



~LXXV: A Number for New Beginnings~

“Now the Lord said to Abram, ‘Go from your country and your father’s house...to the land that I will show you...’ Abram was 75 years old when he departed.”

~Genesis 12:1, 4

Dear Members and Friends,

75 is mentioned only twice in the Bible, and both times, it’s in reference to new beginnings. The first time is this: When Abram (later renamed “Abraham”) turned 75, God called him “away from his country and his father’s house” to become the father of a great nation in a land as yet unknown. (By the time his kid was 75, I’m sure Abram’s dad was more than ready to turn his bedroom into a TV room.) The second mention of the number 75 comes in the book of Acts, where it retells the story of an elderly Jacob and 75 of his family members who emigrated to Egypt to start a new life with his long-lost favorite son, Joseph. Biblically, 75 speaks of new beginnings, which is something to keep in mind as we enter more deeply into our 75th anniversary celebrations.

It is a time of new beginnings in American church life, and Bower Hill is no exception. Think how much has changed since 1951, when church was a part of most people’s lives. As a forward-looking element of our 75th anniversary observances, we’ve planned a speaker series to address the changing role of faith in American society:

“Faith Forward: The Future of Congregational Life”

We are bringing nationally renowned experts in the field of religious trends here to Pittsburgh to talk about current findings and the changing role of religion today, as well as possible ways forward. This is a big deal! Not only has this conversation not yet been brought to Pittsburgh, but our interfaith speaker series has already aroused the interest of Pittsburgh Presbytery (co-sponsoring the events) and Christian Associates of Southwest Pennsylvania (also co-sponsoring). Here’s how it’s going to look:

Wednesday, March 11, we’ll “examine the data” at Cefalo’s in Carnegie, with Ryan Burge. Who’s Ryan Burge? Google him, he’s famous! Burge is a groundbreaking author and podcaster whose work appears in The New York Times, The Wall Street Journal and Politico. There will be a catered dinner, a presentation by Burge, and a time of Q&A to discuss issues facing congregations today—and particularly our church.

Wednesday, April 22, again at Cefalo’s, we’ll learn from Andrew Root how church life is changing. Root is equally famous; Google him too. Root is a professor at Luther Seminary who has written a series of books about the changing place of religion in our country. This event, too, includes dinner, a lecture, and a time of discussion.

Wednesday, May 13, is a panel discussion on “ways forward” for congregations. This will be moderated by Liddy Barlow of Christian Associates of Southwest PA, and it will include Greg Jones of 1st Baptist Church, a professor at Duquesne whose work explores the intersection of faith and virtual life; Tracy Keenan, former associate pastor here at Bower Hill and retired “Missional Presbyterian” in Delaware; and Eric Schaffer, former president of Rodef Shalom, who oversaw the merger of that congregation with Temple Sinai. This event is also at Cefalo’s with dinner and discussion.

The cost for each event is only \$35 per person, or \$90 per person for the entire series. Register soon as spaces are limited. See the brochures in the Narthex or contact the church for more information. Happy Seventy-fifth anniversary, Bower Hill. Let’s face this new day with hope and joy.

Christ’s Peace,

~Brian



Worship Plans

February 1
75th Anniversary Celebration
with Mission Emphasis:
SHIM Neighborhood
Academy and Casa San Jose
will be presenting, followed by
1950s-themed potluck
No communion.

February 8
Epiphany 5
Communion
 1 Corinthians 2:1-12
 Matthew 5:13-20

February 15
Transfiguration
 Exodus 24:12-18
 Matthew 17:1-9

February 18
Ash Wednesday
Beginning of Lent
Communion and Ashes
 7:00 p.m.

February 22
Lent 1
 Genesis 2:15-17, 3:1-7
 Matthew 4:1-11

February 26
Thursday Evening Lenten
Worship & Potluck
 7:00 p.m.



The Church office will be closed
 on Monday, February 16, in
 observance of President's Day.

Congregation Meeting Notice

By official call of the Session, the first 2026 regular meeting of the congregation of Bower Hill Community Church (Presbyterian U.S.A.) will be held on Sunday, February 22, in the Sanctuary immediately following the worship service, and via Hybrid.

