as the way that saves us in the present. That way is the neighborly ethic that Jesus teaches—love your neighbor as yourself, look out for those who are despised, excluded, and vulnerable. Be careful about judging the speck in your neighbor's eye; chances are you've got a log in your own.

So much in our lives is out of our control. The pandemic is the obvious pedagogy for this painful, human truth. Jesus' antidote isn't to snap his fingers and bring everything under control, but to create a beloved community that offers the healing, justice, and love that all human beings need whatever life brings to them. Jesus comes to save us not in some weird parentally-approved sacrificial moment, but by taking on flesh to hurt with us, exposing the senselessness of death-dealing powers, and by proving, finally, that the creative power of life is where true power resides.

2020 is a painful, loss-filled year. We limped to the end of 2020 as a community, and we stumble into the new year with more grief than we are accustomed to handling. There are the deaths of those we love—some casualties of COVID, others collateral to it. Children and their parents lost their normal routines, the chance to celebrate significant lifetime milestones, and their own security and sense of safety. So did those in nursing homes and retirement communities. Those living alone lost human touch, conversation, and engagements. Some lost jobs or income. Our hospitalized loved ones lost visits, families of frontline health care and service workers lost safety. And, finally, the racial-injustice pandemic of the last 400 years could no longer be ignored as the deaths of George Floyd and Breonna Taylor catalyzed the Black Lives Matter

movement in a new way and sent many of us into the streets. All this culminating in an unprecedented attack on our Capitol fueled by the most divisive administration in recent memory. There is no "but" or "and yet" that we could offer that would in any way reverse or counteract all of this loss and grief.

There was only the church, stripped of all but the relationships at our core, to walk with, zoom with, abide with, mourn with, laugh with, shout out with, hope with, sing with, die with each other even when some of that singing and shouting and laughing and crying had to happen with 6 feet or more of distance. As we look back on 2020 and look forward to 2021, what brings me the most pride and the most hope is that the church found a way to be church—the living, breathing, body of Christ in the world—suffering with, proclaiming, healing, hoping, longing, laughing, grieving together.

The worship life of the church shifted miraculously back in March a week before lock-down orders came. Worship moved quickly online where we learned how to get creative fast in a messy, creative Brown Memorial kind of way. Rachel Cunningham became our Zoom worship technician deftly in March, providing our team with the technical assistance we needed to move completely online in a short amount of time. Michael Britt and the choral soloists quickly became audio and video production specialists. Your preachers turned televangelists without the icky parts, and the worship committee deftly planned some meaningful seasons and services including probably our best Christmas Pageant to date—in a pandemic! We held two joint worship services, began uploading all sermons and worship services online. We owe an enormous debt of gratitude to Eric Echols who helped us get online in March while on a personal trip to South Africa! At the conclusion of the year we welcome Anastasia Kupstas as our first ever media specialist to give the staff a breather and to help us prepare for hybrid worship as conditions allow, and for whatever is coming post-pandemic!

As you would expect, our missional engagement with the world didn't miss a beat even though the rhythms were changing drastically all around us. Chrystie Adams led us as we partnered with Promise Heights and Eutaw-Marshburn Elementary in staying present and attentive to the needs of children near to us. Our Tutoring Program under the direction of Martha

Socular and Amy Munds pivoted to Zoom tutoring with 41 tutors working with 48 students with our four partner schools. The BUILD organization along with our nonprofit developer, ReBUILD Metro, became a food delivery service overnight, serving 2.2 million meals by the end of the year. Our Green Team began engaging in the Rockrose City Farm in Woodberry to grow and deliver produce to partners such as the Farm to Stoop Project and Madison Avenue Presbyterian Church. The Session authorized an emergency “Loving Your Neighbor” Fund for COVID-related relief and the generosity of our congregation raised an additional \$46,363 beyond our normal giving that went directly to organizations and initiatives bringing healing and hope. Our mission partners around the globe corresponded with and prayed for us, and we for them as we all experienced the impacts of COVID in different ways. And we joined with partners near and far to proclaim Black Lives Matter and to deepen our public and personal work inside of and outside of the church.

