



Bradley
Hills

PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

EMBRACING JOURNEYS. ENGAGING FAITH.

Annual Report 2023

Annual Meeting
February 11, 2024

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David Gray - Senior Pastor



Dear Friends,

Thank you for another wonderful year together in ministry. I give thanks to God for each of you. For your faithfulness, your care of our community, your willingness to engage your faith and your desire to see good being done in the world. What the Apostle Paul told the church at Corinth applies to our church – we all have gifts. Being a member of a church means we have an opportunity to use them towards God's glory. On December 17, I saw so many gifts at use for God's glory. Choir and Chancel Players leading us in worship. Flower and Chancel Guilds and A/V and usher teams making it possible. Caring members setting up for our caroling

fellowship brunch. Mission leaders leading several alternative gifts projects. With our Deacons and Visiting Team supporting people in need who were unable to attend. So many folks bringing food. And this happens on some levels throughout each Sunday. Bradley Hills is an incredible church with wonderful, caring and compassionate members. It is a joy to walk the journeys of life and faith with you.

This year our Strategic Visioning Task Force, under Shizuko Sei's leadership, shared their findings and ideas with Session. As we seek to Connect, Celebrate, Nurture, Serve and Steward, we look to come back together after Covid, expand our impact on our world, and prepare to sustain BHPC long into the future. We continued a time of transition here with retirements and welcomed several new team members. All with the Holy Spirit guiding us.



Our education and music ministries continue to thrive. I am proud of how much missional support our congregation does in the world in so many ways. BHPC partners with Bethesda Jewish Congregation and Maqaam e Ibrahim Islamic Center in our building, cares for around 170 children in our nursery school, and provides space and a supportive environment to pastoral counselors, local concerts and board meetings, our phenomenal Friends Club, and programs for young adults with developmental differences. Hosting many community programs requires more staff time and puts more wear on our facility than if we didn't share our building with many others. While some of the building users bring in helpful income, our church facility provides significant missional support to these and other mission partners.

It was wonderful to see such strong in-person worship attendance return for Christmas Eve this year. Seeing the kids dressed as sheep and shepherds struggling to find room on the chancel because there were so many was a good challenge to have.

We set new records for dollars brought in this past year and for pledged dollars for 2024. BHPC begins the new year with momentum, optimism and with Hallelujah in our hearts.

Sitting with many of you in counseling sessions, small group devotions, regular conversations at the doors after worship and sharing the weekly graces you lifted up, helps me recall how blessed I am to be in ministry with you. You will find many examples of activities of the church in these pages to follow that may remind you of your own memories.

I am excited for our future together, and appreciative of your support for our shared journey.

In the New Testament, James reminds us that we are to do the good we ought to do. Being around you all in ministry in the community of BHPC, reminds me that in the body of Christ, we are inspired to do what we ought to do because we are to act, in word or deed, all to the glory of God. Encouraged and helped by the Holy Spirit.

I firmly believe that in the world we live in, especially in the year we as a country are entering, with all the issues we face, that a church like Bradley Hills is more important than ever. We need places like BHPC which help us discover and do the good that is ours to do. Thank you for being on this journey with me and my family. I'm excited for what God will do in our midst at BHPC in this year, and in the years to come.

Wishing you and yours all the best for 2024!

In Christ's love,



Denise Diaab - Associate Pastor



In January 2023, I had the opportunity to visit my family in California. While I was there, I worshiped with my “home” church on Epiphany Sunday and was introduced to the tradition of picking a “star” word. The pastor challenged us to keep the first word we picked—rather than shuffle through the basket for something to our liking. Printed in capital letters on the yellow star I picked from the basket was the word **RESILIENCE**.

I think of resilience as the ability to weather adversity—to learn and grow through life’s experiences and challenges. We are able to develop resilience in spaces that provide the resources, relationships, and meaningful experiences that help us gain the skills and self-assurance to face what comes our way.

Resources: On a weekly basis, worship at BHPC provides sanctuary not just for our bodies, but also our souls through music, prayer, and the Word read and preached. In our discussions of prayer during the Lenten Small Groups we examined how we are co-creators with God and that through our prayers “God works with the world as it is to bring it toward what it can be” (Marjorie Suchocki). During our Fall Small Groups, our interfaith conversations on Christianity, Judaism, Islam, and Buddhism were timely as we faced the outbreak of war in the Middle East. The Susan Andrew’s Lecture “Sacred Mysteries of the Labyrinth” invited us understand how the labyrinth can be a beneficial spiritual practice.

Relationships: Care and connection continue to be an important part of the pastoral care ministries at BHPC. BHPC is a large congregation that has a small church feel because of the genuine efforts of the Deacons to connect with members, support opportunities for members to connect with one another, and provide assistance to members when needed.



Members of the Visiting Team continued to provide caring support, Christian fellowship, and a nurturing relationship to those in need. We also had the first meeting of our new Grief Support Group in December. If you do not know who your Deacon is, would like information about receiving a visit from a member of the Visiting Team, or would like to join the Grief Support Group please contact me.



Experiences: Meaningful experiences with people within the BHPC community can help build resilience by fostering a sense of belonging because we feel welcomed, we are nurtured, and we are cared for as we grow spiritually and develop in our faith formation.

Meaningful experiences with others in the broader community help build resilience by allowing us to find shared purpose in service to make the world a better place. Through Mission Connection Lay Ministry, we had both financial and hands-on mission opportunities, including our partnership with Faith Presbyterian Church. Through the Racial Justice Coordinating Committee we provided financial support to restore the historic Scotland Zion AME Church and participated on the Juneteenth Interfaith Committee and volunteered at the Juneteenth Celebration. Lastly, one of the most rewarding experiences that I had was accompanying our middle school youth to Massanetta for their summer conference where they participated in mission projects, experienced energized worship, dialogued with other youth about living their faith and had fun.

It has been my blessing to serve as your Associate Pastor—to share this journey with you in times of challenge as well as times of celebration. I have come to think of resilience as another word for faith—or perhaps it’s that our faith allows us to be resilient. By God’s grace, and through faith we remained resilient in 2023. As we look toward 2024 together, “let us not grow weary in doing what is right, for we will reap at harvest time, if we do not give up.”

In Christ’s love and hope,

Denise

Matthew Robertson - Director of Music



Dear Friends,

Happy New Year! I write this note on leave, and with my wife and new daughter, Caroline. This time with family has been a deep joy, yet I look forward to returning to service at Bradley Hills. During this time, I'm especially grateful to Brenda Weiser for filling in during my absence, as well as the entire Bradley Hills family for their support of our Music Ministry during this time.

I hold our singing choirs dear to my heart, and it is such a joy to have them all meeting regularly. I'm grateful to all of the members of our Chancel Choir for their beautiful work inspiring our congregation nearly every week. And to our Bell Choir for

adding joy through bells a handful of times a year. I'm glad that our Lantern Chorale for children and youth in grades 6-12, and Alleluia Singers, led by Marie Marquis, for children grades K-6 meets weekly. And I was delighted to welcome a new choir this year: while a new Cherub Choir, directed by Rosanna Howard, only met twice before I left for parental leave, I am excited for what this choir may have in store in the future.

