



# BOWER HILL NEWS

DECEMBER 2008

Dear Friends,

In his poem titled *Star Silver*, Carl Sandburg speaks of

*Star silver playing cross-lights on pine green  
Back in a barn in a Bethlehem slum;  
Why does the story never wear out?*

Sandburg’s poetic message is direct: it is in the Bethlehem stable where heaven and earth meet, where star silver and pine green intertwine; and it is in the Bethlehem Babe, in the presence of the Child Jesus, that the divine and the human merge. An old story, ever new! Why does the story never wear out?

The story never wears out simply because it speaks an eternal truth: Emmanuel . . . God with us. “The Word became flesh and dwelt among us,” wrote the author of John’s Gospel. “We have beheld His glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father.” God took His Word, wrapped it in swaddling clothes, and laid it in a manger, so that love might be more than a Word only heard.



I believe, beyond the shadow of a doubt, that God **WOULD** have been more real to Israel if the Prophets had had a Word in Flesh to point to **RATHER** than just a word that was heard, but no one could possibly **FEEL** or touch or hold; consequently, God took His Word and wrapped Him in swaddling clothes and laid Him in a manger where **LOVE** could be felt and fully known, not just talked about, all of which makes more sense **THAN** lofty ideas, concepts and notions lost in a maze of God-words, God-plans, and God-**TALK** which pale for lack of flesh and blood; Christmas is the centerfold between the Old Testament and the New: in one, people talk **ABOUT** God’s love while in the other, people feel **IT**. I’m glad we live on this side of the centerfold.

The story never wears out because it addresses a perennial need for love and peace. “The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light” (Isaiah). Christmas seems to come at the climax of calamity, even now. This year Christmas—Emmanuel, God with us—comes when a once-prosperous economy is far less prosperous, and we join the rest of the world who are in desperate need of love, peace, harmony, and hope. This same need once again sets the stage for star silver playing cross-lights on pine green, for heaven touching earth, for the divine residing with the human, for love being made real, for Emmanuel, God with us. It’s an old story, ever new, ever relevant—a story that never wears out.

In this joyous season and throughout the new year, may God bless you and those whom you love with the special awareness of Christ’s eternal Presence.

Yours truly for a Season of Love and Joy,  
Calvin C. Wilson, Interim Pastor

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### COMMUNITY NOTES

#### SOUND TECHNICIANS NEEDED

If you are old enough to drive, you are old enough to run our Sound Board. We are looking for a few more folks who are willing to be trained to run the Sound Board on Sundays and special services. We will have a training to orient you to all the dials and capabilities of the system and what to do when things go wrong. If you are interested, call Jean Miewald.

#### FOOD BANK NEEDS

On Sunday, December 14 we will have our regular collection for the Wallace Food Pantry. Please give generously to help those in need. The food pantry is in particular need of pasta, dry cereal (prefer healthy varieties like Cheerios) and peanut butter. Also appreciated are chunky or hearty varieties of various soups.



#### BOOK WORMS

Bookworms meets on the third Tuesday of each month at 7:30 p.m., in the home of a member, for fellowship and discussion of a chosen title.

New faces are always welcome!

#### No meeting in Dec.



#### January

*World Without End* by Kenneth Follett

Hostess: Nina Helbling

#### February

*Plain Truth* by Jodi Picoult

Hostess: To Be Determined

#### March

*Them* by Nathan McCall

Hostess: To Be Determined



\$10 Each

## Poinsettias for Christmas



Please Print Clearly

In Memory of \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

In Honor of \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Please deliver this order form with payment to the Church Office or leave in the Offering tray.

Order Deadline is December 7th.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_\_

# of Plants \_\_\_\_\_

## 2008 CHRISTMAS ANGEL TREES - MISSION OPPORTUNITY

This Christmas we will continue our long-standing tradition of the angel trees. They will again be located in the hall outside of the Friendship room. There will be three trees again this year.



