



~ An Old Faith, a New Year ~

*“God has made everything suitable for its time;
moreover God has put a sense of past and future into their minds...”*
~Ecclesiastes 3:11

Dear Members and Friends,

A mildly amusing “meme” on Facebook shows Moira Rose, a well-known, melodramatic character from a popular sitcom—a show with a name too vulgar to mention here! She has an exaggerated look of panic and dismay on her overly-painted face as she clutches a kitten to her chest. A caption reads: “The moment you realize that 2022 is pronounced 2020 too.” Another meme says: “Nobody claim 2022 as ‘your year’. We’re all gonna walk in real slow. Be good. Be quiet. Be cautious and respectful. Don’t touch anything.” If I’m being honest, I found 2020 easier to take than 2021! In 2020, at least we lived with the constant belief that the pandemic would draw to a speedy conclusion. (I also got weekends free for the first time in my adult life.) 2021 disabused us of the belief that the pandemic would be short-lived, and it did so without mercy and without fanfare.

Oxford Languages—the publisher of various dictionaries—named “vax” its word of the year for 2021. It’s a word that usually appears in other forms, such as “vaxxed” and “anti-vaxxers.” Hardly a glorious legacy for 2021. And yet, the passing year did leave us its share of parting blessings. Even as we celebrate the arrival of the New Year, it’s appropriate to pause and take stock of the many joys that 2021 afforded us. What have they been for you?

The quote at the top of this page is from the poetic-if-doubt-filled book of Ecclesiastes. It’s sometimes translated as, “God has made all things beautiful in their time.” I like this second translation a little better, for it implies that even things that start off less than beautiful (liver & onions, dragonflies, newborns) can become quite appealing. It just takes the necessary amount of time for them to get there—and heat, too, in the case of liver. This suggests that if you and I are faithful and constant, then even these times of extremism, polarization, pandemic, and overall societal malaise will also bear their beautiful fruits. But that’s been said many times. Another question is in order: If God makes everything suitable for its time, does God makes everyone suitable for their times, too? That’s to say, yes, these are troubled times in which we live. Most of us are hoping that they will open swiftly onto better days. But we have been shaped by these times, even as we have shaped them. Have we not been formed especially for this hour, to meet its unique challenges, to apply our ancient and timeless faith to the day in which we live? We have been fashioned for the days that have been assigned to us and given the resources to turn them toward the glory of God and the betterment of humanity. We were meant for these days; they were meant for us. At the risk of sounding trite or simplistic, I’m going to say: I think we’ve got this! With courage and with hope, you and God—together you’ve got this...

Let us hold steadfastly to the faith that has brought us this far, and trust that the One who held all our yesterdays still holds our tomorrows. All joy and blessings to you in 2022! Let it be a year of new insights, and of healing, and of new life.

In Christ’ Peace,
~Brian



LIGHTING THE STEEPLE -- Dedications for January are as follows:

January 1 - January 7 - In memory of David Green by his family.

The opportunity to light the steeple of Bower Hill Community Church continues. Many have sponsored a night in honor of a person or a special occasion. It has also been lit as a way to memorialize a special person who has passed away. 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. (You will not be billed for this.)

Requests should include; the date(s) you would like to sponsor, the reason you want to sponsor (in honor, in memory, etc.), the name of the person(s) or the event as you want it to appear in the bulletin, and your name. Email your request to: Amy Leasure at amlea97@hotmail.com. MULTIPLE sponsors can share the SAME DATE.

*Thank
You!*



FROM THE MISSION COMMITTEE

The Mission Committee would like to thank everyone for their generous support of our Angel Trees this year.

