

= Brown Memorial Presbyterian Church =

Brown Memorial Park Avenue Presbyterian Church of Baltimore , Maryland , U.S. , is a large , Gothic Revival @-@ style church built in 1870 and located at Park and Lafayette Avenues in the city 's Bolton Hill section . Named in memory of a 19th @-@ century Baltimore financier , the ornate church is noted for its exquisite stained glass windows by renowned artist Louis Comfort Tiffany , soaring vaulted ceiling , and the prominent persons associated with its history . Maltbie Babcock , who was the church 's pastor 1887 ? 1900 , wrote the familiar hymn , This is My Father 's World . Storied virtuoso concert performer Virgil Fox was organist at Brown Memorial early in his career ( 1936 ? 1946 ) .

Called " one of the most significant buildings in this city , a treasure of art and architecture " by Baltimore Magazine , the church underwent a \$ 1 @. @ 8 million restoration between 2001 ? 2003 . It is part of the Presbyterian Church ( U.S.A. ) denomination .

= = History = =

The Brown Memorial Presbyterian Church building was dedicated on December 4 , 1870 , in memory of George Brown , chairman of the Baltimore @-@ based investment firm , Alex . Brown & Sons , and one of the founders of the pioneering Baltimore and Ohio Railroad in 1827 . Construction was funded by a gift of \$ 150 @, @ 000 from his widow , Isabella McLanahan Brown , an amount equivalent to more than \$ 4 million in 2009 . George Brown was described by a Baltimore historian as a successful businessman and civic leader who " regarded religion as preeminent above all other things and loved his church with all the ardor of his noble nature " . John Sparhawk Jones was the church 's first pastor , serving from 1870 to 1884 . Several of his collected sermons were later published in such books as Seeing Darkly , The Invisible Things , and Saved by Hope .

The church 's pastor between 1887 ? 1900 was Maltbie Babcock , who was formally installed on September 28 , 1887 . His biography in a 1910 encyclopedia described him as " a fluent speaker , with a marvelous personal magnetism which appealed to all classes of people , and the influence of which became in a sense national . His theology was broad and deep ... he reached people in countless ways and exerted everywhere a remarkable personal magnetism ... [ having ] an unusually brilliant intellect and stirring oratorical powers that commanded admiration " . While at Brown , he led fund @-@ raising efforts to assist Jewish refugees from Russia who were victims of an anti @-@ Jewish pogrom . He was also a popular speaker with students at Johns Hopkins University . Under Babcock , the church acquired additional property at North and Madison Avenues for a chapel and Sunday School complex .

When Babcock was called to New York City 's Brick Presbyterian Church in 1900 , many prominent Baltimoreans , including the faculty of Johns Hopkins University , unsuccessfully implored Babcock to remain at Brown instead of accepting the call to Brick Church . Babcock resigned on January 17 , 1900 , to pastor the Manhattan church but died suddenly the following year at age 42 . At his New York funeral , the presiding clergyman eulogized him , " We do not need a candle to show a sunbeam ... The work our brother has done ? the life he lived speaks for him . " A memorial service for the esteemed former pastor was held at Brown Memorial on May 22 , described as " impressive " by the New York Times . So inspired was former U.S. Postmaster General James Albert Gary , a member of Brown Memorial , that he chaired a committee to raise \$ 50 @, @ 000 ( the equivalent of \$ 1 @. @ 4 million in 2009 ) for construction of a new church in memory of the beloved former pastor . More than half of that amount was raised the first day from the wealthy congregation , the New York Times reported , and the new Babcock Memorial Presbyterian Church was soon constructed on Brown Memorial Church 's North Avenue property .

Babcock 's successor as minister of Brown Memorial , John Timothy Stone , also presided over a large memorial gathering in Baltimore on June 2 , 1901 , choosing as the text for his address to the throng : " For where your treasure is , there will your heart be also " ( Matthew 6 : 21 ) . Babcock was eulogized at the Baltimore service by various prominent educators , including Daniel C. Gilman , the first president of Johns Hopkins University , John F. Goucher , the founder of Goucher College

, and Francis L. Patton , president of Princeton University . A poem by Babcock was published posthumously the following year by his wife as the familiar hymn , This is My Father 's World .

The sanctuary was enlarged in 1905 with the addition of a transept and several Tiffany windows while Stone was minister . Further significant development occurred in 1931 under T. Guthrie Speers , with the addition of the current chancel designed by notable architect Ralph Adams Cram and the installation of the present 4 @-@ manual pipe organ by Ernest M. Skinner . Speers had a popular ministry at Brown Memorial Presbyterian Church from 1928 to 1957 . He began an outreach program to Baltimore 's Jewish community , occasionally exchanging pulpits with local rabbis .

