

# THE HERALD



**BROWN MEMORIAL**  
WOODBROOK PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

A Congregation of the



Dear Members and Friends,

Everyone loves a good story, don't they? We read stories and tell them. When we get together with treasured friends or eat a meal with family members, it's not unusual for people to begin to remember and talk about shared experiences that happened in the past. The shared memories in the stories of shared experiences not only help us celebrate the past, but bind us together in the present as they also help us move into the future.

As we at Brown Memorial Woodbrook begin to move fairly rapidly toward some major changes, I want to encourage us to remember and tell each other stories of our shared experiences. When have we as a church laughed together? When have we as a community accomplished things that we really didn't dream we could accomplish? When have we found unity of purpose? Who are the people in the church who have helped each of us grow in faith and how did they help us do that? Who in the church has been a role model for each of us? When were the serious times and when were the silly times in our life together?

I hope we will remember and share our stories of Brown Memorial Woodbrook's life in the coming months. There will be some structured opportunities for storytelling along the way, but I hope also that when we gather informally in the lobby before or after worship, or we are gathering for a Team meeting, that some of our conversation will turn to storytelling about our church. Let us share stories with one another of our connection with this congregation and our experiences in it. It's important that we do this, especially as we move toward opening a very new chapter in our life as a people of faith.

In Christ's service,

Randy

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**JULY 2017**

**Why this particular merger?**

Simply put, and perhaps most significantly, because both Govans and Brown Woodbrook were ready for it. It was the right time for both churches. In addition, both churches understood that in this particular merger each side brought significant complementary gifts to the new church that might result in a strong and vibrant merged church. Furthermore, this particular merger would not be an acquisition of our church by another, but rather a joining of two congregations on equal footing to create a new worshipping community out of the gifts and history of each of the two individual congregations. As merger conversations occurred, it also became clear that our two congregations had been involved in some of the same missional causes over time and that our "hearts" were in much the same place.

**Where will the merged church be located?**

The merged congregation will be located at the Govans site on York Road. That congregation is firmly rooted in its community, and that location offers a multitude of opportunities for us to engage in hands-on ministry. The Govans facility is appropriately sized for the merged congregation and is in good shape.

**What will happen to the Brown Memorial Woodbrook property?**

It will be sold. Through word-of-mouth there is significant interest from several parties in the possible purchase of the property. The Session has engaged legal counsel to guide the sales process and will engage a broker to market the property if needed.

**What happens to the proceeds from the sale of the Brown Memorial Woodbrook property?**

The money will become part of the merged church. A significant portion of the money will be put in an endowment fund and used to support mission through the Brown Memorial Woodbrook Mission Fund at Govans. Another significant portion of the money will be placed in an endowment at Govans to support the ongoing ministry of the merged church. We are hopeful that the proceeds of the sale of the North Charles Street property will enable Christ's ministry to be expanded significantly in the community and also help create a balanced budget for the merged church to help insure its ability to be a source of life and hope for many decades to come.

**What happens to the Columbarium?**

In accordance with the license agreement that each niche holder has signed, the "use of space or spaces in the Columbarium shall continue only so long as the present Brown Memorial Woodbrook Presbyterian Church edifice stands and is owned by the Church." The license agreement also indicates that in the event that the Columbarium is either demolished or the property sold, lease rights shall cease and that after having attempted to locate and notify any next of kin, the church "shall have the right to remove cremated remains in such manner as it shall deem proper." While the legal language may seem a little harsh, please be assured that the Session understands the deep emotional impact on next of kin about the relocation of cremains and holds all of those families in our prayers.

At this time, we expect to construct a columbarium at Govans and move the ashes in our columbarium to that location. More than likely the construction of a new columbarium at Govans would happen sometime in the winter of 2018. If anyone desires that the ashes be transferred to the cremation garden already in use at Govans, that is possible too. Alternately, next of kin may also make their own arrangements for the transfer of cremains elsewhere if they do not wish the cremains of their loved one(s) moved to Govans. We anticipate communicating directly with next of kin in the coming weeks.

**What will happen to our Holtkamp organ?**

It is likely that the church will seek to “re-home” our wonderful organ if it appears that the property will be sold to an entity that does not intend to use the building for worship. The Holtkamp Company has offered to assist us in locating a purchaser for our instrument. Although we are told that there is market is saturated with organs for sale, the quality of our organ is such that we are optimistic we can find a purchaser who will love and treasure it as we have done.

**What will happen to our furnishings?**

We anticipate working with people from Govans to determine which of our furnishings are needed in the Govans facility, including which pianos and other musical instruments. We will be taking our handbells with us, along with the Prayer Garden statue, the new *Glory to God* hymnals, and other items.

