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Govans Presbyterian Church
Baltimore, Maryland



GOVANS PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH CELEBRATES BLACK HISTORY

by Lea Gilmore, Minister of Racial Justice and Multicultural Engagement

Black History Month was created by Dr. Carter G. Woodson. Realizing the need to focus the attention of the public on the vast contributions of its African American citizens, in 1926, Dr. Woodson organized "Negro History Week" which was expanded with the help of other prominent African Americans, into "Negro History month." Woodson chose the month of February, because both Abraham



Lincoln and Frederick Douglass were born during the month. Since 1976, every U.S. president has officially designated the month of February as Black History Month. Other countries around the world, including Canada and the United Kingdom, also devote a month to celebrating Black history."

It is important to recognize Black History

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PASTORAL PONDERINGS

by Rev. Tom Harris

Dear Friends,

One of the spiritual disciplines I have been practicing since returning from sabbatical has been daily personal Bible Study. This has morphed and changed some since August, but in general it involves about an hour of reading before breakfast every day (with reading online comics and the *New York Times* daily email over breakfast as my "reward"). I have also started including other devotional texts in this time, but still start with some Bible reading. As of the writing of this letter I'm up to Psalm 37 after starting with Genesis 1! I have learned or relearned many things as a



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February Calendar

2 - Personnel Committee, 6:00 pm
6 - In-Person and Online Worship, 10:00 am
6 - Soul Kitchen Meal Pickup, 3:30:5:30 pm
7 - Music Mondays, 7:00 pm
11 - Govans Book Club, 10:00 am
12 - Young Families Ski Trip, 10:00 am
12 - Racial Justice Speaker Series, 2:00 pm
13 - In-Person and Online Worship, 9:00 & 11:00 am
13 - Youth Servant Leader Council, 3:00 pm
13 - Soul Kitchen Meal Pickup, 3:30:5:30 pm
14 - Music Mondays, 7:00 pm
14 - Finance Committee, 7:00 pm
15 - Session Meeting, 6:30 pm
20 - In-Person and Online Worship, 9:00 & 11:00 am
20 - Soul Kitchen Meal Pickup, 3:30:5:30 pm
21 - Special Black History Month Music Mondays w/
Roderick Demmings, Jr, In-Person & Online, 7:00 pm
21 - Facilities Committee, 6:30 pm
25 - Intergenerational Book Discussion, 6:30 pm
27 - In-Person and Online Worship, 9:00 & 11:00 am
27 - Soul Kitchen Meal Pickup, 3:30:5:30 pm
28 - Music Mondays, 7:00 pm

February Birthdays

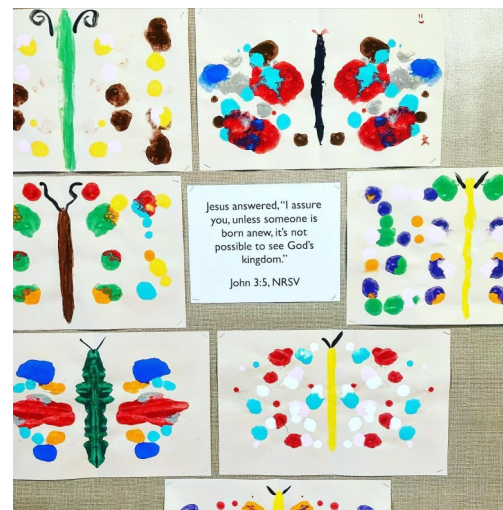
3 - Chris Hoffman
4 - David Sandles
5 - Felecia Traynham
8 - Lyndell Smith
9 - Patricia Short
10 - Chad Koehler
10 - Barb Taber
14 - Xavier Henderson
15 - John Laube (Bonanza)
18 - Jody Morris
18 - Bonnie Thomson
19 - Andrea Cox
21 - Mary Cooper
22 - Doug Gaede
23 - Wendy Smith
27 - Loren Western



CRAFTING OUR WAY THROUGH THE GOSPEL OF JOHN

Intergenerational Sunday school returns this season with our new series, Crafting Our Way Through the Gospel of John. Each Sunday until Holy Week, we will create a craft to help us discuss the Bible story for that Sunday. Keep an eye out in worship and around the education building for our artistic creations! Sunday school will take place in the gallery of the education building to give us extra room to spread out. On the first Sunday of each month, we'll gather at 11:10 am after the joint service; on all other Sundays, we'll meet at 10:10 am between the two services.

