

AVON CLUB PRESENTS

BEN AVON

HOLIDAY HOUSE TOUR



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All Aboard for the Ben Adon Holiday House Tour!

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Western Pennsylvania Office**

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(Irwin, Pittsburgh, Allegheny County Washington & Westmoreland County)

724-640-7246 (RAIN) RainRoofingAndSolar.com

#PA085791

A MESSAGE FROM OUR PRESENTING SPONSOR

DEAR BEN AVON HOLIDAY HOUSE TOUR GUESTS,

Ho ho ho! We at Rain Roofing and Solar are absolutely delighted and jolly to be sponsoring this year's Avon Club's special charity event - spreading holiday cheer far and wide! As we deck the halls for our 70th year in business, we're filled with gratitude for our wonderful community. To all our cherished customers, we wish you a Merry Christmas brimming with joy, laughter, and twinkling lights, plus a sparkling, prosperous New Year ahead! If you have any questions or concerns, don't hesitate to give us a jingle - we are here to help!

As we celebrate this season of giving, we're reminded that it's the people - our friends, neighbors, and loyal customers - who make our community shine brightest. Thank you for letting us be part of your homes and your holidays. From all of us at Rain Roofing and Solar, may your days be merry, your hearts be light, and your roofs be beautiful and bright!



George Rain

Rain Roofing and Solar
7950 Route 30
North Huntingdon PA
724-640-7246





THE 2025 BEN AVON HOLIDAY HOUSE TOUR

The Avon Club proudly presents its 2025 Holiday House Tour.

This year, we welcome you to the Borough of Ben Avon, where visitors will tour five beautiful homes. The homes we have chosen represent a wide variety of architectural styles and designs, with special attention paid to preserve the original character of each house. Each home is beautifully decorated, to not only honor the historical features, but also to demonstrate the unique style and taste of the homeowners. A detailed history of each home is included in this program.

Through the Avon Club Foundation, a non-profit public charity, we engage in a variety of civic activities to promote and support our community and beyond. We plant and manage the beautiful flower beds along the Ohio River Boulevard, award scholarships to graduating young women, and provide financial assistance to local charities, schools, and community projects. Over the past 81 years, the club has distributed over \$600,000 in donations to many individuals, institutions, and organizations. Our volunteers now come together to present the Holiday House Tour.

There are three main purposes of this year's house tour. One is to provide visitors with a deep historical perspective of our area from the earliest records of settlement through decades of change, represented by architectural diversity. The second is for visitors to simply have fun as we share our community with you during this most festive holiday season. Finally, the tour is the Avon Club's major fundraising event. The proceeds of this event will allow us to continue our mission: to provide needed support in the areas of education, recreation, preservation, and social responsibility.

Thank you for sharing your day with us and supporting our event.

Avon Club President
Susan Geist

House Tour Chair
Jennifer Wagner



ABOUT THE AVON CLUB

The Avon Club is a social and community service organization with membership open to women age 18 or older who live or work in the Avonworth School District. In 1944, Avon Club was founded by women whose husbands were serving in World War II. Club members aided the war effort by rolling bandages, knitting sweaters and corresponding with servicemen. Once the war ended, the purpose of the Club shifted to social interests and to the promotion of civic participation for the betterment of the community. As the Club became more vital to the community and its success in fundraising grew, the need to form a foundation was envisioned.

Our Goals & Vision

We are a social and philanthropic group of more than 60 women who live or work in the Avonworth school district. The Avon Club's vision is to make our community the best place to live, work, learn and play in the Pittsburgh area while caring for the needs of others. We do this through our goals of Education, Preservation, Recreation and Social Responsibility.

What we do

Members meet on the first Thursday of most months to plan and execute fundraisers and community events. Committees distribute scholarships to local students and grants to local organizations, maintain the flower beds on Ohio River Boulevard, plan and run the annual Ben Avon Fall Festival, raise funds for worthy causes through events like the Holiday House Tour and organize social events.

Grants

The Avon Club Foundation makes distributions to those organizations serving our community, as well as other worthy, tax-exempt organizations providing services which otherwise might be unavailable or requiring additional support from local or federal government programs. Goals to improve the community include the areas of Education, Recreation, Preservation and the Environment, and Social Responsibility.

Scholarships

We award scholarships to exemplary female senior students residing within the Avonworth School District (either attending Avonworth High School, Private Schools or home schooled). Evaluation considers academics, extra-curricular activities, and enthusiasm in future educational and professional goals. Applications for the 2026 scholarships will be available in late December.



Sewing Fine Seams - in the garden of Mrs. W. K. Unverzagt, of Ben Avon (right) are members of the Avon Club, a Ben Avon civic organization. The group will hold a bazaar November 7. Meantime, Mrs Joseph H. Smith and Mrs William T. McClelland join their hostess in sewing, crocheting and painting a collection of items to be sold at the benefit.



Avon Club table at Fall Festival 2023



Scan the QR codes or visit theavonclub.org

HOUSE TOUR GUIDELINES:

- Present ticket at each house.
- Booties are provided with your ticket.
Please wear them in each home and dispose at the end of your tour.
- Houses can be toured in any order
- No busing or transportation provided
- Please do not block driveways
- Eating, smoking and vaping are not permitted in any of the homes
- No restrooms available in the homes, please see map for locations
- Children 12 and over are welcome with an adult and a ticket
- Bring your umbrellas, the tour goes on rain or shine

ACTIVITIES TO ENJOY IN AND AROUND BEN AVON DURING THE TOUR:

Food & Beverage

Anchor & Anvil Coffee Bar

7221 Church Avenue, Ben Avon Enjoy warm coffees and teas, smoothies, fresh-baked goods, and sandwiches between the hours of 8:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.

Community Presbyterian Church

7501 Church Avenue, Ben Avon Serving soups, sandwiches, desserts, and beverages during the house tour 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

A “Cookie Walk” is also scheduled to stock up on your favorite holiday cookies!

Gourmet Goodie Sale

6825 Church Avenue, Ben Avon (House #2) Festive cookies, desserts, breads and all your favorite holiday baked goods available for sale during the house tour from 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. and 6:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m.

Craft Shows

Community Presbyterian Church Craft Fair and Cookie Walk 7501 Church Avenue, Ben Avon 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m

Avonworth Band Craft Show

1310 & 1320 Roosevelt Road
Ohio Township 11:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m

Digital Map of Local Business’



Scan to check out a listing and map of our local shops and restaurants in the area!

