



Good News from Brown Memorial Park Avenue
Presbyterian Church

Tidings

JAN/FEB 2021

Clergy and Staff

Senior Pastor

Andrew Connors

Associate Pastor

Michele Ward

Minister of Music

Michael Britt

Christian Educator

Rachel Cunningham

Administrative Assistant

Sharon Holley

Financial Administrator

Sharon Lucas

Facilities Manager

Keith Moore Sr.

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Lisa Roca

Media Specialist

Anastasia Kupstas

Director of Children's Music

Robert Tracy

Composer in Residence

Haley Olson

Custodian

Henry Owens

Tutoring Program Director

Martha Socolar

Tutoring Program Assistant Director

Amy Munds

Music Minister Emeritus

John Walker



Pastor's Reflection

Lent 2021

By Andrew Connors, Senior Pastor

I went back and reread the Lent issue for this time last year. We were still living in pre-pandemic ignorance. I wish I had recognized the bliss that it was. That issue of the Tidings proudly announced all the 150th anniversary activities we were about to undertake. It invited everyone to the BUILD Mayoral Forum to hear the candidates discuss their platforms. And it shared the learnings of young explorers in the tutoring program. None of us knew what was about to unfold. But the Lenten theme was prescient: Wilderness. As the pandemic began to unfold my early pandemic expectations are now laughable. Back then I was hoping we'd be back together by Easter, not looking at the calendar a year later hoping everyone gets vaccinated by the fall.

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Pastor's Reflections

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I've learned to get comfortable planning out a month or two ahead at most, monitoring conditions to see what we can do. Rolling with the changes instead of trying to fight for control. Even so, as Lent comes around again, I'm very confident that our theme - Again and Again - will be right on target. Once again we are benefiting from the creative resources of "A Sanctified Art". The theme acknowledges the rhythms of life and faith presence in Lent. The repetition of our own failures to live the way we hope, and the cycles of injustice that recur, calling forth our lament and anger. But also God's "sacred refrain," as the authors call it: "I choose you, I love you, I will lead you to repair." That refrain invites us to cultivate our own sorts of repetitive spiritual practices that support and sustain our faith - again and again.

Groundhog's Day is worth watching again if you haven't seen it recently. Bill Murray is cast as Phil Connors (no relation), an egotistical, self-centered TV news reporter who finds himself repeating the same day over and over again. He tries everything to get out of the cycle, and reaches a level of depression with his dreary existence that feels, well, relevant. Yet once he accepts his plight, he finds some important keys to the choices that he is

determined to make to bring meaning and purpose to his life even in its repetitiveness. There is some deep spiritual wisdom here with lots of laughs along the way.

In reflecting on the movie, I realized that most people reference the film in situations where they feel stuck in the same wearisome cycle, when in fact, the movie's conclusion is a joyous state of meaning and purpose, rooted in relationship. There is the dreary cycle, yes. But there is also the joyful one. One cannot be separated from the other. Of course, in the movie Bill Murray gets to transition to the next day as soon as he discovers this joy while we will have to wait a few more months. But while we're stuck here together, I'm hopeful that we can go even deeper into the wisdom that Lent brings to us. The same wisdom that it brought to us last year. The pain that is part of our human existence is real. Injustice doesn't seem to end. But neither does God's determination to reach us with grace, with truth, and with justice again and again.



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INSPIRING OUR COMMUNITY THROUGH MUSIC

I would like to extend my sincerest and heartfelt thanks to everyone in our music ministry for their outstanding contributions to our worship services this past year: The Chancel Choir and Soloists, Handbell Choir and Soulful Revue.

This ministry could not survive without their incredible talent and their willingness to do whatever it takes to inspire our community through music. I am also deeply grateful to our children, youth and other church members who have taken the time to record truly inspirational pieces for our services. I hope and pray that very soon, we may be able to bring back together, The Soulful Sisters and our Instrumental Ensemble. I miss you all so much. Finally, I would like to thank the members of our congregation for their never ending support and affirmation. That means more to me than you will ever know.

God Bless You! Stay safe and well!

