

BOWER HILL NEWS

INTO THE UNKNOWN BY REV. LAURIE

JANUARY 2008

Every January, I think about how fitting it is to consider the story of the Magi again. I am always struck by the sheer faith, hope and curiosity that led them forward into the unknown. One of my favorite Christmas songs is: "I Wonder as I Wander," and while the lyrics have nothing to do with the Magi, the chorus always makes me think about them and their wandering. There is so much to wonder about them and their journey! I wonder about what they hoped to find. I wonder about what compelled them to journey so far away with their destination unclear. I wonder about the doubts and crisis of faith that they may have had on nights when they could not see the star. I wonder about how long their journey took and I wonder what they thought when they finally saw the baby. There is so much to wonder about their journey. This story, in so many ways, captures the questions and considerations that we face at the beginning of another year. So much is unknown as we begin our journey into 2008. Unlike the Magi, our journey is necessary and we have no choice about going forward into the unknown of this new beginning.

We have our own things to wonder about. As we stand on the edge of one year and stargaze into the next, we are led to wonder what will 2008 bring to our lives, to our church, to the world? How will we grow as a community together? How will we show our love for one another and for the world? What new mission experiences will we join in together? We already know that we have the beginning of small group ministry to look forward to in 2008. Just after Easter, one of our MAT teams will be starting a new experiment called Faith in Action which will lead us to consider how we are called to "be the church!" For four weeks we will worship and study together and strengthen our bonds with one another and our understanding of what it means to be the church together! It is indeed something to wonder about and anticipate with great joy!

In addition to these two wonderful experiences, the Session will continue to pray about how to lead the church forward into the future. In the days ahead, the Session will also explore the Advent Experiment of worshiping together at one service we will continue to consider how we are called to live out our core value of community. Please be in prayer for us and with us in this time of visioning. What else will 2008 hold for Bower Hill, we'll just have to wait and see as we wonder as we wander toward 2008. As we travel on our journey, let us grasp on to hope and let us strive to have faith in the God who is journeying with us and guiding us into the unknown, even if there is no blazing star to light the way!

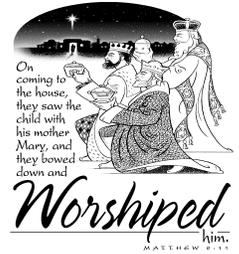


WONDER

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COOL NEW THING BY REV. LAURIE



January sixth is set aside as the day of Epiphany. It is a time for remembering and celebrating the journey that the Magi made to visit Jesus which is recorded in Matthew 2. In some traditions, Epiphany is a holiday that is celebrated with a great deal of ceremony and hullabaloo, such as a celebration that includes a meal and a cake with a surprise for one lucky person. As the finale to our Advent Experiment, we will come together for an Epiphany worship service and feast in the Fellowship Hall on Sunday January 6, 2008 at 10:00 am. We will gather around tables and begin worship, then we will continue our worship with a time of fellowship and a brief meal. At the end of the meal, we will share the king's cake and a few lucky people will be chosen to participate in the procession of the Magi, which will be followed by a short message and communion. As this is both a time of worship and fellowship, the celebration is expected to conclude at 11:30 am. Participants are asked to bring a dish to share of a brunch variety as we will eat at approximately 10:15 am. Ideas include: bagels, yogurt, cereal, doughnuts. Volunteers are need to help set up and to bake the king's cakes for us. Please let Rev. Laurie know if you are interested in helping.

WINTER SNOW PLAN BY PHIL JOHNSON

We are planning some changes this winter season for safety reasons. Bower Hill Church has a lot of areas that must be cleared of ice and snow in order to make it safe for members of the congregation. This is sometimes difficult to do if a storm hits Saturday evening or Sunday morning. The Buildings and Grounds Committee has developed a storm plan. If we experience heavy snow or ice we will close the parking lot next to the Hospice Center. All doors at that end of the building, including the main entrance will be closed. The lower parking lot and the handicapped parking area by the kitchen will be cleared and available. Access to the church will be limited to the handicapped entrance by the kitchen and the entrance under the portico by the church office.



Bad weather of this nature is infrequent so we may never have to implement this plan; but if we do, we hope everyone will understand and no one will be inconvenienced.

SMALL GROUP FELLOWSHIP 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. 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.