PEOPLE PLACES THINGS

The Avonworth Historical Society will celebrate its 40th anniversary in 2024! Our mission is to preserve, promote and disseminate the history of our local communities, in particular, Emsworth, Kilbuck Township, Ben Avon, Ben Avon Heights and Ohio Township. We sponsor six public lectures annually, produce quarterly newsletters for our membership filled with informative local history and photographs, own and maintain the Dickson Log House by the Emsworth Locks and Dams and open our archives for public research.

We are currently involved in renovating the original Elste's grocery store at 7119 Church Avenue in Ben Avon for our future office space. Become a member or donate at **avonworth-history.org**

FOLLOW
US

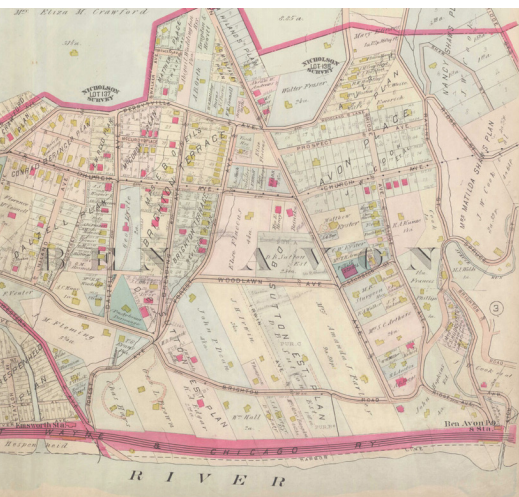


DONATE
NOW!



THE HISTORY OF BEN AVON

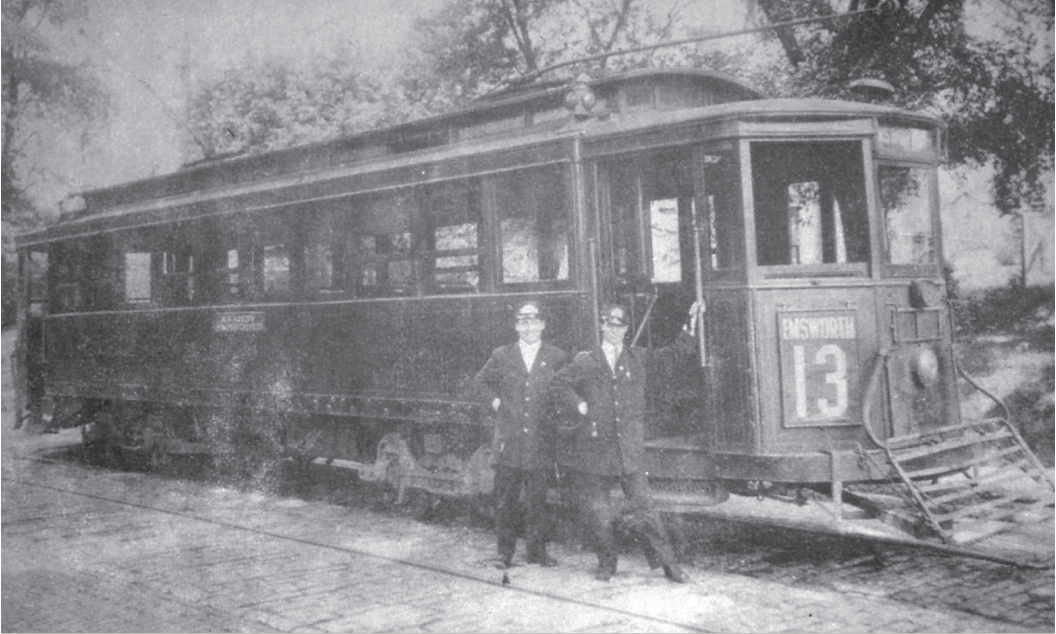
The lands in western Pennsylvania were the traditional territory of indigenous people of many tribes, including the Osage, Adena, Hopewell and Monongahela people. The end of the Revolutionary War in 1782 brought an end to British claim to these lands. Over the next 15 years through multiple conflicts and treaty agreements, the indigenous people relinquished possession. In 1784 the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania claimed a large tract of land here.



The place that was to become Ben Avon began as a farming community in the early 19th century.

The place that was to become Ben Avon began as a farming community in the early 19th century. By the end of the 19th century, the focus shifted to residential development along the bluff above the Ohio River along Brighton Road. The early residential development was characterized by large lots and impressive houses. Brighton Road has been largely replaced by the Ohio River Boulevard. Bits and pieces of the original Brighton Road can still be found in Ben Avon and the other northern boroughs. The first phase of the transition from farming to the beginnings of suburban development was spurred on by the development of the railroad along the northern banks of the Ohio River. This development began with the Ohio and Pennsylvania Railroad's first section — from Allegheny City to New Brighton in Beaver County — which opened in 1851. In 1856, the railroads between Pittsburgh and Chicago were consolidated as the Pittsburgh, Fort Wayne and Chicago Railroad (PFW&C). The railroad built a series of stations and freight depots along the route to provide passenger and freight traffic. They included stations at Dixmont, Emsworth, Ben Avon (originally Laurel), and Birmingham. These stations allowed people to live in the countryside and commute into Allegheny City to work. In 1857, the opening of the Fort Wayne Bridge over the Allegheny River extended rail service into the City of Pittsburgh.

Passenger traffic on the PFW&C continued well into the 20th century. After World War II, competition from the trolley and automobile put an end to local commuter passenger service.

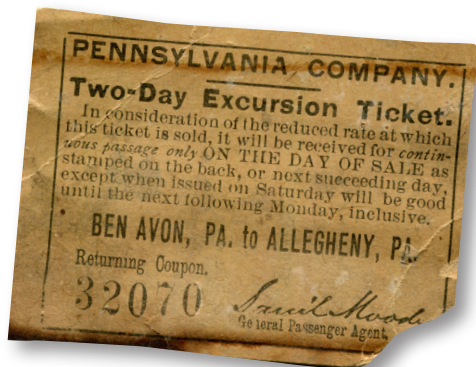


The Emsworth "Ol' 13" trolley car ran along the BA&ESRC Line from Emsworth.