Michael T. Britt
Minister of Music and Organist

AGAIN & AGAIN

Ash Wednesday through
Easter Sunday

In Lent, we're reminded that, again and again, suffering and brokenness find us. We doubt again, we lament again, we mess up again. Again and again, the story of Jesus on the cross repeats—every time lives are taken unjustly, every time the powerful choose corruption and violence, every time individuals forget how to love. With exacerbation we exclaim, “Again?! How long, O God?” And yet, in the midst of the motion blur chaos of our lives, God offers a sacred refrain: “I choose you, I love you, I will lead you to repair.” Again and again, God breaks the cycle and offers us a new way forward.



This theme provides a clear invitation in a time when much is unclear. Even if worshiping apart, we come to God again and again with our prayers, our dreams, our hopes, and our doubts. Even if from a distance, we will continue to be community to one another—especially when it's hard—by choosing each other over and over again. We will continue to love God with the same persistence God chooses and claims us. Our sub-theme, A Lenten Refrain, speaks to the ways God can make music of our lives. “Refrain” also reminds us that Lent is a season of abstaining from certain practices in order to take on new rhythms and habits.

In this season, we need rituals—both old and new—to remember and be transformed. Embodied practice builds muscle memory. Repetition helps retrain our neural pathways. We need the 46 days of Lent because this season shapes us into more faithful disciples. Join us this Lent as again and again, we bring all of who we are to God and trust that God will meet us, time and again, along the way. © a sanctified art | sanctifiedart.org ♦

Lenten Activities

LENT-IN-A-BOX

Shrove Tuesday through Holy Week

Lent is just around the corner and we're working to bring Lent-in-a-Box kits to your homes, filled with resources to enhance your Lenten experience from Shrove Tuesday through Holy Week. Contact Rachel Cunningham to sign up to receive a box.

SHROVE TUESDAY

February 16, 2021 at 6 pm (Trivia at 7 pm)

Make pancakes together on Zoom and enjoy one another's company on the cusp of the Lenten season. This year instead of our Annual Pancake Relay Races we'll have Pancake Day Trivia. Plan to join us and share your Pancake Day knowledge!

Worship During Lent

Ash Wednesday

February 17

Stop by the Sanctuary during one of two time slots (11 am - 1 pm or 4-6 pm) to receive your ashes in a COVID safe manner. Masks must be worn at all times and social distancing practiced. No speaking will take place while individuals are marked with the sign of the cross. Once the ashes have been imposed, clergy will step back to a safe social distance to offer a prayer. At 7 pm join us on Zoom for a Ecumenical Ash Wednesday service with our brothers and sisters from Corpus Christi Catholic Church and Memorial Episcopal Church.

Pausing and Praying During the Week

Wednesdays During Lent Personal Reflection

Wednesdays during Lent the Sanctuary will be open from 4-6 pm for silent personal reflection. Participants may walk the labyrinth, light a candle in the columbarium or meditate in the pews. Those who attend must wear masks and practice social distancing at all times. Socializing outside of households is strongly discouraged and prohibited inside the building. If you would like to socialize outside, please do so at safe social distances while wearing your masks.

Youth Sunday

February 7 at 11 am

Youth group members will lead Brown Memorial as they preach, participate in music, and guide us through communion with Pastor Michele and other youth leaders. Join us for a special morning of worship, contemplation, and fun!

Wednesdays following Ash Wednesday

Evening Zoom Prayer Services

At 7 pm on each Wednesday following Ash Wednesday, we will join together with our brothers and sisters from Corpus Christi Catholic Church, Madison Avenue Presbyterian Church, and Memorial Episcopal Church for a short ecumenical prayer service over Zoom. Each church will lead one of the five prayer services before Holy Week.

Thursday Evenings

Prayers of the Community

Thursdays join with others in lifting up the prayers of the community from 5:30-6 pm via Zoom.

COVID Caveat

Please note that we continue to monitor the COVID-19 situation consulting our public health consultants while doing our best to balance safety and the desire to physically be in the church. All in-person events are subject to cancellation should public health deem it necessary. Please check the church calendar for possible cancellations or alterations before departing for any in-person event.

Youth Events

Spring SNL Series

TED and Theology from 5:30 to 7 pm

Meditate, discuss, and reflect on these four TED talks together as a youth group and play games together this spring!

- » February 21 with Drew Dudley: Everyday Leadership
- » March 21 with Mena Fombo: No. You cannot touch my hair!
- » April 18 with Dylan Marron: Empathy is not endorsement
- » May 23 with Erica Chenoweth: The success of non-violent resistance

These SNL gatherings may be online or in person, or take place in a hybrid format, depending upon the current health restrictions during the covid19 pandemic.