Inside the congregation, all of our ways of relating shifted. The elders and deacons teamed up early, launching a listening campaign across the church to listen, connect, and act accordingly. We shifted important events like the annual retreat online and took some risks some of which worked! Your two pastors shifted our increasing pastoral care needs online and over the phone at first, and into hybrid “pastoral pandemic visits” as positivity rates declined and public health officials gave us new directions for wearing masks and staying safe. Some adult education classes shifted online, others regrouped as did some Sunday school classes for children and youth. Montreat Youth Conference still took place, but this time at local parks in Baltimore City at safe social distances. Sunday Night Live! moved online with virtual game nights and scavenger hunts. We have learned together how to better articulate our needs, our stressors, and what we might do to address them, including sometimes taking a break from screens and activities.

But the work of the church continued. The Trustees have been busy maintaining our facilities, preparing for the day when we can return. We welcomed Lisa Roca, a communications consultant, who has taken over some of the communications responsibilities that Jennifer Michael handled well after her official departure from Brown.

There’s no doubt that the pandemic, in some ways, has weakened our congregation. The normal departures that are a part of congregational life when people find new work and opportunities that take them elsewhere have not seen the usual corresponding new members to take their place. Giving to our annual fund declined slightly from 2019. Thank you to those of you who have consistently kept the church at the top of your financial priorities.

Even with these challenges, new opportunities have been revealed to us. By the time you read this we will have welcomed into our congregation our second new member who does not live in the state of Maryland. Several others who had moved away prior to the pandemic re-engaged their dormant memberships. Online engagement is up and we are already discussing what church life may be like post-pandemic with all of these electronic tools at our disposal. And in a broader sense we have gone through something traumatic together, learned what is critical to us as human beings made in the image of God, and gained greater confidence in the resilience of our community of faith.

In this way 2020 also revealed the depth of our strength. Visitors from other churches across the nation noted the emphasis on connection that is at the heart of our worship service, in contrast to so many other congregations that are more one-way in nature. If you need an example, check out the Christmas Pageant from December 20 that made an old story come alive and put smiles on so many faces. We managed strong educational engagement through reading groups, Sunday morning educational offerings, as well as our anti-racism trainings which involved over 50 individuals on three separate occasions. Simultaneously, the Tutoring Program participated in 5 equity trainings with plans to center equity in all aspects of the Tutoring Program’s work. Finally, while we entered 2020 \$40,000 short of our pledge goal, I note that we raised more than this amount in additional offerings for COVID-19 relief, proving that we have capacity to grow in our generosity together. And in typical Brown Memorial fashion we leveraged our own giving with partners across institutions, most notably BUILD, which had served 2.2 million meals to thousands of Baltimoreans before the end of the year. As we look toward 2021 we can build on these strengths to sustain us through the remainder of the pandemic and position us to meet God in

the world—the missional work that strengthens our church in the process.

As we close out 2020, I want to say a special word of thanks to Kathy Arnold and Kathryn Wagner (now in Basel, Switzerland!) and the deacons for their shift toward online care of our community. Also to Session for their wisdom in tenaciously pursuing goals around racial justice and our 150th anniversary, and postponing others (including parts of our 150th!) into 2021 in addition to fielding all kinds of questions and concerns about when and how to reopen. Finally, our staff has been amazing, particularly Rachel Cunningham, Michael Britt, and Michele Ward who embraced that single line in all of our job descriptions—“other duties as as-

signed”—with flexibility, good nature, heart, and a team ethic that continues to inspire me and makes me feel we have the best church staff around.

