

**~ And Dwelt Among Us ~**

*“And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, full of grace and truth;  
and we have beheld his glory, as of the only Son of the Father.”*

~John 1:14

Dear Members and Friends,

It's the weekend before Christmas, and Bobby, in Boston, gets a call from his elderly father in Pittsburgh. The father says, “Bobby, your mother's making me crazy. I've had six decades of picking up after her. We're getting a divorce. Don't try to talk us out of it.” Dad hangs up, and Bobby immediately calls Geraldine, his older sister in Hong Kong, waking her from a dead sleep. Within minutes, Geraldine—ever the older sister!—telephones their parents in Pittsburgh. In a shrill, rushed voice she says, “Dad, you and mom have been together for sixty years! How much time do you think you have left? I will not let you waste your golden years in bitter legal battles. I don't care what the issue is, we WILL work it out. Am I understood? Don't do a thing. Bobby and I will both be there on the first flights we can catch.” Geraldine hangs up. The old man smiles at his wife and gently kisses her hand. “Well, my love, looks like they'll both be home for Christmas this year.”

At Christmastime, presence is so much more important than presents! And that's the beauty of the Christmas story. In ancient times, when our ancestors gazed at the skies and pondered the hard questions of life, when they were confronted with the mysteries of birth, and death, and illness, and wonder, they found their best comfort not in tales of conquest and glory, nor in lofty wisdom and rituals, but in a simple tale of divine presence: A disgraced pregnant maiden, a dreaming carpenter, an inglorious barnyard birth, and the earthy, simple claim that God is with us; God is among us; God is not far off where we couldn't reach, but around us and within. The message of Christmas is that God does not remain in remote majesty and splendor, but becomes present in all our human travail, sharing our indignities, and outrage, and shame. God is present in all our laughter, and love, and in the satisfaction of a job well done. God with us! In that same old story, the angel names the child “Jesus,” which means “God saves.” And how does God save? By coming to us, being among us, walking beside us...and then commissioning us to go and do likewise.

There still aren't many sure answers to the hard questions of life: when a nation stands bitterly divided, when the doctor's news is bad, when the telephone rings in the middle of the night, when someone you love is angry, or bored, or scared, and you don't know why. We have no easy answers at times like these. But we can do what God does in Jesus; we can show up in the flesh. There's a living presence that will not leave us or forsake us, come what may in the years ahead. There's a living presence that might just turn up on your doorstep with a casserole, for that's one thing it means when we say that God comes to us in the flesh. It's called “incarnation,” this belief that God's presence somehow flooded Jesus' humanity, giving us a glimpse of a human life filled with the holy. This is really what Christmas all comes down to: this belief that God enters into all the shame, and the blame, and the messiness of a beautiful and broken world. God is not far, but near. And we are called to be the same, getting our hands dirty, suffering with those who suffer, walking with the lonely.

And what does it all mean? Well, it's significant that we have Family Promise in our building right at Christmas-time, isn't it? We'll have homeless families in need of meals, hosts, and listening ears at a time when we celebrate God's presence to us in Christ. Incarnation means reaching out in love to the disadvantaged, the sick, the aged, the very young, the helpless, and the hopeless, the anxious, the sad, perhaps even the least powerful of all, the animals God created but who get no vote, the world with its forests, and its plant life, and its oceans! Stand with them, for this is how God stands with humanity in Christ. Merry Christmas to you, Bower Hill Church. It's a joy to be walking alongside you!

In Christ's Peace,

~Brian

PS: The Snyder Christmas Open House is back! Saturday, December 3, from 6:30 to 8:00 p.m.

## COMMUNITY NOTES

Want to be included on this page? Submissions are typically due the 15th of every month for the next month's publication (unless otherwise announced). 412-561-4114 or office@bhccml.com



### **BOOKWORMS**

This group meets monthly on the fourth Tuesday at 7:30 p.m. in the Friendship Room (201) for fellowship and discussion of a chosen title.