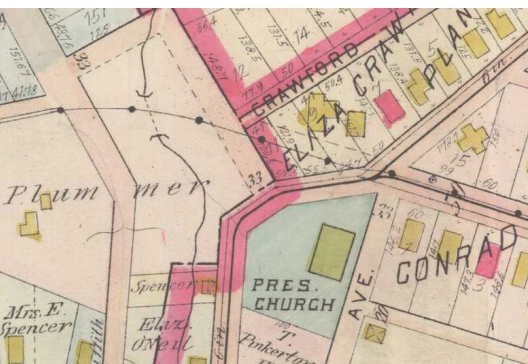
After the Civil War, the land in Ben Avon was slowly subdivided into residential lots. Passenger rail service encouraged residential development close to the railroad in Ben Avon. The residential development depicted on an 1897 G. M. Hopkins & Company insurance map is clustered around two stations — Ben Avon and Emsworth. The map also shows that most of the Borough had been divided into lots. Only a few of the lots, however, were occupied by houses. Church Avenue ran from Perrysville Avenue to Dickson Avenue, but did not provide connections to Emsworth and Avalon. Ben Avon was cut off by Vinegar Hollow to the west and the Spruce Run Ravine to the east.

The real development of Ben Avon came with the advent of the streetcar. The initial plan to make the missing connections between Ben Avon and neighboring Emsworth was the formation of Ben Avon Street Railway Company in 1899, which was expanded to become the Ben Avon and Emsworth Street Railway Company (the BA&ESRC) in 1903. The planned route was along Brighton Road-

from the east to Dickson Avenue, then north on Dickson to Church Avenue, and then west on Church to Emsworth. This route depended on a yet-to-be built bridge over Spruce Run. The route was eventually shifted to the north, requiring two smaller bridges over Spruce Run and Ravine Avenue. The BA&ESRC began work in 1903 and, after a number of delays, was completed in 1906. The delays included a strike by the structural iron and steel workers.



THE HISTORY OF BEN AVON



The line with dots shows the path of the street railway. Fill is indicated to cross over the small creek of Vinegar Hollow. Dotted lines show the path of Church Avenue across the three southern lots on Perrysville Avenue from the plan of Elizabeth Crawford.

In 1905, the two bridges (also called viaducts) were built to carry the streetcar lines over Ravine Avenue and Spruce Run making the connection with Avalon. At the other end, Vinegar Hollow was filled in to make the connection with Emsworth and a third bridge was built in Emsworth, this one over Lowries' Run. Ravine Avenue remains a paper street and serves as the driveway for a house overlooking the ravine.

To make it possible to build and operate a street railway trolley line, adjustments were made. Lewis Avenue, a short stretch of street between Dickson Avenue and Ravine Avenue, was realigned to extend Church Avenue. To the west, a section of Perrysville Avenue lost a building lot and parts of two more lots to allow Church Avenue to connect with Center Avenue into Emsworth. The street

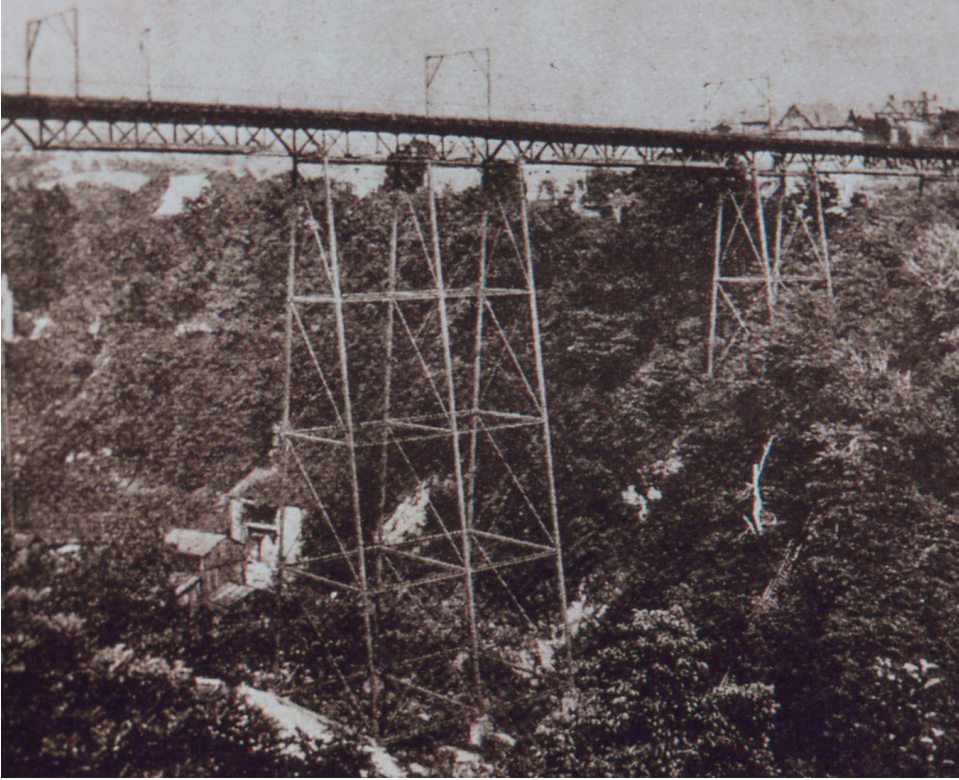
car line passed through Emsworth along Center Avenue as far as Pennsylvania Avenue. It was eventually extended as far as Hazelwood Avenue with a loop across from the Emsworth Inn.

When houses were built in the early 1900's, the arrival of street cars was anticipated. Investors were developing business plans and borrowing to create a network of street car lines that at its peak in 1918 had over 600 miles of track. In 1900, the line from Allegheny City through Bellevue and Avalon was already in business. By 1906, the streetcar line was extended through Ben Avon and Emsworth.

The delay in the development of Ben Avon into the late 19th and early 20th centuries ensured that when most of the development came, it came with paved streets, and water and sewer systems. Today, we take these amenities for granted. In the mid-19th century this was not the case. The residential development created a demand for services that townships were unwilling or unable to provide. The solution was to incorporate as a borough. This enabled the local government to levy the taxes and fees needed to meet the demand for services.



Ben Avon Station



Built in 1904, the Lowries Run Viaduct connected the rest of Emsworth to the BA&ESRC line.

Ben Avon may have been destined to be a quiet residential community. It was founded and grew on the land defined by the ravines, runs, and hillsides. The industrial and commercial expansion from Pittsburgh outward stopped before it could reach Ben Avon and its immediate neighbors. The Dickson heirs moved slowly in the subdivision of their property into residential lots. Ben Avon was not an isolated community. The railroad, the street cars, and Ohio River Boulevard all provided vital contact between Ben Avon and the surrounding world. It remains, in the words of many real estate agents, a quiet suburb only minutes away from the big city. The history of Ben Avon was provided by the Avonworth Historical Society.

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It remains, in the words of many real estate agents, a quiet suburb only minutes away from the big city.

