

Annual Report 2024



Bradley
Hills

PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
EMBRACING JOURNEYS. ENGAGING FAITH.

Annual Meeting

February 9, 2025

Table of Contents

Staff Reports

Senior Pastor Report by David Gray.....	3
Associate Pastor Report by Denise Diaab.....	4
Director of Music Report by Matthew Robertson.....	5
Director of Children's, Youth, and Families Report by Rosanna Howard	6

Annual Report of the Session by Bob Reutershan, Clerk of Session.....	7
--	---

Committees & Lay Ministries

Personnel Lay Ministry Report by Andrew Milne, Chair.....	8
Financial Lay Ministry Report by Dave Burgett, Chair & Jan Spencer, Staff Liaison.....	8
Stewardship Lay Ministry Report by Penny Clark, Chair.....	10
70th Anniversary Committee Report.....	10
Outreach & New Member Lay Ministry Report by Scott Williams, Chair.....	11
Adult Education Lay Ministry Report by Carol Starr, Co-Chair.....	12
Deacons Report by Catherine Payne & Andrew Sanderson, Co-Moderators.....	13
Worship & Arts Lay Ministry Report by Eva Caldera, Chair.....	14
Youth Lay Ministry Report by Nancy Kauffunger, Chair.....	17
Children's Lay Ministry Report by Courtney Kennedy, Chair.....	18
Property Management Lay Ministry Report by Linda Kauskay, Chair.....	18
Mission Coordination Lay Ministry Report by Bonnie Holcomb.....	19
Racial Justice Coordinating Committee Report by Louise Meyer, Chair.....	21
Inter-Congregational Partnership Committee Report by Judy Ozone, Chair.....	22
Interfaith Refugee Family Initiative Report by Brigitte Burgett & Evelyn Ganzglass Co-Chairs....	22
Nominating Committee Report by Curt West, Chair.....	23

Partners in Ministry

Friends Club Report by Ken Silverstein, Director.....	23
BHPC Nursery School Report by Liz Sorbino, Director.....	24

David Gray, Senior Pastor

"Surely the LORD is in this place" – Genesis 28:16



Dear Friends,

I love it when we sing, "Surely the presence of the Lord is in this place.... I see glory on each face. Surely the presence of the Lord is in this place." This song tells of Jacob's realization that God is near.

I sense God's presence throughout the Bradley Hills' congregation. You are a wonderful congregation. Committed, caring, and supportive. Loving God and seeing the image of Christ in each other. I continue to learn so much from you and receive more in love than I could ever hope to give.

This year we supported each other and gave thanks for the lives of saints who taught us a lot over many years.

As you explore this annual report, you'll get a sense of the caring, supportive, nurturing, and interesting congregation I so love. And if you are not a member yet, I hope that you'll join. Come to Sunday worship. It's fun! I appreciate the special music you'll experience.

This year I got to accompany young people on a mission trip. Kids and youth journeyed to Massanetta and Montreat, held Vacation Bible School, a Christmas tree lighting event, and a well-attended Christmas pageant. Our interfaith witness continues to be a global leader. We continue to live out our strategic plan and lean into our racial justice work.

Our missional programs make a real impact. I know from experience how meaningful our Feeding Families program is. Alternative giving, Angel Gift Tree, and our refugee project are very positive. Smart Sacks feeds many families. Our coat drive provides warmth.

After a difficult election season for a divided nation, we came together with our partners for prayer and interfaith worship.

Our small groups flourished. We finished with a strong budget surplus as you supported God's work. We have seen many new members join, and we have seen a growing online community. Our overall worship attendance continued its strong growth. We continued to give thanks to God for spiritual growth.

We are excited that Rosanna Howard, Kristen Abbott, and Beth Beisel joined our team in 2024, bringing new gifts and joy to our staff.

Our chancel is starting to be full of kids again during worship after the lull of Covid and our Sunday school programs are humming. We had 22 in our youth confirmation class this year. The future is bright for BHPC.

As we look to 2025, this is our 70th anniversary. A year of celebration of our history and of voices of the present, even as we look to the future.

God works through you and your ministry here. We see glory on each face. Surely the presence of the Lord is in this place.

Thank you for the privilege of being in ministry with you. Wishing you and yours all the best for 2025. See you at church.

In Christ's love,

David



Denise Diaab, Associate Pastor

Dear Friends,

During 2024 we continued to focus on care and connection through our pastoral care ministries and small group opportunities.

Pastoral Care

Lay Visiting Team. On September 18, 2024, the BHPC Visiting Team was commissioned to provide caring support, Christian fellowship, and a compassionate presence to those in need in conjunction with pastoral care provided by BHPC's clergy staff, deacons, and elders. At its core, the BHPC Visiting Team is a ministry of presence, with the hope that in building caring relationships, those involved will feel they have someone who will listen and be there for them as their situation dictates. This is all done to demonstrate the love of Christ in the world. The members of the Lay Visiting team are Kim Brinkman, Fran Cotter-Weaver, Peggy Hartman, Elaine Henderson, Patty Howie, June Kyakobye, Jennifer Kline (Chair), Judy Ozone, Michelle Scott, and Yoshi Sei.

Grief Ministry. The Grief Ministry (Peggy Hartman) provides bereavement care, including sending the *Journeying Through Grief* books to help provide support and healing during the first year following the loss of a loved one.

Grief Support Group. In January 2024, BHPC's Grief Support Group began a five-week session facilitated by Jayneen Jones (grief counselor from Holy Cross Hospital). At the end of the five weeks, the group elected to continue meeting regularly until the end of the year with Pastor Denise. The Grief Support Group will resume meeting in 2025 and is open to anyone who would like support – wherever you are on your grief journey. For information contact Pastor Denise.

Connection

Bradley Hills offered the congregation two main opportunities to connect by participating in small group offerings. These gatherings provided the opportunity to fellowship, meet new friends, learn new contemplative practices, and engage in stimulating conversation around a selected theme/topic in a small group setting.

Participants had the choice of in-person or online (Zoom) and several meeting time options, including a new option in 2024 for young families that included communal dinner and childcare while parents enjoyed discussion time. The 2024 small group conversation leaders were Carol Frenkel, Rosanna Howard, Christina Liu, Cathie Lutter, Venus Masselam, Allyson McKinney Timm, and Tamae Wong.

- Lenten Small Groups gained new insights on the Ten Commandments as we discussed *Love Carved in Stone: A Fresh Look at the Ten Commandments* by Eugenia Anne Gamble.
- Fall Small Groups wrestled with *Jesus and the Disinherited*, Howard Thurman's timeless classic on how the teachings of Jesus help us hold on to our integrity and walk in love and forgiveness during challenging times.

