

BOWER HILL NEWS

DECEMBER 2007

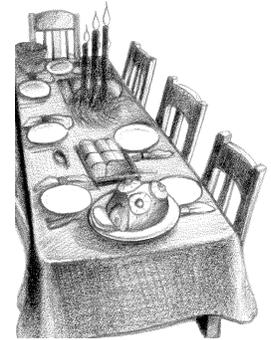
HOME TO THE TABLE BY REV. LAURIE

Do you remember the dinner bell? My family used to have one mounted outside the front door that they would ring when it was time to come home for dinner. You could hear the sound throughout the entire neighborhood and even though my sister and I would sometimes drag our feet getting home because we didn't want to leave our friends, there was always a sense of joy at the sound of the bell. The bell meant that it was family time because everyone was home and it was time to gather at the table to share the news of your day. The bell meant that a warm meal was waiting to fill you up and help you grow. The bell meant that it was time once again to gather around a table to be surrounded by those who loved you. Because of my dinner bell, one of my favorite songs is by John McCutcheon and it is called, "Calling All the Children Home." It tells about coming home to the table:

*Where everybody's got enough, though we ain't got a lot.
Where no one is forgotten and no one is alone,
when she's calling all the children home.*

So many of my memories as a child are of coming home to the table, maybe that's why I am always moved by the sight of the communion table when I walk into the sanctuary. A table is a symbol of home, a symbol of family, a symbol of community. So much of our time is spent around tables. So many memories are centered around joining together in fellowship with family and friends at a table. Gathering around the table is like coming home. At the table we are family. At the table we are sisters and brothers, loved and accepted, welcomed and cared for. At the table we envision and strengthen our family as we live out our calling to be in communion with one another.

During the time between Advent and Epiphany, we will be spending a great deal of time around tables together. We will come together around the table to celebrate communion in worship. Because the celebration of communion is so symbolic of our call to be a community, we will celebrate communion twice in December on the 2nd and 23rd. We will come together around tables in fellowship for a potluck dinner on December 2nd. We will come together around tables as we serve together by preparing gift bags for the Washington City Mission. We will come together around tables for Christmas Dinner with family and friends. We will come together around tables at the Washington City Mission to show these often forgotten folks that they are loved by God and remembered by the family of Bower Hill Community Church. We will come together around tables for an Epiphany worship celebration and feast. This Epiphany feast will take place during worship at 10:00 am and will be held in the Fellowship Hall. We will worship together and share a meal around tables at this family celebration which will include the sharing of the King's cake and the procession of the Magi. As we come home to the table, so many times in the weeks ahead, we will have the opportunity to strengthen our community and to assure one another that no one is forgotten and no one is alone, for we are all loved and accepted and joined together as a family in Christ! May we all envision and work to create a stronger community in the days and weeks ahead as we worship and serve together and as we live out our call to love one another!



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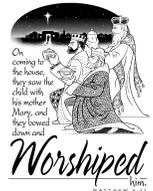
OFFICE OPEN HOUSE



The week before Christmas, the office staff will be hosting a Christmas Open House. We hope you will stop by for hot cider, hot chocolate and some fresh baked holiday cookies. You can join us Monday the 17th through Thursday the 20th from 10am-2:30pm and on Friday the 21st from 10am-12pm.

EPIPHANY FEAST BY REV. LAURIE

Last year, Leonard and I experienced an amazing family worship service and dinner at my sister's church on Epiphany. As Epiphany (January 6) is on a Sunday this year, we discussed the idea of having a similar celebration at Bower Hill. After some discussion, the idea was offered that we transform our regular Sunday morning service on Jan. 6 to an Epiphany Family Celebration. The idea has been embraced and this will be the finale to our Advent Experiment. On January 6th we will come together at 10:00 am for worship and a potluck brunch (so please some food to share) in the fellowship hall. This is a great family experience that you won't want to miss! Keep in mind that on January 13th we will return to our two regular worship services at 9:00 am and 10:30 am!



