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PASTORAL PONDERINGS

by Rev. Tom Harris

Dear Friends,

I shared a few things about my sabbatical via the church email list and the Facebook group. I mentioned the work on the book and time spent with family including helping my mom move into assisted living after her latest fall. I didn't mention various and sundry items, so this seems like a good forum for those. Let's start with the

Failures:

Learning to play the banjo - This did not happen. So sad. My desire to be a musician and my ability to put in the work just don't seem to match up. At least not at this point in my life.



Flossing - I tried flossing! I know some of you are probably shocked that I don't floss. Well, unfortunately, I still don't. Just couldn't make it stick. I'll keep trying.

Successes:

Vacation - A family trip to Burlington, Vermont and then to Acadia National Park was wonderful. We also stopped

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SEPTEMBER MISSION OFFERING:

KAY PAPA NOU & UNITY HOUSE

Govans has been a long time supporter of Kay Papa Nou, an orphanage in the Port-au-Prince area in Haiti run by David and Dani Guillame. All donations marked "Mission Offering" during September will be donated to Kay Papa Nou.

Please see page six for letters from residents expressing their faith in God despite the hardships of life in Haiti and a message from Joyce and Ted Kruse, Govans members who work closely with Kay Papa Nou.



Pastor Tom with David and Dani Guillame during his trip in April 2018

September Calendar

- 5 - Online Worship, 10:00 a.m.
- 5 - Soul Kitchen Meal Pick-Up, 4:30-6:00 p.m.
- 10 - Youth Group, 6:30 p.m.
- 12 - Online Worship, 10:00 a.m.
- 12 - Soul Kitchen Meal Pick-Up, 4:30-6:00 p.m.
- 13 - Music Mondays, 7:00 p.m.
- 14 - Govans Community Gospel Choir, 7:00 p.m.
- 18 - Racial Justice Speaker Series, 2:00 p.m.
- 19 - Online Worship, 10:00 a.m.
- 19 - Soul Kitchen Meal Pick-Up, 4:30-6:00 p.m.
- 20 - Music Mondays, 7:00 p.m.
- 21 - Session Meeting, 7:00 p.m.
- 25 - Young Families Game Day, 3:00 p.m.
- 26 - Online Worship, 10:00 a.m.
- 26 - Soul Kitchen Meal Pick-Up, 4:30-6:00 p.m.



September Birthdays

- 2 - Calvin Morris
- 2 - Jeremy North
- 2 - Michael Boersma
- 5 - Fred Gaede
- 8 - Bruce Dunlop
- 9 - Kay Simmons
- 10 - Kamila Alexander
- 11 - Matthew Moore
- 12 - Don Taber
- 13 - Eleanor Schwartz
- 14 - Sherry Peck
- 19 - Bobbie Seabolt
- 20 - Deb Smith
- 22 - Laura Wake
- 23 - Trenton Simmons
- 24 - Tank Jamison
- 24 - Matthew Clay-Robison
- 24 - Tabitha Gover
- 24 - Lea Gilmore

Welcome, Jennifer, Michael, and Theo Khayyat!
Theo Khayyat was baptized during worship on
Sunday, August 15 (pictured).



The Govans Band (from left): Holly Brown, Lea Gilmore, Andy Wilson, Anne Owens, Stephen Gaede, Joe Gover, and Bonanza Jones

JOIN THE BAND!

It is my distinct honor to serve as First Service Music Director for Govans Presbyterian Church. In that capacity, I am also the Govans Band Leader. The band is composed of volunteer musicians who are fully committed to bringing their best for praise and worship every Sunday. We present a variety of musical genres: Gospel, Christian Contemporary, Blues, Folk, Hymns, as well as original music and songs. Do you play an instrument? Do you like to sing? Join us! We welcome professionals, as well as those who have the desire to make a joyful noise! Please contact me to find out more details. I look forward to hearing from you.
-Lea Gilmore (lea@govanspres.org)

Letter from Pastor Billy

Hello,

It's time for Sunday school! This fall, we'll have intergenerational Sunday school for kids and families outside on the playground as long as the weather permits. When we have one service, Sunday school will take place following worship; when we have two services, Sunday school will take place between worship services.



Our theme will be "God's stories on stage." Accordingly, each week we will be acting out the scripture passage for that week's sermon. If you would like to volunteer as an actor for one week, please email me at billy@govanspres.org. There's no memorization required! I'll see you on our playground stage!

