



March | April 2024

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WELCOME TO REV. SHANNON WESTON, GOVANS' NEW BRIDGE PASTOR

The Rev. Shannon Weston, our new "bridge pastor," is a 43-year-old certified leadership coach who specializes in helping organizations navigate strenuous situations.

Born and raised in Bowling Green, Kentucky, she attended the University of Memphis before transferring to the University of Louisville where she obtained a bachelor of arts degree in music (she



used to play the clarinet) with a minor in religious studies.

She was raised a Southern Baptist but left in middle school. "It did not fit with what I was," she said. She holds a master of divinity from the Louisville Seminary and is working toward a doctorate of ministry

from St. Mary's Ecumenical Institute in Baltimore. The thesis? Coaching Leadership for Systemic Change. Perfect, right?

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REV. ROBERT C. GALBRAITH: A CASE STUDY OF THE MINISTRY - PART 2

by Myra Brosius



RC and Mary Galbraith, n.d. By permission of N. Jinette.

Robert C. Galbraith was the installed pastor at Govans leading up to and through the Civil War - a time crucial to the understanding of our racial justice history. Particularly germane is

that Galbraith had a calling to minister to African Americans —both enslaved and free—for two decades. Ministers at that time had differing agendas in preaching to the enslaved. We do not have his sermons and so I set out to develop insight about this intriguing man by examining the influences of his life to see how they may have informed his message. In Part II, we begin when Galbraith was a recent graduate of Princeton Seminary and end with an introduction to Elizabeth Love, the subject of a scandal that was fueled by the white supremacists attitudes of the Baltimore elite.

continued on page 8

March Calendar

3 - Worship, 10:30 a.m.
3 - Soul Kitchen Meal pick-up, 4:30 p.m.
8 - March Youth Group, 5:00 p.m.
10 - Worship, 10:30 a.m.
10 - Soul Kitchen Meal pick-up, 4:30 p.m.
11 - Marie Herrington-Music Mondays, 7 p.m.
12 - Lenten Small Group, 6:00 p.m.
15 - Where's My Peace concert, 7:00 p.m.
17 - Worship, 10:30 a.m.
17 - ROPAGOFA Trip to Jesus Christ Superstar,
17 - Soul Kitchen Meal pick-up, 4:30 p.m.
19 - Lenten Small Group, 6:00 p.m.
19 - Session Meeting, 6:30 p.m.
24 - Worship, 10:30 a.m.
24 - Soul Kitchen Meal pick-up, 4:30 p.m.
26 - Lenten Small Group, 6:00 p.m.
28 - Maundy Thursday Supper, 5:30 p.m.
28 - Holy Week Service, 7:00 p.m.
31 - Worship, 10:30 a.m. followed by Egg Hunt
and Petting Zoo
31 - Soul Kitchen Meal pick-up, 4:30 p.m.

March Birthdays

2 - Lucia Clay-Robison
3 - Phyllis Ross
4 - Nathan Green
9 - Shelly Clay-Robison
16 - Jenny Hoffman
17 - Terry Shaw
20 - Mary Beth White
24 - Darbey Gover
26 - Jon Morgan
29 - Ashley Short
30 - Paulina Conrad



April Calendar

7 - Worship, 10:30 a.m.
7 - Soul Kitchen Meal pick-up, 4:30 p.m.
- March Youth Group, 5:00 p.m.
14 - Worship, 10:30 a.m.
14 - Soul Kitchen Meal pick-up, 4:30 p.m.
16 - Session Meeting, 6:30 p.m.
21 - Worship, 10:30 a.m.
21 - Soul Kitchen Meal pick-up, 4:30 p.m.
28 - Knox/Govans Partnership Sunday - Service at
Knox (No service at Govans), 11:00 a.m.
28 - Soul Kitchen Meal pick-up, 4:30 p.m.



April Birthdays

2 - Helen Finney, Anne Stone, Mark Wong
5 - Zoe Green
9 - Claire Storey
13 - Peter Conrad
17 - Quentin Morris
22 - Eric Johnson
23 - Noah Mills
26 - Shannon Weston
28 - Marie Herrington
30 - Bobbie Cook

Note: If you are not sure if the church has your correct birthday, please email Andy Wilson (wilson@govanspres.org) in the church office.

