



**BROWN
MEMORIAL
PARK AVENUE**

Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)

2022

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.

Letter to the Congregation

Last year I started off the annual report stating that it had been a difficult year in the wake of the pandemic and we should start by acknowledging it. This year, at a loss for words, I remembered the sermon a friend of mine preached in the wake of the death of her adolescent son by suicide. This seminary friend's husband—also a colleague from seminary—had died quite suddenly a few years before the death of her son—itself an unimaginable loss, leaving Leigh to raise four children. Leigh (the mom) told the gathered community that she felt a need to address the congregation—including the grieving friends of her son—because if she were in their shoes she would be wondering things like “how is she doing? What is she thinking? What will she do? How can they go on?”

Leigh testified, honestly, that she had no idea how to answer those questions. That she had learned several things through this journey of grief including how important it was to speak her own grief: “because I have been able to say how bad the bad is, I can also say how good the good is.” Part of that goodness for Leigh was the community that surrounded her—the daily acts of kindness and generosity directed toward her and her remaining 3 children that she could not ignore. “I would literally have to bury my head in a hole to not be blinded by the light of God's love that so many of you have allowed to shine through yourselves. I cannot reject it; I cannot turn away from it. Indeed I can and will be distracted from it, pulled back into the painful places of the other parts of my reality, but I am convinced that choosing life will always be my ultimate decision because I have had the gift of seeing what that choice looks like in the very best and in the very worst situations.”

I feel similar about this past year. We have scarcely been able to catch our breath between the deaths of several of our members including the death of Michael Britt. So many of us are carrying other heavy burdens as well — cancer diagnoses, mental illness flare ups in ourselves or those we love, and a kind of depressive haze that seems to have descended on the world as we all try to drag ourselves into old routines with no small amount of ambivalence. For that reason, I think we've done well to be gentle with ourselves and recognize that the church need not be a place that piles on

exhaustive tasks and assignments. Rather, recognizing that God has come close to us, the church becomes the place where we hone our senses to experience this divine presence for all its worth.

The upshot of this conviction is that we focused a great deal of energy on getting our consistency back on Sundays—worship in person each week through some ongoing covid flare ups, followed by the launch of our new Sunday schedule of worship, lunch and education for people of all ages. Eventually, we'll have the drive and the energy for small groups and other types of gatherings but we did well to preserve that energy by simply being there for each other each and every Sunday through the trials and tribulations of the year.

This focus on worship proved to provide us with the foundation that we all needed when Michael became sick and later died. We gathered to lift him in prayer but also each other. We practiced our grief with each other not just for Michael but for Ken, Lee, Ellen, Sandra, Don and Madara as well. And in the months that followed we have all clung to the Word to sustain us through the hard, painful work of grief, trusting that God desires healing for all of us.

The choir not only sung through their own grief, but led us all in doing the same. Tom Hall, John Walker, Rob Tracy and Deborah Richardson all stepped forward, unsolicited, to provide extraordinary leadership in the midst of our shock and grief. Many volunteers—in the choir and beyond—provided countless hours organizing the music library, arranging the music office, and finding permanent homes for much of Michael's organ music. Michael's absence continues to be felt including in this Annual Report which would normally feature the musical highlights that he compiled. As we journey through our grief together we've found new ways to celebrate his time among us including the establishment of the Michael T. Britt Memorial Fund which will sponsor and feature the work of new compositions.

The adult education program has provided some incredible teaching and teachers to pull us together, give us new ways of thinking about our world and our faith, and provoke us to action. In the spring,

Letter to the Congregation *Continued from Page 1*

Gretchen and Andrew guided us to reconsider our preparation for death a topic that we couldn't have imagined would be so important at the time. The diversity committee brought the Rev. Bill Gaventa to walk us through new approaches to welcoming people with disabilities, Matt Taylor taught us twice—once on the book of Philemon in conjunction with the Anti-Racism Steering Committee, and a second time on the rise of Christian nationalism. We were privileged to get the preview for what became his multi-series presentation on the podcast Straight White American Jesus. Finally Jack Hodges agitated and entertained us with a walk through the distinct voices of the Gospels in the spring and the different approaches to the Advent and Christmas stories in the fall. While all of this was happening our small co-hort of children were making crafts, singing songs, caring for our church and learning about God's story of love and grace with Rachel, Michele, and other volunteers.