One tree will be for **Hekima Place**, the girls' orphanage in Kenya that we have supported for several years. Approximately 40 young women, who have lost their parents to HIV/AIDS, live at the orphanage and your donation of \$30 will provide education and a safe, loving environment for one of the girls for one month. Please remove an ornament from the tree and make a check payable to Bower Hill Church for \$30, indicate "Hekima Place" in the memo and get it to the church office as soon as you can. Be sure to hang the ornament on your tree at home and every time you look at it, remember the difference you are making.

The second tree will be for **Lydia's Place**, the Pittsburgh organization that provides assistance to incarcerated women and their children as they work to rebuild their lives. Simply take one or more of the angels off the tree, purchase the item indicated on the



angel and return it to the church office unwrapped by Sunday, Dec. 14th. Your gifts will be given to the children at Lydia's annual Holiday party. Hang the angel on your tree at home and know that you are helping a child in need.

The third tree will again support our **Troops in Iraq**, with a slight twist. This Christmas, rather than sending over various small items such as videos, toiletries, etc., your mission committee has decided to adopt a Marine unit. There are about 17 marines in this unit and they need things such as Gerber multi-tools and Camelbak hydration systems, items that would be very difficult for us to purchase. So this year we have decided to ask the members of the congregation to take a star off the tree and write a check for \$20, payable to BHCC, with "OTA" in the memo section. Then, and this is just as important as the money, please write a brief note or thank you card to the unit with your message to the troops. The church treasurer will send a check for the amount collected, along with our notes, to Operation Troop Appreciation ([www.OperationTroopAppreciation.org](http://www.OperationTroopAppreciation.org)), a local group that we have worked with for a couple of years to facilitate support of our troops. They will purchase the needed items and mail them, with our notes, to our troop. Hang the red, white or blue star on your tree and let's hope that they'll all come home safely.



## PITTSBURGH PROJECT REPORT



What do you get if you cross over 150 pairs of hands, a thought-provoking speaker, and the organizational skills and hospitality of The Pittsburgh Project? You get 22 homeowners in the city of Pittsburgh whose dwellings were improved the weekend of November 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup>. Betsy and Alan Hohlfelder, LuAnn McNickle, Bud Hooper, and Jean Miewald joined over 150 other people from as far away as Ann Arbor, Michigan and Silver Spring, Maryland and ranging in age from 11 to 75 to think about what it means to be a follower of Jesus. Bart Campolo used 1 John 4 to remind us that God is Love and rather than trying to "fix" people, we need to just love them, make them part of our community (which will take sacrifice on our part) and tell them that they are loved. The Bower Hill crew's main job for the weekend was replacing drywall and painting the kitchen ceiling for a homeowner on the North Side. This was enhanced by the new drywall being ½ inch thick while the rest of the ceiling was 5/8 inch thick. Some of the other 21 crews worked on exterior painting, yard clean up, or roofing. We slept on bunkbeds with mattresses and there were showers right down the hall. Meals were cooked and served by the Pittsburgh Project staff and while not gourmet, tasted mighty good after a day's work. There was one thing wrong with the weekend, though. You weren't there with us. Our homeowner appreciated our help and in fact had many other jobs lined up for us that we were not able to finish. Perhaps we can do that with you during a service retreat next spring.

During the Advent season, we will again endeavor to keep our hearts and minds focused on the needs of others. The Mission Committee is making plans to continue our efforts to help the homeless at the Washington City Mission over the holidays. Plans are underway, and volunteers can see Rev. Laurie for more information.

