

~Nothing Is Lost~

“Nothing is lost.

Everything that went before is still in there somewhere,
still shaping us, still coming back to us at times.”

Members and Friends,

Has it ever happened, as you were going about your life, that you suddenly remembered a person you hadn't thought about in years? Perhaps it was some neighbor, or a classmate, or a co-worker from long ago. That seemingly random person comes to mind unexpectedly. Then, over the course of a day or a week, you find yourself occasionally returning to linger over memories of him or her. Is she still alive? What's he doing now? Where did they go? After a short time, the person disappears as unexpectedly as he or she resurfaced...returning once again to those dark cerebral archives, waiting for a sound, or a smell, or a sight to call them back to mind.

This happened to me recently. I was sitting at my desk, pulling together some last minute preparations for our Christmas worship, when “out of the blue” a face from long ago returned to mind. Her name was Patricia, and she worked in some upstairs office of the library in Oklahoma City, where I was a checkout clerk. Patricia was about forty-five, twenty years older than I was. She took cigarette breaks every hour. Her hair was dyed a fiery shade of red. And though she was a pleasant enough person, her face had a simpering quality to it, as if she were forever moping about some petty grievance. This is the face that returned to me out of nowhere, staring across the years with the same little frown as ever.

The religious landscape of Oklahoma is overwhelmingly Southern Baptist, with a large Pentecostal minority. The little Presbyterian church I attended was often mocked by local people as “high church” (because we said the Lord's Prayer) and “liberal” (because we recycled). In fact, we were neither “high church” nor “liberal”...just Presbyterian. Neighbors used to ask me how it could possibly count as baptism when the minister touches a baby's forehead with a wet hand. (I always told them that we believed in conserving water.) As for Roman Catholics in Oklahoma, they were a tiny minority, and badly misunderstood by most people. For this reason, many in the Roman fold felt a little defensive of their faith, seeking refuge in the traditions and certainties of pre-Vatican II Catholicism. Patricia was a zealous convert to this “Latin mass” brand of religion. She had no use for the conservatism, but she loved the medieval pageantry. More than that, she loved shocking her fellow Oklahomans by telling them her dramatic conversion story. Like many a passionate convert, Patricia wanted everyone else to convert, too. Especially me.

Patricia once invited me to a New Year's Eve party at her house, where she seated me at a secluded table with two Catholic priests who plied me with questions about my faith. Here in Western Pennsylvania, the tradition is to serve sauerkraut at the New Year; in Oklahoma, they opt for black-eyed peas and cornbread. The meal is supposed to bring luck in the coming year. But ever since that day, black-eyed peas remind me of the discomfort of being ganged-up-on by proselytizers. After my big move to Africa, Patricia sent a few airmail letters, but when it became clear that I wasn't a likely convert to her faith, our acquaintanceship petered out.

So what was Patricia doing at my desk in Mt. Lebanon these sixteen years later? I don't know. I learned about eight years ago that she died of lung cancer. The writing of my Christmas sermon triggered long-dormant memories of her. Red hair. Smoking. Proselytizing. At the start of this New Year, I find joy in the knowledge that even Patricia is still waiting in the wings, poised to spring back into my life at an unexpected moment. Nothing is lost. Everything that went before is still in there somewhere, still shaping us, still coming back to us at times.

2011 was a good year at Bower Hill Church. We saw a growing number of social events, greater numbers of children in Sunday school, and more adults in worship. “There's good energy,” as they say. As we expand in this New Year, we do it on the firm foundation of all the faithfulness and hard work that went before us—both in the closing year and in years far distant. Today doesn't exist in a vacuum; it's the accumulation of a whole lot of yesterdays. This fresh day in the life of our congregation—and in your private life—is the work of many hands. And for that, we should be grateful. Many blessings to you in this New Year!

~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

FOODBANK STILL NEEDS YOU!



On Sunday, December 8, we will have our regular collection for the Wallace Food Pantry. High-protein foods like peanut butter and tuna, baby items of all types (diapers, formula, food), are always deeply appreciated. The food bank specifically requests boxed or bagged rice this month.

SENIOR MEN'S GROUP: FIRST WEDNESDAY OF THE MONTH



Senior men's breakfast will meet on Wednesday, January 4. The group convenes at 8:00 a.m. at Kings Restaurant on Rte. 50, Washington Pike, near the end of Greentree Road, in Scott. The meeting day will continue to be the first Wednesday of each month until this April. 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.

