Dear Members and Friends,

Have you ever found yourself among a bunch of happy, talkative people who were so glad to see each other that they barely noticed a stranger (you) in their midst? I had that feeling some years ago when I was asked to spend a week living and lecturing at a well-known summer event in our region. (Names are withheld to protect the guilty.) I was a missionary, just home from the field, and this was a yearly event that was all about missions and missionaries. It should have been a perfect fit. But alas! The people who attended this annual gathering had been seeing each other for one week every summer since time immemorial. You can’t blame them for sweeping past a stranger to make a beeline for familiar faces. After greeting me hurriedly, they all rushed off to talk to their old once-a-year friends, leaving me to sit alone, eat alone, and walk the grounds alone. I’m not threatened by solitude. I often enjoy it. And yet, it felt awkward to be a visitor to an unfamiliar group of people, and one of their lecturers, but left entirely to my own devices. They sang their hand-clapping songs, and listened to their guest speakers, and complained about their declining numbers. “We need to get new people to come next year,” they would say. I’m just not sure they truly wanted newcomers. What they really wanted was for their old-comers to live forever. They wanted to press their beautiful memories of that annual experience into the pages of a timeless book, like some fading autumn leaf, and keep it forever just as they remembered. They weren’t prepared to welcome new people into the fold. It’s too bad, too, because they really did have something singularly good to offer.

In time, you’ll forget the words that people have said to you, but you’ll never forget the way they made you feel. And now, years later, I’m a local pastor who could be a cheerleader for that summer event. I could be encouraging my congregation to take part in it annually. But I don’t. It’s not that I bear a grudge; I really do understand the rare joy of getting caught up with old friends. It’s just that I felt snubbed there—a decade and a half ago. I probably won’t go back because I associate that event with a feeling of isolation, which isn’t anything I want for myself or anyone else…especially among fellow Christians.

By comparison, I once went hiking in the Allegheny National Forest only to find that I’d wandered into the annual gathering of the Rainbow People—a New Age group that meets once a year on public lands to chant, and dance, and meditate amid clouds of marijuana smoke. Several hundred of them were doing a pagan circle dance in a large clearing, all to the beat of an African drum. It’s like an old fashioned camp meeting for New Agers, and the whole thing always comes to a crescendo on July 4, when 12,000 people join in to chant, and meditate, and pray for peace. I was just a local, out for a hike, but many of these folks had traveled all the way from the West Coast to attend the annual event in the forest where I walked weekly. Can you believe that nearly everyone I encountered greeted me? (It became tiring.) Many of these visitors even yelled, “Welcome home!” It was an odd thing for a visitor to yell to a native. Some offered me food…and some offered me other forms of, um, refreshment—that I declined. (Alcohol is not permitted inside the Rainbow People’s camp, but alcohol is not what I’m talking about.) A few people struck up conversations.

How is it possible that I, a Christian pastor and former missionary, felt more welcomed by the Rainbow People than I did by fellow Christians who had gathered to talk about missions? Hebrews commands us to welcome the stranger. This has implications for our national and churchly lives, but what does it say to our life as a congregation? Are we more like the unnamed Christian gathering that made me feel so unwelcome, or the Rainbow People who embraced me despite my obvious allegiances to the establishment? I sometimes hear church members say, “I can’t greet visitors. What if they’re church members that I don’t know?” Here’s a little trick. Instead of saying, “Hello, are you visiting?” try saying, “I don’t think I know you, my name is…”

In Christ's Peace,
Brian
Join us in the Friendship Room each Sunday following worship, as the Rev. Dr. Fred Leasure, Parish Associate, and church member Peter Smith lead a discussion of the day’s scripture readings. Come join us for a change of pace and some lively discussion.

SUMMER SUNDAY SCHOOL

Children from preschool through completed second grade will be combined for summer fun during the worship service. Children should remain in worship until the Children's Sermon. Then they will be escorted to room 110 (downstairs lounge) for games, crafts, and to enjoy the playground. Parents should pick up their children from room 110 after worship.

Completed third grade and above are invited to stay in worship with their parents. Children’s bulletins are available in the Narthex. Childcare for infants and toddlers is offered during worship in the nursery.

TALKING ABOUT TOMORROW

BHCC has undertaken a series of church-wide conversations about the identity and direction of our congregation. These conversations are supposed to be fun, low-key, stress-free, and above all, multigenerational. We want YOU to take part! Our next event will take place on Sunday, July 9, immediately following worship. (There will be no Bible study that day.) Just stay for coffee hour, expect it to take A WHOLE HOUR, and bring a brunch dish to share. We will be discussing the results of our last Talking-about-Tomorrow gathering and the opportunities that lie ahead with both DART and the Braillists moving out of our building. Please plan to attend.

