



Good News from Brown Memorial Park Avenue
Presbyterian Church

Tidings

SUMMER 2022

Clergy and Staff

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Christian Educator

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Sharon Lucas

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Martha Socolar

Tutoring Program Assistant

Director Karlin Scudder

Tutoring Program Director of

Development Tracy Cerrato

Music Minister Emeritus

John Walker



Pastor's Reflection

By Andrew Connors, Senior Pastor

**There is a balm in Gilead to make the wounded whole;
there is a balm in Gilead to heal the sin sick soul.**

Last month I was sickened by the news of another mass shooting. I'm guessing many of you were, too. Rage, tears, despair — the cycles of my heart in these times. My friend, Heather Shortlidge, who's now the transitional pastor for Wayne Presbyterian Church near Philly, wrote a lament that I've included in italics, interspersed with my comments:

*Holy God, we weep for parents whose phones rang on Tuesday afternoon.
Parents who were at work or running errands.*

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—INSIDE—

Youth Summer Camps: Learn about ways to become involved. See pages 6-7.

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Anticipating the summer break and time spent with their children.

Imagining those phone calls, O God, takes our breath away.

Lament is an age-old practice of our ancestors in the faith. It precedes all action. Yet, it's the practice I often skip over in my rush to "do something."

We weep for counselors and administrators who were charged with identifying the dead and making those gut-wrenching phone calls.

We weep for teachers in classrooms, watching the violence unfold, desperately trying to protect their students.

In my social media feeds, it's become a bit of a trope to make light of "thoughts and prayers." The escape to "thoughts and prayers" as an alternative to action is worthy of critique. But thoughts and prayers were never meant to be alternatives to action. They were meant to be an indispensable part of any action that people of faith take. A way to guard against hasty action that causes more hurt than enacts healing. A way to seek divine guidance as a part of our discernment of where to put our energy, time, and efforts.

We weep for the first responders, for police officers, firefighters, and EMT's who witnessed this carnage, stopped the shooter, secured the scene, and provided lifesaving care.

By naming our losses, and centering them in our thoughts, we trust that God will bring us insight and direction, for action that is constructive, healing, and just in its means as well as its ends.

We weep for the dead, the 19 fourth graders and two of their teachers, whom we now name aloud...

Alexandria Aniyah Rubio, 10

Alithia Ramirez, 10

Amerie Jo Garza, 10

Annabell Guadalupe Rodriguez, 10

Eliahana Cruz Torres, 10

Eliana "Ellie" Garcia, 9

Irma Garcia

Jackie Cazares, 10

Jailah Nicole Silguero, 10

Jayce Luevanos, 10

Layla Salazar, 10

Eva Mireles, 44

Makenna Lee Elrod, 10

Maite Rodriguez

Miranda Mathis, 11

Nevaeh Bravo

Rojelio Torres, 10

Tess Marie Mata

Uziyah Garcia, 8

Xavier Lopez, 10

Jose Flores, 10

Naming the pain of the loss does a couple of things. It keeps us from turning away from the pain - facing it, naming it instead of hiding from it. It also keeps us from holding it all inside, voicing the pain with the expectation that our community is willing and able to hold it together.

We weep for the eighteen-year-old shooter, for his grandmother, and for his parents. O Lord, it is not easy, but you tell us repeatedly, to pray for our enemies and those who wish us harm,

As we articulate our pain it lessens its hold over us, allowing our hearts and minds to be guided toward responses that are constructive and clear.

We weep for all the surviving students and teachers inside Robb Elementary School, the ones who hid, huddled in fear, wondering if they were next.

Pastor's Reflection

Continued from Page 2

We weep for every family whose life is forever changed by the trauma of gun violence and who are triggered every time there is another shooting.

I see again that what children (including my own) most need from me is support in living through these despairing times - an example of how to care for oneself while simultaneously taking actions that I can to reduce violence in our culture and guns as a solution to our problems. In order to live that kind of hopeful, purposeful life, I need to tend to my soul so I can fight like hell for justice and peace.