WASHINGTON CITY MISSION BY JOHN ZOLL



Last Christmas Day my family and I had the opportunity to join with a group of 20 or so other members of BHCC, to help prepare and serve dinner to those who are served by the Washington City Mission, in Washington, PA. We decorated the dining room and provided homemade music while residents and others who are served by the mission enjoyed a meal of ham, hash brown potato casserole, greens beans, fresh baked bread and pies. Everyone who was served a meal was also presented with fresh fruit and a gift bag. On the short trip home our family decided that this was a fitting celebration of the birth of Jesus, and that we would welcome the chance to it again.

If you are ready to roll up your sleeves and do something for someone less fortunate this Christmas, won't you join us this year? It can be as easy as (making a) pie, or as difficult as spending a few hours at the mission preparing and serving Christmas dinner at the Washington City Mission. There are opportunities to do some truly meaningful work each week of Advent. On December 2nd, sign up sheets will be available in the narthex to volunteer for many of the service opportunities. There will also be lists available to help purchase supplies for the gift bags for the Washington City Mission which will be assembled on December 16th.

On December 9th, in conjunction with the Pittsburgh Presbytery, we will have a sweater (and coat) drive in honor of Mr. Rogers to pass on a little warmth to those in need at the Washington City Mission. These gently used sweaters and coats will help keep needy people warm this winter and we will collect them during our time of offering. In addition to the sweater drive, we will also have a cookie sale after Worship on December 9th, to help defray costs for the Washington City Mission Christmas Dinner. If you like to bake, please donate some of your wonderful cookies and make sure you stop by the sale and buy a few dozen of your choosing for \$4.00 per dozen. We hope to make this event even bigger than last year, so start up your oven and let the baking begin!

On December 16th we will be stuffing gift bags for the clients at the mission and making decorations to help make the dining room more festive.

For Christmas dinner, we need pies and plans are underway to do some of the cooking for Christmas dinner before Christmas, so look for more info in the weeks ahead. Also we're looking for volunteers to serve dinner on Christmas day, last year we helped between 2pm and 6pm and some folks came for the whole time while others were just there part of the time. Volunteers can help by serving, cleaning, playing music and visiting with guests! As you can see there are many places to use your gifts and talents and each one will make a real difference to those in need.

Want to help with this year's mission events? Contact me to find out how! John Zoll, Phone 412-235-1710, email thezolls@comcast.net or visit the table in the narthex in the weeks ahead!



ANGEL TREES BY BETSY HOHLFELDER

Once again this Christmas, members of Bower Hill will have the opportunity to share with those less fortunate or in need of encouragement through the tradition of our "Angel Trees." This year there are three options for giving.

Our first tree will feature red, white and blue stars and the gift items specified will be mailed to our troops in Iraq and Afghanistan. We are partnering with Operation Troop Appreciation, a non-profit organization located in Mount Lebanon that collects and sends items to our troops throughout the year. We will do the purchasing and collecting of gifts...they will do the mailing. If you are interested in participating, simply take a star from the tree, purchase the gift idea that is indicated, and return it to the church office or place it under the tree by December 23rd.



Angel
Trees

Our second tree will feature gold angels and is for the benefit of the kids served by Lydia's Place. Did you know that on any given day there are 7000 children in Allegheny County with an incarcerated parent? Lydia's Place seeks to help incarcerated women and their children as they work to rebuild their lives by offering a variety of pre-release and post-release services. Our gifts will be given to these kids at Lydia's annual Holiday Party. To participate, select an angel from the tree, buy the gift indicated, and return it unwrapped to the church office or beneath the tree **by Thursday, December 13th**.

Our final tree will feature the beautiful girls from Hekima Place in Kenya. Many of us were inspired by the visit of Kate Fletcher to Bower Hill this summer. Because of her work and the boarding school she founded in 2005, over 40 girls who had been orphaned by HIV/AIDS are now living in a stable and loving environment and are getting a chance at an education. Donations are needed to help cover the costs of housing and educating these girls. To participate, please select an ornament from the tree. Take it home, hang it on your tree and smile as you think of the gift that you are giving. Then, write a check payable to Bower Hill Community Church for \$30, indicate Hekima Place in the memo, and return it to the church by December 23rd. Your contribution will cover the cost of room and board or the cost of school fees for roughly one month for one of the girls. The Mission and Outreach Committee will match the gifts that are given to Hekima Place this Christmas.

Thank you in advance for your generosity and sharing!

