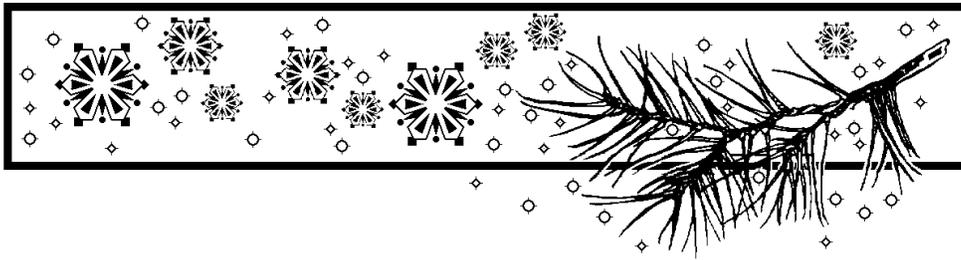


# BOWER HILL NEWS



January 2011

~The Unseen~

Dear Friends,

Myra wasn't an old woman. Though she looked about 70, she was in her mid-fifties. But whether 70 or 50, there's no good age to be homeless and living alone in vacant warehouses in Oklahoma City. Myra was short and squat, but not at all plump. Her gray-brown hair hung limply in two long pigtails. Since I'd so rarely seen that hairdo on an adult, I wondered if it wasn't a holdover from happier times, perhaps when Myra's mother used to put her little girl's hair up in pigtails? I didn't know. Myra was a shuffler; she barely raised her feet as she trudged into the public library at opening time. She sat in a corner all day long, pressing her face close to the pages of newspapers and books. At closing time, Myra made her scuffling exit, staring straight ahead, speaking to no one, looking at no one, gazing through enormous glasses that didn't seem to do much good. Myra couldn't see, and she usually went unseen.

I was in my early 20s—an idealistic library clerk and selfishly determined to rescue all the living world. And so, I began talking to Myra each time she walked past my desk. Since I didn't know her name, I greeted her with generic statements: "First one in, last one out!" "It's a cold one today!" At first, Myra barely acknowledged me. She seemed afraid of being noticed. But with time, she began to answer me, her deep voice raspy with disuse. Slowly, over a period of two years, she entrusted me with her name and her story: Myra had always been poor, but her life was normal enough until she began experiencing mental illness. With only few resources and not much in the way of a "safety net," she'd been on the streets for about fifteen years.

Myra had been beaten and robbed so many times that she had no legal form of identification. She carried in her bag a worn-out birth certificate from Texas. Her social security number was scrawled out on a tattered scrap of paper, which she kept in her wallet. You needed at least two forms of ID in order to get a library card. You also had to prove that you were a legal resident of the county. Now, these things took place almost twenty years ago, so you must forgive me for what I'm about to confess: I issued Myra a library card anyway, listing as her address an abandoned house that stood across the street from my apartment. My coworkers knew what I had done, but they kindly turned a blind eye. With the old birth certificate, the new library card, and an official letter [*ahem*] from the public library to prove her social security number, Myra was able to apply for public housing. I never believed I would see her weathered, careworn face so alive with joy! Myra was going to have a home! She showed me a floor plan and told me in great detail how she hoped to decorate. The details were so precise that I knew she'd been dreaming about this for years.

The authorities took their time processing the paperwork to secure an apartment for Myra. But before they were finished, Myra was struck by an eighteen-wheeler and killed while walking along an interstate. She'd always been so good at going unseen; the trucker didn't see her, and Myra probably never knew what hit her. The contents of her backpack were blown to the wind, and she was identified only by the library card in her wallet.