Some of those ways I care for myself include sitting with members of our church and hearing their life stories; allowing someone to tell their own story undermines that first step toward violence of all kinds. I sit with friends who want to hear the same from me. I temper my consumption of news in all of its conflicted states with thoughtful reflection from articles and books along with music and art that speaks to our hopes and dreams.

On this journey of life it's important that we balance the reality of the world with possibilities about who we could become together. Last night, for example, I watched a National Geographic documentary about the brave cave divers who rescued the child soccer team from the cave in Thailand back in 2018. In a culture awash with movies that seem to undergird the NRA's imagined "good guy with a gun" heroism, it was important and uplifting for me to see what true heroism actually looks like. In this case, skilled and nerdy misfits who haven't fit well in society, putting their usually isolated skill at work and their lives at risk for the sake of saving children.

*We weep for those of us who are numb,
unable to handle this pain,
unable to bear this grief.*

We weep for leaders, elected to govern, and yet who struggle to discern what is right in the face of powerful political forces.

While I name the pain, offer it up to God, tending to my soul, I can simultaneously rage with the knowledge that our political stalemates are keeping us from common sense. I can absorb the ludicrous reality that the only thing different from us and other industrialized nations on earth is that our gun laws literally care more about the individual "rights" of people to own small arsenals more than the safety of our children. I can recognize the hypocrisy between trusting individuals with firearms that routinely kill more preschoolers than police officers each year, while taking away the right of a woman to make decisions about whether to end a pregnancy. I can also see hopeful data that shows that most of my fellow citizens support common sense gun safety measures. Such hopeful signs help me channel my anger and outrage into organizing and resisting and voting for change rather than retreating to cynicism or giving up altogether.

This morning, we weep, O God. We weep and pray.

I can see that this struggle we are in is a multi-decades struggle and I can recalibrate my energy and efforts accordingly. That struggle needs faithful disciples for the long haul. We can care for ourselves and each other accordingly. We have entered terrible times, and we are not alone. We are not powerless. We are not without the community that we need to hold our hurts and focus our gifts in ways that can and will lead to healing.

There is a balm in Gilead to make the wounded whole; there is a balm in Gilead to heal the sin sick soul.

MUSIC NOTES

Hymn Sings and Silent Film at Brown Memorial

HYMN SINGS AND LEMONADE

Wednesday, June 8 from 6 to 7 pm

Wednesday, July 13 from 6 to 7 pm

Wednesday, August 10 from 6 to 7 pm

Join us for Summer Hymn Sings and Lemonade on June 8, July 13, and August 10 from 6 pm—7 pm on the front steps of our sanctuary. Choose and sing your favorite hymns accompanied on a vintage reed organ. Please check our website as well as "This Week at Brown" for updated information. In case of bad weather or excessive heat, we will move inside to the Sanctuary vestibule.

SILENT FILM

Friday, July 22 at 7 PM

In July gather with us for a Silent Film with a live organ accompaniment on Friday, July 22 at 7 pm. We'll feature "The Strongman" (1926) starring Harry Langdon with music from Michael Britt, organist at Skinner Pipe Organ.

TUTORING PROGRAM

By Tracy Cerrato

The Brown Memorial Tutoring Program was very excited to welcome Karlin Scudder in January as our new Assistant Director. The transition has been seamless, and the children just adore her, affectionately addressing her as Ms. K. She previously served nearly two years as a Peace Corps education volunteer in Liberia specializing in literacy, working with students in grades pre-K through fifth grade.

While exploring the continent of Africa as part of our Seven Continents theme, Karlin had the opportunity to share with the students during circle time some of her experience in Liberia. Karlin explained how the country is closely tied to the United States and even has a county called Maryland. Students were most interested in the language spoken (Liberian English) and what people eat.