If your family would like to participate from home, email billy@govanspres.org and Pastor Billy will help coordinate a supply delivery to your home. Pictured right, Sunday school participants made butterfly paintings on January 23 to remember the new life that Jesus told Nicodemus about.



Letter from Pastor Billy

Hello, Govans,

How do we define the church today? And what counts as “church” in the digital and COVID era? Last month, as part of my work toward my Doctor of Ministry degree, I took a course on contemporary ecclesiologies (the study of the church) devoted to those questions.



The course made use of some wonderful books to broaden our discussion of the many ways the Christian church is growing and adapting in the world, such as Song-Chan Rah’s moving Evangelical perspective on anti-racism work and the future of the church in The Next Evangelicalism: Freeing the Church from Western Cultural Captivity. As a class, we also tackled Jurgen Moltmann’s classic The Church in the Power of the Spirit in which the well-known “theologian of

...continued on page 5

Church Staff

Rev. Tom Harris, Senior Pastor
Rev. Billy Kluttz, Associate Pastor

Lea Gilmore,

Minister for Racial Justice &
Music Director, 1st Service

Deborah Lewis

Interim Music Director, 2nd
Service

Pam Wallace, Office Manager
Andy Wilson, Administrative Asst.

Sylvia Usher

Sexton

Pam Ferguson,

Director of Preschool

Gwen Lloyd, Program Director,
Senior Network

Govans Presbyterian Church

5828 York Road Baltimore,

Maryland 21212

410-435-9188

Youth and Young Families Activities:

- Sunday, February 6 - Intergenerational Sunday School after joint worship service at 11:15 am
- Saturday, February 12 - Young Families Ski Trip @ Liberty Mountain at 10:00 am
- Sunday, February 13 - Youth Servant Leader Council Meeting via Zoom at 3:00 pm
- Tuesday, February 15 - Preschool Chapel with Pastor Billy
- Friday, February 25 - Youth Group at 6:30 pm - Intergenerational reading/discussion of Amanda Gorman's poetry online and in person - volunteer readers needed (contact billy@govanspres.org)

Contact Pastor Billy (billy@govanspres.org) for more information and to sign-up up for weekly Youth and Young Families Updates.



**THE HERALD &
BELLRINGER**

*The deadline for
submissions for the March
2022 newsletter is
February 15, 2022.
Please send to Andy
Wilson
(wilson@govanspres.org)
or call the church office.*

Govans 101

Every First Sunday
Following Worship

Whether you are interested in becoming a member, getting more involved, or just learning more about the church, you're invited to a monthly conversation hosted by Govans' pastors. We'll talk about our ministries, what it means to be Presbyterian, our governance and theology, and, most importantly, how you can be a part of it all.

Questions? Email tom@govanspres.org or
billy@govanspres.org.

What's Going On At Govans?

YOUNG FAMILIES SKI DAY

AT LIBERTY MOUNTAIN

Saturday, February 12 from 10:00 am - 3:00 pm

Liberty Mountain Resort - Fairfield, Pennsylvania
Young families are invited to a skiing day with Pastor Billy at Liberty Mountain. Liberty Mountain has terrain perfect for beginner and advanced skiers. Lift tickets are \$84 for adults and \$70 for kids and seniors (over 65). Scholarships are available, email billy@govanspres.org to request a scholarship. Families with kids ages 1 to 18 are welcome. Non-skiing parents are also welcome to come and watch.



GOVANS
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

Youth and
Young Families

Govans Book Club

10:00 am on the second Friday of the month

Live on Zoom

Next Meeting is February 11 at 10:00 am

The book selection *Daughters of Yalta* by Catherine Katz

Email Bobbie Cook (cookbobbie347@gmail.com) for the more information.