In Christ's love and hope,

A handwritten signature in dark ink that reads "Denise". The script is fluid and cursive, with a large, stylized 'D' and a long, sweeping tail on the 'e'.

Matthew Robertson, Director of Music

Dear Friends,

This annual report is a bittersweet one to write, given my resignation, effective at the end of this program year. While I am happy and excited to devote myself full time to my role as artistic director of The Thirteen — which has needed more time than I have had to give for quite some time now — I am saddened to leave Bradley Hills.

I'm very grateful to 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 and Alleluia Singers for our youngest children meets weekly.

My 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, Kaylin Withers, Kyle Tomlin (spring 2024), Brynn Farlow (fall 2024) 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. I've joined for a number of those rehearsals and the joy on these kids' faces is a delight to see! For the 2023-2024 program year I was also delighted to welcome J. Solomon Collins as the one-year Donald Sinclair Sutherland Choral Scholar at Bradley Hills.

Bradley Hills Presents has been busy during this past year, with the Yale Whiffenpoofs, a spectacular concert by pianist Brian Ganz, and an entertaining holiday concert with Emmet Cahill, Irish tenor. Over my tenure, Bradley Hills Presents has seen a substantial increase in audience and is now positioned to grow yet more. I'm grateful to Worship & Arts, Friends of Music, Eva Caldera, Margaret Rick, and countless others for their leadership.

The long lead time between the notice of me leaving and my last day is designed to give Bradley Hills as much time as possible for a seamless transition, and I have expressed to David Gray my happiness to help out during and after the transition in whatever way I can. In the intervening months, I am dedicated to ensuring that the music program at Bradley Hills is in as strong a place as possible before my departure. Please partner with me in this. If you've ever thought of joining a choir, Worship & Arts, Friends of Music, or another music-focused committee, now is the time: you'll be helping the church prepare for the future and put as strong a foot forward for potential director of music candidates, while having fun!

One of the most frequent questions I get asked by friends who don't work in churches is about funerals, with the question being, "Does it ever get easier to play funerals." It doesn't; it gets harder. As my care for you and your families has increased over the last 12 years, I find that when the time comes for any sort of transition it is often very difficult. The consolation is that this pain of loss is the result of care for each other and relationships that have been built — often over a decade. I have loved being part of this community and walking the journeys of life with you. My resignation also is not a goodbye: I'm a native Washingtonian and my family has no plans to leave. I've shared with David Gray that I'm always happy to help Bradley Hills if I can. I hope that I may see some of you at future concerts I conduct.

In closing, I'd like to share the words of the Irish Blessing our choir sings from time to time:

May the road rise to meet you.
May the wind be always at your back.
May the sun shine warm upon your face;
the rains fall soft upon your fields.
And until we meet again,
may God hold you in the palm of God's hand.





Rosanna Howard, Director of Children's, Youth, and Family Ministries

Dear BHPC family,

As I write this, it has been almost a year, to the date, since I began as the interim DCE. And what a year it has been! When I transitioned from congregant and

lay ministry participant to staff member, I could not have imagined all that this position entails. I had worked in education and nonprofit institutions my whole career, and I had been an active church member in many congregations, but I had a huge learning curve when it came to beginning a career in children's and youth ministry.

Thank you all so very much for helping me through this transition, teaching me about everything from church organization, to budgets, to our own institution's nuances and practices. I could not have made it through the past year without your mentorship, teaching, and institutional knowledge. The successes and growth of our children's and youth ministries over the past year are your successes.

Nothing brings me greater joy than to watch the number of young people seated on the chancel for the children's moment increase over time each Sunday. I love watching our new families and youth get involved in the various ministries of the church.

I am absolutely thrilled with the success of our family small groups and the community that is growing up around them. And I could not be prouder of our youth deacons and elders as I watch them take on leadership roles in the ministry of our church.

Some of my happiest and proudest moments this past year came from watching 24 youth group members lead worship on Youth Sunday, listening to our high schoolers' reflections in worship after the mission trip to Richmond, witnessing the leadership of 25 members of our youth group and the community as they helped with Vacation Bible School, and reveling in the participation of the youngest members of our congregation in the Christmas Eve pageant.

We are so blessed to have such active and invested children, youth, and families. And I am so blessed to be your new director of Children's, Youth, and Family Ministries.

Thank you for having me in this role and for trusting me with the spiritual formation of your young people. I am honored and humbled.

Peace and blessings,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Rosanna".



Annual Report of the Session

During 2024, we made several staff changes. The search committee for a permanent director of children's, youth, and family ministries recommended to Session that we offer the position to BHPC member Rosanna Howard, who was serving as the interim director, and Session approved that recommendation. We all are very pleased with the enthusiasm and commitment Rosanna brings to her ministry. Session also decided that the church would be best served if we returned to the model we had for most of the past few decades of having separate office manager and communications manager positions.



In the fall, Session approved the hiring of Kristen Abbott as our office manager and Beth Beisel as the coordinator of external communications, and everyone in the BHPC community seems very pleased with how that decision has turned out. Session also increased the hours for Jan Spencer, our director of financial ministries. On a bittersweet note, Matthew Robertson, our director of music ministries, advised us in the fall that he would be leaving us in June 2025. We hate to see Matthew leave, but are glad we have a long period of time to decide what direction our music ministry should take.

BHPC will be 70 years old in 2025, and Session decided that we should celebrate that anniversary with programs throughout the year. A committee was formed to plan the celebration and Session approved the committee's recommendation that we celebrate "our past, our present, and our future." Numerous activities have been planned, including a visit to BHPC in February by our long-time former senior pastor Susan Andrews, who will be preaching on February 23; a celebration of the ministry Donald Sutherland, our director of music emeritus and his wife Phyllis Bryn-Julson, a world-renown soprano; the 50th anniversary of our Holtcamp organ; a dinner on May 3rd in memorial hall, and a Welcome Back+ Brunch on September 21.

Session invited the deacons to join us for dinner in the spring of 2024 for fellowship and so we all could get to know each other. Under the leadership of Pastor Diaab, members of Session have been joining with the deacons each month to serve home communion to BHPC members who are unable to be at worship. All of the members of Session find this ministry to be very meaningful. For some time, Session and the nominating committee have been attempting to find leadership for the mission coordination lay ministry (MCLM). The two co-leaders of MCLM are stepping down early in 2025 and, to date, we have not been successful in calling a new MCLM chair. We continue to discuss what we need to do to find leadership for this very important lay ministry.