PASTOR SEARCH 101 - WHAT COMES NEXT?

by Jon Morgan

Presbyterians often joke about their penchant for bureaucracy and nothing better demonstrates that tendency than the Baltimore Presbytery's flow chart for seeking a new pastor.

It's a marvel of boxes and lines that looks like Harry Potter's treasure map. It can only be contained to a single page by shmooshing it into a "W" shape with "pastor announces departure" at one end and "first year review" of the new pastor at the other.

In between are 22 action steps that would do Gen. Eisenhower proud.

The process typically takes 12-18 months and entails at least two committees: one to pick an interim pastor and another to find the full-time replacement for Tom Harris. That doesn't count the committee that hired our bridge pastor. Soon we'll have a committee on committees.

But it's serious work that requires no small amount of introspection by the congregation.

"It make sense to me to wait a year to see what we are and what we want," said Angela Pinaglia, who has graciously signed up to serve on the interim-pastor search committee.

Also serving on the committee are Sam Fuller (chair), Maria Wong, David Boersma, Ben Hobbs, and Jennifer Parks.

The interim pastor is needed to oversee the organization, which includes the preschool and has about 30 employees and a budget of , while candidates are sought for a new leader.

The skills required of a bridge, interim and full-time pastor are distinct but one thing they must have in common, Angela said, is a fit with the unique characteristics of Govans. "We want them to have values that match what we are," she said.

There are a number of Presbyterian churches competing for pastors now, but Angela is confident Govans will find a strong replacement for Tom, who served here for 17 years.

"Our church should float to the top even with the large number of vacancies," she said. "We've been told along the way that Govans is an attractive church for a pastor.



Church Staff

Rev. Shannon Weston, Bridge Pastor
Lea Gilmore,
Minister for Racial Justice & Music
Director

Marie Herrington
Music Director

Missy Smith, Interim Christian
Education Coordinator

Rufus Ingram, Bookkeeper

Andy Wilson, Office Manager

Sylvia Usher, Sexton

Pam Ferguson,

Director of Preschool

Gwen Lloyd, Program Director, Senior
Network

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**Submissions for the May|June
2024 newsletter are due by April
10. Please send to Andy Wilson
at wilson@govanspres.org**

SUNDAY MORNINGS AT GOVANS

9:00 a.m. - Adult
Options in Sharp Hall
and Zoom

9:45 a.m. - Sunday
School in the Youth
Room

10:30 a.m. - Worship in
the Sanctuary and
Zoom



WHAT'S GOING ON @ GOVANS?

Where is My Peace? - A Live Concert featuring Elisheva Pront and Jialiang Li - March 15 at 7:00 p.m.: Elisheva Pront, soprano and Jialiang Li, piano are a Baltimore-based duo. Together, they perform art song and new music which spans a range of poetry drawn from human experiences.

Elisheva and Jialiang met at the Peabody Conservatory and have been collaborating for almost three years. They were most recently seen performing at NYC songSLAM 2024 where they premiered a new work in Yiddish. Last summer, they traveled to Source Song Festival in Minneapolis MN where they studied collaborative art song and performed in several masterclasses and recitals.

In this recital, they will present songs which explore internal and external experiences of peace and conflict. Admission is free.

WHERE IS MY PEACE? A Live Concert with ELISHEVA PRONT & JIALIANG LI Friday, March 15 | 7:00 pm



GOVANS
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

GOVANS/KNOX BIBLE STUDY

GOVANS
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

Wednesdays at 12:00 noon on Zoom
Everyone is welcome!



CHILDREN'S SUNDAY SCHOOL

Email missy@govanspres.org
for more information.

Sundays at 9:45 a.m. in the
Youth Room

ADULT OPTIONS

Sundays at 9:00 a.m. in Waverly Room and on Zoom

ST. ANDREW'S REFUGEE SERVICES SEEING INCREASES IN DEMAND FOR SERVICES.



By Fiona Cameron, Director of Development (StARS)

During recent months StARS has seen a huge increase in demand, as over 350,000 new refugees have arrived in Egypt fleeing the violence in Sudan. This has been compounded in recent months by the war in Gaza, which has left thousands of Palestinians trapped in Cairo with no means of support. Every day StARS has served up to 400 clients, and has managed to maintain its open door policy - the only organization in Cairo to do so.