GOVANS
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

Music Mondays

Sharrif Simmons

Monday, February 7
Live on Zoom

Sharrif Simmons is a performance artist, author, songwriter, musician, poet and arts educator. This spoken word/concert will showcase poems from the 1st. & 2nd editions of Sharrif's book *Fast Cities and Objects That Burn*. Poems will be accompanied by acoustic guitar. The theme of the night will span from Rodney King to George Floyd and will include a discussion with Q&A about our continued efforts for social justice in the United States. Prepare for a night of enlightening poetry and acoustic music!

Contact Lea Gilmore (lea@govanspres.org) for more info.
Zoom link at www.govanspres.org.



Online Bible Study

with Knox and Govans Presbyterian Churches
Wednesdays at 12:00 noon on Zoom
Everyone is welcome!

ZOOM LINK WILL BE IN THE WEEKLY EMAIL - SUBSCRIBE AT
WWW.GOVANSPRES.ORG

GOVANS
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

Music Mondays

Paris Kern and Joy Trukowski

Monday, February 14 at 7:00 pm ET
Live on Zoom

Paris Kern is a singer who delights in sharing folk songs mostly in the tradition of Britain. The last few years her newest joy has been in Improvisational Choral singing known as circlesinging, a form created by Bobby McFerrin with whom she has studied.

Joy Trukowski is a member of VoiceExchange, a group of singers and improvisers based in Washington, D.C. which spontaneously creates improvised choral pieces, leads community-singing events, and delivers a cappella performances that are highly audience-interactive.

Join Paris and Joy as they share love songs for you to join in and then, with the magic of live looping, create circle songs WITH you!

Contact Lea Gilmore (lea@govanspres.org) for more info.
Zoom link at www.govanspres.org.



Adult Options Returns In February:

- February 6 at 11:10 am (Zoom and Waverly room after the single service): Lea Gilmore, and members of the Racial Justice Working Group, will update us about their work.
- February 13, 10:10 am (after first service). Fred Rasmussen of the Baltimore Sun will present on the Pullman Porters labor movement.

The Light - Govans' Racial Justice Ministry e-newsletter is available now in the Racial Justice section of www.govanspres.org.

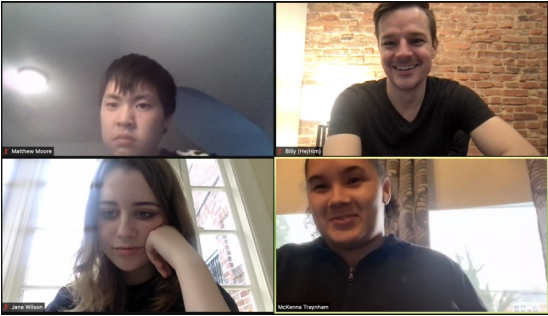
If you would like to subscribe, please email Andy Wilson (wilson@govanspres.org).



ISSUE 2 · JAN 2022

THE LIGHT
**RACIAL JUSTICE
MINISTRY
E-NEWSLETTER**

Youth and Young Families Activities



Screenshot of January 9 Youth Servant Leader Council Meeting



Young Families Ice Skating on January 8 at the Inner Harbor Ice Rink



Letter from Pastor Billy (continued from page 3)

hope” offers his vision of the church as a diverse community gathered, empowered, and sent by God’s Spirit to transform the world. Although Moltmann describes his context 50 years ago, I was struck by the similarities to our own current struggles as a faith. He writes:

In this situation of paralysing apathy and the creeping recession of the will to live, the Christian faith must show itself in courage for incarnation, in a passionate love of life, and in its ardent interest in existence, so that the feeble ‘enjoyment’ of life acquires the power to resist death, catastrophe and all the people who pursue them.

I am so grateful to serve a church like Govans that embodies that “courage for incarnation” and I hope that in the month ahead you might challenge yourself to live into Moltmann’s threefold calling of courage, passion, and “ardent interest in existence” through your personal spiritual life and through your support of our collective mission and ministry at Govans.