THANK YOU FROM THE BUILDINGS AND GROUNDS COMMITTEE

The Buildings and Grounds Committee and members of Bower Hill Church would like to say thank you to Steven Ollinger.

Steve completely replanted and redesigned the garden area near the lower parking lot by the portico entrance. This was done as an Eagle Scout project so thanks again Steve!



FLEA MARKET NEWS BY THERESA CHILD



Thank you for your help!

Thank you to all the people who contributed to the 2007 Flea Market in November. Because of your help with pricing and boxing leading up to the event and greeting, taking money, straightening tables, etc. the day of the sale we raised over \$1800.

A big thank you to the youth for your help boxing and for tackling the huge job of bringing down the boxes the week before the sale.

Thank you to Nancy Andrews who took charge of the boutique, Jean Grabow who priced all the jewelry, and my parents, Glenn and Sally Child, who were with me every step of the way.

Because many of our helpers have worked at the Flea Market under Jean's wing for so many years, I found that many "chores" were taken care of before I even realized they needed to be done.

BAUBLES, BANGLES AND BEADS FROM THE MISSION COMMITTEE

On Dec. 9, the Adult Ed. class heard a presentation from Theresa Orlando about Miryam's House. Although BHCC has supported them for some time, it was good to hear the details of this service to homeless, mentally ill women. One of the things they offer is a boutique where the women can redeem vouchers they earn through doing chores. In January we will be collecting jewelry, scarves, and other accessories to donate to this boutique. After Christmas would be a good time to clean out jewelry boxes or overstuffed drawers of accessories. If, perhaps, you make bead jewelry yourself, why not make something for a woman who has nothing? Some pretty, feminine item can make a big difference to a woman who is struggling just for survival.

At no cost to ourselves, we can brighten the lives of some of society's most needy people.

BOOKWORMS BY MARGARET ZABO

Bookworms is the name of the Women's book club at Bower Hill. Each month, women gather at someone's home for a book discussion and fellowship. Newcomers are always welcome!

January's book selection is: The Real All-Americans by Sally Jenkins.

Please join us at Betsey Hohlfelder's house January 15 at 7:30 pm.

February's title: Ireland by Frank Delany

March's title: Thousand Splendid Suns by Khaled Hosseini



BOOKWORMS

FOOD BANK COLLECTION BY REV. LAURIE



Food Banks all over our community are reporting desperate needs for food. Shelves are low on supplies and major cuts are being made to assistance programs. On Sunday, January 13th we will have our regular collection for the Wallace Food Pantry. Please give generously to help those in need. Chunky soup, pasta and peanut butter are always helpful, but any donations would be greatly appreciated. In February, we will have an additional collection as we once again participate in the Souper Bowl Of Caring Project. As we are grateful for all that we have, let us continue to remember those in need by responding with generosity!

A MESSAGE FROM MALAWI BY ROY MPONDA



Dear Bower Hill Church,

Our church board sat down sometime in early October to asses the three bids from potential borehole drilling companies. The company chosen turned out to be the one with the lowest bid. Actual drilling is supposed to commence sometime in December. Things are moving, but at a snail's pace. The funds were deposited into the church special bank account and I, for one, have a close eye on the borehole project funds. Once the work commences, I will take some pictures for everybody at Bower Hill to appreciate their contribution towards this dream-come-true project.

Wishing you all a Merry Christmas and Prosperous New Year of 2008; my family extends their love to you!

**Epiphany Celebration
Worship and Potluck
Sunday January 6th**

10:00 am in Fellowship Hall



Regular Sunday Morning Services

Resume on January 13

9:00 am Contemporary Worship

10:30 am Traditional Worship

WORSHIP NOTE BY REV LAURIE

Thank you to all who participated in our Advent Experiment. Leonard and I enjoyed all the wonderful gifts that have been shared during the experiment. As the congregation came together to worship, a variety of members shared their talents. The music was inspiring, the children's art was delightful, the litanies were meaningful and the support of the congregation was moving. Special thanks go to Debby Hayes who led the Advent Time for the children each Sunday in the Library!

