

~ Homecoming Sunday ~

““So the ransomed of the Lord shall return, and come to Zion with singing; everlasting joy shall be upon their heads; they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away.”

~ Isaiah 51:11

Dear Members and Friends,

The word “Zion” occurs throughout the Hebrew Scriptures, but it doesn’t quite carry the emotional power for you and me that it carried for its first readers. Here’s a piece of advice for any non-Jew who reads the Old Testament: Zion = Home. In the Hebrew imagination, Zion was always and forever “home,” even for those far-flung Jews who had never laid eyes on the place. It was from Zion that they drew their strength, their identity, their remembrance of things past, and their hopes for things to come. This is why their forced exile in far-off Babylon created such songs of lament. This is why, in Jesus’ day, everyone was always going up to Jerusalem for the holidays. It was home.

And you? When you think of “home,” what comes to mind? Perhaps it’s certain people, mostly, with their old familiar voices and faces and ways. The word “home” inspires in us a longing, and sentimental feelings of safety, and acceptance, and love. Whether we experienced these things in our homes-of-origin or wished in vain for them, they are what “home” means to us. “Home” calls to mind certain sounds. It calls to mind for me the memory of my grandmother making French toast in the kitchen below, singing those rollicking old Methodist hymns of her childhood, as the songbirds announced the morning. Her house was always more home to me than anyplace else.

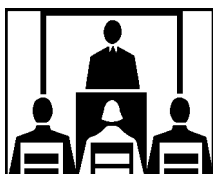
Speaking of French toast, “home” always seems to be associated with flavors, too, doesn’t it? I have made it my mission, when my wife is away, to familiarize my children with the things we ate in the 1970s and 80s. The old “comfort foods” of home. It seems that cabbage and potatoes play a prominent role in these. Among them I would count old fashioned dishes German hot potato salad, cabbage and kielbasa with potatoes, tuna noodle casserole, haluski, pierogis, and scalloped potatoes. (Did you ever notice that scalloped potatoes just sort of disappeared from the American dietary repertoire after years of prominence?) For desserts you’ve got such forgotten classics as custard pie and spice cake. It’s fun making these sentimental old dishes for my kids. I have to wonder why they fell out of favor, because they’re just as delicious today as they ever were.

In the spirit of coming home to our church family, and to our church building, and to God, “Kick Off Sunday” this year is being reimagined as “Homecoming Sunday.” By “Homecoming,” we do not mean that you need to rent a tux or wear a ball gown. What we mean is that we are encouraging everyone to come home to their church. Many have forgotten what they loved about church and what they’ve been missing during these days of isolation and worry. And so, COME BACK on September 12 for a return service of worship, with communion. Stay for a brief program by our youth mission team, which traveled over the summer to one of the poorest towns in Michigan, and stay for lunch, where the “comfort foods of home” will be served. There’s no need to bring anything, but if you have a favorite comfort food, feel free to cook it up and share it. Lunch will be served outside, weather permitting, by gloved and masked servers. Bower Hill Church is your Zion in a way: a place where you’ve been welcomed, and loved, and accepted, perhaps a place where you’ve made deep relationships and even shed an occasional tear, a place where you’ve pondered the big issues of life. We hope to see you soon.

In Christ’s Peace,

~Brian

ADULT EDUCATION RETURNS TO BHCC



Adult Education will resume meetings during second hour at 11:00 a.m. beginning on Sunday, September 19. The theme selected for this year is "Who is My Neighbor? How Do I Love My Neighbor?". Remembering the second great commandment to love our neighbors as ourselves, we will be finding out about our neighbors and their needs right here in the South Hills, but also elsewhere in our country and around the world. We will learn about opportunities for working with and helping our neighbors as well. The spiritual side of this theme will be a focus on growing in empathy and understanding so that we may act in truly loving ways, remembering that "Each of us must please our neighbor for the good purpose of building up the neighbor." (Romans 15:2)

Pending any changes in guidance from the BHCC Task Force, we are planning to hold Adult Education sessions in a hybrid manner. Some of us will be meeting in person in the Friendship Room with masking and distancing according to our Church Task Force and CDC recommendations. In addition, we will be linking into a Zoom session using a laptop, screen-sharing, and a special microphone that should improve interactive discussion.