We also wanted to highlight Taynasia, our work-study student from the Maryland Institute College of Art (MICA). Taynasia, in addition to tutoring two students throughout the year, helped with a number of projects from assembling bulletin boards to creating the cover art for our tutor directory. The Tutoring Program is fortunate to get such talented students each year; we are so grateful for this partnership!

For more information please contact Program Director Martha Socolar at msocolar@browntutoring.org or Assistant Director Karlin Scudder at karlin@browntutoring.org.

Session News & Notes

The following are recent actions taken and reports received by the Session.

Submitted by Brad Norris, Clerk of Session

■ The Session has solidified their Strategic Priorities for 2022, which were drafted as part of the Session Retreat in February. The Session will be working with Brown Memorial committees and teams to integrate our themes of building connection, deepening our relationships, being vulnerable, and having fun throughout the 2022 Church Year. Our strategic areas of focus for 2022 will be encouraging personal connection, leadership and hospitality training, continuing our focus on Christian Education, and expanding our work with children and youth.

■ Received report from the Anti-Racism Task Force on their continuing work in addressing the role of Brown Memorial in anti-racism activity and the Brown family history. We reaffirmed that there is an ongoing congregational and Session commitment to the committee's work, as well as value in helping the committee create a focused and goal-oriented charge for the next two to three years. The Session is recommending that the committee work toward drafting amended language for their charge that can address relevant action steps for the committee over the next 2-3 years. Once the committee has this new language, they will present it to the Session.

■ Heard reports from the Committee working with Afghan Refugees, which has raised significant funds to open a community welcome center, including a \$6,000 gift from The United Way. The volunteers have provided support to families and individuals in need ranging from English Classes, Employment and Job Search Help, Financial literacy, Cultural Competence Assistance, and Transportation.

■ Approved a request by the Tutoring Commission to amend their fiscal year to July 1 – June 30. The primary motivation for this was to assist in applications for grant money for the program. Since this can only help the Tutoring Commission in their efforts, and doesn't affect Brown Memorial's calendar year reporting, the Session voted to approve this unanimously. We are excited to see the Tutoring Commission grow and thrive in these ways!

■ Approved a new schedule of Special Offerings at Brown Memorial as put forth by the Special Offerings Work Group. These will include making permanent places in the church calendar for offerings to the Neighborhood Assistance Fund, The Brown Memorial Tutoring Program, and the Peace & Global Witness Offering. This new schedule of special offerings will be implemented starting this Fall.

■ Approved a request by the Christian Education and Worship Committees to move the start time for Worship Services to 10:30 am permanently beginning Memorial Day. Christian Education classes will also be moving to after the service instead of before with this schedule. This change will allow for participation in Christian Education classes by the Choir members and others who are otherwise engaged prior to the service. This will also make for consistency in the service time through all future seasons of the church calendar.

MIDDLE SCHOOL Camp

JULY 7-10

Location: Massanetta Springs Camp & Conference Center, Harrisonburg, VA

Grades: rising 6th to graduating 8th

Cost: \$375 per person (scholarships available—please inquire)

Massanetta's Middle School Conference transforms the faith journey of hundreds of middle schoolers from all around the country. Every aspect of this conference is crafted with middle schoolers in mind. Conference activities like keynote, recreation, encounter groups, and workshops are centered on the theme of the summer. We promise it will be one of the best things your youth do all year! Contact Pastor Michele for more information and sign up at michele@browndowntown.org.

SOARING EAGLES SUMMER CAMPS

JUNE 20-23 & JULY 11-14

With the imminent closure of Eutaw Marshburn Elementary School (EMES) on the horizon this summer will be one of our last to host the annual learning and choir camps. Since 2012 we have partnered with The Center to provide a summer enrichment camp for the children of EMES. We are pleased that the COVID decline is allowing us to return to this week of hands on learning, June 20-23, 8am-2pm. Volunteers are needed to help lead education stations, serve as counselors, and provide meals. Youth in 7th grade and up may serve as counselors for Soaring Eagles Learning Camp. We are also excited for the return of the Eutaw Marshburn Choir Camp, July 11-14, 8am-2pm. We are in our 4th year of choir camp and while music experience is helpful for volunteers it isn't essential. If you are interested in helping with either camp or if you'd like more information please contact Chrystie Adams at cladams22@verizon.net.