Everyone is welcome to read the book for the month and join the discussion.

Also, the group is exploring possibilities for changing the meeting schedule. Watch for updates in future newsletters and bulletins.

Here is the schedule through March 2017:

**December**—no meeting

**January**—*The Secret Chord*  
by Geraldine Brooks

**February**—*Becoming Amish:*  
*A Family's Search for Faith, Community and Purpose*  
by Jeff Smith.

**March**—*Life, Death, and Reinvention:*  
*The Gift of the Impossibly Messed-Up Life*  
by Michelle Snyder and Fe Anam Avis

### **WESTERN PA DIAPER BANK**

Our next collection date for disposable diapers will be **Sunday, December 18**. Sizes 4, 5 and 6 are most in need for babies. XL diapers are needed for the geriatric population. The collection container is the Pack'N Play located in the hallway directly outside of the Nursery.

Tax-deductible monetary donations can be made by a check payable to Western Pennsylvania Diaper Bank and mailed to 2546 Centre Ave., Pittsburgh, PA 15219. Please note our church name on the Memo line of your check.

SHIM will distribute coupons for disposable diapers to the families they support. Please save coupons that you collect but don't use, and place them in the envelope near the Pack'N Play.



### **COFFEE, CAKE & CONVERSATION**

There is no meeting in December. We'll meet again on January 24, 2017.



### **SENIOR MEN'S GROUP**

The senior men's breakfast group will meet again on **Wednesday, December 7**. The meeting time is **8:00 a.m.**, and the location is the Kings Restaurant on Route 50 near the end of Greentree Road, in Scott. The group meets in the room to the left of the cashier, and no reservation is necessary. Usually 6-10 church members attend and are welcome to an unstructured discussion of any topic that comes to mind. Join us!

### **WALLACE FOOD PANTRY COLLECTION**

The next collection date is **Sunday, December 11**. Wallace Food Pantry thanks all the members of Bower Hill Church for their generous monthly donations of food! The Pantry has experienced a dramatic increase in the number of client families being registered and served each month, so your donations are especially significant and meaningful. As always, soups, canned tuna and chicken, and boxed cold cereal continue to be among the pantry's greatest needs. For the Christmas holiday, as well as for the upcoming Easter holiday, Wallace continues to collect boxed potato mixes and all-in-one dessert mixes (those not requiring separate icing to complete them). Collection bins are located in the hallways outside the church office and the narthex.

### **LGBTQ WORKSHOP**

**Monday, December 5, 7:00-9:00 p.m.**  
**BHCC Friendship Room (201)**

The UU Church of the South Hills Interweave Group will present a workshop entitled "Transaction," best described as a transgender curriculum for churches and religious institutions. The curriculum is designed to help churches address the issues of understanding and welcoming by providing step-by-step training about the needs, apprehensions and fears of transgender people, as well as the wealth of gifts and graces they bring, while responding to the concerns of the church or religious institution. Participation is limited to 30 individuals, and an RSVP is required. Questions and RSVP at [Interweave@Sunnyhill.org](mailto:Interweave@Sunnyhill.org)



### DIRECTOR OF MUSIC MINISTRIES

Anne Carper Smith  
an@bhccml.com

The **Three Rivers Ringers** will present a **FREE concert** in our sanctuary on **Friday, December 2, at 8:00 p.m.** A light reception will immediately follow. Donations are welcome.

The **Cherub Choir** will sing at the beginning of worship on **Sunday, December 18.** Please plan to arrive in the choir room at 9:00 a.m. for robing and warm-ups. The children are excited to share their music with you.