We encourage all members and all friends of BHCC to join us for one or more of the sessions listed below.

Let's make Adult Education a habit this Fall!

Sarah Neusius, Chair, Adult Education Committee

September 12 - During this year's Homecoming Sunday, the Youth will be presenting on their summer mission trip to Michigan as part of the all-church luncheon (see information elsewhere in this Newsletter). There will be no separate Adult Education this day.

September 19 - Pastor Brian Snyder will introduce our theme for the year, noting the scriptural basis for loving our neighbors and our need to develop empathy for others.

September 26 - No Adult Education class. A celebration luncheon will be held in Fellowship Hall for Karen Reynolds' faithful service to BHCC and to extend best wishes on her retirement.

October 3 - We will have a presentation by Kate Fletcher and Maggie Wambui about Hekima Place and our neighbors in Kenya.

October 10 - We will host Kathy Hrobosky on the ecojustice organization Interfaith Power and Light, which is working to organize a chapter here in Southwest Pennsylvania (co-sponsored with the Eco-Justice Team which is considering joining IPL).

October 17 - Pastor Brian Snyder will lead a session on how poetry can help us see the world and our neighbors differently and become more empathetic.

October 24 - Liddy Barlow of Christian Associates of SWPA will be presenting on empathy.



WORSHIP PLANS

September 5

Labor Day Weekend

No communion

Proverbs 22:1-2, 8-9, 22-23

James 2:1-13

September 12

Homecoming Sunday

Communion

Mark 8:27-38

James 3:1-12

September 19

17th Sunday after Pentecost

Mark 9:30-37

James 3:13-4:3, 7-8a

September 26

18th Sunday after Pentecost

Mark 9:38-50

James 5:13-20

JOIN THE IRU TEAM FOR AN INTERACTIVE EXPERIENCE AT THE US/MEXICO BORDER



The Immigrant, Refugee, and Undocumented Persons Discovery (IRU) Team invites YOU to join the Bower Hill Church delegation to Borderlinks in the Tucson, Arizona area from February 16-22, 2022.

What is Borderlinks? -- Established in 1987, Borderlinks has been facilitating educational immersion trips for delegations in the Arizona Sonoma Region and beyond the border to Chiapas. Founding members and organizations include Rick Ufford-Chase, Former Moderator of General Assembly and New Sanctuary, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

What is the Mission of Borderlinks? -- Through dynamic educational experiences, Borderlinks connects divided communities, raises awareness about the impact of the border and immigration policies, and inspires action for social transformation.

What will we learn? -- Why do people migrate? What happens during the migrant journey? How do governmental policies impact people? We will speak with people directly affected by migration, including migrants, and others who live in borderlands, and with advocates for migrant justice. We will develop tools to take action for positive social change in our home community.

What are the details of the trip? -- The trip to Arizona will be February 16-22, 2022. The cost of the trip for each participant is approximately \$1000.00 plus airfare. We are working with the Mission Committee to fund part of these expenses. The delegation can be between 8-14 persons. We currently have eight individuals interested.

Borderlinks website- [BorderLinks](#)

If you are interested in going or just have questions, contact Linda James, Betsy Hohlfelder, Sarah Neusius, Darendalease, Theresa Child, or Brian Snyder. Any of us would welcome an **email, phone call** or an **in-person discussion** about the trip.

PONDERINGS FROM THE PA



John Wesley is known for his three-fold advice: “**Earn** all you can, **Save** all you can, **Give** all you can.” Pondering this advice can cause one to be confused concerning the last two phrases. If you are saving all you can then it may seem that you do not have much to give. This seems especially true for those of us who are retired and often wonder if our savings will expire before we do.

Dr. Ernest Campbell, a well known Presbyterian clergy, once preached a sermon in which he characterized the theme of our current age as: “Grab it up, Use it up, and move on!” Correct as he may have been, it stands in stark contrast to Wesley’s advice. So how do we reconcile what is with what is ideal?

I believe we should focus our giving of time and material wealth on the basis of our need to give rather than the need of the organization or individual to receive. Giving is our affirmation of both the source and ownership of all we have. Psalm 24 affirms: “The earth is **the Lord's**, and everything in it, the world, and **all** who live in it.”