**What sort of staff will the merged church have?**

Sessions of both churches have approved a staffing plan for the merged church which they believe will provide the necessary support for vibrant mission and ministry while being affordable. The difficult reality is that the merged church cannot afford and does not need all of the persons currently employed by both congregations. We have already had conversations with each staff member so that those who will not have a position in the merged congregation can begin to seek other employment. In addition, employees who lose their jobs as a result of the merger are being offered a significant severance.

The current plan is to have pastors of both Govans and Brown Woodbrook remain and serve the merged congregation as co-pastors. As with all other aspects of the merger, this will require Presbytery approval. In churches where there are co-pastors, the co-pastors alternate moderating Session meetings. Each of the co-pastors will share in the ministry and leadership of the congregation but each will also have specific responsibilities. Job descriptions for both pastoral positions are being developed based on the skills, gifts and interests of each pastor and the needs of the merged church.

**Who will serve on the session of the merged church?**

Upon merger, the sessions of both our churches will become one session. This will result in an initial session of 20 people, but one in which interests and voices from both original congregations will be part of the initial leadership of the new congregation. Over time that number will be reduced to a reasonable size for the new church.

**Will there be a Board of Deacons?**

No, the merged church will not have a Board of Deacons. We have the option of commissioning people to deacon tasks, and there will be a Session committee coordinating the deacon functions.

**What is the timing of the merger?**

Sessions of both churches have now reviewed a draft of the Plan of Union and have authorized the distribution of the draft to the congregation. The draft Plan of Union has also been provided to various Presbytery counsels and committees. Between now and mid-August the Plan may undergo some modifications depending upon feedback received either from our congregations or from Presbytery. It is anticipated that a final Plan of Union will go to the Session of both churches in September and that both churches will have a congregational meeting on October 1, 2017 to act on the proposed Plan of Union. Once both congregations have approved the Plan of Union, the Presbytery of Baltimore will be asked to approve it as well. We have asked for time on Baltimore Presbytery's docket in September to share with the Presbytery the move toward merger and expect to ask for Presbytery's approval of the merger at the November Gathering.

The merged congregation will begin to worship together on December 3, which is the first Sunday in Advent

**What happens to my church membership when we merge?**

Anyone who is currently on the active membership roll of both congregations at the time of the merger will automatically become a member of the new, merged church. Any pledge commitments to either church before merger made will follow that person into the merged church.

**What will worship be like at the merged church?**

There will be two worship services on Sunday mornings. The earlier service will be a bit more informal than the later service. This "alternative service" has a small band to provide musical accompaniment and is intentionally designed to be especially accessible and engaging for children and families with children. The later service will be traditional in format, and probably feel very similar to what we have been used to at Brown Memorial Woodbrook, with organ and piano being the primary instruments used for accompaniment. It is anticipated that preaching duties will be split evenly between the co-pastors.

**Does the sanctuary at Govans have an organ?**

Yes.

**What happens to the Weekday School and to the tenants in our building?**

The Brown Memorial Weekday School leadership and the Session are working toward transferring the Weekday School to St. Thomas Church in Owings Mills at the end of the 2017/2018 school year. The Session has engaged an attorney to represent the church and Weekday School in the transfer. The preschool at Govans will continue there. All of our tenants have been notified that their leases will not be extended beyond June 30, 2018.

**What happens to our building from December 2017 through June 2018?**

Although the merged church will not operate out of the North Charles Street property, due to the number of tenants in the building and the presence of the Weekday School, we anticipate that Tony Mason will spend a significant portion of his work week on site until the Weekday School's year is over. Due to the desire and the need to focus on celebrating our past, grieving our losses, and building some anticipation and excitement about our new future, we anticipate that much of the work of cleaning out our building will not commence until after the merger occurs.

**What will the name of the merged church?**

The name of the merged church will be Govans Presbyterian Church. Although Govans was certainly willing to consider a name change, due to the strong missional connection between Govans and the community surrounding the church, and the strong identification in the community with Govans as a place of hope, it is important missionally to keep the name Govans Presbyterian Church. There will be a mission endowment established at Govans funded by some of the proceeds of the sale of our property which will be one way the name "Brown Memorial Woodbrook" lives on.

**How large will the merged congregation be?**

We currently have 97 members. Govans has approximately 175.

**What's Baltimore Presbytery's role?**

Baltimore Presbytery has been walking with the Path Forward Task Group through its discernment process, with Bill Nickels (Associate General Presbyter) being an active participant. We have also notified our Presbytery's General Presbyter, as well as the Stated Clerk, the Committee on Ministry, the Property and Loan Committee, the Trustees and the Commission on Thriving Congregations. Ultimately, Presbytery will need to approve a Plan of Union for the merger to occur.