My first thanks go out to our Chancel Choir's president, JudyAnn Webster, for her wonderful leadership of our choir over this past year. I am deeply appreciative of our section leaders – Marie Marquis, Kaytlin Withers (fall 2023), Caroline Nielsen (winter/spring 2023), Kyle Tomlin, and Steven Slupe – for their tremendous leadership of our choir and congregation. I'm doubly grateful for Marie Marquis, who has joyfully led our Alleluia Singers, our choir for our youngest singers. Alleluia Singers meet every week after worship. I've joined for a number of those rehearsals and the joy on these kids' faces is a delight to see! This year, I am

also delighted to welcome J. Solomon Collins as the one-year Donald Sinclair Sutherland Choral Scholar at Bradley Hills. Solomon is a senior at UMD College Park, and I look forward to showcasing more of his talents in the spring. I look forward to continuing to rebuild a vibrant musical community at Bradley Hills.

The Sutherland Endowment and Bradley Hills Presents have been busy during this past year. The Sutherland Endowment commissioned a residency from Black American composer, pianist, and conductor Brandon Waddles in Summer 2023 and established the aforementioned Choral Scholarship for Solomon Collins. Bradley Hills Presents continued concerts throughout this past year, welcoming the Yale Whiffenpoofs, the American Spiritual Ensemble, Veronique Gobet, and more!

I'm grateful to Worship & Arts, Friends of Music, Eva Caldera, Margaret Rick, and countless others for their leadership. It is these people who have committed to the idea of what the Music Ministry at Bradley Hills can be, and it is these people who are responsible for a vibrant and full year.

With warmest wishes,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Matthew Robertson".



Annual Report of the Session



Welcome Back Brunch 2023

In July of 2023, Session received and accepted the final report of the Strategic Visioning Task Force (SVTF). The task force's report identified five areas to which the church should give its attention: 1) **Connecting**, strengthening connectional relationships within the congregation and surrounding communities; 2) **Celebrating**, celebrating in gratitude for God's grace and love and glorify God through joyful worship on Sundays where all are welcome; 3) **Nurturing**, providing more Christian education programs and spiritual growth opportunities with a focus on joy and engagement; 4) **Serving**, giving glory to God through Christian ministry and interfaith programs; and 5) **Stewarding**,

caring for God's creation. Session asked each of the lay ministries to review the SVTF report and to consider how each of them might taking action to implement the report's recommendations. We continue to work with the lay ministries to find ways in which the BHPC community can take the actions necessary to move in the directions the SVTF has pointed us.

Session recently reviewed proposed revisions to the bylaws of the Bradley Hills Nursery School. Session reviewed a draft of the proposed bylaws and made recommendations on issues that needed to be addressed before the finalization of the new bylaws.



Recognizing New Members in March 2023



Parents & 2nd Graders at Worship Workshop

BHPC continued to see changes in the church staff in 2023. In the late winter of 2023, we said goodbye to our long-time church treasurer Amy de Court and welcomed new treasurer Jan Spencer, who quickly took over the reins of that position. Session approved a position description for an interim music director who would fill in for Matthew when he was away on new-parent leave. Session then approved the hiring of Brenda Weiser for the interim position; and Brenda has done a wonderful job of leading our music program since November and will continue in the position until Matthew returns in February. Finally, in January of 2024, our newly-ordained Director of Christian Education (DCE) Matt Nabinger advised us that he had accepted a call to be the Pastor of Oaklands Presbyterian Church in Laurel, Md. Matt's seven-year ministry at BHPC was celebrated in worship on January 21, 2024. He is beloved by all of the members of the congregation, especially by the youth, and we wish him the very best in his new ministry. Session

approved a position description for an interim DCE and then approved the hiring of BHPC member Rosanna Howard to fill the position. Rosanna will occupy the position while the church conducts a search for a permanent DCE.



Church School plants flowers outside of Education Door

Under the leadership of Pastor Diaab, in 2023 members of Session joined with the deacons to serve home communion to BHPC congregants who are unable to be at worship. All of the elders who have participated in home communion find the experience to be very meaningful. Other actions taken by Session in 2023 included adopting a sexual misconduct policy, as required by National Capital Presbytery, and providing that we have uniformed security personnel at our worship services. After the attack on Israel by Hamas on October 7, Session sent a letter to our partners at Bethesda Jewish Congregation giving our condolences for the loss of Israeli lives and the taking of hostages and expressing our hope for future peace in the region.



Middle School Trip

Our congregation continues to grow; at the end of 2022 we had 625 active members, and that number rose to 649 at the end of 2023.

Nominating Committee



Carol McLeod, Jeanne Tustian, and Joan & Julie Jameson

The Nominating Committee is a committee of the congregation that helps recruit and lift up elders, deacons and lay ministry leaders.

Winter 2023

- At the January 22, 2023 Congregational Meeting, Yoshi Sei and Caroline Simpson were elected unanimously to 3-year terms as deacons.

Spring 2023

- The committee worked to find chairs for and discuss succession planning with lay ministries including Adult Ed, Finance, Personnel, and Mission. Congregation members were encouraged to join lay ministries and teams through church bulletins and email newsletter communications. The committee also discussed membership with lay ministry chairs and generated lists of potential lay ministry members for chairs to contact.

- At the June 11, 2023 Congregational Meeting, the 2023-2024 Nominating Committee was elected for a one-year term. Its members are Stacey Milne (Chair and Session designee), Gail Brown, Bie Fox, Lee Anne Graeb, Cheryl Naulty, James Scroggs, and Carol Whitley.

Fall 2023

- The Nominating Committee met to develop a slate of nominees for elder and deacon openings in 2024. The committee solicited and considered suggestions from members through pulpit announcements, weekly bulletins / emails, and conversations. In November the committee published its slate, which reflected the diversity within the congregation. At the December 3, 2023 congregational meeting, the following nominees were elected unanimously:



Deacon Prepared Receptions



World Communion Set-Up by Bie Fox & Brigitte Burgett

- **Elders:** (for 3-year terms) John Buchman, Kathleen Elliott, Christina Liu and Curt West
- **Youth Elder** (for one-year term): Ben Scribner
- **Deacons:** (for 3-year terms) Julie Hunter, Dee Llewellyn, Andrew Sanderson, and Richard Webster
- **Youth Deacon** (for one-year term): Andrew Gray
- Updated the Deacon & Elder Handbooks for 2023-2024



Easter Coffee Hour 2023



All Church BBQ 2023



Welcome Back Brunch 2023

Personnel Lay Ministry



Amy de Court

The Personnel Lay Ministry (PLM) supports all aspects of personnel management at BHPC, including organizing job descriptions of all positions, organizing search committees when positions become vacant, celebrating and recognizing the church’s staff, and gathering information for annual performance reviews.

2023 was a year of celebrations and transitions for some of our staff, and PLM organized recognitions and supported those transitions. PLM planned and led the church’s celebration, in March 2023, of Amy DeCourt’s lengthy and devoted service following her retirement as BHPC’s financial manager. We also welcomed Jan Spencer early in 2023 as our new Director of Financial Ministries.

