

Expressions

A Newsletter for the Congregation of Bradley Hills Presbyterian Church

I know that when we come together something beautiful will happen as we are encouraged by each other's faith. (Romans 1:12)

Dear Friends,

This has been a year of both joy and challenge. Even as we have been celebrating the 70th anniversary of the founding of Bradley Hills Presbyterian Church, we have been mindful of our country's recent challenges to the foundations of our democratic form of government and the dismantling of programs that protected the most vulnerable — the “least of these” that Jesus refers to in Matthew 25. Globally, we have also been painfully aware the devastating loss of life and destruction that is taking place in Palestine and Ukraine.

In times like these, people often wonder and ask, “Where is God in all of this?”

In a recent Bible study lesson, we hear Gideon ask such a question when an angel appeared to him and said, “The LORD is with you.”

Outspoken, tell it like it is, show me a sign Gideon replied to the angel:

“...if the LORD is with us, why then has all this happened to us? And where are all his wonderful deeds that our ancestors recounted to us, saying, ‘Did not the LORD bring us up from Egypt?’ But now the LORD has cast us off and given us into the hand of Midian.”

In response, God told Gideon, “You go I commission you to deliver Israel.”

This spring when there was an unprecedented onslaught of government layoffs, members of our congregation heard God's call and stepped up to share their talents and gifts to “do something.” For example, a counseling group was formed to offer professional help for those dealing with the stress of losing their job and/or the climate of uncertainty surrounding their employment. The Action Forum was formed to identify and address the immediate needs of the local community through financial assistance and legislation advocacy, and we are gearing up to support the annual Coat Drive and Annual Day of Service to assemble disaster kits.



This fall as we turn to looking at BHPC's future and discerning where Spirit is leading and to what future God is calling us, may we continue to respond, “Here I am.” We are almost assured that there will be challenges and rough waters ahead. During times like these, the opposition is counting on fear and distraction to discourage us. However, we must hold on to hope and God's promise to be with us so that our faith will not fail.

In the days ahead, I hope you will be encouraged by one of my favorite hymns:

“We've come this far by faith, leaning on the Lord, trusting in the holy Word; God's never failed us yet. O, can't turn around, we've come this far by faith. We've come this far by faith.”

In faith and hope,

Denise

A Special Message from Pastor David

Invitation to Gatherings about BHPC's Future

Dear BHPC community,

We are anticipating an exciting fall at Bradley Hills. Seventy years ago, spiritual friends dreamed of a church that would have a generational, life-changing impact on multitudes of people throughout the greater DC area and beyond. This year, we celebrate that, for 70 years, this bold vision has been manifested in and through the people of BHPC to have a positive impact on our community. As we celebrate our cherished past and honor our present, we now look to where God may be calling us for the future.

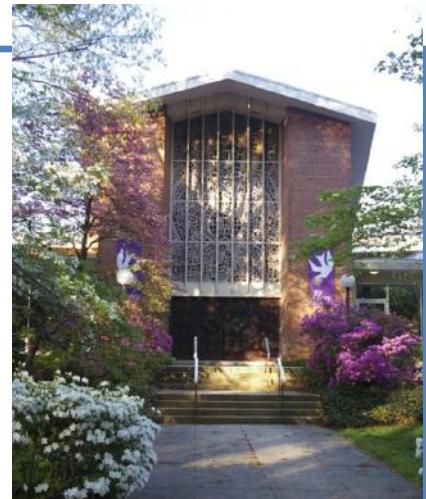
I'm inviting the members and friends of Bradley Hills to imagine the life-changing impact of a church that is prepared for that future. In 2023, our Session approved the recommendations of our Strategic Visioning Task Force Report, which encouraged, among other things, the church to take bold action to ensure the long-term sustainability of BHPC at 6601 Bradley Blvd.

In that spirit, I invite you to join me for a time of dreaming and visioning as we consider our next steps as a church family.

Here are the details for a series of "First Impressions Gatherings" scheduled for later this month and early September. Because we want everyone to be able to attend a gathering, we are providing three opportunities (see right column).

Why "first impressions?" Before launching into a potential capital campaign, we would like to receive feedback and input from our community.

I would love for you to be at the table for one of these gatherings. If these dates don't work for your schedule, I, and our Session, look forward to having a chance to connect with you in the coming weeks.



First Impression Gatherings

1. In person. Sunday, August 24

Following 10:00 am worship, in Covenant Hall
Childcare provided: Pizza party for the kids.

