

~ **Pathways in Lent** ~

*“ God has put a sense of the past and the future into their minds,
yet they cannot find out what God has done from the beginning to the end-
ing.”*

~ Ecclesiastes 3:11

Dear Members and Friends,

Have you ever walked a prayer labyrinth? It's not the same thing as a maze. A maze has dead ends and false trails. In a maze, your goal is to get out the other side, and you usually have to retrace your steps a few times to get there. In a labyrinth, you come out the way you went in. It's impossible to get lost because the whole thing is just a single coiled pathway leading to the center. Prayer labyrinths started appearing on the floors of European churches in the Middle Ages. The most famous one was laid out in flagstone in the cathedral at Chartres, France, in the 1200s. You're supposed to walk a prayer labyrinth slowly, letting its turns and contours empty your mind. It's a rhythmic practice, lulling, and strangely hypnotic.

It seemed like a good idea to make a prayer labyrinth to use with my confirmation class. I thought it would be easy to create one on the floor of the chapel. And so, I chose from among the many possible designs, printed a picture off the Internet, did my measurements, and started laying out the labyrinth in blue masking tape. If I hadn't been bald when I began the task, I'd have pulled out all my hair by the end of it. Something was amiss. My "coiled pathway" looked more like a plate of tangled spaghetti noodles. I followed the design as best I could, but the end result was nothing like the thing in the photo. Oh, it was a labyrinth...of sorts. Fit for a Minotaur. The single path did eventually reach the middle, but unlike the best labyrinths, its twists and turns weren't elegant. They didn't take you to unexpected places; they held no subtle surprises. And yet, I have to say that my defective labyrinth still does what it's supposed to do. It empties the mind. It strips away distractions.

I'm glad I spent two hours in the chapel, creating a labyrinth. The end result wasn't the thing I'd planned, but it was still worth the time. That's the way it is in this journey of faith that all of us are on. The path isn't always what we expect. It's not always a thing of symmetry and beauty. But if we apply ourselves to "the path," "the way," then it ends up doing what we ask of it. As Lent folds in around us once again, I would encourage you to choose a path. That's to say, find a meaningful "spiritual practice" that you can repeat each day in Lent. Sit in silence for twenty minutes every morning. Memorize a prayer or a poem that speaks to your soul, and recite it regularly. Abstain from all gadgets and electronic devices between 5:00 and 10:00 p.m. Read a Psalm both morning and night. Maybe even create a labyrinth in your basement and walk it daily. The variety of paths is nearly limitless, and whichever one you choose, it will end up doing things for you that you didn't expect. I'm glad to be making this journey beside you.

In Christ's Peace,
~Brian

THANK YOU! Back in November, I put out an urgent appeal. The church lost a profitable tenant, and we faced a significant gap in the 2018 budget. In response to that need, member pledging has increased by 14%! Thank you for your generosity and your faithfulness to the ministries of Bower Hill Church!

ASH WEDNESDAY is February 14, with a communion service in the sanctuary at 7:30 p.m.

LENTEN COMPLINE SERVICES (1946 Book of Common Worship) take place each Wednesday in Lent at 7:30 p.m. in the chapel. Come see the labyrinth! Each service includes an interview with a member of the congregation, singing together the hymns that he or she chooses.

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



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.



WESTERN PA DIAPER BANK (collection resumes)

The Mission and Outreach Committee is pleased to announce the resumption of the collection of disposable baby and adult diapers for the Western PA Diaper Bank. Starting March 18, we will begin quarterly collections on the third Sunday to include March, June, September, and December.

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.

Monetary donations are accepted by making your check payable to Western PA Diaper Bank and mailing it to **2546 Centre Ave., Pittsburgh, PA 15219**. Please note our church name on the Memo line of your check. Your donation is appreciated!

As always, please save coupons for disposable diapers that you collect but don't use, and place them in the envelope near the Pack'N Play.

Thanks to everyone who sent checks and donated coupons during the hiatus.

SPAGHETTI DINNER FUNDRAISER

Boy Scout Troop 28 is holding a spaghetti dinner in **Fellowship Hall on Saturday, March 17, from 4:00 p.m. until 7:00 p.m.** Tickets are \$8.00 for adults and \$4.00 for children under 12, and they will be sold before and after BHCC worship services on March 4 and March 11. They will also be available to purchase at the door on the day of the dinner. All are welcome!