The year 2024 was a very good one for BHPC financially. As the result of the very effective stewardship campaign in 2023, the church's operating budget in 2024 was the largest ever, and we ended the year with a budget surplus of approximately \$100,000. We are very grateful to all of the faithful members and friends of BHPC who made these results possible. Of course, one of the reasons we have done so well financially is that we have a wonderful staff. In appreciation for their leadership, their commitment to the church, and the hard work they did in 2024, the personnel and finance lay ministries recommended to Session that each member of the staff receive a one-time bonus. Session approved that recommendation, and each member of the staff received a bonus.

In mid-2024, Dr. Hananiel Setiawan, a member of BHPC, requested that Session take him under care and endorse his request to be enrolled as an inquirer as he seeks to become a PCUSA minister of word and sacrament. He is a student at Union Presbyterian Seminary. Session agreed to take Dr. Setiawan under care and intendeds to support him during his time in seminary.

Two BHPC members who have children in the nursery school, Rachael Alderton and Amanda Franklin-Munson, agreed to fill two open BHPC member slots on the Board of Trustees of the BHPC Nursery School and Session approved their service on the board. We entered 2024 with 639 active members. During the year, several of our members passed away and in December Session moved 24 active members to the inactive rolls. As a result, although we gained a number of new members in 2024, we had 630 active members at the end of 2024.

Personnel Lay Ministry

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.

In 2024, PLM supported transitions in several positions at BHPC.

Rosanna Howard joined us as our director of Children's, Youth, and Family Ministries, beginning in early 2024 in a temporary role while a staffing search was undertaken, and continuing with us now as the successful candidate in a search that ended in the summer.

We also returned to a prior staffing model in which the positions of office manager and communications coordinator are separate. PLM worked with David Gray in filling these two positions, and we have welcomed Kristen Abbot as our office manager and Beth Beisel as our coordinator of external communications.

PLM's work in 2024 also included several annually recurring activities: (1) proposing terms of call for BHPC's pastor and associate pastor for approval at the 2024 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 2025, after considering current and staffing needs and several inflation benchmarks. PLM also proposed an end-of-year bonus for BHPC personnel, which was approved by Session and paid to the BHRC staff in December 2024.

PLM also led the annual information-gathering for staff performance reviews. As many lay ministries continue to meet remotely, PLM relied primarily on email and scheduled phone conferences with staff and lay ministries. Using the information compiled by PLM from these communications, 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 Neil Imus for his service on PLM as he concluded his lay ministry service with us in December 2024. PLM also welcomed back Ann Mitchell as a member of our lay ministry in December 2024.



Staff Christmas lunch, December 10, 2024

Financial Lay Ministry

The Financial Lay Ministry develops our annual budgets, oversees expenditures, manages the church's investments, approves fundraising appeals, and supports fundraising by the Stewardship Lay Ministry.

In addition to our usual tasks, our work this year included two major new initiatives. One was the selection of Brian Salcetti of Sandbox Financial Partners as an investment advisor, the reorganization of our investment funds, and the increased investment of previously-underinvested funds in restricted and cash accounts. Our investment income is already showing increased returns.

The other initiative is to support a likely forthcoming anniversary capital campaign to, among other things, create a building endowment and make our long-term finances more sustainable for us and future generations. We conducted a careful written proposal and interview process to evaluate campaign consultancies for Session's consideration.

2024 Results

Operating Budget

Income

- Pledged contributions: \$1,160,303.
- Unpledged contributions: \$153,320.
- Building user income: \$325,687, plus \$12,212 from BJC for debt service.
- Investment and other income: \$57,684.
- Total revenue: \$1,713,548, 10% more than budgeted.



Expense

- Staff compensation and benefits (\$1,060,624) were a little higher than budgeted due partly to well-deserved year-end bonuses.
- Property management expense (\$201,705) was a little higher than budgeted.
- Other line items were generally at or below budget.
- Total operating expenditures: \$1,578,754, less than 1% over budget.

Operating Budget surplus: \$133,310, of which \$65,310 is allocated to the capital reserve and \$68,000 to a new restricted fund for capital campaign expenses.

Capital Budget

- \$60K from budgeted general operating revenues was added to the capital reserve.
- \$65.3K from the 2024 operating surplus was added to the reserve.
- Expenditures were \$86,390, 14% less than expected.

Net current year increase in capital reserve: \$35,739. Overall, revenue exceeded expenditures by \$103,740, which represents a significant improvement over the average for the past decade.

2025 Budget

- Pledges are up nearly 6%, to \$1,192,261.
- We estimate total revenue of \$1,655,183.
- Using conservative assumptions of revenue and expense, we project an operating surplus of \$6,640.
- Capital reserve expenditures are up to \$169K, largely due to \$84K to replace cracking windows, an expense not expected the when windows were installed five years ago. This exceeds current year funding by \$109K.
- Overall, operating and capital expenditures are projected to exceed receipts by about \$102K. However, this amount is less than the 2024 surplus. Moreover, we have made conservative revenue and expense assumptions and we hope that 2025 results will exceed projections, as they did in 2024.

The forthcoming anniversary capital endowment campaign is designed to help close the historic capital funding gap, without reducing church programs, by creating an additional source of annual income in perpetuity.

For more details on the 2024 financial results and 2025 operating and capital budgets, see the separate BHPC 2024 Annual Financial Report. The Financial Lay Ministry, comprising John Buchman, Jim Everett, Bethany Frick, Ed Hummers, Jalena Specht, Jon Winslow, and Dave Burgett, Chair, would like to thank Jan Spencer for her expert financial management, the lay ministries for their prudent budgeting and expenditure, and the congregation for its generous financial stewardship.

Stewardship Lay Ministry

We are enormously grateful for the BHPC congregation's generous response to this year's pledge campaign. Pledges for 2025 set another new record: 207 pledges totaling \$1,192,261 including 15 commitments from first-time pledgers. The average amount pledged was 2.3% 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.

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 (deceased), Christina Casson (deceased), Penny Clark, Amy deCourt, Joel Fickett, Bill and Bethany Frick, Cindy and Ira (deceased) Geer, David and Bridget Gray, Madge Henning, Ed and Marcia Hummers, Neil and Abby Imus, Wafa Khallouf (deceased), Cathy Lutter and Todd McCreight, Judy Rankin, Bob Reutershan, Mike and Jalena Specht, Carol Starr, Alvin Stenzel, Myla Williams, and four 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, Brigitte Burgett, and Steve Fox.

And our most sincere thanks to Chancel Players Bill Perry, Pattie Howie, James Scroggs, and Frank Randall for the thoroughly entertaining Missing Pledge radio skit they presented on October 20.

4. We wrote personalized thank-you notes to everyone who made a pledge for 2025.

5. 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 Beth Beisel and Elizabeth Bullock for their hard work and creative contributions to this year's lively and colorful 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.