2. In person. Sunday, September 7

Following 10:30 am worship, in Covenant Hall
Childcare provided: Snacks for the kids.

3. Virtual. Sunday, September 7 by Zoom

7:00 pm. Join by clicking the link below:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83569441971?pwd=GKoqavHufK8EuoCSenUJaA9J3hznIM.1>

Meeting ID: 835 6944 1971

Passcode: 001787

One tap mobile:

+13017158592,,83569441971#,,, *001787# US (Washington DC)

I look forward to seeing you soon.

Grace and peace as we journey forward together.

In Christ's love,



August Worship

August 3, with Communion

Message by Pastor Denise Diaab
10:00 am | Sanctuary & online
With Han Setiawan leading organ

August 10

Message by Pastor Denise Diaab
10:00 am | Sanctuary & online
With Giles Cooke leading organ

August 17

Message by Pastor Denise Diaab
10:00 am | Sanctuary & online
With Annabel Hunter leading organ

August 24, Pulpit Exchange

Message by Rabbi Eric Abbott,
Bethesda Jewish Congregation
10:00 am | Sanctuary & online
Children and youth will share their
experiences from Vacation Bible School
With Annabel Hunter leading organ
*After worship: Conversation about the
church's future, see p. 2.*

Our Summer Send-Off

August 31, Holy Humor Sunday

Message by Pastor David Gray
10:00 am | Sanctuary & online
Blessing of the Back Packs, Hymn Sings,
VBS Children's Choir, and Section Leader
Steven Slupe Offers Leonard Cohen's *Hallelujah*
With Annabel Hunter leading organ
*After worship: Brief congregational meeting
& Ice Cream Social.*



Students of any age! Bring your back packs to worship on August 31 for a special blessing from our pastors.

FALL SERVICES BEGIN

September 7

Welcome Back Sunday

**Message by Pastor David Gray
With Communion, Choir, and
Commissioning of Church Teachers.**

8:30 am | Outside in the Cross Garden
Now with Music **NEW**

10:30 am | Sanctuary & Online

Choir begins September 7

First rehearsal is on September 4
Interim Director of Music Ministries
Paul Vasile
will lead music starting September 1.

**Our fall schedule returns on September 7
with two services at 8:30 am and 10:30 am.**

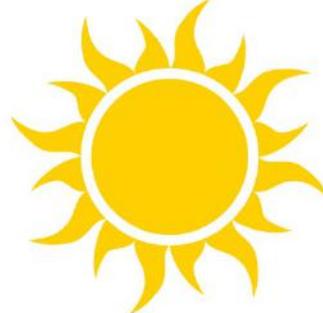
Also starting on the 7th: Adult education, youth group,
regular church school, and our full
coffee hour after 10:30 service.

**Join us after worship on Sept. 7th
as we reflect on God's plan for the
future of BHPC.**

*Please Note: The Welcome Back Brunch will be
held on September 21.*



It's a Bradley Hills Summer *Spectacular* Send-Off!



LAUGHTER | MUSIC | BLESSINGS | ICE CREAM

Say goodbye to summer at this light, laughter-filled worship service.
Celebrate the new school year too! Family friendly. Fun for all ages.

SUNDAY, AUGUST 31
10:00 am Worship

All are welcome



Holy Humor Sunday



Blessing of the Backpacks



- Hymn Sings
- VBS Children's Choir
- Music Offering by Section Leader
Leonard Cohen's "Hallelujah"



Ice Cream Social
outside after worship



News from BHPC

Congregational Meeting

There will be a very brief congregational meeting on Sunday August 31 right after worship. It will take place at 11:00 am both in person in the sanctuary and online to elect our new nominating committee members.

Music in the Fall at Bradley Hills

Our music program continues to grow and develop at Bradley Hills this fall. On September 7, we will begin to offer music at our 8:30 am service, outside at the cross garden.

Our new Interim Director of Music Ministries, Paul Vasile, will be joining us September 1. He will lead our choir and other musical offerings as we look for a permanent DMM. There will be more information about Paul and ways you can meet him in the September BHX newsletter.

Our choir also begins on the September 7 at our 10:30 service in the sanctuary. Interested in joining choir? There's always room for more voices. It's a fun and fulfilling way to offer your talents in worship. The first choir rehearsal is on September 4. Please contact Kristen Abbott at the Church Office if you're interested in joining or have questions (kristen@bradleyhillschurch.org).