FROM THE CHURCH OFFICE

The office will be closed on Monday, February 19, in observance of Presidents' Day.

SENIOR MEN'S GROUP

The senior men's breakfast group will meet again on **Wednesday, February 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!



COFFEE, CAKE & CONVERSATION

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

UNITED FOOD PANTRY COLLECTION

Our next collection date will be **Sunday, February 11**. The pantry's needs are primarily for boxed cereal (especially Cheerios, which is the only cereal some clients are able to eat), canned soups, and vegetable-only or fruit-only baby food. In addition, for Easter dinner for pantry clients, all-in-one packaged dessert mixes (i.e. that do not require separate icing) and specialty potato mixes (such as mashed potatoes, scalloped potatoes, etc.) are needed.

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.

BOOKWORMS



BHCC's ladies' book discussion group 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.

FEBRUARY 27

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

MARCH 27

Personal History, by Katherine Graham

APRIL 24

Gentleman in Moscow, by Amor Towles



ADULT EDUCATION
Linda James, Committee Chair

There are two options available for Adult Education. The schedule for the ongoing class in room 208 is listed below:

February 4 — DVD Presentation (*Painting the Stars - Session 5 - Evolutionary Christianity*) will be led by Linda James in a discussion of the impact of science on our faith and how they connect.

February 11 — For this class, Peter Smith will lead a discussion on the lectionary verses of the week.

February 18 — For this class, Brian Snyder will lead a discussion with the participants of the Confirmation Class

February 25 — We will not have regular Adult Education, because Mission and Outreach will coordinate an intergenerational activity to provide welcome packages for refugees in cooperation with AJAPO (Acculturation for Justice, Access, and Peace Outreach).

Progressive Theology (room 204)

This class is intended for those members who have not attended Adult Education in the past. This discussion-based class will help you think faithfully about things that seem to make some Christians so angry—like homosexuality, and evolution, other faiths, and the “end times” craze. It is taught by Michelle Snyder and Tracy Riggle-Young, and it utilizes a DVD course, *Living the Question*.



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

It's hard to believe that Lent is upon us! Cherub Choir rehearsals will run from 10:45-11:15 a.m. in the choir room on February 18, 25 and March 4, 11. We will rehearse in the sanctuary from 10:45-11:00 a.m. on March 18, and sing during morning worship on Palm Sunday, March 25.

We have enough children who have gone through Cherub Choir to have a Chorister Choir for grades 3-5! Our young friends are sad when they age out of Cherubs, so let's give them something meaningful to look forward to! Rehearsals will be held in room 103 at the same time as Cherubs.
Hooray!

Musically Yours,
Anne



FEBRUARY WORSHIP PLANS

February 4—Fifth Sunday after Epiphany
Communion

Mark 1:29-39; Isaiah 40:21-31

**February 11—Transfiguration
Scout Sunday**

II Kings 2:1-12; Mark 9:2-9

February 14—Ash Wednesday — 7:30 p.m.
Communion

February 18—First Sunday in Lent
Genesis 9:8-17; Mark 1:9-15

February 21—Lenten Compline — 7:30 p.m.
Chapel

February 25—Second Sunday in Lent
Genesis 17:1-7, 15-16; Mark 8:31-38

February 28—Lenten Compline — 7:30 p.m.
Chapel

CONGREGATION MEETING NOTICE

By official call of the Session, the first 2018 regular meeting of the congregation of Bower Hill Community Church (Presbyterian U.S.A.) will be held on **February 25** in the sanctuary immediately following the worship service.



The agenda for the meeting includes review of the 2017 year-end financial statements and presentation of the 2018 operating budget as adopted by Session. The Nominating Committee will present a slate of two candidates for unexpired terms in the Session Class of 2019. Church members may be nominated from the floor for these positions, but such nominations must have the consent of those being nominated prior to the meeting.

