EAGLE MESSENGER



Published by St. John's Evangelical Lutheran Church, Boyertown, PA

DECEMBER 2022

Dear Siblings in Christ,

Typically, I have no problem writing in advance. This year, however, finds me at a bit of a loss having to write about Advent and the Christmas season having not yet celebrated Thanksgiving. It makes me wonder how often I skip offering thanks and regrettably go right to the party.

What and who are you focused on this Christmas? With all the activities and church events to attend and people to see, this may be a challenging question for you to answer. So many obligations and tasks may make it difficult for you to find meaning during this special time of the year. Perhaps the loneliness of the season weighs heavy on your heart. The loss or distance of loved ones can make anyone feel alone during this time of year.

When overwhelmed by activities or isolated by loneliness, you will likely find yourself feeling somewhat lost this Christmas season—especially if your eyes aren't fixed on Jesus. Now is a time for all of us to be more intentional and to remember the awesome gift of joy God gives us - that He is with us! Right here and right now! If we keep our attention on Him, He will guide us through every situation and circumstance we encounter.

This is what Jesus desires for us. If we have our eyes fixed upon Him, we will walk in His ways and avoid running astray. The psalmist writes, "God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble." Like a compass, He is faithful to show us where we are and where our next step should be.

Perhaps you're thinking, I know Christ is the reason for the Christmas season, but how can I be focused on someone I can't see and don't really know? Who is this Jesus anyway? Can I really trust Him to guide and direct me? Absolutely you can—and to help you keep your focus on the Savior, I would like to remind you of some of the titles attributed to Him in Scripture.

Jesus is Emmanuel, which means that He is God with us (Matthew 1:23). The indescribably awesome, infinite Lord of all that exists took on a form like ours and dwelt among us. Through His Holy Spirit, He is with us in every circumstance we will ever encounter. Therefore, we are never alone. Regardless of where we are or what we experience, we are assured of His wonderful, powerful, loving presence.

Jesus is our Prince of Peace (Isaiah 9:6). Even when our hectic schedules and overwhelming responsibilities increase during this season, we are assured tranquility in our relationships with Christ. He can speak solace and peace to our circumstances when everything around us is in chaos.

Jesus is the Light of the World (John 8:12). Although you and I may experience difficulties and dark moments, Christ lights the way for us. He assures us that if we faithfully walk with Him, we will not remain in darkness. The Savior will illuminate our paths and lead us to the answers we need.

Jesus is our Great High Priest (Hebrews 4:15). He is the Holy One who shared in our humanity and who bridges the gap between us and the Father—ushering us into relationships with God and teaching us His ways. Jesus intercedes for us, understands our human weaknesses, and has the ability and knowledge to meet every need we will ever have. Therefore, there is no One better to teach us how to live.

Jesus is the King of Kings and Lord of Lords (Revelation 19:16). He is the Sovereign Ruler over all that exists. No problem is too daunting for Him, and we can always trust He will act in our best interests with love, grace, and wisdom. Therefore, He is our perfect Leader who always guides our paths to triumph.

Jesus is the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world (John 1:29). He is our Deliverer, Redeemer, and Savior who does what we could never do for ourselves. He reconciles us to the Father and breaks the hold sin and death have over us. Because Jesus has defeated these, our greatest foes, we can be certain that nothing we ever experience will hinder His perfect presence and provision in our lives.

So, what things are grasping for your attention this Christmas? What are you spending your time and energy trying to accomplish? I pray that if your faith should waver or you begin to feel lonely, overwhelmed, lost, or empty, you will realize that your focus is not where it should be—on the only One who can fulfill all your needs.

Jesus is worthy of your focus, worship, and praise always, regardless of the season. The Prince of Peace, Guiding Light, Great High Priest, Lord, and King—the One who willingly delivers you from all your sins and burdens—is always with you. I pray this Christmas, Christ will be foremost in your thoughts, your comfort in times of loneliness, and your refuge during storm. May He bless you greatly as you seek His face and celebrate His glorious birth.

