

~ A NEW THING ~

*“Do not remember the former things, or consider the things of old.
I am about to do a new thing; now it springs forth.
Do you not perceive it?”*

~Isaiah 43:18, 19a

Dear Members and Friends,

One disadvantage to writing an old-fashioned paper newsletter is that it throws off a person's inner clock. It means trying to convey certain feelings on paper before you (the writer) have really gotten ready for them in real life. For example, you have to write about Thanksgiving well before Halloween, before the autumn turns its annual corner from bright yellows and oranges to somber grays and browns. Then you need to write about the extravagant joy of Christmas before you've even had a chance to truly sit with soberer Thanksgiving thoughts. Even today, as I write—having pushed the newsletter deadline to its allowable limit, and still days before Christmas—I've got to think and talk about a world I haven't seen yet: the New Year, 2017. “Life comes at you fast,” the Nationwide Insurance ads claim. And as we look back over the days we've been given, or even just the 365 days of the year now ending, we would have to agree. Something new is always upon us. “Do you not perceive it?”

One problem with welcoming a new year is that it comes at a time when nothing feels new. The Christmas decorations look ragged and maudlin in January's merciless light. Taking them down is a tiresome task. And not to knock a much-loved carol, but if Christmas takes place “in the deep midwinter” then Pittsburgh is planted in the deep Midwest—somewhere in Iowa. Winter hasn't even gotten out of the gate at Christmastime. By New Year's Day, winter's iciest, coldest two and a half months are still ahead of you, with precious few holidays to break up their tedium. According to Snyder Family legend, my late-January birthday always has the worst weather of the year. You'll know I'm another year older on the day you see a snowplow stuck in a snowdrift.

And yet, even amid all the sameness of things, we can sometimes feel the moments passing. Their constant rumble is like a subway train beneath the ground we're standing on. If we stop to listen to the rhythm of our hours and days, if we pay attention to the sometimes-monotonous march of seconds and minutes, we'll catch echoes of their footfalls drawing nearer, stomping past us, receding into the distance. When did that hair go gray on the head of the one you love? When did that wrinkle form on the familiar brow? Time passes, bestowing gifts richly with one hand and stealing them with the other.

In every season of life, there is a new thing that God is doing, if we will open our hearts and spirits to its unfolding. Whatever time it is in your life, whatever your age or occupation, the voice still calls out to you again from down the beach. “Follow me.” Or, as the God of Isaiah declares, “I am about to do a new thing... Do you not perceive it?” Sometime in this truly deep midwinter season—at an evening time yet to be determined—we are going to gather as a congregation to discuss the “new things” that we sense the Spirit doing in our midst and the directions they might lead us. Until then, I'd encourage you to ask yourself these two questions: What new thing am I being called to? What new thing is our church being called to? It is my joy and privilege to be making new discoveries with you.

In Christ's Peace,
~Brian

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.

Here is the schedule through February 2017:

January—*When Breath Becomes Air*
by Paul Kalanithi

February—*The Secret Chord*
by Geraldine Brooks



COFFEE, CAKE & CONVERSATION

This group gathering is canceled indefinitely. Thanks to everyone who participated!

WALLACE FOOD PANTRY COLLECTION

The next collection date is **Sunday, January 8**. 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 upcoming months, Wallace will continue 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.

A SPECIAL ANNOUNCEMENT



Ruth Robbins gave birth to twin girls on November 9. She was a surrogate for a couple who live in Madrid, Spain.

Ruth & family wish to thank BHCC for the wonderful support given throughout this amazing experience.



SENIOR MEN'S GROUP

The senior men's breakfast group will meet again on **Wednesday, January 4**. 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!

WESTERN PA DIAPER BANK

Our next collection date for disposable diapers will be **Sunday, January 15**. 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.

HOOKS AND NEEDLES

Hooks and Needles made over 30 scarves this fall that were distributed to homeless veterans through the Angel Tree program, as well as to active servicemen overseas.

The group meets the first and third Saturday at 10:00 a.m. in the Lounge. Anyone with an interest in knitting, crocheting or any other fabric craft is invited to join the group. We will be planning the next project at our upcoming January meetings.