In October, we celebrated Matt Nabinger’s ordination as a Minister of Word and Sacrament. PLM’s chair extends thanks to the leaders of Children’s Lay Ministry, the Youth Lay Ministry, and many others for their partnership and support in planning the reception which followed Matt’s ordination service.



Ordination of DCE Matt Nabinger

PLM also worked with David Gray and Matthew Robertson to plan for the arrival in November of Matthew’s first child. These efforts included, as part of leave planning, identifying and engaging a temporary Director of Music Ministries. Brenda Weiser joined us in that position in December 2023.



Temp. Dir. of Music
Brenda Weiser

In response to the Strategic Visioning Task Force report, PLM also began conversations with Denise Diaab and David Gray to discuss administrative tasks as a component of their overall duties as Pastor and Associate Pastor.

PLM’s work in 2023 also included several recurring activities: (1) proposing terms of call for BHPC’s Pastor and Associate Pastor for approval at the 2023 congregation annual meeting; (2) supporting the renewal of BHPC’s Pastoral Associate relationship with Jong Mi Lee; and (3) preparing a recommended staff budget and COLA for 2024, after considering current and staffing needs and several inflation benchmarks.

PLM also led the information-gathering for annual staff performance reviews. As in 2021 and 2022, with many lay ministries continuing to meet remotely in 2023, PLM relied on email and scheduled phone conferences with staff and lay ministries in addition to in-person meetings with some lay ministries. After information-gathering, PLM consulted with David Gray as head of staff ahead of his individual meetings with members of the staff for annual reviews.

PLM also thanked Judy Webster for her service on PLM as she concluded her service in June 2023. PLM welcomed Rob Rennhack as a new member of our lay ministry in Fall of 2023.



Staff Holiday Party with BJC, BHPC
Nursery School, Friends Club, &
BHPC



Thank you to our Sunday
security officers



Facilities Manager
Farid Beltran



Staff selfie at the All
Church BBQ

Financial Lay Ministry

The Financial Lay Ministry oversees the development and management of our annual budgets, manages the church's investments, coordinates the church's special offerings and other fundraising appeals, and supports the efforts of the Stewardship Lay Ministry.

2023 was a strong year financially for Bradley Hills, thanks to the contributions of our members and staff. Our church leadership and staff found ways to sustain and enhance programs and missions while closely managing financial resources. Thank you to our many members who demonstrated faithful giving throughout 2023.



*Terry Brady ushering at the
10:30 a.m. Worship*

SOURCES of INCOME for OPERATIONS

Individual gifts:

- Pledged income in 2023, our primary income source, totaled \$1,103,924, which was 1.5% above budget.
- Unpledged income totaled \$131,202 this past year, well over the \$95,000 that was budgeted.

Building Users:

- Bradley Hills Nursery School made building use contributions totaling \$166,282.
- Bethesda Jewish Congregation continued making its building use contribution totaling \$92,498.
- Total building use income reached \$274,882 as outside building users continued to return post-pandemic.

Investment/Other Income:

- While our endowment proceeds were relatively flat to 2022 levels, we restructured and consolidated some of our local banking relationships, significantly improving interest rates. Investment/other income was \$32,312 ahead of budget.

Total Revenues:

- Total revenues in 2023 were \$1,575,402, which was \$88,387 over the amount budgeted.

USES of FUNDS for OPERATIONS

Staff Compensation & Benefits:

- Staff compensation and expenses totaled \$1,006,677 which was right at budget.

Programs, Missions, and All Other Expenditures:

- Use of funds for programs, missions, and non-program expenses were \$418,739, the largest portions of which were Property Management of \$192,799 and Mission Coordination of \$96,279.

Special Obligations:

- Special obligations include the annual apportionment payment of \$31,907 to National Capital Presbytery (\$30,350 for 2024).
- The Operating budget contributed \$50,000 toward funding capital reserves which was nearly double that of the prior year, but less than the \$125,000 that should be set aside annually.



*Dir. of Finance
Jan Spencer*

The second volume of the Financial Annual Report provides a detailed accounting of the church's revenues and expenditures in 2023 and the 2024 budgets for Operations and the Capital Reserve Fund. If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to contact Ed Hummers, Dave Burgett or Jan Spencer.

STAFF TRANSITION

The church has been graced by having Jan Spencer as the replacement for Amy deCourt who retired in March. Jan has experience in church finances and her past experience has brought new insight to our practices and reporting. Know that we are in good hands with Jan's delightful personality and knowledge.

Stewardship Lay Ministry



*Cathie Lutter & Todd
McCreight with their
granddaughter*

Again this year the BHPC congregation responded generously to the pledge campaign. Stewardship pledges for 2024 set another new record: 195 pledges totaling \$1,113,085, including 21 commitments from first-time pledgers and more “new” dollars than we’ve had in many years. The average amount pledged was 3.4% higher than the year before. Thanks to everyone who pledged!

The SLM’s purpose is to “... *focus on year-round stewardship communication and education while highlighting the spiritual nature of giving to the church.*”

1) In April, our Legacy Planning subgroup (LPM) led messages in worship that encouraged members to include a planned gift to BHPC when they make their estate plans. A brochure available in the Narthex explains how you can arrange for planned gifts to BHPC through wills, trusts, insurance, or retirement plans. Sincere thanks to Chancel Players Bill Perry, Jean Dudek and Tracy Rankin for the entertaining Presby Jeopardy Tournament of Champions they presented on April 23 to support our initiative.

2) We honor the members of the Lantern Legacy Circle, each of whom has included a planned gift to the church in their estate planning: Susan Bowis, Christina Casson (deceased), Penny Clark, Joel Fickett, Bill and Bethany Frick, Cindy and Ira Geer, Madge Henning, Ed and Marcia Hummers. Wafa Khallouf (deceased), Cathie Lutter and Todd McCreight, Judy Rankin, Bob Reutershan, Mike and Jalena Specht, Carol Starr, Alvin Stenzel, Myla Williams, and two people who asked to remain anonymous.

3) For SLM’s fall stewardship campaign, we published a colorful and informative brochure (available in the Narthex) and we coordinated stewardship testimonials in October worship services. Special thanks to BHPC members who delivered those important messages: Frank Randall, Rosannah Howard, and Penny Clark. We wrote personalized thank-you notes to everyone who pledged contributions for 2024.



*Cheryl & Andrew Martel
looking at the 2023
Stewardship brochure*

4) We contributed 11 articles to the BHX and 52 inserts for Worship Service Bulletins, keeping a year-round emphasis on gratitude and informing members how their giving supports church ministries.

Special thanks to Elizabeth Bullock, who created the lively design and colors for this year’s stewardship brochure.

Your Stewardship Lay Ministry: Nancy Cylke, Frank Randall, Alvin Stenzel, and Penny Clark – Chair. Staff Liaison Jan Spencer, Session Liaison Joel Fickett.

Legacy Planning Lay Ministry: Penny Clark, Walter Hill, and Alvin Stenzel and Bob Reutershan – Co-Chairs. Staff Liaison Jan Spencer.