Older youth are welcomed and encouraged at this event. For the younger elementary and below, childcare will be provided downstairs in the Adult Lounge (110), which allows easy access to the playground.

Please sign up on the bulletin board outside the Friendship Room, or follow instructions in the email blast from the church office regarding online sign-up.

The church office will be closed on Monday, July 3, and Tuesday, July 4, in observance of Independence Day.

WORSHIP PLANS

July 2: 4th Sunday after Pentecost, Communion
Rev. Dr. Fred Leasure is preaching.

July 9: 5th Sunday after Pentecost
Genesis 24:42-67; Matthew 11:16-19, 25-30

July 16: 6th Sunday after Pentecost
Genesis 25:19-34; Matthew 13:1-9, 18-23

July 23: 7th Sunday after Pentecost
Genesis 28:10-19a; Matthew 13:24-30, 36-43

July 30: 8th Sunday after Pentecost
Romans 8:26-39; Matthew 13:31-33, 44-52

August 6: 9th Sunday after Pentecost, Communion
Rev. Dr. Betty Sykes is preaching.

August 13: 10th Sunday after Pentecost
Genesis 37:3-4, 18-28; Matthew 14:22-33

August 20: 11th Sunday after Pentecost
Genesis 45:1-15; Matthew 15:21-28

August 27: 12th Sunday after Pentecost
Romans 12:1-8; Matthew 16:13-20
Session Responsibilities (2017-2018)

Clerk of Session
Bill Cadwell

Church Treasurer
Gordon Mitchell

Commissioner to Presbytery
Cathy Morgan

Administration and Personnel
Session Chair: Dick Headley
Session Member: Susan Hicks

Mission and Outreach
Session Chair: Pat Jacobs
Session Member: Kara Pepicelli

Adult Education
Session Chair: Linda James
Session Member: Dick Headley

Nominating
Session Chair: Keith Mason
Session Member: Gordon Mitchell

Building and Grounds
Session Chair: Ben Boisvert
Session Member: Dave Hicks

Parish Life
Session Chair: Theresa Child
Session Member: Pat Jacobs

Christian Education
Session Chair: Deb Carter
Session Member: Susan Hicks

Worship and Music
Session Chair: Andy Druckenbrod
Session Member: Sarah Cannon

Communication
Session Chair: Jim Cannon
Session Member: Theresa Child

Youth Ministries
Session Chair: Alan Hohlfelder
Session Member: Kent Jones

Finance and Stewardship
Session Chair: Mike Riemer
Session Member: Gordon Mitchell
Youth Group Outing—
Saturday, August 26
Pittsburgh Riverhounds Soccer game
Be sure to join us for our fall kickoff youth event, when we go to the Riverhounds game. Plan to meet at the church at 6:00 p.m. In order that enough tickets are reserved, please RSVP to the Evite from Amy Grella. If you have any questions, please email Amy at am@bhccml.com.

BE SURE TO MARK THESE SPECIAL WEEK-LONG ACTIVITIES IN YOUR CALENDARS:
July 17-21 – Day Camp /Jr. Day Camp week (students in completed 5th & 6th grades can still attend Day Camp, and the older students (completed 7th and above) can help with our Jr. Day Camp.
July 23-28 – Mission Possible Trip to Camp Crestfield. This is available for students completed 5th grade and up. The registration deadline has been extended – please contact Amy if you are interested in attending.

SHIM MISSION OPPORTUNITY
Each summer, over 100 refugee children enjoy summer fun and learning at South Hills Interfaith Ministries’ Kamp Kaleidoscope.

Southminster Presbyterian Church prepares Bag Lunches of Peanut Butter & Jelly, Pretzels, Carrots, Grapes and Cookies for the campers. Please join us in the Kitchen at Southminster from 7:00—8:00 p.m. on the following Mondays: June 26, July 10, 17, 24, and July 31. For more information, contact Stacy Hefferin (412-343-9686) or (slhefferin@yahoo.com).

PARAMENTS
On Pentecost Sunday, the last set of our new paraments was displayed. The Communication Committee has posted information and pictures of the paraments on the church website. The postings include information that Sarah Cannon supplied about the making of them, symbolism, when used, and other fascinating information. You can see the information by clicking on About Us in the top menu, then clicking on Media in the right side menu, then clicking on View Paraments in the list on the page. The first post, called Paraments—Overview, has the full information about all of the paraments. It includes links to the second through sixth posts, which contain the same information and more detailed pictures for each set of paraments.