Myra had once given me her private journal and asked me to hold it for safekeeping. I still have that journal, and on occasion it occurs to me that I—a mere meddling library clerk—am the sole keeper of her memory. Hers can be a sad story, but I choose to see it as a happy one. Myra might have been a "Jane Doe," but instead she enjoyed the dignity of dying as one whose name and identity are known. Myra suffered no pain. Myra died happy, full of hopes and dreams, believing that she was finally going to have a home. And she found a way to pass her life's story along to someone who, in turn, would pass it along...to you. Myra's story goes with me wherever I go. God forgive me, but there hasn't been a new Myra in my life for a very, very long time. In this New Year, I hope that God will send each of us a Myra, and then God give us the courage and the youthful resolve to see them, to know them, and to share their stories!

~Brian



## COMMUNITY NOTES

Want to be included on this page?  
Submissions are due the 15th of every month  
for the next month's publication.  
412-561-4114 or office@bhccml.com

### EMERGENCY COAT DRIVE

BHCC has received word that several local charitable agencies as well as those in neighboring Ohio, do not have enough warm winter coats to meet ongoing needs this winter. We are collecting coats for all genders and sizes. Donated coats may be placed in the plastic bins near the church office. Thank you for your generosity!

### COLD WEATHER POLICY IN EFFECT

Now that winter is upon us, please note the Buildings and Grounds Committee has asked that, on sub-30 degree days, members and friends use the Fellowship Hall entrance in order to access the Narthex and Sanctuary. The Narthex doors will be cordoned off and kept closed in order to retain heat in the Sanctuary.

### SUNDAY SCHOOL TEACHERS

We are still looking for a few good people who would like to be involved, on a rotating basis, with our Sunday School program. Help is always needed with all age groups. Our teachers work in teams so feel free to also volunteer a friend. Please contact the BHCC office or Susan Hicks at 412-833-7753.

### CHILDREN'S OFFERING RESULTS

The children's Wishing Well collected \$122 from October to December - WOW and THANKS!

We will be discussing with the children where the money is most needed to determine who receives our gift.

The collection will continue indefinitely.

Thank you, thank you, thank you!

The Mission Committee

Your Mission Committee

### COFFEE HOUR HOSTS ALWAYS IN DEMAND

If you haven't done coffee hour hosting in a while, please consider signing up on the poster in the Friendship Room. On our web site, [www.bhccml.com](http://www.bhccml.com) click on Ministries, click on Worship and you will find guidelines and complete instructions on how to do it. Donna Williams or Glenn Child will be happy to show you where everything is located.

### SENIOR MEN'S BREAKFAST CONTINUES

Senior men's breakfast will meet on the first Wednesday of each month through April. The next meeting is on January 5. The group convenes at 8 AM at King's Restaurant on Rte. 50, Washington Pike near the end of Green Tree Road, in Scott. We normally have eight to twelve men attend. There is no agenda other than good fellowship and interesting conversation. No invitation or reservation is needed. We meet in the room to the left of the cashier.

### BOOKWORMS

Bookworms is our ladies' book discussion group. It 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.

#### JANUARY

*Breakfast with Buddha* by Roland Merullo  
Hostess for January is Carolyn Phillipe.

#### FEBRUARY

*American Lion - Andrew Jackson in the White House*  
by John Meachem.  
Hostess TBA

#### MARCH

*Sarah's Key* by Tatiana de Rosnay  
Hostess TBA

### BOOK DRIVE FOR THE NEIGHBORHOOD ACADEMY

We just delivered another 10 boxes of books to TNA, bringing our total to 17 boxes or approximately 350 books. They are most appreciative as we help to build their in-school library and get books into the homes of students so they can read to their younger siblings. This is an important project for us and TNA. As Rev. Tom Johnson, Head of School at TNA puts it, "reading is the key, the foundation to learning." This is an ongoing project, so please continue to bring your gently used, age appropriate books to the church office. Thanks for all that you've done to date-our congregation is the best!



## UGANDAN WELL PROJECT UPDATE

BHCC and the Rotary of Upper St. Clair were instrumental in financially supporting the placement of three water tanks at two churches and a school in the African bush.

Pat and Rick Jacobs visited these sites during their Mission trip last September and have received updated photos from the recipients.

