

# Bower Hill Community Church Presbyterian Church (USA)

*A place to Believe, Belong and Become!*

**JANUARY 2007**

## *The Way Forward*

As we rest in the glow of a very eventful and meaningful Advent and celebration of Christmas, 2007 looms with all of its promises and pitfalls. And in this first article for 2007, I want to clearly describe something our future at Bower Hill Community Church must include. We must increase our ability to invite our acquaintances, friends and neighbors to events at Bower Hill. It was just a few short weeks ago that we had our first event where we asked and expected you to invite people to an event at the church. Most would say it was not a success. I completely disagree. I was very proud that all of you were willing to try it. We Presbyterians have almost no history of individual members of congregations understanding that they have a role to play in bringing people into the church. It is not easy to change history. But we're making baby steps.

However, the inviting is just a part of the process. The Session and Pastors spend most of their time and energy creating the meaningful events or programs that make it possible to offer things to our acquaintances, friends and neighbors. For example, on the 24<sup>th</sup> and 25<sup>th</sup> of December, we provided three worship services: one very sweet, another that encouraged participation and another that held up the majesty of God followed by an opportunity to cook and serve two meals for people without a place to prepare their own. The four events were meaningful in their own way and each of them were wonderful opportunities to invite someone new to participate in the life and ministry of Bower Hill.

I hope I have reminded you of the partnership that must exist among you the congregation, the Session and Pastors. I know this is not new information. In 2007, your Session and Pastors will provide wonderful experiences for you and we hope, for some of our acquaintances, friends and neighbors. That is our continuing promise to you and of course the continuing pitfall would

be not to share the good that we do with our acquaintances, friends and neighbors.

### **Pastor's Message**

*for the*  
**NEW YEAR**



In His Grace,  
Leonard

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# Christmas Project

## Washington City Mission Project Christmas Project—Laurie and Leonard

Questions, questions, questions! There have been so many questions asked about the project at the Washington City Mission that there seems to be a clear interest in learning more about our Christmas Project and how it came about. When plans were being laid for the Youth Mission Trip which focused on local agencies that were doing things about hunger, Tom Hayes had a connection at the Washington City Mission and he introduced us to their work by scheduling a day at the mission. Each time we have been involved with the mission, the people have been friendly and easy to work with. They are always so grateful for the help which has made every experience positive. When we were making arrangements for our Christmas Day Project, the staff kept commenting on our generosity and continually thanked us for blessing them.

On Monday afternoon, we arrived at the mission and were greeted by a crew of 5 folks who were scheduled to work in the kitchen that day. They quickly unloaded the car and proceeded to provide whatever we needed to make the preparations easy. We have never experienced a more gracious group of people as they were willing to step back and let us do what we wanted, while being ever ready to jump in with just what we needed. They provided instructions on appliances, hefted heavy pots and cleaned up an enormous amount of spilled hash browns. For dinner, the mission provided the meat from the wealth of donated hams they received, while we made 15 batches of cheesy hash browns and pounds and pounds of green beans. John Zoll and Jean Miewald baked 20 loaves of homemade bread for the project and there were about 30 pies that were donated by the congregation, which were the big hit of the event! Since fresh fruit is always scarce and very much appreciated, we also brought some very large apples and oranges that were very well received. While some of our crew prepared the food, others decorated the room with tablecloths, personalized placemats, paper chains, Poinsettias, homemade Christmas Trees and Popsicle Stick Stars. Since we had such a large crew, we were able to serve as waiters and waitresses and bring our guests their food and drinks, which is something that they don't experience very often. After dinner the gift bags were handed out and stuffed animals were distributed to the kids who were there. A few extra bags and animals were left for those who were able to visit family or loved ones for the holiday.