As we move through the New Year together, we wish to name and celebrate first and foremost our strong foundations as a faith community. Emerging from the pandemic, our numbers have been smaller but solid; our educational life has been the same; leaders in the Diaconate, the Session, and the Trustees have given hours and energy toward making sure that those carrying heavy burden have what they need, the life, programs, and staff of the church are supported and nurtured through challenging times, and the facilities receive the attention that is warranted by a 150 year-old facility. We met our financial giving goals for 2022, have already exceeded our pledging goal for 2023, and have made solid progress on fulfilling our pledges for the capital debt reduction campaign. We cannot say "thank you" to each other enough.

This foundation is critical as we continue to confront and work through some of our challenges together including our lower attendance, the collective weariness that many members of our congregation seem to be navigating in our family and work lives, and the ongoing challenges to balance the financial needs of the stewardship of our buildings, our organizational life, and the calling to be about God's justice for the city and the world.

Our newfound stability offers us the opportunity to ask some basic questions together about what is needed now in the life of our community. Questions such as: What drains your energy at this point in your daily living? What gives you energy? Where would you like for our community to fit on that continuum and where does it actually fit? What changes could we make together to narrow the gap between our aspirations and our reality? How could you be part of that change?

How we answer those questions together will better help all of us continue to reshape how we live and carry out our calling together, reshaping our community in all the ways that we deem necessary to meet that calling. We are grateful for the opportunity to serve you together and look forward to the days and weeks to come.

Brown Memorial Ministry Staff,
Andrew Connors, Senior Pastor
Michele Ward, Associate Pastor
Rachel Cunningham, Christian Educator



CHURCH LIFE HIGHLIGHTS



EASTER SUNRISE

JANUARY: Members and friends joined Brown Memorial as we held our first Annual Meeting in the church building since 2020.

LENT: We saw the return of in-person gatherings around meals including the Shrove Tuesday Pancake Supper, Palm Sunday Branches and Brunch, and Maundy Thursday Soup Supper and Contemplative Worship Service.

APRIL: Our All-Church Retreat was at Skycroft Conference Center—a new model weekend retreat. Rockrose Charity Garden renamed Rockrose Food Justice Project and joined the Baltimore Farmers Alliance, a network of urban farms throughout the city.



ALL-CHURCH RETREAT

SPRING HIGHLIGHTS



MINISTRY OF WELCOME AFGHAN RESETTLEMENT

MAY: The Ministry of Welcome (BMMW) team hosted an EiD dinner with the Afghan Refugee families living in Reservoir Hill. Throughout the year the BMMW team assisted these families in settling into Baltimore with furniture and clothing donations, shopping trips, ESL classes, and summer camps for the children.

JUNE: Brown Memorial hosted overnight community engagement groups on behalf of The Center Baltimore, a ministry of the Presbytery of Baltimore. The churches were from Annapolis, Maryland; West Raleigh, North Carolina; and Shepherdstown, West Virginia. Paperback + Pastor returned. We led Soaring Eagles Learning Camp and EMES Choir Camp with support from Brown Memorial volunteers and Center volunteers from Providence Presbyterian Church (SELC); Grace Episcopal Church (CHOIR) and Burke Presbyterian Church (CHOIR).



SOARING EAGLES LEARNING CAMP



SUMMER HIGHLIGHTS



VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL

JULY: Vacation Bible School returned after a long hiatus in a new all-day format that proved highly successful. The four day experience was meaningful and engaging for both the children and adults who volunteered. Youth Trips included Massanetta Middle School Conference in July, Montreat Youth Conference in August, and the Presbyterian Peace Fellowship Matthew 25 Fall Youth Retreat in November.

AUGUST: The Pejuhutazizi Learning Camp, which provides a chance for children from the Baltimore Presbytery and the Upper Sioux Community in Granite Falls, MN to get to know each other and keep their minds active during the summer months, returned after two-years of interruption.



THE PEJUHUTAZIZI LEARNING CAMP



AUTUMN HIGHLIGHTS



THE TUTORING PROGRAM

SEPTEMBER: The Tutoring Program began its 59th year continuing strong partnerships with Mount Royal Elementary, Dorothy I. Height Elementary, and the Baltimore Montessori Public Charter School. In 2022 we had 62 dedicated tutors working with 72 students. This is approximately 20 more than last year, so we feel like we are well on our way to returning to our pre-pandemic numbers. Our students are making some nice progress with their reading skills while also, focusing on our theme of the year, "Being the Best You!" Through weekly journal writing answering the "Question of the Week", they are not only improving their writing, but also learning to be more thoughtful about being respectful, kind, and caring.