Peace,
Pastor Billy

Govans Racial Justice Ministry celebrates Black History Month with Special Programming and Engagement Opportunities:

February 12 at 2:00 pm - Racial Justice Speaker Series: Mark Williams (Live on Zoom): Join local journalist, Mark Williams as he presents *Environmental Injustice: How Contamination of Water, Air, and Land Constitutes Violence Against Black Communities*. Black Americans are among those who suffer the greatest harm from industrial contamination of our water, air and land. This ongoing violence targets Black and indigenous community in particular and is a continuation of violence and plunder that began hundreds of years ago. We hope you can join us to learn more and about vital and urgent issue.



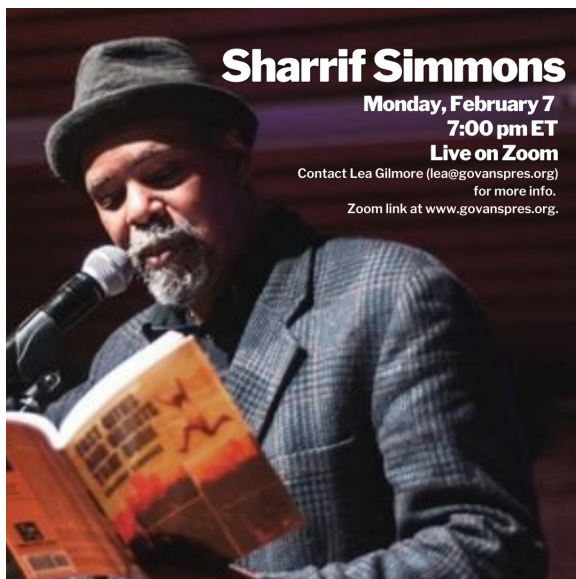
GOVANS Racial Justice Ministry Speaker Series
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

Mark Williams

Environmental Injustice: How Contamination of Water, Air, and Land Constitutes Violence Against Black Communities

Saturday, February 12 at 2:00 pm - Live on Zoom

Visit www.govanspres.org for the link. Email Lea Gilmore (lea@govanspres.org) for more info.



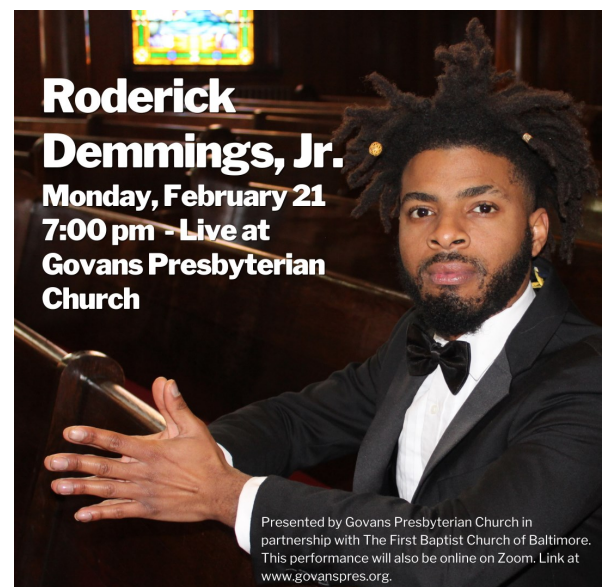
Sharrif Simmons

Monday, February 7 7:00 pm ET Live on Zoom

Contact Lea Gilmore (lea@govanspres.org) for more info.
Zoom link at www.govanspres.org.

February 7 - Sharrif Simmons- 30 years of Fast Cities and Objects That Burn. Live on Zoom: This spoken word/concert will showcase poems from the 1st & 2nd editions of Sharrif's book *Fast Cities and Objects That Burn*. Poems will be accompanied by acoustic guitar. The theme of the night will span from Rodney King to George Floyd and will include a discussion with Q&A about our continued efforts for social justice in the United States. Prepare for a night of enlightening poetry and acoustic music!