Words cannot express our gratitude to all who participated in the Washington City Mission Christmas Project. This was truly a wonderful congregational mission project. The planning team was so overwhelmed by the many people who baked, donated, or purchased cookies from the Cookie Sale to support the project. The generous financial contributions as well as the cookie sale helped to make the event possible. Of course, we could not have pulled it off without the many, many volunteers! From those who helped plan the menu, prepare the food, make the decorations, assemble and decorate the gift bags, to the 22 people who signed up to bring pies, and those who didn't sign up but donated anyway, it was amazing to see how this project came together. There were 30 folks who were able to give a part of their Christmas Day to the project including 2 who delivered stuff, 1 who helped set up, 27 who prepared, decorated, served and cleaned up. Of that 27, there were 5 children under 10 and 2 youth, 3 relatives of congregation members, and 5 friends of congregation members. The mission was extremely grateful for the generosity of this congregation. The meal was well received, the pies were a special treat and residents especially appreciated the ability to choose their favorite. The decorations made the room look much more festive and it was a special treat that we had enough people there to serve the dinner guests. It was one surprise after another and there were many exclamations of delight over the treats in the gift bags as well as big smiles from the kids who were there. Thank you especially to those who inspired this event.

For those who are interested, there is always a need for help at the mission. Volunteers are routinely needed in the office helping with mailings, in the dining room helping with meals and in the thrift store warehouse sorting donated items. If you are interested in helping, check out [www.citymission.org](http://www.citymission.org) or call the mission at 724-222-8530.



# Church News



## All Hands on Deck

On February 8th, we are hosting a meeting of the Pittsburgh Presbytery. This is a wonderful opportunity for us to welcome our brothers and Sisters in Christ to our building and to do things in such a way to make the meeting flow smoothly.

It will require a fair amount of preparation before the meeting and work during the meeting. There will be various ways for you to volunteer some of your time, talent and treasure. For example, we will need a crew in the parking lot to guide people to parking spots and another crew in the kitchen to provide a running snack bar of finger food.

As it turns out, this will be Dave Green's first meeting as Moderator, so that is just a very sweet coincidence and another reason why we want to do a very nice job at this.

If every member of the church gives a couple of hours to this either on February 8<sup>th</sup> or at home preparing something for the snack bar, no one of us will be overburdened. Please contribute to this.

Faithfully, Leonard

## 2007 Stewardship Campaign—Kurt Kerner

When we announced this year's campaign in early October, we set a goal of \$330,000; somewhat with our fingers crossed, as we have had six straight years of declining pledge revenues, and the target represented a nearly 4% increase over last year's \$318,000.

With the campaign essentially over, we are really pleased to announce the total pledges received were **\$334, 281!!** Not only that, but the number of pledges increased from 226 to 228. That is a substantial number as we had several members who felt they could not pledge but would contribute.

Our thanks to all of you who pledged, as well as to those who indicated they could not this year but would contribute as they were able. While that doesn't give us quite the same ability to plan our budget, your contributions are equally important.

**Again, thanks and congratulations!**



## Flea Market Thank You's—Theresa Child

Because of everyone who donated items and helped with the sale, this year's Flea Market was a great event. To get ready for the sale heavy lifters helped Jim bring boxes full of donated items already marked with prices down from the loft while many others emptied the boxes, making sure each item made it to their designated area. On the day of the sale with a line that stretched the length of Fellowship Hall, many cashiers collected money and helped customers wrap and pack their precious finds. Other helpers spent the day straightening tables and putting items that got moved back where they belonged as well as making customers feel welcome. Luckily, no clean up crew was needed because anything left after the bag sale held during the final hour (buy a bag for \$3 and stuff as much as you can into it) was donated to the Washington City Mission and would be picked up later in the week.

Thanks to everyone's hard work, the final tally added up to just over \$2000.

The money will be used to fix Fellowship Hall's roof and gutters.



# Church News

## Greeters & Coffee Hour Hosts

### Greeters:

Jan 7th—Dr. Richard Rothrock, Jason & Kiri Rising

Jan 14th—Dr. Ed & Bette Ruh, Dr. Ivan & Kohar Shnorhokian, Lou & Wendy Mazzini

Jan 21st—Richard & Lori Schofield, Carol Swed, Ginny Starr

Jan 28th—George & Joann Vosburgh, Cindy Waller, Bob & Betty Winnett

### Coffee Hour:

There are sign up sheets in the Narthex. Please be sure to select a date! Thank you!