Welcome Back Brunch Potluck

We're having a Birthday Party!

Bradley Hills

is turning **70**

✓ GAMES FOR KIDS ✓ BIRTHDAY CAKE
 ✓ BOUNCY HOUSE ✓ SHAVED ICE
 ✓ "HAPPY BIRTHDAY" SING-A-LONG

SUNDAY, SEPT. 21, 11:30 A.M.


Bradley Hills
 PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

Children, Youth, and Families

Volunteers Needed for VBS

Both youth and adults are welcome to join in the fun at this year's Vacation Bible School from August 18-22. All youth volunteers get SSL hours for their participation. Up to 36 hours with training and extended day.

Get excited! We are bringing back a full week of indoor Vacation Bible School with new curriculum, new songs and dramas, and decorating the sanctuary and church with the theme, "Operation Restoration: Mending God's Broken World."

We have also added an extended day option from 12-2:30 pm. We would love to have some volunteers to help in the afternoon, as well.

To sign up to volunteer, register in Realm.

Please make sure to indicate any days you cannot attend and if you would like to stay for the afternoons. If you would like to participate in the drama team, leading the VBS openings and closings, let Rosanna Howard know.

Training: Mark your calendar for **Sunday, August 17 from 4:00-8:00 pm** for VBS training and preparation. Followed by dinner and an epic evening of water games.

Questions? Contact **Rosanna Howard** (rosanna@bradleyhillschurch.org).



VBA Food Drive

Vacation Bible School participants will be making snack bags for Bethesda Help. You can support their efforts by donating the following items.

Please purchase individual packages, that is, in single portions. The deadline for dropping off food is **August 17**. Thanks so much!

- juice boxes
- fruit cups
- applesauce
- fruit snacks
- cookies
- pretzels
- raisins
- granola bars
- crackers/chips
- goldfish





August 24: It's a Pizza Party!

Calling all kids! Join us for a fun pizza party while parents attend important “first impression” gatherings (see p. 2). Led by our Youth Group.



Church School Teachers Needed

There is a need for church school teachers for the 2025-26 school year. Church school

starts on Sunday, September 7, 2025, and goes through Sunday, May 17, 2026. Church school teachers usually teach once a month, and our classrooms typically have 10-15 children each.

We need teachers for the following classrooms:

Preschool Church School (ages 3-4) | 4 lead teachers to collaborate with parent volunteers (in a co-op style format) to teach a basic curriculum of story, craft and snack. Training in best practices for preschool classroom instruction and management will be provided and supervised throughout the school year by DCYFM Rosanna Howard.

Godly Play (Kindergarten) | 2 lead teachers and 2 door persons to teach the Godly Play curriculum and support the Godly Play classroom. Training in the Godly Play curriculum with a GP trainer and DCYFM will be provided in late August.

Godly Play (1-2 Grade) | 2 lead teachers and 2 door persons to teach the Godly Play curriculum and support the Godly Play classroom. Training in the Godly Play curriculum with a GP trainer and DCYFM will be provided in late August.

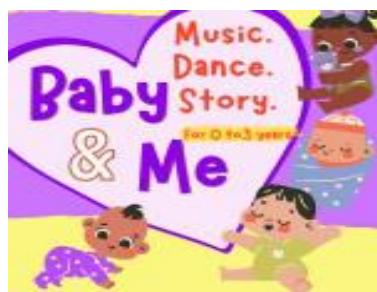
Club 3-4-5 | 3 lead teachers and 2 second adults to implement the Feasting on the Word Curriculum. Training in classroom management and best practices will be offered by the DCYFM in late August.

To learn more about the commitment or ask any questions, reach out to **DCYFM Rosanna Howard**, rosanna@bradleyhillschurch.org.



ASP Mission Trip, Massanetta, and Montreat

Our summer youth outings were a great success! From faith formation to gardening, from building homes in hurricane-ravaged North Carolina to square-dancing, a wonderful experience was had by all. See pages 13-15 for photos. Many thanks to youth leaders for coming along for the ride and lending such great support and guidance to our kids.



Baby & Me This Summer

Baby & Me continues all summer long. Led by Rosanna Howard, these fun sessions take place on Tuesdays from 9:15-10:30 am in the crib room. It's all developmentally appropriate, child-led play (0-3 years) with music, dance, and story. Siblings welcome! And let your friends with children know that this is being offered at the church for free. All are invited to attend.