This huge increase in demand, combined with a dire economic situation, which has seen the devaluation of the local currency by 50%, and food inflation running at up to 70% has led to hugely increased vulnerability and need in refugee populations, which has been matched with cuts in budgets for many INGOs.

As part of our response, StARS has continued to work with Community Based Organizations around Cairo, ensuring that they, who are so often first responders to crises, have the skills and resources to do so. Many of our partner CBOs have repurposed - for example we are aware of schools which have changed to provide shelter for people fleeing Sudan. The Sudanese crisis have given us new opportunities to strengthen this work as new and existing funders look to partner with those working on the front line.

Other issues affecting the organization have been the lack of Sudanese curriculum examinations which have affected the schools, and with other community schools, we are looking at alternative curricula for this year to ensure that our children are able to gain formal qualifications.

Our plans for 2024 include holding a Youth Conference, for unaccompanied and separated children, and our delayed Sunday Funday which is the one time of the year when all the staff have a chance to get together and celebrate, as well as managing the day to day needs, which we anticipate will continue to increase in the coming year.



Scan to give to StARS

WELCOME TO REV. SHANNON WESTON

She's led congregations for 20 years, most recently Ashland Presbyterian in Hunt Valley. She and her husband, Derrick, live in Lutherville and jointly raised a blended family of four children (along with a dog, cat and an assortment of plants). She'll be with us until June 10 as we seek an interim pastor to help us through the search process for a new leader.

She agreed to answer a few questions for the Herald/Bellringer as she gets settled into her new role.



What are the special challenges and rewards of serving a congregation on a short-term basis?

"As a person who values relationships, the biggest challenge is that there is not enough time to get to know everyone in the congregation. As I told the Bridge Pastor Search committee, my role is to support the staff and help keep the work of the church going. Status quo is usually used negatively, but in this case, that's a lot of my job, to keep the status quo of Govans. The reward here is getting to help in the small way I can, to support the staff and the leadership by providing guidance, asking questions, and helping them expand possibilities for the future. As Liam Neeson's famous line goes, "I have a special set of skills," and I'm happy to be of any help I can.

What advice do you have for us as we launch the search for a new pastor? Pitfalls to avoid?

Psalms 37:8 says, "Fret not- it tends only to evil." You have an amazing congregation; do not sell yourselves short! Be as honest and transparent as possible with candidates, which means, be as honest with yourselves as you can about who you are and what you are looking for. Give regular updates the congregation about what the committee is thinking, there's a lot of this process that is private, but bringing the congregation along in the hopes for the future is important. Pick people for the Pastoral Nominating Committee (PNC) who are representative of the whole church. Don't rush the process, wait for the right person for this time in Govan's life.

What are your impressions so far of Govans?

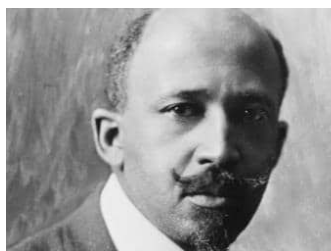
I've been a fan of the work Govans has done in its community for a dozen years. I was privileged last year to help you with a small part of that in the decision to move to one service. The community has been everything I thought it would be: warm, welcoming, and open.

What should we expect to see in the coming weeks from the pulpit and beyond as you take on this role?

The biggest thing you can expect is shared leadership. In this role I am only 30 hours a week, that was intentional on everyone's part. For myself, I have a business outside of the church as a Leadership Coach and Coach Trainer. The church's leadership, there is an intentional shift away from a pastor centric model. The realities of a long-term pastorate, with all the changes that Govans has been through, and the realities of pastoring during covid, is a good time to take stock and refresh. It is also a time to sit in our grief while preparing for what's next. You will hear themes of reassurance, faith, and hope through worship, prayers, and meeting times.