Outreach & New Members Lay Ministry

Chair: Scott Williams

LM Members: Bie Fox, Brent Coffey, Fam SaeChao Chock

Session Liaison: Andrew Martel

Staff Partners: David Gray and Elizabeth Bullock

This ministry supports church growth by (a) reaching out to the community and encouraging people to visit, (b) supporting the congregation in identifying and welcoming visitors, and (c) connecting new and potential members to ministry opportunities, (d) and cross ministry collaboration for effective membership outreach and engagement.

Despite the continued impact of the pandemic, we had 24 adult new members join BHPC in 2023 and we finished 2023 with 649 adult active members, 28 active non-members and 288 inactive members.

Welcoming Visitors, New Members, and Building Connections: As we’ve welcomed our church family back into the building (as well as continued to engage with new and current members online) we were ready to meet people where they are

Successful outreach depends on **all of us!** You can help support this mission by inviting friends and family to worship services and events, sharing Facebook posts, and information about Bradley Hills, and being sure to greet those you do not know on Sunday! If you would like to get involved, please let Scott Williams know. Thank you to everyone for making Bradley Hills a welcoming church community.

A collage of 20 photographs of people, mostly families and individuals, arranged in a grid-like fashion. The photos show various groups of people, including couples, families with children, and individuals, in different settings like outdoors, indoors, and in front of buildings. The photos are arranged in a grid-like fashion, with some larger and some smaller, creating a visual representation of the community. The individuals are diverse in age and appearance, and the settings range from indoor spaces to outdoor landscapes. The overall tone is positive and community-oriented.

Adult Education Lay Ministry

Throughout 2023 Adult Education Lay Ministry programs on Sunday morning served as a keystone of community faith development and outreach. As pandemic challenges eased, live attendance increased as we moved back into the lounge. Technology allowed us to simultaneously provide Zoom presentations for members across the country. These programs provided opportunities for members to



Adult Education on Zoom

- *Explore Our Faith* – in depth studies of Biblical passages provided by pastors, adult education leaders and scholars including Reverend Shively Smith and Dr. Denise Dombkowski Hopkins. Dr. Bruce Douglass led a three-week study on the impact of Reformed faith on nationalism, revolution and democracy.
- *Live Our Faith* – recognized leaders, many of whom are Bradley Hills members, shared their experiences locally and globally to address poverty, economic and racial injustice, environmental stewardship, as well as the challenges and opportunities presented by social media and artificial intelligence.
- *Support Our Faith* – presentations by the BHPC Strategic Visioning Task Force (STVTF), the Racial Justice Coordinating Committee (RJCC), Jimmie Hawkins from the Presbyterian Office of Social Witness and BHPC mission projects revealed multiple opportunities for discipleship.

Adult Education has sought to coordinate and partner with ministries, groups, and activities that enliven the church community. We planned closely with pastor Denise Diaab to provide sessions that led into and brought together issues and ideas for small group discussion. Denise provided an introductory session on Prayer and, at the conclusion of sessions on the book, *The Elephant is Running*, author Bruce Epperly discussed the importance of this multi-faith study. When the RJCC planned a field trip to visit the Josiah Henson Museum, adult education arranged a session with Jamie Ferguson Kuhns, author of Josiah Henson's biography, to provide context for the trip.

Adult Education facilitated a session for members to learn about the rationale for the Strategic Visioning Task Force Report as the Session began to work on its implementation. We have agreed to collaborate in planning future Susan Andrews lectures and look forward to the Robert P. Jones address on February 18 on his book *The Hidden Roots of White Supremacy* with the help of the Racial Justice Coordinating Committee. The lay ministry has also agreed to contribute financially to the Reformed Institute of the Greater Washington Area in recognition of the stellar annual programs presented by Bruce Douglass. Future program development will include enhancing faith development across generations.

Deacon's Report

There are varieties of gifts, but it is the same Spirit who gives them. There are different ways of serving God, but it is the same Lord who is served. God works through each person in a unique way, but it is God's purpose that is accomplished. To each is given a gift of the Spirit to be used for the common good. Together we are the body of Christ, and individually members of it.

(1 Corinthians 12:4-7, 27)



Deacon Summer Gathering

Our mission is to “...be a bridge between the Holy and the people; to listen, identify and respond to those in need, to model God's compassion and hospitality; to partner with the staff and fellow Deacons in caring for one another, serving with imagination and gladness.” And we served in spirit and alignment with 1 Corinthians and BHPC's Strategic Vision Task Force goals.

Connect

Deacons organized our annual fellowship events - Easter Sunday Coffee Fellowship, Welcome Back Brunch, and Veterans' Coffee Hour - in honor of our congregation and veterans. And we hosted receptions after attending Blue Christmas services with our congregation.

We connected in various ways, especially with those experiencing sickness, loss, sadness, or other challenges and limitations. Communion was served monthly in homes and to sextons, teachers, and caregivers, and grace was delivered weekly through flowers. Parishioners were driven to and from worship and medical appointments, and meals were delivered to those needing comfort. We hosted memorial receptions and served as ushers and pallbearers compassionately for many of our beloved church families.



Deacon visit with Hazel Ghurani

Deacons organized, collaborated, or participated on many inclusive ministries and projects. For instance, we collaborated with Flower Guild and invited our congregation to share in the joys of delivering flowers. Our Youth Deacon organized his youth peers to welcome new church members with leis, bestowed upon them at the Welcome Back Brunch. Childrens Ministry helped us decorate the Easter Sunday Coffee Fellowship. And Deacons individually served with Inter-Congregational Partnership Committee (ICPC), Youth, Childrens, Personnel, Outreach, Worship & Arts, and Session ministries on the Interfaith Brunch, Nabinger Ordination Reception, Youth Mission trip, Communion, Father's Day Sunday Coffee Fellowship, Safety & Security, and Hymnals-to-Virtual-Worshippers.

And we connected with our congregation through visits, calls, cards, letters, emails, Deacons' Corners, and as Deacon of the Week greeters.

Celebrate

Deacons livestreamed Blue Christmas services to broaden accessibility and connect our members in a meaningful way. We also livestreamed an inurnment service.

Nurture

Deacons invested funds to establish a dedicated Grief Ministry program at Bradley Hills, and some are in training to become facilitators.

Steward

We used environmentally friendly dishware, glassware and silverware for our events and invested in new, reusable supplies to enhance our receptions.



Deacons preparing for the Welcome Back Brunch

In closing, we thank Pastor Denise Diaab for her spiritual guidance and wisdom. We thank Pastor David Gray, Farid Beltran, Jan Spencer, Elizabeth Bullock, Juan Mendez Jr., Leo Bruno, Doug Anderson, and Corky Hickey for their support. And we thank the Class of 2023 for leading us through our post-pandemic re-opening and onto new, more imaginative ways of serving you.