Financial Lay Ministry Second Quarter Update

Operating Budget

Thanks to the generosity of many members fulfilling their annual pledges early in the year, our revenue is tracking ahead. This has enabled BHPC to expend nearly its entire Mission budget and denominational support in the first half of the year, getting valuable funds in the hands of those who need it most. We are experiencing the usual lower summer giving trends and are mindful of potential economic uncertainties within our community. However, our current financial position continues to provide a solid foundation for the months ahead.

REVENUE

Overall: Ahead of budget, 59.7% of year-to-date (YTD) budget achieved.

- **Congregational Giving:** Ahead of budget (approximately 1.5 months).
- **Building Use:** Congregational partners are on track.
- **Investment/Other Income:** Over 80% of annual budget, as we recorded the annual endowment draw income in January.

EXPENSES

Overall: Ahead of budget (53.8% of YTD budget).

Program Areas: Generally at budget (50.1%).

- **Worship & Arts:** Ahead of budget due to higher instrument maintenance and guest organist fees.
- **Property Management:** Ahead of budget due to snow removal and prepaid maintenance early in year.
- **Mission (MCLM):** Significant portion spent early (92.6%), supporting 16 mission partners as well as summer youth trips.

Operating Budget Bottom Line: **YTD Net Income:** \$104,666 (vs. budgeted year-end surplus of \$6,640).

Outlook: Well-positioned, but experiencing summer giving slowdown and recognizing potential employment uncertainty within our community.

Capital Budget

HVAC: \$38,000 (complete)

Replacement Windows: 92,866 (complete)

Cross Garden Enhancement: \$12,391 (complete)

Office Flooring/Carpet: \$26,200 (complete)

Labyrinth Enhancement: \$10,000 (Although not formally a part of the capital budget, this project has been made possible through a generous donor.)

Capital spending through the year has slightly exceeded the capital budget. However, we anticipate some of the window replacement expenses will be offset by state grant funds not yet received.

Questions? Feel free to reach out to one of our FLM members: Dave Burgett, Chair; John Buchman, Session Liaison, Ed Hummers, Jalena Specht, Jim Everett, Jon Winslow, Bethany Frick, Jan Spencer (staff), and David Gray, Pastor.

Stewardship

Stewardship Lay Ministry's Report on 2025 Pledge Fulfillment through June 30

We are grateful for the congregation's faithfulness, both in making financial pledges to the church each year and in fulfilling those pledges. Members fulfill their pledges in different ways, depending on their own household income and budgeting. Some pay their pledges in equal amounts spread over the entire year; some pay the entire pledge early in the year; others pay the entire pledge toward the end of the year.

Many gifts come electronically through Realm, some from the Sunday offering plate, and others from Stock Donations, Donor-Advised Funds, and RMD Qualified Charitable Distributions. We honor and thank everyone for ALL the ways they give to support Bradley Hills!

Through June 30 (halfway through the year), 59% of households that made stewardship pledges have either fulfilled their pledge entirely or have contributed more than half of their annual pledges. Around 18% of households have fallen a bit behind, having contributed less than 50% of their annual pledge. Around 23% of pledging households have not yet made a gift toward their pledge.

The summer brings a different rhythm to church life and for many in our congregation, it's a time for rest and travel. Please remember that while you may be away, your church remains open and active, serving the needs of its members and the community. If you have fallen behind in fulfilling your 2025 pledge, we encourage you to catch up so that the church can fulfill its mission year-round.

Fulfillment Status



Realm: Our Church Digital Hub

We are updating the Realm database! Never heard of Realm? In a nutshell, Realm allows you to keep track of financial spending, find members' contact information, and receive important communication from Bradley Hills. For more info, go to <https://www.bradleyhillschurch.org/about/realm/>. Please take a few minutes and update your Realm information or add yourself to Realm if you have not done so already. You can add a photo too, so people at church can recognize you. Look for the Realm cloud icon at the bottom right of the Bradley Hills website for access. If you have never signed into your Realm account, contact Kristen Abbot (kristen@bradleyhillschurch.org) for an email invitation. Thank you so much!



Coming This Fall: Racial Justice at Bradley Hills

BHPC's Racial Justice Coordinating Committee (RJCC) invites you to a meeting to provide feedback and comments on BHPC's draft Antiracism Policy.

Date: Sunday, in October. Date TBD.