2025 BEN AVON HOLIDAY HOUSE TOUR

Checklist

- ❶ 6630 BRIGHTON ROAD
- ❷ 6825 CHURCH AVENUE &
GOURMET GOODIE SALE
- ❸ BEN AVON BOROUGH HALL
7101 CHURCH AVENUE
- ❹ 337 BREADING AVENUE
- ❺ 7320 BRIGHTON ROAD
- ❻ 6925 OHIO RIVER BOULEVARD
COMMUNITY PRESBYTERIAN
CHURCH OF BEN AVON
- ❼ 7501 CHURCH AVENUE



Ticket Sales and Pick-Up
9am-3pm - Anchor & Anvil Coffee Shop
7221 Church Avenue
5pm-7:30pm - Ben Avon Borough Hall
7101 Church Avenue



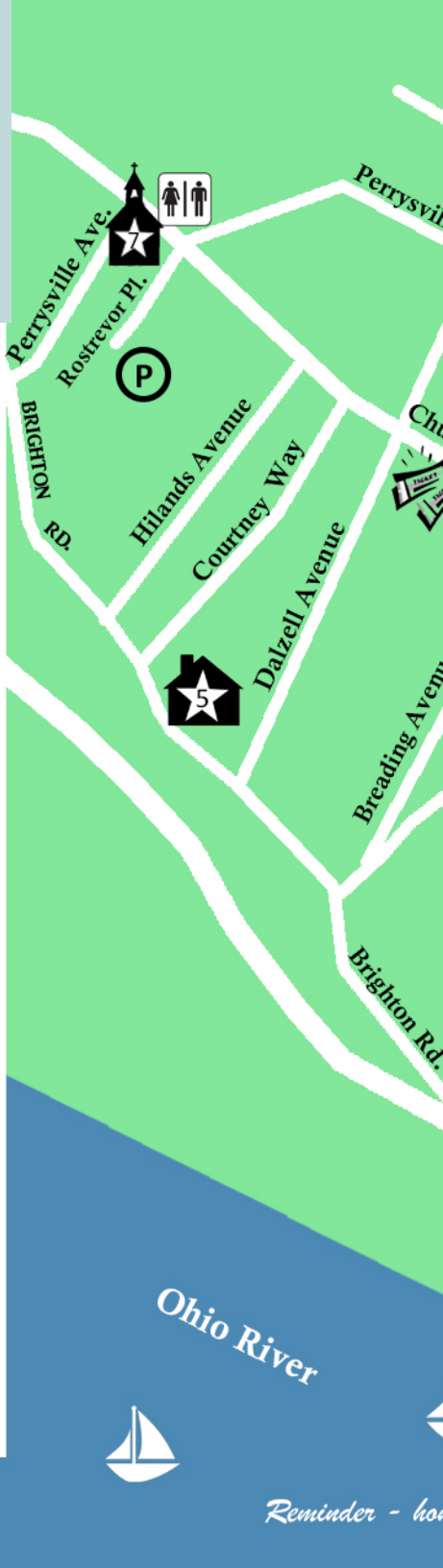
Featured Home



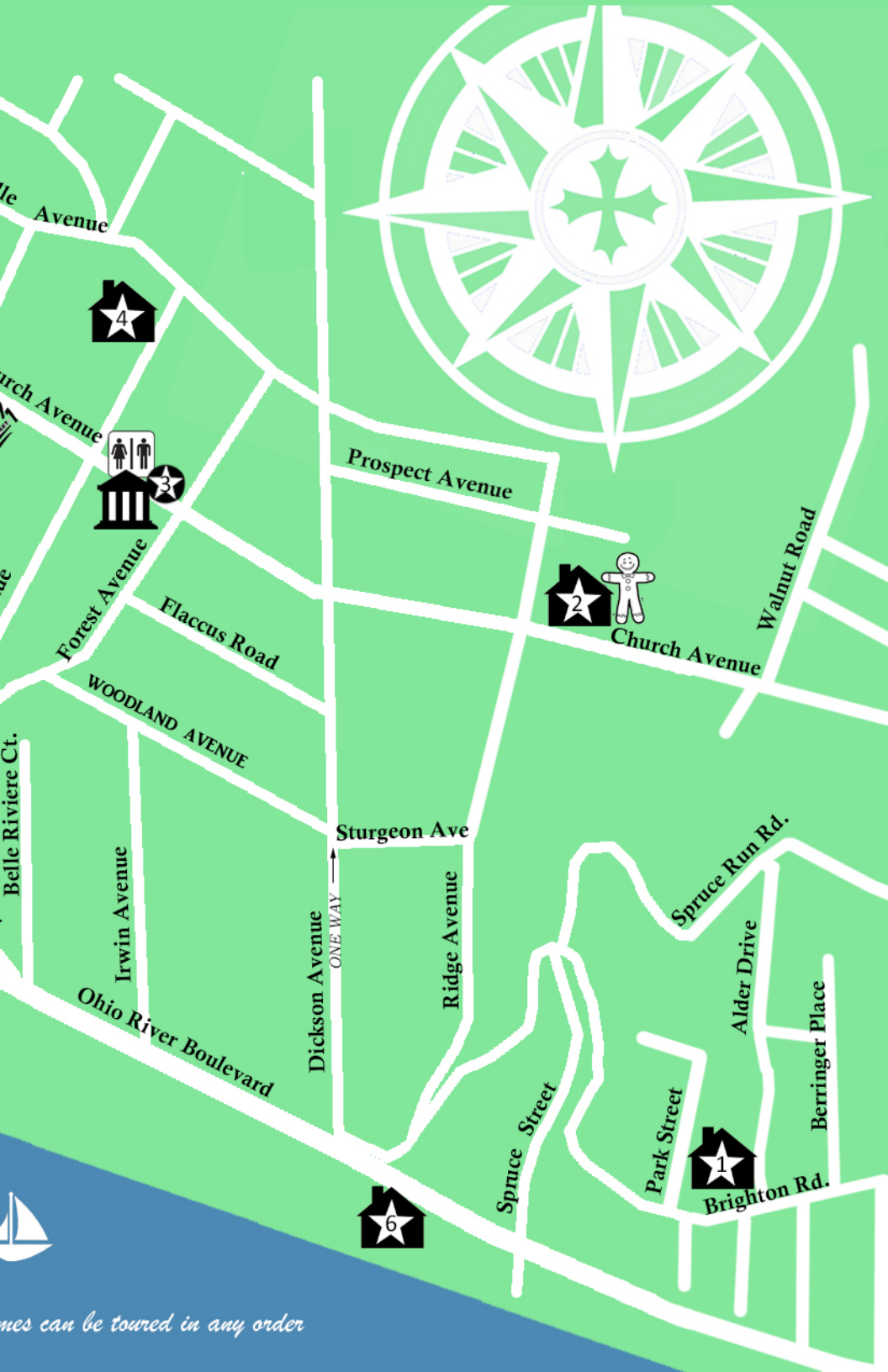
Parking Lot



Public Restrooms (Available All Day)
Ben Avon Borough Hall
7101 Church Avenue
Community Presbyterian Church
7501 Church Avenue