The agenda for the meeting includes a review of the 2025 year-end financial statement, presentation of the 2026 operating budget as adopted by Session, and approval of the pastor's revised terms of call.

PASTORAL PONDERINGS ~ Giving from the Heart

February is the month when we see hearts in all shapes and sizes in honor of Valentine's Day. The day commemorates a 3rd-century priest that has become the patron saint of lovers. The tradition is that he defied the emperor by performing marriages and was martyred for his faith.

The day is traditionally celebrated by elementary school children sharing cards with each other, to lovers giving gifts of roses, candy and other special remembrances. As a side note on this tradition, the heart has become known as the seat of emotion. Gifts that are said to be given, "straight from the heart," are those that are presented with the deepest of feelings, love and gratitude.

The church is a place where we have an opportunity to give gifts in many different ways that demonstrate the love of Jesus for each one of us. It is not an obligation, but wonderful way in which we can enhance the lives of those that we don't even know and let them know that they too are loved. Will you give a gift this month straight from the heart?

~ Rev. Dr. Fred Leasure, Parish Associate

Faithful Conversations

February 8 – Volunteer Experiences of BHCC members

February 15 – Process Theology, Part II

February 22 – Mission in the Far East, One Family's Story

Sanctuary Flower Dedications

If you are interested in purchasing flowers or making a donation to the charity of your choice as a dedication in memory/honor of a loved one, please contact the church office to request a form or information.



Lighting the Steeple

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.

February 11, 2026

In honor of all who have served by Susan Watson

Observations of a New Member by Wendy Duchene

I recently began to attend BHCC for two very simple and somewhat selfish reasons. I was looking for a place to spend an hour a week to sit in a peaceful, intellectual environment, sheltered from the constant noise of our turbulent times. And the church was close enough to my home to make it easy. I had no intention of joining. I found that convenient, peaceful, intellectual place I was looking for but I also found a great deal more. I found a place where the actual teachings of Christ, with an emphasis on love, compassion, and service to the less fortunate, were the center of worship. A place where the congregation has as its focus and mission to live life as warm beacons of hope for those without it. What I have seen in my brief time at BHCC is a church grounded in real Christian love – not Christian Nationalism, not intolerance or fear, and not the egotism or superiority too often displayed by those who disguise their selfishness under the so-called gospel of prosperity. The true nature of BHCC can be seen in the causes it champions – reducing hunger among the less fortunate in the community, eliminating crippling medical debt, and sharing its physical assets with others who lack such a beautiful building in which to worship.

As a country, we face a lot of issues none of us ever anticipated. I have written to our leaders in the Senate and House and asked them on which side of history they will choose to be remembered in the years to come. Many church leaders, and church goers, frankly, are facing the same questions as organized religion struggles for relevance. I truly believe that Bower Hill Community Church, though it may face many challenges that I, as a new member, am not aware of, is on the right side of that struggle. And that is why I chose to join the church rather than just attend. I have felt very welcomed here, but that is not the important part. I feel like all would be welcome here – as Christ would welcome them.

From the Eco-Justice Team:

Even without the imminent threat of an energy-sucking data center, electric costs have been rising and are likely to continue to do so. There is plenty of advice for curbing energy use on-line, not all of which involves freezing in the dark.

In addition, Duquesne Light offers several programs to help customers control usage and costs. Go to duquesnelight.com and click on "Energy and Money Savings." There you will find information about rebates on a range of energy-saving devices, such as air conditioners, furnaces, and insulation. Another program will pay us for old appliances, as well as haul them away. They will pay \$50 for an old refrigerator, freezer, or room air conditioner, or \$35 for a dehumidifier. The hauled away items are then recycled in a responsible manner. I can say from personal experience that this program works. Additionally, Duquesne Light offers a "Residential No-cost Comprehensive Audit," during which the auditor will install LED bulbs, LED nightlights, power strips, and other qualified products. Lastly, the site offers various products at a discount. The day I checked, the featured products were smart thermostats and power strips. Get details of all these on the above-mentioned web site.