## Communion Servers for February

The following people are scheduled to serve communion on Sunday, February 4th. If you are not able to serve communion, please arrange for a substitute.

Alan & Betsy Hohlfelder

Chan Ketchum

Graham & Carol Knox

Jane Kohman

Chuck & Mary Laufer

Choir: Gordon Mitchell and Phyllis Yohe



## Bookworms



January's book is *Valley of Decision*, by Marcia Davenport, at the home of Diane Leeson. February's book is *The Innocent Man*, by John Grisham, at the home of Lee Ferrero. Stay tuned for more updates in the next newsletter.

## A Note of Thanks:

On October 14th, Bower Hill Community Church hosted a Hunger Action Event to help raise awareness about hunger both in our area and around the world. We invited several organizations to send representatives to help us with our event and we were delighted when speakers from World Vision, Heifer International, Bread for the World, the Pittsburgh Community Food Bank and the Washington City Mission, joined our event. An offering was collected after Donald Messer's Keynote and the money from the offering was recently distributed to the 5 organizations that participated in our event along with a personal thank you note. Below is a copy of the thank you note we received from Roger Nicholson who came as a representative from Heifer International.

Dear Laurie,

What a joy to get your note yesterday enclosing the generous check from Bower Hill Community Church for Heifer International. Please convey to your faith community Heifer's heartfelt thanks for this meaningful contribution...Your congregation's effort to raise the consciousness of people about world hunger and poverty is most commendable. In a world where there seems to be so much destructive energy, it's good to know about constructive efforts. Heifer makes a long-term difference. Thank you again, and if I can help in the future please call on me.

Sincerely,

Roger S. Nicholson



# Mission News

## Mission Action Team #2 Report—Betsy Hohlfelder

**How can we attract the busy and over-committed typical persons of our community to Bower Hill Community Church?**

Seeking to answer this question will be the work of our Mission Action Team (MAT #2) over the next several months. Our team met with Dr. Jim Mead of the Pittsburgh Presbytery on November 27<sup>th</sup> for training on the process that we are encouraged to follow. We came away feeling both challenged and excited to begin. Our first meeting was held on Sunday, December 10<sup>th</sup>. We will meet again on January 7<sup>th</sup>. We are committed to trying to keep the congregation up-to-date on our progress. We encourage your ideas and your prayers as we seek to understand how God is leading Bower Hill Community Church to answer this important question. We also ask for your patience. Our MAT work is part of a process that typically takes 8-12 months. There are no easy answers to the question that we have been given. But we seek to be faithful and open to where God will lead us, and look forward to the transformation that will result.



Please feel free to contact any member of our MAT team with your questions or input: Mary Good, Betsy Hohlfelder, Rick Jacobs, Tim Lease, Jean Miewald and Lori Schofield.

## Mission Briefs—Dave Hicks

The following is a note from Joan McNulty regarding the Walk for Autism Research: "Our church had a team at the Walk for Autism Research recently and the Bower Hill Church members donated \$828 to Autism Speaks. Of the many, many teams contributing, Bower Hill was the only church."



Thanks to all who took angels for Lydia's Place and our soldiers in Iraq. Once again, the members of Bower Hill Church went above and beyond the call. Diane Leeson, who is in charge, had to make additional angels. Next year, we will have to get a bigger tree. Thanks Diane, for all your hard work!

At the December meeting of your Mission Committee, we approved sending \$1,200 to The Neighborhood Academy to be used for scholarships for their students. This is a 8th - 12th grade private school for low income students, located in the Garfield area of Pittsburgh, and is a great mission opportunity for our church. It has been approved by the Presbytery as a mission agency. We have met with the folks there and are very impressed. We are exploring more ways to work with them, so watch and listen for more about this very worthwhile organization and how we can partner with them in the future. We know that they are always looking for tutors in their math lab, so if you are interested, let me know. Thanks for making a difference!

