

~ The Word Made Flesh ~

*"In him was life, and the life was the light of all people.
The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it."*

~John 1:4-5

Dear Members and Friends,

Christmas is no time to try new things—especially in the kitchen or at church, right? At Christmas, give us the time-honored recipes and carols of yore. In a world of endless change, Christmas comes all-too-briefly to comfort our unsettled souls with echoes of a far-off home. Its music, and smells, and tastes all remind us that we were children once, innocent and hopeful. The old things of the season speak of the changelessness of God. That's why I'm always slow to request unpopular carols to sing in worship during Advent and Christmas. And yet, there is a Canadian carol I wish we could sing every now and again. It's got a haunting French medieval tune. But even though the music is somber, it's hard to sing the words with a straight face; they're just too strange. You probably know it:

*'Twas in the moon of wintertime
When all the birds had fled,
That mighty Gitchi Manitou
Sent angel choirs instead;
Before their light the stars grew dim,
And wandering hunters heard the hymn:
"Jesus your King is born, Jesus is born,
In excelsis gloria."*

*Within a lodge of broken bark
The tender babe was found,
A ragged robe of rabbit skin
Enwrapp'd his beauty round;
But as the hunter braves drew nigh,
The angel song rang loud and high...*

*O children of the forest free,
O sons of Manitou,
The holy child of earth and heaven
Is born today for you.
Come kneel before the radiant boy
Who brings you beauty, peace and joy...*

Not really Christmas Eve material for Bower Hill, except maybe as a choir anthem. Can you even sing "Gitchi Manitou" with a straight face? It doesn't take us back to the place where we need our Christmases to take us. Besides, the lyrics seem a little schmaltsy, even condescending to North American Indians... Until you learn that a French missionary to the Hurons wrote them in 1642. He wanted to put the Christmas story into terms his people would understand. And isn't that what Christmas is? It's a celebration of the one decisive act whereby God is finally translated into terms we understand: in a life, in all the messiness and the joy of a human person. I wonder how we might rewrite the Christmas story so that it would make clearer sense to us bored, prosperous, overworked suburbanites of the 21st century.

And so, in this season of lovely old traditions, and sentiment, and all the bittersweet echoes of innocence lost... remember the incarnation. God so desires relationship with us that God comes to us in ways we can grasp—in all the frailty and poverty of this child, out on the furthest margins of our world. How are we "incarnating" that love? Happy Advent and Merry Christmas to you. I'm glad we're sharing this time together.

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



SENIOR MEN'S GROUP

The senior men's breakfast group will meet again on **Wednesday, December 6**. 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!

BOOKWORMS



Bookworms is our ladies' book discussion group, which meets monthly on the fourth Tuesday at **7:30 p.m.** in Room 103 for fellowship and discussion of a chosen title. Everyone is welcome to read the book for the month and join the discussion.

There is **NO meeting in December**.

January 23

One in a Million Boy, by Monica Wood

February 27

84 Charing Cross Road, by Helene Hanff
Duchess of Bloombury Street, by Helene Hanff

WESTERN PA DIAPER BANK — UPDATE

BHCC delivered nearly 5,000 diapers to SHIM on behalf of the Diaper Bank in 2017. Special thanks to everyone who has contributed diapers and diaper coupons this year.

Please note that we are pausing our collection of diapers starting now and going through the upcoming holiday season. We will resume our drive again in 2018 at a time to be announced. However, you may continue to place coupons in the envelope near the Pac n' Play, and they will be mailed to the Diaper Bank each week.

COFFEE, CAKE & CONVERSATION

There is no meeting in December. The group will meet again on January 23, 2018.



WINE & CHEESE SOCIAL

Ladies of Bower Hill

Parish Life invites you to a wine and cheese social at the home of Darendia Lease, on the evening of **Monday, December 4, at 6:00 p.m.** Please come and bring a bottle of wine (or sparkling cider) and an appetizer (cheese or something else) to share. We had an abundance of wine at the previous gathering, so you might want to share a bottle with someone else who is coming. Please sign up on the bulletin board outside the Friendship Room or email Theresa Child at treetoowon@yahoo.com so that we know how many people to expect. Hope to see you there!