After Speers ' retirement in 1957 , John Middaugh was minister from 1958 to 1968 . Middaugh was a regular panelist for ten years on the weekly television program To Promote Goodwill , an interfaith discussion of social and religious issues produced by WBAL @-@ TV and broadcast worldwide on the Voice of America . He was also in the forefront of the civil rights movement in the early 1960s . Along with William Sloan Coffin and dozens of other clergymen and civil rights activists , Middaugh was arrested in a clash with police at Baltimore 's Gwynn Oak Amusement Park in July 1963 over efforts to desegregate the popular attraction .

Membership peaked at 1 @,@ 336 in 1952 but subsequently declined in the late 1950s as much of the city 's population migrated to the suburbs . In response , a portion of the congregation decided in 1956 to build a church in the suburban Woodbrook area north of Baltimore . Other members wished to remain at the Bolton Hill location , prompting a decision to operate one church at two locations , with a shared ministerial staff . In the early 1970s , the church began a tutoring program for neighborhood children and a " Meals on Wheels " service under then @-@ ministers Iain Wilson , pastor , and Clinton C. Glenn Jr . , assistant minister . In 1980 , the congregations of the two churches voted for separation . The original Bolton Hill church was subsequently constituted as " Brown Memorial Park Avenue " , to distinguish it from " Brown Memorial Woodbrook " , when the separation was completed in October , 1980 .

The immediate past minister of the church is Roger J. Gench , pastor from 1990 to 2002 , who is now pastor of historic New York Avenue Presbyterian Church in Washington , D.C.

The full list of senior ministers from 1870 to present is :

= = Current ministry = =

The current pastor of Brown Memorial Park Avenue Church since 2004 is Andrew Foster Connors . A native of Raleigh , North Carolina , he earned a Bachelor of Arts from Duke University and a Master of Divinity degree from Columbia Theological Seminary in 2001 . He is a recipient of the prestigious David H. C. Read Preaching Award , named for Presbyterian clergyman and author David H. C. Read of New York City 's Madison Avenue Presbyterian Church .

His wife , Kate Foster Connors , whom he met while both were student interns for U.S. Representative David Price , is also an ordained minister and serves as youth director at Brown Memorial . The Connors have two children .

Under the pastorate of Andrew Foster Connors , the church 's historic leadership continues in social justice issues including national peace efforts , a statewide campaign for marriage equality , local efforts to rebuild blighted neighborhoods , and advocacy of after @-@ school programs to invest in the youth of Baltimore . His views on current affairs are frequently reported in the Baltimore Sun daily newspaper . Connors has also taken an active role in dialogues between the Jewish and Christian faith communities .

= = Music ministry = =

The current minister of music and organist at Brown Memorial Presbyterian Church since June , 2012 , is Michael Britt , who studied music at the Peabody Conservatory and the Conservatoire de Paris . He succeeded Dr. John Walker , an internationally renowned concert organist and CD recording artist , who was minister of music between 2004 and December , 2011 . Formerly director of music and organist at Riverside Church in New York City ( 1983 ? 1992 ) and Shadyside

Presbyterian Church in Pittsburgh , Pennsylvania ( 1992 ? 2005 ) , Walker has a Doctor of Musical Arts degree from Stanford University and is National Vice President of the American Guild of Organists . He was named Minister of Music Emeritus by Brown Memorial in 2012 and continues to perform there occasionally .

Other previous organists include the celebrated virtuoso Virgil Fox , who gained considerable fame as a concert performer and recording artist while at Brown Memorial early in his career , from 1936 to 1946 . Later , Richard Ross was also a significant music figure in the life of the congregation , succeeding Fox as choirmaster and organist , while also composing music . Francis Eugene Belt then served as organist for more than 50 years , spanning the 1950s to the late 1990s .

The 4 @-@ manual Ernest M. Skinner pipe organ has 2 @,@ 939 pipes and remains essentially the same today as when it was installed in 1931 and tonally finished by G. Donald Harrison , as Skinner 's opus 839 . The organ underwent a complete restoration between 2002 ? 2005 , with all original 45 ranks of the instrument fully preserved . A 99 @-@ memory level Capture System was added to the organ in 2005 .