The Church Office will be CLOSED for New Year's Day, on Monday, January 2, and again on Monday, January 16, for Martin Luther King Day.



NEWS FROM THE DIRECTOR OF CHRISTIAN EDUCATION AND YOUTH PROGRAMS

Amy Grella — am@bhccml.com

ALL Youth, from preschool through 8th grade, are invited to the fourth annual **Sunday-after-Christmas Pajama Party, on 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. Wrap and Dive WILL NOT be held so that youth can help de-deck the halls after the party.

Wear your PJ's and bring a pillow and blanket. We will watch a fun holiday DVD.

SUNDAY, JANUARY 8—Normal Sunday school schedule resumes.

YOUTH /FAMILY PROMISE LOUNGE UPGRADES

On **Saturday, January 21 – Sunday, January 22**, we will be working on the Youth / Family Promise Lounge to update the appearance of this space and make it more functional. Your help is needed to paint, clean, and re-organize during a work shift that weekend. On Sunday night, plan to join us for an all-family potluck at 6:00 p.m. in Fellowship Hall, when we will dedicate the new Youth Lounge and have "Eat & Meet" for the entire family. Sign-up sheets are on the Youth bulletin board by the kitchen.

TWEENER RETREAT SIGN-UPS

Youth, currently in grades 4-6, are encouraged to sign up for the Tweener Retreat at Crestfield Camp and Conference Center, which will be held from **Saturday, April 29, through Sunday, April 30**. Come enjoy 24 hours of fun! This retreat is specially designed to introduce the importance of retreating to young people. The 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. Sign-up forms can be found on the bulletin board across from the kitchen. If you have any questions, please contact Amy @ am@bhccml.com or (412) 801-3723.

SAVE THE DATE for Day Camp / Jr. Day Camp

We are partnering with Crestfield again this summer for our Day Camp/Jr. Day Camp. Please be sure to mark your family calendars for the week of Monday, July 17, through Friday, July 21 for either Day Camp, which is for completed 1st – 6th graders, or Jr. Day Camp, for completed pre-school – Kindergarten. Details will be sent via email in February.



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 January is as follows:

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

January 8: Bridgette Kennedy, Manchester-Bidwell's Community Liaison, will present the vision that drives her organization.

January 15: The Rev. Dr. Brian Snyder will continue his series on spirituality and theology in our lives and the life of the church.

January 22: BHCC's Haiti Travel Team will take a look at what we've learned over the past five years in our attempt to partner with communities in Haiti to solve the problem of providing sustainable clean water systems and how we might move forward in strengthening our relationships with our existing partners.

January 29: Elder Steve Boisvert will review the book *The End of White Christian America*—a look at the changing demographics and culture in America and its effects on both mainline and evangelical white Protestant churches.

**DIRECTOR OF MUSIC MINISTRIES**Anne Carper Smith—an@bhccml.com**GLAD TIDINGS OF JOY!**

Thank you to all of the families of our Cherub Choir members, who did a great job sharing their musical gifts with the congregation on December 18:

Aiden & Ella Belardi	Claira McElroy
Abigail Boisvert	Lily Philson
Chris Bruder	Michela & Drake Robbins
Owen Geis	Rachel Robosky
Ellena & Elise Gibbs	Leah Smith
Autumn Grella	Beatrice & Gus Watterson
Calvin Kocher	
Elaine Mackey	

Thank you also to the following singers, ringers, and instrumentalists of Bower Hill, who helped make the Advent and Christmas services so special:

Debbie Boisvert	Jason Rising
Karl Casey	Chris Robbins
Sally Child	Jason Robosky
Margaret DeLair	Josie Sheldon
Susan Hicks	Donna Williams
Betsy Hohlfelder	Lynn Wohleber
Rick and Pat Jacobs	Margaret Zabo
Kristen Mackey	
Jean Miewald	
Anne & Gordon Mitchell	