Time: 11:45 am-1:00 pm

Where: BHPC Library

Over the past 6 months, a volunteer team of BHPC

members drafted a proposed Antiracism Policy. The RJCC has received comments from Session, the Board of Deacons and several lay ministries. This meeting will provide the congregation the opportunity to offer comments before a final draft is presented to Session for approval on September 16. A copy of the draft Antiracism Policy will be available for your review on August 30. Contact Don Picard for further information.

Adult Education

Adult Education Returns September 7

September 7, 14, and 21. Reformed Political Thought in an Age of Catastrophe (1914-1945)

Dr. R. Bruce Douglass (and close friend of Bradley Hills) will be presenting a three part series to begin our program year. Dr. Douglass is Director Emeritus, Reformed Institute of Metropolitan Washington and former Chair of the Department of Government at Georgetown University.

Between 1914 and 1945, the West experienced a series of catastrophic political and economic developments. It was a time when radical ideologies attracted wide followings, making it difficult for democratic regimes to govern. It was also a time when war took on a totalizing character that had devastating effects throughout much of the world. In

addition, the global economy suffered a depression of unusual magnitude. During this period, reformed Protestants continued to play influential roles in public life, but they were forced to rethink a number of the assumptions they had inherited from their 19th century predecessors.

Session #1 - Radical ideologies

Session #2. Depression

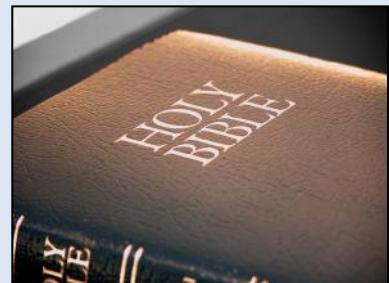
Session #3. War

Dr. Douglass never fails to enlighten and remind us about how our faith has addressed the challenges of the past and the similarities and differences to today.

September 28. Bradley Hills: The Church of the Future after celebrating Bradley Hills Past 70 Years
David Gray will engage us in a session that explores the possibilities and challenges for our future.

Bible Study on Zoom August 6, 13, and 20

Bible Study continues over the summer. Join us by Zoom on Wednesdays at 2:00 pm to discuss scripture with Pastor David or Pastor Denise. You do not need to be a member of Bradley Hills to attend our Bible Study classes. Everyone in the community is invited! Whether you enjoy actively participating or simply wish to listen in, all are welcome. Contact the Kristen Abbott at the Church Office for the Bible Study Zoom link (kristen@bradleyhillschurch.org).



Announcing the 2025/2026 Concert Series

The Friends of Music invites you to a new season of concerts.

“Bradley Hills Presents” is proud to announce its upcoming season, showcasing exceptional musicians from around the world. Tickets can be purchased for the entire season or individually.

Season Subscription: \$25-\$140 **Individual Tickets:** \$40 adult | \$30 student | \$15 child (under 15 years)
Get \$5 off when you advance purchase individual tickets.

For more info and to purchase a subscription or tickets, go to
www.BradleyHillsChurch.org/concerts



James O'Donnell, organ
Sunday, October 12 | 5:00 pm

“A master.” —*Richmond Times-Dispatch*

It is hard to overstate the brilliance of organist James O'Donnell. Now Organist Emeritus at Westminster Abbey, O'Donnell led music there for many state occasions over his 23-year tenure, including the 2022 state funeral of Queen Elizabeth II.



Reflections: Works for Cello by Bloch, Weinberg, and Chopin
Sunday, November 9, 2025 | 5:00 pm Amit Peled, *cello* | Stefan Petrov, *piano*

Hailed by the *New York Times* for his “glowing tone, seductive timbre and an emotionally pointed approach to phrasing,” Israel cellist Amit Peled returns for a concert full of Eastern European flair!



The Love Triangle: Music and Letters of Johannes Brahms and Robert & Clara Schumann
Saturday, April 18, 2026 | 7:30 pm Alon Goldstein, *piano*

“Goldstein pours out crisp, strongly etched torrents of bravura chordal runs and passionate lyrical song.”

—*Chicago Sun-Times*



American Brass Quintet
Saturday, May 16, 2026 | 7:30 pm

The *New York Times* wrote that “among North American brass ensembles, none is more venerable than the American Brass Quintet.” Join The American Brass Quintet in concert to experience their unparalleled legacy in the brass field firsthand.