Please see [www.bhccml.com](http://www.bhccml.com), as well as the bulletin boards in the hallway near the office, for more photos. For more information about how you can help, visit:

[www.UgandanWaterProject.com](http://www.UgandanWaterProject.com)

### BOWER HILL BABIES

**Congratulations to Lisa and Jason Shwallon**

**On the birth of a healthy daughter!**

**Vanessa Roberta Shwallon**

**October 12th**

**Congratulations to**

**Trisha and Grafton Eliason,**

**on the birth of a healthy son!**

**Noah Grafton Eliason**

**December 5<sup>th</sup>**

**7 lb 4 oz**

**Congratulations to**

**Pat and Rick Jacobs,**

**on the birth of a healthy grandson!**

**Luke Thomas Fowler**

**Dec. 3 in Boulder, CO**

**8 lb 9 oz, 21 inches**

  
*A Special*  
**THANK YOU**  


Many thanks to the special, caring members of BHCC for their many cards, calls, prayers and to Feed My Sheep for the delicious meals.

The recovery will be lengthy,  
but it helps to know that so many people care.

Thanks so much,

Joan Zakor

## JANUARY WORSHIP PLANS AND VOLUNTEERS



### SERMON PLANS

1/2: Epiphany Sunday: Matt. 2:1-12  
 "Party Crashers," Brian Snyder preaching / Communion

1/9: Baptism of the Lord: Matt. 3:13-17  
 Rev. Susan Shira Nilsen preaching

1/16: John 1:35-42,  
 "What Do You Seek?" Brian Snyder preaching

1/23: Matt 4:12-23,  
 "Calling All Fishermen," Brian Snyder preaching

1/30: Micah 6:1-8,  
 "The Big Three," Brian Snyder preaching

### LECTORS

1/2: Margaret Zabo  
 1/9: Keith Mason  
 1/16: Dick Westerhoff  
 1/23: Susan Hicks  
 1/30: Cynthia Gissin

### GREETERS

1/2: Connie & Dave May  
 1/9: Jim & Joan McAnulty, Betty Ewing  
 1/16: Marian Brannan, Judy Delestienne  
 1/23: Jason & Kiri Rising, John Theilacker  
 1/30: Michael Waine, Anne Noland

### USHERS

### SOUND BOARD OPERATORS

Bill Andrews, Glenn Child

## ADULT EDUCATION

### ADULT EDUCATION IN JANUARY EXPLORES BELIEFS, BELHAR, QUESTIONS AND PHILANTHROPY

Sunday, January 9 marks the beginning of a new year of varied adult education subjects with a group discussion led by Dave Green on young Christians deserting the faith and a recent study suggesting that most Americans are uninformed about religions.

The Rev. Janet Edwards returns to Bower Hill on Jan. 16 to explain the Belhar Confession, a statement of faith written in South Africa during apartheid, being considered for inclusion in our denomination's Book of Confessions.

Our pastor, The Rev. Brian Snyder, will lead the second discussion from Living the Questions, titled Thinking Theologically, on Jan. 21.

The big picture on regional philanthropy will be presented by Susan Taylor, executive director of The Grantmakers of Western Pennsylvania, on Jan. 30.

Adult education sessions are held in the church library at 10:45 AM each Sunday unless otherwise announced. Dave Green is chair of the adult education committee. Phone 412-531-2205. Email: [davegreenpgh@aol.com](mailto:davegreenpgh@aol.com).





## Learn More About Our Church

### INQUIRERS' CLASS

#### Interested in learning more about Bower Hill Church?

The pastor will lead an "Inquirers' Seminar" for potential new members or anyone who has questions about the church. Those who wish to unite with this congregation will be received into membership the following Sunday, January 23. There is no obligation to join. Lunch (from Panera Bread) and childcare will be provided!

#### WHEN?

Sunday, January 16, 2011,  
from 10:45 a.m. until 2:00 p.m.

#### WHERE?

In the Lounge

Call the office at 412-561-4114  
with any questions.