The church office will be closed:

Friday, December 31

New Year's Eve

Monday, January 17

Martin Luther King Day



January WORSHIP PLANS

January 2

Epiphany Sunday
Communion
Isaiah 60:1-6
Matthew 2:1-12

January 9

Baptism of the Lord
Isaiah 43:1-7
Luke 3:15-17; 21-22

January 16

Second Sunday after Epiphany
I Corinthians 2:1-11
John 2:1-11

January 23

Third Sunday after Epiphany
I Corinthians 12:12-31a
Luke 4:14-21

January 30

Fourth Sunday after Epiphany
I Corinthians 13:1-13
Luke 4:21-30

PASTORAL PONDERINGS FROM THE PA

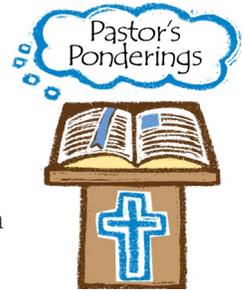
Happy New Year 2022

We measure the passage of time in our lives by certain landmarks. There are numbers associated with years that have special meaning, such as birth, marriage, death, and traumatic events. As we look forward to a new year with the number 2022, we wonder what will be the landmarks it will provide.

Over 4,000 years ago the ancient Babylonians are credited with marking the new year with celebrations and promises. These promises included affirming loyalty to the king, to paying of debts, and returning items that they borrowed. Today some of us make what has been called, “*New Year’s resolutions.*”

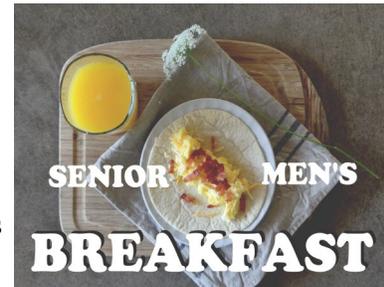
The definition of the word “resolution” is to find an answer or a solution to something and is from the noun “resolve”. The noun is defined as a firm decision to do something. Whether you do indeed make resolutions, I would encourage you to be a bit introspective and to identify what you intend to do to answer the calling of God on your life and how you will demonstrate that commitment with your actions.

~ Rev. Dr. Fred Leasure, Parish Associate



SENIOR MENS BREAKFAST

Our next gathering will be on **Tuesday, January 4, at 8:00 a.m.** The meeting location is the Denny's restaurant at 2180 Greentree Road, near Swallow Hill Road. No reservation is required, and conversation is spontaneous. The regular meeting date will be the first Tuesday of each month. **All men are welcome.** Any questions or comments, contact Glenn Child at gstchild@yahoo.com.



UNITY FOOD PANTRY COLLECTION



Sunday, January 9, is the next collection date. Unity Food Pantry's greatest needs are for bagged white and brown rice, boxes of mashed potato buds, and boxes of low-sugar varieties of cold cereal.

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.

January Adult Education

Adult Education is exploring the questions of “Who is my neighbor? How can I love my neighbor?” in our Sunday morning sessions. We are meeting between 11:00 and 12:00 a.m. in the Friendship Room and online via Zoom for speakers, videos, and discussion of these questions.

We are not meeting on January 2 due to the holiday, but sessions planned for January include the following:

January 9 - JoEllen Welch, Director of Development, Marketing, and Outreach, East Liberty Family Health Care Center, will be speaking about this organization and its work.

January 16 - Ralph Lowe, Director of the Pittsburgh Presbytery’s Justice Ministries, will visit again and lead further discussion of the racial divide in our society.

January 23 - Members of BHCC’s IRU (Immigrant, Refugee, and Undocumented Persons) discovery team will bring us up to date on the Driving PA Forward drivers’ license initiative.

January 30 - Pastor Brian Snyder will lead further exploration of having empathy for our neighbors.

All of these are chances to grow in knowledge and understanding of our neighbors, and we hope that you will join us.

~Sarah Neusius, Chair Adult Education



If you are interested in purchasing sanctuary flowers or making a donation to the charity of your choice as a dedication in memory or honor of a loved one, please contact the church office to check for available dates.



For the month of January, the 9th and 30th are available for dedications.