Have a blessed Christmas! Pastor Bob

WHAT'S INSIDE?						
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY FOR WELCOMING ALL

Introduction/Overview

The Welcoming Team is composed of self-selected and invited individuals. The team recognizes that we need to fulfill the baptismal promises in order to welcome all people, regardless of race, economic status, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, or political persuasion. We chose to follow the Reconciling in Christ program of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. The program's goals support St. John's mission to love God and to love people.

Process

- Multiple virtual meetings with Jamie Fivecoat to organize our team
- Training provided by Reconciling Works of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
- Workshop with Jamie and Karen Fivecoat
 - * Development of questions to ask a cross-section of the congregation
 - * Team members assigned people to interview
- Data from interviews compiled and scored on a five-point scale (scoring was subjective)

Data Results

Of the five questions asked to 40 interviewees, we determined that:

- 1. St. John's is more welcoming than it used to be
- 2. Younger people say we could do better with welcoming
- 3. Older people say we are doing a fine job

Next Steps

Following the steps outlined in Building an Inclusive Church, we must continue to build relationships and to map the next steps of our journey. These steps introduce change. One of the recommendations is to work welcoming all concepts into small groups. Another recommendation is to request the congregation to officially recognize welcoming all as a community ministry. Small group learning opportunities are a good way to reinforce the baptismal promises.



THE CHURCH OFFICE IS CLOSED

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 23 - MONDAY, JANUARY 2



BAPTISMAL PROMISE

GIFTS OF DISCIPLESHIP



LIVE

among God's faithful people



HEAR

the word of God



SHARE

in the Lord's Supper



PROCLAIM

the good news of God in Christ through word and deed



SERVE

all people, following the example of Jesus



STRIVE

for justice and peace in all the earth



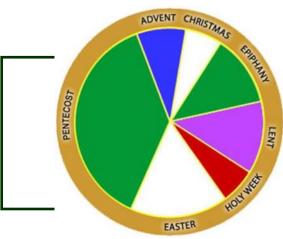
ST. JOHN'S EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH











A new liturgical year began on November 27 with the start of Advent. The church year is cyclical; seasons flow one to another. There are 6 seasons in the liturgical calendar: Advent, Christmas, Epiphany, Lent, Easter and Pentecost. Each season has its own theme, color and symbol. The church year is a never-ending circle beginning with Advent.

THE SHACK

By William P. Young Published by Windblown Media; Copyright 2007

Available through independent booksellers, online, or through your local public library

By: Cathy Krause

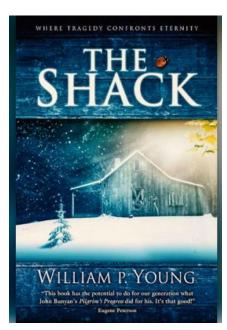
A cataclysmic event (e.g., a flood, a fire, an auto accident, a death, etc.) generally changes the life of the person experiencing it. What that person does with the change is dependent on the person and their faith.

<u>The Shack</u> is a work of fiction involving a cataclysmic event. I believe that God can use anything to fulfill his purposes – even a novel. This article is not a book review; it is an exploration of one of the biblical concepts found within its pages.

One of the overarching concepts in <u>The Shack</u> is that of relationship to God. Is God kept in a box and brought out only on Sunday mornings for an hour? Is God kept in a book and kept on a shelf – unopened and unread? Is there a feeling of being abandoned by God? Do you echo the words of the psalmist in Ps 22:1-21, Ps 69:1-3 or Ps 77:1-10? What does a cataclysmic event do to your relationship with God?

Preconceived notions of God can keep us from a relationship with him. Again, God can and does use circumstances or situations to bring his will to fruition. This promise is given by Jesus in Matthew 19:26. Even if we feel God's absence, that does not mean he is not near us.

In Genesis 1:26 and 27, God says, "Let us make humans in *our* image, to be like *our-selves.....*God created humans in his own image, in the image of God he created them, male and female." (Life Application Study Bible) (italics – mine)



Furthermore, we project what we think God *should* be based on our preconceived ideas. Can God be female? Wisdom belongs to God – and wisdom is referred to as female in Proverbs chapters 1 and 8. (Sophia is Greek for wisdom and is female.) Is the Holy Spirit female? How would you react/connect with a feminine God or Holy Spirit? Can God be both male and female? What if God is African? Or Hispanic? Or Asian? And, more importantly, does it matter?