Peace,
Pastor Billy

Sunday School for Children and Youth this Fall:

Sunday school for children and youth will kick off for the fall on Sunday, September 12 following worship. When we return to two services in October, Sunday school will take place between the two services. Thank you to all of the parents who shared your thoughts on how to safely offer Sunday school this fall. As long as weather permits, we will hold Sunday school outside on the playground under the gazebo. Our fall theme will be God's Stories on Stage. Each week, we will reenact our scripture as a funny skit. We need adult volunteers willing to read the parts each week. Please email billy@govanspres.org if you are willing to play a part for one week (no memorization required).

Youth and Young Families Activities:

- Sunday, September 5 at 3:30 p.m. - Family Litter Clean Up Day (last one for the year) at Govans - 3:30 to 4:30 p.m.
- Friday, September 10 at 6:30 p.m. - In-Person Youth Group at Govans
- Sunday, September 12 at 11:00 a.m. - First family Sunday school of the fall on the playground after worship
- Saturday September 25 from 3:00 to 5:00 p.m. - Young Families Board Game Party at Govans
- Sunday, September 26 at 10:00 am - Youth Servant Leader Commissioning during worship

Church Staff

Rev. Tom Harris, Senior Pastor
Rev. Billy Klutz, Associate Pastor
Lea Gilmore,
Minister for Racial Justice & Music
Director, 1st Service
Mary Hamlin-Spencer
Music Director, 2nd Service
Rev. Jenny Williams
Ministry Associate for
Congregational Care
Pam Wallace, Office Manager
Andy Wilson, Administrative Asst.
Sylvia Usher
Sexton
Pam Ferguson,
Director of Preschool
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*The deadline for
submissions for the
October 2021 newsletter
is September 20, 2021.
Please send to Andy
Wilson
(wilson@govanspres.org)
or call the church office.*

**Believe in
Baltimore**
Hosted by Govans Presbyterian Church



What's Going On @ Govans?

GOVANS
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
MUSIC
MONDAYS

ANDY COHEN
IN CONCERT **FINGERBUSTERS**
AND **FOOFARAW PART 2!**
September 13 7:00 p.m.



Renowned folk singer-songwriter, historian and rabble rouser, Andy Cohen will lead us on a journey of music from "the golden age of 78s. Andy Cohen is a virtuoso finger-style guitarist who has been described as "a walking, talking folk-blues-roots music encyclopedia."

Join us for an evening of music and fun!

For more information and/or to request the Zoom link, please email Lea Gilmore: lea@govanspres.org

GOVANS
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

MUSIC MONDAYS

DEBBIE BOND &
"RADIATOR" RICK
September 20 7:00 p.m. ET



Join us to celebrate the release of Debbie Bond and "Radiator" Rick's new recording *Blues Without Borders*! They will be sharing songs of peace, unity, justice, and love - and a bit of humor too! Celebrating blues power as medicine for the soul connecting us to our common humanity. Plus Govans' own Lea Gilmore is on the new recording!

Join us for an evening of music and fun!

For more information and/or to request the Zoom link, please email Lea Gilmore: lea@govanspres.org

GOVANS
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

RACIAL JUSTICE
MINISTRY
Speaker Series

RACIAL JUSTICE
MINISTRY
Speaker Series



Richard Rowe

Structural Racism & Psychological Trauma: The State of Black Men in Baltimore City & Beyond

Saturday, September 18 @ 2:00 p.m.
live on Zoom

Richard Rowe, MPA, currently serves as the Director of Training for the Black Mental Health Alliance, Inc. He has served as a senior manager / project director for numerous public/private agencies and grassroots organizations. Richard's areas of specialization include mentoring, fatherhood, family-centered healing rituals, collaborations and partnerships, enhancing intergenerational relationships, healing centered engagement, stress reduction, wellness, and resiliency.

This presentation will elevate the conversation related to the socio-economic and psycho-cultural contexts of Black men in society and how Black men are viewed, treated, criminalized, demonized, and how they have been, and are still being rendered voiceless and invisible. A number of recommendations will also be lifted-up and shared with participants.

Visit www.govanspres.org to register for the Zoom link.

For further details, please contact Lea Gilmore, Minister for Racial Justice: lea@govanspres.org

Family Game Day

Saturday, September 25
3:00-5:00 p.m.