70th Anniversary Committee

Founded as a congregation on Bradley Blvd. in 1955, Bradley Hills Presbyterian Church will be 70 years old in 2025. Building on our strategic vision and the theology of the number 70, we plan to make 2025 a year to remember.



God calls us to be joyful, and “Celebrate” is one of the five key values in our strategic plan. We have received many blessings and endured many challenges as a congregation and have stayed together as a community. We survived the “Covid years” stronger than ever. God has led us through it all, and we are excited to honor God’s grace in our congregation together. The 70th Anniversary Committee is composed of several teams working on various projects to make 2025 a year of celebration for Bradley Hills.

In early 2024, an initial team of volunteers worked together to plan and create a recommendation for Session on how best to celebrate the 70th Anniversary of Bradley Hills. The team identified potential activities, budgets, themes, mission opportunities, and how to incorporate a potential capital campaign into the year. The team concluded work in May with a successful recommendation to Session. The theme for the year is “Past, Present, and Future” where we plan to remember our past, honor our present, and plan for the future. From the initial planning work, several additional groups of volunteers were set up.

The first group was responsible for planning the May 3, 2025 gala. This wonderful dinner event will celebrate the past and where we’ve come from as a church. We hope that former pastors, music directors, and other important members of Bradley Hills’ past will be in attendance. This will be a special night and not one to miss. Following the dinner, on Sunday May 4, the renowned speaker Barbara Brown Taylor will be preaching and leading adult education. The deacons have graciously agreed to be part of the planning for our Fall Welcome Back+ event on September 21, 2025, which will celebrate our families and children, the future of Bradley Hills, with special activities. We will also get to sing Happy Birthday to Bradley Hills.

Another group is thinking about long-term fiscal opportunities to make BHPC sustainable long term. Throughout this year of celebration, we will prayerfully consider where God is leading us as a church community. We believe God is calling Bradley Hills to be a beacon of light and hope in the next 70 years.

Please help us make 2025 a year to remember. Make sure to follow us for more updates on the Bradley Hills website at www.BradleyHillsChurch.org/70th.



*70th Anniversary Dinner planning meeting with dinner,
January 14, 2025.*

Outreach & New Members Lay Ministry

Chair: Scott Williams

LM Members: Bie Fox, Brent Coffey, Raisa Orleans, Jeff Vanderslice

Session Liaison: Andrew Martel

Staff Partners: David Gray and Beth Beisel

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, (c) connecting new and potential members to ministry opportunities, and (d) cross ministry collaboration for effective membership outreach and engagement.

We had 15 adult new members join BHPC in 2024, and we finished 2024 with 630 adult active members, 29 active non-members, and 289 inactive members.

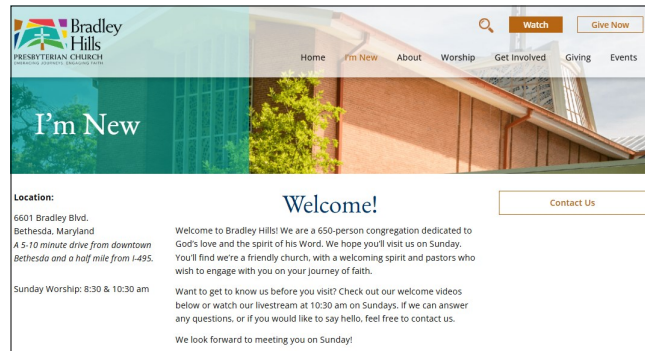
Welcoming Visitors, New Members, and Building Connections. We are ready to meet people where they are with welcome kits, personal phone calls and notes from David, outreach emails, and warm greetings on Sundays.

New Member Gatherings. We host informal events for new members of the BHPC community to gather, connect, and exchange with each other. These events are hosted at an existing church member's home and are a great opportunity for fellowship.

Our BHPC Website. Maintaining and enhancing our website is critical to our outreach activities. We are undertaking an update to the website to reflect our dynamic and welcoming faith community. In recent years we have linked our website to advertising campaigns on social media, and this tool has been effective for pushing targeted efforts to recruited new members.

Reaching & Driving Social Media Expansion. We have continued to find ways to expand our use of social media for advertising and actively post upcoming activities, post-activity recaps, and other announcements of general interest. Utilizing Facebook and other platforms has allowed for direct advertisement campaigns targeting the specific audience when appropriate and for objective statistics to tell us who is viewing our advertisements. Building on our experience from prior years we have been better able to target advertisements to specific audiences.

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.



Welcome page on Bradley Hills' website.



Pastor David leading adult education session.

Adult Education Lay Ministry

The Adult Education Lay Ministry programs serve as both keystone and springboard for faith development and congregational engagement. These hybrid programs meet weekly in person at the church and via Zoom. Each weekly presentation is a beginning. Every presentation is an invitation for people to connect, an invitation to learn something new, an invitation to hear a different perspective, an invitation to follow-up, and an invitation to engage and get involved. Our lay ministry provides opportunities for members to:

Explore Our Faith. We explored in-depth studies of Biblical passages as well as the history of our faith provided by lay ministry leaders, pastors, adult education leaders, and scholars, including Robert P. Jones, Reverend Shively Smith, and Dr. Denise Dombkowski Hopkins. In September, Dr. R. Bruce Douglass led a three-week study on Righteous Statecraft: Reformed Political Thought in the 19th and 20th Centuries.

Live Our Faith. Recognized leaders such as Reverends Matt Hackworth and Jermaine Ross-Allam, Dr. Sahar Khamis, Rabbi Eric Abbott, and Amanda Craft shared their work locally and globally to address poverty, racism, white supremacy, Islamophobia and antisemitism. In addition to addressing the challenges of global warming and environmental stewardship, Bob Deans provided an eloquent testimony concerning how faith relates to responsibility for a healthy democracy.

Support Our Faith. Skilled therapists addressed the challenges of intergenerational communication in this time of elevated anxiety and conflict, and a panel of age-related specialists helped members deal with issues of loneliness. Lee Rainie, Director of Elon University's Imagining the Digital Future Center, led a discussion on the impact of AI on spirituality and dignity as well on work and jobs.

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. We look forward to a range of programs that celebrate the history, current status, and future of Bradley Hills Presbyterian Church during its 70th year.

Deacons Report

Our mission as Deacons of BHPC is to gird ourselves spiritually so that we may be a bridge between the Holy and the people; to listen, identify, and respond to those in need in the congregation; 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. At the March 2024 Deacon retreat, the Board considered ways we could achieve a key objective of the Strategic Visioning Task Force Report: Objective 1.1: Rekindle and strengthen congregational relationships.

