

~ Y'all Come Back Now, Ya Hear? ~

*"I was glad when they said unto me, Let us go into the house of the Lord.
Our feet shall stand within thy gates ..."*

~Psalm 122:1-2

Dear Members and Friends,

Do you remember *The Beverly Hillbillies*, that old black-and-white sitcom about a poor family from Appalachia who struck it rich and moved to Beverly Hills? It was old even when I was a kid. The best part about getting a sick day in the 1970s was being home alone and watching the old TV shows that only aired during the daytime: *I Love Lucy*, *Perry Mason*, *Bewitched*, *Hogan's Heroes*. Incidentally, Michelle will tell you that we don't have a TV, but that's not exactly accurate. We've got a venerable old 24-inch flat screen that's attached to an old-fashioned antenna. We only switch it on once every four years—for presidential elections—and it picks up the three major networks...plus one station that plays nothing but those ancient shows night and day. Black and white reruns no longer hold much interest for me, but I'll long remember the theme songs for all of them. At the end of *The Beverly Hillbillies*, the singer would close the show's theme song with the memorable words: Y'all come back now, ya hear?

So...you've probably guessed where this is headed. It's time to come back to church! We have yet to see what the coronavirus will do to religious faith in the United States. Strangely, it seems to have sparked a mini-revival of religion in Britain. Only 10% of Britons attended church on a weekly basis prior to the pandemic, but since COVID-19 struck, online attendance at religious services has spiked to 25% of the population—with young people leading the charge. But America's relationship to faith is unique. Some wonder if the pandemic is hastening the already hasty unchurched of the nation. When circumstances prevent us from practicing old habits—like churchgoing—they will be quickly replaced by new habits. And so, I've created a list of reasons you should come back to church:

It's safe. Our COVID-19 safeguards are thorough and cautious.

It's good for your spiritual health. Watching church on our TVs and computer screens was good, but there's a special energy about corporate worship—with hearts and voices united. Being back inside the church building alone is a joy.

It's good for your emotional health. You miss us, and we miss you! Returning to some degree of social normalcy will help to break you out of the pandemic funk.

It's kid-friendly. Beginning on May 9, "summer Sunday school" will take place outside during the worship service for kids from preschool through middle school.

It's where you belong.

What am I leaving out? I'm sure you could add reasons of your own to the list. I suppose I ought to close this note by saying, "Y'all come back now, ya hear?" But now that the moment is upon me, it just seems too corny. In any case, we hope to see you soon. In the meantime, keep in touch.

In Christ's Peace,
~Brian

P.S: WE NEED ELDERS, DEACONS, GREETERS, AND LECTORS! Most urgently, we need previously ordained elders to go back on session. Please contact me **as soon as possible** if you would be willing to make yourself available for any of these jobs!

Christian Education and Youth Programming -- Amy Grella, Director / am@bhccml.com

CHILDREN'S WORSHIP -- PRESCHOOL THROUGH GRADE 2

Pre-recorded children's worship stories will be posted weekly on the church website through Sunday, May 2.

The Open the Church Task Force is finalizing requirements for groups (both internal and external) to meet back in-person, and I anticipate we will be hearing new recommendations and approval from Session soon. On Sunday, May 9, we plan to begin in-person options for children using the Summer Sunday School format.

The Summer Sunday School format focuses on fellowship (there are no prepared lessons), socialization and allowing kids to enjoy our outdoor playground equipment. Our goal will be to remain outdoors on the playground as much as possible but have the indoor area (room 110) accessible for inclement weather. Everything we do, whether indoor or outdoor, will require masks for everyone. Additional COVID safety plans and procedures are being developed to ensure the safety of our volunteers and participants and will be shared in the coming weeks.

AN UPDATE ON JUNIOR DAY CAMP AND DAY CAMP

The Christian Education committee has decided to change the format of our traditional week-long day camp and junior day camp this summer. We plan to host shorter, all-outdoor meetups every Wednesday night throughout the summer. We believe this will be easier to plan and staff, while allowing us to maximize the safety precautions we adopt for all participants and volunteers. If you would like to be involved in planning, please contact Amy or the church office.