BHPC Nursery School

How is it August already? At BHPCNS, August is always a flurry of activity as we prepare for the upcoming school year. This summer we are busy replacing our classroom rugs, replenishing the mulch and sand on our playgrounds, and adding new soft flooring to our Rainy Day Room. We have enjoyed seeing all the places near and far that "Flat Bradley" has visited this summer. We are excited for another fun-filled year of playing, growing, and learning.



We have limited openings in our program for the 2025-2026 school year and will begin accepting applications for the 2026-2027 school year for new families in late September. For more information visit our website www.bhpcns.org or call the office at 301-365-2909 to arrange a tour and have your questions answered.

In the meantime, enjoy the last days of summer.



Mission

Distribute Groceries in Anacostia

Help Is Needed the Third Saturday Each Month!

BHPC is proud to support Faith Presbyterian Church's monthly "Feeding Families" project. The demand is now higher than ever for families in the church's neighborhood. **Up to 4-5 BHPC volunteers** help Faith's team from 9:00-10:40 am, rain or shine.

Volunteers pack 60 grocery bags at the church in Anacostia and distribute them on the church property.

Adults, families and teens are welcome. There's a new [Sign-Up Genius](#) for **September 20, October 18, November 15, and December 20, 2025**, or send Joan Burns, BHPC liaison to Faith Presbyterian Church.

Thank you!

Massanetta Springs Middle School Conference



Montreat Youth Conference



Photos & Announcements

Items for the September 2025 BHX should be sent to
Beth Beisel at beth@bradleyhillschurch.org by August 15.

Did We Miss Your Birthday?

Email **Kristen Abbott**,
Office Manager, at kristen@bradleyhillschurch.org
so we can celebrate with you.

All Church BBQ



A special thanks to the Owens family for organizing and leading this year's All Church BBQ. It was great!



Youth Mission Trip



A shout out to youth and adults for their ASP mission trip. They helped build homes in North Carolina.



Happy August Birthdays

Grace Ahn
Mike Alderton
Doug Anderson
Rick Arndt
Jerry Backenstoe
Willa Banashak
Greg Bardwell
Cody Beiki
Shirley Bennett
Dinea Blesi
Cormac Brodeur
Hudson Brown
Bill Bryson
Maya Caceres
Owen Campbell
Tricia Chalfant
David Cho
Elijah Cho

Kevin Christensen
Charles de Court
Emily Deans
Anjali Dhar
Dorothy Embree
Andrew Foster
Graham Fowler
Larry Friend
Sim Gardner
Silvie Geist
LeeAnne Graeub
Lillian Graves
David Gray
Kirk Griffith
Pam Hammers
Susan Hatchett
Thomas Hatchett
Steve Holmberg

Christopher Hopson
Kenneth Howie
Bruce Hunter
Barbara Jennings
Sara Jordan
Simone Kang
Charlie Kauffunger
Kieran Kindig
Min Lee
Lucy Low
Bebe McMeekin
Linda McReynolds
Chris Menard
Maggie Menard
Bill Miller
Christopher Miller
Stacey Milne
Sandy Murray

Nancy Myers
Megan O'Keefe
Olivia Peterson
Keira Potashnik
Thomas Quane
Omid Razavi-Kelishadi
Bill Scheig
Ella Scott
James Scroggs
Becky Sczudlo
Paul Skrabut
Matthew Stone
William Stricklett
Curt West
Caroline Yeager
Stephanie Zhou



Flower Sign Ups

Interested in dedicating flowers in honor or memory of someone? Use the QR code, or contact Susan Vanderver or Bie Fox. Each dedication costs \$65. All proceeds go to the Flower Guild and Sunday arrangements.



Flower Deliveries

Looking for volunteers to drive and deliver floral arrangements to members who are housebound or ill. To sign up, use the QR code or contact Dee Lleelyn or Caroline Simpson.



6601 Bradley Blvd.
Bethesda, MD 20817
ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED



Summer Send-Off! August 31, 10:00 am Worship

Holy Humor Sunday + Blessing of the Backpacks + Ice Cream Social



www.BradleyHillsChurch.org

6601 Bradley Blvd. • Bethesda, MD 20817 • 301-365-2850
Office Hours: Tues. - Thurs. 9 am to 4 pm; Fri. 9 am to 1 pm

If you would like to stop receiving a paper copy of the BHX, please email or call [Kristen Abbott](mailto:Kristen.Abbott@bhpc.org) at (301) 365-2850. Copies of the BHX are also available in the Narthex.