THREE RIVERS RINGERS FREE CONCERT

Friday, December 1, 8:00 p.m.

Bower Hill Church—Sanctuary

'Twas the Night Before Christmas



It's lovely weather for a sleigh ride together... with Three Rivers Ringers! Join Pittsburgh's premier handbell ensemble for a fun evening of holiday music for the whole family. You'll experience the magical sounds of handbells at the holidays with favorites from Tchaikovsky's *The Nutcracker*, classics from Leroy Anderson and Vince Guaraldi, and much more! A light reception will immediately follow. Donations are welcome.

UNITED FOOD PANTRY COLLECTION

Our next collection date will be **Sunday, December 10**. The pantry's needs are primarily for boxed cereal (especially Cheerios, which is the only cereal some clients are able to eat), canned soups, canned tuna, and white rice. A new need is for all-fruit or all-vegetable baby food, which is a special need of several of the children in our client families. As always, donations of any non-perishable food items are welcomed. Collection bins are located in the hallways outside the church office and the narthex.



THE CHURCH OFFICE WILL BE CLOSED

CHRISTMAS Monday, December 25

NEW YEAR'S Monday, January 1



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

Many thanks to Kristen Mackey, Chris Robbins, Jason Robosky, Rich Salvante, and Margaret Zabo for enriching our worship with their instrumental music!

Here are some upcoming music program highlights:

On **Sunday, December 17**, the worship service will be packed with fabulous music. The Cherub Choir will open the service by singing the introit, and the Chancel Choir will be joined by harpist Chelsea Lane to perform selections from Benjamin Britten's *Ceremony of Carols*.

The **Christmas Eve prelude will begin at 6:30 p.m. on December 24**, and will feature harpist Chelsea Lane, violinist Carolyn Edwards, and organist Anne Smith. The **evening worship service will begin at 7:00 p.m.** and will include a brass quintet. What a fantastic way to celebrate the birth of Jesus. We hope you will come, and invite friends and family!

Anne Smith will join PSO musicians Carolyn Edwards and Allie Thompson in a sixty minute recital at St. Paul's Episcopal Church in Mt. Lebanon on **Sunday, January 21 at 4:00 p.m.** Rarely played duos by Reinberger, Kodaly, and Saint-Saëns will not disappoint—we hope to see you there!



ADULT EDUCATION
Linda James, Chair
Adult Education Committee

Adult Education meets on Sunday mornings, following worship, from 10:45—11:45 a.m. in Room 204. If you've never attended a session, why not give it a try. Our schedule for the month of December is shown below.

November 26: Thanksgiving Weekend
No Adult Ed — Deck the Halls!

December 3: DVD presentation (*Painting the Stars*), followed by a discussion, led by Linda James, of the impact of science on our faith and how they connect.

December 10: Class will be led by Pastor Snyder with the participants of the Confirmation Class.

December 17: Rabbi Mark Mahler from Temple Emanuel will speak on the Jewish Faith.

December 24: Christmas Eve—No Adult Ed

December 31: No Adult Ed

CHRISTIAN EDUCATION AND YOUTH PROGRAMS UPDATE—Amy Grella—am@bhccml.com

December Youth Calendar

Please **NOTE the time change to our Sunday Night Live**. Youth will meet on **December 10**, from **5:00-7:00 p.m.**, to prepare and eat dinner with Family Promise. Be sure to sign up for this night so that we can plan our food purchase.

Sunday Morning “2nd Hour” XP3

Be sure to join us Sunday mornings during second hour for XP3 in the youth lounge. Starting December 3, we will begin a three-week series called “*Tis the Season*”. **NOTE:** XP3 will not meet on December 24 or 31.