Govans Presbyterian Church

Play your favorite games with your family and favorite Govans friends. All families with children ages 1-18 are welcome. You may bring a favorite board game to play or play one of ours. Facemasks are required for all participants three years of age and above.



GOVANS
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

Community Gospel Choir

Tuesday, September 14
7:00 p.m.

Music is a unifying force. There is no better way to build and feel community All are welcome, no experience necessary. Contact Lea Gilmore (lea@govanspres.org) for more information.



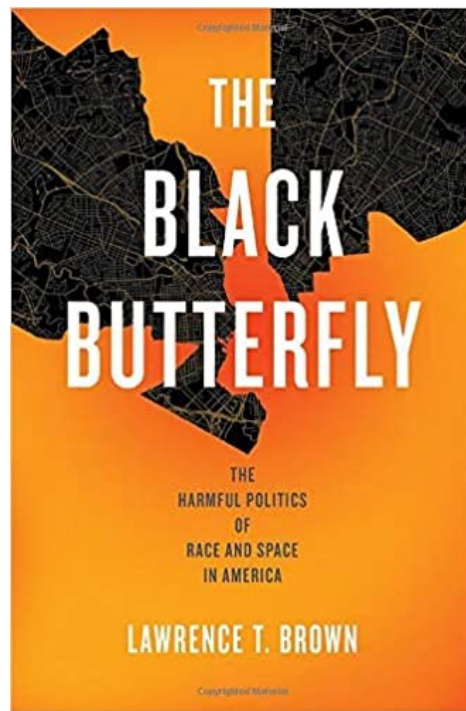
Racial Justice Ministry Book Discussion Returns for the Fall: *The Black Butterfly*

The world gasped in April 2015 as Baltimore erupted and Black Lives Matter activists, incensed by Freddie Gray's brutal death in police custody, shut down highways and marched on city streets. In *The Black Butterfly*—a reference to the fact that Baltimore's majority-Black population spreads out on both sides of the coveted strip of real estate running down the center of the city like a butterfly's wings—Lawrence T. Brown reveals that ongoing historical trauma caused by a combination of policies, practices, systems, and budgets is at the root of uprisings and crises in hypersegregated cities around the country.

Putting Baltimore under a microscope, Brown looks closely at the causes of segregation, many of which exist in current legislation and regulatory policy despite the common belief that overtly racist policies are a thing of the past. Drawing on social science research, policy analysis, and archival materials, Brown reveals the long history of racial segregation's impact on health, from toxic pollution to police brutality.

But there is reason to hope. Throughout the book, Brown offers a clear five-step plan for activists, nonprofits, and public officials to achieve racial equity. Not content to simply describe and decry urban problems, Brown offers up a wide range of innovative solutions to help heal and restore redlined Black neighborhoods, including municipal reparations. Persuasively arguing that because urban apartheid was intentionally erected it can be intentionally dismantled, *The Black Butterfly* demonstrates that America cannot reflect that Black lives matter until we see how Black neighborhoods matter.

The discussion will take place on Zoom from October 5 through November 9 at 7:00 p.m. Email Lea Gilmore (lea@govanspres.org) for more information. The church will have hardcover books available for purchase for \$30 plus shipping. Email Andy Wilson (wilson@govanspres.org) to register and purchase a book. The book were purchased by Govans from Urban Reads, a Black-owned bookstore in Waverly



SOUL KITCHEN VOLUNTEERS NEEDED:

Volunteers are needed every Sunday to help prepare, serve, and clean-up at Soul Kitchen, our free community take-out meal. Help is needed from 3:30-6:30 p.m. Come for all or part of the time. Contact Carolyn Anewich (carolynsnecklaces@gmail.com) if you have any questions. You can sign-up to volunteer by going to the Soul Kitchen page on the Govans website:

www.govanspres.org/events/soul-kitchen. Thanks!



August Mission Offering: Kay Papa Nou and Unity House in Haiti

Below are two of the ten letters we received from residents at Kay Papa Nou reflecting on the recent new in Haiti:

"Above all I want to take this opportunity to greet our dear friends who still think of us in Haiti. It is with sadness and pain that I talk about this great shocking drama that is happening in my country. On the night of July 6 to 7, 2021, foreign mercenaries installed in the country for several days to execute a grand plan arranged by the bourgeoisie of the country killed our President Jovenel Moise. The situation in this country is never stable. Gangs of bandits are paid to disrupt the political and social security system, traumatize people, and ruin the dreams of the young people by making our country uninhabitable.