Join us for a **FREE concert** with **The Yinzer Singers** on **Sunday, December 18, at 7:00 p.m.** in the sanctuary. A congregational sing along and Christmas favorites are anticipated--hope to see you there! (see info below)

The Yinzer Singers are holding their first Holiday Canned Food Concert Series. BHCC is one of three concerts in total, with each event lasting about one hour. This family-friendly event is open to all ages and **admission is free with the donation of a non-perishable item.** While raising food and funds, the Yinzer Singers will entertain the South Hills community with holiday classics and popular a cappella favorites. Donated items will go to the South Hills Food Pantry and any monetary donations will be split between the host venue and the Yinzer Singers. The Yinzer Singers hope to collect at least 200 non-perishable items. This concert series raises awareness, promotes Pittsburgh's musicians, and provides an entertaining, innovative, and musical evening for all ages.

### HOLI- ZAAR

### Local Community Events

### DAY BA-

The Annual Concordia of the South Hills Holiday Bazaar will take place on **Tuesday, December 6, from 10:00 a.m. until 4:00 p.m.** in the IL Commons area. Shop for everyone on your list! Auction items, jewelry, fashion accessories, ornaments, artwork, holiday decorations and much more! Proceeds benefit the Concordia South Hills Caring Fund.

### CHRISTMAS CONCERT

Hekima Place is holding its Annual Advent Christmas Concert at St. Thomas More Church on **Saturday, December 10, at 7:30 p.m.** Refreshments will follow in the Family Life Center.



### ADULT EDUCATION

Cathy Morgan, Chair  
Adult Education Committee

Adult Education meets in the Friendship Room from 10:45—11:45 a.m. on Sunday mornings after worship and a time for fellowship. If you've never attended a session, give it a try. This is not your traditional "class," but an opportunity to explore what it means to be people of faith in this ever-challenging world. Our schedule for the month of December is shown below.

### November 27: Thanksgiving Weekend

No Adult Ed — Deck the Halls!

**December 4:** The Rev. Fred Leasure, Parish Associate, will lead a discussion: "*Not A Hallmark Christmas - The Nativity of Jesus in New Light.*"

**December 11:** Dr. Drew Smith will lead a discussion on the many types of advantages people have in our society and how they affect all of us.

**December 18:** Anya Martin will present the Hiawatha Project, using theater to promote social justice to our class.

**December 25:** Christmas - No Adult Ed

**January 1:** De-deck the Halls - No Adult Ed

### A NOTE OF APPRECIATION

*Thank you for giving me an opportunity to visit your church and share the word of God together. I felt honored to come all the way from Kenya to meet a welcoming community. Thank you for sparing some time to listen to me. I take this chance to thank you on behalf of all my sisters and the entire Hekima family for your continued support. Thank you for your prayers, kindness, and generosity. May God fill your pockets, and I know we girls when we graduate and you change our lives like you have changed my life, God is always rewarding you for your good work. You will always be in my heart and my prayers, and when you wanna remember many of your achievements, just remember that Hekima Place Jane is among the achievements. Thank you and be blessed for your good work.*

Happy Times  
Jane Wanjiru



### NEWS FROM THE DIRECTOR OF CHRISTIAN EDUCATION AND YOUTH PROGRAMS

Amy Grella — am@bhccml.com



#### EAT AND MEET

Grades 5 through 8 are invited to Eat and Meet on **December 11** from **6:00—8:00 p.m.**

#### RAISING MONEY-SMART KIDS

**This class has been postponed to a later date due to schedule conflicts.**

#### YOUTH SWEATER DRIVE

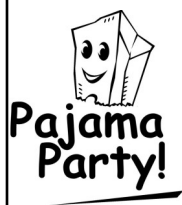
It's getting cold outside! Bower Hill Youth are collecting new and gently-used sweaters for the "Mister Rogers Neighborhood Sweater Drive." The drive, conducted by the Children's Museum of Pittsburgh in collaboration with Presbyterian Media Mission, will help people who need to keep warm this winter.