The choir sings a wide range of choral music at Sunday services , from works of classical composers , such as Mozart 's Ave verum corpus and choruses by Handel and Johannes Brahms , to spirituals and anthems by 20th @-@ century composers , such as Jane Marshall 's My Eternal King . Major choral works are also performed during the year , such as the oratorio Elijah by Felix Mendelssohn , conducted by Walker and accompanied by guest organist Frederick Swann , and Johann Sebastian Bach 's cantata , God 's time is always the very best time ( " Actus Tragicus " , BWV106 ) , in the 2008 ? 2009 season . The choir 's May , 2009 , performance of Elijah has since been released on CD .

= = = Programs and activities = = =

Along with regular worship services on Sundays and holy days , Brown Memorial Park Avenue Church offers various programs of enrichment and outreach , such as concerts , lectures , and study forums . The " Tiffany Series " presents high quality classical concerts as well as distinguished speakers at the church . Speakers have included Harry Belafonte and Marian Wright Edelman , founder of the Children 's Defense Fund , who spoke on Children in Peril : What Does Our Faith Require of Us ? on March 16 , 2008 . The series " Wednesday Nights at Brown " offers dinner speakers for adults , such as John Walker 's " Christian Hymnody and the Theology Behind It , " and arts or music activities for children .

The church is active in numerous missions , both locally and on the national and world scenes . Its Urban Mission committee sponsors the Tutoring Program , the oldest volunteer school tutoring program in the nation , and partners with a local elementary school in a story @-@ reading program and yearly donation of books to all pupils . High school and college age youth participate in " Share , " an annual summer missions trip to El Salvador . The church also has a longstanding outreach program with the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation in South Dakota , where Brown Memorial youth and adults conduct summer learning camps for Lakota children .

= = Stained glass windows = =

Among the considerable number of stained glass windows , those crafted by Louis Comfort Tiffany in 1905 are especially prized for their vibrancy and exceptional depth . Baltimore City Paper called the church and its collection of a dozen Tiffany windows , " the most magnificent interior space in Baltimore City " . During the restoration survey in 2000 , various stained glass experts praised the extent and craftsmanship of the windows . As part of the church 's \$ 1 @. @ 8 million restoration project between 2001 ? 2003 , all of the stained glass windows were releaded and restored to their original lustre . They are :

The Annunciation to the Shepherds ? the birth of the infant Christ is announced by angels to shepherds tending their flocks . Tiffany employed a confetti glass technique for the flames of the shepherds ' bonfire as the star of Bethlehem gleams with etched glass .

The Baptism of Christ ? portrays Jesus with John the Baptist at the River Jordan . Mottled glass is used for the area around the water , with a layer of wavy glass over Christ 's left foot to create the illusion of looking through water .

Christ Blessing the Children ? the Lord holds a child in his lap , whose face is that of the boy for whom this window was donated as a memorial by his grieving parents .

I am the Way ? Jesus walks on tempestuous seas surrounded by storm clouds . Opalescent glass is used to create a glow of light around the figure of Jesus .

Christ in Gethsemane ? portraying Christ praying in the Garden of Gethsemane , surrounded by trees made of stippled glass .

The young David ? the future Israelite king is pictured .

If I Be Lifted Up ? Christ is portrayed in the clouds , with light radiating from behind His head as the penetrating eyes seem to follow the viewer around the nave . An extra layer of mottled glass behind the clouds was used by Tiffany .

Lead , Kindly Light ? the cross at its center is made of etched glass and glows brightly in the rays of the afternoon sun .

The Holy City ? St. John 's vision on the isle of Patmos of the " New Jerusalem " , as described in Revelation 21 : 2 . Brilliant red , orange , and yellow glass is etched for the sunrise , with textured glass used to create the effect of moving water . Said to be one of the two largest windows ( along with The Annunciation to the Shepherds ) ever made by the Tiffany Studios , this 58 @-@ panel stained glass window honors the church 's beloved pastor of the 1880s ? 1890s , Maltbie Babcock .

Gabriel ? the archangel Gabriel in the clouds , with feathers individually made of opalescent glass by Tiffany .

John , the Visionary ? Wearing a red cloak and having an intense expression , St. John is portrayed by Tiffany in the style of the 17th @-@ century Flemish painter Reubens . The window is made of drapery , opalescent , and mottled glass .

The New Creation ? located at the rear of the church , it is based on the description in Revelation 22 : 1 @-@ 2 , with stained glass depictions of trees , mountains , and streams of Living Water . At the top is a star morphing into a cross , with rays made of nuggets .

Brown Memorial 's stained glass windows