Bill Cadwell, Clerk of Session



NEWS FROM THE DIRECTOR OF CHRISTIAN EDUCATION AND YOUTH PROGRAMS

Amy Grella — am@bhccml.com

NEW MULTI-GENERATIONAL MISSION OPPORTUNITIES

The Youth Committee, in conjunction with Mission and Outreach, is excited to announce two **NEW, multi-generational mission opportunities** for all kids, youth and families!

- **Saturday, February 17 – One Day Mission Trip at The Pittsburgh Project**

The deadline to register for this one-day mission trip is Sunday, February 4. All youth (grades 6 and up) and adults are invited to participate. We will start the day early to gather with other service-minded groups for work assignments and instructions. Then we launch out on a full day of home repairs in one of Pittsburgh's many neighborhoods. We will end the day's work back at The Pittsburgh Project for refreshments and a time of worship and debriefing. We will wrap up before dinner. Their staff provides lunch, tools and materials. The costs for this event will be covered by the church's Youth Work Trip and M&O funds, so this opportunity is free to all who wish to participate! A signup sheet is on the bulletin board by the Friendship Room, or contact Amy (am@bhccml.com) to sign up.

- **Refugee Resettlement Bags**

In February, we will be working with AJAPO, a refugee resettlement agency, to create welcome bags for refugee families – our goal is to create 30 bags. Each bag contains some basic necessities for a family, and there are MANY ways you can help. Starting in February, you can donate supplies needed for the bags – just pick a tag (or two) from the giving tree and bring in the supplies. During Children's Worship in February, children will be working on making cards to place inside each bag. On **Sunday, February 25** during second hour, we will have an "all-hands on deck" mission party to assemble and fill all of the welcome bags. All members of the congregation are invited to participate, and all second-hour classes will not meet that day so everyone can join in the fun.

SAVE THESE JULY DATES FOR EXCITING SUMMER EVENTS!

- **Youth Work Trip - July 16-20**

A youth work trip at the Pittsburgh Project is set for the week of **July 16-20**. This week-long, overnight mission trip is available for all youth grades 6 and up. This trip is being offered in place of the Mission Possible week at Crestfield.

- **Day Camp / Jr. Day Camp - July 23 – 27**

We are partnering with Crestfield again this summer for our Day Camp/Jr. Day Camp. Please be sure to mark July 23-27 in your family calendars for Day Camp (for completed 1st – 6th graders), or Jr. Day Camp (for completed pre-school – Kindergarten). If you have any questions, please contact Amy at am@bhccml.com or (412) 801-3723.



NEW PPI THERAPIST AT BOWER HILL!



Pittsburgh Pastoral Institute is introducing Brandon Graf, Licensed Professional Counselor, who will be working out of Bower Hill Church, room 202.

Brandon has worked in a variety of settings over a ten-year period including Drug and Alcohol settings, Employee Assistance, and private practice. He works with individuals who are having spiritual and existential crises and also works with couples and families. Born and raised in Pittsburgh, Brandon enjoys traveling and has visited over 30 countries. He's an avid Pittsburgh sports fan who also enjoys exercise, hiking, and reading.

PPI is the area's oldest and largest interfaith counseling and psychotherapy center that integrates behavioural science and the resources of a client's particular religious faith.

To arrange a confidential appointment with Brandon, please call PPI at 412-661-1239.



PONDERING FROM THE PA

There are two words that have the potential to influence all of our relationships: “them” and “us”. When we use the word “them” we seem to identify the persons as somehow different from us. Obviously, this designation can be quite harmless when we are simply trying to distinguish basic differences such as tall verses short, or blonds verses red-heads.

However, all too frequently, we begin to stereotype and adopt sweeping generalizations.

The Bible sets apart different groups by their nationality, their genealogy, or their religious affiliations. Yet Jesus strives to make it very clear that these differences in the eyes of God are meaningless. We are all children of God and cared for equally.

More and more frequently our society seems to use what could be characterized as “careless language” when speaking of groups of people. Whether intended or not, we often cause hurt and needless anxiety. This is especially true when we attach labels to the differences.

As we enter the month of February when we celebrate the special gift of love on Valentine’s Day, may we resolve to do more than send candy or flowers. May we vow to think before we speak and understand that “them” are really “us!”