May Birthdays

05/01	Laura S. 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	Bill Sheridan
05/09	Emily Hutson
05/09	Charlie Obrecht
05/10	Barbara Clippinger
05/10	Sue Galusha-Bobango
05/11	Matt Fedderly
05/11	Khoa Nguyen
05/13	Josephine Finney
05/14	Diane Hodges
06/16	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	Susan Haugh
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

June Birthdays

06/03 Mary MacLeod Kelly
06/04 Will Brockman
06/04 Sarah Reiman
06/05 Emy Urban
06/06 Lorrie Liang
06/09 Kelly Knock
06/10 Erika Brockman
06/10 Exel Estrada
06/10 Cal Riorda
06/11 Loretta Byers
06/12 Abby Jackson
06/12 Kathy Kaneda
06/12 Mary Obrecht
06/13 Gregory Brightbill
06/13 Will Coulson
06/13 Rob Marshall
06/15 Jacob Thompson
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
06/26 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

Montreat Youth

MORE THAN ENOUGH: JULY 31–AUGUST 6

About Montreat Youth Conference

A Montreat Youth Conference affirms youth in their calling to be and to shape the church of Jesus Christ. Our desire is to help youth come to know and believe that they are the beloved of God and to be a place where authenticity, community, connection, and God's truth thrive. We seek to be an inclusive space where each voice can be heard and where each heart can be molded; where change is invited, challenge is expected, and where all are embraced.

Because our culture is overwhelmed with messages of scarcity and criticism and our problems can seem insurmountable, we often struggle to feel adequate for the tasks demanded of us and the lives we are called to lead. From the manna discovered in the desert by the Israelites to the feast of loaves and fish received by hungry followers of Jesus, we will explore how God has always provided, not only what we need to survive but the great abundance needed to thrive.

Join us as we learn that because of God's love, created in God's image, and filled with God's Spirit, we are assured that we are enough, we have enough, and we are empowered to do more than enough.

Youth leave Montreat knowing that:

Their faith matters.

They are loved as they are.

They are part of a community of faith.

Registration Details

Who: Highschool students

Where: Montreat, NC

When: July 31 to August 6, 2022

Cost: \$650. Contact Rev. Michele Ward at michele@browndowntown.org.



Special Events

Hershey Park Summer Lock In August 26 to August 27

Spend the night at Brown Memorial Friday night for an old fashioned lock in with dinner and games. Then head out to Hershey Park the next morning to enjoy roller coasters, water rides, and more! This event is open to 6th to 12th grader students. The cost is \$25. Register by contacting Rev. Michele Ward michele@browndowntown.org.

Drop off: August 26 @ 6 pm
Pick up: August 27 @ 9 pm

Canoe and Scoop Saturdays June to October from 9 am to 12 pm

Clean up the remnants of rain storms from the beautiful shoreline of Middle Branch Park with Baltimore Recreation & Parks. This activity is open to anyone 12 years and older and qualifies for service learning hours. Contact Michele for more information. Save the Dates:

Saturday, June 11
Saturday, July 23
Saturday, August 20
Saturday, September 10
Saturday, October 15

Green Team Partnership Events Stillmeadow Peace Park, Saturdays at 10 am

A 10 acre urban forest in the heart of West Baltimore, our Green Team volunteers here on a regular basis shaping trails, planting native trees, and building relationships with Stillmeadow Community Fellowship and their neighbors. Contact McKay Jenkins at mckay@udel.edu to find out how to volunteer.