## Food Pantry Goal for January



The Food Pantry appreciates your donations of canned beans and canned fruit for the month of January. Thanks to all who participated last month! In October, 26 bags of food were collected and in November, we collected 18 bags. This month's donations will be collected on Sunday, January 14th and our goal is to collect 30 bags of food! We hope you will join our efforts! Please contact Jason Rising at 412-851-1503, jaydr@adelphia.net, for more information.

# Education News

## Youth News for January—Brian Hayes

The New Year has finally caught up to us! Perhaps many of you are thankful that the holiday hassle has been traversed. This Christmas, I discovered a heavy sentiment of gratitude for the youth of our community. As the lights and the glow begin to fade away in our rearview mirrors, let us take a moment to appreciate the youth of our church for their altruistic efforts during the blur of Christmas.

The Middies can sing. The energy of the Middle School group was harnessed to go caroling the week before Christmas. The kids also constructed small gifts to offer as we visited members of the BHCC congregation. This experience provides as a wonderful example to recognize the ubiquitous grace that God pours into our lives. One cannot help but feel humble when considering that the Middies had no motivation for reward. If any of the kids had a conscious thought about why they were caroling, the instantaneous answer would be: "Because its fun." As we observe how our kids perform actions without seeking reward, I pray that the enlightening lesson of humility may resonate in our *grown-up* souls.

The Middies were not the only example of self-sacrifice this holiday season. The High School Group assembled the luminaria for our Christmas Eve service. Please do not forget that the lovely celestial glow we all enjoyed on Christmas Eve was a direct result of the efforts provided by our high school kids. They truly had no incentive to offer time and energy during those hectic days right before Christmas. I hope we can all display our gratitude by supporting our upcoming fundraising events.

Speaking of fundraising, I thank everyone who supported the kids in their bake sale efforts. The profit yielded was one hundred seventy dollars toward the work trip. The mission trip this summer will be in San Diego with a group called Youthworks. The kids will be raising money through events such as Hoagie Sales as well sales of items through the Equal Exchange co-op. I am available through email ([br@bhccml.com](mailto:br@bhccml.com)), or I can be reached at the church offices if anyone is interested in individually supporting the youth mission trip.

Supporting the youth in our community is a necessary component to achieving an evolved society. I confess that I am often too distracted by the daily grind to take a step back and look at the big picture. Peering through the smoke and mirrors reveals a world that is craving for improvement. The Holy Trinity is one collective entity just as the past, present, and future is a symbiotic relationship. We may contain many demographics in our congregation, but we are all on the same train. Our youth represent our future as well as an integral component to our culture and our humanity. Bob Marley once wrote:

*"Hear the children cryin',  
but I know they cry not in vain.  
Now the times are changin';  
love has come to bloom again."*



## Adult Education For January

Jan 7th & 14th —Jay Lewis, Stated Clerk of Pittsburgh Presbytery, will discuss the decisions of last summer's General Assembly, and in particular, the final report of the Theological Task Force on Peace, Unity and Purity of the Church. This report addresses many of the controversial issues which have engaged the Presbyterian Church in recent years and should be of interest to all members.

Jan 21st—John Burgess of Pittsburgh Theological Seminary will discuss his recent trip to Russia with emphasis on the state of Christianity in that country.

Jan 28th—Anna Thorpe, an active member of the Pittsburgh Darfur Emergency Coalition, will speak about the crisis in Darfur, Sudan. The discussion will continue on February 4th.



