

~Peace, Goodwill~

*Suddenly, there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God and saying,*

*“Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace, goodwill among people.”*

~Luke 2:13, 14

Dear Members and Friends,

Oh, they had started off with such noble ideals. Christmas for Brad and Kim was going to be a simple affair. They wanted to keep the spirit of the season with a small Advent wreath in their dining room and some tasteful little sprigs of holly on the windowsills. They had collected some ground pine to make a wreath for the front door, too. Their Christmas tree was going to be a fragrant little balsam fir, decorated with old-fashioned strings of popcorn, and snowflakes, and paper angels. No colored lights, no tinsel, or flashy ornaments, and especially none of those silvery threads of “icicles” that you can drape on the tree (and find tangled up in the rotor of the vacuum cleaner well into February). Brad and Kim resisted the temptation to put a light-up-life-sized Frosty the Snowman in the front yard. No plastic reindeer and sleigh on the roof, either. And what about Santa? Well, that was a tough call. They wanted their twins to experience the wonder and the mystery of believing in Santa, but they also wanted to avoid the disappointment that inevitably follows. And so, they never really volunteered much information about the Jolly Elf. They “neither confirmed nor denied” any rumors.

No, Brad and Kim wanted their children’s memories of Christmas to be about the pageant at church, the ancient account of angels and shepherds, the stirring old carols of peace on earth, the candlelight, the roasted turkey, the togetherness. They wanted the gifts to be useful things and few in number, things like socks, and gloves, and maybe just the occasional toy. In fact, they’d even considered the possibility of drawing names and doing a family gift exchange at \$20 per person. That way, they thought, Christmas would be in keeping with their values of simplicity and moderation. The holiday wouldn’t undermine itself by turning the nativity of Christ into a grab-fest. It was a beautiful plan for a pure and non-materialistic Christmas.

But then...there was grandma. On Christmas Eve at Kim’s mother’s house, the young couple grinned at each other sadly across a room knee deep in crumpled wrapping paper. Grandma had easily spent \$500 on each kid. And she bought loud gadgets, too: Leapsters, and iPods, and Wiis. Grandpa had pretended to slip out to buy some eggnog, and he’d returned in a Santa costume, laden with all the many gifts. “Ho-ho-ho!” he cried. There were blue and white lights blinking on a huge, artificial tree. The Chipmunks crooned “Jingle Bells” on the stereo. Grandma had survived the lean Christmases of yesteryear. She knew all too well about waking up on Christmas morning only to discover school pencils and undergarments in the stocking. Her grandchildren were going to have a proper Christmas! Brad and Kim didn’t love it, but they loved her, and so they took it all in stride. After all, aren’t people more important than ideals?

One of the hardest things about being in relationship with other people is accepting their sometimes-awkward expressions of love for us. At times they convey their affection in ways that we find uncomfortable, or showy, or even downright tasteless. People can embarrass us with lavish displays, or bumbling words, or unexpected gestures. They might even give us gifts that we don’t want or know what to do with. The secret is to accept all these things with grace, and smile at the heart that gives them. Consider! After all these centuries, humankind still isn’t quite sure what to do with God’s extravagant self-expression in the person of Jesus. I think a good place to start is to smile, and embrace the “peace and goodwill” of the Giver.

Merry Christmas,

~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

## LOOK at THIS!

### MOM'S GROUP AT BOWER HILL

For all you moms out there of very small children, we want you to know you are not alone at Bower Hill. On Wednesday, Jan 9<sup>th</sup>, from 10:00 a.m. -11:30 a.m. , any interested mom (or dad) is invited to get out of their house and come have some adult conversation with other people who "get it." We will meet in the nursery for our first meeting, although that could change over time. On that day, the group will decide how frequently to meet. Contact Ruth Robbins, Trisha Eliason, or Michelle Snyder for details.



### SENIOR MEN'S GROUP: WEDNESDAYS

Senior men's breakfast will meet on Wednesday, December 5 and January 2. 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 gatherings will continue to be on the first Wednesdays of the month through 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.

### 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.

- December:** No Meeting
- January:** *Gabby* by Gabrielle Giffords & Mark Kelly
- February:** *Snowman* by Jo Nesbo



## Food Collection

### FOOD DRIVE: EVERY SECOND SUNDAY EACH MONTH

Wallace Food Pantry is working to collect food items that they will need to provide Christmas dinner supplies to all their client families. The primary need is for boxed or bagged potato mixes, such as au gratin, scalloped, mashed, etc. Also welcome are cranberry sauce and boxed stuffing. Basics like dry cereal, canned tuna, and soups are always appreciated.