Rockrose Food Justice Project Tuesday and Thursdays at 8 am

Harvest produce and care for the ground of the Rockrose Food Justice Project at Rockrose City Farm located at 3713 Clipper Rd, Baltimore, Maryland. Contact Derrick Weston at dweston80@gmail.com to learn more about the mission of the farm, a member of the Baltimore Farm Alliance, and how you can contribute to the farm's flourishing.

July Birthdays

07/03	Peter Hoffberger
07/03	Stuart Mitchell
07/03	Henry Owens
07/03	Tom Waldron
07/05	Will Fesperman
07/06	Michael Britt
07/06	Joyce Edington
07/06	Hannah Milcarek
07/06	Nick Robinson
07/09	Charlie Obrecht
07/09	Rob Tracy
07/09	Lorenzo Zapata
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
07/19	John Boumgarden
07/19	Rachel E. Clark
07/21	Hilbert Byers
07/22	Wells Obrecht
07/24	Courtney Abrams
07/24	Doug Adams
07/24	Veronica Nash-Pappalardo
07/28	Erin Bobango
07/29	Ian Munds
07/30	Matthew Dahl

August Birthdays

08/01 Deb Milcarek
08/01 Malinda Peeples
08/02 Rachael Edgin
08/02 Beverly Hensley
08/04 Bill McConnell
08/05 Chuck Holland
08/09 Donald McPherson
08/10 Osaro Grayson
08/11 Mehran Armand
08/11 Emily Rose Proctor
08/12 Gilly Babb
08/12 Carly Tu
08/13 Edward McCarthy
08/14 George Brown
08/14 Mike Reed
08/15 Cecelia Reichelt
08/21 JoAnn Copes
08/21 Jim Egan
08/21 Tim Hughes
08/24 Wolfe Glaser
08/24 Carol Graves
08/24 Terry Lorch
08/24 Laura McConnell
08/25 Samuel Edgin
08/26 Evan Cunningham
08/26 Xóchitl Mota-Back
08/26 Theresa Veatch
08/27 W. Courtland Robinson
08/28 Susan Flanigan
08/28 Andy Imperato
08/29 William Copper
08/30 Sharon Lucas

Paperback and Pastor

Pastor Michele is taking over Paperback and Pastor while in her Doctor of Ministry program in Creative Writing & Public Theology at Pittsburgh Theological Seminary! Bring a snack or a beverage to share and join us for discussions.

Wednesday, June 15 at 6 pm

Call It Grace: Finding Meaning in a Fractured World by Serene Jones

As the president of the Union Theological Seminary, Rev. Dr. Serene Jones is one of America's foremost theologians. This bracingly honest and practical book takes us on an emotional and intellectual journey to bring spirituality back into our lives. Drawing from the work of Hegel, Nietzsche, and other great minds, as well as from deeply moving and personal experiences, Jones offers readers a rich guidebook for living a more honest, grace-filled life. Join us for the discussion hosted by Rev. Andrew Connors at 29 South Stricker Street, Baltimore, Maryland.

Wednesday, July 20 at 6 pm

Island of the Innocent: A Consideration of the Book of Job by Diane Glancy

There is much mystery surrounding the Book of Job. Who was he? Where was he? What prompts Job's comforters to accuse him of wrong-doing as the cause of his suffering? How did Job's wife endure her husband's ordeals? And who is innocent among us? Island of the Innocent's narrative dramatizes how the way one looks at something shapes and changes what is seen. Voices of the trials of the Native American interject themselves into the text. There is Custer riding toward the Little Bighorn. There is a Native American doll in a museum, taken from a battlefield in western Nebraska after the massacre of Ash Hollow. There is Job, sitting in his yard chair in discomfort, among the falling leaves and his three friends. And finally, Jehorah. Only Diane Glancy could create the missing story of Job's wife, unsilencing this biblical character and endowing her suffering with meaning. Join us in Brown Memorial Front Parlor at Church House at 1316 Park Avenue, Baltimore, Maryland.