A big thank you to all who were involved in the project.

Thanks to everybody’s hard work and donations, flea market proceeds continue to be spent on projects that improve life here at BHCC. Most recently, flea market funds paid for the new Listening Assistive System in the sanctuary. At the most recent Session meeting, it was mentioned that for those who use the headsets to hear the worship service, the quality of the new system is far superior to the old system!!

Collection for the fall flea market has begun. Items can be dropped off Monday through Friday during office hours or Sunday before or after worship. If you are able, please take all items directly upstairs to the loft; otherwise leave items on the benches outside Fellowship Hall.

PLEASE do not include clothes or old TVs. All items must be clean and in working condition.

If you have any questions, please contact Theresa Child at (412) 429-9519 or at treetoowon@yahoo.com.

PONDERINGS FROM THE PA
Have you ever received a package you did not expect and you had no idea what was inside? If you are like me, your curiosity would not let you rest till you opened it to find out who sent it and what was inside. There can be such excitement in discovery! Those moments of wondering grant to us a sense of anticipation that just cannot be matched.

Each day we awaken to the receipt of the package of God’s unending grace. In spite of the detailed plans we may have made, or the long list of things we know need to be accomplished, there are unexpected opportunities to share our faith. It can be as simple as a smile for someone who is frowning, a hug for someone who is lonely, or a simple act of patience and unexpected kindness. Not only can those moments change the attitude of another, they can bring to us the warmth and sense of fulfillment that only comes from the gift of the Holy Spirit.

Experience that discovery of God at work in your life today.
COMMUNITY NOTES

Want to be included on this page? Submissions are typically due the 15th of every month for the next month’s publication (unless otherwise announced). 412-561-4114 or office@bhccml.com

SENIOR MEN’S BREAKFAST GROUP
For the month of July, the senior men's breakfast will be held on the second Tuesday of the month, July 11, due to a conflict with Independence Day on the first Tuesday, July 4. As always, the group will convene at 8:00 a.m. in King's Restaurant on Route 50 near the end of Greentree Road. All are welcome.

WALLACE FOOD PANTRY COLLECTION
The next collection date is Sunday, July 9. Wallace Food Pantry is grateful to the members of Bower Hill Community Church for their generous support of this ministry to our hungry neighbors! Any donations of non-perishable food items, toiletry items, and paper products are welcomed. Collection bins are located in the hallways outside the church office and the Nursery.

BOOKWORMS
This group meets monthly on the fourth Tuesday at 7:30 p.m., in Room 103, for fellowship and discussion of a chosen title. Everyone is welcome to read the book for the month and join the discussion.

July 27
Underground Railroad, by Coleson Whitehead
August 22
Man Called Ove, by Fredrik Backman
September 26
Wright Brothers, by David McCullough

SANCTUARY FLOWER/DONATION DATES
Would you like to purchase sanctuary flowers or make a donation to the charity of your choice in memory or honor of a loved one? At this time, Sunday, July 23, and Sunday, August 20, are available. Please call or email the office to request information.

NEWSLETTER DEADLINE NOTICE
The deadline for the September Kickoff edition of the newsletter is August 15. Newsletter volunteers will meet August 24. There will be no mailing to fold in July. Please call the office with any questions or concerns.

CRAFT/VENDOR FAIR
On Saturday, November 4, Bower Hill Church, in partnership with Good Shepherd Lutheran Church, will hold a craft/vendor fair called Women Helping Women, with proceeds benefiting Family Promise. If you are a woman crafter or vendor and are interested in participating in this event, or if you are interested in helping, please contact Jean Miewald or Joan McAnulty. More information about this event will be forthcoming, so stay tuned!

WESTERN PA DIAPER BANK
Our next collection date for disposable diapers will be Sunday, July 16. Sizes 4, 5 and 6 are most in need for babies. XL diapers are needed for the geriatric population. The collection container is the Pack’N Play located in the hallway directly outside of the Nursery.

Tax-deductible monetary donations may be made by a check payable to Western Pennsylvania Diaper Bank and mailed to 2546 Centre Ave., Pittsburgh, PA 15219. Please note our church name on the Memo line of your check.

Please remember to save diaper coupons that you collect but don’t use, and place them in the envelope near the Pack’N Play.