### Deck the Halls

### DECK THE HALLS

Deck the Halls is scheduled for Sunday, December 2, following the Worship Service. Many hands make light work. There will be no Adult Education or Open Spaces on that date so that everyone can help out. Dress is casual! Donna Williams is in charge of the event. Coffee hour will be held as usual.

### DIAPER SHOWER

With the arrival of a new baby come piles of receiving blankets, onesies, and sleepers....often more than one little person can wear. But there are never enough DIAPERS. For that reason, the Bower Hill family will host a "diaper shower" for the following family:

#### February 24: The Askins Family

A table will be set up during coffee hour where you can bring diapers, wipes and well wishes to this family.



### DECEMBER 8TH: SNYDER'S 3RD ANNUAL CHRISTMAS OPEN HOUSE

As last year, all are invited to 3524 Washington Pike, Bridgeville, PA for drinks, appetizers and good conversation.

Come and go anytime between 6:30 - 8:30 p.m. to kick off the Christmas season together



**Snyder's Christmas Open House**  
Saturday, December 8th

**Don't Panic! Dinner's in the Freezer**  
Saturday, January 5  
from 9:00 to Noon

**All-Church Potluck/Haiti Presentation**  
Sunday, January 6, following Worship

**Mom's Group**  
Wednesday, January 9, from 10:00 -11:30 a.m.

**All-Church Sled Riding**  
Saturday, February 23 (weather permitting)

**Lenten Dinner Series: Take-out & Eat-in Video Discussion**  
Thursdays, February 21 & 28, March 7, 14, 21

**Easter Breakfast**  
Sunday, March 31st

**Don't Panic! Dinner's in the Freezer**  
Saturday, April 6 from 9:00 a.m. - Noon

**Men's Outdoor Adventure**  
Saturday, May 18



10-28-2012

Kiera Elizabeth Ryfun  
Daughter of Scott and Mary Beth Ryfun

11-25-2012

Lillian Jean Philson  
Daughter of Laura Magee Philson

**THE BIRTHDAY BLESSING**



**LOOK WHO WAS BORN THIS MONTH**

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.

December 3: Ashley Holdsworth  
Katie Philson

December 5: Marge Beatty  
Noah Eliason

December 6: Joan McAnulty  
Steve Boisvert

December 7: Bill Andrews  
Rich Salvante

December 8: Sophie Hicks

December 10: Kathy Philson  
Christine Henney

December 11: Jason Robosky

December 14: Betsy Prine  
Tim May  
Leo Geis

December 18: Robert Mackey, Jr.

December 19: Martha Van Horn  
Dwayne Fielder

December 22: Beth Gardner

December 28: Catherine Good

December 31: Kurt Kerner  
Betsy Hohlfelder

**LECTORS**

- December 2:** Susan Nilsen  
**December 9:** Chris Robbins  
**December 16:** Tim Lease  
**December 23:** Kiri Rising  
**December 30:** Joan Zakor

**ACOLYTES**

- December 2:** Ellie Rising, Sydney Saba  
**December 9:** Nate Rising, Leo Geis  
**December 16:** Madelyn Salvante, Graceann Foster  
**December 23:** Sage Williams, Julian Salvante  
**December 24:** Lydon Cameron, Anna Meyzk

**GREETERS**

- December 2:** Leonard Heisy, Lynn Foltz, Michelle Snyder  
**December 9:** Dave & Susan Hicks, Beth Wilson  
**December 16:** Alan & Betsy Hohlfelder, Ed Hanke  
**December 23:** Woody & Barb Hughes, Christine Henney  
**December 30:** Phil & Linda Johnson, Mary Lou Frock

**COFFEE HOUR VOLUNTEERS**

- December 2:** The Yohe Family  
**December 9:** The Burke Family  
**December 16:** The Saba Family  
**December 23:** The Hicks Family  
**December 30:** The Williams Family

**COMMUNION SERVERS**

Jason & Kiri Rising, Curt & Kathy Philson  
 Choir: Phyllis Yohe, Joan Zakor

**ADULT EDUCATION**

**On Sunday December 9,** The Rev. Tom Johnson, headmaster of The Neighborhood Academy, will report on progress with inner-city children at this alternative school. **Programs for December 16 and 23 are yet to be announced.** There will be no adult education on Sunday, Dec. 2, or Sunday, Dec. 30.