MUSIC NOTES BY JESSICA BAIER

December is such a busy time for the choir! We are preparing wonderful music for the Advent season, as well as music for our Christmas Eve service, which will be the traditional Lessons and Carols. During Advent, we will be having special music at different times throughout the worship services. This will include music from all three of our musical ensembles, as well as different vocal and instrumental soloists from the congregation. Again, Advent and Christmas are excellent times to sing with the Chancel Choir—it is an opportunity to sing with us without having a long-term commitment. **King's Kids Clappers** Wednesdays at 4.30pm



Christmas Music

Handbell Choir Thursdays at 6.30pm **Chancel Choir** Thursdays at 7.45pm

SMALL GROUP FELLOWSHIP STARTING IN JANUARY BY ALAN HOHLFELDER



Beginning in January, the Evangelism, Membership and Community Building Committee of Bower Hill will be organizing small fellowship groups. The groups will be comprised of 6 to 10 people and will focus on fellowship, study and service. Groups will meet in members homes and will be provided with small group study guides to facilitate spiritual growth. At the completion of the study, groups will be encouraged to participate in a service activity of their choosing. Look for sign up tables at the church in mid November and early December. Please join us for a time to grow together as a community of faith, get to know each other and work together to serve those in need. Call Alan Hohlfelder at (412) 341 - 1029 if you are interested or have questions.

MINUTE FOR MAKING A DIFFERENCE BY MARYBETH WAINE



Minute for
Making a Difference

Because there are so many worthwhile causes and so many urgent needs, sometimes needs that are closer to home can be overlooked. Sometimes more familiar causes seem less compelling by comparison, in which case it's easy too, to underestimate the potential value of our contributions. My minute for making a difference is devoted to a cause very close to home, the spiritual growth of our church family's children. The need is for volunteers to assist with Christian education classes for our middle school and high school youth, whose classes each have only a single teacher.

For reasons both simple and complex, the need is real and the need is urgent. One simple reason is that there *inevitably* will come a time when one of these individuals can't make a class. Sure, many of the youth will be glad for the chance to sleep in, but I believe they all will wonder why we haven't made better plans for their religious education, whether it has any value to us, *whether we value them*.

But the urgency of this need is based on more complex reasons concerning the development of faith and spirituality. Consider, please, that the goal of our Christian education program is not just to provide knowledge of what the Bible says, but to provide understanding that the Bible is a tool that helps us all navigate a path to deeper faith.

Our middle school and high school youth are struggling through that period of life when we question all authority, when we realize that adults don't know everything and when "because I said so" is no longer a satisfactory reason. It's a necessary stage of development that teaches us to think for ourselves, make decisions independently and accept responsibility for our choices. But this also is an age when many young people begin to question the validity of the Bible and begin to doubt its value. These questions and doubts can be the beginning of the end; can lead a young person to decide to just go through the motions for a little while longer, just to please his or her parents. Many people survive adolescence with their faith intact; however, many do not. In our town with umpteen houses of worship, *many* families are "un-churched." This statistic underscores the fact that our youth face a real risk.

We're talking about a serious stall in the faith journey that you can help prevent. Here's how. Any one person can offer only his or her understanding of a passage, which a young person may or may not be able to accept. But if another person – hopefully you - shares a different view, whether conflicting or complementary, our children will be able to learn the things they *desperately* need to know: that faith is in fact intensely personal, that questions help us gain understanding and that doubt is a necessary part of the path to deeper faith.

Please consider joining our junior and senior high Christian education teachers, whether for a month of Sundays, one Sunday each month, or any other way that works for you. You don't have to be a scholar, you don't have to plan a lesson, you just have to come. For many of us, it's easier to write a check than to contribute even an hour of our time or face the more daunting prospect of personal involvement. But the youth of Bower Hill are a remarkable group. You can learn from them. And they can learn invaluable lessons from you. If you just show up for an hour, they will learn that you care about them. And if you share your own personal beliefs and opinions, they'll learn that it's okay to disagree and to question and they'll learn that faith can survive doubt. And they'll learn that we are with them on their journey. The need is real. Please consider giving the gift of yourself to the youth of our church.