"I am neither male nor female, even though both genders are derived from my nature. If I choose to 'appear' to you as a man or a woman, it's because I love you. For me to appear to you as a woman and suggest that you call me 'Papa' is simply to mix metaphors, to help you keep from falling so easily back into your religious conditioning." p.95, The Shack

Next month: a look at God's love in The Shack.

ANNUAL CONGREGATION BUDGET MEETING

Sunday, December 11 immediately following 9:30 am worship

In accordance with Article C.10.01.01 of our constitution, the Annual Congregation Budget Meeting will be held on Sunday, December 11, 2022, immediately following 9:30 am worship. The agenda consists of only the following items:

- presentation of the 2023 Ministry Action Plan for approval
- 2) election of Congregation Council Members

WEATHER RELATED CLOSINGS

Our 'Inclement Weather' policy at St John's states that when the Boyertown Area School District is closed, we follow their lead and cancel all meetings and events.

For weather related closings, check Channel 69 News or www.wfmz.com.





ST. JOHN'S PRESCHOOL

Growing and Learning in God's Love

'TIS THE SEASON

By: Danielle Antalosky, Preschool Aide

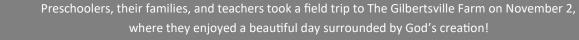
It's hard to believe that November is over and December is already here. Our students had so much fun this past month learning about Thanksgiving, being thankful and of course, turkeys.

As we move into the month of December, we will be learning about Christmas and all it entails - the birth of Jesus, the importance of giving to the less fortunate, family traditions and Santa!

The students will be very busy getting ready for the holiday. We will be working on a special present for mom and dad (shhh....don't ask...it's a secret!). Christmas decorations, both for home and school, will be created with love by the stu-

dents. I am so happy to share in the excitement and anticipation of the Christmas season with our students.

Christmas blessings to you and your family from all of us at St. John's Preschool. May the new year bring your family peace and joy! Merry Christmas!













A CHRISTMAS GIFT OF EMPOWERMENT

By: Jen Schlegel

Paul writes in the fourth chapter of his letter to the Ephesians, "11 So Christ himself gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the pastors and teachers, 12 to equip his people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up 13 until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ."



We at St. John's have been invited to participate in the ministries of Wellspring Karitas, each in different ways. First, we are all invited to offer prayers - for guidance, success, health, and increased understanding of what it means to love our neighbor and greater recognition of who our neighbors are. Second, eleven members of our congregation, along with Tracey Smith, representing Wellspring Karitas, will be traveling to Cuernavaca, Mexico, next month. We will experience firsthand the grassroots projects developed there that allow local disabled people to have full-time, fair-wage employment; encourage young people to stay in school through alternative education; support local farmers and feed marginalized populations and build community. Third, we are all invited to contribute donations to purchase tools so we can literally help equip people for works of service.

This Christmas, consider helping equip people to do work that empowers them and supports community building in Cuernavaca and around the world. Know that a financial donation will help buy tools needed for a second workshop to repair wheelchairs. Suggested financial donations will go to the following:

Screwdriver	\$16	Wrench set	\$30
Pliers	\$22	Power drill	\$100
Ratchet set	\$25	Angle grinder	\$175

Donations can be given via check made out to St. John's with the memo line stating, 'tool donation'. The deadline for contributions is Epiphany, January 6, 2023. Questions? Please contact Jen Schlegel at jrschlegel@comcast.net.

WOMEN'S GROUP

By: Betty Long

St. John's has a new women's group called Joyful Sisters of Service. As a faith-based group of women, we will focus on needs in our community and of all people. Our first activity will be to join with those that visit Chestnut Knoll on Thursdays. We will accompany them on **December 15 at 10:00 am**, where we will participate in a Christmas worship service and bring cookies for the guests. To prepare, we will meet on **Wednesday**, **December 14 at 1:00 pm** in Fellowship Hall to sort cookies and finalize plans for the event. All women are invited to join!



