

~ **Freedom from Our Desires** ~

“The Spirit immediately drove Jesus out into the wilderness. And he was in the wilderness forty days, tempted by Satan, and he was with the wild beasts, and the angels ministered to him.”

~Mark 1:12-13

Dear Members and Friends,

Lent begins neatly on the very first day of March this year, meaning that Easter will be fairly late. I love a late Easter because it means that the earth itself echoes the joyful message of resurrection—the fresh smell of damp soil, and all the buds, and the birds, and the flowers lending a kind of emotional power to the mystery of new life that we proclaim. (Of course, as of this writing, in mid-February, we’ve already got daffodils coming up just outside my office window at the church.) According to the ancient plan of the church, Lent begins in the cold and dark, then journeys slowly toward warmth and light.

Oh, I know, it all sounds so medieval to ask people to torment themselves with deprivations and to feel guilty about their shortcomings just because Easter is coming. I’ve never been much of one to promote self-flagellation, hair shirts, cats-of-nine-tails, or even fasting. The old traditions of Lent include a lot of penitential acts that were meant to tame the willful flesh of its sinful desires. I was a little bit amused to come across a Protestant publication from the 1880s that suggested the following rules for Lent: “Eat nothing sweet. Do not put salt, pepper, or mustard on your food. Put no sugar or cream in your coffee or tea. Read nothing amusing, including novels, poetry, or humorous nonfiction. Eat no meat one or two days a week, and give the money you would have spent on meat to the church. Get up five minutes early each day to pray or read devotional literature.”

My first reaction to this list was, “Mustard? What about ketchup? Horseradish sauce? Salsa?” If we were to extend the spirit of these rules to the 21st century, we might include: Watch nothing on TV but the news. Stay off Facebook. Don’t play Candy Crunch—or whatever. In fact, get off the electronic devices altogether. It’s just 40 days, not counting Sundays, for Sundays are never “fast days.”

No, I don’t often ask people to “give things up for Lent.” As a pastor, I’m much more likely to ask you to take up a good cause for Lent, or a good habit, or a productive activity. And yet...I’ve got to admit that there’s something powerful about occasionally saying no to our desires. There’s something compelling, perhaps even something wise, about practicing resistance against the constant urge to indulge ourselves.

When we deny ourselves the luxuries that we’re used to, we learn a liberating thing: we need very little in life. And though denying ourselves mustard doesn’t teach us what it’s like to be poor, it does remind us that there are those in the world who struggle to survive, who cannot afford even the smallest indulgences. When we deny ourselves the excesses of life, we learn a new appreciation for things we once took for granted. Most importantly, perhaps, when we say no to our desires, we become their master. And in a society that is largely ruled by its empty wishes and desires, how peace-giving and empowering it is to become their master. And all those abstract indulgences like gossip, self-pity, jealousy, rage... You’ll never regret giving those up for forty days, for after Lent is over, you’ll have learned that you have it in your power to give them up for life, just by consistently refusing them.

Lent is a holy time, a joyful time to discover anew what it means to be spiritual beings, following after the way of the Christ. I hope you’ll use this time intentionally and well.

In Christ’s Peace,
~Brian

PS: If you still don’t know what to give up for Lent, allow me to suggest an hour each Wednesday evening from 7:00—8:00 p.m.! Our evening Lenten services will follow the beautiful liturgy of the 1946 Presbyterian *Book of Common Worship*, and will make use of music and art to focus on the Scriptural Stations of the Cross.

**NEWS FROM THE DIRECTOR OF CHRISTIAN EDUCATION AND YOUTH PROGRAMS**Amy Grella — am@bhccml.com**Souper Bowl of Caring Results**

Bower Hill Youth thank you for your support of our first ever Souper Bowl of Caring collection that took place this year around the Super Bowl. \$196 in cash and canned goods was collected for SHIM!

Youth Program Enhancements

Has it been a while since you have checked out the programs we have for youth grades 5 and above? There is no better time than now to do so. Many exciting changes are taking place based on feedback from the recent youth survey, and these changes have been implemented to make the experience for our youth even better!

Changes to Our Sunday Morning Wrap & Dive

Instead of a one-hour meet, this time will now have planned programming for 45 minutes. The last 15 minutes will be a new hangout time for any youth who wishes to stay. This will allow the youth time to relax in the newly re-done lounge with their peers, while giving flexibility to families who want to leave earlier the ability to do so. The programming content will no longer include a review of the sermon and sermon questions as a group. In March and continuing through Lent, the group will discuss what it means to walk in Jesus' ways.