**December 7<sup>th</sup> or 14<sup>th</sup>**

Sign up to bake pies for the Christmas Dinner at the Mission

**December 21<sup>st</sup> — Before Worship**

Bring cookie donations to the Fellowship Hall for our fund raiser cookie sale to help support the mission project

**December 21<sup>st</sup> — After worship**

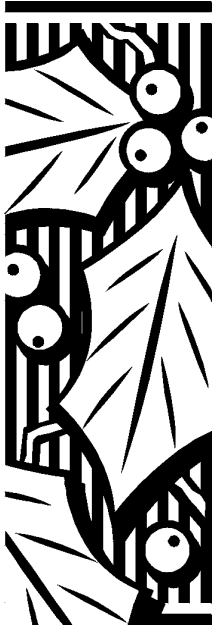
Buy some cookies to support the mission effort  
Help us wrap or assemble gifts to give to the mission residents on Christmas Day.  
Help us make decorations for Christmas Dinner.

**December 24<sup>th</sup>**

Drop off pies at the church for Christmas Dinner

**December 25<sup>th</sup> — From about 1pm-5pm**

Help decorate the mission,  
make Christmas Dinner, serve dinner, clean up or sing and visit with residents.  
*This year we are asking all volunteers to sign up, so that we know whom to expect.*



**Christmas Greetings from the Staff**

The time draws near the birth of Christ:  
The moon is hid, the night is still;  
The Christmas bells from hill to hill  
Answer each other in the mist.

—Alfred, Lord Tennyson

As the time draws near to the humble, yet wondrous birth of Christ,  
your staff wishes you unbounded joy in this glorious and hallowed season,  
and a resounding Merry Christmas and Happy New Year.

We cordially invite you to a Christmas Open House at the Church Office on Monday and Tuesday, December 22 and 23, 9:30 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. Please stop in so that your staff may greet you with an abundance of Christmas Cheer.

~ Rev. Calvin W. Wilson, Rev. Laurie Sponaugle, Jessica Baier, Emily Kerr, Dianne Scott, Mike Bergen

## SPECIAL EVENTS THIS SEASON

### CHRISTMAS PARTY FOR THE LADIES OF BOWER HILL CHURCH

Join us to celebrate the season with the women of Bower Hill Church on Tuesday, December 9 at 7:00 p.m. at Mary Good's home at 909 Old Hickory Road, just a few short blocks from the church. Take a few hours during this busy month to catch up with old friends and meet new ones. If you are able, bring an hors d'oeuvre, drink or holiday treat to share. If you would like to arrange for a ride, call Kathy Philson 531-7539. Hope to see you there! It's sure to be a festive evening for all!



### FINAL CONCERT IN SERIES



The final performance of our Fall Concert Series is to take place on Sunday, December 14, at 4pm. This will be a Christmas Concert, given by the choirs of Bower Hill Community Church and Pleasant Hills Community Presbyterian Church, Jessica Baier and Jonathan Wooding, Directors of Music. This concert will be of sacred Christmas music, featuring pieces from G. F. Handel's *Messiah*, Morten Lauridsen's *O Magnum Mysterium* and more. A free-will offering will be passed to support The Friends of Music.

There will be a reception following the performance.

### BOWER HILLERS CHRISTMAS EVENT

All members and friends of Bower Hill Community Church are cordially invited to a Festival of Holiday Merriment on Wednesday, December 17, 2008, 12 p.m. at Peter's Place. The program, titled *Christmas Conviviality*, will feature Carols, Readings, and A Mummer's Play, presented by Jane Howell and Calvin Wilson. The cost is \$17.00 per person. Choose from Chicken ala Kelly, Salisbury Steak, or Boston Scrod Almandine. For more information, call George Freas, 412-279-5866, or mail your check –payable to Bower Hillers— to George Freas, 574 Moreland Drive, Pittsburgh, PA 15243-1714 by December 10. Come join us for a cheery and merry little Christmas interlude in the holiday hustle and bustle.



Bower Hillers Back For Christmas!

### EPIPHANY FEAST

Do you remember our Epiphany celebration last year?



We met in the fellowship hall, joined together in family worship, broke bread together (lots of bread!) and enjoyed breakfast with one another, distributed the King's Cake, chose the kings for our procession, worshiped some more and celebrated communion. It was an amazing community celebration! Many enjoyed it so much, that we would like to hold a 2<sup>nd</sup> annual Epiphany Feast on Sunday January 4<sup>th</sup> at 9:30 a.m.