TWEEN AND PRE-TEEN PROGRAMMING THIRD THROUGH EIGHTH GRADE

The Open the Church Task Force is finalizing requirements for groups (both internal and external) to meet back in-person, and I anticipate we will be hearing new recommendations and approval from Session soon. We anticipate resuming in-person meetups in May. Once we move to in-person, we will continue to hold zoom meetups, but will need to select a different time to meet. Look for more information on that coming soon!

This Sunday, May 2, is Youth Sunday, a service that will be fully led by the high school youth. We are not meeting that day in order to encourage kids and families to participate in worship whether in-person or on-line.

On Sunday, May 9, our 3rd-8th graders will begin meeting in-person during the worship service. Everything we do, whether indoor or outdoor, will require masks for everyone. Additional COVID safety plans and procedures are being developed to ensure the safety of our volunteers and participants. These will be shared in the coming weeks.

Senior High Youth Group Youth Sunday -- May 2

The youth group has worked hard to plan the worship service on Sunday, May 2.

In lieu of a sermon, our three seniors: Madelyn Salvante, Ellie Rising, and Coleman Child, will be speaking.

Spring Plant Sale

Bower Hill Youth Group would like to thank you for your support of our spring flower sale. **The flowers will be delivered to the church parking lot on Tuesday, May 4.** Volunteers will be needed to help sort and assist people with pickup. Additional details on when orders may be picked up will be provided as soon as greenhouse delivery is finalized. Check your email for important delivery updates.

GLOBAL LINKS - PERSONAL CARE KIT ASSEMBLY

Many hands make light work! Plan to join Bower Hill Youth on Sunday, May 16, immediately following worship in Fellowship Hall, to package the personal care kits for Global Links.

The collection deadline for items has been extended to May 14. Thanks to those of you who have already contributed to this effort! To date, we've collected nearly half the items needed for our goal of 250 personal care kits. Collection bins are located in the hallway outside the church office, and in the narthex on Sundays.

Bower Hill will gather items donated by members and friends to make up the kits. Each kit must include one of each of the following items. **All items should be NEW, FULL SIZED, and Individually wrapped -- no travel or extra-large size please.** Where possible, please choose gender-neutral, fragrance-free items with less chemicals. Please open the link below to see the specific items still needed and to sign up for what you would like to contribute. We still need the specified number of the items below: Shampoo (159), Dental floss (135), Lotion (134), Toothpaste (128), Deodorant (90), Toothbrush (69), Bar of soap (33).

[Mission - Global Links | BowerHillChurch](#)



WORSHIP PLANS

May 2

Fifth Sunday of Easter - Communion

Youth Sunday:

Graduating Seniors are Preaching!

May 9: Sixth Sunday of Easter

Mother's Day

John 15:9-17; Acts 10:44-48

May 16: Ascension

Ephesians 1:15-23; Luke 24:44-53

May 23: Pentecost

John 7:35-39; Acts 2:1-18

May 30: Trinity

Isaiah 6:1-8; John 3:1-17

COVID MITIGATION UPDATE

Acting on a report from the Open the Church Task Force, Session has approved the following changes to our mitigation efforts **effective this Sunday, May 2.**

Clergy and Lectors will no longer be required to wear masks when speaking.

Fully vaccinated members of the choir will sing without masks behind the communion table.

The congregation will be permitted to speak prayers & responses while wearing masks

Fellowship time following the service will be permitted outside with social distancing and masks being worn

All doors and all restrooms will be open

Temperatures will no longer need to be taken

Parents of children and youth will be contacted regarding best practices and event dates

All persons entering the building must wear masks and social distance. We encourage people to return to in-person worship and other church events. We ask everyone to observe their own comfort level to determine when and where they will be present.



May 2 — Barbara Oram

May 4 — Beth Robosky

May 7 — Kristen Mackey

May 9 — Avery Saba

May 10 — Ben Boisvert

Lynn Foltz

May 11 — Anna Siefken

May 12 — Cal McElroy

May 13 — Connie May

May 14 — Debbie Boisvert

May 17 — Rick Baumhammers

Robert Olinger

Caroline Smith

May 18 — Lindsay Cole

May 19 — Abbey Marcovsky

May 20 — Evelyn Lansbery

Abby Waine

May 22 — Nancy Andrews

Jennifer Webler

May 23 — Allison Bruder

May 24 — Jackson Donahue

May 26 — Dick Westerhoff

May 28 — Sam Rothschild

May 29 — Caroline Barone

Jacob Geis

May 31 — Brad Young

THE BIRTHDAY BLESSING

Please take a moment to read through the names, pray for them, and offer them your best wishes. If your name is not listed, it is because the church office does not have your information. Please call 412-561-4114 or email office@bhccml.com.