Changes to Sunday Evening Eat & Meet

Going forward, dinner will no longer be a part of our normal programming. At lesson time, we will split into two groups (one for older/ one for younger) in order to allow the youth a more age-appropriate discussion experience. Meeting time is still **6:00—8:00 p.m.**, so there will be plenty of time for group games at the end! The youth have decided to rename the group **Sunday Night Live**, since Eat & Meet is no longer accurate. Upcoming topics will include peer pressure, forgiveness, mission opportunities, and finishing the painting of the last wall in the youth lounge.

Tweener Retreat Sign-ups

Youth in grades 4-6 are encouraged to sign up for the Tweener Retreat at Crestfield Camp and Conference Center from **Saturday, April 29—Sunday, April 30**. Come enjoy 24 hours of fun! This retreat will introduce the importance of retreating to young people. These 24 hours will give kids a chance to start exploring their relationship with God and what it means to be a Christian in an ever-changing world. The sign-up sheet can be found on the bulletin board across from the kitchen. Questions?—please contact Amy @ am@bhccml.com or (412) 801-3723.

Save the Date for Day Camp / Jr. Day Camp

Please mark your calendar the week of **July 17-21** for Day Camp and Junior Day Camp. Bower Hill will partner with Crestfield again to offer Day Camp, which is for completed 1st – 6th graders. Junior Day Camp is for completed Preschool – Kindergarten. Details about how you can volunteer to help and/or contribute supplies will be sent in the coming weeks.

Summer Youth Mission Trip

Please save the date for Mission Possible - a mission trip / camp experience at Camp Crestfield from July 23-28. Mission Possible is a mission program targeted for Junior and Senior High youth groups that offers **experiential growth in faith** through service, fellowship and fun. By focusing on mission, participants will work side-by-side with partners in Christ's service, and work to fulfill Christ's great commission to make disciples while staying at Camp Crestfield and taking advantage of their beautiful grounds and amazing activities. The cost of the trip is \$250 when paid in full by April 30, or \$275 after April 30. A \$50 non-refundable deposit is required to hold your place, and is due by March 30. We are also in need of chaperones to participate in this week with our youth. If you are interested, please contact Amy at am@bhccml.com



ADULT EDUCATION
Cathy Morgan, Committee Chair

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 have never attended a session, give it a try. You will find stimulating ideas and conversation. Please be aware that 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 March is as follows:

March 5: Bower Hill Church member Peter Smith will lead the second of three classes on spirituality and theology in our lives and the life of the church.

March 12: Paul Siefken, President of Fred Rogers Company, will discuss the Fred Rogers Company’s vision.

March 19: The Rev. Dr. Brian Snyder will continue his series on spirituality and theology in our lives and the life of the church.

March 26: Robyn Vitter, Director of Mt. Lebanon Public Library, will discuss how the library continues to meet the needs of the community.



DIRECTOR OF MUSIC MINISTRIES
Anne Carper Smith—an@bhccml.com



Cherub Choir rehearsals will be held at 10:45 a.m. in the choir room on the following Sundays:

March 5, 12, 19, 26 and April 2

They will sing in worship on **Palm Sunday, April 9.**

DISTRIBUTION OF THE ANNUAL REPORT

The office has sent an electronic copy of the 2016 Annual Report to all members with an email address on file in the church office. Printed copies will be made available to members during office hours. If you are unable to pick up a copy, call 412-561-4114 to request that it be mailed.

ECUMENICAL STATIONS OF THE CROSS

Lent is a time for new beginnings. In a troubled and troubling world, take time this season to cultivate God’s peace-giving presence in your life.



* Our evening Lenten observances begin on

Ash Wednesday, March 1, with a service of ashes at 7:00 p.m. in the sanctuary.

* Every Wednesday from **March 8 through April 5, at 7:00 p.m.**, a contemplative compline service will take place in the sanctuary using the historic 1946 *Book of Common Worship*.

These services will include music, art and meditations on the Ecumenical Stations of the Cross—which is to say, fourteen events in the life of Jesus, drawn from the Passion narratives in Scripture. Life in today’s world requires spiritual resources! Come and find yours as we observe this holy season together.



MARCH WORSHIP PLANS

March 1: Ash Wednesday — 7:00 p.m.

March 5: First Sunday in Lent
Communion: Genesis 2:15-17, 3:1-7;
Matthew 4:1-11

March 8: Lenten Compline Service — 7:00 p.m.

March 12: Second Sunday in Lent
Genesis 12:1-4; John 3:1-17

March 15: Lenten Compline Service — 7:00 p.m.