SPECIAL MUSIC PLANNED FOR HOLY WEEK

by Marie Herrington



W.E.B. DuBois



Margaret Bonds

Palm Sunday - March 24

Join us on Palm Sunday for a celebration of Margaret Bonds, an incredibly influential African American composer of the 20th century. She uses W.E.B Du Bois' prose titled "Credo" for this piece (see adjacent text). A friend shared a portion of this prose poem by W.E.B. DuBois on Facebook recently, and I found it beautiful and timely, and decided to share it here.

We will have two amazing singers joining the Chancel Choir for this performance, baritone, Ben Ross, and soprano, Elisheva Pront, who will also be performing the "Where is My Peace?" concert with Jialiang Li on Friday, March 15.

Born in Chicago in 1913, Margaret Bonds grew up in a musical household, studying music first with her mother, Estelle C. Bonds, who was an organist. Musical life in the city of Chicago was also very rich, and Bonds had the chance to study piano and composition with Florence Price while she was in high school. In 1933, Bonds performed Price's piano concerto with the Chicago Symphony Orchestra.

In 1939, Bonds moved to New York, and attending Juilliard Graduate School the following year. In New York, Bonds (who kept her mother's maiden name as her own for life) worked to advance black musicians and composers and organized a chamber society dedicated to supporting the work of black composers and musicians. In 1967, legendary

choral director and vocal coach Frederick Wilkerson featured the original piano/vocal version of her setting of W.E.B. Du Bois's civil-rights manifesto "Credo" in the first all-Bonds concert in Washington, D.C. She died in Los Angeles in 1972.

Easter Sunday - March 31

Join us on Easter for a very joyful Early Music Easter - featuring baroque violins, baroque viola, baroque cello, and the good ole Easter trumpet. You will hear pieces from baroque composers like G.P. Telemann, and G.F. Handel, as well as a modernized Vivaldi piece that the choir will be performing. And that's not all - on hymns we will be hearing from our guest trumpeter, as well as our wonderful handbell ensemble. We are looking forward to sharing a musically rich Easter Sunday

"Credo" by W.E.B. DuBois (Originally published 1904)

I believe in God who made of one blood all races that dwell on earth. I believe that all men, black and white, are brothers, varying through Time and Opportunity, in form and gift and feature, but differing in no essential particular, and alike in soul and in the possibility of infinite development.

Especially do I believe in the Negro Race; in the beauty of its genius, the sweetness of its soul, and its strength in that meekness which shall yet inherit this turbulent earth.

I believe in pride of race and lineage and self; in pride of self so deep as to scorn injustice to other selves; in pride of lineage so great as to despise no man's father; in pride of race so chivalrous as neither to offer bastardy to the weak nor beg wedlock of the strong, knowing that men may be brothers in Christ, even though they be not brother-in-law.

I believe in Service—humble reverent service, from the blackening of boots to the whitening of souls; for Work is Heaven, Idleness is Hell, and Wage is the "Well done!" of the

Master who summoned all them that labor and are heavy laden, making no distinction between the black sweating cotton-hands of Georgia and the First Families of Virginia, since all distinction not based on deed is devilish and not divine.

...continued on page 10

—with you!

REV. GALBRAITH...continued

A Calling to India

At the age of 26, upon graduating from Princeton in 1837, Galbraith had hoped to serve in the newly-established Presbyterian missions in India but was unable due to poor health. One year prior John Lowrie had served as the first Presbyterian missionary in India, from 1833 to 1836 when he became ill and reluctantly had to leave the country; he remained active in the Presbyterian Board of Foreign missions as staff. Lowrie's work is prominent in the historical record and so an opportunity to explore some norms that may have influenced Galbraith and his later approach to mission work with African Americans.



Gospel of Luke in Tamil, the oldest language of India. Archives of RC Galbraith, with permission of his heir, N. Jinnette

Lowrie was three years Galbraith's elder, and they came from similar backgrounds, both growing up in Pennsylvania west of the Allegheny Mountains among the Scots-Irish and graduating from Jefferson College. Galbraith likely had followed John's career with interest. At Galbraith's graduation from seminary, there were only eleven Presbyterian missionaries in India, so it was a small club.

According to Lowrie, "The main thing to be kept in view by the missionary is that of teaching the great truths of the Gospel, clearly and fully, exemplifying these lessons in his life, and depending on the influences of the Holy Spirit, sought constantly in prayer, to apply unto men the benefits of redemption."