Adult discussion sessions are held in the church library at 10:45 a.m. 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)

**OPEN SPACES: ADULT DISCUSSION**

Everyone is welcome to join Open Spaces which meets in the Friendship Room during the adult education hour—10:45 a.m.-11:45 a.m. Each week we will have a focused discussion on a relevant faith topic. It's a great opportunity for questioning and spiritual growth in an open environment. Child care is provided.

**DECEMBER WORSHIP PLANS**

**December 2: Communion,  
 First Sunday of Advent**  
 Luke 21:25-36

Please stay after worship to help decorate the church for Advent and Christmas!

**December 9: Second Sunday of Advent**  
 Luke 3:1-6

**December 16: Third Sunday of Advent**  
 Luke 3:7-18

"Repeat the Sounding Joy," a service of worship through music. This traditional service will include a sermon, as usual, but will make use of extra music for Advent and Christmas.

**Dec. 23: Fourth Sunday of Advent**  
 Luke 1:39-45

The children's Christmas pageant will take place during morning worship. This brief play, with all new costumes, is an imaginative retelling of the Nativity from the "Birds of Bethlehem." A sermon will follow.

**Dec. 24: Christmas Eve**

Special music begins at 7:00 p.m. The candlelight service of "Lessons and Carols" for all ages begins at 7:30 p.m. Childcare will be provided in the nursery.

**December 30:  
 The First Sunday of Christmastide**  
 Luke 2:41-52

**ADVENT IN THE CHAPEL**

Our annual Advent Bible studies will take place in the chapel on Thursdays, December 6, 13 and 20, from 7:00 p.m. until 7:45. We will be looking at the early chapters of Matthew and Luke in order to gain a perspective on the lesser known characters of the Advent story: Joseph, Zechariah, and Elizabeth. Childcare will be provided.

## STONE SOUP

*This summer, a group of people interested in how we could view food through the lenses of our faith met together during the Adult Ed. hour. During that time, we dreamed and imagined together how we might be community for each other, as well as good stewards to the earth and to our bodies.*



*Some of the ideas that were born in that group are listed below as upcoming events.*

### **DON'T PANIC! DINNER'S IN THE FREEZER.**

We are hosting this event because our world has become increasingly frantic and we have less time both to feed our families well AND to spend much needed quality time with our friends and neighbors. On Saturday, January 5, from 9:00 a.m. to noon in the church kitchen, any interested folks will meet to cook together, drink coffee, eat pastries, talk and laugh. At the end of our time together, each participant will go home with three healthy casseroles (which will be announced at another date) to put in the freezer which can then be pulled out on a busy night. The ingredients will be pre-purchased and costs will be divided evenly among participants. The deadline for sign-up (on the community bulletin board) will be the last Sunday in December. For those who need it, childcare could be made available. For questions or if you have ideas, please contact Betsy Hohlfelder, Kiri Rising, or Michelle Snyder.

### **ALL-CHURCH POTLUCK/HAITI PRESENTATION**

On Sunday, January 6, after sharing the Lord's Supper in worship, we will take our communion experience to Fellowship Hall where we will have an all-church potluck dinner. All adult education classes will meet there instead of the usual locations. After lunch, the recently returned Haiti team will share a slide show and their experience of doing two water system installations. More information about the potluck will be coming.



MUSIC NOTES BY JESSICA  
BAIER  
je@bhccml.com

#### Office Hours

Sunday: 7:00 a.m.— 12:00 p.m.  
Monday: 10:00 a.m.— 3:00 p.m.  
Tuesday: 10:00 a.m.— 3:00 p.m.  
Wednesday: 11:00 a.m.— 9:00 p.m.  
Thursday, Friday, Saturday as needed

**HANDBELL CHOIR: WEDNESDAYS AT 6:00 PM**  
**CHANCEL CHOIR: WEDNESDAYS AT 7:15 PM**

*To the congregation of Bower Hill Community Church:*

*Thank you so much for your thoughts and prayers, cards and emails, and those who provided meals while I prepared for and recovered from surgery. I am recovering quite well, and await more tests in the near future. I am very thankful for all of you.*

*I am very blessed to be your Director of Music.*

On Friday, December 14, at 8:00 p.m. in the BHCC Sanctuary, the Three Rivers Ringers will provide a special Holiday Concert. The Three Rivers Ringers are Pittsburgh's premier community handbell ensemble, Bower Hill is proud to host them for another concert. There will be a reception following the concert.



The Christmas Pageant will be held on December 23 during our 9:30 a.m. Worship service. It is called, "The Birds of Bethlehem" and tells the story, through music, about the birds who came to visit the baby Jesus before the shepherds and the wise men arrived. Each bird brings its own special gift to the baby. The birds are each represented by an adult solo, an instrumentalist, and of course, costumes that the children will be wearing.