Rev. Dr. Fred Leasure, Parish Associate



⇒ In order to conserve the Sanctuary’s heat on cold Sunday mornings during the winter months, we are restricting 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.**

⇒ The Committee is discussing plans to encourage church members to recycle on the premises whenever possible. After considering using our current waste hauler to recycle for us, it was determined that the cost is fairly high, and an additional enclosure would have to be built for the container. But we can do our part now and suggest that members who use the kitchen for coffee hour, etc. take home all articles that can be recycled and add them to your own household recycling. This may include plastic serving trays, juice/drink bottles, cardboard (corrugated and other), paper, etc. This way, we can limit what goes into the landfill and be good stewards of the earth. We want BHCC to be as “green” as possible. Thoughts and suggestions for achieving this goal would be appreciated. Many thanks.

WORSHIP VOLUNTEERS



COMMUNION SERVERS—February 4

Bill Cadwell, Nancy Criswell
Dick and Carolyn Westerhoff

USHER CAPTAIN: Sam Kidder

GREETERS

February 4: Robbins Family
February 11: Salvante Family
February 18: Ben and Carolyn Boisvert
Ed Hanke
February 25: Sam Kidder, Margaret Zabo
(Jeff Carper greets weekly.)

ACOLYTES

February 4: Henry and Clara Druckenbrod
February 11: Avery Saba, Michela Robbins
February 18: Kemp and Helen Carter
February 25: Ruby Siefken, Estelle Smith

COFFEE HOUR

February 4: Kocher Family
February 11: Sarah Cannon, Theresa Child
February 18: Andrews Family
February 25: Saba Family

FLOWER DEACONS

February 4: Anne Mitchell
February 11: Nancy Green
February 18: Kathy Philson
February 25: Ruth Robbins

SEXTONS

February 4: Bill Cadwell
February 11: Jean Miewald
February 18: Glenn Child
February 25: Bill Andrews

SOUNDBOARD

February 4: Nathan Ivey
February 11: Peter Morgan
February 18: Bill Andrews
February 25: Glenn Child

AN INTERGENERATIONAL OPPORTUNITY TO WELCOME THE STRANGERS INTO OUR MIDST

February brings an intergenerational opportunity to be part of a mission to welcome refugees to the Pittsburgh area. AJAPO (Acculturation for Justice, Access & Peace Outreach) is a non-profit organization that assists refugees in easing their resettlement and integration into American society for up to five years. Beginning February 4, members will be able to be part of this effort by donating items for welcome packets for AJAPO’s clients. We will bring it all together on **February 25** during Adult Ed and Second Hour when we will assemble the welcome packets, and all ages will have an opportunity to add welcome cards to the packets. As much as we want to provide the actual welcome packets, we also want to show that our congregation welcomes those who are fleeing situations we can’t begin to image and to share the blessings into which we have been born. To learn more about AJAPO, you can visit <http://www.ajapopittsburgh.org>.

Items we would like to have in our welcome packets:

2 Toothbrushes	Fleece Blanket	Deodorant
Toothpaste	1 box Bandages	2 Cotton Washcloths
4-pack Toilet Paper	Bar Soap	Liquid Hand Soap
Towel	Pair of Socks (adult)	Vaseline (1 lg. or 2 small)
Packet of Razors	Pillow	2 Notebooks
Comb	Lip Balm	1 pack of Pens

Do not mistreat or oppress a foreigner, for you were foreigners in Egypt. (Exodus 22:21)



**OH, THE WEATHER OUTSIDE HAS BEEN FRIGHTFUL
BUT OUR COCOA (AND COFFEE AND TEAS) ARE DELIGHTFUL!**



As winter finally sets in with a vengeance, 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, and rooibos teas) 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.

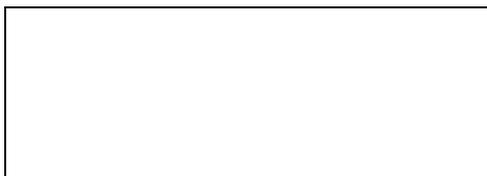
BOWER HILL COMMUNITY CHURCH

Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)

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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

Davis Gray

Lauren Kocher

Betty Mancini

LuAnne Pattison (former member)

Ginny Starr

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.