Family Worship Experience on Christmas Eve at 9:30 a.m.

Several families have asked for a Family Worship experience on Christmas Eve—one that is geared more toward children in both the time that it occurs and the content. This year, Christmas Eve falls on Sunday, and **we hope you will join us** for a special service at **9:30 a.m.**, which will be geared toward children of all ages, with our older youth narrating, while the children perform a Christmas Pageant. Over the next several weeks, Children's Worship time will be used to practice and prepare. **This does not replace Bower Hill's traditional Christmas Eve service in the evening**, which begins with **music at 6:30 p.m. and worship at 7:00 p.m.** Childcare will be provided for both services.

Sunday-after-Christmas Pajama Party! — December 31, from 9:30—10:30 a.m.

All Sunday school classes will participate in this Pajama Party, which will be held in the Lounge (#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. Refreshments will be provided.**

Sunday, January 7—Normal Sunday school schedule resumes.

SAVE THE DATE — Sunday, January 14

Have you ever wondered what it would be like to live in a refugee camp? During SNL on January 14, we are partnering with SHIM to hear local teenagers share their experiences as refugees. This is one SNL you don't want to miss!





December

WORSHIP PLANS

December 3

First Sunday of Advent; Communion
Isaiah 64:1-9; Mark 13:24-37

December 10

Second Sunday of Advent
Rev. Dr. Fred Leasure preaches

December 17

Third Sunday of Advent
Britten "Ceremony of Carols" with harp
John 1:6-8, 19-28

December 24

Christmas Eve
9:30 a.m. Service with Children's Pageant
All are welcome.

Evening Candlelight Service

Music with harp, violin
and brass quintet at 6:30 p.m.
Worship at 7:00 p.m.

December 31

First Sunday of Christmastide
Isaiah 61:10-62:3; Luke 2:22-40

ADVENT IN THE MORNING!

Make your Advent season of preparation more meaningful this year with an early morning Bible Study!

Beginning Thursday, November 30,

and continuing for the four Thursdays of Advent, Fred Leasure, our Parish Associate, will lead a Bible Study entitled *The Light Will Shine*.

Each session will stand alone, so you can come for one or all four weeks. **An early bird session will begin at 6:30 a.m. in the lounge** and will include coffee, tea and sweets. For those who don't believe God is up that early, **a second session will follow at 10:00 a.m.** Both gatherings will conclude after 45 minutes.



November 30

"Watchful Expectancy"

Isaiah 64:1-9 / Matthew 24:36-44

December 7

"John the Baptizer"

Isaiah 61:1-4, 8-11 / Matthew 3:1-12

December 14

"The Fulfillment of Promises"

Micah 5:2-5 / Matthew 1: 18-25

December 21

"The Dawning of Day"

Isaiah 52: 7-10 / Luke 2:1-20

Capture the joy and deepen your focus in the busy days of preparation!

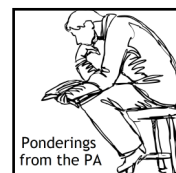
PONDERINGS FROM THE PA

Expectancy is the theme of Advent. For centuries the Israelites expected a new messiah to appear and return the kingdom they knew under David. They looked backward and pined for their history to be repeated. However, the birth of Jesus and his ministry brought disappointment because what they expected and what was delivered were quite different.

As we prepare to celebrate the birth of the Christ, we often anticipate the comfort of family traditions. There is a great sense of peace in the familiar and in having our expectations fulfilled exactly. Unfortunately, we often set ourselves up for disappointment as seasons in our life have changed.

So many hoped-for fulfillments need to be adjusted; sons and daughters don't come home, relatives have passed on, decorations have faded and traditions have been adjusted.

This Advent we should expect the unexpected! Rejoice in the newness of an uncertain future. As Jesus broke into the world, he upset most of the presumptions of a Davidic-style kingdom. Instead, he brought the freshness of an eternal kingdom and freedom from the harsh punishment of old rules. May our lives be filled with the joy of receiving the Christ in fresh new moments of unexpected opportunities.