Stay warm!

Souper Bowl of Caring – Food Drive through **March 8**

Join Bower Hill youth in the movement to Tackle Hunger by collecting both monetary and food donations to benefit the Greater Pittsburgh Community Food Bank. We're asking for your help in one of four ways:



1. Share this drive with friends and neighbors by passing along fliers (located on the tables in the Narthex) or download and print them here to hand out to your neighbors.
2. Make a monetary donation directly to the Food Bank on-line.
3. Bring your food items to church between now and March 8 . There will be a collection box setup near the portico entrance.
4. Distribute fliers around the neighborhood on Sunday, February 22. We'll meet in Fellowship Hall after church and organize teams.

Unity Food Pantry Collection February 8

Unity Food Pantry's greatest need boxed cereal, along with canned fruit, instant mashed potatoes, and diapers of all sizes.

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.

Notes from the Mission Committee:

Thank you for your contributions to this year's **Giving Tree** charities. \$560 was raised for the Greater Pittsburgh Community Foodbank. 22 Jared Boxes were filled with games and activities for children at area hospitals. And a nice assortment of cat food, dog food, leashes, treats, toys and towels was collected for Humane Animal Rescue of Pittsburgh. In addition, a member of Hooks and Needles crocheted 40 lap robes which were provided to seniors residing at Presbyterian Senior Care in Washington County.


On **March 15, 2026**, a number of us from Bower Hill will be attending the 29th annual **Empty Bowls Dinner at Rodef Shalom** in Oakland. You may select a bowl made by local potters, in which your soup selection will be served. This is a fundraiser for the Greater Pittsburgh Community Foodbank. Tickets are \$35 in advance, or \$40 at the door. Take this opportunity to gather with friends and neighbors for an informal meal of local chef-created soups, hearty bread and other tasty treats. Seatings are at 1:00 p.m. 3:30 p.m., and 6:00 p.m. We'll meet in the church parking lot to carpool. Watch for further details.

Thank you to the 75th Anniversary Committee for planning a church service, accompanied by a service project, for Sunday, February 1. Our supportive relationships with Casa San Jose, Neighborhood Academy and SHIM were highlighted, and bags of snacks, treats, and toiletry items were assembled for the three organizations.

Our mission efforts with New Hope Worship Center (formerly Carnegie Pres) continues with meal preparation the fourth Sunday of each month. Carnegie Carryout Dinners have been prepared for an average of 60 individuals who greatly appreciate the hot, free meal. St. John's Lutheran Church in Carnegie will be joining in our efforts, as we continue to seek additional congregations to join in this project.

Global Links, an occasional recipient of Bower Hill's mission support, is holding a virtual "Lunch and Learn" February 5, 2026 at noon. Global Links collects useful surplus medical materials from area hospitals and shares them with international and domestic partners. They also work to educate others on issues of global health and environmental stewardship. Their International Medical Aid Program has collaborated on health improvement projects, education exchanges, and medical studies in 15 Latin American and Caribbean countries over the past three decades. To sign up for this Zoom session, visit Global Links' website at globallinks.org and click on the "Lunch and Learn" icon to sign up.


Update from the Director of Education Ministries – Amy Grella




THE EVENT

STRIKES BACK

Sunday February 15th, 2026 from 6:30-8:30pm
@The Pittsburgh Project



Ralph Lowe
Keynote Speaker



Jakob Harmon
Worship Leader

Because Youth Group is Better Together

2026 Summer Mission Trip Opportunities

It's that time of year to be thinking about our summer mission trips for youth. This year, we will have two trips, one for middle school and one for high school. Please save the dates. Registration details will be emailed once available.

High School Mission Trip to Wilamore, KY July 5-10, 2026

Save the date! Bower Hill high school youth will join the youth from Hampton PC for a mission trip to Wilamore, KY. This trip will be for completed 8th to 12th graders.

Middle School Crestfield Service Adventure Camp July 19-24, 2026

Don't miss out on the best week of summer. This camp is for completed 6th – 8th graders. [Click here](#) to see the video from last years' Service Adventure Week.