Thursday, August 23 at 6 pm

The Christian Imagination: Theology & the Origins of Race by Willie James Jennings

In *The Christian Imagination*, Willie James Jennings delves deep into the late medieval soil in which the modern Christian imagination grew, to reveal how Christianity's highly refined process of socialization has inadvertently created and maintained segregated societies. A probing study of the cultural fragmentation--social, spatial, and racial--that took root in the Western mind, this book shows how Christianity has consistently forged Christian nations rather than encouraging genuine communion between disparate groups and individuals. Join us in Brown Memorial Front Parlor at Church House at 1316 Park Avenue, Baltimore, Maryland.

Eid Celebration

By Court and Ang Robinson

In the Islamic calendar, Eid al-Fitr (the Festival of Breaking the Fast), marks the end of Ramadan, a month-long period of fasting and atonement. In Afghanistan, Eid al-Fitr typically is celebrated over three days and involves worship in the mosque and praying, visiting with family and friends, and gift-giving by elders to children. As one Islamic newsletter put it, "For every Muslim, Eid is a time of celebration, laughter, togetherness, abundance and sharing."

As part of the work of the church's Ministry of Welcome to support resettlement efforts for Afghan refugees, members of the Afghan Support Group (led by Barbara Cook) decided to host an Eid celebration dinner on May 3 for the estimated 20 Afghan families resettling in Reservoir Hill. To stage the event, we enlisted the help from volunteers, Brown Memorial Church Staff, Memorial Episcopal Church, along with special support from Rev. Grey Maggiano, and Shakera Rahimi whom are with Afghan Alliance Coordinator for Luminus, a nonprofit organization that provides immigration assistance.

To coordinate the event we met several times, and talked to many, about what would make the Eid celebration special to the families. While some mentioned giving gifts, playing games, listening to music, telling stories, spending time together, everyone came back to the central theme of sharing a special meal together. After planning a menu we selected the restaurant, The Helmand, a Baltimore fixture for more than thirty years.

We agreed on a menu to accommodate 90 people which included: banjan bowrani (eggplant, pan-fried with yogurt); salata (mixed greens and tomatoes); kabuli (seasoned chunks of lamb in baked rice and topped with raisins and glazed julienned carrots), dwopiazza (seasoned lamb tenderloin with onions and yellow split peas); koufta (beef meat-

balls in spicy tomato), chicken kabob, seekh lamb kabob, sauteed spinach, shalghum (sweet and spicy turnips); challow (basmati rice baked with cumin seed), Afghan naan, ferni pudding, and cardamom tea. We mention these by name both to re-savor some of those exquisite flavors and to invite you to consider each of these dishes as a kind of special guest at this celebration, which in their sharing and consumption, brought Afghanistan to Baltimore and our multiple communities together in one room.

We set up tables, decorated with blue and green tablecloths, created flyers with "Eid Mubarak" greetings (thanks Shirley Parry), and placed flower-filled vases on each table (thanks Christy Macy and others). Gilly Babb donated 50 envelopes with cash gifts ("Eidi") for each child 16 and under to take home. Memorial Episcopal brought boxes of gifts of toys for children, supplemented by another box of toys contributed by Grace Peng and Mehran Armand who also brought boxes of Eid cookies.

We also set up playrooms upstairs for the children, staffed by Memorial Episcopal and Brown Memorial volunteers. A troop of Brown volunteers (thanks Peggy Obrecht, Judy Jones, Barbara Cates, Barbara Christen, Racheal Edgin, Al and Ellen Fisher and others!) helped Qayum and his team from Helmand unload and set up the food and helped all evening long to keep the food and drinks replenished. Grey Maggiano brought Afghan music, and we had a PA system for the playing of a prayer from the Quran and for welcome remarks from church leaders and community members. Page Campbell and Shirley Parry helped organize transportation. Ileana Imhoff and Peter Kirchgraber greeted families as they arrived through the door to the sanctuary and showed them to the Assembly Room.