GETTING TO KNOW YOU — NOW ON WEBSITE

The *Getting to Know You* bios included in the latest newsletter have been added to the website. There are two new links in the Members section—one that takes you to the current *Getting to Know You* insert and one that has combined the Photo Directory pictures with the *Getting to Know You* archive.

To access both links, sign in as member using your user id and password, and click on Members in the top menu. On the right side menu are the two new links--“**Members** – Getting to Know You – Current Newsletter Insert” and “**Members** – Photo Directory and Getting to Know You.” When you click on the link for the Photo Directory, you’ll see all the pictures of church members listed in alphabetical order. You can either scroll to the person/family that you are looking for, or you can use the new search field. If the individual or family has *Getting to Know You* material, there will be a link to the right of the picture. Currently, there are four members/families with this information. Each month, more bios and fun facts will be added.

This will replace the former Photo Directory Links A-Z, which will be deleted in a few weeks.

If you need help signing into the Members section of the website, contact Glenn Child at gstchild@yahoo.com.

**IN MEMORIAM**

Louise Burroughs
6/21/27 to 9/29/17

Marian Brannan
4/8/23 to 11/5/17



Teagan A. Bruce and Barrett O. Bruce

Born 4/23/2010 and 9/29/2011

to Scott and Vickie Bruce

Baptized on October 8, 2017

DECEMBER WORSHIP VOLUNTEERS**COMMUNION SERVERS**

Jim & Sarah Cannon, Doris Olinger, Kirsten Bruder

LECTORS

December 3: Advent 1: Brian Snyder and Fred Leasure
December 10: Advent 2: Rich and Nancy Salvante Family
December 17: Advent 3: Jason and Kiri Rising Family
December 24: Evening Worship — Laura McGaha
December 31: Mike Riemer

GREETERS

December 3: Druckenbrod Family
December 10: Mary Good, Mary Beth Waine
December 17: Dick and Kate Junker
December 24: Keith Mason, Bill Ewing + extras
December 31: Leo and JoAnn Goode

USHER CAPTAIN: Andy Druckenbrod

ACOLYTES

December 3: Henry and Clara Druckenbrod
December 10: Graceann Foster and Ruby Siefken
December 17: Kemp and Helen Carter
December 24: Michela Robbins, Chris Bruder, Jacob Geis
December 31: TBA

COFFEE HOUR

December 3: Sheri Geis Family
December 10: Lease Family
December 17: Saba Family
December 24: Westerhoff Family
December 31: Rising Family

FLOWER DEACONS

December 3: Kathy Philson
December 10: Ruth Robbins
December 17: Sally Child
December 24: Darendia Lease
December 31: TBA

SEXTONS

December 3: Bill Cadwell
December 10: Tim Lease
December 17: Glenn Child
December 24: Bill Andrews
December 31: Jean Miewald

SOUNDBOARD

December 3: Peter Morgan
December 10: Bill Andrews
December 17: Glenn Child
December 24: Rob Mackey
December 31: Nathan Ivey



NEW THIS YEAR! You have the option to order Christmas poinsettias OR you may make a donation to SHIM to be given in honor or in memory of loved ones. Poinsettia plants are \$8.00 each. Please deliver this order form with payment to the Church Office or drop it in the Offering tray.

Sale Dates: November 26, December 3 and December 10

Deadline for orders is Monday, December 11.

Name: _____ Phone: (_____) _____ - _____

of Poinsettias _____ Donation to SHIM _____ 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.

ANGELS AT BHCC IN ADVENT



Among the traditions that bind us together at BHCC are the Angel Trees. For many years, members have shared their blessings with brothers and sisters beyond our congregation whose ma-

terial needs are greater than ours. This year is no exception. As you travel from the sanctuary to Fellowship Hall, you will see three "trees" on your left, one of which is not your traditional Christmas tree. We will be **collecting warm coats for SHIM's Winter Coat Drive**. Coats of all sizes, girls and boys, women and men, will be most welcome. They can be hung on the center coat "tree" or carefully laid under it. In addition to SHIM, we are **collecting items for Homeless Veterans** in the Pittsburgh area and **for Family Promise families**.