FIDDLER ON THE ROOF

TALISMAN PLAYERS

January 18 | 7:00 pm | Sanctuary

Men's Retreat
February 3-5 | Off-Site

REGARDING CONTRIBUTIONS

The IRS provides clear guidelines with regard to the date of posting contributions, which we follow carefully. All contributions received or postmarked by December 31 will be included in that year's contribution statement. If the contribution is received or postmarked after December 31, it will be included in the contribution statement of the year in which it is received/postmarked, regardless of the date on the check.

Eagle Messenger Article Deadlines

Note: Earlier deadline in December

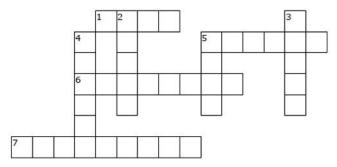
Monday, December 5 for January issue Monday, January 9 for February issue Monday, February 13 for March issue

The Birth of Jesus

And she brought forth her firstborn son, and wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger; because there was no room for them in the inn. Luke 2:7 (KJV)

Puzzle is based on Luke 2:1-20





ACROSS

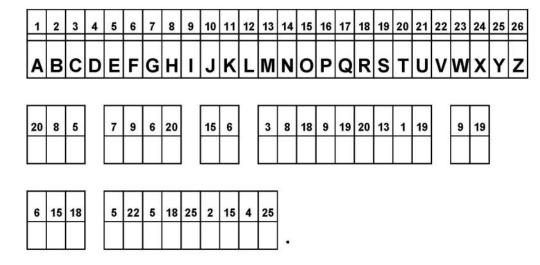
- 1. An infant or very young child
- The place where Mary laid the baby Jesus
- A person who takes care of sheep
- 7. The city where Jesus was born

DOWN

- Heavenly being that told the shepherds about Jesus' birth
- 3. The savior of the world
- 4. The earthly father of Jesus
- 5. The mother of Jesus

JOSEPH	ANGEL	BETHLEHEM	BABY
MARY	SHEPHERD	JESUS	MANGER

Don't Miss Christmas SECRET MESSAGE



And the angel said unto them, Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord. Luke 2:10-11 (KJV)

WORSHIP MINISTRY

Date	Day	Time	Liturgical Day	Special Service	Lector	Media	Prayers	Sound	Ushers	Video
12/4/2022	Sunday	9:30 AM	Advent 2		Dave Long	Shannon Omlor	Lauren Frey	Myles Omlor	Scott Scheiry, Susan & Andy Varzally, Terry Wadsworth	Sarah Eidle
12/7/2022	Wednesday	7:00 PM		Midweek Advent	Amanda Ehst	Shannon Omlor	NA	Brianna Rohrbach	Ros & Brian Moatz	Abbe Grofe
12/11/2022	Sunday	9:30 AM	Advent 3		Krista Fretz	Shannon Omlor	Martha Bentley	Chase Sennott	Ashley Gheer, John Gheer, Jay Herbert, Gerry Krause	Nyla Omlor
12/14/2022	Wednesday	7:00 PM		Midweek Advent	Bob Machamer	Shannon Omlor	NA	Ashley Gheer	Mary Kay & Donnie Heimbach	Jason Eidle
12/18/2022	Sunday	9:30 AM	Advent 4		Mel Roth	Sarah Eidle	Friz Family	Myles Omlor	Becky & Barry Erb, Bunny & Ron Riffle	Shannon Omlor
12/21/2022	Wednesday	7:00 PM	Blue Christmas			Shannon Omlor	Bonnie Moatz	Brianna Rohrbach	Ros & Brian Moatz	Scott Scheiry
12/24/2022	Saturday	3:00 PM	Christmas Eve		Phyllis Kershner	Sarah Eidle	Martha Bentley	Chase Sennott	Martha Bentley, Jay Herbert, Ed Schaeffer, Carol Sematis	Jason Eidle
12/24/2022	Saturday	8:00 PM	Christmas Eve	Candlelight	Charles Haddad	Shannon Omlor	Lauren Frey	Ashley Gheer	Bev & Joe Blake, Ben Rohrbach, Bill Rohrbach	Scott Scheiry
12/25/2022	Sunday	10:30 AM	Christmas Day		Terry Wade	Sarah Eidle	Terry Wade	Brianna Rohrbach	Mike Gilbert, Sandy & Terry Wade	Abbe Grofe
1/1/2023	Sunday	9:30 AM	First Sunday after Christmas	Lessons and Carols	NA	Shannon Omlor	Jean Machamer	Myles Omlor	Gerry Krause, Bill Rohrbach, Susan & Andy Varzally	Nyla Omlor
1/6/2023	Friday	7:00 PM	Ephipany of Our Lord		TBD	Sarah Eidle	Ros Moatz	Chase Sennott	Ros & Brian Moatz	Jason Eidle
1/8/2023	Sunday	9:30 AM	Baptism of Our Lord		Bev Blake	Shannon Omlor	Karen Pollock	Ashley Gheer	Martha Bentley, Barbara Houp, Darin Moyer, Kevin Moyer	Scott Scheiry
1/15/2023	Sunday	9:30 AM	Second Sunday after Epiphany		Andy Varzally	Sarah Eidle	Molly Byrne	Brianna Rohrbach	Becky & Barry Erb, Bunny & Ron Riffle	Abbe Grofe
1/22/2023	Sunday	9:30 AM	Third Sunday after Epiphany		Mary Kay Heimbach	Shannon Omlor	Sarah Eidle	Myles Omlor	Joanne Dykie, Scott Scheiry, Carol Sematis, Terry Wadsworth	Sarah Eidle
1/29/2023	Sunday	9:30 AM	Fourth Sunday after Epiphany		Missy Endy	Sarah Eidle	Michele Eidle	Chase Sennott	Charles Haddad, Phil Haddad, Sandy & Terry Wade	Shannon Omlor