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



January 25-- *The Rescue Game*
by Ellen Raskin

GET OUTDOORS - Trail behind Hastings Housing Development

Saturday, January 8



This hike supplements our Fairview Park and Boyce/Mayview Park outings. We will start below Fairview Park by Chartiers Creek near Over the Bar restaurant. The hike will parallel Chartiers Creek and the train tracks behind the Hastings housing complex. The hike will be on flat ground and should take about 1 hour. Depending on how long the hike takes, if we want to hike some more then: we can then hike the trails to and in the Hastings housing complex, Wingfield Pines or Boyce/Mayview trails. We will meet at 9:00 a.m. in the main parking lot and carpool to the hike, or you can drive your own vehicle. The trailhead is a 15-minute drive, so it will about 12:00 p.m. at the latest when we return. If it rains, we will reschedule. The trail should be okay if it snows. **Please email me at gstchild@yahoo.com or call so that I have a rough idea of who is coming.**



Margaret Renkl is a writer based in Nashville whose subjects cover the flora, fauna, politics and culture of the American South. In surveying the increasingly visible effects of climate change, she writes:

“It’s easy to feel powerless in a situation like this. . . . Fortunately, saving the planet isn’t something we’re obliged to manage on our own. Our collective efforts *can* make a huge difference, even as the greatest differences will be made in ways that are far beyond the reach of average citizens. And in supporting these efforts, we are far from powerless.”

She goes on to encourage supporting green candidates, environmental nonprofits, nonprofit news sources, legal organizations that push for greater conservation measures, and, last but not least, “conservancies that work to protect ecosystems while they are still intact.”

We have a number of the latter in our own backyard. Conservancies provide opportunities for volunteer activities that often include entire families. Check out one or more on the web:

- ◇ Western Pennsylvania Conservancy - <https://waterlandlife.org>
- ◇ Mt. Lebanon Nature Conservancy - <https://www.lebonature.org>
- ◇ Scott Nature Conservancy - <http://scottconservancy.org>
- ◇ Upper St. Clair Citizens for Land Stewardship - <http://www.uscccls.org>
- ◇ Pittsburgh Parks Conservancy - <https://pittsburghparks.org>

These and similar groups give families and individuals the opportunity to experience fun, outdoor, productive projects in which to explore and experience nature. Check them out!

Even closer to home, our own former “Bubble Brigade” has, by default, been replaced by a very few willing souls. As you enjoy our growing Coffee Hours, consider saying thanks, or even helping out!



Bower Hill supports The Neighborhood Academy on North Aiken Avenue in Pittsburgh. This private school is for middle and high school students who come from families that demonstrate financial need. It is a faith-based, college preparatory, independent school whose mission is to break the cycle of generational poverty by empowering youth and preparing them for college and citizenship.

To learn more, their website is [About Us - The Neighborhood Academy](#)

UPDATE FROM THE DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION MINISTRIES -- Amy Grella - 412-801-3723

Upcoming Youth Events

Our youth calendar is full of special events for youth in grades 3 and up.

Sunday, Jan. 9 - 6:30 - 8:00 p.m. - 3rd-8th grade Youth Group room 110.

Sunday, Jan. 23 - 6:30 - 8:00 p.m. - High School Youth Group room 110.

Sunday, Feb. 13 - 6:00 p.m. Super Bowl Party for all youth.

Souper Bowl of Caring

Join our youth in tackling hunger this winter! Bower Hill youth will be collecting both monetary and food donation items for our Souper Bowl of Caring, which will culminate in watching the Big Game on Feb. 13 at 6:00 p.m. All donations will benefit SHIM.



Seeking youth-loving Small Group Leaders

Beginning in February, we will transition to have all youth groups meet at the same time on Sunday evenings. We will still meet as separate groups - this means we need adult volunteers to lead small groups of similar-aged youth. If you have a heart for youth and are interested in volunteering no more than 2-4 hours of your time each month, this opportunity may be for you! Be on the lookout for additional information in January.

SAVE THE DATE for these Upcoming Awesome Events!