Reminder - hos



le Avenue

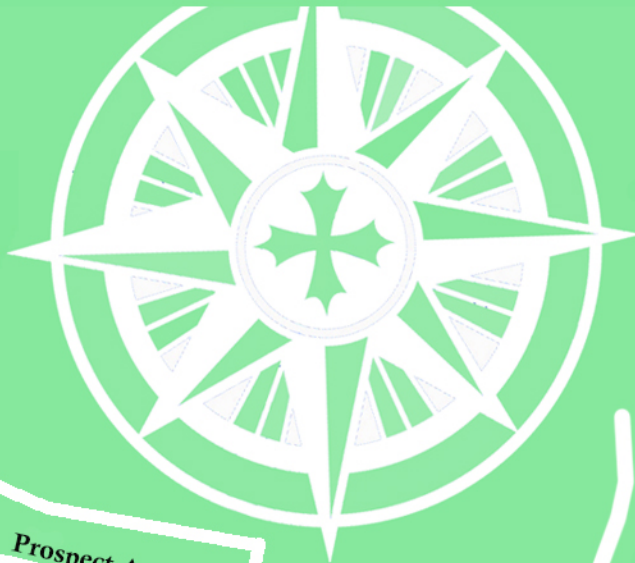
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Belle Riviere Ct.

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Prospect Avenue

Walnut Road

Church Avenue

Forest Avenue

Flaccus Road

WOODLAND AVENUE

Sturgeon Ave

Dickson Avenue

ONE WAY

Ridge Avenue

Spruce Run Rd.

Alder Drive

Berringer Place

Brighton Rd.

Spruce Street

Park Street

Ohio River Boulevard

Irwin Avenue



6630 BRIGHTON ROAD

The Ifft family hosts today's tour of this impressive home dating back to its construction in 1872. This home stands as an example of Greek Revival architecture, a style popular in the mid-to-late 1800s that symbolized strength, symmetry, and classical elegance. The home features many hallmarks of the period — including tall, narrow windows, high ceilings, thick crown moldings, transom windows, and a gracious front porch framed by round columns.

Visitors often notice the front entryway and the long staircase leading upstairs. The staircase, one of the home's original features, was crafted from solid hardwood and worn smooth by generations of footsteps. All seven mantelpieces throughout the home are unique, featuring details that reflect both the craftsmanship and decorative style of the late 19th century.

Tall, double-hung windows allow light to pour into every room, creating a welcoming, airy feeling. The thick plaster walls, tall baseboards and moldings, decorative ceiling medallions and antique chandeliers add layers of texture and character.

When the Iffts purchased the home 26 years ago, it needed both care and modernization. They were drawn to its historic charm, generous spaces, and the unmistakable sense of character that older homes hold. Over the years, they've worked thoughtfully to preserve its original craftsmanship while updating it to suit a busy modern family.

Restoration & Modernization

Throughout their time here, the Iffts have undertaken numerous updates while striving to keep the home's historic integrity intact.

Some favorite projects include:

- Restoring the original hardwood floors, all three stories, this ongoing labor of love, took a lot of elbow grease.
- Preserving the intricate woodwork, including the door and window casings, banisters, and baseboards, each lovingly refinished by hand.
- Updating the kitchen and bathrooms, blending modern functionality with period inspired details such as shaker-style cabinetry and warm finishes. In addition to modernizing the home, they had to consider a family member who has special needs, and many of the updates were designed to offer support for her yet keeping the design element period appropriate.
- Adding new and replacing outdated systems (plumbing, electrical, radiant floors) to ensure comfort and efficiency without compromising aesthetics.

The Iffts have also spent a lot of time enhancing their outdoor spaces while designing landscaping to give privacy and adding perennial plantings that complement the size of the home. The outdoor space in the back and side yards provide a lovely backdrop to host big and small get-togethers. Kevin and Kim created a NOLA (New Orleans) inspired courtyard and spent many days scraping old cement from the bricks before they could build the fireplace and border walls. In the end, the result was dreamy. A spot to sit back and relax, listen to music, watch a game or take a soak. This outdoor space provides a very special sanctuary to their whole family.

Quite possibly the best spot at 6630 Brighton Road is the front porch. It's large, private, and original to the home featuring the original columns, wooden ceiling and the front door entrance with all the entablature details. The porch is one of the family's favorite gathering spots – and the best place to have a morning cup of coffee, listen to the birds and snuggle a big old dog on the porch swing.

From the Current Owners – A Home with history and heart

What we love most about this home is how it has evolved alongside our family. It has been both our gathering place and our sanctuary — a home that reflects 150 years of history and 26 years of our own story layered within it.

We raised five children here, and every inch of the house tells part of our family story. The rooms have been well lived-in — hosting holidays, birthday parties, first-day-of-school photos, and countless ordinary days that have added to the home's spirit and warmth. When the kids were little, they called our living room, the Ballroom. Not because it was a Grand Old Ballroom, but because they literally played baseball and kickball in this spacious room.

Every improvement we've made has been with an eye toward preserving its past while preparing it for the future. From refinishing floors to designing the modern upgrades, our goal has always been to honor the craftsmanship of the original builders.

As we open our doors for this year's Ben Avon House Tour, we hope visitors see not just the architecture, but the sense of continuity and care that defines this home. It's a living piece of history — one that's been loved deeply by our family and friends and thoughtfully maintained





6825 CHURCH AVENUE

The McCourt Family welcomes you to their historic home at 6825 Church Avenue. Constructed in 1930 as a part of the “Avon Place” development plan, the house is a variation on the American Foursquare that was popular across the United States between the 1890s and 1930s. Designed as a reaction to the more ornate Victorian styles, the Foursquare is known for its simple, economical, and efficient design that maximizes interior space.

Ownership History

Prior to the purchase by the McCourts in 2020, the home was owned and lovingly

renovated by members of Ben Avon’s own Shamot Family – Peter, Bill, and Mary Ann – with the goal of returning a neighborhood home back to its historical roots, while also incorporating beautiful modern amenities.

In 1907, John Cook, who was assigned to oversee the Avon Place development, sold “Lot 10” to Elanora Ray. The Avon Place development was a consolidation of several Ben Avon family estates, which were then laid out as single family home plots.