YOUTH GROUP meet ups

Youth Group Updates – **Note Date changes due to winter weather!**

Combined Middle school & high school youth groups

Be sure to check out our monthly service and fellowship opportunities for youth in grades 6-12.

- Sunday, February 1 – Youth Group for Tweens & Middle Schoolers. We'll meet for Group games, snacks, discussion from 6:30 p.m. - 8:00 p.m. Be sure to invite your friends – room 110.
- **Sunday, February 8 - *UPDATE* Confirmation class will meet right after church** in room 110. This is the reschedule of our January meetup cancelled due to weather.
- Sunday, February 15 – The Event Strikes Back (Pittsburgh Presbytery Joint youth event) 6:00 p.m. - 9:00 p.m. Meet at the church – carpool to The Pittsburgh Project together.
- **Sunday, February 22** – We will meet to distribute Souper Bowl of Caring Fliers around the neighborhood.
- Saturday, February 28 – Sunday, March 1, 2026 – Crestfield Tweeners Retreat. Last Call to register for the Tweeners Retreat for grades 3-6. Don't miss out! [Click here to register.](#)

Looking Ahead: Save the Date for these Upcoming Events – **Date changes in RED.**

Here is a list of future events for your calendar. Bower Hill will attend all of these as a group.

- March 20-22 - Spring Retreat for Grades 6-12.
- June 28 - July 2 - Crestfield Elementary Overnight Camp (completed 3rd-5th).
- July 5-10 - Mission trip to Wilamore, KY with Hampton Pres for completed 8th-12th grades.
- July 19-24 - Crestfield Service Adventure Camp for kids ages 12-17.
- July 27-31- Bower Hill's Vacation Bible School week.

UPCOMING

Fellowship Events

Get Outdoors

Saturday, February 3

We have decided to change the start time from 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. for hikes during the winter months. Hopefully, this will give us more comfortable hiking temperatures. During the winter months, it is always difficult to find trails that are safe to walk. If the weather cooperates, we will hike local trails that are not hilly such as Panhandle Trail, Montour trail, Boyce-Mayview Park trails, etc. We will decide what trail to hike when we meet. If it's too cold or all trails may be icy, the hike will be rescheduled.

We will meet at 1:00 p.m. in the main parking lot and carpool to the hike. The trailhead should be about a 30-minute drive. The hike should be about 2 hours. So, we will be home around 4:00 p.m. If it rains or weather is bad, we will reschedule. Please email me at gstchild@yahoo.com or call so we don't leave without you.

Hooks & Needles February 7 & 21

Hooks and Needles continues to meet on the 1st and 3rd Saturday of each month. We will meet at Phyllis Yohe's house from 1:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m.

New Members and needle workers of all skills welcome! Hope to see you there!

Koinonia Wednesdays

9:15 a.m. Room 110

All women are welcome to join Koinonia, BHCC's women's Bible study group, and to explore and share in faith and fellowship with other women. This group meets on Wednesdays, fully in-person in the lounge (Room 110). Contact Sarah Neusius (sraahneusius@gmail.com) for more information or just come and join us.

Senior Men's Breakfast

**February 3
8:00 a.m.**

The Denny's at 2180 Greentree Road had a car crash into the restaurant. I expect it will not be open February 3. So, let's meet at: Eat'n Park Collier, 1197 Washington Pike, Bridgeville, PA 15017

No reservation is required, and conversation is spontaneous. The regular meeting date is on the first Tuesday of each month. All men are welcome. Any questions or comments, contact Glenn Child at gstchild@yahoo.com.

Bookworms February 24

1:30 p.m. via Zoom

This is an open invitation to anyone attending Bower Hill Community Church, friends and family members, to join Bookworms, the Church Book Club. Reading and discussing books since 2001, members have enjoyed the variety of perspectives readers bring: from 'loved it', to 'yuk', to everything in between.

The group reads fiction, non-fiction, memoirs, biographies, really anything the group suggests. The conversation is assisted by online reader guides. Different perspectives create great discussions. All opinions are welcome. A list of the books read by the group is available on the church website. (<https://www.bowerhillchurch.org/books-read>). Check out the variety!