A NOTE OF THANKS! BY JUDY LUNOE

My name is Judy Lunoe and I was one of the chaperones on the Mission trip to San Diego. I just wanted to thank the congregation for all your generous donations and support to make the Mission trip possible. When I volunteered to be a chaperone I had no idea how moving and life changing the experience would be. It all started on the Sunday morning we were commissioned. The laying of hands on us was one of the most moving moments I have ever felt; I could truly feel God flowing through us and the love I felt was amazing, tears were streaming down my face it moved me so. For that I thank you Leonard and Laurie, Brian and the entire congregation.

A NOTE OF THANKS! (CONTINUED) BY JUDY LUNOE

Our trip began the following Sunday and our work began. I have never counted to twelve so many times, 8 boys 4 girls. It's a big world out there and we had 12 little lambs to watch over. We arrived in San Diego and went straight to our new church home base. The girls and I set up in the sanctuary, our new sleeping room for the next five days. The boys set up camp on the second floor classroom wing. As the rest of the 70-80 kids and adults showed up we all became familiar with our surroundings and met the leaders of the Youthworks program. These three young adults were great, very kind and helpful to us all. Before we knew it we were having dinner and then singing and worshipping together.



Our days usually began @6am with a crew of kids (and chaperones) making breakfast for everyone and getting the lunch buffet ready for all to pack a lunch. Breakfast was followed by group worship then a quiet devotional time. We then would all go to our head start programs for the first part of the day, helping the teachers and children at these sites was awesome. The children were so happy to see us every day and to see our youth interact with these kids was a privilege I will cherish forever.

Our second part of the day (with my group) after our bag lunch (except for our last day when the teachers gave us a little party) was at a place called Special Delivery, a little place next to a diner owned by a woman who one day 18 years ago delivered a meal to a man who had AIDS and could no longer make the trip to the diner to eat his meals. She fed this man because he had no one to care for him in that way. Those meals lead to making and delivering more than 180 meals a day, breakfast and lunches to patients with HIV and AIDS and terminally ill cancer patients. All of these meals were made and delivered by volunteers. It was truly amazing, 100% of the food was donated daily, and all workers, food prep and delivery were volunteers. Again, to see our kids go in there and clean, cook, prepare, organize and work together as a team was seeing God at work.

After our work at Special Delivery, it was our shower time at the gym where some of our other kids were working; we had no showers at our church so the gym was kind enough to let us use their facilities. It was quite a feat to get 70 kids and adults showered in an hour!!!! By now it was time to return to our home base church for a little free time while another group of kids and chaperones would be making dinner for everyone. This was also a time for all of the adults to meet together with one of the Youthworks leaders for reflection, concerns and prayer (and a little chocolate and soda pop too!!). After dinner we would have an activity, a trip to La Jolla Beach to see a beautiful sunset, Coronado beach for a swim, a picnic with the locals and a trip downtown to pass out items to the homeless was quite eye opening experience.

By the time we were finished with our after dinner activity we would go back to our church and have a small snack and start our evening devotions, singing and story telling. I think this was the favorite time of day for many of us because it was a time to step back and take a look at what we were doing and what an impact it was having on the people we were helping and how it was influencing each of us. True life lessons happened on these evenings of awakenings. The last night we were there, was the washing of the feet night. The Youthwork leaders washed the chaperones feet and Brian then washed our youth's feet and prayed with Jason and me and let the kids know how special and unique and loved they were. Let me tell you, it was a beautiful thing. Last but certainly not least was each churches individual time to be together, this was my favorite time. Each of us would talk about our day and then Brian would lead us in prayer, and Brian, I must tell you, you inspire me the way you speak to our hearts and really cherish each and every one of our kids and me too. After our church time the kids had 45 minutes of run around and Frisbee time until lights out at 11:30 which would turn into Midnight when I could be found sound asleep, snoring on my beloved air mattress.

Friday we went to another host church near The Zoo and the University of San Diego. We got settled and some of us went to the navel base and the rest of us went to Coronado beach and just played and had fun. We all ended up at the beach, then we went out for a great Mexican dinner, loads of fun was had by all. Back at the church we were all so tired and sun kissed, the kids put on an improv of our journey" Saturday Night Live" style, we had a blast.