In 1923, Dr. Ernest W. and Martha Logan purchased the plot at 6825 Church Av-

enue and constructed the home you see today. The Logans lived here with their four children until moving to another Ben Avon home (165 Irwin Avenue) in the late 1940s. Dr. Logan was a prominent Ben Avon resident, Suburban General Hospital physician, and a member of the Shannopin Country Club and Woodland United Presbyterian Church. Martha was raised in her family home on Dickson Avenue. Their daughter, Mary Jane, married into the Espy family, owners of the former drug and grocery stores on Church Avenue.

Dr. Craig and Ruth Hoyt purchased the property in 1956. As both men were physicians, it is speculated that Dr. Hoyt took over Dr. Logan's medical practice, which was in the home. The Hoyts lived in the home until selling to William C. Hunt in 1975, who then sold the home to H. Meriline and Norma Fowler in 1990.

The Appel family were the last owners of the home prior to its purchase by The Shamots in 2016.

From the Current Owners

The McCourts purchased the home in the early days of the COVID 19 pandemic. Harry and Ella had just returned to the area after spending 20 years in The Villages, Florida. The home provided the family, which includes daughters, Sharon and Bridget, and grandson, Harry, an ideal place to set up a multi-generational home. The first-floor suite, which they learned once served as Dr. Logan's and Dr. Hoyt's visiting and patient exam rooms, was perfect for Harry and Ella, while the upper floors provided ample room for the rest of the family.

The McCourts enjoy entertaining family, friends, and neighbors, and have spent their five years in the home creating spaces to receive and host guests. The first

effort was the installation of the backyard patio in 2021. This project made the lower level of the backyard more accessible and functional.

The following spring, a front garden was constructed, to welcome visitors to the home. The paved walkways, garden seating, and front porch allow family members – including their dog, Roxie – to meet and greet their Ben Avon community.

Last year, following a successful celebration of Harry's 90th birthday, Sharon and Bridget transformed their detached garage into a traditional Irish pub. Named The Wonky Snug – because everything is just a little off center! – the pub was almost completely renovated by the sisters. The only hired help came from electrician Mike Ross – another 2025 House Tour participant – and Kristian Kaseman, an architectural salvager, who supplied and installed the stained-glass windows. You will find the tour's Gourmet Goodies for sale in The Wonky Snug this year. Please stop in and enjoy a treat in the pub!





337 BREADING AVENUE

Welcome to 337 Breading Avenue, the home of the Quigley-Ross family. Built in 1903, this home is a great example of an American Foursquare. The architectural style was popular in the late 1800's to early 1900's. Considered a reaction to ornate Victorian and Queen Anne homes of the time, the Foursquare became popular amongst the growing middle class due to its affordability and practical style that borrows from Craftsman and Colonial Revival architecture.

The home features brick construction, with a nearly 2 foot wide stone foundation, and beautiful stone features throughout, including the massive front door threshold, windowsills, and exposed foundation.

Ownership History

The property at 337 Breading was originally Lot 21 and a small portion of Lot 22 in the Amended Plan of Brighton Terrace laid out by Mrs. Elizabeth B. O'Neil and J. Palmer O'Neil. The O'Neils sold several lots to George D. Sells in 1902. An article in the Pittsburgh Post on May 17 of that year indicated that the lots would be "improved at once."

The Sells family, including George's wife Margaret, his daughter Phyllis and his sons George D. Sells, Jr. and Robert F. Sells lived on the property for over 50 years. George D. Sells, Jr. served as a Sergeant in WWI and was

wounded in action. His name is listed on the Veterans Honor Roll in Ben Avon. Robert F. Sells had a successful business career, including retiring as the president of the Amstand Supply Division of the American Radiator and Standard Sanitary Corp.

Daughter Phyllis Sells inherited the property in 1948. Phyllis had childhood polio. In 1956, the Pittsburgh Post-Gazette published an article about Espy's drugstore and reported that her prescription was the first filled by druggist William Espy in Ben Avon in 1906.

The Sells also owned the property on Lot 20 next door, which eventually became 335 Breeding in the 1950s. In 1952, Phyllis sold the house at 337 to J. Russell and Jordis Fisher, and they sold to Robert and Anna Campbell in 1960.

The Campbells owned the property until 1991, when it was purchased by Michael and Anna Schlumpf.

From the Current Owners

Mike and Jen are the 5th owners and purchased the home in 2015. From the first moment they stepped inside, they knew immediately that this was the home for them. The back staircase reminded Jen of growing up in her grandparents' home, the house was big enough to host their large extended family and friends, there was plenty of room for all six kids, and it was a blank slate ready to be recreated. So despite needing work, they made an offer and have worked to make the home theirs ever since.

Years ago, there had been a wraparound porch and a detached garage. These were removed by the previous owners and replaced with a concrete driveway and smaller front porch. In 2022, Mike and Jen replaced the small porch with one that more closely resembles the original and have plans to install a stone and slate patio in the right front yard. Neighbors, Bruce and Gretchen Hall, are the architects who designed the porch with their input and Amish contractor, Eli Byler, built it. The porch floor is teak and iron railings custom built by Lux Ironworks.

Unfortunately, the original butler's pantry and working kitchen was removed, so Mike and Jen took that as an opportunity to create an open concept kitchen - living room. They made the original dining room a living room and removed the walls that once enclosed a butler's pantry. At the same time the floors were refinished on the first and 2nd floor and stairs repaired. The space is 100% more functional and is where they spend most of their time. Jason Cook completed the renovation leveraging their design, complete with soapstone counters, salvaged door and mirror (bathroom) and handmade light fixtures from artists in Ohio and Israel.

The built in window seats, cabinets, mantles, and grand front staircase are original, as are the leaded glass windows in the front of the house. They discovered a cowboy and Indian scene on a copper fireplace screen in the 2nd floor nursery (now an office). Perhaps the original owners already had a baby boy when the house was built?

Many objects have been found throughout the renovations, including empty whiskey bottles left in the walls by the original builders, perfume bottles and broken pottery under the porch.

Our home is a perfect blend of our personalities - traditional, yet eclectic and drawn to the creative and beautiful things that remind us of family. Our art collection includes paintings, drawings, and pottery from our travels or sometimes found locally. Thank you for visiting us today.





HOUSE Four

7320 BRIGHTON ROAD

Mike and Cathy Ginsberg welcome you to their home at 7320 Brighton Road. This historic Ben Avon property was built circa 1888. The Victorian-style home has a wrap-around porch and pitched, slate roof.