Rev. Dr. Fred Leasure, Parish Associate

FROM THE ECO-JUSTICE TEAM → 1-800 . . . what do I do with this stuff??

We often find ourselves stuck, wondering what to do with items we no longer need or use, yet are hesitant to throw away. Perhaps you've helped to clean out the home of a loved one, or assisted your parents in getting rid of things as they look towards moving to a smaller home. It can be relatively easy to re-home clothing and kitchen items, but what to do with a skein of yarn, an old slide projector, or an unused box of tiles that were left over from that flooring project years ago? We've run across two local organizations that just might help you put these treasures to good use, while avoiding calling the "haul-it-away" service! Both are located in the Homewood/Point Breeze area, and they just happen to share a building.

The Pittsburgh Center for Creative Reuse (pccr.org) is a nonprofit that inspires creativity, conservation, and community engagement through reuse. PCCR operates a non-traditional art supply shop where people can donate used art and craft supplies, as well as shop for these items all in the same location. On the Center's list of items they are currently accepting from donors are included: artwork; small musical instruments; non-decorated baskets and suitcases; trophies; stationery; fabric; wrapping paper; office supplies; overhead projector; pre-1970 magazines; old snapshots and slides; buckets, containers, cord and much more. An up to date donation guide may be found on the Center's website, along with a form to request a materials drop-off appointment (new procedure during COVID times). In addition to operating a store for the purpose of selling all these reclaimed items, the Center offers custom kits, video tutorials, and live virtual instruction for organizations and individuals seeking creative activities, whether it is for a classroom, a community center, or a virtual party.

Construction Junction (cjreuse.org) is located just around the corner from PCCR. CJ works to support and promote conservation through the reuse of building materials. Donations of used and surplus materials are accepted at their large warehouse, and are sold to new users in their 30,000 square foot adjoining store. Their materials are a fraction of the cost of new, and their their mission has both an environmental and social impact. Items one can donate include: appliances; architectural salvage (at times, you can find old church pews here!); tile; mirrors and glass; lighting; doors; hardware and tools; and many other one-of-a-kind treasures. Check on the organization's website for more information and a list of items currently in demand.

Both these organizations are currently selling items through their on-line stores, as well as at their physical location. Policies have changed throughout the pandemic, so be sure to check their respective websites before making a trip to 214 N. Lexington Street, Pittsburgh 15208. Even better -- join the Eco-Justice Committee for a "field trip" to these two organizations sometime in late September or October. Date is pending. Watch your church announcements for further details.

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.

UNITY FOOD PANTRY COLLECTION

Sunday, September 12 is the next collection date.

The Pantry's greatest needs are for boxed cereal (preferably low sugar varieties), peanut butter, canned tuna, and feminine hygiene products of all types. Donations of any non-perishable food items are welcomed.

Items can be brought to the church on Sundays and on weekdays during regular business hours. They may be placed in the collection bin located in the hallway outside the church office.



GET OUTDOORS AND HIKE MINGO CREEK PARK -- SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 11

Easier hike -- paved trail, mostly flat

Since the first Saturday in September is part of the Labor Day weekend, we will hike on the second Saturday this month. The hike selected for September 11 is the paved trail in Mingo Creek Park. This hike was selected to give those who have trouble with uneven ground or hills an opportunity to join us. The path is paved with only one short hill. It can be bypassed by walking on a lightly used road for 50 yards. This is a great place for kids with lots of playgrounds along the way. Families could start out with us, stop by the playgrounds, play in the creek and return back on the trail when they are ready. We will start at the east end of the paved trail. On our journey, we will follow Mingo Creek and will see two covered bridges. The trail is 2.8 miles out and 2.8 miles back. We will try to keep it to about two hours, and then turn back if we appear to be exceeding that timeframe.

Mingo is about a 45-minute drive, so it will be 12:30 p.m.–1:00 p.m. when we return. If it rains, we will reschedule. **Please email me at gstchild@yahoo.com so that I have a rough idea of who is coming.** We certainly don't want to leave on Saturday before you get there.