DECEMBER 2022

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
				1 Operation 143 Delivery 10:00a Chestnut Knoll Service 6:30p Sharing the Gospel 6:30p Worship Team 8:00p Worship Broadcast	7:00a Men's Small Group Bible Study 9:00a Preschool Gym Class	3 10:00a Recital: Music Studio of Patricia Keith 4:30p Come to the Table
4 Advent 2 9:30a Sunday School 9:30a Worship Celebration 10:45a Love Wins 4:00p The Messiah	5 5:00p Newsletter Submission 6:30p Girl Scouts 6:30p Karitas Team 7:00p Joint Parking Lot Committee	6 12:00p Staff Workshop	7 9:30a Preschool Chapel Time 11:30a Preschool Staff 12:45p Preschool Chapel Time 2:00p Homelessness Task Force 7:00p Holden Evening Prayer 7:30p Congregation Council	8 10:00a Chestnut Knoll Service 6:30p Sharing the Gospel 6:30p Worship Team 8:00p Worship Broadcast	9 7:00a Men's Small Group Bible Study	4:30p Come to the Table 7:00p Director's Big Band Christmas Concert
9:30a Sunday School 9:30a Worship Celebration 10:45a Annual Congregation Budget Meeting 4:30p Shop with a Cop	12 10:00a Talisman Players 6:30p Girl Scouts 7:30p Optimist Club of Boyertown	9:00a Admin Staff 6:30p Finance Team	1:00p Joyful Sisters of Service 7:00p Holden Evening Prayer	15 Operation 143 Delivery 9:00a Community Leaders 10:00a Chestnut Knoll Service 8:00p Worship Broadcast	7:00a Men's Small Group Bible Study 9:00a Preschool Gym Class	4:30p Come to the Table
18 Advent 4 9:30a Sunday School 9:30a Worship Celebration	19 6:30p Girl Scouts	20	21 Preschool Closed 9:30a Pottstown Soup Kitchen 7:00p Blue Christmas Worship	Preschool Closed 10:00a Chestnut Knoll Service w/Holy Communion 8:00p Worship Broadcast	23 Preschool Closed Office Closed 7:00a Men's Small Group Bible Study	24 3:00p Worship Celebration 8:00p Candlelight, Worship Celebration
25 Christmas Day 10:30a Worship Celebration 11:00a Christmas Day Meal	26 Preschool Closed Office Closed	27 Preschool Closed Office Closed	28 Preschool Closed Office Closed	Preschool Closed Office Closed 10:00a Chestnut Knoll Service 8:00p Worship Broadcast	30 Preschool Closed Office Closed 7:00a Men's Small Group Bible Study	31 4:30p Come to the Table