FIBER GROUP TAKES OFF, NEW TIMES!



Starting January 7th, the Hooks & Needles group will be meeting twice a month on the first and third Saturdays from 10:00 a.m. to Noon. Sandi Solomon will be the coordinator and will offer her past teaching experience to those who would like to learn or need some help. If you are already a "needler" just come and enjoy the camaraderie of fellow adult needlers..... If you have

any questions, Sandi can be reached at goldilox67@yahoo.com or 412-276-3019 after 7:00 p.m. weekdays. Please reference BHCC Needlers in your subject line if you email her.

BOOKWORMS



Bookworms is our ladies' book discussion group. It meets on the third Tuesday of each month at 7:30 p.m. in the Friendship Room at BHCC, for fellowship and discussion of a chosen title. Look to the bulletin for information on upcoming hostesses. Come and join a lively discussion. **Please**

Note: Bookworms now meets in the Friendship Room



ALL AGES EVENTS

January 14: Game Night at Bower Hill
6:30 –8:30 p.m., all ages welcome,
bring drinks or snacks to share

February 25: Sat., Skiing and Snow Tubing

Calling all Snow Bunnies!
A group of skiers from all ages and skill levels (and some tubers too) will be spending the day together at Seven Springs to take to the slopes.

Don't ski? You can still come and hang out in the lodge by the fire. Be watching for price information, travel details, and sign-ups coming soon!

SAVE THE DATES

March 11: All Church Bowling

March 17: Haiti fundraiser and tea

April 8: Easter Breakfast

April 22: Youth Spaghetti Dinner

May 5: Cinco D'Mayo Party

June 9: Bower Hill Relay for Life Team



HAITI WATER PROJECT:

UPDATE!

Two fundraisers helped to raise much-needed money this fall for the Bower Hill Haiti Water Project. Beautiful note cards, Christmas cards and donation cards were sold to church members and at a few outside sites, raising over \$2300 to date. Thanks to all who bought cards or helped to sell them. Our very own Pat Jacobs did all the photography for the cards, including the adorable penguins!

“Beer Here for Water There” was the name of our raffle fundraiser held at the Saloon on November 26th. Thanks to the planning work of Mary Good and Kathy Philson, and our terrific ticket sellers, Madeline Good, Erik Johnson and Kathy Philson, this event raised \$510 in just a few hours. People were eager to take a chance on a basket of specialty beer and two Penguin tickets, and some were even interested in hearing about Haiti and the need for clean water.

Thanks for your continued interest and support of our project. Stay tuned for details about our upcoming first trip in late February!

THE COMPANY OF PASTORS



What is “The Bower Hill Company of Pastors” and what do they do? The ever-growing Company now numbers five ministers, and so they are sometimes jokingly referred to as “The Battalion of Pastors.” These are Presbyterian clergy who worship at our church and volunteer their time to help out whenever needed. Pastor Snyder is not included in their number, and all but one of them are retired—at least in theory. They are Rev. Dr. Grafton Eliason, professor of psychology at California University of Pennsylvania; Rev. John Yohe, retired but frequently preaching at a small church in Elizabeth; Rev. Susan Nilsen, retired but serving on committees of presbytery; Rev. Dr. Betty Sykes, retired and spending her time between Pittsburgh and Denver. The most recent addition to the Company is Rev. Cal Wilson, retired but working at First Lutheran Church in downtown Pittsburgh. On his free Sundays, he returns to worship at Bower Hill with his wife, Beth.

Members of the Company of Pastors are not paid for their service to Bower Hill Church. And yet, each of them has been called upon to preach, teach, administer the sacraments, and make visits. Their most recent undertaking was to divide up all the “shut-ins” in our congregation and arrange for each of them to receive Holy Communion at home on a quarterly basis. If you see a member of our Company of Pastors, be sure to say “thanks.”



LOOK WHO WAS BORN THIS MONTH

THE BIRTHDAY BLESSING is changing. Instead of inviting you to the front of the church on the month when your birthday is celebrated, we will list your name in the first worship bulletin of that month and in the monthly newsletter.