Cliff Ty & Catherine Payne
Moderators

Linda McReynolds
Secretary

Class of 2023: Carol Frenkel | Mark Kindig | Cliff Ty | Tamae Wong | James Eliason (Youth Deacon)

Class of 2024: Andrew Bremer | Bie Fox | Linda McReynolds | Becky Sczudlo

Class of 2025: Andrew Graeub | Catherine Payne | Yoshi Sei | Caroline Simpson

Worship & Arts Lay Ministry

The Worship & Arts Lay Ministry supports the ministry staff in offering meaningful ways to enhance our worship experience. Over the course of the past year, we have embraced familiar and diverse traditions that bring us together in the sanctuary. Overall worship attendance continued a healthy rebound, as staff sought to build out our worship programs this year with hopes of excellence, participation, meaning and joy. We were able to have a variety of congregational voices present in liturgy, music, scripture and prayers more than we have had since covid began. We continued to build our on-line community globally, while seeing increased in person attendance. In May 2023 we welcomed a “Tricaster” upgrade to the livestream portion of our A V system, shifting from vimeo to youtube and creating a more reliable livestream option.



Youth led Worship on Youth Sunday 2023

Meaningful messages and purposeful prayers engaged the congregation. When the weather was nice we held 8:30 worship outside at the cross. As the year neared its close, over 900 people took part in our three Christmas Eve worship services, a significant increase over 2022 and a hopeful sign of renewal in our worship community. We enjoyed having a full house of children during our Christmas pageant, and look forward to the new year.

A special project in 2023 enhanced outreach to online worshipers by offering to send hymnals to people who attend Sunday services remotely. Through collaboration among the Deacons, the Outreach Lay Ministry, and Matthew Robertson – with special thanks to Cliff Ty, Scott Williams, Corky Hickey and Joel Fickett, the church was able to provide 15 hymnals to members of our church family and also obtained a supply to offer in the future.

Music Ministry



*Chancel Choir Processional on
Easter Morning*

Matthew Robertson brought musical excellence and fresh ideas to the 2023 music program, upholding the church's commitment to high quality music while showcasing varied musical traditions, including choral works by diverse contemporary composers. During Matthew's parental leave at the end of 2023, we were pleased to welcome Brenda Weiser to the position of Temporary Director of Music Ministry. On multiple occasions, Annabelle Hunter offered her considerable musical gifts as organist and pianist; Bill Perry performed original songs to enhance our worship.

We are grateful for the dedication of the volunteers who participated in our many music programs this year and encourage all who are interested in contributing musically to the church to consider sharing their gifts in this way. The Chancel Choir continued to grow back slowly, with our talented section leaders serving as essential anchors for music on Sundays. In fall 2023, we welcomed Solomon Collins, an early-career bass baritone currently completing his degree in vocal performance at the University of Maryland, to the Chancel Choir as the Sutherland Choral Scholar for the 2023-24 program year. (The Choral Scholar program is made possible through the Donald S. Sutherland Endowment, which extends the church's mission of music in the community above and beyond regular programs.)

The children's choirs, Lantern Chorale and Alleluia Singers, also brought their special gifts to worship services, as did the Bradley Ringers, our bell choir. Rosanna Howard began a cherub choir for our youngest singers this past fall. The Intergenerational Choir extended the variety of opportunities to sing in church. Participation involved a single rehearsal on Sunday morning and gave new and different people a chance to come together to make music for worship during the summer months.

Many special musical occasions took place at BHPC in 2023. Highlights included an inspiring week with renowned choral director, Brandon Waddles, leading the choir and congregation in music during a summer residency. (This was also thanks to the generosity of the Donald S. Sutherland Endowment.) During Holy Week, Matthew led our chancel choir and a chamber orchestra in a special Good Friday offering of Gabriel Fauré's Requiem, and for All Saints Sunday, Matthew led the choir in special music. Both Easter and Christmas Eve featured the joyful sounds of an excellent brass quintet.

Friends of Music

Friends of Music, a subcommittee of Worship and Arts, offered five “Bradley Hills Presents” concerts to the broader community, including well known groups like The Yale Whiffenpoofs. The mission of Friends of Music is to bring joy through the unique language of music. BHPC Friends of Music/Bradley Hills Presents launched a new 2023-24 season in October with two concerts (pianist Véronique Gobet and The American Spiritual Ensemble). Two more concerts are planned for spring 2024, including an appearance by the popular Yale Whiffenpoofs (who also sang in the series in 2023). This concert series continues to provide important outreach and ministry to the broader local community through compelling musical offerings that convey the church’s celebration of musical excellence.

Chancel Players

The Chancel Players, Bradley Hills' drama troupe, was founded over 20 years ago by Andy Wolvin, Professor Emeritus, Communication, University of Maryland. Since then the Players and the congregation have been inspired by Andy's creative, kind and thoughtful guidance and theater expertise, from the very first production of a scene from Thornton Wilder's "Our Town," to the many scripture readings, storytellings, monologues and skits that have supported Bradley Hills' worship services. This past year Andy decided to step down as Director of the Chancel Players, with Bill Perry assuming that role going forward. The Players are extremely grateful to have been led by Andy's passion and commitment to excellence, and will strive to carry on that tradition in the years to come. All who are interested in reading, speaking or performing scripture, stories and theater pieces are welcome to join us!



Reenactment of the Last Supper

Ushers and Communion Teams

Ushering and greeting at Bradley Hills is a service to the congregation involving security, safety, emergency procedures, medical emergencies, welcoming, and hospitality. Many of the Bradley Hills members who are health care professionals make themselves available for medical emergencies that may occur on Sunday mornings. Members and visitors alike are first received by the ushers and greeters. That first impression on a Sunday morning is important for parishioners and essential for new visitors. The PCUSA Book of Order recognizes this gathering of the people: "Worship begins as the people gather. One or more of the following actions are appropriate: People may greet one another..."

The Bradley Hills League of Ushers and Greeters assists with the gathering of the community for worship. Bradley Hills currently has 65 members serving as ushers and greeters on seven teams which rotate usher duty every seventh week. The teams are composed of church members who represent our wonderfully diverse Family of Faith with respect to gender, age, and ethnicity. We always welcome new members and encourage people to join this ministry. It is a great way to meet others in the church. Many of Bradley Hills' recent new members have joined the usher teams. The League is coordinated by two Co-Head Ushers, Susie Wellman and Corky Hickey, and a Special Services Coordinator, Carol McLeod. We offer our special appreciation to the usher team captains and assistant captains: Dave Hammers, Clarence Hickey, Susie Wellman, Lou Kallas, Andrew Milne, Louise Meyer, Joel Fickett, Sally Fowler, Bruce Hunter, and Bill Edelblut.

We are also thankful for the dedicated service of our Communion teams, who organize and prepare the very meaningful sacrament that feeds our souls. This year, Sunday communion was extended beyond the sanctuary to those in the building (including Sunday School, child care, and sextons) and to home-bound members served by the Deacons. Many thanks to the volunteers who serve in this ministry, and to Pastor David and Pastor Denise for renewing this vital aspect of worship.

The Flower Guild

The Worship & Arts Lay Ministry and the Flower Guild would like to thank members of the congregation who contributed flowers to specific worship services to honor or memorialize a loved one. The flowers not only provided warmth and beauty to our worship space; the deacons continued our ministry by delivering the Sunday arrangements to church members who were sick or experienced a hardship or loss. The Flower Guild also organizes and prepares the flowers for holiday worship services, including flower sales at Easter and Christmas.