### MUSIC NOTES BY JESSICA BAIER



Thank you to all of the members of the Chancel Choir and Handbell Choir, and to those who provided special music during Advent and throughout the Fall months. I value your time, energy, and sharing of talents.

There's a contemporary musical group called Point of Grace, that recorded a great piece called *One King*. It talks about the journey of the three kings travelling to Bethlehem, following the star, which is what we always celebrate on the Sunday of Epiphany. The haunting melody of this piece is so moving, the tiny refrain is the simple explanation of this holy day.

*One king held the frankincense,  
one king held the myrrh,  
one king held the purest gold,  
and one King held the hope of the world.*

	<p>Dan Getkin can be reached via email at <a href="mailto:da@bhccml.com">da@bhccml.com</a></p>
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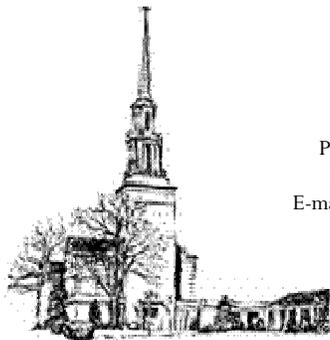
At the end of a very busy holiday season, I must pause and express my gratitude for all the help that this congregation has provided to this youth ministry. First, and foremost, thank you so much for ensuring that the 2010 Wreath Sale was a success. We sold out! On behalf of our students, I am so thankful for all of your kind purchases and contributions. Whether this event succeeds or fails rests almost entirely upon your participation, and we are so thrilled with the results. Also, we are very much appreciative for all of you who donated bottles for this year's luminaries. Though perhaps those contributions do not seem as great as the wreath purchases, because of the sheer quantity that was necessary, the bottle collection is equally significant.

We are thankful for all of your effort in this event just the same. I am so grateful for your partnership with this youth program. Without the support of our congregation, we would not be as successful as we are. Blessings to you in this new year, and I look forward to our next project together!

# BOWER HILL COMMUNITY CHURCH

*Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)*

70 Moffett Street  
Pittsburgh, Pa 15243



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RETURN SERVICE

## OUR CHURCH STAFF

Rev. Brian Snyder, Pastor  
[br@bhccml.com](mailto:br@bhccml.com)

Company of Pastors  
Rev. Grafton Eliason  
Rev. Susan Shira Nilsen  
Rev. John Yohe

Jessica Baier, Director of Music Ministries  
[je@bhccml.com](mailto:je@bhccml.com)

Dan Getkin, Youth Director  
[da@bhccml.com](mailto:da@bhccml.com)

Dianne Scott, Financial Secretary  
[di@bhccml.com](mailto:di@bhccml.com)

Emily Kerr, Secretary  
[em@bhccml.com](mailto:em@bhccml.com)

Jim Askins, Custodian

## THE CHURCH OFFICE

[412] 561-4114  
Monday - Friday 9:00 a.m.— 2:30 p.m.

## CARE LIST

**Margie Beatty**, 1300 Bower Hill Rd., Pittsburgh, PA 15243

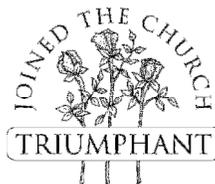
**Matt Dunfee**, 966 Worthington Woods Blvd, Worthington, OH, 43085

**Peggy Craig**, 714 Bower Hill Road, Pittsburgh, PA 15243

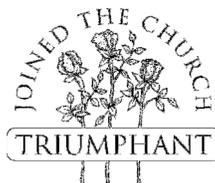
**Catheryn Deemer**, 300 Kane Blvd. Room 314, Pittsburgh, PA 1524

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

**Barbara Prunchak**, c/o Crestwood Commons, 100 Crestwood Court #223, Wheatfield, NY 14304



**Kennedy M. Fetterman**  
**08-23-16 to 12-02-10**



**Evelyn Mason**  
**03-24-22 to 12-05-10**

**A Memorial service will be held at 2 p.m. on  
Saturday, January 29th  
at Friendship village of the South Hills.**