March 5 - 6 - Tweener Retreat at Camp Crestfield

We are thrilled to get back on campus at Crestfield for a fun-filled overnight, specifically designed for students in grades 3-6. The Next Generation Team of the Pittsburgh Presbytery is hosting this shortened retreat. We will leave early on Saturday morning and return by lunchtime on Sunday. Look for registration details in January.

March 18 - 20 - Spring Retreat at Camp Ligonier

Don't miss out this time... we will return to Camp Ligonier for a weekend retreat open to all middle school and high school students in grades 6-12. We will partner again with area youth from the six 319 / North Hills churches, and this time, Sunset Hills youth will be attending as well. We will help with an on-site work/service project on Saturday morning in exchange for (free) use of their adventure equipment in the afternoon. Look for registration details in January.

High School Summer Mission Trip

A team of high school youth and adult leaders will be traveling to Philadelphia, PA for a mission trip the week of June 19. The week is focused on learning about the food crisis in Philadelphia. We will partner with local organizations in helping meet the ongoing needs within the community like planting and weeding at an urban garden, packing boxes at a food distribution center or helping load and unload food deliveries to food pantries. In the evenings, we will explore Old Historic City and the Liberty Bell, stroll along the shore of the Delaware River and run up the "Rocky Balboa Steps" at the Philadelphia Museum of Art. **The deadline to register for this trip is Sunday, January 2.** Check your email from Amy for full details.

Sunday-after-Christmas Pajama Party

Join us for the eighth annual **Sunday-after-Christmas Pajama Party!** All Sunday school classes will participate on **Sunday, January 2.** Please report directly to room 110 at the beginning of worship, since there will be no children's sermon. Kids should be picked up after worship. The nursery will be open that day. **Wear your PJ's and bring a pillow and blanket.** We will watch a fun holiday DVD. Donut holes, fruit, juice, and milk will be provided. Plan to stick around afterward to help de-deck the halls.



Journey Together continues in January

Journey Together is a second-hour option for families to do together with their youth in grades 6-12. Engage in activities focused on exploring the Bible, the Spirit, being Disciples, our Church, and our World. The class will resume on Sunday, January 9 at 11:00 a.m. in room 105.



De-Deck the Halls

Many hands make light work! All are invited to stay after worship on Sunday, January 2, to help un-decorate the church.

Regular second-hour classes will resume January 9.



Rev. Dr. Brian Snyder, Pastor
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Parish Associate
Rev. Dr. Fred Leasure
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Company of Pastors
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Rev. Phil Jamison
Rev. Dr. Fred Leasure
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Monday - Friday, 9:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.
www.BowerHillChurch.org



PLEASE PRAY FOR OUR CARE LIST

Bower Hill Church Members

**Joan Bridges, Jeff Carper
Dan Duffy, Jean Dunfee
Georgia Gallo, Barbara Oram
Dottie Post, Donna Williams**



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|---|---|
| January 2: Amy Leasure | January 21: Beverly Burke
Ellie Marcovsky
Claira McElroy |
| January 3: Eric Lansbery
Lynn Sirinek
Sharon Suritsky | January 22: Lee Ferrero
Dave Hicks |
| January 4: Karen Reynolds | January 24: Lindsay Bruder
Mary Lou Frock
Julian Salvante |
| January 5: Erik Johnson | January 26: Brian Snyder
Inese Baumhammers |
| January 7: Drake Robbins | January 27: Adam Andrews
Anne Smith |
| January 9: Eloise Grier
Mary Ann Scott | January 28: Sally Child
Kent Jones |
| January 11: Lynn Mezyk | January 31: Nathan Rising
Julia Snead |
| January 13: Sydney Saba | |
| January 14: Phyllis Madden | |
| January 15: Matthew Kocher | |
| January 16: Nina Mackey
Richard Rothrock | |

THE BIRTHDAY BLESSING:

Please take a moment to read through the names, pray for them, and offer them your best wishes!

Have we missed YOUR birthday? If your name is not listed, it is because the church office does not have your information. Please call the office administrator at 412-561-4114 with updated information.