March 19: Third Sunday in Lent
John 4:5-26; John 4:27-42

March 22: Lenten Compline Service — 7:00 p.m.

March 26: Fourth Sunday in Lent
John 9:1-12; John 9:13-41

March 29: Lenten Compline Service — 7:00 p.m.

Flea Market



It's time for the **Spring Flea Market** and there are many opportunities to participate.

Here's the scoop:

Items will be collected from now through Sunday, March 19.

All items must be clean and in working condition. **PLEASE do not include clothes.**

If you are able, please take all items directly upstairs to the loft, otherwise leave them on the benches outside Fellowship Hall.

FINAL PRICING— **Sunday, March 19**, from 10:45 a.m. until ???

UNPACKING THE BOXES— **Thursday, March 23**, from 9:00 a.m. until ???.

Help us unpack for an hour or two or stay all day and really get a workout. We are typically done between 12:00 noon and 1:00 p.m. Snacks will be provided, but if you plan to stay all day, you may want to bring a bagged lunch.

SALE DAY— **Saturday March 25**, from 8:00 a.m. until 3:00 p.m.

The Flea Market opens at 8:30 a.m., and we usually have shoppers arriving early, so the most help is needed during the first few hours.

SOUP COOKS AND BAKERS NEEDED. We are looking for bakers to make items for the snack bar such as mini muffins, cookies, and brownies. Baked goods can be dropped off in the kitchen or on the cart outside of the office on **Friday, March 24, and on Saturday** sometime between 10:00 a.m. and 1:00 p.m. We are also looking for a gallon of each of the following soups: chicken noodle, potato and chili. Soup can be dropped off in the kitchen on Friday from 10:00 a.m. until 1:00 p.m. or by 9:30 a.m. on the day of the Flea Market.. Containers can be provided.

Don't forget that flea market helpers get first crack at all merchandise!!

If you have any questions, contact Theresa Child at 412-429-9519 or at treetoowon@yahoo.com.

Thanks in advance for all your help to make this year's spring flea market a huge success.

Flea Market News—Due to everybody's hard work and donations, proceeds from the past three flea markets and Craigslist sales that took place during the months between flea markets have added up to more than \$14,000! Session has approved the use of \$11,000 of those funds toward new lighting in Fellowship Hall and \$2,200 toward Youth Ministries for staffing the Camp Crestfield Interns.

PONDERINGS FROM THE PA



Over the past two months we have had several close friends die. Since we were not in the area at the time, we did not have an opportunity to visit the family in person. Therefore, I was left writing a note to (in all of these cases) the widows. This raises the common question, what should you say? As one who lost a wife to cancer several years ago, my perspective is based on the responses that I received from numerous friends and supporters. The one phrase that seems to be used when we aren't sure what to say is, "If there is anything I can do, please call me." I found this, though I am positive it was well-intentioned, to be not only unhelpful, but actually annoying.

God granted us one of the best gifts in the form of memory. The cards and notes that recalled a time we had shared together was such an affirmation of how much the life of the loved one had touched them. It also was comforting to refocus on good times and not just the pain of the loss.

I think that this remembrance reaffirms our faith perspective that our heaven really begins here as we are a part of the fellowship of believers. Death is not only painful and difficult, it is also more than a single event. It continues as a wound that though healed continues to be sensitive. To this end, consider dropping a note to the family member a month or two after the death. Grieving is not a linear process, and an affirmation of concern after time has passed can be extremely helpful.

I'm sure this topic is one we would rather avoid, but know that an affirmation of concern is more significant than precise wording!

Rev. Dr. Fred Leasure, Parish Associate

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

THE SENIOR MEN'S BREAKFAST GROUP

will meet again on **Wednesday, March 1**. The meeting time is **8:00 a.m.**, and the location is 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, March 12**. Currently, the food pantry's greatest need is for canned tuna or chicken, canned dinners (such as ravioli, spaghetti, beef stew), cold cereal, canned fruit, and white rice. As always, any donations of non-perishable food items, toiletry items, and paper products are welcomed. Collection bins are located in the hallways outside the church office and the Nursery.

WESTERN PA DIAPER BANK

Our next collection date for disposable diapers will be **Sunday, March 19**. 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.

Please remember to save diaper coupons that you collect but don't use, and place them in the envelope near the Pack'N Play.

BUILDING & GROUNDS COMMITTEE

In order to conserve the Sanctuary's heat on cold Sunday mornings during the winter months, we plan to restrict access through the front doors in the Narthex. Therefore, **when the orange cones are blocking the sidewalk, please proceed to the entrance to the hallway outside Fellowship Hall.** Thank you.