Memories of the evening are too many to count but here are a few:

Eid Celebration *Continued from Page 10*

■ Qayum Karzai, in asking to be reminded of our location, asked “are you the church with the sign out front, “Immigrants and Refugees Welcome”? It is a wonderful thing you are doing to welcome the Afghan refugees.” (He and his wife Pat later made a generous contribution to our ongoing efforts to support Afghan resettlement).

■ The Afghan families disembarking from the bus and walking through our sanctuary, the women and girls dressed in brightly colored finery (some with newly painted henna on their hands), the men and boys more casually dressed, greeting our volunteers and one another with “Eid Mubarak” (“blessed feast/festival”), some of the kids high-fiving us, and everyone smiling and laughing.

■ The delicious Afghan food piled high on plates and taken back to the tables where our volunteers and guests sat with the Afghan families, talked and shared stories, and ate, and ate and the food kept coming from the kitchen and never seemed to run out, all the way through from the koufta to the feni pudding and the Eid cookies. We could see people relaxing, leaning into the food and the shared pleasures of the blessed feast/festival, maybe leaving behind, for a time anyway, the hardships in their lives. “We do not want to go home,” said several people as the evening was coming to a close. We all felt some of that.

■ The beautiful, numerous, sometimes noisy, and happy children. One child in particular stands out: she was maybe four or five, dressed all in white, wearing a kitty-ear headband and a frilly, fluffy, Disney princess party dress. When some Afghan music started playing, she began to twirl in place, in perfect time to the music, her hands raised gracefully, waving like a blossoming sapling swaying in the breeze. Ang captured some of her dance on video and every time we watch it, our hearts leap in our chests at the pure beauty of the moment.

■ The families walking back through the sanctuary to the waiting bus, their arms full of boxes and bags of leftovers, toys and cash for the children, and vases full of flowers, then waving and smiling as the bus took them back to Reservoir Hill.

For all those in the congregation, named and unnamed, who helped in any way, our deepest thanks! For those who could not attend for reasons of space or scheduling, we will continue to look for ways to involve all who want to be part of our continuing efforts to build community with our new Afghan neighbors. We will be launching a new fund-raising appeal so stay tuned for that! Also, we want to note continuing initiatives and new needs (these from Barbara Cook):

We are excited to report that the Welcome Center and English classes will continue through the summer on Fridays at the St. Frances Neighborhood Center on Reservoir Hill. As our Afghan neighbors lose their case managers at IRC, they are left to manage the bureaucracy around WIC, food stamps, Medicaid and rental assistance. It is daunting even for those of us who think we know a thing or two about bureaucracies.

Youth and adults, please consider volunteering for a couple of hours on Fridays to assist clients with phone calls, paperwork around benefits, studying for driver’s license, making doctors’ appointments, transportation for grocery shopping, etc., etc. There will always be an interpreter there to work with you. And the added benefit is that you will learn so much and your work will be rewarded with smiles and delicious Afghan treats.



BMPA Calendar

*Alive in the City
and the World*

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 both in-person and virtually, each week gathering for worship, prayer, study, and fellowship.

SUNDAY MORNING: During the summer the choir takes a break and there is no education hour. Choir and a new post worship lunch and education hour will resume the Sunday after Labor Day. Join us for Summer Hybrid Worship at 10:30 am. Visit browndowntown.org to learn more about our Hybrid Worship and access 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 <https://browndowntown.org/sermons/> or visit and subscribe to our YouTube channel at www.youtube.com/channel/UCSP0yeb15aXbb1ePJ2RwgcA

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.

Tidings

*Good News from Brown
Memorial Park Avenue
Presbyterian Church*

1316 Park Avenue,
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Andrew Connors,
Senior Pastor

Michele Ward,
Associate Pastor

Lisa Roca,
Editor

*To submit Tidings articles,
email Lisa Roca at
lisa@browndowntown.org.*

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