Ownership History

The original owner, Alfred C. Knox, purchased the initial parcel on which the home was constructed in 1887, and then purchased additional property in 1889 and 1902 from John Goehring, Clement Tetedoux, Frederick Boyles and Alice Josephine and Albert Ulrich. Subsequent owners of the property later sold a portion along Courtney Way to allow for the construction of duplexes. A large portion of the property was acquired by John Goehring from several prior owners, including the Western Pennsylvania Hospital, Dixmont and heirs from the Dalzell family. Clement Tetedoux, one of the prior owners, was widely acclaimed as one of the finest vocal teachers in the United States in

the late 1800s. Instrumental to the development of Pittsburgh's early musical community, he was involved in both the training of professional musicians and the cultivation of music-loving audiences.

Alfred C. Knox and his heirs owned the property for approximately 53 years and built the home that stands there today by 1888. Knox was Vice President and director of the Mellon National Bank, Director of the Hostetter-Connelsville Coke Company, and Chairman of the Board of the Logan Trust Company of New Kensington. His brother was United States Senator Philander C. Knox, who is pictured in a framed photo at the top of the stairs of the home.

Knox lived in the home with his wife Annie, daughters Louisa, Juliet, Mary and son William, and several domestic servants, until his death in the home in 1925. His wife and then unmarried daughters Louisa and Juliet

inherited the home.

Both Juliet and Louisa Knox were deeply involved in the community, including college alumnae groups and faith groups. Juliet served on the board of the YWCA and Louisa with the League of Women Voters. Juliet passed away in 1956 while living at 201 Forest, after the sisters sold the home in 1950. Louisa lived to be 109 years old, passing away in 1982 with services held in the Ben Avon Methodist church. At the time of her death, she was the oldest living alumnae of Goucher College.

From the Current Owners

The Ginsbergs purchased the home in 1988 and have enjoyed it ever since.

The parquet floors are all original. Each of the rooms on the first floor have different parquet designs, and if you look closely, you will see that each has a distinct border. The family room was originally the dining room. To replace the dining room, the Ginsbergs now utilize the entrance hall—the round table expands to accommodate up to 12 diners.

The Ginsbergs commissioned Red Clay Tile Works in Bellevue to design new tile for the entrance hall fireplace, using a relief that ties into the antique wall unit. Mr. Ginsberg brought the painting above the fireplace from Africa when he was on a trip to train Kenyan lawyers. The front doors of the house enter into an alcove. The Ginsbergs added artwork in that space. There are a number of paintings by Tom McNickle in the entrance hall, including a piece that the Ginsbergs commissioned of the house.

The library is perhaps the most interesting room in the house, with a Delph Tile fireplace and a ceiling painted and textured to mimic a tin ceiling. The built-in bookcases are all original, and hand stained to look like quarter-sawn oak, although the wood itself is pine. The library floor is perhaps the most intricate of all of the floor designs.

The Ginsbergs enclosed the back porch to expand their kitchen space. They have renovated the kitchen twice—the original renovation utilized the space of the now-enclosed back porch, and the subsequent renovation incorporated a heated floor, updated appliances, and a split system heating and air conditioning system.

The room adjacent to the kitchen that is now the family room was originally the dining room. The artwork over the sofa and the fireplace are original oil paintings by Ron Donoghue, a well-known Pittsburgh plein air painter who is well known for his 90 Neighborhoods of Pittsburgh paintings. Several of his pieces are displayed at the Duquesne Club. A third Donoghue painting is displayed over the fireplace in the kitchen.

The house has four chimneys and 11 fireplaces. The Ginsbergs had the fireplaces in the second floor bathroom and Mr. Ginsberg's dressing room painted to give them a marble look—they were originally black slate.

When the Ginsbergs bought the home, there was no heat or air conditioning on the second and third floors, other than the radiators on the two landings and the primary bedroom. They added a forced air system above the third floor to provide HVAC to the second and third floors.

There were originally five bedrooms on the second floor. After their children were grown, the Ginsbergs took the middle bedroom on the second floor (formerly the nursery) and constructed a large bathroom with a heated floor and a Hans Grohe shower system. They then turned the room across from the bathroom into a dressing room for Mr. Ginsberg, and added closets to the room next to the bathroom, which functions as Mrs. Ginsberg's dressing room.

The Ginsbergs also renovated the third floor, originally the servants' quarters. There are two bedrooms and an open, family room area.



• HOUSE • Five

6925 OHIO RIVER BOULEVARD

Welcome to 6925 Ohio River Boulevard, the home of the Keller Family and one of the oldest homes on the tour this year. Designated by the Pittsburgh History and Landmarks Foundation as the Arthurs–Johnson House, the property stands as a fine example of the Italianate architectural style. Hallmark features include its graceful proportions, bracketed box gutters, and ornate interior details—such as flared newel posts and spindles, marble mantels with arched openings, and elegant plaster crown moldings.

Ownership History

Perched on a hill overlooking the Ohio River, 6925 Ohio River Boulevard welcomes travelers into the borough of Ben Avon. Constructed between 1870 and 1873 on land inherited by Sarah C. Arthurs from her uncle, David Dickson, the home was likely built by Sarah's husband, John L. Arthurs, a skilled carpenter.

Though its steep ravines and hilly lot might deter modern developers, in Victo-



rian times the top of a hill was considered the perfect site for a grand residence. Today, the home rewards that choice with sweeping, ever-changing views of the Pittsburgh skyline, shifting beautifully with the seasons and time of day.

Several unique features reveal the home's storied past: a small structure in the rear, once the original kitchen and now an art studio; a large wooden barrel in the attic, thought to have collected water from a former windmill and cistern; and a deep stone-lined well uncovered during the installation of a new driveway—meticulously constructed to reach all the way to the river.

From the Current Owners

Since 2004, current owners Matthew and Amy Keller have thoughtfully balanced preservation with modern design. Their renovations emphasize both structure and aesthetics, enhancing the home's architecture and its striking location. A floor-to-ceiling sliding glass wall in the kitchen opens to an infinity deck. Both were designed to extend sightlines towards the river and downtown Pittsburgh. Inspired by archival photos, the Kellers rebuilt a side porch that had been lost over time, restoring a defining historical feature. In 2021, the exterior was painted black to create a sculptural, contemporary silhouette that contrasts beautifully with the crisp white interior, a palette

that highlights both form and light. Over the years, they have also reimaged the kitchen, bathrooms, and flooring, blending old-world craftsmanship with modern comfort.