Flower Guild's Spring Tea Gathering

The Flower Guild is a quiet ministry that typically doesn't get much recognition. The Worship and Arts Lay Ministry would like to recognize and thank these 2023 Flower Guild members: Judy Arndt, Brigitte Burgett, Bie Fox (co-chair), Cindy Geer, Pam Hammers, Sarah Klontz, Betty Lee, Christina Liu, Dee Llewellyn, Catherine Payne, Lisa Scribner, Susan Vanderver (co-chair), Tamae Wong, and Jackie Ling Zhang,.

The Chancel Guild, Sound and Videography Ministry Team

Mary Hickey and the Chancel Guild have ensured that our sanctuary is beautifully presented and maintained. The Chancel Guild prepares the Sanctuary and Covenant Hall for worship each Sunday. The dedicated team is Christina Liu, Catherine Payne, Karin Harrison, Lisa Hicks, Jana Coffey, Patty Howie, Janet

Miller, Emily Coffey, Dee Llewellyn, Melissa Kallas, Susie Wellman, Diane Whitaker and Mary Hickey. We extend a special thanks to our sound and video ministry team (Bruce Liffiton, Jim Kettler, Min Lee, Bruce Hunter, Andrew Loughran, and Yoshi Sei) for all of their support and assistance this year, particularly with the livestream services.

Worship & Arts members in 2023 included Corky Hickey, Mary Hickey, Bruce Hunter, Melissa Kallas, Naomi Kettler, Bill Perry, Margaret Rick, and Susan Vanderver, as well as David Gray and Matthew Robertson. Thank you!

Eva Caldera, Chair, Worship & Arts

Youth Lay Ministry



High School Youth at Summer Mission Trip in North Carolina

Our Youth Ministry caters to youth in grades 6-12 and their families. Our youth meet on Sundays to make social connections and experience service opportunities together. Youth also had the opportunity to participate in Youth Connect, a program which met on Thursday evenings to explore scripture and spiritual practice.

Other activities the youth enjoyed during the year include: game nights, service projects, and the annual Christmas parties. In addition, the youth participated in fundraising events. These fundraisers allow our youth to participate in faith affirming summer trips. As you may know, many of our fundraisers are community gathering events. This past year we had our Pancake Breakfast in April and our Chili Cook-Off in December after the annual Christmas tree lighting.

In June, 11 high school youth traveled to North Carolina with Asheville Youth Mission to participate in a week-long mission trip. Later in the summer, 9 high school youth and 3 adults traveled to the Montreat Conference Center near Black Mountain, NC to meet Presbyterian youth from across the country for a week of spiritual formation, worship, and recreation. At the same time, 7 middle school youth and 2 adults attended the Massanetta Middle School Conference located in the Shenandoah Valley. This programming is targeted towards the middle school age group and we find this to be a wonderful prelude to Montreat.



DCE Matt Nabinger and Will Kauffunger



Youth & Parents participating in the Angel Gift Tree Wrapping Party

In November, our ministry team led the Thanksgiving Basket drive. Thanks to the generous participation of Bradley Hills and BJC, we donated 50 Thanksgiving baskets, 25 to A Wider Circle and 25 to NCCF.

As we look ahead in 2024, our youth hope to make improvements to the youth lounge on the third floor of our church building. We hope to make changes to foster a more relaxed atmosphere and encourage our youth to spend more time "hanging out" with each other.

Many thanks to all who continue to support our children and youth on their faith journey! They could not do it without your continued support.

Children's Ministry



Children's Ministry Ice Cream Social

Children's Ministry oversees our offerings to the youngest in our church, from infants to Grade 5 and their families, under the dedicated leadership of DCE Matt Nabinger. This year we were very happy to be back in full swing with many children participating in worship and our children and family programs.

We encouraged stewardship in Lent with the “fish” boxes for One Great Hour of Sharing. At Easter, we held a Family Easter Celebration complete with an Easter Egg hunt outside with around 100 participants! Following Easter, we sponsored an Earth Day activity where we planted vinca in the planter near Door 15 (which bloomed until the end of November), and teacher recognition in May of our 25 dedicated teachers.

Our Family Connections lunches began again focusing on parents input to the strategic vision, reconnecting and getting to know one another, and a panel on parenting in the 21st century.

In August, we had an enjoyable ice cream social which provided an opportunity for families of all ages to get together. We also partnered with Geneva Presbyterian to hold Vacation Bible School again this summer with many participants and youth helpers!

This fall, our two Godly Play classes for children ages 3 -Kindergarten and 1st and 2nd grade) and Club 3-4-5 for children in 3-5th grades have encouraged our children to explore a variety of Bible stories and think about their relationship with God. In October, over 80 people, many from the nursery school as well as BHPC, attended our “Trunk or Treat” event where children could trick or treat from cars decorated in the parking lot, then watched a movie together. Our new “Cherub Choir” is growing in numbers and participated in worship in December. In December, we hosted an Advent Workshop along with Tree lighting event in conjunction with the Chili Cookoff. Many new families and nursery school families attended. We were delighted to have around 50 children participating in the in-person Christmas pageant this year as lambs, lions (!), donkeys (very popular), angels, and shepherds.



Quinn Scribner on the piano

Including children in worship and offering educational and social opportunities for children and families have always been central to our mission. We welcome parents' input on other ways to offer support and look forward to 2024!



Family Connections Lunch & Fun!

Summer Mission Trip 2023



Family Connections Parent Outing



VBS Storytelling



Trunk or Treat 2023

Worship Workshop 2023



Property Management Lay Ministry



Kim Brinkman weeding the front gardens

PMLM’s mission is to provide resources and oversee projects to maintain and improve the church facilities and grounds, negotiate agreements with building users, and support the staff that maintain the church facilities and grounds for all building users. We prioritize and align our efforts to the congregation’s mission, responsible building stewardship, financial prudence, safety and earth care. PMLM oversaw a number of improvements and repairs to the building and grounds during 2023.

We augmented the rooftop solar system installed last year (which was projected to meet nearly 90% of our electrical needs) by subscribing to a community solar project. This has enabled us to meet our remaining electrical needs through solar power, at a price 10% lower than Pepco’s charges per kilowatt hour.

We renovated the landscaping at the entrances to the Sanctuary, main office and choir room, replacing plantings that had outlived their healthy life cycles and implementing a design featuring native plants intended to reduce maintenance needs over time. A dedicated group of volunteers worked throughout the year to ensure the success of the new plantings as well as maintain and improve other areas of the grounds. We had a very successful Fall Call with many members pitching in one Sunday afternoon to spread nearly 100 bags of mulch to protect our new and mature plantings from the encroaching cold weather. On the advice of a licensed arborist, we removed 10 aging trees that posed a significant risk to property users. Working with Montgomery County, however, we obtained 34 new trees to make up for that loss, which the County supplied and planted at agreed locations on our property, free of charge. We expect to receive 16 more in the coming year.



Doug Anderson & Bie Fox at the Fall Call Clean Up

Exterior improvements to our building included installing a new sump pump and drains for the window wells outside classrooms 103, 105 and 107; recaulking all our windows; painting the building fascia and old bell tower; replacing two old tile drains, one of which had collapsed; and repairing the roof over Covenant Hall. Interior improvements included rewiring the lights in Memorial Hall; repairing damaged pews in the Sanctuary; building out a storage closet for the Deacons; replacing the kitchen dishwasher; and painting one of the stairwells.



