



**Rev. Brian Snyder**

New Pastor of  
Bower Hill Community Church

## Meet Brian Snyder

When our new pastor, Brian Snyder, decided to be a missionary in the African nation of Cameroon, he wasn't looking to develop his spirituality, he was seeking adventure. Unable to find a teaching job after graduating with an English degree from Mid-America Christian University in Oklahoma City, he took a position as a library clerk. Because of the limited opportunities in Oklahoma, Brian sought advice from his pastor who suggested that Brian could use his education and skills in an overseas location and indicated that there was a need in Cameroon.

Following the minister's advice, Brian decided to go to the African nation where he could use his fluent French to teach English at a church related high school of 900 students where he also acted as administrator.

And then they asked him to preach.

The preaching of God's word as well as teaching a discipleship class for new believers helped Brian to realize that he loved pastoral duties.

After five years in Africa, his path took a few detours before he entered Seminary in 2002. He served as director of "Reader's Service," a PCUSA mission agency located in Stony Point, New York, and then worked for World Mission Initiative here in Pittsburgh. While in seminary Brian provided Pulpit Supply and won various preaching awards including Pittsburgh Seminary's "McConkey Award in Homiletics."

Brian graduated from Pittsburgh Theological Seminary with a Master of Divinity in 2005 and was ordained as a PCUSA Minister of Word and Sacrament in March of 2007. He was called to serve as solo pastor for The Presbyterian Church of Kane in Kane, PA a small town in the northern central part of the state.

He is currently working towards his Doctor of Ministry at Colgate Rochester Crozer Divinity School which he will finish in 2012. His doctoral dissertation is on "Sources of Authority for the Postmodern Pulpit."

Brian isn't all work and no play. He is interested in Benedictine spirituality, especially the writings of Sister Joan Chittester, a well-known nun and activist in Erie, PA. To paraphrase one of her philosophies: The key to the spiritual life is balance. Each day should include a little bit of work, a little bit of rest, a little bit of play and a little bit of prayer.

For Brian, the play component means hiking. He finds that a two to three hour hike each Sunday gives him the strength to do everything else in his life. His passion for the sport is so great that he maintains a blog about hiking in the Allegheny National Forest.

## Why We Chose Brian

Besides being an excellent preacher, Brian is a pastor who loves pastoral care. He has a strong desire to get to know us and to love us. He's had several years of mission experience as well as having served as solo pastor in his current call. Yet, he is young enough to relate to the young families we want to attract to Bower Hill.

## Why Brian Chose Us

"Bower Hill captured my interest the moment I read the slogan 'Growing Together in Faith, Reason, Service, and Love'," says Brian. "Feelings, too, are an important part of our faith journey, but I'm drawn to Bower Hill's commitment to think about the life of faith." Brian is also attracted to our church's long tradition of social witness, its fully engaged laypersons, and its potential in ministry. He says, "I'm looking for a church where my family will be comfortable, a place we can call 'home' for a long time to come."



Meet the Snyder Family  
Michelle  
Chloe (5) & Greta (4)

Brian and Michelle Snyder are not strangers to Pittsburgh. The couple met and married while students at Pittsburgh Theological Seminary. Michelle put her academic career on hold in 2004 when their first daughter Chloe was born at 1lb 1oz and spent four months in Magee-Women's Hospital. Despite her challenging entry into the world, Chloe is developmentally normal and enjoys playing with her sister Greta, who was born the following year.

Michelle returned to seminary and graduated with dual degrees (MDiv/MSW) in 2009. She currently works as a mental health therapist.

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**Sunday August 1st-Brians's first Sunday as  
Pastor of  
Bower Hill Community Church**