**WOR-
PLANS****SHIP****January 1—Epiphany Sunday**

New Year's Day

Isaiah 60:1-6; Matthew 2:1-12

January 8—Baptism of the Lord

Communion; Watterson Baptism

Isaiah 49:1-9; Matthew 3:15-17

January 15—Epiphany 2A

Isaiah 49:1-7; John 1:29-42

January 22—Epiphany 3A

1 Corinthians 1:10-18; Matthew 4:12-23

January 29—Epiphany 4A

1 Corinthians 1:18-31; Matthew 5:1-12

**Oh, the Weather Outside Can Be Frightful
But Our Cocoa (and Coffee and Teas) Are Delightful!**



As winter finally sets in, now is the time to enjoy our organic Fair Trade cocoa as well as our coffee (now in handy K-cups!) and organic teas. Warm yourself up in two ways: enjoy a wonderful hot beverage and support farmers around the world through fair compensation for their toils. The Presbyterian Coffee Project, in cooperation with other denominations and the Equal Exchange Cooperative supports small-scale farmers by eliminating the many layers that traditionally siphon off profits from the people who actually grow the cocoa, coffee and teas. In addition, profits are redirected back to the farmers' communities where they have a say in how the lives of their communities can best be improved. Through this cooperative model communities have built schools and health centers. PCUSA's Enough for Everyone Program has collaborated with Equal Exchange since 2001.

If you haven't been supporting this program, please consider purchasing some of our Fair Trade products. Coffee is \$8.00 per 12 ounce bag or box of 12 single-serve cups. We have two varieties of regular and one decaf coffee available. There are four types of teas (green tea, earl grey, English breakfast, herbal tea), which are \$4.00 for a box of 20 tea bags, and our organic cocoa is \$6.00 per can. Each Sunday, the Equal Exchange cart is located on the way from the sanctuary to Fellowship Hall. We operate on the honor system for payment. Pick up your coffee, tea, or cocoa and place your check or cash in the offering plate marked "Coffee/Tea/Cocoa" or drop it off in the office if you happen to be at church during the week. Many thanks to all who have supported this project! Fair Trade products are a great way to help small scale farmers around the world support their families with pride and dignity.

A LETTER FROM CHAIR OF THE CAPITAL CAMPAIGN COMMITTEE — JASON RISING DECEMBER 2016

Dear Members of Bower Hill Community Church,

As we near the end of 2016, the Capital Campaign Committee wants to give an update on the status of the Branching Out Capital Campaign. We are happy to report that as of the end of November we have collected \$721,500 of the approximately \$770,000 that was pledged during the initial campaign launched in 2014. That is almost 94% of our goal. So first and foremost we want to thank everyone who has contributed to this campaign through their time, talent and treasure. We are also pleased to announce that 62 of the 84 pledging units have completed their capital campaign pledges, and we look forward to seeing this number continue to grow as we close out the campaign in 2017.

Through November, the following projects have been funded by capital campaign contributions – repair of the steeple, new flooring installed in the downstairs lounge, the playground redone with new equipment and ground cover, certain exterior doors and all windows replaced with new models that enhance the safety, energy efficiency and beauty of our church. The boiler system has been replaced. We made a \$20,000 contribution to the new organ and \$10,000 of the \$50,000 committed to the parking lot repairs was spent to rehabilitate the south lot next to Family Promise. Most importantly, we have donated over \$72,000 to our missions (Hekima Place, Haiti Water, SHIM and Family Promise). These are blessings from God and show how much we can accomplish as a congregation.

As we enter the final phase of our campaign, we continue to be encouraged by the generous participation of this congregation. If you have completed your commitment, I offer you my sincere gratitude on behalf of the committee. We have accomplished great things with this capital campaign. For those of you still in the process, we continue to be very hopeful that we can achieve 100% of our goal and don't see any reason why we shouldn't strive to surpass the \$770,000 target. I know there are a number of new members who have joined Bower Hill since the beginning of the campaign. If you are interested in participating in the campaign, please reach out to me, Gordon Mitchell or Brian. I assure you it is never too late to be a part of this important project.