A MEMBER IN NEED

Longtime Bower Hill Church member Jim Burke has been put on the 'active' list for a kidney transplant. The waiting list to receive a kidney is up to five years, and doctors have advised Jim to aggressively search for a living donor. Might you be willing to be tested to become a donor? For information, or if you can help with the search, contact Pastor Brian Snyder. Please pray for an appropriate donor to be found.

GIANT EAGLE GIFT CARDS

If you do much of your grocery shopping at Giant Eagle, please consider buying their gift cards through the church. Bower Hill buys the cards at a 5% discount, which currently provides us with about \$2,500 in extra income every year. The cards are sold in \$50 and \$100 denominations at a table in the Narthex before and after worship services. Your purchase of these cards is an easy way to help underwrite the annual church budget.

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.

March 28

Last Bus to Wisdom, by Ivan Doig

April 25

Becoming Amish, by Jeff Smith

May 23

*Life, Death, and Reinvention:
"The Gift of the Impossibly Messed-up Life"*

by Michelle Snyder

June 27

The Orchardist, by Amanda Coplin

NEW MEMBER CLASS PHOTOS

Please check out the some of newest member class (December 2016) photos, which are included as a separate sheet in this newsletter.



- March 1
Jay Reisinger
Philip Johnson
- March 2 Dan Zabo
- March 5 Anna Mezyk
Daniel Boisvert
- March 6 Betty Jonosy
- March 7 Deborah Carter
Leo Goode

- March 11 Betty Mancini
- March 12 Megan Henney
- March 13 Ronald Linaburg
- March 14 Beth Ruh
Florence Spangenberg
- March 15 Addie Ivey
Patricia Hansen
- March 16 Lynne Wohleber
- March 18 Christopher Bruder
Cindy Waller
Megan Gardner
- March 21 Lucille Heckman
- March 25 Gavin Salvante
William Ewing
- March 26 Cynthia Gissin

- March 27 Bob Winnett
Darenda Lease
Matt Belardi
Mike Riemer
- March 28 Gabriel Mezyk
Peter Morgan
- March 29 Donna Williams
- March 31 Judy Delestienne

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.



MARCH WORSHIP VOLUNTEERS

COMMUNION SERVERS

- March 5: Alan and Betsy Hohlfelder
Kiri Rising, Nancy Andrews

LECTORS

- March 5: Kristen Mackey
March 12: Keith Mason
March 19: Nancy Salvante
March 26: Dick Headley

GREETERS

- March 5: Bill Ewing, TBD
March 12: Lisa Shwallon, Barb Hughes
March 19: Cathy Morgan, Paul Blake
March 26: Judy Delestienne, Dottie Carter

USHER CAPTAIN—Peter Morgan

ACOLYTES

- March 5: Leo and Jacob Geis
March 12: Allie Bruder, Nate Rising
March 19: Greta and Chloe Snyder
March 26: Hayden Jones, Ruby Siefken

COFFEE HOUR

- March 5: Child Family
March 12: Druckenbrod/Schlesinger Family
March 19: Geis Family
March 26: Belardi Family

FLOWER DEACONS

- March 5: Mary Gorski
March 12: Anne Mitchell
March 19: Ruth Robbins
March 26: Phyllis Madden

SEXTONS

- March 5: Jean Miewald
March 12: Dave Hicks
March 19: Bill Cadwell
March 26: TBD

Questions? Need to switch or reschedule? Please contact:

Greeters, Communion Servers: Andy Druckenbrod

Lectors: Rev. Brian Snyder

Sextons: Bill Cadwell

Coffee Hour: Pat Jacobs

Acolytes: Jean Miewald

Flower Deacons: Cynthia Gissin

BOWER HILL COMMUNITY CHURCH

Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)

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OUR CHURCH STAFF

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Parish Associate
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Company of Pastors
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THE CHURCH OFFICE

[412] 561-4114

Monday - Friday 9:00 a.m.— 2:30 p.m.

PLEASE PRAY FOR OUR CARE LIST

Marian Brannan, 1300 Bower Hill Rd., #1128, Pittsburgh, PA 15243
Louise Burroughs, 2160 Greentree Rd., #307W, Pittsburgh, PA 15220
Matt Dunfee, 569 S. Forest St., Apt. 10, Denver, CO 80746
Ethel La Barbera, 50 Vanadium Road, #130, Bridgeville, PA 15017
Alma Johnson, 13 Charles Street, Dravosburg, PA 15034
Larry Sirinek, 220 Woodhaven Dr., Pittsburgh, PA 15228

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.