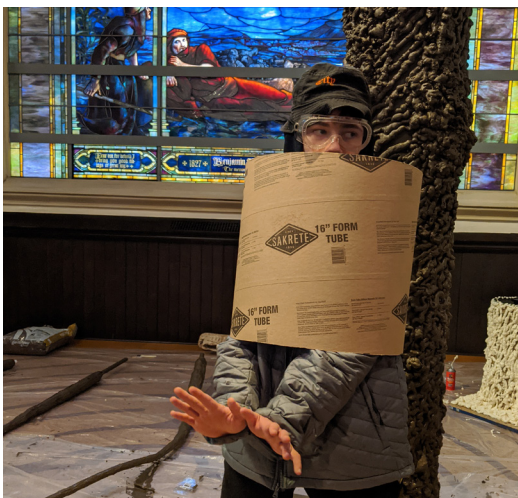
Keep awake! For you do not know the hour or the day that the church will be called upon. Thankfully, we’ve experienced its grace in 2020. I am hopeful about what 2021 will bring.

Andrew Connors
Senior Pastor



Church Life

Our community extends far beyond the walls of our sanctuary and Sunday morning service. Committed to building one community our justice-oriented church strives to live out our faith, beginning with the warm and welcoming culture that we strive to create together.



Clerk's Report

Noteworthy: In the year of the COVID-19 pandemic, the most significant event was the move to online worship, presented via the Zoom platform, on Sunday, March 15, 2020 and continuing each Sunday throughout the year.

Mourned Members and Friends: Nancy Atkinson Warner January 29, 2020, James Veatch, Sr. March 28, 2020, Yvette Yvonne Matthews May 6, 2020, Mary J. Randall May 7, 2020, Charles Lewis Wagandt May 21, 2020, Ellen B. Williams May 31, 2020, Murphy Davis October 22, 2020, Benjamin Jerome Tillman November 4, 2020, and Narka Lee Keller Ryan November 9, 2020.

New Members Welcomed: Christina Mitchell, Stuart Mitchell, and Carol Mitchell.

Baptisms Celebrated: Gabriella Gwendolyn Mitchell, daughter of Christina and Stuart Mitchell on March 15, 2020. Rosemary Maren Wagandt, daughter of Carrie and James Wagandt on December 13, 2020.

Weddings Officiated: Morgana Kinlan and Matthew Mickel February 1, 2020, Gerald De Leon and Samuel Versey February 22, 2020, Allison Hutson and Steve Whitchey on May 23, 2020, Caitlin Schneider and Edward O'Malley on October 10, 2020, and Heidi Davis and Joseph Francella on November 13, 2020.

Elders: Kelsie Riegel Morgan, Elizabeth Reichelt, Taylor Stewart, and John Walker completed their service on Session. Other Session members in 2020 included: Anne Arnold, Gayle Barney, Liz Bowie Fesperman, Al Fisher, Brad Norris, Michael Reed, Jody Shaw, Laura Urban (clerk), and Michele Ward. Rev. Andrew Connors served as moderator.

Youth Elders: Yari Armand, Liam McConnell, and Joseph Reichelt.

Trustees: George Brown (co-chair), Christine Calderon, Bruce Curtis, Jonathan Hensley, Beth Gregory, Kelly Knock, David Miller (co-chair), and Malinda Peeples served as Trustees.

Deacons: Kirk Fulton completed his term of service this year before moving to California, and Kathryn Wagner (co-chair) served prior to moving to Switzerland. Kathy Arnold (co-chair), Page Campbell, Jim Cox, Rebecca Crew, David Lascu, Ryan Moran, and Eddie Satterfield also served as deacons.

Loving Your Neighbor Fund: The following organizations, programs, and ministries received support in 2020 through Brown Memorial's COVID-19 Loving Your Neighbor Fund: Sacred Heart of Jesus Financial Assistance Fund, Samaritan Community Financial Assistance Fund, Eutaw Marshburn Elementary School, Meals on Wheels, Our Daily Bread (Catholic Charities), No Boundaries Coalition, Turnaround Tuesday / BUILD, Cuba Presbytery, North Ave Mission, Baltimore Farm to Stoop Project, and Sew Labs / Flatten the Curve.