ADULT EDUCATION

Adult Education will continue to offer Zoom sessions in May, on Saturday mornings, from 9:00-10 a.m. based on our themes of Spiritual Self Care and Racial Justice.

On May 2, there will be a panel review of Heather McGhee's book *The Sum of Us: What Racism Costs Everyone and How We Can Prosper Together* presented by Linda James, Jean Miewald and Sarah Neusius, who have been reading this book for the Mission Committee. McGhee's argument is that zero sum thinking and racist policies have hurt all Americans, not just people of color. Other sessions are being planned through May 22, at which time the programming year will conclude.

Please look for additional information and links through E-Blasts and plan to join us.

--Sarah Neusius and Rick Jacobs
Co-Chairs, Adult Education

PASTORAL PONDERINGS

What do your eyes say? For over a year now we have greeted everyone while they were wearing a mask. We have not been able to see their full face and therefore have had to rely on their eyes to convey their expressions. I admit that trying to preach with a mask was not only difficult for speaking, but it also did not allow me to convey the emotion that usually was conveyed by entire facial expressions.

What do we say with our eyes? If they are closed, we assume sleep. If we wink one, we assume we are flirting or that there is a secret conveyed to those who are in on it. If we squint, we think that the sun is too bright or that we are having difficulty accepting or understanding what is being said. But, how do our eyes say we understand and that we love you?

As a part of the community of faith, we are challenged to be welcoming and loving. We must practice using our eyes to more fully convey our concern for all God's children.

Rev. Dr. Fred Leasure, Parish Associate

LIGHTING THE STEEPLE



May 9

In memory of Betty B. Mancini by her family:

Ann Morrison & Bob Hendricks
Rick and Andrea Morrison

May 24

In loving memory of my daughter, Elizabeth Kay Allen,
with love from Kay Allen

EVERY DAY in 2021

In prayer for World Peace, from Susan Hill Brown,
former member of BHCC

The opportunity to light the steeple of Bower Hill Community Church continues to be successful. Many have sponsored a night in memory or in honor of a person or a special occasion. Notice of the lighting and the person, event, or date that it commemorates, will appear in the weekly bulletin. The cost of this is \$10 a day and can be sent directly to the church.

Requests should include: 1) the date(s) you would like to sponsor; 2) the reason you want to sponsor (in honor, in memory, etc.); 3) the name of the person(s) or the event as you want it to appear in the bulletin; 4) your name. Email your request to: Amy Leasure at amlea97@hotmail.com.



COLLECTION ONGOING

Flea Market items can still be dropped off from Monday through Friday inside the Portico door (the area right outside the office). Please call ahead to be sure that someone is in the office during business hours (9:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.).

Please do not include clothes or old TVs. All items must be clean and in working condition. Contact Theresa Child at treetoowon@yahoo.com or at 412-429-9519 if you have any questions.



CONGREGATION MEETING NOTICE

By official call of the Session, the second 2021 regular meeting of the congregation of Bower Hill Community Church (Presbyterian U.S.A.) will be held via Zoom on Sunday, May 23 at 11:00 a.m. All church members are encouraged to attend. Details and instructions for joining the meeting will be sent in a future e-blast.



The Nominating Committee will present its slate of nominees for Session members in the Class of 2024, Deacon members in the Class of 2024, and congregation members of the 2022 Nominating Committee.

Bill Cadwell, Clerk of Session

ECO-JUSTICE NEWSLETTER MAY 2021

Since today is part of Earth Week, Earth Day is on my mind. By the time you read this, you will have received an e-blast about some of the many activities available to us all. The Eco-Justice team has recently received Building & Grounds approval to plant five more trees on church property, so look forward to that!

During the pandemic, we have continued meeting, planning, and working on what projects we can. We hope to invite you soon to join us in some ways our team can add to the projects our congregation pursues to do our part to further God's Kingdom in the world. This newsletter has attempted to focus on what we can do at home.