New Landscaping in the Spring of 2023

We continue to evaluate the safety of our congregation and building users as we explore ways to make our facilities more secure. Our Security Subcommittee worked to improve and communicate our security protocols through documentation and training sessions for deacons, ushers and building users. We installed improved access controls at our exterior doors, funded by a grant the Nursery School received from the State of Maryland. We also worked with the Nursery School to apply for another safety grant from the state and received \$37,000 to use for additional security improvements.

As always, PMLM sought to be resourceful and spent time working with building users, local government and utilities to obtain funds that can help improve the quality and efficiency of our grounds.

Once again, our deepest gratitude goes to our building staff, Farid Beltran and the sextons for all they do day-to-day to ensure our facility and grounds provide a safe, functional and hospitable environment for our BHPC congregation, our interfaith connection to the BJC and Muslim congregations, the Nursery School and the other various groups of our community who make their home in our church.



First blooms from our new garden plants

Mission Coordination Lay Ministry



*Season of Giving Advocates:
Judy Ozone, Bob Reutershan,
Bonnie Holcomb, & Elizabeth
St. John*

Bradley Hills has a long legacy of mission engagement. The Mission Coordination Lay Ministry spent 2023 in transition, seeking a chair and a workable model for coordinating the wide range hands-on volunteer service opportunities, peace and social justice initiatives, and overseeing the church's generous financial support for local, national, and global mission partners. Members with a heart for mission are sought to step up to lead.

Mission has several sources of funding to support a range of activities:

1) Mission allocation is nearly 6-7% of BHPC budget revenues. In 2023 that amount was \$96,279.00. MCLM chose to increase the amounts for each local mission partner by 8.7% to meet the COLA and allow for increased costs for supplies due to inflation. 2) Endowment funds were used to boost support for Faith Presbyterian Church (\$13, and New Story Leadership. For distribution of additional endowment monies available, MCLM planned a Mission Forum on January 28, 2024, designed to offer members the opportunity to propose and vote to allocate these funds for new or existing projects. 3) Special designated

and in-kind gifts went to Angel Gift Tree recipients at Dennis Avenue Health Center and The Women's Collective, to support the annual Coat Drive and for Olive Oil ministry at the holidays (84 bottles of Palestinian olive oil for \$2747.60). 4) Alternative Giving expanded to connect with the global #GivingTuesday program and brought in \$20,995 for 16 projects.

Hands-on Projects returned to full scale operation in 2023:

- Bradley Hills sent 40 volunteers to participate in Faith Presbyterian Church's "Feeding Families" program, assembling and distributing 50 bags of free groceries 6 x per year, additionally purchased and assembled 50 bags of school supplies, and supported an annual teacher appreciation lunch with gift cards.



Feeding Families



New Story Leadership

- The "Smart Sacks" project draws an intergenerational group of 50 volunteers, aged from 2-92, who collected food from Manna, packed, delivered and distributed 204 food sacks weekly during the school year to two elementary schools - in Aspen Hill and Potomac.
- The Coat Drive distributed 108 donated coats in October to adults, children and babies through Arcola Elementary School families in Silver Spring.
- Monthly dinners were prepared for women living at Becky's Place in Rockville.
- The Interfaith Refugee Project collected furnished and equipped homes for new refugees.

MCLM also supported and coordinated efforts to support peace and social justice initiatives, and raise awareness for MCLM mission partners, including:

Supported activities of the BHPC Racial Justice Visioning Task Force.

Collaborated with the Inter-Congregational Partnership Committee (ICPC) to co-sponsor a New Story Leadership (NSL) summer internship program, and to co-host an annual event in Covenant Hall on July 9 at 3:00 PM to hear the stories and share our interfaith witness with the 9 young adult in Washington for seven-week internships.

Promoted the PCUSA's Oct 2 World Communion Sunday's Peace & Global Witness special offering; designated 25% to Presbyterian Peace Project's Guns to Gardens project.

Adult Education Lay Ministry presented speakers on range of Hands-on Mission opportunities on November 12 and Alternative Giving on November 19.



Racial Justice Coordinating Committee



Pastor Denise & Rabbi Abbot (BJC) at the Juneteenth Celebration

The Racial Justice Coordinating Committee, formed out of the 2021 Racial Justice Visioning Task Force (RJVTF), met monthly via Zoom in 2023 to review and implement actions to promote racial justice in our church, our community, our nation, and the world. This work falls under the 4 Action Pillars established by the RJVTF:

1) Action Pillar: Education of the Congregation

Planned February 5, 2023 lunch and tour of the Smithsonian's National Museum of African American History & Culture, with follow up Zoom meetings to discuss personal reflections. Attendance: 19 (23 signed up)

Planned May 7 Adult Ed lecture by Jamie Ferguson, Senior Historian with The Maryland Capital Park and Planning Commission, and author of *Sharp Flashes of Lightning Come Black Clouds: The Life of Josiah Henson*. Attendance: 13 (virtually and in-person)

Planned May 21, 2023 lunch and tour of the Josiah Henson Museum & Park. Attendance: 17

Publicized informative Zooms and other educational opportunities regarding racial justice on Realm, in weekly emails, bulletins, and BHX.

Started planning for possible 2025 Civil Rights Trip to Atlanta, Birmingham, Montgomery, and Selma. Considerations include joining trip led by Westminster Presbyterian Church (Alexandria, VA).

Coordinated with Adult Education to provide speakers on Racial Justice topics: February: Rabbi Krame and LaTisha Gasaway-Paul on the history of the Scotland Community. Educated the congregation to build awareness and support for the Juneteenth Festival.

Encouraged continued Allyship training sponsored by the Presbytery through postings on Realm.

2) Action Pillar: Diversity of Staff

Pastor David Gray continued building relationships with Union Seminary and Howard Seminary.

Continued diversity in music and liturgy during worship.

3) Action Pillar: External Partnerships

Continued to deepen BHPC's two mission partnerships with Faith Presbyterian in Anacostia and Patterson Elementary School through the Mission Coordination Lay Ministry (led by Joan Burns who organizes volunteers via a Sign Up Genius):

Volunteer support of Faith's "Feeding Families" project, a food pantry offered on the 3rd Saturday of the month. BHPC sends a team of 4-5 volunteers on alternative months (6x/year) to help pack and distribute 50 bags of groceries purchased by Faith for local residents.

Financial support of Staff appreciation luncheon at Patterson Elementary and volunteer support of Patterson's school supply kit program (August 2023).

4) Action Pillar: Advocacy

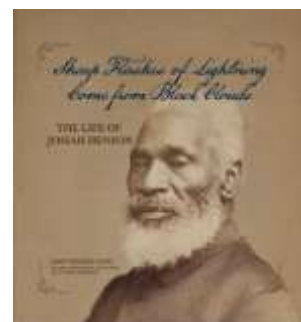
Participated in interfaith Juneteenth Celebration at Cabin John Village Mall to raise money and awareness for Scotland AME Church's building repairs and historic preservation.