**You may drop off new and gently used sweaters of all sizes in the church Narthex between now and December 10.**

All sweaters collected will be distributed to families in need with assistance from Sweater Drive partners: the Presbyterian churches of the tri-state area, the Homeless Children's Education Fund, the Children's Museum of Pittsburgh Ambassadors: Kids at Heart, and other agencies who work with families and children in the region.

On **Sunday, December 25**, the church will hold a worship service; however, there will be no children's programming and the nursery will be closed, in order to give the staff and volunteers time to spend with their families.

**SUNDAY, JANUARY 8**—Normal Sunday school schedule resumes.



Sunday School will enjoy its fourth annual **Sunday-after-Christmas Pajama Party!**

All Sunday school classes will participate on **Sunday, January 1, from 9:30—10:30 a.m.** in the Lounge (room 110). There will be no children's sermon. Please report directly to the Lounge at the beginning of 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, juice, and milk will be provided.**

#### SAVE THE DATE!

There will be a work party on Saturday and Sunday, **January 21-22** to clean, paint, and reorganize the Family Promise / Youth Lounge. A family potluck dinner and room dedication is planned for Sunday evening, January 22, during Eat & Meet time. Details to follow in the coming weeks.





# December

AD-

VENT

## AND CHRISTMAS WORSHIP PLANS

### December 4

Second Sunday of Advent; Communion  
**"Love"**: Isaiah 11:1-10; Matthew 3:1-12

### December 11

Third Sunday of Advent  
**"Joy"**: Isaiah 35:1-10; Matthew 11:2-11

### December 18

Fourth Sunday of Advent  
*"Repeat the Sounding Joy:  
 a Christmas Celebration in Music"*  
**"Peace"**: Isaiah 7:10-16; Matthew 1:18-25

### December 24

Christmas Eve  
 Music at 6:30 p.m.; Worship at 7:00 p.m.

### December 25

Christmas Day: Family worship  
 No children's program, Sunday school, or Nursery.

## ARE YOU NEW TO BOWER HILL CHURCH?

### **Newcomers Lunch**



Would you like to find out more about our congregation, what we believe, why we do the things we do? If so, Pastor Snyder will be holding a **"Newcomers' Lunch"** on **Sunday, December 4**, just after the worship service. This is an informal discussion time with the pastor and other newcomers. For those who decide to join the church, this will serve as the new members' class. However, there is no obligation; this is the proverbial free lunch! It is approximately a two-hour event. Please call or email to reserve a place, to inform us of dietary restrictions, and to notify us if you will need childcare: 412-561-4114 or [br@bhccml.com](mailto:br@bhccml.com).



### CHRISTMAS

Monday, December 26

### NEW YEAR'S DAY

Monday, January 2

## DECEMBER WORSHIP VOLUNTEERS

### COMMUNION SERVERS

Jim & Sarah Cannon, Doris Olinger, Shelly Saba

### LECTORS

December 4: DJ Geis  
 December 11: Phil Johnson  
 December 18: Michelle Snyder  
 December 24: Susan Hicks

### GREETERS

December 4: Druckenbrod Family  
 December 11: Paul Blake, Andy Smith  
 December 18: Peter & Holly Smith  
 December 24: TBD

**USHER CAPTAIN:** Mike Riemer

### ACOLYTES

December 4: Henry & Clara Druckenbrod, Julian Salvante  
 December 11: Graceann Foster and Estelle Smith  
 December 18: Kemp Carter and Avery Saba  
 December 24: TBD

### COFFEE HOUR

December 4: Salvante Family  
 December 11: Westerhoff Family  
 December 18: Morgan Family  
 January 1: Watterson Family

### FLOWER DEACONS

December 4: Josie Sheldon  
 December 11: Beth Robosky (poinsettias)  
 December 18: Mary Good (poinsettias)  
 December 25: Mary Gorski



Christmas poinsettias are available for purchase this year to be given in honor or in memory of loved ones. Each poinsettia plant is \$8.00. Please deliver this order form with payment to the Church Office or drop it in the Offering tray.