- Throughout 2024, the Deacons organized fellowship events, including the Easter Sunday Coffee Hour, the Welcome Back Brunch, and the Veterans' Day Coffee Hour. Individually, Deacons have provided support to fellowship events sponsored by other ministries such as the Inter-Congregational Partnership Committee (ICPC) and the Christmas Brunch.
- The Deacons connected with those experiencing sickness, grief, loss, and sadness through prayer, visits, calls, and cards. They supported grieving families by preparing receptions following memorial services and comforted those in need of fellowship in hosting the Blue Christmas service and reception. The Deacons delivered in-home communion, as requested, to those unable to attend services in person and to sextons, teachers, and caregivers. They also organized the delivery of flowers.



Set up and decorations for the Welcome Back Brunch on September 8, 2024.

- With the help of our youth deacon, the Board connected with the youth of the church and supported expanding the Board to include up to two youth deacons in future terms.

We are thankful for the opportunity to support the spiritual leadership and ministry of healing and wholeness offered by our pastors, helping them in times of member concerns and celebrations.

Catherine Payne & Andrew Sanderson, Co-Moderators

Linda McReynolds & Julie Hunter, Secretaries

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

Class of 2025: Andrew Graeub, Catherine Payne, Yoshi Sei, Caroline Simpson, CJ Kauffunger, Daniella Ngah

Class of 2026: Julie Hunter, Dee Llewellyn, Andrew Sanderson, Richard Webster

Worship & Arts Lay Ministry

The joy of worship with the BHPC community and the weekly spiritual sustenance offered by our worship experience are at the heart of the work of the Worship & Arts Lay Ministry (W&A).

As a wonderful example of the intersection between worship and arts, consider the architecture of our sanctuary, thoughtfully designed and filled with spiritual symbolism to create a beautiful space for contemplation, for music, and for convening our community each week. For our 70th anniversary year, Corky Hickey, Steve Fox, and Rosanna Morrison created a special report, *Interpretation of the Spiritual Symbolism of the Bradley Hills Presbyterian Church Sanctuary*, and we hope it will encourage reflection and appreciation of the ways that the arts enhance worship in our congregation.



World Communion Sunday, October 6, 2024.

Under the umbrella of the W&A are multiple groups of dedicated church volunteers who play different roles in our worship space each week — with words and acts of welcome, inspiring music, theatrical moments, beautiful flowers, excellent sound quality, and care for the details of setting up the sanctuary where we gather. Also included within W&A is Friends of Music, through which our church shares musical programs in our acoustically excellent space with the broader local community, signaling our commitment to outreach and furthering a strong musical tradition in the Washington area.

Music Ministry

Under the leadership of Matthew Robertson, musical excellence is a hallmark of BHPC's worship experience each week and during the Advent and Easter seasons. 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's dedicated singers, including our talented section leaders, serve as essential anchors for music every Sunday.

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. The Intergenerational Choir during the summer 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.

Many special musical occasions took place at BHPC in 2024. During Holy Week, Matthew led our chancel choir and

guest musicians in a special Good Friday offering of John Rutter's Requiem, and during Advent, Chancel Choir presented Britten's Ceremony of Carols. Both Easter and Christmas Eve featured the joyful sounds of an excellent brass quintet. On multiple occasions, we heard from other musically gifted members of our community, including Annabelle Hunter, who offered her considerable musical gifts as organist and pianist, and Bill Perry, who performed original songs that enhanced our worship.

A new collaboration with the Mission Lay Ministry brought a "Music for Food" concert to our sanctuary in April, with all money raised going to Bethesda Help, which was designated as the recipient by BHPC. The concert featured a baroque ensemble — Tempo Justo — performing gratis. Over \$28,000 was raised to support food programs in our community.

Ushers and Communion Teams

The Bradley Hills League of Ushers and Greeters assists with the gathering of the community for worship. Bradley Hills currently has 69 members serving as ushers and greeters on seven teams that 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. Many of Bradley Hills' recent new members have joined the usher teams. The League is coordinated by four co-head ushers: Susie Wellman, Corky Hickey, Louise Meyer, and Kim Brinkman, and a special services coordinator, Carol McLeod. We offer our special appreciation to the usher team captains and assistant captains who lead the teams on Sunday mornings: Dave Hammers, Clarence Hickey, Susie Wellman, Lou Kallas, Andrew Milne, Louise Meyer, Kim Brinkman, Joel Fickett, Sally Fowler, Bruce Hunter, and Bill Edelblut.

Ushering and greeting at Bradley Hills is a service to the congregation involving welcoming and hospitality, while being aware of the needs for security, safety, emergency procedures, and medical emergencies. 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." This initial gathering and greeting occurs most often in our Narthex.

We are also thankful for the dedicated service of our communion teams, who organize and prepare the meaningful sacrament that feeds our souls. Sunday communion extends 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 vital way.

Chancel Players

The Chancel Players, Bradley Hills' drama troupe, present readings, monologues, sermon sketches, and chamber/readers theater selections in worship services. For example, this past year the Chancel Players led the readings for our annual "Lessons & Carols" service; Tracy Rankin and Andrew Martel presented the Luke Christmas story for the Christmas Eve services; Jean Dudek, a professional storyteller, presented several scriptures in memorized storytelling format, and Bill Perry wrote and directed skits for Stewardship Sunday and announcing BHPC's 70th Anniversary celebration. These are just a few of the many contributions the Chancel Players provided to Bradley Hills in 2024. All who are interested in reading, speaking, or performing scripture, stories, and theater pieces are welcome to contact Bill Perry and join us!



Chancel Players announcing 70th Anniversary Gala to take place on May 3, 2025.

The Flower Guild

Each week, a member of the Flower Guild is assigned to select, purchase, and arrange flowers for Sunday's worship services, bringing warmth and beauty to our worship both in-person and online. This ministry is funded by those who sign-up for a \$65 contribution to honor or memorialize a loved one for a specific Sunday. The ministry continues after the worship service, when the deacons deliver the flowers to those who need an extra measure of God's care.

The Flower Guild also organizes and prepares the flowers for holiday worship services, including flower sales at Easter and Christmas. The W&A would like to recognize and thank these 2024 Flower Guild members: Judy Arndt, Bie Fox (co-chair), Melissa Kallas, Sarah Klontz, Betty Lee, Dee Llewellyn, Catherine Payne, Lisa Scribner, Susan Vanderver (co-chair), and Tamae Wong. Thanks also to Kim Brinkman, Brigitte Burgett, and Betty Lee, who contributed to holiday preparations. The Flower Guild welcomes new participants, and we'll pair you with another member to help you get started. If you're interested, please contact either of the co-chairs, and we'd love to get you involved in 2025.



Bie Fox arranging flowers for the Flower Guild.