There is one little exception...this year for the potluck, we are asking you to bring no breakfast breads! All ages are invited to bring a breakfast offering of juice, fruit, cereal, milk, yogurt, eggs or breakfast meat (meat/eggs will need to be in containers that plug in and stay hot as we will begin breakfast around 10:00 a.m.). We will gather together around tables in the Fellowship Hall at 9:30 a.m., when worship will begin. Sunday School has been canceled for the day as we expect worship and fellowship time to end around 10:45 or 11:00 a.m. If you have any questions, please ask Rev. Laurie.


 Adult Education
**December 7**

## “Forgiveness”

Rev. Walter Wiest, retired Professor of Theology At Pittsburgh Theological Seminary, will lead a discussion on Forgiveness which will treat forgiveness as more than just what we might do, for instance, in forgiving someone’s debts. Rather, we shall see it as something essential to Christian faith, affecting the whole of the Christian life. It is a virtue that begins with God and extends to us.

**December 14**

“Forgiveness” with Rev. Wiest continues.

**December 21**

The Class is invited to participate in the Washington City Mission event to be held in the Church

**December 28**

No class due to holidays



## BHCC 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

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

Pat Metheny, Reformed Presb. Home, 2344 Perrysville Ave., #316 D, Pittsburgh, PA 15214

Harry Retzer, 493 Castle Shannon Boulevard, #520, Pittsburgh, PA 15234

Tooie Sharkey, Asbury Heights, 700 Bower Hill Rd, #7338, Pittsburgh, PA 15243

Evelyn Mason, Health center at Friendship Village, 1290 Boyce Road, Upper St. Clair 15241

Jim Redmond, Country Meadows, 3570 Washington Pike, Apt. 52, Bridgeville, PA 15017

Barbara Prunchak, Country Meadows Skilled Nursing, 3590 Washington Pike, Bridgeville, PA 15017

Lee McCauley, 2076 Borland Road, Pittsburgh, PA 15243

Betty Ewing, 1300 Bower Hill Road, Apt. #335, Mt. Lebanon, PA 15243

WORSHIP PLANS AND FELLOWSHIP VOLUNTEERS FOR DECEMBER

**Sunday, December 7**

Second Sunday of Advent  
 Isaiah 40:1-11; Mark 1:1-8  
*Voice from the Wilderness*  
 Calvin C. Wilson, preaching

**Sunday, December 14**

Third Sunday of Advent  
 Psalm 126; John 1:1-13  
*An Imperial Message*  
 Calvin C. Wilson, preaching

**Sunday, December 21**

Fourth Sunday of Advent  
 Luke 1:26-38  
 Laurie Sponaugle, preaching

**December 24**

Christmas Eve  
 5:00 p.m. Family Worship  
 Laurie Sponaugle, preaching  
 8:00 p.m. Service of  
 Candlelight and Carols  
*They Were at Bethlehem*  
 Calvin C. Wilson, preaching

**Sunday, December 28**

First Sunday after Christmas  
 Luke 2:22-52  
*The Larger Heart, the Kindlier Hand*  
 Calvin C. Wilson, preaching