February 21 at 7:00 pm - Roderick Demmings, Jr. in Concert (In person and online): Pianist, organist, singer, and composer, Roderick Demmings Jr. brings a concert whose diversity can rarely be eclipsed. From Bach, to Ella Fitzgerald, to James Cleveland, to Johnny Cash, "Rod" is bringing it all. An ardent advocate for social justice, Rod will showcase several original works that prick the conscience concerning the civil rights of Black and Brown bodies. A stirring pathos sprinkled with humor, the concert guarantees to leave all in attendance asking themselves "how might I be better."



Roderick Demmings, Jr.

Monday, February 21 7:00 pm - Live at Govans Presbyterian Church

Presented by Govans Presbyterian Church in partnership with The First Baptist Church of Baltimore. This performance will also be online on Zoom. Link at www.govanspres.org.



February 25 at 6:30 pm - An Intergenerational Discussion of Amanda Gorman's *Change Sings* (In-person and online): You're invited to an intergenerational discussion of Amanda Gorman's *Change Sings* February 25th at 6:30pm online and in-person at Govans. Govans Youth will be leading the discussion about this inspiring poem as part of Govans' Black History Month Celebration. Please purchase books from the church office for \$20 (email wilson@govanspres.org). The church has purchased the books from Urban Reads, a Black-owned bookstore in Baltimore City. You may also purchase additional copies to be donated to Govans Elementary School. All ages are welcome for this intergenerational discussion.

February 27 at 11:00 am- Matthew 25 Service (In person and Virtual): Govans Presbyterian is a Matthew 25 Church. Matthew 25 is an initiative of PC-USA. We recognize Christ's urgent call to be a church of action, where God's love, justice and mercy shine forth and are contagious. And we rejoice how our re-energized faith can unite all Presbyterians for a common and holy purpose: our common identity to do mission. We do this by committing to: Building Congregational Vitality; dismantling structural racism; and eradicating systemic poverty. Lea Gilmore, Minister for Racial Justice and Multicultural Engagement will be preaching.



Govans Celebrates Black History Month...continued from page 1.

is American history and should not be confined to 28/29 days of the year. There is so much to be learned (and unlearned).

Usually, when students learn about Black history in class, their lessons are limited to slavery or the civil rights era. Don't get me wrong: these are integral parts of our story, and it's encouraging to read stories that show our strength, perseverance, and ability to overcome so many adversities. I am proud to come from a culture filled with people who were bold and brave enough to fight for our freedom and rights. But in the same breath, I can't help but feel disappointed that our students are not learning about the vastness of our greatness. After all, we are much more than just an oppressed culture. (Sachel Harris, 2021)

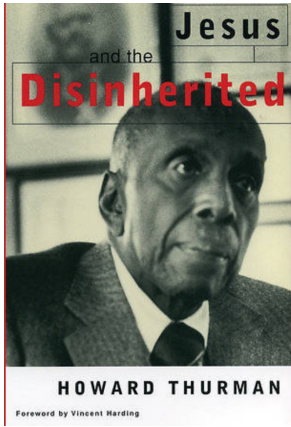
As we continue to fight the forces that want to sanitize and edit the aggregate of African Americans' experiences and contributions, we embrace the continued relevance of Black History Month and the absolute necessity that this history be taught and celebrated throughout the year.

To learn more about Govans' Racial Justice Ministry, contact Lea at (lea@govanspres.org)



Racial Justice Ministry

LENT AT GOVANS



LENTEN STUDY OF JESUS AND THE DISINHERITED

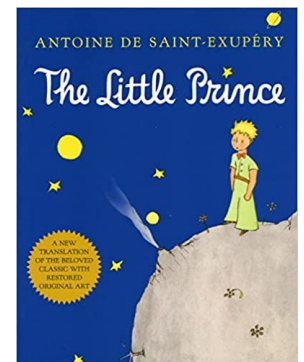
Join Minister Lea Gilmore and Pastor Tom Harris on Tuesday evenings in Lent for a deep dive into this theological classic. In the forward Vincent Harding writes, "Jesus and the Disinherited is the centerpiece of the Black prophet-mystic's lifelong attempt to bring the harrowing beauty of the African American experience into deep engagement with what he called 'the religion of Jesus'". Books will be available to purchase by contacting the church office (wilson@govanspres.org or 410-435-9188).