The time is 9:00 a.m. to meet in the main parking lot and carpool to the hike. If carpooling is a concern, please feel free to drive your own car. Families with younger children may want to drive on their own, so they can quit earlier or stay longer depending on the interest of the children. We should be back sometime before noon.



BOOKWORMS

The group continues to meet on the fourth Tuesday of the month, at 1:30 p.m., via Zoom. If you are interested in joining the group, please contact Linda James at lindaleejames.72@gmail.com.

September 28 -- *The Engineer's Wife*
by Tracey Enerson Wood

October 26 -- *The Secret Lives of Church Ladies*
by Deesha Philyaw

-Group of short stories about Black Women and Girls.

November 23 -- *The Four Winds*, by Kristen Hannah
-A story from the Great Depression and the Dust Bowl

SENIOR MEN'S BREAKFAST GROUP

Our next gathering will be on **Tuesday, September 7, 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. While typically it is the senior men who are available for the breakfast, **all men are welcome.** Any questions or comments, contact Glenn Child at gstchild@yahoo.com.



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

September 18 -- In celebration of the 56th Wedding Anniversary of Margaret and Dan Zabo.

September 26 -- In loving memory of husband, Roger Allen, given with much love by Kay Allen.

Every Day in 2021 -- In prayer for **World Peace**, from Susan Hill Brown, former member

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: 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.

JOIN US FOR HOMECOMING SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 12

Please join us for our fall season on September 12. This year we're calling it "Homecoming," and we hope you'll see it as an occasion to come back to church! In lieu of our normal welcome back breakfast, we invite you to plan to stay for two special events following worship. The youth mission team will be sharing a recap of their summer mission trip to Benton Harbor, Michigan, followed by a buffet lunch of "comfort foods" with **outdoor seating**.

While food is being provided by a group of gracious volunteers who stepped up to help organize this event, you may also feel free to bring your own comfort food dish to share if you so desire. (Pastor Brian suggest something like lime Jell-O with shredded cabbage and carrots.) The important thing is that you join us either way! Please RSVP for the lunch to assist with the planning of food and setting up enough tables. [Here is the link to RSVP](#). Childcare will be available during this special program in room 110 / playground area.

SUNDAY SCHOOL BEGINS ON SUNDAY, SEPT. 12TH

We are thrilled to welcome children and youth back into our church building for new in-person options which kick off on Sunday, Sept. 12. Our nursery will be open for babies and toddlers during worship. During second hour, childcare will be provided in room 110. Please look below for details on the plan by each age group. Also, please be sure to read the updated safety plan article also in this newsletter.

CHILDREN'S WORSHIP (PRESCHOOL - 2ND GRADE)

Children preschool (potty-trained) up to second grade will start in worship with their families. After the Children's Sermon, kids will be escorted downstairs to room 103, our Children's Worship Space. Children will have their very own worship experience, learning Bible stories through seeing, hearing, and hands-on activities. Parents may pick up their children in the classroom after worship ends.



TWEENS (3RD - 5TH GRADE)

The 3rd – 5th graders will meet during worship in our newly refreshed room 105 using the ever-popular Sparkhouse Holy Moly curriculum. This class will still take place during the entirety of worship service, so kids should go directly to room 105 on Sunday morning. Parents may pick up their children in the classroom after worship ends.

MIDDLE AND HIGH SCHOOL (GRADES 6-12)

NEW 2ND HOUR OPTION TOGETHER WITH ADULTS

Older youth in grades 6-12 are invited to remain in worship at 9:30 a.m. with their families and join us for second hour programming. We are pleased to introduce a new second hour option **for families to do together** with their youth in grades six through twelve and led by Amy Grella.

Aptly named, **Journey Together** will begin on September 19, at 11:00 a.m. It is a series of planned activities focused on exploring the Bible, the Spirit, being Disciples, our Church, and our World. It is NOT a straight Bible study. Think of it to experience spiritual growth through engaging, fun activities that would typically happen during youth group meetups. I promise you, it will NOT be boring! The class will meet in Fellowship Hall during second hour at 11:00 a.m. Childcare will be available for elementary aged kids downstairs in room 110 during this time.