Please take a moment to read through the names, pray for them, and offer them your best wishes! If your name is not listed, it is because the church office does not have your information.

<i>January 1</i>	<i>Linnea Johnson</i>
<i>January 05</i>	<i>Erik Johnson</i>
<i>January 06</i>	<i>Hillary Knox</i>
<i>January 08</i>	<i>Betty Winnett</i>
<i>January 09</i>	<i>Mary Ann Scott</i>
<i>January 10</i>	<i>Pat Jacobs</i>
<i>January 11</i>	<i>Ian Post</i>
<i>January 11</i>	<i>Grace Kelly-Tray</i>
<i>January 13</i>	<i>Lori Schofield</i>
<i>January 13</i>	<i>Sydney Saba</i>
<i>January 14</i>	<i>Phyllis Madden</i>
<i>January 16</i>	<i>Richard Rothrock</i>
<i>January 21</i>	<i>Bev Burke</i>
<i>January 22</i>	<i>Lee Ferrero</i>
<i>January 22</i>	<i>Dave Hicks</i>
<i>January 24</i>	<i>Mary Lou Frock</i>
<i>January 24</i>	<i>Lindsay Bruder</i>
<i>January 24</i>	<i>Julian Salvante</i>
<i>January 26</i>	<i>Inese Baumhammers</i>
<i>January 26</i>	<i>Brian Snyder</i>
<i>January 27</i>	<i>Adam Andrews</i>
<i>January 28</i>	<i>Sally Child</i>
<i>January 28</i>	<i>Tyler Ryfun</i>
<i>January 31</i>	<i>Julia Snead</i>
<i>January 31</i>	<i>Katherine Gallagher</i>
<i>January 31</i>	<i>Nathan Rising</i>

JANUARY WORSHIP PLANS

1/1: New Year's Day, Communion,
Luke 2:22-40 & Isaiah 61:10-62:3

1/8: Epiphany Sunday,
Matthew 2:1-12 & Isaiah 60:1-6

1/15: Baptism of Our Lord Sunday (observed),
Mark 1:1-11 & Genesis 1:1-5

1/22: 3rd Sunday in Ordinary Time,
Mark 1:14-20 & Jonah 3:1-5, 10

1/29: 4th Sunday in Ordinary Time,
Mark 1:21-28 & Deuteronomy 18:15-22

LECTORS

January 8: Josie Sheldon

January 15: Tim Lease

January 22: Theresa Child

January 29: Keith Mason

GREETERS

January 1: Kiri & Jason Rising, Mary Good

January 8: Kate & Dick Junker, Kirsten Bruder

January 15: Carol & Graham Knox, Theresa Child

January 22: Mary & Chuck Laufer,Carolynn Phillippe

January 29: Tim & Darena Lease, LuAnn McNickle

COMMUNION SERVERS

Tim & Darena Lease, Barb & Woody Hughes

ACOLYTES

January 8: Graceann Foster, Ellie Rising

January 15: Sage Williams, Evie Harris

January 22: Madelyn Salvante, Lindsay Bruder

January 29: Sydney Saba, Todd Westerhoff

JANUARY ADULT EDUCATION

Adult education will open the new year with three programs discussing Pittsburgh Presbytery mission agencies and programs, plus a presentation from a UPMC physician on how the hospitals manage medical ethics issues.

On Sunday, January 8, the work of the Pittsburgh Pastoral Institute (PPI) will be explained by its clinical director, Joanne Bassillios. PPI exists to serve individuals, families and communities through an interfaith ministry of counseling and education.

January 15 will bring Dr. Beth Chaitlin of Shadyside Hospital. She comes to Bower Hill on the recommendation of the UPMC ethics consortium.

Our church mission and outreach committee is presenting the last two adult education programs this month: January 22 will feature a representative of the East Liberty Family Health Care Center, which Bower Hill directly supports. On January 29, The Rev. Cynthia Jackson will be here from presbytery to report on Produce to People, in which a number of Bower Hill members serve.

Adult education sessions are held in the church library at 10:45 a.m. each Sunday unless otherwise announced. There will be no adult education program on January 1. Dave Green is chair of the adult education committee. Phone 412 531 2205. Email davegreenpgh@aol.com.