The group currently meets by Zoom on the fourth Tuesday, January through November, at 1:30 p.m. We met in the evening at the church until Covid made meeting in-person impossible. Virtual contact is still comfortable for most attendees, although that could change in the future.

Please consider joining the group to discuss any book that interests you. Reading every book and attending all the discussions is not mandatory to be a member. Come try us out. We may 'worm our way' into your reading routine. To join the group for the next meeting, send your requests to Sally Child at sa.child@yahoo.com.

January 27 - All the Colors of the Dark by Chris Whitaker



Let Our Light Shine

JOIN US FOR BIRTHDAY SUNDAY - February 1

The second celebration for the 75th Anniversary of Bower Hill Community Church will be held on February 1.

At Bower Hill we don't get gifts for our birthday-we give gifts!

9:30 a.m. - Worship featuring speakers from SHIM, The Neighborhood Academy, Casa San Jose and First Baptist Church of Bridgeville

10:30 a.m. - Throwback Potluck and filling snack bags for The Neighborhood Academy and SHIM and toiletry bags for Casa San Jose.



For the potluck on February 1, we're challenging you to make a dish from years gone by. Whether it's deviled eggs that were popular back in the 50's, ambrosia salad from the 60's, or strawberry pretzel salad from the 80's, find a vintage recipe to share with your Bower Hill family!

For more ideas of dishes that were popular at potlucks in previous decades visit the [75th Anniversary page](#) on the church website.

Once you've chosen your dish contact Theresa Child at treetoowon@yahoo.com or use the link below, so that we can make sure that we have a nice mix of main dishes, sides, salads, and desserts.

[Throwback Potluck Signup Sheet](#)

2026 SPEAKER SERIES EVENTS

March 11 ~ Ryan P. Burge

April 22 ~ Andrew Root

May 13 ~ Liddy Barlow, Greg Jones, Tracy Keenan, Eric Schaffer

4:00 p.m. - 8:00 p.m.

Dinner Included

Cefalo's Banquet and Event Center
Carnegie, PA

\$35 per person per event

\$90 per person for the entire series



To register, scan the QR Code or go to <https://www.bowerhillchurch.org/speakerseries>

UPCOMING ACTIVITIES

Grand Finale Weekend May 16-17, 2026

Saturday Evening

Celebratory Banquet

Sunday

Special Worship Service which will include former pastors and members followed by a Strawberry Festival on the church lawn



Rev. Dr. Brian Snyder, Pastor
brian.snyder@bowerhillchurch.org

Parish Associate

Rev. Dr. Fred Leasure
fred.leasure@bowerhillchurch.org

Company of Pastors

Rev. Dr. Fred Leasure

Rev. Dr. Betty Sykes

Amy Grella

Director of Education Ministries
amy.grella@bowerhillchurch.org

Anne Smith

Director of Music Ministries
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Kim Digman

Church Administrator
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THE CHURCH OFFICE

70 Moffett St., Pittsburgh. PA 15243

(412) 561-4114

office@bowerhillchurch.org

Monday - Friday, 9:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.

www.BowerHillChurch.org



PLEASE PRAY
 FOR OUR CARE LIST

Bower Hill Church Members

Matt Arner, Nancy Green

Barb Oram



February 4: Nathan Gray

February 20: Taylor Linaburg

February 8: Susan Hick

February 24: Scott Olinger
 Val Watterson

February 10: Lauren Kocher
 Maggie Webler
 Beth Wilson

February 25: Dana Guidice

February 13: Nate Ivey
 Glenn Williams

February 26: Matthew Arner
 Chris Robbins

February 14: Rachel McElroy

February 27: Nick Gibbs
 Norma Grubb
 Chris May

February 16: Jim Kane

Tracy Riggle-Youn

February 18: Karl Casey

February 29: Emily Chin

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.