The study will take place on Zoom at 7:00 pm March 8, 15, 22, 29 and April 5.

THE LITTLE PRINCE AND THE FOURTH GOSPEL

Saturdays during Lent - 3-4 pm, 4-5 pm - March 5 through April 16 - Online only

Discover a new appreciation for Antoine de Saint-Exupéry's classic children's novel *The Little Prince* as we read it alongside the Gospel of John this Lent. Pastor Billy will offer two weekly discussions of the book and related sections of John's Gospel on Saturdays via Zoom. On Saturdays, he will lead an English-language discussion of the book from 3:00 to 4:00 pm and a French-language discussion from 4:00 to 5:00 pm. To RSVP and receive a reading guide, email billy@govanspres.org. No prior reading is required to participate each week, we will read the chapters together during the session. The French session will be led using intermediate French; French speakers of all levels are welcome to participate.



Lenten Text Devotionals

Want to deepen your spirituality during Lent? Sign-up for Govans' daily text message devotionals. Each day during lent, Pastor Billy will curate inspiring quotes, prayers, and lyrics to inspire you as we journey together toward the cross and good news of Easter.

Text "govans" to 94000 to subscribe. Message and data rates may apply.



Ash Wednesday Service

March 2 - 7:00 pm

Join us for music from both music teams, scripture, message, prayer and the ritual Imposition of Ashes.



Special Lenten Sermon Series

"Unbinding Grief, Unbinding Life"

Throughout the season of Lent, we will be reading the Story of the Raising of Lazarus in John 11. This story explores the relationship with grief and new life for several different characters including Jesus himself.



BELIEVE IN BALTIMORE PODCAST WITH BALTIMORE CITY COUNCILMEMBER, MARK CONWAY



Is the environment a social justice concern? How can neighborhoods around Baltimore work together to strengthen our city? Baltimore City District 4 Councilmember Mark Conway joins us on the latest episode of the podcast to discuss his work on the council and in the community. Mark Conway hails from the Bronx, New York. Mark studied Government and Politics and Philosophy at the University of Maryland. After completing his undergraduate studies, he pursued a Master's of Public Policy while working at the Environmental Protection Agency in Washington, D.C. **Listen to this and all episodes of Believe in Baltimore at: www.govanspres.org/podcast.**



Pastoral Ponderings, continued from page one.

result of this time. It has also been a way to check in with my own faith in relation to Scripture. While Scripture stays the same over time, our faith grows and matures. Therefore we never read the same Bible twice (deep, right?).

The Season of Lent (beginning March 2 with Ash Wednesday) is a time when Christians are invited to give special attention to their spiritual life. In pop culture this often translates into people “giving up” something for Lent. Chocolate, alcohol, and soft drinks are popular abstentions. Giving something up can certainly be meaningful. It reminds us of the ways we can become dependent on things instead of dependent on God. However, I would encourage you to instead (or also) consider adding a devotional practice to your life. A regular time of prayer each morning. A regular meditative walk at lunch. Reading the Bible or a devotional book. Committing to calling a friend or family member once a day to check in. Slowly, mindfully eating one meal a day. The list of possibilities could go on and on.

In this newsletter, you will find two possibilities for added devotional practice in Lent. Pastor Billy is leading a study of *The Little Prince in conversation with the Gospel of John*. You can participate in that study in French or English or both. Minister Lea and I are leading a study of *Jesus and the Disinherited*, by Howard Thurman who was a mentor of Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Both opportunities offer meaningful ways to deepen your spiritual life during this season that happens to coincide with the coming of Spring and the new life celebrated in Easter.

Regardless of what you choose to do or not do (or abstain from doing), I invite you to be intentional about your spiritual growth in the coming year. We have been given the gift of life. Let's be thoughtful and prayerful in how we live it.