CHILDREN'S SUNDAY SCHOOL

January 1: NO Classes

January 8th: Classes resume for all ages

NEW ADULT CLASS: *The Basics of Faith*

A new book discussion group will begin on January 8 during the education hour (Sundays, 10:45-11:45) in the Conference Room.

This group will meet *every other week* to discuss belief and the life of faith in light of the readings.

Stay tuned for details.

LENTEN EVENING WORSHIP

The season of Lent begins with an Ash Wednesday service on February 22 at 7:00 p.m. in the sanctuary.

Lenten evening events will take place in the Lounge every Thursday in March: a potluck dinner at 6:30 p.m. followed by a half-hour service of worship / Bible study.

Our Lenten series will conclude with a traditional Maundy Thursday worship service in Fellowship Hall on the evening of April 5.

Watch the weekly bulletin for details as they develop.

**MUSIC NOTES BY JESSICA BAIER**

je@bhccml.com

Office Hours**Sunday:** 7:00 a.m. -1:00 p.m.**Monday:** 10:00 a.m. -3:00 p.m.**Wednesday:** 10:30 a.m. - 3:30 p.m.
and 4:30 p.m. -9:00 p.m.

Thank you to all who shared their musical gifts during the Advent and Christmas season, especially to the members of the Chancel and Handbell Choirs, Jason Rising, Amanda Vosburgh, Rich Salvante, and Jason Robosky.

A PARTRIDGE IN A PEAR TREE.

Have you ever wondered what the words meant when you sang this carol? Jessica found a clipping that explained this carol in one of her grandfather's music books. According to Roman Catholic history, King Henry VIII of England broke with the Roman church in 1553, resulting in the government prohibiting Catholics from openly practicing their faith between 1558 and 1829. The following was devised as a coded message for followers to remember their faith:

The **TRUE LOVE** in the first line refers to the Father God,

and the **PARTRIDGE IN A PEAR TREE** to Jesus Christ on the cross.

TWO TURTLE DOVES refer to the Old and New Testaments.

THREE FRENCH HENS stood for faith, hope and love.

FOUR CALLING BIRDS were the gospels: Matthew, Mark, Luke and John.

FIVE GOLDEN RINGS represented the first books of the Hebrew Bible (or the laws): Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy.

SIX GEESE A-LAYING represent the six days of creation.

SEVEN SWANS A-SWIMMING stood for the seven gifts of the Holy Spirit: Wisdom, Understanding, Counsel, Fortitude, Knowledge, Piety and Fear of the Lord.

EIGHT MAIDS A-MILKING represent the eight Beatitudes:

(1) the poor in spirit, (2) they that mourn, (3) the meek, (4) they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness, (5) the merciful, (6) the pure in heart, (7) the peacemakers, and (8) they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake.

NINE LADIES DANCING were the nine fruits of the Holy Spirit: Love, Joy, Peace, Patience, Kindness, Goodness, Faithfulness, Gentleness and Self Control.

TEN LORDS A-LEAPING denote the Ten Commandments.

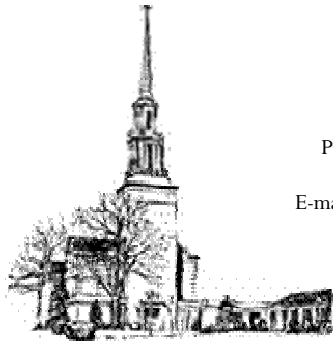
ELEVEN PIPERS PIPING refer to the eleven faithful disciples.

TWELVE DRUMMERS DRUMMING recalled the twelve points of belief in the Apostle's Creed: Belief in (1) God the Father, (2) Son, (3) Holy Spirit, (4) that Jesus Christ was born of the Virgin Mary, (5) Made man, (6) Crucified, (7) Died and was buried, (8) Rose on the third day, (9) Ascended into Heaven, (10) Sits at the right hand of God the Father and will come again, (11) the Resurrection of the dead, and (12) Life Everlasting.

BOWER HILL COMMUNITY CHURCH

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OUR CHURCH STAFF

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Jim Askins, Custodian

THE CHURCH OFFICE

[412] 561-4114

Monday - Friday 9:00 a.m.— 2:30 p.m.

PLEASE PRAY FOR OUR CARE LIST

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

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

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

Ethel La Barbera, 50 Vanadium Road, #130, Bridgeville, PA 15017

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