**What's my role as we move toward merger?**

Pray for the leaders of both churches and for both congregations. Ask questions when you have them. Be open to a new future and if you have significant doubts about the merged church, give it a try and see.

## **CHRISTIAN EDUCATION HIGHLIGHTS**

By Karen Bartell, Christian Educator

**GATHERING SUNDAY    SEPTEMBER 10, 2017**

immediately following worship

New Menu                  New Program

We will celebrate and share stories through  
**Steeple Storytelling**

Lunch and a variety of displays and activities will be available. Please come and help us celebrate our life and experiences at Brown Memorial Woodbrook Presbyterian Church.

### **CELEBRATING BROWN WOODBROOK THROUGH PHOTOS**

We are collecting pictures of past Brown Memorial Woodbrook events that can be displayed and enjoyed during the next few months. If you have a picture you would like to share, please do so by placing a copy of that picture in the basket on the table in the Lobby. Please do not give us originals as we are unable to guarantee return to the donor. If you have an electronic picture, you can submit that by email to [pictures@bmwpc.org](mailto:pictures@bmwpc.org).

## **AUGUST MEETING SCHEDULE**

MISSION MEETING-Sunday, August 6 at 11:30 AM in the Library

STATED SESSION MEETING-Sunday, August 20 at Noon in the Library

CALLED SESSION MEETING-Thursday, August 31 at 6:30 PM in the Library

## **SAVE THE DATE!**

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 22—HOMECOMING

## **MISSION COMMITTEE**

FOOD ITEMS FOR ACTC: August is the month Assistance Center of Towson Churches relies on Brown Memorial Woodbrook donating items. Items can be placed in the lobby under the Mission Bulletin Board. Accepted food items are:

Boxes of cereal, rice (bag or box), dry pasta, macaroni and cheese.

Cans of tomatoes, pork and beans, green beans, peas/mixed vegetables, corn, potatoes (can or box), fruit, meats, pasta meals, tuna, and, and pop-top canned goods for homeless Care Bags.

Jars of spaghetti sauce, peanut butter, jelly, and soup.

We are encouraged to consider especially donations of the following canned products:

Peas/Mixed Vegetables, Canned Potatoes, Tomatoes (whole, crushed, diced).

## **SUMMER SING**

Sing Handel's *Messiah* with the Maryland State Boychoir on Sunday, August 13. All are invited. Registration is at 5 PM, Rehearsal at 5:30, and the concert at 7:30. 3400 Norman Avenue, 21213. More information at [www.msbsummerseries.org](http://www.msbsummerseries.org).

## **BOOKENDS**

### READING LIST

2017-2018

The book club is comprised of men and women from the church and community who enjoy discussing a variety of books. The club meets the second Friday of the month at 10 AM in the church Library.

Listed on the next page are the books selected for the 2017-2018 year. All are welcome!

DATE	BOOK TITLE	AUTHOR	LEADER
October 13	<i>Upstairs At The White House</i>	J.B. West	Ajax Eastman
November 10	<i>A Gentleman in Moscow</i>	Amor Towles	Ellen Barnhart
December 8	<i>The Soul of an Octopus</i>	Sy Montgomery	Bonny Lewis
January 12	<i>The Last Bus To Wisdom</i>	Ivan Doig	John Dillion
February 9	<i>Commonwealth</i>	Ann Patchett	Bobbie Cook
March 9	<i>The Wright Brothers</i>		Edie Cleaves
April 13 TBD			
May 11 TBD			

## THANK YOU NOTE FROM JESSICA MORREL

To the congregants of my church,  
 Thank you so much for my graduation gift! I absolutely love it and I can't wait to use it next year. Thank you for always being my second family and being a support system for me from such a young age. I can't wait to come back and visit. Love you all so much!

Xoxo,  
 Jessica

**BROWN MEMORIAL WOODBROOK  
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH**

6200 North Charles Street at Woodbrook Lane  
Baltimore, MD 21212

# Herald

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*A Congregation of the*



## BROWN MEMORIAL WOODBROOK PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

CORE VALUES

We commit to living out God's love through:

- Compassion
- Learning
- Inclusion
- Faith

STAFF

- The Rev. Dr. Randy Clayton, Pastor
- Karen Bartell, Intergenerational Ministry Coordinator
- Anthony Mason, Sexton
- Lee Kelly, Office Manager
- Cindy Zhao, Financial Secretary

Website: [www.bmwpc.org](http://www.bmwpc.org)  
Phone: 410-377-7232  
Fax: 410-377-9115  
E-mail: [lkelly@bmwpc.org](mailto:lkelly@bmwpc.org)