Peace, Tom



The Session met for our regular monthly meeting on Tuesday, January 18. Here are some highlights from the meeting.

We approved the 2022 Operating Budget. This budget will be shared with the congregation before the March 6th Annual Congregational Meeting. Some highlights of the budget include:

- A strong increase in pledging with 8 new pledges and over \$50,000 in increased pledges.
- Increased pledge support for the staffing initiative
- Increased costs from the Presbytery recommended 4% Cost of Living Increase for all staff and new staff costs needed for operating our new AV equipment.
- We will also be adding a paid singer for the band. This will encourage more singers to participate in the band in the same way section leaders encourage participation in the choir.

We also discussed a vision for a community garden on the front lawn of the church. The proposal came from the Earth Care Committee. The vision would be for Govans to partner with community members to create this garden. We cannot and should not do it alone. Several organizational models are being considered and we will begin to look for partners. At this point the Session communicated to the Earth Care Committee that we support the vision and encouraged them to continue exploring the possibilities.

The Session also agreed to a proposal from the Earth Care Committee to sign a letter from the Maryland Campaign for Human Rights in support of a voter referendum for a State Amendment for Environmental Human Rights. Stay tuned for more information as the legislation is considered by this year's General Assembly.

We also heard a report from Facilities about the Preschool Window Wall project. Architects are being interviewed and we are working closely with our Owner Representative. The safety of the children of the Preschool will be our highest priority moving forward with this project.

Finally, we approved an updated COVID Policy. The full policy was included in the weekly email and can be found on the church website. Significant changes to the policy include an emphasis on high quality masks like KN95 for staff and worshippers. The new policy also emphasizes we will follow CDC, state and city guidelines and mandates as we seek to navigate the ever changing nature of the pandemic.

If you have any questions, please contact any member of the Session or the ministerial staff.

A poster for Intergenerational Sunday School. It features a large, light-colored wooden cross on a dark wood background. The text "Intergenerational Sunday School" is in a large, white, sans-serif font. Below it, in a smaller white font, is "FOR PARENTS AND KIDS 10:10 AM IN THE GALLERY (11:10 AM ON FIRST SUNDAYS)". At the bottom right, it says "Email Pastor Billy (billy@govanspres.org) for more information." and includes the Govans logo, which is a stylized cross made of four colored squares (yellow, green, blue, red) with the word "GOVANS" below it.

FEBRUARY MISSION OFFERING - GEDCO AND CARES:

Govans Presbyterian Church was one of the leading churches that started GEDCO and the CARES program to meet the needs of our neighbors. CARES was opened in 1993 by a group of devoted volunteers primarily from churches in the Govans neighborhood of north Baltimore. Their vision was to create a centralized place where area churches could send persons in need and know they would be served more effectively and efficiently. We continue to support GEDCO and CARES through our offering and continued food donations.

GEDCO's CARES serves families and individuals in crisis by connecting our clients with resources that enable movement towards self-sufficiency. These resources include food and emergency financial assistance services.

CARES continues to be run by an extremely dedicated team, consisting of one full time and one part time employee, as well as over 100 volunteers. With the generous support and food donations made by GEDCO's network of over 55 Member Organizations, individuals, schools, corporations, government agencies, and community groups, GEDCO's CARES responded to over 3,599 requests for food and financial assistance to over 478 families. This included providing 208 families with eviction prevention assistance, assisting 81 older adults with prescription assistance, and helped 189 households avoid a disruption in their utility service in FY 20 (April 1, 2019 thru March 31, 2020).

*****All donations marked "Mission Offering" during February
will be donated to GEDCO/CARES.*****



30th Anniversary
GEDCO 
*Building Caring and Compassionate Communities
since 1991*




PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
5828 York Road
Baltimore, MD 21212
410-435-9188
www.govanspres.org

*"Govans Presbyterian Church is a theologically progressive community
empowering people to make the world better."*



GOVANS
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

CELEBRATES BLACK HISTORY MONTH

**See inside for more details*