If you have any questions or require more information, please speak with Josie Sheldon or our Director of Music, Jessica Baier.

## STEEPLE REPAIR UPDATE



As most of you know, the steeple was significantly damaged by a storm in September 2010. Upon subsequent inspection and evaluation, additional unrelated damage was discovered. Much of this unrelated damage was due to a lack of available funding to perform proper preventative maintenance and repairs over an extended period. Unfortunately, this unrelated damage is more extensive than the storm damage itself. Although none of the damage will cause an immediate structural failure, repairs are necessary to restore the integrity and weather tightness of the steeple. Without these repairs, the existing damage will continue to progress until significant structural damage occurs. During high wind storms in the past, parts of the steeple have fallen on the roof below, and we have sustained roof damage. The current condition poses a liability with regards to potential personal injury in addition to the potential property damage.

The insurance carrier is requesting that we make the repairs to at least the storm damage for which they reimbursed us. They have also commented that they would like to see the damage caused by neglect to be repaired as well to mitigate potential further damage to the building and limit the possibility of injury to the general public in the event of another storm.

The Building and Grounds Committee met with and solicited opinions from multiple contractors specializing in such repairs. From this input, a formal request for proposal document with material and performance specifications was prepared and sent out to selected qualified contractors. The goal was to establish a repair solution that was sensitive to the existing church building's architectural design and history but was practical in cost and in minimizing future ongoing maintenance.

Quotes were received, evaluated and tabulated. From this, Niko Contracting Co., Inc. has been selected to make the repairs. A pre-award meeting with Niko Contracting Co. was held on Monday, November 5, to go through the final details and expectations.

### **The expected timeline will be:**

4/1/13	Work begins
6/30/13	Substantial completion
7/13/13	Punch list completed and final payment released

### **The budget for the repairs is:**

\$170,000	Cost of repair with contingency
<u>(\$40,000-45,000)</u>	Less insurance proceeds and partial use of major maintenance funds on hand
\$130,000 -125,000	Anticipated total outstanding cost with contingency

The Finance Committee has been working on a plan to address the cost. The tentative plan is to borrow the necessary money using the endowment fund as collateral, which will help minimize the interest rate. Repayment of this line of credit loan will be accomplished either through funds set aside in the annual budget or through a capital fund drive. Grants are being pursued. In addition, Session plans to provide sufficient funds in future budgets to perform necessary maintenance in a more timely manner and thus avoid a repeat of the present situation.

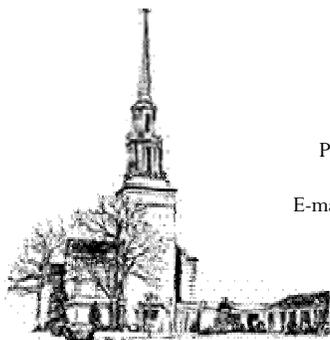
If you have questions, please see members of the Building and Grounds or Finance committees.



## BOWER HILL COMMUNITY CHURCH

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

70 Moffett Street  
Pittsburgh, Pa 15243



Phone: 412-561-4114  
Fax: 412-561-2252  
E-mail: [office@bhccml.com](mailto:office@bhccml.com)  
[www.bhccml.com](http://www.bhccml.com)



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### 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. Betty Sykes  
Rev. Calvin C. Wilson  
Rev. John Yohe

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

Chelsea Leitcher, Youth Director  
[ch@bhccml.com](mailto:ch@bhccml.com)

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

Emily Kerr, Office Administrator  
[office@bhccml.com](mailto:office@bhccml.com)

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  
**Matt Dunfee**, 966 Worthington Woods Blvd, Worthington, OH, 43085  
**Ethel La Barbera**, 50 Vanadium Road, #130, Bridgeville, PA 15017  
**Moody & Alma Johnson**, 13 Charles Street, Dravosburg, PA 15034  
**Velma Noonan**, 50 Vanadium Road, #1119, Bridgeville, PA 15017  
**Pat Nuernberg**, 619 Friendship Circle, Pittsburgh, PA 15241  
**Jeanne Olsen**, 1001 Ajay Drive, South Park, PA 15129  
**Barbara Prunchak**, c/o Crestwood Commons, 100 Crestwood Court #223,  
Wheatfield, NY 14304  
**Tooie Sharkey**, Asbury Place, 760 Bower Hill Rd, Pittsburgh, PA 15243



***Congratulations and prayers to  
Kevin Westerhoff  
and Michele Hunton,  
married on November 9th, 2012  
in Ipswich, MA.***