In closing, we are in the process of confirming our commitment to a number of other projects and I will make sure to update the congregation once we have made our recommendations to Session. There is still a lot we want to accomplish. We hope (and expect) to have enough left over to consider additional Phase II projects that include—contributing to lighting in fellowship hall, restoration of the major maintenance reserve fund and funding portions of the exterior painting project—while maintaining our commitment to donate 10% of every dollar collected to the four missions.

This continues to be such an exciting time for our church and I thank you again for all of your generosity. We all want to finish this campaign and exceed our initial goal, so I ask for your continued support and prayers. Thank You!



PONDERING FROM THE PA

January can be a very sad month. The parties are over, the decorations are boxed up and the days are dark and dreary. For the church, we move into that intermediate season that separates Christmas from Lent—sometimes referred to as Ordinary Time. So how can we approach these days and transform them?

Many of us remember, before the electronic gadget revolution, the large wall calendar we hung in some prominent location that boasted a season-appropriate picture for each month. As you flipped through what was ahead in the year, you could look forward to celebrations, trips and yet-to-be-discovered surprises that would unfold in the months to come.

We can recapture that anticipation as we focus on the difference we can make in another's life with something as simple as a phone call or a short note. What can you do today that will allow January to be exciting instead of sad?

Rev. Dr. Fred Leasure
Parish Associate

JANUARY 2017 WORSHIP VOLUNTEERS**COMMUNION SERVERS**—January 8

Dick and Kate Junker, Linda and Phil Johnson

LECTORS

January 1: n/a

January 8: Allie Bruder

January 15: JoAnn Goode

January 22: Dick Westerhoff

January 29: Leo Goode

USHER CAPTAIN: Andy Druckenbrod**GREETERS**

January 1: Matt and Lauren Kocher

January 8: JoAnn and Leo Goode

January 15: Caroline Barone and Sam Kidder

January 22: Ben and Carolyn Boisvert

January 29: Mackey Family

ACOLYTES

January 1: n/a

January 8: Leo and Jacob Geis

January 15: Allie Bruder and Nate Rising

January 22: Greta and Chloe Snyder

January 29: Hayden Jones and Ruby Siefken

COFFEE HOUR

January 1: Kocher

January 8: Belardi

January 15: Boisvert

January 22: Mackey

January 29: Saba

FLOWER DEACONS

January 1: Anne Mitchell

January 8: Ruth Robbins

January 15: Nancy Green

January 22: Kathy Philson

January 29: Doris Olinger



January 3 Lynn Sirinek

January 4 Karen Reynolds

January 5 Erik Johnson

January 7 Drake Robbins

January 8 Betty Winnett

January 9 Mary Ann Scott

January 10 Pat Jacobs

January 11 Lynn Mezyk

January 13 Sydney Saba

January 14 Phyllis Madden

January 15 Gary Gorski
Matthew KocherJanuary 16 Nina Mackey
Richard Rothrock

January 18 Paul Blake

January 21 Bev Burke
Ellie MarcovskyJanuary 22 Lee Ferrero
Dave HicksJanuary 24 Lindsay Bruder
Mary Lou Frock
Julian SalvanteJanuary 26 Inese Baumhammers
Brian SnyderJanuary 27 Adam Andrews
Anne SmithJanuary 28 Sally Child
Kent JonesJanuary 31 Katherine Gallagher
Nathan Rising
Julia Snead

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. Please call 412-561-4114 or email office@bhccml.com.



Sandra Caffo (Friend)

Brian & Melissa Harman

Children: Graham, Cormac ("Mac")

Nathan & Brianna Ivey

Children: Adelaide, Lucinda

Linda James

Alexander (Friend) & Rachel McElroy

Children: Clara, Michael ("Cal")

Keith & Laura McGaha

Larry Sirinek

Laura Swedler

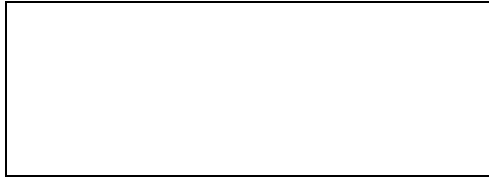
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OUR CHURCH STAFF

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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

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.