**Sale Dates: November 27, December 4 and December 11**

*Deadline for orders is Monday, December 12.*

**Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Phone:** (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_\_

**# of Plants** \_\_\_\_\_

**Check #** \_\_\_\_\_

**In Memory of** \_\_\_\_\_

**In Honor of** \_\_\_\_\_

**Flowers can be taken home after the service on Christmas Eve.**

\_\_\_ **I will take my flowers home.**

\_\_\_ **Please deliver my flowers to those who cannot attend church.**



- December 3 — Katie Philson
- December 6 — Joan McAnulty  
Steve Boisvert
- December 7 — Bill Andrews  
Richard Salvante
- December 8 — Sophie Hicks
- December 10 — Estelle Smith  
Christine Henney  
Kathy Philson
- December 11 — Jason Robosky
- December 14 — Leo Geis  
Betsy Prine  
Tim May
- December 18 — Rob Mackey
- December 19 — Dwayne Fielder  
Richard Headley
- December 21 — Abigail Boisvert
- December 22 — Beth Gardner
- December 23 — Kemp Carter
- December 25 — June Blake
- December 28 — Catherine Good
- December 31 — Betsy Hohlfelder

**THE BIRTHDAY  
BLESSING**

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



**Evelyn Jean Lansbery**

***Born May 20, 2016***

***to Eric and Emily Lansbery***

***Baptized on November 20, 2016***

**IN MEMORIAM**

***Jane Kohman — 2/9/20 to 11/2/16***

Member since 1973.

Memorial service at a later time.

***Alice Cantalupo — 3/23/21 to 11/15/16***

BHCC Charter Member—1951

***Due to the Christmas holiday, the article submission deadline for the January Newsletter is December 12.***

***All weekly bulletin submissions are due on Tuesdays.***





## BOWER HILL COMMUNITY CHURCH

*Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)*

70 Moffett Street  
Pittsburgh, Pa 15243



Phone: 412-561-4114  
Fax: 412-561-2252  
E-mail: [office@bhccml.com](mailto:office@bhccml.com)  
[www.BowerHillChurch.org](http://www.BowerHillChurch.org)



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### OUR CHURCH STAFF

Rev. Dr. Brian Snyder, Pastor  
[br@bhccml.com](mailto:br@bhccml.com)

Parish Associate  
Rev. Dr. Fred Leasure

Company of Pastors  
Rev. Tami Hooker  
Rev. Dr. Fred Leasure  
Rev. Dr. Betty Sykes

Amy Grella  
Director of Christian Education  
and Youth Programs  
[am@bhccml.com](mailto:am@bhccml.com)

Anne Smith, Director of Music Ministries  
[an@bhccml.com](mailto:an@bhccml.com)

Dianne Scott, Financial Secretary  
[di@bhccml.com](mailto:di@bhccml.com)

Karen Reynolds, Office Administrator  
[office@bhccml.com](mailto:office@bhccml.com)

### THE CHURCH OFFICE

[412] 561-4114

Monday - Friday 9:00 a.m.— 2:30 p.m.

## PLEASE PRAY FOR OUR CARE LIST

**Matt Dunfee**, 966 Worthington Woods Blvd, Worthington, OH, 43085  
**Ethel La Barbera**, 50 Vanadium Road, #130, Bridgeville, PA 15017  
**Alma Johnson**, 13 Charles Street, Dravosburg, PA 15034

### SUNDAY TRANSPORTATION

**Need a ride** to worship? The deacons would like to provide a ride to worship for members who need one. Please contact the church office several days before Sunday worship, and someone will help schedule your ride.

### ARE YOU WILLING TO GIVE A RIDE?

The deacons are compiling a list of people who might be **willing to give rides** to church. There are several people who do not drive who might come to church if they had a ride. If you would be willing to offer rides, please call the church office at 412-561-4114.