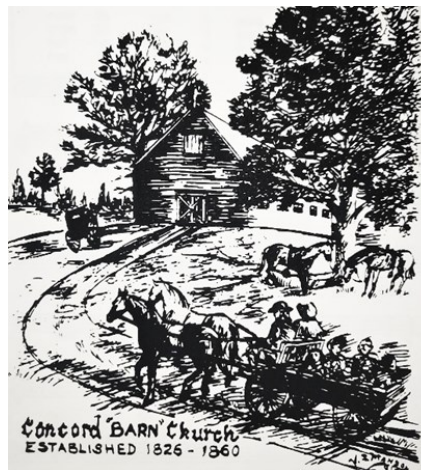
Moving to Virginia

Undaunted by disappointment, Galbraith and his new wife Mary moved to southern Virginia, to take a teaching position in a private school in Princess Anne County –near present-day Virginia Beach. There, Galbraith hoped to find opportunities to preach to "Negroes". Notably, while there were mission programs by the Board of Foreign Missions established for Native Americans, and countries abroad, there were no national Presbyterian programs

to sponsor a missionary for the enslaved or free blacks. To do so, you were on your own and by the strength of his own determination, Galbraith headed south.

While in Princess Anne County, Robert and Mary lived with 33 individuals including students and seven enslaved people aged 10 to 23. The enslaved living at the school may have been laboring there or hired out. It was not uncommon in colonial and antebellum Virginia for institutions to hire out their enslaved, including among them Presbyterian churches. At the time, Virginia had no system of publicly funded schools and so schools were either funded independently or supported by a church. In the economy of the day, hiring out the enslaved was one way to raise funds.

Onward to Brunswick County, Virginia



While teaching, Galbraith was ordained in 1844 –the same year that a building committee was organizing the Govane Chapel. Shortly thereafter he moved Mary and their 4-year-old son one hundred miles west by horse or wagon to Brunswick Virginia to serve as an evangelist minister and missionary at Concord Presbyterian Church. Founded in 1826, the church had closed six years prior to their arrival; his charge as a missionary was to "rejuvenate" the church.

During his time at Brunswick, Southern Virginia was the national leader in producing tobacco and about sixty percent of the population of the County was enslaved. Galbraith is said to have "preached at various points in Brunswick County and largely to the Negroes." Five years later the family moved to Baltimore where, beginning in 1849, he served under the Board of Missions as pastor to Madison Street (now Madison Avenue) Church—the first Presbyterian church in Baltimore for African Americans.

REV. GALBRAITH...continued

Elizabeth Love

An associate of Galbraith's for over four decades, Elizabeth Love, is a person of interest because she appears to have become victim to the white supremacist attitudes of Baltimore elites after the Civil War. First appearing in the 1850's census, Elizabeth was recorded as a white 20-year old "hireling" in the Galbraith household in Baltimore, along with his wife, Mary and their three children aged two to ten. Elizabeth continued to live with the Galbraith household until Robert's death in 1895 at the age of 83.

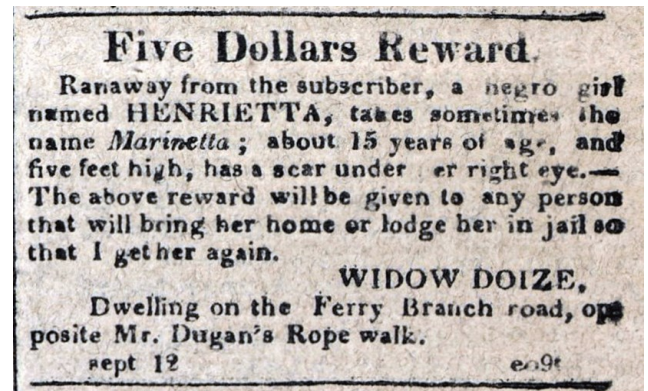
Several factors led me to believe that Elizabeth may have once been enslaved (or a free black) and was brought from Virginia by Robert and Mary Galbraith to Baltimore, living the remainder of her life "passing" for white. I could not substantiate this theory, and Ms. Love's great granddaughter, Nancy Jinette, now living in Colorado had no family lore supporting the notion. True or not, explaining the cultural factors supporting the theory reveals the many injustices of the time that were related to race.