OPERATING BUDGET

	<u>2021 Budget</u>	<u>2020 Actual</u>	<u>2020 Budget</u>	<u>2019 Actual</u>	<u>2019 Budget</u>
REVENUE					
General Fund/Pledge and Plate	651,500	568,123	622,000	589,495	642,000
Rent/Use/Miscellaneous	13,831	11,000	14,075	16,261	13,835
Endowment Income/Draws	403,883	310,993	418,638	375,265	437,429
PPP Loan: Forgiveness Anticipated		122,630			
TOTAL REVENUE	\$ 1,069,214	\$ 1,012,747	\$ 1,054,713	\$ 981,020	\$ 1,093,264
EXPENSES					
Personnel	669,070	624,644	640,091	632,931	641,378
Salaries	404,993	372,619	385,498	374,336	379,933
Health/Pension/Worker's Comp	145,915	145,905	145,687	144,999	147,562
Personnel Committee	600	287	600	3,552	-
Housing Allowances	69,258	67,250	67,250	67,250	67,250
Payroll Taxes	36,505	30,255	29,806	30,630	34,133
Professional Expenses	11,800	8,327	11,250	12,165	12,500
Christian Education	23,500	10,146	23,500	18,659	23,500
Children & Families	3,500	2,063	3,500	2,246	3,500
Youth Groups	13,500	6,153	13,500	13,013	13,500
Shared Christian Ed	5,000	1,521	5,000	2,763	5,000
Adult Education	1,500	408	1,500	637	1,500
Congregation/Worship	24,350	21,621	23,100	28,207	25,190
Congregational Care	10,100	7,347	10,100	4,556	3,100
Music	7,550	4,113	7,500	7,995	7,850
Worship	6,200	9,662	5,000	5,266	5,450
Diversity	500	499	500	10,390	8,790
Mission	92,892	92,263	92,363	90,125	92,163
Tutoring Program	38,632	37,000	37,000	31,000	31,000
General/Presbyterian	22,760	24,363	24,363	29,363	29,363
Global	9,500	9,000	9,000	6,762	8,500
Urban/Local	22,000	21,900	22,000	23,000	23,300
Operations	259,401	290,526	275,659	299,156	311,033
Session	1,342	10,010	-	-	-
Office	37,600	34,189	35,000	38,578	36,600
Communications	13,659	7,033	10,659	16,878	17,295
Building/Facilities	206,800	239,294	230,000	233,409	244,410
Debt Service - Satisfied in 2019	-	-	-	10,290	12,728
TOTAL EXPENSES	\$ 1,069,214	\$ 1,039,200	\$ 1,054,713	\$ 1,069,077	\$ 1,093,264
BALANCE	0	(26,453)	0	(88,057)	0

Brown Downtown Turns 150

Stories of Faith and Hope

"Stories tell you the history. More importantly, let the stories be your bridge to others as we continue looking forward, building our community of hope and faith."

In the spring of 2020 we started collecting stories to share as part of our 150th Anniversary Celebration. The group working to bring history alive at Brown Memorial continued interviewing long-standing members of our faith community and pastors even

with the uncertainty that unfolded during 2020. Later this year you will receive your own personal copy of the story collection. We look forward to celebrating all these powerful, rich stories with all of you, whether you have been around or are relatively new in our community. In the meantime look for more stories in the church e-newsletter "This Week @ Brown" each month.





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*Alive in the City
and the World*

Clergy and Staff

Andrew Connors: Senior Pastor
Michele Ward: Associate Pastor
Michael Britt: Minister of Music
Rachel Cunningham: Christian Educator
Sharon Holley: Administrative Assistant
Sharon Lucas: Financial Administrator
Keith Moore Sr: Facilities Manager
Lisa Roca: Communications Consultant
Anastasia Kupstas: Media Specialist
Robert Tracy: Director of Children's Music
Haley Olson: Composer in Residence
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
to be added.