Amy's global design sensibility was shaped by her time abroad with Semester at Sea, where travel inspired her appreciation for international style and texture. Many of the home's distinctive furnishings were sourced from Hot Haute Hot, a store in Pittsburgh's Strip District where she once worked. Matt has contributed his own craftsmanship to the property—building stone walls throughout the grounds and crafting Victorian replica shutters for the second floor.

Together with their children, Grace and Eddie, the Kellers feel deeply connected to this remarkable home and its history. Their hope is that the Arthurs-Johnson House will continue to stand proudly on its hillside, inspiring future generations for the next one hundred and fifty years.



7501 CHURCH AVENUE



The Community Presbyterian Church of Ben Avon would like to extend a very warm welcome to those attending the Ben Avon Holiday House Tour.

Our church building was constructed in 1911 and was known as the Ben Avon Presbyterian Church. In the same community within walking distance was the Woodland United Presbyterian Church. In 1987 these two churches merged with the Woodland building used as the Program and Administrative Center and the Ben Avon building used for worship for the merged churches.

At the hands of an arsonist, the Woodland Church building was destroyed during the filming of the movie *Lorenzo's Oil* in 1991. The insurance claim monies were used to expand and renovate the Ben Avon church building to meet the needs of the growing congregation. In 2012, the church commemorated the 25th anniversary of the consolidation of the two congregations

forming what is known today as The Community Presbyterian Church of Ben Avon.

Today, we take great care in preserving our historic building, while opening it to the community for programs, meetings, and events. We house Wooden Ladder preschool, Community Theater, and senior citizens exercise, as well as girl scouts, yoga, and musical recitals. On Sundays, we worship at 10:30 a.m. and throughout the week we offer opportunities for the whole family to grow in faith, love and joy.

To support the Holiday House Tour, today we are offering:

Free parking in the lot off of Rostrevor Place

Use of restrooms from 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

Lunch for purchase - including soups, sandwiches, desserts, and beverages

Craft Fair and Cookie Walk from 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.



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The Avon Club greatly appreciates the continued support of our organization by the following past presidents.

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7101 CHURCH AVENUE

Building History

In August 1919, Ben Avon purchased a lot at the corner of Forest Ave. and Church Ave. from Judge J.A. Evans. The lot had previously been owned by C.A. and Minnie White and John and Alice Cook. It was laid out as lot No. 46 in Elizabeth O'Neil's Brighton Plan of Lots.

By the end of 1919, the voters of Ben Avon assented to increasing the borough's indebtedness by \$35,000 to the purpose of erecting, equipping and furnishing a public building for municipal purposes. Until that time, the Borough Council had met at Ben Avon Elementary School. To raise the additional money needed to complete the building thirty-five \$1,000 bonds were sold.

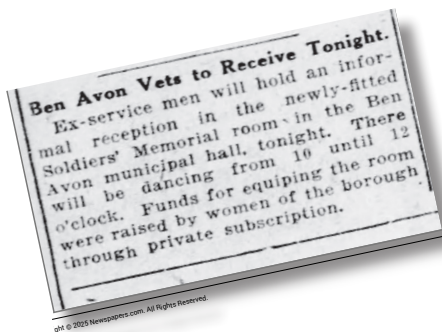
The architects for the Ben Avon Borough Hall were Thomas B. Wolfe and his son, Lawrence Wolfe. The Wolfe family had three generations of architects who resided in Ben Avon. Some of the buildings that the oldest Wolfe, Thomas B. Wolfe, worked on with his original partner, Martin U. Vrydagh, were Calvary Methodist Church, the Howard Heinz (son of H. J. Heinz) residence called Warwick House in Morewood Heights, Greenston United Methodist Church in Avalon, and the Church of the Epiphany in

Bellevue.

On Monday, April 18th, 1921, Ben Avon's new Municipal building, located at the corner of Church and Forest Avenues, was opened for public use. The second floor of the structure was furnished by public subscription at a cost of \$3,000 and put to its first use the following Saturday by the newly formed young men's club of Ben Avon.

The building, which is red brick and of colonial design, was built with a view of service to the community. The council's chamber, police headquarters and firemen's rooms were situated on the first floor. The fire apparatus was housed in the basement of the structure.

The second floor, initially known as the Memo-





rial Room, was used by various groups including the War Veterans Club and furnished with a pool table, piano, lounges and game tables. Over the years the room was used as a serve-yourself library and community meeting space.

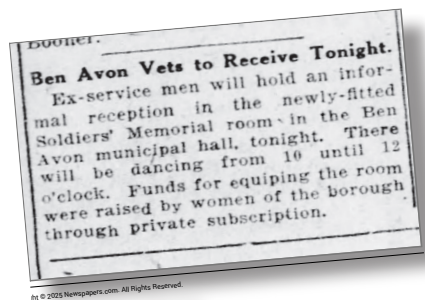
Borough Hall today

Today, the Borough Hall is still an integral part of the Ben Avon Community. Ben Avon Council has been meeting in this building since 1920, first upstairs and later on the first floor in a space that was originally the police station. In addition to Council Chambers, the first floor of the building houses the Borough Offices for the Borough Secretary and Public Works Manager. The basement, initially the home of the fire-fighting apparatus, is currently used for the storage of Public Works equipment and Borough records. There is also an old jail cell in the basement.

The second floor of the building continues to be used as a community resource hosting private functions including birthday parties, showers and public events such as the Fall Festival, Light-up Night Festivities and Holiday House Tour. Additionally, Boy & Girl Scout groups and YMCA classes have used the space. It's also worth noting that the Avon Club has been leveraging the space for meetings and events since the organization was formed in 1944.

Following the 100 year anniversary of the building, community leaders and residents initiated the 'Centennial Building Project. The goal of the project is to make updates to the building to ensure that it can continue to be a community asset for the next 100 years. Phase

1 of the project was completed in 2024 and included the installation of a new roof, windows and insulation updating the 'envelope' of the building. Funds for this phase were secured through a PA State Gaming Grant. Phase 2 of the project, which included the installation of an elevator, was completed this past year again using State Grant funds. The building is now ADA compliant and the 2nd floor can be used for both public and private events. New kitchen appliances were also purchased in 2025 using a grant from the Avon Club. Future project phases include updating the HVAC, interior and exterior renovations and painting.



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for their guidance, support, and friendship!

*We extend our sincere apologies to anyone who may
have been inadvertently omitted from this list.*



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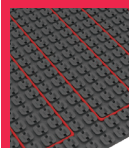
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Members meet monthly and serve on committees to plan and execute fundraisers and community events. Our committees include Civic Service, Scholarships, Grants, Endowment, Social Events, Friendship, the Fall Festival and the Holiday House Tour.





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Without them, there would be no house tour!

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