USHERS

Jim Corbett, Lucille Heckman, Woody Hughes, Earl Kennedy, Bill Ramsey

COMMUNION SERVERS

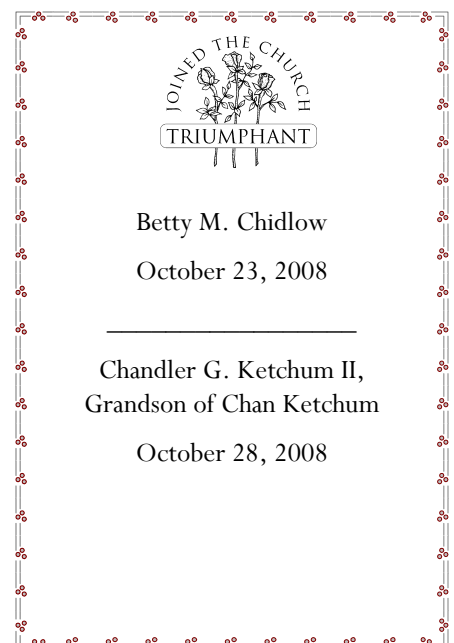
Joan and Bob Bridges, Dave and Susan Hicks, Barb and Woody Hughes, Curt and Kathy Philson, Choir: Rick and Pat Jacobs

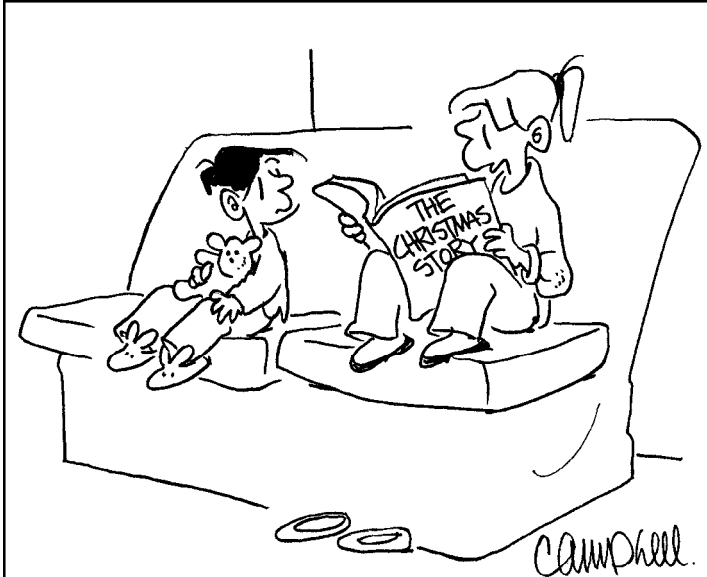
GREETERS

<b>Dec. 7</b>	Alan Hohlfelder	Betsy Hohlfelder	Nina Helbling
<b>Dec. 14</b>	Woody Hughes	Barb Hughes	Christine Henney
<b>Dec 21</b>	Phil Johnson	Linda Johnson	Dawn Kane
<b>Dec. 28</b>	Dick Junker	Kate Junker	Kurt Kerner

LECTORS

**Dec. 7** Mary Beth Waine  
**Dec. 14** Amanda Vosburgh  
**Dec. 21** Ben Hohlfelder  
**Dec. 28** Joan Zakor





"Because they didn't have e-mail then.  
That's why God sent an angel  
to proclaim the baby's birth."

### OUR CHURCH STAFF

Rev. Calvin C. Wilson, Interim Pastor  
ca@bhccml.com

Rev. Laurie Sponaugle, Pastor  
la@bhccml.com

Jessica Baier, Director of Music Ministries  
je@bhccml.com

Dianne Scott, Financial Secretary  
di@bhccml.com

Emily Kerr, Secretary  
em@bhccml.com

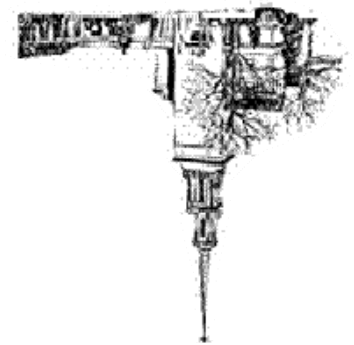
Michael Bergen, Custodian

### THE CHURCH OFFICE

[412] 561-4114

Monday - Friday 8:45 a.m.— 2:45 p.m.

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



70 Moffett Street  
Pittsburgh, Pa 15243  
Phone: 412-561-4114  
Fax: 412-561-2252  
E-mail: office@bhccml.com

BOVER HILL COMMUNITY CHURCH

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