BOWER HILL WEEK AT CHAUTAUQUA INSTITUTION
What do first-rate performers, artists, philosophers, theologians, politicians, writers, and clowns all have in common? They all come to the lovely lakeside Chautauqua Institution each summer to share insights and inspiration with the public. Bower Hill Church members will be converging on the Institution during Week Seven, August 5 through August 12, when the topic will be “The Nature of Fear.” Our pastor will arrange at least one opportunity each day for Bower Hill members and friends to get together and discuss the day’s ideas. However, you must secure your own lodging and gate passes—and find your housing soon! Please visit ciweb.org. Chautauqua is closer than you think, both in miles and in calendar days. Please contact Michelle Snyder for details.
July 1: D.J. Geis, Mary Laufer
      Katie Krol, Benjamin Robosky
July 2: Craig Frock
July 4: Glenn Child, Jennifer Gardner
      Brian Harman
July 5: Henry Carter, Kristen Mackey
July 11: Jeremiah Wagner
July 12: Holly Smith
July 13: Debbie Seifert
      Carolyn Westerhoff
July 14: Glenna Creaves Karkaria
July 16: Alison & Andrew Shwallon
      Ella Siefken
July 18: Ray Henney, III
July 19: Adaline Gray, Ruby Siefken
      Amanda Vosburgh
July 20: Linda Johnson
      Kristoffer Lansbery
      Matthew Linaburg
July 22: Mandy Belardi
July 24: Wyatt Gray
      Dave May
July 27: Preston Harness
July 29: Matthew Dunfee
      Jennifer Foster
      Dawn Kane
      Elaine Mackey
      Ruth Robbins
July 30: Jim Burke, Bob Bridges
Aug. 3: Emmalyn Gray
Aug. 4: JoAnn Goode
      Mary Beth Waine
Aug. 7: Maya Williams
      Peter Smith
Aug. 10: Amanda Gray
Aug. 13: Amber Gier
Aug. 14: Nancy Green
      Craig Grella
      Sage Williams
Aug. 15: Noelle Grella
Aug. 16: Monette Shuttleworth
Aug. 18: Sandra Caffo
      Emma Hicks
Aug. 21: Bill Cadwell
Aug. 23: Ella Belardi, Bob Ferrero
      Joan Bridges
Aug. 28: Michela Robbins
Aug. 29: Graham Harman
Aug. 30: Andrew Smith
Aug. 31: Jean Miewald
      Catherine Morgan

THE BIRTHDAY BLESSING:
Please take a moment to read through the names, pray for them, and offer them your best wishes!

The Worship and Music committee has purchased (with the help of Flea Market money) a new hearing assistance system for those with a hearing loss. The old system was light-based and required the listener to have a direct line of sight to the transmitter which was above the flowers in the front right side of the church. The new system is FM-based which provides better coverage. The transmitter is located with the soundboard equipment. The old system had a combined receiver and earphones. The new system has multiple options for listening. Each member who utilizes the system will use a receiver that is a little larger than a cell phone.

Members with hearing aids with built-in T-coils
If you have a hearing aid that has a built in T-coil, then you can use an induction neck loop that is plugged into the receiver. The receiver picks up the FM signal and puts it into the induction loop which transmits a signal to the T-coil in your hearing aid. The neck loop goes around you head and is plugged into the receiver. You will use the on/off and volume control on the receiver to adjust the loudness. About 50% of the new hearing aids come with a built in T-coil. You may need to have your hearing aid programmed to use the T-coil.

Members with hearing aids without built-in T-coils or members without hearing aids
If you don’t have a T-coil in your hearing aids or don’t use hearing aids, you can ask for headphones which are plugged into the receiver. The receiver picks up the FM signal and outputs the sound through the headset similar to the old headsets. The headphones will plug into the receiver. You will use the on/off and volume control on the receiver to adjust the loudness. With the new receivers, you can plug in any ear buds or headphone that has a mini plug – 1/8”.

We have eight receivers with three induction loops and five headsets. We can purchase additional receivers, induction loops and headsets at a reasonable cost as the need arises. So, please try out the new equipment and let Glenn Child, Gordon Mitchell or the ushers know of questions or problems.
Sunday Transportation

Need a ride to worship? The deacons would like to provide a ride to worship for members who need one. Please contact the church office several days before Sunday worship, and someone will help schedule your ride.

Are You Willing to Give a Ride?

The deacons are compiling a list of people who might be willing to give rides to church. There are several people who do not drive who might come to church if they had a ride. If you would be willing to offer rides, please call the church office at 412-561-4114.