Saturday we went to the San Diego Zoo and we couldn't have asked for a nicer day, it was beautiful. After the zoo we started our journey back to Pittsburgh with lots of laughing, walking and waiting. I would do this again in a minute; I loved every minute of it. I thank you very much for making the mission trip such an adventure and making it possible for us all to have such an awesome memory of how God works in all our lives.

With much gratitude, thanks and love, Judy Lunoe

MINUTE FOR MAKING A DIFFERENCE BY JOAN MCANULTY



In the mid 1980's a group of us from Bower Hill Community Church visited East Liberty Family Health Care Center while on a day long mission trip. The health care center had first opened July 1, 1982 using three rooms in the basement of Eastminster Presbyterian Church. They began with three employees: David Hall, MD, Suanne Craig, RN and Stephen Paschall, Administrator. The center is dedicated to showing God's love, known in Jesus Christ, by providing quality, whole-person health care to all, especially the poor". The Center has been faith-based since its inception, offering prayer with every visit, but never discriminating on the basis of religion.

This past summer the Center celebrated 25 years of giving the best healthcare anyone can get. There are now two primary care physicians' offices in the underserved community of Pittsburgh's East End, East Liberty and Lincoln Lemington. The staff of 70 consists of 14 physicians, a dentist, a pharmacist, nurses, nurse practitioners, medical assistants, a chaplain and an administrative staff. In 2006 there were more than 35,000 encounters of whole person health care. 65 healthy babies were delivered, 100 home care patients cared for, 18,000 prescriptions filled and there were special programs for diabetics and recovering addicts. All this is care open to all without regard to ability to pay: Approximately 1/3 of patients have no insurance, 1/3 have Medicare or Medicaid insurance and 1/3 have commercial insurance Bower Hill Church is one of 60 churches that support the health care center. The amount budgeted and that we are sending this year is \$1000. Since 1996 we have been funding the center from the operating budget. Before that it was individual members contributions sent from the Church. Bower Hill was one of 25 churches of this area that had at least 8 people at the June 8th anniversary celebration. Jim and I personally financially support the center each year. I volunteered a day each week at the center for several years. Jim was on the Board of Directors and the financial committee for many years. We are prayer partners of the center. Each month we receive a calendar that is used in our daily morning prayer time, which has prayers of thanksgiving, prayers for specific needs and individual prayers for each day of the month.

This DVD is available for anyone to view. It was done for the 25th anniversary celebration by long time employees of the center. We urge you to borrow and watch this DVD...you will long remember it. See Jim or me to become a prayer partner, view the DVD or learn more about East Liberty Family Health Care Center.

Micah 6:8 is the scripture the center relates to: "And what does the Lord require of you, but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God". The mission of the center continues to be: "showing God's love, known in Jesus Christ, by providing quality, whole-person health care to all, especially the poor".

ADULT EDUCATION BY NINA HELBLING

The Adult Education Class will meet during December in the church library from 9 - 9:55 am. We urge you to join us for some interesting programs.

Dec. 2: Pat Fenton from Action Housing will give an overview of homelessness in Allegheny County

Dec. 9: Theresa Orlando, Ex. Dir. of Miryam's House will speak about their programs for homeless, mentally ill women and their recent merger with Bethlehem Haven

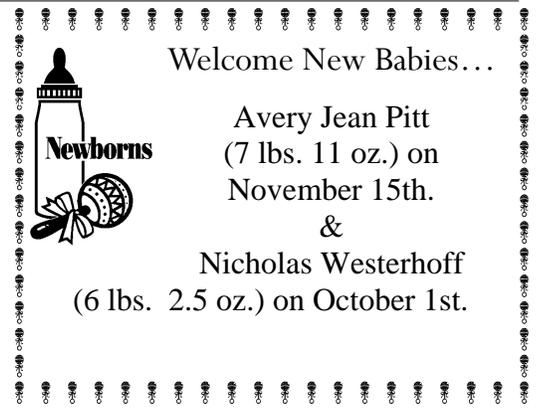
Dec. 16: George Vosburgh will again lead our discussion, focusing on Handel and The Messiah