NEW YOUTH GROUP OPPORTUNITIES KICK OFF IN SEPTEMBER

We are excited to share new groups for kids and youth from grades 3 through 12. This year, we are happy to offer separate youth group options for the following three age groups: 3rd-5th grades (aka our tweens), middle school, high school. Led by Miss Amy and other volunteers, these groups will meet once a month on Sunday evenings. Weather permitting, all meetings will be held outdoors when we are able, or inside if needed. Because each group is only meeting once a month, it is vital that you make every effort to have your child participate during their appropriate night, so we have enough kids to make it fun. Kids are welcome to bring friends or neighbors to join in.

→Tweens (3rd - 5th grades) will meet the first Sunday night of each month.

All meetings will be from 6:30 - 8:00 p.m. We will meet on the main church lawn outside Fellowship Hall.

September 5 - NOTE: Since this falls on a holiday weekend, look for an RSVP so we can confirm that attendance is enough to hold it. Otherwise, we will start our first meeting in October.

October 3, November 7, December 5

→Middle School (6th - 8th grades) will meet the second Sunday night of each month.

All meetings will be held from 6:30 - 8:00 p.m. We will meet on the main church lawn outside Fellowship Hall.

September 12, October 10, November 14, and December 12

→High School (9th - 12th grades) will meet the third Sunday night of each month.

All meetings will be from 6:30 - 8:00 p.m. We will meet on the main church lawn outside Fellowship Hall.

September 19th, October 17th, November 21st, and December 19th

SENIOR HIGH YOUTH GROUP FALL RETREAT

Please save the date - November 12-14. The Senior High Youth Group will be heading to Crestfield with Sunset Hills United Presbyterian Church for a weekend retreat. Details to follow, but make sure to mark your calendar... it is sure to be a fun event!

UPDATED COVID SAFETY PROCEDURES FOR CHILDREN AND YOUTH

The COVID safety plan and procedures have been updated. The full plan can be found on our website using the following link <https://www.bowerhillchurch.org/children-youth>. In general, masks will be required for children three years and older and for all those who are working with children. Social distancing will be practiced during seated activities. Hand-sanitizing and cleaning stations will also be set up, and the sharing of craft supplies and toys will be minimal. We will continue to monitor and actively incorporate any new guidance from the county, state, and federal levels into our safety plan. As always, we know you will use your own comfort level to determine what is right for you and your family.

VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES FOR WORKING WITH CHILDREN AND YOUTH

Expanded in-person options for children and youth are only possible with the help of approved adult volunteers and older youth! Volunteers are needed on Sunday mornings during worship and Sunday evenings for youth group. If you can lend a helping hand, please let Amy know, and check your email for a signup link in the coming weeks.



Rev. Dr. Brian Snyder, Pastor
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Rev. Dr. Fred Leasure
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PLEASE PRAY FOR OUR CARE LIST



Bower Hill Church Members

**Jeff Carper, Sally Child
Jean Dunfee, Georgia Gallo
Nancy Green, Barbara Oram
Dottie Post, Donna Williams**

Thank You!

We thank the Bower Hill Community Church family for all the cards, phone calls, thoughts and prayers for Jim McAnulty during his final illness, as well as your thoughts and prayers for us since his death.

Joan, Jan, Carol, Linda and Family

Thanks,
Joan McAnulty



Sept. 1: Dottie Carter

Sept. 2: Calvin Kocher

Sept. 3: Davis Gray
Emily Lansbery

Sept. 5: Margaret DeLair

Sept. 7: Gus Watterson

Sept. 9: Aiden Belardi

Sept. 10: Keith Mason
Phil Neusius

Sept. 11: Parker Simpson-Hunt

Sept. 12: Doris Olinger

Sept. 14: Paul Siefken

Sept. 17: Carol Knox

Sept. 18: Chloe Snyder

Sept. 19: Jonathan May

Sept. 23: Henry Druckenbrod
Bryan Webler

Sept. 25: Amy Grella

Sept. 27: Ashley Brown
Michael Waine
Sam Webler

Sept. 28: Gordon Mitchell

Sept. 29: Barrett Bruce
Ruth Foltz
Ellena Gibbs
Tiffany Marcovsky

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.