Elizabeth and her parents were from Virginia where about a third of the population was enslaved between 1850 and 1860. The Virginia Piedmont—often referred to as the tobacco belt and where Galbraith ministered, was the most concentrated numbers of enslaved, making up between 50 and 75 percent of the population.

Passing for white was one way of escaping bondage and it was a common practice amongst those who could. Anyone with actual or rumored African American heritage, free or not, was vulnerable to a life of slavery and used whatever methods available to them to avoid bondage. For example, if at birth Elizabeth's mother was enslaved, by Virginia law, Elizabeth's status would also have been enslaved for life, regardless of the status of the father (theoretically white, in this case, based on her complexion). Even if a person were manumitted, Virginia law required the individual to leave the state within one year unless provided court dispensation and so both the enslaved and manumitted African Americans in Virginia had compelling reasons to go north.

Another pressure that could motivate a light-skinned

African American to hide her race were various mechanisms that legalized the return of fugitive slaves to their owners. Various laws from the colonial period through to the Fugitive Slave Act of 1850 required with increasing fervor, the return of slaves to



American Commercial and Daily Advertiser, September 12, 1814. Maryland State Archives

their owners, regardless to what state of the Union they may have fled.

Finally, the practice of kidnapping African Americans—whether escaped slaves or bona fide free persons, was a constant threat. Particularly after the slave revolt led by Nat Turner in 1831 Virginia, there was a climate of fear that increasingly sought to repress future uprisings. African Americans who may have been "free" through manumission or escape, including those living in Baltimore—lived in constant terror—that their plight could change in an instant. The Baltimore jail was full with those said to have been "escaped slaves" in a justice system where the enslaved had no rights.

Join us in Part III as the Galbraith's begin their life in Baltimore and learn more about Elizabeth Love.

Scan QR code for Part I of Myra's research into the life and work of Rev. Galbraith from the September/October 2023 issue of The Herald and Bellringer.



The Session met in our regular monthly meeting on Tuesday, February 20. Here are some highlights:

Our new bridge pastor Shannon Weston moderated her first Session meeting with us. We reviewed and approved her contract and terms of call. She will be with us until our interim pastor begins but no later than June 10. As a reminder, Reverend Weston's role is to cover our immediate needs of preaching and worship leadership, pastoral care and Session moderation.

CHURCHWORKS: NEWS FROM THE SESSION

Which brings us to the interim pastor search. Session reviewed and approved the interim pastor position description and it is now posted on the Presbytery's website. Interim Pastors are typically at a church for 12-18 months. This allows for a congregation to grieve the loss of the previous Pastor and separate from them as well as define themselves as a congregation. The interim pastor search committee consists of Sam Fuller, Maria Wong, David Boersma, Ben Hobbs, Jennifer Parks, and Angela Pinaglia. The goal is to fill the position within three months.

Jody Morris, on behalf of the Earth Care committee, presented the design for a stormwater system that was funded by a Chesapeake Bay Trust grant. With this in hand, the committee is applying for a grant in the fall to repave the parking lot with a porous material to reduce stormwater runoff in our immediate area.

In other business Sherry Peck and Angela Pinaglia were appointed to the two Session spots on the Elder Nominating Committee. The rest of the committee consists of Carolyn Anewich, Stephen Gaede, and George Alexander. There will be a congregational meeting in early May to elect new elders to Session.

And lastly we heard updates on the construction project for education building and playground that is currently scheduled to begin in June. Stay tuned for more information on this exciting and much needed project!

“CREDO” by W.E.B. DUBOIS...continued from page 7

I believe in the Devil and his angels, who wantonly work to narrow the opportunity of struggling human beings, especially if they be black; who spit in the faces of the fallen, strike them that cannot strike again, believe the worst and work to prove it, hating the image which their Maker stamped on a brother's soul.

I believe in the Prince of Peace. I believe that War is Murder. I believe that armies and navies are at bottom the tinsel and braggadocio of oppression and wrong; and I believe that the wicked conquest of weaker and darker nations by nations whiter and stronger but foreshadows the death of that strength.