The Chancel Guild

Christina Liu and the Chancel Guild team (Anthony Breder, Jana Coffey, Karin Harrison, Mary Hickey, Lisa Hicks, Patty Howie, Melissa Kallas, Dee Llewellyn, Janet Miller, Catherine Payne, Susie Wellman, and Dianne Whitaker) have ensured our sanctuary is beautifully presented and maintained. The Chancel Guild welcomes new volunteers for these important tasks.

Sound and Videography Ministry Team

We extend a special thanks to our sound and video ministry team (Bruce Lifiton, Jim Kettler, Bruce Hunter, Yoshi Sei, Andrew Loughran, and Doug Anderson) for all of their support and assistance this year, particularly with the livestream services.



Friends of Music

As a subcommittee of W&A, Friends of Music presents outstanding musical programs for our members and the surrounding community by well known, invited artists. Usually numbering four or five concerts during the academic year, this past fall started with an excellent program by the Yale Whiffenpoofs, and a second fall program showcased the wonderful pianist, Brain Ganz. Our very popular Christmas program was presented by a wonderful tenor, Emmett Cahill, and we look forward to two more concerts in late winter and spring. This concert series brings Bradley Hills' long-standing musical interests to our broader community and provides our wonderful musical sanctuary as an excellent space for both artists and listeners.

Worship & Arts members in 2024 included Corky Hickey, Mary Hickey, Bruce Hunter, Melissa Kallas, Naomi Kettler, Bill Perry, Karen Pettigrew, Margaret Rick, Susan Vanderver, Kim Brinkman, and Louise Meyer, as well as David Gray and Matthew Robertson. Thank you!

Youth Lay Ministry

Our Youth Ministry caters to youth in grades 6-12 and their families, fostering opportunities to make social connections, grow spiritually, and participate in service activities. The youth meet after church for fellowship and discussion or a mission-driven undertaking most Sundays. Youth also have the opportunity to participate in Desserts & Devotions on Thursday evenings to explore scripture and spiritual practice.

Our winter retreat was well attended with youth spending a fun weekend in January at Massanutten. Over the spring, the youth organized and ran events such as the Pancake Breakfast and the 100 Envelope Fundraiser to help raise money for their summer trips.

In June, ten high schoolers and three adults traveled to Richmond to VCU's campus ministry, The Pace Center, on a mission trip serving the local community. A few weeks later, three high school youth and two adults traveled to Montreat Conference Center in North Carolina to meet other Presbyterian youth for a week of spiritual formation, worship, and recreation. During that same week, twelve middle school youth and three adults attended the Massanetta Middle School Conference and Mission at Massanetta, located in the Shenandoah Valley.

The summer concluded with Vacation Bible School for elementary-aged children. Approximately 25 youth volunteered, managing games and arts & crafts activities and also helping with storytelling. In addition, 20 youth began their confirmation journey in October. Our year concluded with an interfaith service project with the BJC and MIIC youth assembling and distributing 90 Thanksgiving baskets to families in need in our community and throughout the DMV, followed by our annual Christmas parties in December.

Many thanks to all who supported our children and youth on their faith journeys! They could not do it without your continued support. (Pictures are from the summer youth trips.)



Children's Lay Ministry

The Children's Lay Ministry seeks to make Bradley Hills a welcoming and enriching faith community for families with young children up through 5th grade. Our ministry is supported by the director of Children's, Youth, and Family Ministries (DCYFM) and coordinates church school during Sunday service as well as events for families with children throughout the year.

This year we transitioned the DCYFM role from Matt Nabinger to Rosanna Howard via a competitive search. We are overjoyed to have Rosanna's energy, vision, and warmth guiding our ministry. She has brought a host of exciting new ideas for helping families connect at Bradley Hills.

In 2024 we expanded childcare for events beyond worship. This enables parents to participate in enriching programming such as adult education and small groups. Under Rosanna's leadership we also expanded programming with an interfaith gardening club, a family scavenger hunt, and Lenten and fall family small groups. These events were provided in addition to our traditional offerings, which include family connectional lunches, Vacation Bible School (VBS), Trunk or Treat, Advent Workshop, and the Easter Egg Hunt.

VBS grew from 35 registrations in 2023 to 60 in 2024. We added a fourth group to accommodate the larger numbers, and we had over 25 middle and high school youth from the church and wider community who volunteered during the week.

In our weekly church school classes, we implemented enhanced security measures to ensure the safety of our children and families. This included data capture for "drop-in" families that are not officially registered for church school, a sign-in/sign-out procedure for all children, and mandatory training for all church school teachers and aides in September. In addition, we further integrated our "Club 3-4-5" (our 3rd, 4th, and 5th grade students) into worship by having them remain in the sanctuary during communion Sundays to participate.

We are expanding the Milestones Workshops beyond 2nd and 3rd grades to include a workshop at each grade level from 1st-5th grade. We started with the 1st grade workshop on prayer this fall, where the children learned the Lord's Prayer and recited it in the worship service.

We are deeply grateful to the many BHPC members who supported this ministry throughout the year. We thank all of the church school teachers, milestone workshop instructors, second adults, and church youth who helped out during our events.



Third grade Bible presentation on December 10, 2024.



Watering during Fall Call, October 20, 2024.

Property Management Lay Ministry

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 2024. We renovated the landscaping at the entrance to the

education building, replacing plants that had outlived their healthy life cycles and implementing a design that featured more intentional structure and more native plants. A dedicated group of volunteers worked throughout the year to ensure the success of our recent landscape improvements as well as to maintain and improve other areas of the grounds. We held a very successful Fall Call and Spring Fling, with many members of the congregation pitching in after Sunday services.

Other exterior improvements to our building included replacing a collapsed drain behind Covenant Hall, renovating the sidewalk by the back playground, installing new fencing, upgrading weatherstripping, replacing broken windows, and installing a wooden bench to honor Jeanne Tustian's decades of devoted service to improving our grounds. Interior improvements included repairing a pipe leak in the undercroft, painting the nursery school classrooms and hallway as well as the second floor hallway of the education building, upgrading two electrical panels, replacing the carpet in the lounge and youth lounge, and replacing the flooring in the kitchen and rear sanctuary near the choir robe rooms.

Security improvements included hardening additional exterior doors, adding additional exterior door access panels and Bluetooth readers to permit phone door access, and installing interior door exit sensors that improve the functioning of our door alarms, all paid for by a state grant. We applied for three additional grants and received two that will enable us to (1) install a universal communication/paging/notification system that will enable resident building users to communicate more efficiently and effectively in the event of a security incident and (2) harden the nursery school windows.

We also negotiated the lease of one of our parking lots to a WSSC subcontractor, which brought an additional \$30,000+ in revenue to BHPC.

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 that make their home in our church.

Mission Coordination Lay Ministry

While seeking a Chair, MCLM operated under interim leadership throughout 2024. Session has now taken up the matter to assess, rethink, and possibly re-organize this important ministry of the church. Meanwhile a group of seven stalwarts met monthly on Zoom with Denise Diaab, our faithful staff liaison, to ensure that basic activities were upheld, such as overseeing a budget of \$96,279 (plus endowment and Alternative Giving income) and organizing the events listed below.

Bradley Hills is home to multiple mission projects and initiatives with diverse features designed to reach out beyond our walls. Some have independent sourcing; some are funded by the church budget. Members enjoy this variety of commitments and are called to participate in all kinds of engagement in the world, whether local or global.



January 28, 2024, mission forum.



Day of Service, October 6, 2024.



Olive oil sales during Advent.

Our overall commitment is to “mutual ministry,” acknowledging that collectively we serve others in the spirit of Christian love, and we receive rich blessing at seeing God at work in the world.

Major Activities for 2024

- On January 28, Mission Coordination hosted a well-attended Mission Forum titled “Put Your Heart into Mission” held in Covenant Hall. Church members submitted proposals for funding from the mission endowment proceeds, if they would agree to provide project leadership. The meeting was open to all church members to hear, discuss, and select which proposals would receive support. After a lively discussion, three projects were selected: one in Tanzania, brought by Matt Hackworth, to build latrines for a community serving the disabled; a project of Community Reach in Rockville to assist immigrant communities, brought by Lou and Pat Kallas, and HomesNotBorders for refugee apartment set ups, brought by Brigitte Burgett. Volunteers were recruited for tutoring and assisting racial justice initiatives.
- Bradley Hills and BJC hosted “The Phoenix Plan” by New Story Leadership (NSL) shared by interns on July 28, 2024. War in the Middle East prevented normal operations of the New Story Leadership summer program. However, past interns came to a packed house to present a vision for long-term peace in Israel/Palestine.
- The Annual Coat Drive organized by Susie Krasnican during Sundays in September provided over 90 coats to benefit children at Arcola Elementary School.
 - Note: A new leader is needed for the coat drive. Susie is willing to act as an advisor for important steps that must be taken many months in advance.
 - The coat drive is a concrete way to support local immigrant families through Arcola Elementary’s Linkages to Learning program, families who are now more endangered than ever.
- The Committee for Higher Education in Asia held a high tea to meet with the rector of Forman Christian College Jonathan Addleton, his wife, and the Friends of FCC at the Bradley Hills Library on September 25.
- ♦ Mission Service Day held on October 6, World Communion Sunday. Organized by Rebekah Liu and Paul Martin. It drew a large (100+) intergenerational turnout in Memorial Hall and featured disaster kits assembly, Smart Sacks, and the coat drive.
- Angel Gift Tree, Alternative Giving, and Olive Oil Ministry ran throughout Advent until year’s end. With 18 projects offered to “Support Justice All Year,” Alternative Giving brought in \$20,030.73.
 - Note: A leader is needed for the 2025 Olive Oil Ministry. This is an important way to provide income to olive tree growers and demonstrate solidarity during both peace time and times of conflict in Israel/Palestine. The primary work takes place in Advent, with a bit of advance effort necessary to be well prepared. See Judy Ozone.

If you are called to lend your energy and creativity to mission at BHPC, contact Pastor Denise Diaab.



Rebecca and Paul helping out.



Assembling disaster kits on the Day of Service.



Organizing coats for the annual coat drive.



A pile of presents for Angel Gift Tree.

Racial Justice Coordinating Committee

We met monthly to review and implement actions to address racial justice in our church and our communities. Our primary topics of discussion included reparations, a church-wide signature project to address racial justice, potential local partnerships, and drafting of an anti-racism policy and land acknowledgment for our website. Our focus falls under four action pillars:

1) Education of the Congregation

Promoted Sanctuary Road opera at GMU, based on writings of William Still, an abolitionist, historian, and conductor of the Underground Railroad. Relevant adult education programming:

- Dr. Shively Smith, scholar in residence at Metropolitan AME Church. Discussion included civil rights leaders, particularly Howard Thurman, author of *Jesus and the Disinherited*.
- Dr. Robbie Jones, author of *The Hidden Roots of White Supremacy* and *The Path to a Shared American Future*. Copies of *Hidden Roots* were made available for loan to congregants. Discussion included prioritizing an historical audit of BHPC to address institutional racist initiatives (i.e., redlining) and how/if white flight played a role.
- Rev. Jermaine Ross-Allam, director of the Center for the Repair of Historical Harms for PCUSA.
- Janine Smith, Lakota descendant, tribal citizen, and archivist at Loyola University. Discussion included the troubled relationship between Native communities and Christianity (e.g., boarding schools), the challenges of documenting land ownership after Native communities have been excluded from the recordkeeping process, and ways we can restore and heal these relationships.
- Amanda Craft, manager of immigration advocacy in the Office of the General Assembly (PCUSA), led a discussion on migration, including how our faith sets a foundation for a call to welcome, specifically the teachings of Mark on “loving your neighbor.”



2) Diversity of Staff

Pastor David continued relationships for interns with Union Seminary and Howard Seminary.

3) External Partnerships

Supported Faith Presbyterian food pantry and Patterson Elementary School through the Mission Coordination Lay Ministry.

4) Advocacy

- Participated in interfaith Juneteenth celebration at Cabin John to raise money and awareness for local organizations serving Montgomery County's Black community, including Scotland AME Church's building repairs and expansion.
- Attended reception at the National Museum of African American History to raise awareness and funds for Scotland AME.
- Coordinated postcard writing campaign through Reclaim Our Vote to inform Black voters in the South of their voting locations and major issues of the presidential race.
- Attended the Mid-Atlantic Matthew 25 Conference in Columbia, MD: explored building congregational vitality, dismantling structural racism, and eradicating systemic poverty.

InterCongregational Partnership Committee

In 2024 the InterCongregational Partnership Committee (ICPC) strengthened personal relationships and continued to learn about one another's faith traditions through shared services, group discussions, presentations, and social gatherings. Our membership is growing from all three faith communities.

While the November Interfaith Brunch is the signature event of ICPC, the year saw a variety of activities: participation in the Interfaith Works Community Day in April; the Family Fun Picnic in May; an in-person discussion on *Waiting to Be Arrested at Night* by the Uyghur author Tahir Hamut Izgil; hosting a panel of alumni from New Story Leadership in July; meeting at the ICCP Food Festival to share food in September, and organizing the on-line presentation by Widen the Circle in December.