On Sunday January 6th, we will hold our final combined worship service, which will be the Epiphany Feast (look on page two for more information!). Many people have asked, "What is next?" In the month ahead, the Session will be praying and considering the experiment in preparation for our discussion at the January Session meeting. In the weeks ahead, we invite you to take the time to share your thoughts with members of the Session or one of the Pastors. Please continue to hold the church and its leaders in your prayers! And please remember that we will return to our regular schedule of two services on January 13th. Come and worship on the 13th and in the weeks that follow at 9:00 am at the Contemporary Service and at 10:30 am for the Traditional Service.



Worship Notes



JANUARY YOUTH GROUP SCHEDULE

- 1/9 Middies Ice Cream Party Lounge 6:30 - 8:00
- 1/17 High School Pizza Making Kitchen 7:00 - 9:00
- 1/21 Middies Snowman Lounge (dress warm) 6:30-8:00
- 1/20 Hoagie Fundraiser Presale Narthex (following worship)
- 1/27 Hoagie Fundraiser Presale Narthex (following worship)
- 1/27 High School Winter Party Lounge 6:00 - 9:00

High School Bible Study Dates

- 1/8, 15, 22, 29 Brian's Office 7:00 - 8:30

YOUTH TRIP REFLECTIONS BY TIM MAY

This summer our high school youth group will travel to the Eastern Shore of Virginia. We will be attending a mission/work-trip sponsored by Youthworks. The spiritual impact of one of these trips is significant as well as unique for each student. One of our High School students, Tim May, wanted to share a meaningful experience from one of the previous mission trips he attended.

Over the past few years I have gone on the summer Work Trip with the Youth Group. Each time I learn something valuable, but nothing like my first trip to Cookeville, Tennessee.

In Cookeville, the kids from our church were mixed into work groups with teens from all over the United States and each group was assigned an adult leader. The leader of my group was an imposing German man from Texas named Klaus Bohrman.

Klaus had been the champion kick boxer of Germany for two years. While I thought that was really impressive, he did not seem very proud of it. "The reason I was so good was because I wanted to kill the other person in the ring. One time, I came too close," he said. After that match Klaus started to question his involvement in the sport and the meaning of his entire life. He ended up attempting suicide, but luckily his trainer found him and rushed him to the hospital. Klaus had taken enough pills to kill two and a half men. It was a miracle that he was still alive.

Klaus told our group about how he put his life back together while recovering in a rehabilitation center, "What got me out of that place wasn't my good behavior, but a new-found faith. I don't know why, but one day I decided to go to church. Something clicked for me that day and Christ revealed my purpose to me. The truth is that I shouldn't be sitting here talking to you today but Christ gave me a second chance. I have been living with this purpose: that I might stop one of you from making the same mistake that I made that day. The thing that I want you to remember is that your actual purpose isn't as relevant as knowing that each of us have one."

Later that summer, this lesson hit home for me when I broke my hand while on vacation. Because my fingers required pins and surgery, I missed football practice and try-outs. I was really upset until I looked back at the "care-card" that Klaus had written to me at the end of the trip that said, "Nothing ever happens without a reason. Something bad shouldn't stop you, but it should be an opportunity."

One of the good things that came out of my disappointment that summer was that I joined the Rifle Team later that year. Four years later I have learned so much about being a team player and a good leader from my coaches. I am fortunate that I met Klaus and he told me his story on that Work Trip. He changed the way I looked at my life and my relationship with God.



MUSIC NOTES BY JESSICA BAIER

“Each musician must come to experience the dignity, rightness, and eventual joy of putting things aside, of emptying oneself and taking the form of a servant. Such musicians must be able to move back and forth, gracefully, servingly, willingly, from symphony to folk tune; back and forth without complaint, compromise or snobbery, without the conceit that doing an oratorio is somehow more worthy or more deserving than doing a hymn tune. All servant musicians must be able to be creative in transit, serving this community and challenging that one; all the while showing grace, power, elegance, and imagination.”

~Harold Best, “*Music Through the Eyes of Faith*”~

I would like to thank all of the people who gave up their time to do special music for the Advent and Christmas season: Ben Hohlfelder, Jean Miewald, Wendy Mazzini, Carly Lunoe, Emily Stack, George Vosburgh, Lynne Wohleber, Margaret Zabo, Aaron Jones, Rick Jacobs, Brian Hayes, and the members of the Chancel Choir, Handbell Choir, and the King’s Kids Clappers.