Dec. 23 and 30: *No class due to the holidays*



CARE LIST

- Margie and Roll Beatty, 1300 Bower Hill Rd. Pittsburgh, PA 15243
 Matt Dunfee, 966 Worthington Woods Blvd, Worthington, OH, 43085
 Kenn Fetterman, 2236 Kingridge Rd, Pittsburgh, PA 15237
 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
 Peggy Craig, 714 Bower Hill Road, Pittsburgh, PA 15243
 Catheryn Deemer, Broadmore Assisted Living #205, 3275 Washington Pike, Bridgeville, PA 15017
 Harry Dunfee, 1648 Sillview Drive, 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
 Harry Retzer, 493 Castle Shannon Boulevard, #520, Pittsburgh, PA 15234
 Tooie Sharkey, Asbury Heights, 700 Bower Hill Rd, #7338, Pittsburgh, PA 15243



NEW MEMBERS

On Sunday December 2nd, join us in welcoming new members, Jen and Mike, McDonough, Christie and Todd Westerhoff, and Heather Wylie. We will also welcome Abigail Wylie into our family of faith through the Sacrament of Baptism.



WORSHIP AND FELLOWSHIP VOLUNTEERS FOR DECEMBER

USHERS

Steve Boisvert, Bob Bridges, Truman Kohman, Jack Pattison and Bob Winnett

COMMUNION SERVERS FOR DECEMBER 2

Bob and Joan Bridges, Dave and Susan Hicks, Barbara and Woody Hughes, Julia Snead, Bob Winnett, Glenna Creaves Karkaria and Joan Zakor

GREETERS

10:00 a.m. Service:

- December 2: Betty Ruh, the Litten family and the Lunoe family
 December 9: Chan Ketchum, the Snead family and LuAnn McNickle
 December 16: The McAnulty family, the Noland family and the Rising family
 December 23: The Olinger family, the Pattison family and Barbara Prunchak
 December 30: The Schofield family, Ginny Starr and the Swed family

LECTORS

10:00 a.m. Service:

- December 2: Kirsten Bruden
 December 9: Jaime Lease
 December 16: Susan Hicks
 December 23: Cynthia Gissin
 December 30: Brian Hayes

COFFEE HOUR

10:00 a.m. Service:

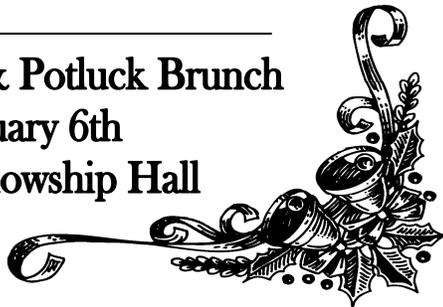
- December 2: Christie and Todd Westerhoff
 December 9: The Green family
 December 16: The Bridges family
 December 23: The Hicks family
 December 30: Open



Sunday Morning Worship
December 2, 9, 16, 23, 30
10:00 am

Christmas Eve Worship
5:30 pm Family Worship
7:30 pm Bower Hill Brass Ensemble
8:00 pm Lessons and Carols Service

Epiphany Worship & Potluck Brunch
Sunday January 6th
10:00 am in Fellowship Hall



OUR CHURCH STAFF

Jessica Baier, Director of Music Ministries

je@bhccml.com

Michael Bergen, Custodian

Brian Hayes, Director of Youth Ministries

br@bhccml.com

Dianne Scott, Financial Secretary

di@bhccml.com

Rev Laurie Sponaugle, Co-Pastor

la@bhccml.com

Rev Leonard Sponaugle, Co-Pastor

le@bhccml.com

Kimberly Shetter, Secretary

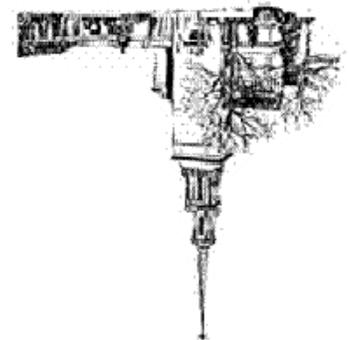
Kim will be leaving us on Dec. 7 to take a full time job at Mercy. We wish her the best.

THE CHURCH OFFICE

[412] 561-4114

Monday - Friday 9:00am—3:00 pm

BOWER HILL COMMUNITY CHURCH
 A PLACE TO BELIEVE, BELONG & BECOME



BOWER HILL COMMUNITY CHURCH

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