The Mission and Outreach Committee is deeply appreciative of the way in which the Angel Trees project has been an integral part of the way BHCC members celebrate the Advent season. We are confident this year will continue that blessed tradition.

SPECIAL THANK YOU FROM SHIM

On behalf of South Hills Interfaith Movement (SHIM), I am writing to thank you and the congregation at Bower Hill Community Church for all your dedicated and thoughtful efforts to support SHIM—you should be proud of making a vital impact right here in your own community.

As a result of your effort to feed the "least of these," SHIM is able to provide produce to our South Hills neighbors. Thank you for going this "extra step" in being a great neighbor!

*Jim Guffey
Executive Director*

PRESBYTERIAN DISASTER ASSISTANCE THANK YOU

Thank you for making Presbyterian Disaster Assistance a priority out of many opportunities to give and serve. Your gift is deeply needed and greatly appreciated. I am privileged to speak this word of gratitude on behalf of those for whom your generosity brings renewed hope and joy in the wake of disaster and its aftermath.

It is a privilege to serve together in a Church that makes such giving reliable, and provides constant faithful partnership to brothers and sisters across the world and here at home shadowed by the challenges and changes brought by disaster and war.

The Rev. Dr. Laurie Kraus, Director, PDA

GREAT COFFEE, TEA, AND COCOA FOR A GREAT CAUSE



For over a decade, Bower Hill Community Church has served Fair Trade coffee and tea during Fellowship Time and other church events. Congregation members are also able to purchase coffee, tea, and cocoa. Our coffee, teas, and cocoa are all from Equal Exchange worker cooperatives. Through Equal Exchange, small-scale farmers not only receive a significantly larger share of the profits, but also have a say in how their organization is run. Communities decide whether their share of the profits will help build a school, a community health center or another community need. 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. Teas are \$4.00 for a box of 20 tea bags, and 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.

Due to the Christmas holiday, the article submission deadline for the January Newsletter is December 13.

All weekly bulletin submissions are due on Tuesdays.



At Christmas Time

HOSTED BY MT. LEBANON

Kids Night Out — Parents Night Off

HIGH SCHOOL GIRL SCOUTS AT BOWER HILL COMMUNITY CHURCH

Enjoy time for Christmas shopping, a date night or just relax during this busy season. Parents are welcome to pack a lunch or dinner for their child and drop the kids off with some enthusiastic teenage Girl Scouts and adult leaders. We will have a nurse attend most nights. Kids enjoy games, crafts, a snack, songs and fun!

Dates and Location: First three Saturdays in December in Fellowship Hall

December 2 — 1:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m.

December 9 — 4:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.

December 16 — 12:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m.

Children who are potty-trained through age 12 are invited!

Cost: \$20/first child and \$15/additional children for 4 hours of babysitting.

Please register using this online form. Space is limited. Reservations required.

Sign up at: <https://goo.gl/forms/LdUSIWe3Pr2xB6042>

Questions? Kristen Westbrook, Troop Leader (412) 818-8333 or wstbk@gmail.com

Girl Scout Troop 50287 is working toward a community service project in tropical Costa Rica this spring to protect endangered sea turtles.

BOWER HILL COMMUNITY CHURCH

Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)

70 Moffett Street
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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

Joan and Bob Bridges

Jean Grabow

Davis Gray

Nina Helbling

Pat Jacobs

Lauren Kocher

Betty Mancini

LuAnne Pattison (former member)

Ginny Starr

Eleanora Freas, 1300 Bower Hill Road, #1431, Pittsburgh, PA 15243

Ethel LaBarbera, 50 Vanadium Road, #130, Bridgeville, PA 15017

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.