Welcome

New Members

In January, we welcomed three new members virtually. Meet them here and say hello when you see them in Zoom worship.

Carolyn Marks

Carolyn joined Brown 29 years ago this past fall. She currently lives in Naples, FL having moved there to accept a job with the Naples Philharmonic. Unable to find a suitable church since moving to Florida 12 years ago, this spring she was delighted to be able to access Brown Memorial's Zoom church. She says, "It feels wonderful to reconnect. Brown gave me the opportunity to serve as an Elder, Deacon, choir member and Worship committee member." Along with John Walker and others she was part of the committee that started the Tiffany Series.



Mary Peeler

Mary Peeler is a lifelong Presbyterian, having been raised in a PC(USA) church in Memphis, Tennessee. She moved to Baltimore in 2015 to attend medical school at Johns Hopkins. She will be here for at least the next four years as a resident physician in Obstetrics and Gynecology. She lives in East Baltimore with her sister Anna and her three-legged cat, Lieutenant Dan (Lou).



Louise Wagner

Louise is happy to be back at Brown after a long absence. She is looking forward to getting to know everyone; and says "it truly feels wonderful to be part of such a vibrant community." In the recent past she had some big life changes: divorce after a lengthy marriage; retirement from a career in human resources, in both banking & health care; and the purchase of a new home, with its never-ending lists of home improvement projects. She has continued to adopt more dogs while working on her dog mom skills, a role very important to her. Since retiring she has found more time to spend with family & friends, gone back to yoga, read more murder mysteries and more. Generally, she finds herself searching while understanding she is more than fortunate to be where she is. She continues to piece together this current chapter of her life.



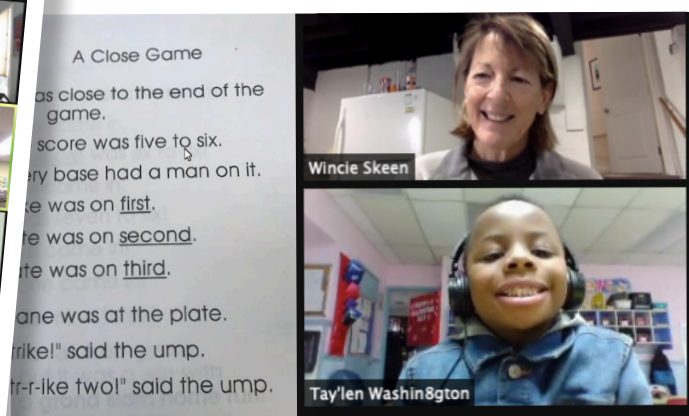
News From

The Brown Memorial Tutoring Program

By Martha Socolar, Program Director

These have been incredibly challenging times for everyone in Baltimore and around the world and the impact of COVID-19 on the Brown Memorial Tutoring Program has been no less. Knowing that our students would be some of the most severely impacted by online education, giving up on the tutoring program during this time, was never a real option. After a great deal of research and perseverance on the part of our strong leadership team, we built an online tutoring program that would continue to provide one on one tutoring for the students from our four partner schools, Mount Royal Elementary, Dorothy I. Height, Eutaw Marshburn and The Baltimore Montessori Public Charter School. To our happy surprise, 41 of our 75 tutors felt comfortable and courageous enough to navigate Zoom technology and give this online tutoring a try.

While the number of children we are serving is down this year, we are continuing to help 48 students with their literacy skills. The online tutoring is challenging, but we're gathering some wonderful success stories. One such story involved a student who really did not want to leave her session when her mother had to leave for an appointment and her tutor continued teaching the magic e rule to her student while they were driving in the car! Another child couldn't wait to excitedly tell her tutor that she was sounding out words over the weekend in order to spell them. In addition, a tutor recently stayed on the Zoom meeting in order to tell me how well her session with her child had gone. Finally, during our sharing time at the end of each session, one student proudly shared that he and his teachers were noticing how his reading is really improving. In the end, we are all in agreement that these are difficult, but hopeful times.