DECEMBER BIRTHDAYS

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
			1 Terry Wade	2 Emily Groff Joan Kessler	3
5 Nathan Vogt	6 Richard Eidle	7 Gregory Daub Brian Shoemaker	8	9	10 Linda Auman Betty Lou Hess
12 Margaret Funk	13	14 Evelyn Heimbach Sherry Mendez	15 Connie Babb Noelle Erb Gloria Weller	16 Shane Johnson	17 Sharon Leister
19 Becky Scheiry	20	21 Chris Hoagey	22 Timothy Krause Susan Varzally	23 Betty Miller Darin Moyer	24 Corrie Shaner
26 Jen Friz	27 Vicki Davidheiser	28 Martha Bentley	29 Cody Rhoads	30 Lori Leister Elaine Smith	31 Ginny Harze Heather Murray Jane Spade
	5 Nathan Vogt 12 Margaret Funk 19 Becky Scheiry	5 Nathan Vogt 12 Margaret Funk 19 Becky Scheiry 26 27	5 Nathan Vogt 6 Richard Eidle 7 Gregory Daub Brian Shoemaker 12 Margaret Funk 13 14 Evelyn Heimbach Sherry Mendez 19 Becky Scheiry 20 21 Chris Hoagey 26 27 28	5 Nathan Vogt 6 Richard Eidle 7 Gregory Daub Brian Shoemaker 12 Margaret Funk 13 14 Evelyn Heimbach Sherry Mendez 19 Becky Scheiry 20 21 Chris Hoagey 22 Timothy Krause Susan Varzally 26 27 28 29	1 Terry Wade 2 Emily Groff Joan Kessler 5 Nathan Vogt 6 Richard Eidle 7 Gregory Daub Brian Shoemaker 8 9 12 Margaret Funk 13 14 Evelyn Heimbach Sherry Mendez 15 Connie Babb Noelle Erb Gloria Weller 19 Becky Scheiry 20 21 Chris Hoagey 21 Timothy Krause Susan Varzally 23 Betty Miller Darin Moyer 26 Jen Friz 7 Vicki Davidheiser 28 Martha Bentley 29 Cody Rhoads Lori Leister



EAGLE MESSENGER

ST. JOHN'S EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH | 45 North Reading Avenue | Boyertown, PA 19512 610-369-1024 | 610-369-1463 Fax | www.stjohnsboyertown.org

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We believe God's purpose for the people of St. John's Evangelical Lutheran Church is to develop joy-filled children of God who love the Lord and share God's Word.

We do this by:

- Maintaining a trusting and welcoming environment.
- Praying daily.
- Reading scripture regularly.
- Sharing our faith through action-based service.
- Encouraging holy conversations.
- Feeding our faith with music.

With a focus on:

- Activities that build relationships.
- Worship that is relevant.
- Meeting the needs of the vulnerable in our community.

Return Service Request - Dated Material Mailed November 22, 2022

WORSHIP

SUNDAY 9:30 AM

In-Person & Livestream on YouTube

Office Hours (open by appointment) Monday-Thursday 8:30 am - 3:30 pm Friday 8:30 am - 12:00 pm

Pastor Bob Machamer
Kay Christman, Finance Team
Amanda Ehst, Worship Coordinator
Sue Grofe, Finance Team
Bonnie Moatz, Finance Team
Shannon Omlor, Communications Coordinator
Linda Rohrbach, Treasurer
Becky Scheiry, Parish Administrator
Amy Willson, Preschool Director

bmachamer@stjohnsboyertown.org financialsecretary@stjohnsboyertown.org aehst@stjohnsboyertown.org financialsecretary@stjohnsboyertown.org financialsecretary@stjohnsboyertown.org somlor@stjohnsboyertown.org treasurer@stjohnsboyertown.org parishadmin@stjohnsboyertown.org awillson@stjohnsboyertown.org