In conclusion, it is true that the country was already facing these problems but the killing of our president is now in the memory of all Haitians, me in particular. I know and I believe that God alone will do justice to this country because he said that the wicked do not resist always." Thank you for your concern." -Pamelitha

"Hello my friends. Before sharing my opinion of my country, I begin with greeting you in the precious name of Jesus Christ. Today, it is with a great sadness and great shame that I will explain to you how I feel after the assassination of my excellent president, Mr. Jovenel Moise. When I heard that he had died upon returning home on the 6th or 7th of July, it hurt me a lot and made me very sad.

Sometimes, when I'm alone, I ask myself this question: where will I go in this country? For a long time, there has been a safety risk in the country, to the point where there are mercenaries who are able to kill the head of state of my country, Haiti. So, that shocked me and made me very sad. Thank you!" -J. Makes

The underlying theme in each of the ten letters received is trust in God's love despite unending hardship. "...Give light to my eyes, or I will sleep the sleep of death, and my enemy will say, "I have prevailed"; my foes will rejoice because I am shaken. But I trusted in your steadfast love; my heart shall rejoice in your salvation. I will sing to the Lord, because he has dealt bountifully with me."



Damaged medical intern residence in
Les Cayes

These letters were received in response to a request to Kay Papa Nou and Unity House to share their feelings about their country. A few days later, their president, Jovenel Moise, was assassinated in his home.

A few days after Moise's murder, the 7.2 magnitude earthquake struck resulting in over 2,000 deaths, 344 missing, and some 53,000 homes destroyed. The residence of Youse Odly, a medical student and intern from Kay Papa Nou, jumped from her residence in Les Cayes to safety. Two

young interns in her group died. The hospital was also damaged.

The collapse of churches in some of the worst-affected areas left residents to grieve in open fields, including Youse Odly, who is grieving for her friend. Fear felt from aftershocks in Port-au-Prince made sleeping indoors difficult to impossible. A few days later flooding from Hurricane Grace only added misery and complicated the recovery operations.

As the new school year approaches, David and Danny continue to need all the support you can graciously give. Preparations are now underway for the new school year. This year seven pupils will be enrolled in the terminal class (final year of high school). Added costs are needed for school books, school bags, uniforms, shoes, etc. Contributions made

Pastoral Ponderings...continued from page 1

in NYC and saw the Botanical Gardens in the Bronx and went up to the top of the Freedom Tower with an old friend.

Adult Rec Softball - I played in an Adult Rec Softball League which was apparently connected with Grace United Methodist Church. We were called Grace Under Pressure. But the connection seemed to be in name only. I couldn't identify anyone on the team who attended Grace. It was lots of fun getting to know some new folks and I only hurt myself semi-seriously twice.

Bible Study - I rediscovered my love of Bible Study. I began and have stuck with a practice of intensive Bible Study for an hour every morning. This has been very nourishing for me in many ways.

Intentions/Hopes Going Forward:

Looking ahead I plan to prioritize my work around preaching preparation, pastoral care, leadership development, Session leadership, and staff supervision. I have tried such a re-prioritization before and usually get bogged down in writing emails and doing too many things that volunteers could be doing. To help me be more successful in the effort this time, I have started meeting with a Spiritual Director on a regular basis.

Preaching without Notes - This will be a challenge (for me at least, hopefully not for you!). For 21 years of ministry I have been a manuscript preacher. I'm comfortable writing. I do it pretty well. But, over the years I have felt called to grow in a new direction related to my preaching. Over the sabbatical I read a couple books on preaching without notes (so now I'm an expert!). I want to try it and stick with it for a while even if it is challenging. I don't want to give up just because I fall on my face a few times. So please bear with me and give me feedback. Preaching without notes is not preaching without preparation. In fact, there is more preparation in some ways and it certainly requires more faith. Thank you in advance for any grace you can extend to me during this effort.

So that's a lot! Regardless of where this all goes from here, I am grateful to have such a wonderful congregation to share in this journey. Thank you again for all those who made this sabbatical possible.

Peace,
Tom

to the Mission Offering will go to help the children and young adults at Kay Papa Nou and Unity House in Haiti.

Thank you

All donations marked "Mission Offering" will go to the benefit the work of Kay Papa Nou and Unity House in Haiti.



Youse Odly and friend in front of her residence in Les Cayes

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