Birthdays of our Members

January

01/01 Fred Lazarus
 01/02 Deb Baer
 01/02 Erin Powell
 01/03 John Warmath
 01/05 Elden Schneider
 01/08 Devon Smith
 01/09 Yari Armand
 01/09 Rebecca Thomson
 01/10 Nathan Arnold
 01/10 Katie Shaw
 01/12 Lizzie Mills
 01/12 Nellie Mills
 01/13 Emily Bishai
 01/13 Richard Cook
 01/13 Ellen Fisher
 01/13 Hadicha Murat-bekova
 01/14 Taylor Branch
 01/17 Elena Kirkpatrick
 01/19 Elizabeth Cavallon
 01/20 Zakiyah Grayson
 01/22 Chrystie Adams
 01/23 Horace Liang
 01/24 Penelope Nash-Pappalardo
 01/25 David Bielenberg
 01/25 Steedman Jenkins
 01/27 Rebecca Adams
 01/28 Charles Reichelt
 01/29 Lucas Calderon
 01/30 Ben Anderson

February

02/03 Sarah B. Buikema
 02/04 Anthony Crooms
 02/04 June Fletcher-Hill
 02/05 Annie Bishai
 02/05 Emily Brown
 02/07 Jonna Lazarus
 02/07 Dave Miller
 02/08 Barbara Christen
 02/10 Lila McNabney
 02/10 Phil Sorensen
 02/12 Bob Babb
 02/13 Tom Hall
 02/13 Lyndsay Taylor
 02/14 Patrick Francis
 02/14 Allan Riorda
 02/15 Geoffrey Parsons
 02/16 Andrew Liang
 02/17 Anne Arnold
 02/17 Ben Inglesby
 02/17 Joseph Reichelt
 02/17 Caroline Tracy
 02/18 Christy Macy
 02/19 Kensi Veatch
 02/20 Oscar Bachvaroff
 02/21 Henry Crew
 02/22 Kathryn Wagner
 02/23 Jake Cheseldine
 02/24 Kyle Rae
 02/28 David Nyweide
 02/28 Miranda Williams

March

03/03 Brad Norris
 03/04 Annie Obrecht
 03/04 Sue Schindler
 03/07 Rosa Brown
 03/07 Tida Nelson
 03/08 Aidan Connors
 03/11 Rees Richardson
 03/11 Dianne Ross
 03/13 Joanne Egan
 03/14 Ken Mills
 03/14 Michele Ward
 03/15 Ellen Edrington
 03/15 Liam McConnell
 03/15 Don Peeples
 03/16 Jonathan Barnes
 03/17 Chel Cavallon
 03/19 Martha Bishai
 03/19 Sarah Diehl
 03/20 Nick Reed
 03/21 Ryan Kelly
 03/21 Ellison Warmath
 03/22 Melissa Riorda
 03/23 Ben Bobango
 03/23 Nell Robinson
 03/23 Stephen Ruckman
 03/23 Sarah Seipp-Williams
 03/26 Kenna Mitchell
 03/26 Carol Newill
 03/26 Sarah Ramirez Cross
 03/26 Rick Thomas
 03/27 Olivia Liang
 03/29 Erin Anderson
 03/29 Olivia Babb
 03/29 David Lascu



BMPA Calendar

*Alive in the City
and the World*

VIRTUAL WORSHIP and 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 MORNING: Join us live on Zoom via your computer or phone for the Education Hour beginning at 9:45 am followed by Worship at 11 am. 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: In addition to joining us live every Sunday, you can read, watch or listen to past sermons at browndowntown.org/sermons, or visit and subscribe to our YouTube channel at browndowntown.org.

OTHER GATHERINGS: Visit our website to view our full calendar and sign up for our weekly email, "This Week @ Brown," for the latest news and Zoom links for small group and committee gatherings.



SAVE THE DATE

90TH ANNIVERSARY OF ERNEST M. SKINNER PIPE ORGAN

On Sunday, April 25, 2021 at 3 pm this celebration will include a recital by Michael Britt who will premiere a commissioned work by Alfred V. Fedak. The program will also feature an interview with Peter Scott, the grandson of Ernest Skinner by Tom Hall and a presentation by Jonathan Ambrosino, a world renowned Skinner historian. More details forthcoming.

Tidings

*Good News from Brown
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*To submit Tidings articles,
email Lisa Roca at
lisa@browndowntown.org. Next
deadline to include
content is March 15, 2021.*

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