# Care List

## **MEMBERS AT HOME:**

Lois Conley, 1150 Bower Hill Rd, 1116A, Pittsburgh, PA 15243  
Matt Dunfee, 966 Worthington Woods Blvd, Worthington, OH, 43085  
Kenn Fetterman, 2236 Kingridge Rd, Pittsburgh, PA 15237  
Barbara Love, 360 Jefferson Dr, Pittsburgh, PA 15228  
Jim Redmond, 101 Manor View Rd, Pittsburgh, PA 15220  
Verna Rose, c/o Gretchen Rose, 134 Grove Avenue, Woodridge, NJ 07095  
Loretta Schweinbratten, 2960 Bethel Church Rd, Pittsburgh, PA 15102  
Morris Standfest, 921 Old Hickory Rd, Pittsburgh, PA 15243

## **MEMBERS IN CARING FACILITIES:**

Bette Carson, Masonic Home, One Masonic Dr, Elizabethtown, PA 17022  
Peggy Craig, 714 Bower Hill Road, Pittsburgh, PA 15243  
Catheryn Deemer, Broadmore Assisted Living #205, 3275 Washington Pike, Bridgeville, PA 15017  
Harry Dunfee, Covenant of South Hills, 1300 Bower Hill Road, Pittsburgh, PA 15243  
Ruth Fenton, Asbury Place, 760 Bower Hill Rd., Pittsburgh, PA 15243  
Bob Gavett, Asbury Heights, 700 Bower Hill Rd., #6443, Pittsburgh, PA 15243  
Marcia Maley, Marian Manor, 2695 Winchester Drive, #216C, Pittsburgh, PA 15220  
Pat Metheny, Asbury Place, 760 Bower Hill Rd., Pittsburgh, PA 15243  
Bill Nuernberg, Friendship Village #123W, 1290 Boyce Rd, Upper St. Clair, 15241  
Harry Retzer, 493 Castle Shannon Boulevard, #520, Pittsburgh, PA 15234  
Tooie Sharkey, Asbury Place, 760 Bower Hill Rd, Pittsburgh, PA 15243



# Elders & Deacons

**Administration & Personnel:** Chairperson, Woody Hughes; Pat Jacobs

**Buildings & Grounds:** Chairperson, Matt Maniet; Phil Johnson

**Christian Education:** Chairperson, Pam Maniet; Debby Hayes; **Adult Education Subcommittee:** Nina Helbling, Dan Zabo

**Community Building:** Chairperson, TBA

**Evangelism & Membership:** Chairperson, Glenn Child; Jean Miewald

**Finance & Stewardship:** Chairperson, Kurt Kerner; Dick Junker

**Mission:** Chairperson, Dave Hicks; Diane Leeson; Lou Mazzini

**Nominating & Presbytery:** Chairperson, Curt Philson; Bill Cadwell

**Music & Worship:** Chairperson, Anne Mitchell; Margie Sewall

**Youth Ministries:** Chairperson, Christine Henney; Jason Rising

### **Deacons Class of 2007**

Bob Bridges

Nancy Green (Sanctuary Flowers)

Theresa Child (Sanctuary Flowers)

Dave Stewart

Cindy Waller (Special Flowers)

### **Deacons Class of 2008**

Marian Brannan (Feed My Sheep)

Betty Chidlow

Barbara Hughes (Ministry at time of death)

Kathy Philson (Moderator)

Carolyn Westerhoff

### **Deacons Class of 2009**

Ben Hohlfelder (Special Flowers)

Mary Good (Secretary)

Margaret Zabo (Welcome Baby)

Elaine Dalmaso

Phyllis Yohe

## COMEDY CORNER



### OUR CHURCH STAFF

*Tom Flynn, Interim Director of Music Ministries*

to@bhccml.com

*Brian Hayes, Director of Youth Ministries*

br@bhccml.com

*Jim Kline, Custodian*

*Elliot Roth, Contemporary Music Leader*

jabinmusic@yahoo.com

*Dianne Scott, Financial Secretary*

di@bhccml.com

*Rev Laurie Sponaugle, Co-Pastor*

la@bhccml.com

*Rev Leonard Sponaugle, Co-Pastor*

le@bhccml.com

*Yara Toury-Vanzin, Administrative Secretary*

ya@bhccml.com

THE CHURCH OFFICE

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Monday - Friday

8:45 am - 5:15 pm

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\*Please note that the newsletter deadline has changed to the 15th of every month. This is a permanent change. Thank you.

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