OCTOBER: The Brown Memorial Green Team finished the Courtyard Garden, celebrating with a planting day in the fall that included youth and children of all ages!



COURTYARD GARDEN

WINTER HIGHLIGHTS

NOVEMBER: Delegation from Brown Memorial visits our sister congregation in Camjuaní, Cuba for the first time since 2019.

DECEMBER: Advent Theme “Generation to Generation” complemented the educational hour focused on the different birth stories of Jesus in the Gospels. A brass and organ concert featuring members of the BSO and Marvin Mills was held in memory of Michael Britt. Brown Memorial hired an Interim Choir Director / Organist, Paul Byssainthe, Jr., who will begin in March of 2023; until then JoyAnne Amani Richardson will direct the choir and Minister of Music Emeritus, John Walker, will play the organ.



WINTER PAGEANT



DELEGATION VISIT CAMJUANÍ, CUBA

LAST MILE CAMPAIGN

In 2021, Brown Memorial launched a two-year “Last Mile Campaign” to complete the funding for important renovations to support our community life in our facilities. In total, 79 households pledged a total of \$603,314 to the campaign, nearly exactly meeting the campaign goal of \$600,000!

To date, 80 households have donated a total of \$546,976. Funds are being used to pay down the U.S. Bank Line of Credit, which currently is down to only \$46,715. This is a tremendous reduction of our once-large debt! Outstanding pledges due to be paid by December 31, 2023. Any funds that we receive in excess of the debt owed will be applied to other investments in our facility.

The renovations included significant updates to our Fellowship Hall to make it accessible to congregants and visitors of all ages and all abilities. Some of those updates were planned and long overdue—such as the new elevator (the building’s first!) and a wheelchair-accessible entrance. Other updates were decided during the renovation process, including the creation of gender-neutral bathrooms. We renovated the kitchen, added new appliances (including a washer / dryer) and equipment to better serve our gatherings; reconfigured and upgraded meeting and classroom spaces; and added safety railings in the balcony and at the chancel steps. Significantly, too, we repaired the water-damaged South Tower, which was gravely compromised and in need of immediate repair. Thank you to the many households who have invested in these long-lasting improvements in our shared life together!

OPERATING BUDGET

Approved by Session

	2023 Budget	2022 Actual	2022 Budget
REVENUE			
General Fund Pledged & Plate Income	680,000	635,435	630,000
Employee Retention Credit (CARES Act)		78,487	
Rent, Use, & Miscellaneous	15,321	13,244	15,022
Endowment Income & Draws*	484,315	322,027	438,603
Total Revenue	\$1,179,636	\$1,049,193	\$1,083,625
EXPENSES			
Personnel	679,147	659,777	699,229
Salaries, Housing Allowances, & Bonuses	494,780	482,768	503,160
Medical, D&D, & Retirement Benefits	136,797	135,081	145,009
Payroll Taxes & Workers Comp	34,300	31,458	38,660
Professional & Recruitment	13,270	10,470	12,400
Education	28,670	23,207	23,500
Children & Family	2,940	1,243	2,800
Junior & Senior High Youth	14,975	12,220	13,000
Christian Education	7,940	9,546	5,800
Adult Education	2,815	198	1,900
Congregation	31,830	29,869	24,260
Worship	6,200	4,945	6,200
Membership	3,500	3,601	2,600
Music Program	11,760	10,735	7,760
Diversity	500	500	500
Transportation	9,870	10,088	7,200
Mission	90,672	88,629	91,406
Brown Memorial Tutoring Program	38,632	38,632	38,632
General Mission	23,140	22,274	22,274
Global Mission	7,500	4,823	7,500
Urban Mission	21,400	22,900	23,000
Operations	349,317	247,711	245,230
Session	0	306	0
Communications	20,000	10,977	10,000
Office	38,500	36,706	35,508
Building/Facilities		295,324	
(Less Draws from Bldg Reserve Fund)		(95,602)	
Net Building/Facilities Expenses	290,817	199,722	199,722
Total Expenses	\$1,179,636	\$1,049,193	\$1,083,625
Balance	0	0	0

*Draws of \$31,459 in excess of 2022 balanced budget carried forward to 2023 Revenue

MEMBER ANNIVERSARIES 2022

50 YEARS AND MORE

- John Burton
- Lynda Burton
- Juliette Hanks
- Hilda Imhoff
- Margaret (Peggy) Obrecht
- J. Courtland Robinson
- Sally S. Robinson

40 YEARS

- Samuel J. Kelly, III
- Bonnie J. Schneider
- Elden E. Schneider, Jr.