Rehearsal Schedule

King’s Kids Clappers Wednesdays at 4.30pm (beginning Jan. 16th)

Handbell Choir Thursdays at 6.30pm

Chancel Choir Thursdays at 7.45pm

JANUARY WORSHIP PLANS BY THE PASTORS



January 6: 10:00 am Family Epiphany Worship Celebration — Fellowship Hall

We will worship and share a potluck brunch with the traditional King’s Cake in the Fellowship Hall as we retell the Epiphany story from Matthew 2 and we will experience the journey of the Kings to visit Jesus. As a part of worship we will celebrate communion together.

January 13: 9:00 am Service and 10:30 am Service

The Rev. Dr. Pat Albright will be preaching at both services.

Bill Wegner will give a Minute for Making a Difference on his trip to New Orleans.

January 20: 9:00 am Service-Rev. Laurie will be preaching on John 1:29-42, her working title is: “Testifying!”

10:30 am Service-Rev. Leonard will be preaching on John 1:29-42, his working title is: “The Claim!”

January 27: 9:00 am Service- Rev. Laurie will be preaching on Matthew 4:12-23, her working title is: “Repentance?”

10:30 am Service -Rev. Leonard will be preaching on Matthew 4:12-23, his working title is, “The Kingdom of God”

ADULT EDUCATION BY NINA HELBLING

January 6 and 13: Water — Blessing and Curse

Water is the Stuff of life. It is the first thing that God created on the Earth. Too much water, we drown; too little water, we die of thirst. Access to water is a basic human right...or is it? Come to Adult Education on January 16 and 13 to learn about water and how we are all affected by it now and in the future. Led by Rick Jacobs.

January 20 and 27: The Christian Church in Iraq Today

Joe Heckel, a member of the Christian Peacemaking Team in Baghdad in 2002, spoke to the Adult Education Class after that experience. He will be back with us to review the general history of religion in the area and in particular Christianity and the Presbyterian Church. Come and hear an update on the current difficulties facing Christian in Iraq.



Adult Education

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



WORSHIP AND FELLOWSHIP VOLUNTEERS FOR JANUARY

USHERS

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

COMMUNION SERVERS FOR JANUARY

Bill Cadwell, Dennis Geis Sr., Nancy Geis, Nina Helbling, Kurt
Kerner, Bev Lamb, Don Lamb, Dave Stewart, Lee Ferrero, Lynne
Wohleber

GREETERS

10:00 a.m. Service:

January 6: The Vosburgh Family, The Waller Family and The Winnett Family

January 13: The Zoll Family, The Pitt Family, The Gibbons Family

January 20: The Andrews Family, The Baumhammers Family and the Bridges Family

January 27: The Boisvert Family, The Burke Family and The Carter Family

LECTORS

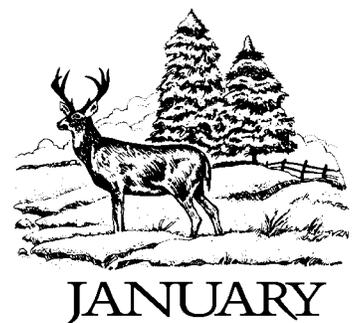
10:00 a.m. Service:

January 6: Alan Hohlfelder

January 13: Mary Beth Waine

January 20: Woody Hughes

January 27: Dave Hicks





OUR CHURCH STAFF

Jessica Baier, Director of Music Ministries

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Michael Bergen, Custodian

Brian Hayes, Director of Youth Ministries

br@bhccml.com

Dianne Scott, Financial Secretary

di@bhccml.com

Rev Laurie Sponaugle, Co-Pastor

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Rev Leonard Sponaugle, Co-Pastor

le@bhccml.com

Emily Kerr, Secretary

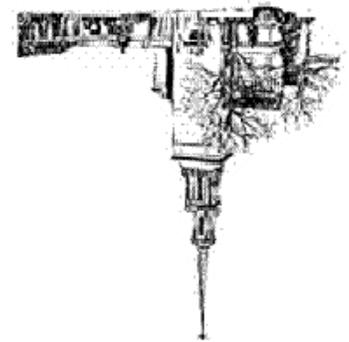
em@bhccml

THE CHURCH OFFICE

[412] 561-4114

Monday - Friday 9:15am—3:15 pm

A PLACE TO BELIEVE, BELONG & BECOME
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