At the Interfaith Brunch, attendees offered several suggestions for future ICPC programming, including more interfaith meals, small group discussions, joint youth activities, and service projects. All suggestions are being considered. Three faith communities are able to use 6601 Bradley Blvd. because each group meets on different days and at different times. Because we are "ships in the night," we rarely cross paths. ICPC plans activities that are purposely social in nature so that we can make new friendships, all in the service of understanding that our faith traditions are more similar than different.

Judy Ozone, chair



Enjoying a delicious meal together for Interfaith Brunch on November 17, 2024.

Interfaith Refugee Family Initiative

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. The Ahmadi family, whom we started supporting in January of 2022, is doing well. One of our volunteers helped the family successfully apply for SSI for one of the adult daughters with disabilities. Two volunteers are helping with their green card applications, which are still pending. We helped the other daughter, who works part time at Target, apply for higher level English courses and were successful in getting her a partial scholarship.

Two volunteers from BJC continue to file taxes for those whom we have been supporting over the years. We continue to support Mehria Reshta, a single Afghan woman. We helped her to apply for college, scholarships, and social services and took her to various appointments. Her job in a small immigration law firm continued until the firm closed in April. We partially paid for an eight-week academic English course at Georgetown University to assure her success in college. She received a full, four-year tuition scholarship to Bard College and a three-year 80-percent room and board scholarship. She moved in with Evelyn for a few months prior to leaving for Bard College after her six-months lease was up in February. We took her for admitted students' day and drove her to college and visited her for parents' weekend. She completed her first semester at Bard successfully and spent the winter break with us and her aunt and family of seven, who had just received their refugee visas in December after spending more than three years in Pakistan under difficult circumstances. Her sister in Afghanistan is applying for college in the US.

In April we started supporting the Fahim family, an Afghan family of seven who came to our attention through one of our volunteers. We helped with rent and referred them to HomesNotBorders to their Moving up Fund, which provided

partial rent support for three more months. Volunteers from the Idara donated computers. This family was eager to work, managed to navigate medical appointments, social systems, and school enrollments by themselves while receiving minimal support from their resettlement agency. They had spent three years in Germany as refugees and had hoped to build a life in the US with the promise of support since they were SIV holders. We helped them get minimum wage jobs while they applied for jobs more in line with their professional expertise. We provided household items, transportation, driving lessons, and mentoring and enjoyed dinners together. They decided to return to Germany because the older two sons wanted to continue their education in Germany, and the parents hoped to get more support in job training.

Five of us volunteer regularly with HomesNotBorders, setting up apartments for newly arrived refugees from many countries. We participated in well over 20 set-ups last year. We also solicited, cleaned, sorted, and dropped off much needed household items and facilitated furniture donations from church members, neighbors, and friends. We applied for a grant through the Mission Forum, and HomesNotBorders received \$1,000 from BHPC to continue their work, which was much appreciated. As for finances, we currently have \$5,685 in the IRP account, which started with \$9,663 in January 2024. As for volunteers, there are currently 11 volunteers involved in various tasks. We have not been actively looking for work since our numbers are small, but we have responded with financial and, more importantly, more comprehensive help and friendship when a need has come to our attention.

Brigitte Burgett and Evelyn Ganzglass, Co-chairs Interfaith Family Refugee Initiative

Nominating Committee

Nominating did its usual work in spring 2024 of filling lay ministry chair seats and new nominating committee members. Then in the fall, we followed the spirit to find new elders and deacons. We'd like to thank our outgoing elders and deacons for their service and leadership: Ben Scribner, Joel Fickett, Gina Perry, Naomi Kettler, Bob Reutershan, Andrew Bremer, Becky Sczudlo, Linda McReynolds, Bie Fox, and Andrew Gray.



Installation of officers on January 26, 2025.

Our new elders and deacons were ordained and installed as ruling elders for the next three years of service: Jenny Rymarczuk, Steve Fox, Kirk Griffith, and Melissa Kallas. Brendan Gray is ordained and installed as a youth elder for the next year. Deacons ordained and installed for the next three year's service: Tara Eliason, Benjamin Scribner, and Melanie Mace. To be installed to active service, as he has been previously ordained a deacon, is JongSeok Kim. Daniella Ngah and CJ Kauffunger are ordained and installed as youth deacons for the next year.

Friends Club

Friends Club, a ministry of the church, has maintained a stable membership. Although we had a few members leave the program, we were able to recruit new members. For much of the year we were at capacity. At the end of 2024, we recruited two new volunteers, which is an ongoing effort. Our programming continues to introduce new activities. An extremely popular activity was one of our new entertainers who did improv with the group. He would pick two members/volunteers to be "partners" (detectives, for example) and then ask them a series of questions. The quick thinking of our "cast" truly made this activity most enjoyable, filled with fun and lots of laughs. We also introduced a few new musicians/singers, who truly brought joy to all. Our partnership with Arts for the Aging continues to be one of the highlights of our program. Once again, the diversity of activities they bring to Friends Club captures the many interests of our members. We even wrote our own opera lyrics, and we also have created individual poems. Arts and crafts remain a core component to our programming. The members created fall wreaths, Valentine's Day frames and other challenging

and fun arts projects. Introduced in late 2023, Drop-In Tuesdays continues to be a great success. Although an abbreviated day, the participants thoroughly enjoy the time with us. One of the key ingredients to the day is the use of the youth lounge where our members play ping pong and pool. Once again, such joy, and it is another opportunity to provide respite for caregivers.

The caregiver support group, which meets twice per month in person, continues to be an important resource for our current caregivers and alumni. As you can imagine, the participants find a source of strength and empathy among one another. This year as a result of both the support group and the weekly sessions, we have seen a growth in friendships developing outside of our four walls. There are many couples now socializing with one another in their homes as well as theater outings.

We are always seeking volunteers and new members. To learn more about Friends Club, 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 early to mid-stage memory loss. We also provide respite for their caregivers.

BHPC Nursery School

BHPCNS, a ministry of the church, 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 just under 170 students, 38 teachers, and an administrative staff of four. With an annual budget of \$1,400,000 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 installation of toddler-sized toilets in the lower-level bathrooms.



BHPCNS believes children learn through play. Through play, children learn friendship, social and emotional skills, independence, and developmentally age-appropriate cognitive concepts in addition to how to work cooperatively in a group setting and how to be good citizens. Every day, our young students are exposed to art, music, science, nature, 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, and science 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, and therapeutic supplemental programming for children as needed.

During the 2023-2024 school year, BHPCNS provided need-based scholarships totaling \$26,000, providing seven children the opportunity to be a part of the BHPCNS 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 and the support of our parents, our specialists, and Bradley Hills Presbyterian Church. Thank you.