FEBRUARY 2026

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1 Birthday Sunday-75th Anniversary Potluck 9:30am Children's Worship 9:30am Worship 10:30am Fellowship (Coffee) 11:00am First Baptist Worship 6:30pm Tweeners/Middle School (Grades 3-8) Meetup Grades 3-8 (Rm. 110)	2 8:00am Montessori School 7:00pm A & P Comm. (Google Meet) 7:00pm Worship Committee (Rm 101)	3 8:00am Men's Breakfast Group - Denny's 8:00am Montessori School 10:00am Staff Meeting (Rm 101) 7:15pm OA Meeting (Rm 105) 7:30pm Troop 28 & 9028 (FH)	4 8:00am Montessori School 9:15am Koinonia (Rm 110) 6:00pm Bells Rehearsal (Choir Room) 7:00pm Choir Rehearsal (Sanctuary) 7:00pm Mayfair on Moffett (110, 105)	5 8:00am Montessori School 5:00pm Events & Outreach Committee (Zoom) 6:30pm Cub Scout Pack 28 (FH)	6 8:00am Montessori School	7 Get Outdoors - See weekly E-Blast 1:00pm Hooks & Needles (Phyllis Yohe's residence)
8 Unity Food Pantry Collection 9:30am Children's Worship 9:30am Worship 10:30am Fellowship (Coffee) 10:45am Confirmation Class (Room 110) 11:00am Faithful Conversations (FR) 11:00am First Baptist Worship	9 8:00am Montessori School 7:00pm B&G Meeting (Rm 101)	10 8:00am Montessori School 10:00am Staff Meeting (Rm 101) 7:15pm OA Meeting (Rm 105) 7:30pm Troop 28 & 9028 (FH)	11 8:00am Montessori School 9:15am Koinonia (Rm 110) 6:00pm Bells Rehearsal (Choir Room) 7:00pm Choir Rehearsal (Sanctuary) 7:00pm Mayfair on Moffett (110, 105)	12 8:00am Montessori School	13 8:00am Montessori School	14
15 Newsletter and Session Report Deadline 9:30am Children's Worship 9:30am Worship 10:30am Fellowship (Coffee) 11:00am Faithful Conversations (FR) 11:00am First Baptist Worship 6:00pm The Event (Youth Group)	16 Montessori School - No School 7:00pm Deacons Meeting (Rm 110)	17 8:00am Montessori School 10:00am Staff Meeting (Rm 101) 7:15pm OA Meeting (Rm 105) 7:30pm Finance Meeting (Virtual) 7:30pm Troop 28 & 9028 (FH)	18 8:00am Montessori School 9:15am Koinonia (Rm 110) 6:00pm Bells Rehearsal (Choir Room) 7:00pm Choir Rehearsal (Sanctuary) 7:00pm Mayfair on Moffett (110, 105)	19 8:00am Montessori School 6:30pm Cub Scout Pack 28 (FH)	20 8:00am Montessori School	21 1:00pm Hooks & Needles (Phyllis Yohe's residence)
22 Semi-Congregational Meeting 9:30am Children's Worship 9:30am Worship 10:30am Fellowship (Coffee) 11:00am Faithful Conversations (FR) 11:00am First Baptist Worship 12:30pm Compassionate Friends (Rm 101, 105, 110, FR) 2:00pm Mission Project with Carnegie Presbyterian (Kitchen & FH) 6:30pm Confirmation Class (Rm. FH)	23 8:00am Montessori School 7:00pm Session Meeting (FR)	24 8:00am Montessori School 10:00am Staff Meeting (Rm 101) 1:30pm Bookworms (Zoom) 7:15pm OA Meeting (Rm 105) 7:30pm Troop 28 & 9028 (FH)	25 8:00am Montessori School 9:15am Koinonia (Rm 110) 6:00pm Bells Rehearsal (Choir Room) 7:00pm Choir Rehearsal (Sanctuary) 7:00pm Mayfair on Moffett (110, 105)	26 8:00am Montessori School	27 8:00am Montessori School 6:00pm Cub Scouts Pinewood Derby (FH & Kitchen)	28 Crestfield One-Night Youth Retreat 7:00am Pinewood Derby (FH, Kitchen)