35 YEARS

- Rose Glorioso
- Shirley Parry

30 YEARS

- Nancy D. Bradford
- Rachel Smith

25 YEARS

- W. Courtland Robinson
- Donna Senft
- Thomas Waldron

15 YEARS

- Jonathan Trevor Barnes
- Michel F. Cavallon
- Barbara S. Christen
- Barbara Gardner Cook
- Darin Ashley Crew
- Rebecca Howell Crew
- Deborah Lee Milcarek
- Kathryn R. Wagner

10 YEARS

- Brent Keith Bellinger
- Evelyn J. Cogswell
- Frederick W. Cogswell
- J. L. Dever Cunningham
- Susan Galusha-Bobango

- William Daniel Hale
- Edward Joseph Obrecht
- Sarah Ramiriz Cross
- Mary Jane Sokol
- David Timothy Urban
- Laura Sokol Urban

5 YEARS

- Judson Arnold
- Anne Fallon Arnold
- Deondra Asike
- Michael Asike
- Julien Colvin
- Joanne Copes
- David Lascu
- Addison Palmer
- Amy Bonitz Palmer
- Daryl Plevy
- Erin Powell



ROCKROSE FOOD JUSTICE GARDEN

CLERK'S REPORT

BAPTISMS

- May 1, Rebekah Grace Souen, daughter of Brittany and Caleb Souen.
- June 5, Mila Lynn Rae, daughter of Amanda and Kyle Rae.
- August 21, Anna Ruth Shaw, daughter of Katie and Jody Shaw.
- October 23, Tadhg Everett O'Malley, son of Caitlin Schneider and Edward O'Malley.
- November 20, Ace Chinedu Aaron, Sir Chidozie Aaron, and Naomi Ijeoma Maria Aaron, children of Alex and Irene Aaron.

DEATH OF MEMBERS

- January 10, Clare Hutson (Allison Witschey's grandfather).
- March 8, Danny Ramon Basso (Kim Scaglione's uncle).
- April 21 Kenrad E. Nelson (Karen Nelson's husband and friend of the church).
- April 22, Peter B. Flowers (Patti Flowers-Coulson's father).
- May 17, Patricia Cavanaugh (Lizzie Bellinger's step-mother).
- May 18, James Philip Hanks (Juliette Hanks' brother).
- June 6, Elizabeth Lee Williams (member).
- June 24, Ellen Carter Cooper (member).
- July 4, Peter John Bascom (Vi Thorpe's step-brother).
- July 5, Doris Merkert (Evelyn Cogswell's sister).
- July 9, Sandra Fink (member).
- September 14, Michael Thomas Britt (member).
- October 4, Betty Ann Brandli (Joe Brandli's step-mother).
- November 16, John Brandli (Joe Brandli's father).
- November 20, Donald P. McPherson, III (member).
- December 6, Jim Richardson (Elizabeth Reicelt's uncle).
- December 24, Madora J. Henson (member).

NEW MEMBERS

On September 11, Anna Hess, Ileana Imhoff, Lisa Johnson, Deborah Richardson and Elizabeth Tatum joined Brown Memorial.

MARRIAGES

Jenny Mauric and Gus Ipsen (non-members, officiated in Brooklyn, NY by Rev. Michele Ward)
Jenny Mauric is the daughter of member Jayne Mauric.

CLASS OF 2023

Beth Gregory (2nd term)
Christine Calderon (2nd term)
Barbara Christen

CLASS OF 2024

David Urban
Charles Reichelt

CLASS OF 2025

Jayne Mauric
Bruce Curtis (2nd term)
Joe Brandli
Carole Tayman



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*Alive in the City
and the World*

Clergy and Staff 2022

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
Henry Owens: Custodian
Martha Socolar: Tutoring Program Director
Tracy Cerrato: Tutoring Development Director
Karlin Scudder: Tutoring 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.



SUMMER CAMPS