Today I want to talk about hope. It's easy to become discouraged when working alone, and it's also disheartening to see the climate disasters grow ever more threatening and deadly. Nearly three billion animals were killed or driven from their habitats in the Australian bush fires of 2019-2020. About 200 people were killed when a collapsing bit of glacier led to a landslide and flood in the Himalayas in February. Hundreds of butterfly species in the American West are in steep decline. And the bad news goes on.

Some scientists are trying to spread the good news they find through knowledge and activism. Marine scientist Nancy Knowlton specializes in coral reefs. In 2014 she joined other scientists to launch <http://www.oceanoptimism.org>, a near-daily Twitter and Instagram feed highlighting glimmers of resilience in the ocean and positive results concerning climate change in general. Likewise, the Smithsonian's <https://conservationcommons.si.edu> offers positive news and events on its website.

Others continue to write and spread the word in other ways, often trying to awaken us to the seriousness of the situation. The famous Penn State scientist Michael Mann discovered the iconic "hockey stick" graph in 1998, to have his findings reinforced over the years. In his new book, *The New Climate War*, he now identifies our biggest obstacles not as climate change deniers, but as the feeling that all is hopeless and futile (<https://www.publicaffairsbooks.com/titles/michael-e-mann/the-new-climate-war/9781541758223/>).

Quite often, though, writers, activists, and scientists come back to the humble theme of doing what you can, wherever you are. Birder and naturalist J. Drew Lanham is also the author of *The Home Place: Memoirs of a Colored Man's Love Affair with Nature* (<https://milkweed.org/book/the-home-place>). His goal is to encourage people of color to realize that everyone can do something, no matter what their resources. He says, "Especially for people of color, for Black folks or Indigenous peoples," climate change, "is not some big word that's far away for big [white] polar bears. It's an essential thing that's close by for little Black and Brown boys and girls who have asthma at rates far higher than the majority." Planting a pot of greens is taking action.

And finally, the poet Nancy Shahib Nye has released a new book, *Cast Away*, which is dedicated to the idea that a person may not be able to save the world, but she can at least pick up trash (<https://www.harpercollins.com/products/cast-away-naomi-shihab-nye?variant=32126651564066>).



THANKS
FROM THE
HEART

Bower Hill Community Church has been a place of spiritual inspiration and community for David and me for over 60 years. It sustained us both during our recent time of illness, the stress of moving and David's passing.

Words of gratitude are not adequate to express our family's thanks for the calls, visits, cards, meals (especially the super soup). We could not have made it without the support of you all.

We cherish the years we spent among you.

Sincerely,

Nancy Green, Tom, Cathy, and Family

WESTERN PA DIAPER BANK

Remember to save coupons for disposable diapers and feminine hygiene products that you collect. You can drop them off at the church office during regular business hours OR send them with your weekly offering.

BHCC Information

Rev. Dr. Brian Snyder, Pastor

Parish Associate, Rev. Dr. Fred Leasure

Company of Pastors

Rev. Tami Hooker

Rev. Phil Jamison

Rev. Dr. Fred Leasure

Rev. Dr. Betty Sykes

Amy Grella, Director

Christian Education and Youth Programs

Anne Smith

Director of Music Ministries

Philip Engel

Financial Secretary

Karen Reynolds

Office Administrator

THE CHURCH OFFICE

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(412) 561-4114

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Monday - Friday, 9:00 a.m.— 3:00 p.m.

www.BowerHillChurch.org

UNITY FOOD PANTRY COLLECTION

The next collection date is Sunday, May 9.

Currently, the Pantry's greatest need is for boxed cereal (preferably low sugar varieties), canned tuna, macaroni and cheese, along with feminine hygiene products of all types.

Donations of any non-perishable food items are always welcomed.

Items can be brought to the church and placed in the collection bin located in the hallway outside the church office. You can also drop off your donations during regular business hours.



BOOKWORMS

The group continues to meet on the fourth Tuesday of the month at 1:00 p.m., via Zoom.



May 25 - *The German Girl*,

by Armando Lucas Correa

June 22 - *This Tender*

by William Kent Kruger

July 27 - *You Never Forget Your First*

by Alexis Coe

CHURCH OFFICE CLOSED

Monday, May 31,
in observance of Memorial Day

BHCC CARE LIST

Joan Bridges, Jim Burke, Jeff Carper,

Jean Dunfee, Dennis Geis, Sr., Jim

McAnulty, Barbara Oram, Donna Williams

LuAnne Pattison, former member