Smithsonian's National Museum of African American History & Culture



Josiah Henson Museum & Park



The Life of Josiah Henson by Jamie Ferguson

Inter-Congregational Partnership Committee



Rabbi Eric Abbot (BJC), Imam Refai Arefin (ICCP), Imam-ad-Dean Ahmad (MIIC), Pastor Denise Diaab, & Pastor David Gray exploring "How Can Our Faith Help Us Deal With This Challenging, Complex Time" on Interfaith Sunday

Bradley Hills PC, Bethesda Jewish Congregation, and Maqaame Ibrahim Islamic Center, the three faith communities that worship at 6601 Bradley Boulevard work throughout the year to connect with one another through interfaith services and activities. This year, we organized:

- Our first Interfaith Brunch took place on the building grounds in April, with get-to-know-you activities, children's games, and a food truck.
- In July, we hosted young leaders, 5 Palestinians and 5 Israelis, from New Story Leadership to tell their powerful personal narratives to foster peacebuilding and bring about

lasting change.

- In October, six inter-congregational authors were featured in "Authors Among Us," the fourth in the series of this program.
- The highlight of the year is the Interfaith Service, held on November 12th, followed by the all-faith communities brunch, sponsored by ICPC. The three faith communities can use a single building because we all meet at different times, so the brunch is an opportunity to meet and greet one another by in-person and by name.

The synagogue-church-mosque partnership serves members of all three faith communities. Members are encouraged to attend services of the partner congregations so that insight and understanding into the faiths of others can be made more familiar and commonalities can be found between our faiths.

Our great sorrow in 2023 was the loss of our long-time co-chair, Marty Ganzglass from BJC, a true believer in the proven value of interfaith relationships and a passionate defender of human rights. We were blessed to work with him for as long as we were able.

Judy Ozone, chair



Rabbi Abbot (BJC), Pastor David, & Tasmeea Noor providing an Interfaith blessing before NSL presentation.



Interfaith Brunch 2023

Interfaith Refugee Family Initiative



IRFI Team

Since 2016 the Interfaith Refugee Family Initiative of Bradley Hills Presbyterian Church, Bethesda Jewish Congregation, the Idara é Jaferia, the Maqaame Ibrahim Islamic Center has welcomed new refugees.

Since January 2022, we have been helping the Afghan refugee Ahmadi family (parents, 2 daughters in their 20s in cooperation with their resettlement agency, Lutheran Social Services. The initial commitment, including rent support, was for one year. The family continues to live in the apartment in Silver Spring that we (BHPC being the leasee) rented for them in 2022, paying their rent on time. The lease was transferred to the family in April of 2023. We continue to provide support with navigating benefits and finances, transportation to medical appointments for the disabled daughter, set up and accompany

her to some appointments, paid for an assessment to help her get an appropriate job and training and eventually social security benefits. She continues to receive tutoring and mentoring by our volunteers. Two retired lawyers (both BJC members) spent numerous hours preparing the family for their asylum application and interviews. Asylum was recently granted to the family and they can apply for a green card within 12 months. Both parents have full time jobs and transitioned from night to day shift; one daughter works part-time with increasing responsibilities, and serves as the family's manager.

We also started to support Mehria Reshta, a young Afghan woman who came to the US without her family, helping her with her apartment set up, benefits, medical appointments, transportation, job search and application to college. The Yousufi family, whom we started serving in 2017 reaches out as needed. The wife, got her citizenship, started a job, and passed the written test for her learner's permit. The husband got promoted to maintenance work within the MCPS.

We continue to collect household items for apartment set ups. Several in our group volunteer with HomesNotBorders, setting up apartments for recently arrived refugees.

There are currently 13 volunteers, 4 from BHPC, who served as needed.

Financial: We started the year with \$14,678 and currently have a balance of \$9663.

We mourn the passing of Marty Ganzglass who has been a steadfast and joyful member of our group all these years.

Brigitte Burgett and Evelyn Ganzglass

Co-chairs Interfaith Refugee Family Initiative

Friends Club

Friends Club has been meeting three days per week at almost full capacity throughout 2023. There continues to be a demand for our program. Currently, we have a "wait list" and as spaces become available, they are filled quickly. This year we added a new activities coordinator who has introduced new ideas and programs to Friends Club. Although we do not have the infrastructure in place (yet) it is still our intent to add a fourth day to our schedule. In the meantime, we have introduced "Drop-In" Tuesdays. This is a modified day for a smaller group of members. One of the most significant additions to our programming is the inclusion of the Arts for the Aging—a nonprofit that provides innovative arts programming—music and visual. This addition has been well received by our members, volunteers, and caregivers. The caregiver support group continues to provide a supportive environment for current and former caregivers. They continue to meet twice monthly. Friends Club experienced two significant losses in 2023. We learned that one of our co-founders, Molly Tully passed away and one of our most beloved volunteers and board member, Marty Ganzglass passed away very unexpectedly. Both will have a forever lasting impact on Friends Club. As we continue to recruit new volunteers, we were able to add three new volunteers. This is an ongoing process. We are always seeking volunteers. To learn more about Friends Club, please contact Ken Silverstein, Executive Director at 301-469-0070 or ken@friendsclubbethesda.org. Friends Club provides a social program designed to enhance the lives of men living with Dementia and other memory loss. We also provide respite for their caregivers.

Bradley Hills Presbyterian Church Nursery School



BHPCNS is a preschool program for children ages 2 through 5, located on the lower level of the BHPC building. Since the school's founding in 1957, by BHPC members, BHPCNS has grown to its current size of more than 170 students, 37 teachers, and an administrative staff of 5. With an annual budget of over \$1.3 million, the school contributes in ways large and small to the BHPC community. The school pays an annual user fee to BHPC, which is approximately 12% of the school's budget. In addition to the user fee, BHPCNS maintains the playgrounds, contributes to landscaping, and pays for other building improvements. The most recent enhancement has been the addition of new sinks and floors in the lower-level bathrooms.

BHPCNS believes children through play, learn friendship, social, and emotional skills, independence, developmentally age-appropriate

cognitive concepts, how to work cooperatively in a group setting, and to be good citizens. Daily the children are exposed to art, music, science, creative movement, literature, math, and many other experiential learning opportunities.

In addition to our classroom teachers' fun and engaging classroom schedules, we work with magical specialists who supplement our programming with Music, Art, Science, and American Sign Language for the children. Throughout the school day our hallways, classrooms, and outdoor play spaces are filled with children's voices, laughter, and excitement.

BHPCNS has a continuing partnership with Growing Minds, a therapeutic center for children and their families, to support our staff in meeting the unique needs of the children in our program. This collaboration includes classroom observations, meetings with staff and families, parent education coffees, and therapeutic supplemental programming for children as needed.

During the 2022-2023 school year, BHPCNS provided need-based scholarships totaling \$40,420 providing 7 children the opportunity to be a part of the school community.

Invitations to family-friendly activities offered by BHPC and by the BHPCNS are jointly extended to the BHPC and school community.

The success of BHPCNS is attributed to the dedication of our amazing staff, the support of our parents, our specialists, and the support of Bradley Hills Presbyterian Church. Thank you.