I believe in Liberty for all men; the space to stretch their arms and their souls; the right to breathe and the right to vote, the freedom to choose their friends, enjoy the sunshine and ride on the railroads, uncursed by color; thinking, dreaming, working as they will in the kingdom of God and love.

I believe in the training of children, black even as white; the leading out of little souls into the green pastures and beside the still waters, not for pelf or peace, but for Life lit by some large vision of beauty and goodness and truth; lest we forget, and the sons of the fathers, like Esau, for mere meat barter their birthright in a mighty nation.

Finally, I believe in Patience—patience with the weakness of the Weak and the strength of the Strong, the prejudice of the Ignorant and the ignorance of the Blind; patience with the tardy triumph of Joy and the mad chastening of Sorrow—patience with God.

Du Bois, W. E. B. (William Edward Burghardt), 1868-1963. CredoW. E. B. Du Bois Papers (MS 312). Special Collections and University Archives, University of Massachusetts Libraries

FAREWELL FROM PASTOR TOM

Pastor Tom's post on Facebook about his final Sunday at Govans:

"The beautiful send off given to Sasha and me on Sunday by the congregation of Govans Presbyterian Church was truly overwhelming. The past few days I have been processing it and trying to formulate a fitting response. There were so many elements of the service and reception that were breathtaking. One of the most important is also one of the simplest: the church was full! Having so many people turn out to wish us well was a gift in itself. For one thing, it is so inspiring to hear a church full of people sing everything from "Lean on Me" for the Prelude, to "Gotta Keep Your Head Up" as the Anthem, to "Come Sing O Church in Joy", to "This Little Light of Mine". Then having such a wonderful group of children and youth (some of whom I baptized) gather around the Communion blanket, filled my heart with joy. The heartfelt words of appreciation in the service and reception were deeply touching. During the reception the funny gifts and parody song, the yummy food complete with vegan table, the band's California Dreamin', and the purse (making a month without income easier, thank you!) were all perfect. I brought home the basket of cards and that afternoon wept over the heartfelt expressions of gratitude for my ministry. Please know that I am equally grateful to have had the privilege to share so many precious and tender moments with you all.

But, this thank you would not be complete without a word of gratitude to the two most wonderful Music Directors I have ever had the privilege of working with: Lea Gilmore and Marie Herrington. I thought I knew how lucky we were when Lea accepted the job as the Band Leader so many years ago, but her talent, creativity, and personality far exceeded my expectations. Nor did I nor any of us at Govans realize we were getting such a gifted, brilliant, kind, but challenging leader for a Racial Justice Ministry that didn't even exist yet. Lea has been my biggest cheerleader, teacher, inspiration, and dearest friend since coming to Govans and I thank God for her.

Regarding Marie, no one knew that we were hiring a musical prodigy and virtuoso. Not only has the breadth of her musical skill astounded us, from organ, to piano, to directing, to singing, to composition, but her passion for bringing us music by women and people of color harmonized perfectly with our justice ministry. Now coming back to this past Sunday, I cannot thank Marie enough for the astoundingly beautiful musical composition based on my poem inspired by the journey of my beloved niece Abby. I don't know how many times I have watched the video of the choir and band performing this piece, and wept. When I'm not watching the video, I'm singing and humming the song. I commend it to everyone (in the video of the service it is at time stamp 46:20). What a gift this song was to Sasha and me and our family! And indeed, so perfect, not just as a reflection on death and new life, but as it turns out, equality fitting for the ending of one part of life and the beginning of another. Thank you Govans for 17 years of ministry, for a beautiful and emotional and joyful send off, and blessings to all of us in what comes next.

Peace,
Tom"



Photos by Justin Camejo

 **GOVANS**
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
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Baltimore, MD 21212
410-435-9188
www.govanspres.org

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

HOLY WEEK AT GOVANS

- **Palm Sunday - March 24 @ 10:30 a.m.**
- **Maundy Thursday Supper - March 28 @ 5:30 p.m.**
- **Holy Week Service - March 28 @ 7:00 p.m.**
- **Easter Sunday - March 31 - Worship @ 10:30 a.m. followed by an Easter Egg Hunt and Petting Zoo with animals from Woodberry Crossing.**

GOVANS 
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH