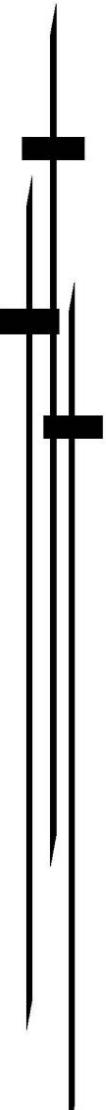
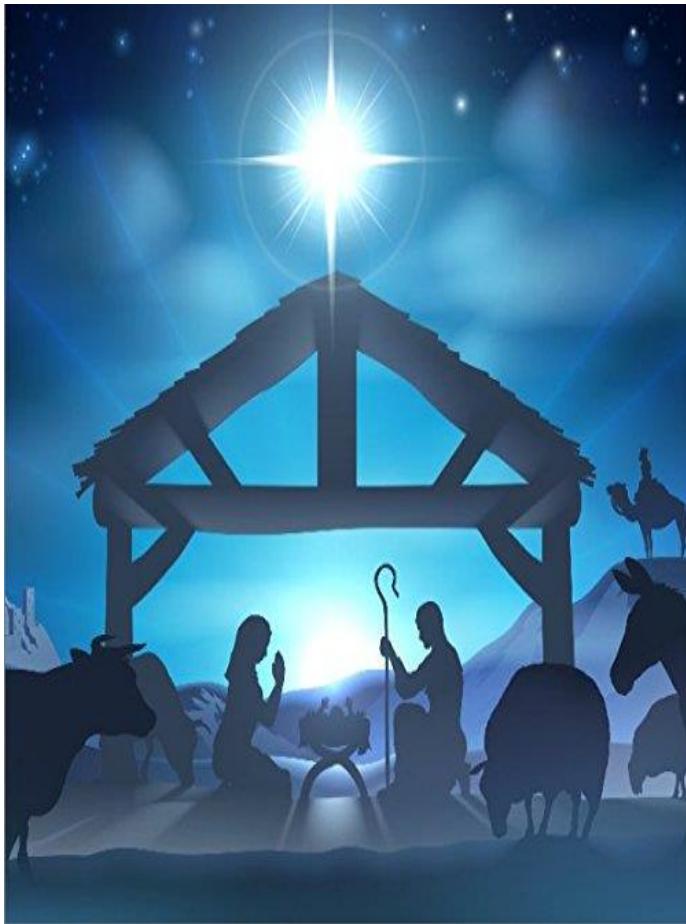


Pillar

The

Brecksville United Church of Christ

December 2019



***Loving, Serving, and Accepting All People
With God's Life-Changing Power***

Pastor's Ponderings.....

The snow is here, and December is here, and Advent is upon us once again. The word 'Advent' comes from the Latin *adventus*, and it means 'the arrival.' So arrival time it is, and we celebrate Jesus as the one who was prophesied to come, who actually came, and who has promised to come again.

The season of Arrival starts with the anticipation of the Messiah's coming. Generations were hoping, praying, living for the day when God would set things right, when all those who found themselves on the bottom looking up would find themselves on the top looking down, or at least, on a level playing field looking out on fair treatment and a just way of making a living.

People were looking for a time when God would stop their oppressors from oppressing them, stop their exploiters from exploiting them, and stop the powerful from overpowering them. When the Messiah came, it was to be a time of peace, when swords would be beaten into plowshares, and the lion would lie down with the lamb, when creation would be at rest. This was their hope: the arrival of the Messiah would be the arrival of a golden age of justice and peace.

When Jesus did finally arrive, it was into a time of criminal injustice, both from foreign overlords, the Romans, and the domestic puppets the Romans had put in place to rule over Judea, the Herodian dynasty. The first experience Jesus had in this world was that of being a refugee running for his life from a murderous dictator. That was the story of his whole life: a life not exempted from the trials and tribulations of others. He lost his father, Joseph, early, and responsibility for his mother and brothers and sisters was thrust upon him. He worked with his hands as a carpenter's or, more accurately, a cabinet maker's son, and he had little or no wealth to fall back on. He was rejected in his home synagogue and lived on the road from the generosity of others, notably some wealthy women who followed him. He taught and healed and fed and confronted the powerful. In the end, he was put to death because his presence in the world was so disturbing to the powers that be that they were afraid of becoming powers that weren't.

Christian faith has proclaimed that Jesus' death wasn't really the end, that his departure was a prelude to another arrival, next time not in humility, but in power and glory.

And that brings the story to us: the long-awaited Messiah has come, lived, died and gone. But prophecy and Jesus' own words promise that he will come again, and then, finally, at this second arrival, love will triumph over hate, grace will triumph over sin, and life will triumph over death for everyone, and not just for him. This is the story into which we are currently writing our chapter. We are practicing love and grace and life so that we can make ourselves ready for his new arrival, as so many of the parables enjoin us to do. It's unlikely to happen any time soon, of course, but by preparing ourselves to live in a world of justice and love, we make the world a better place for everyone as we wait once more for the Arrival of the Messiah. May Advent be a time of blessing to us all!

If you would like to have a pastoral visit in your home, or simply need to talk, please call Pastor Allan Lane at the church office [440-526-4364] or call him on his cell at [513-417-1537] Please leave a message if he doesn't answer as he may be driving. He will be glad to meet with you



FROM THE MINISTRIES OF BUCC

FROM THE MODERATOR:

CONGREGATION IN TRANSITION

Dear fellow members,

The next task in our transition is to develop a Congregational Vision: a series of statements about "who we are" and "where are we going" in order to provide input to our Pastoral Search.

This work will be done in parallel with our other ministries, so we realize that it will take time to properly discern our vision.

Your Congregational Council, and Pastor Allan will lead us through the process following this timeframe:

Throughout the process: During “Prayers of the Church”, Pastor Allan will pray for us as we seek to discern and articulate our vision

By the end of 2019: We will gather all the existing source materials: Previous Congregation Profiles, BUCC Mission Statements, Affirmation of Welcome, Ministry Descriptions & previous Surveys

In January 2020: We will gather demographic information about our membership, local and wider community, nearby churches, as well as nearby UCC churches. We will ask “what is our boundary?”

February & March 2020: We will “poll” our congregation on various topics: our assets & resources, needs and service opportunities. Asking questions: what would excite us if we did it, why we are here, what are we about? To gather this input, we will hold “focus groups” at church or in people’s homes.

April 2020: We will combine all the inputs into a draft Vision statement, which will be validated by the Council, revising as we go.

May 2020: We will share this draft with the Congregation and discuss through similar Focus Groups, revising as needed.

Pentecost 2020: As we celebrate the “beginning of the Church”, we will celebrate and approve our vision document at a Congregational meeting.

In parallel with the later parts of the visioning process, we will form the Pastoral Search Committee, so that they can start searching for someone to help us fulfill our newly affirmed vision as soon as it is approved.

I am excited to be working with all of you as we continue our journey as a congregation.

May the Peace of Christ be with us, Jim Duffy 216-644-2784

CHRISTIAN EDUCATION



The Christmas Pageant, “Our Gifts to Jesus” will be taking place during the service on Sunday, December 15th. If you are a parent or student and would like more information, please email Kate Klonowski, CE Chair at keightykay@gmail.com or call/text (216) 534-3498.

The CE Students are invited to host a table at the “Drum up the Gifts” BUCC Holiday Bazaar happening after church on December 1st. All are welcome to help! All proceeds will be going to support the Cleveland Roots Urban Farm!

We welcome everyone to seriously consider if they would be willing to serve on the Christian Education Ministry for 2020. We can use both teachers and others who would like to support the ministry in other ways (i.e. helping to plan and host educational events at the church, organize fun field trips and activities, etc.)

CE is so much more than church school on Sunday. Come find out more! Our next meeting will be Wednesday, December 11th at 7:00pm at the Panera in Brecksville.

FACILITIES

Do you know someone looking for a nice apartment?

BUCC has a very nice 2-bedroom unit available for rent in our Arlington Street property. The unit has an eat-in-kitchen, dining room, and living room on the first floor, and two bedrooms and bath on the second floor. The unit comes complete with a stove, fridge, washer and dryer, garage parking and cozy front porch. The unit will be available December 1st, and rents for \$850 per month. Please pass the word around! Thank you.



1. We are preparing a NEW Mission statement.
2. In the process of replacing our light fixture above the front church doors.

3. Overseeing process of repairing concrete ramp for parlor entrance.
4. Monitoring LED lighting upgrades.
5. Discussing thermostat upgrade for Narthex.
6. Seeking replacement tenant for one of two rental properties.
7. Have completed the following:
 - a. Replaced parking lock shed lock.
 - b. Prepared for winter: snow-blower, shovels & ice melt pails.
 - c. Recruited new Facilities & snow-herder members.
 - d. Oversaw hot water tank repairs.

FINANCE

During 2019 the following funds have been sent to the Living Water Association:

Strengthen the Church	\$520
One Great Hour of Sharing	\$720
Neighbors in Need	\$693



In addition, three quarters of OCWM in the amount of \$11,437.50 were also paid.

When the money in the Christmas Fund and the last quarter of OCWM are sent before the end of the year, we will be 5 for 5.

An unsealed pledge envelope was received with no pledge card. If you do not receive a thank-you letter for your pledge, please contact Joy Garapic.

FINANCING BUCC INTO THE FUTURE

As we look back on the progress BUCC made under Dave Shackle's guidance and look forward to what BUCC may accomplish in the future, the Finance Committee wanted to offer a few observations.

First, we celebrate a stable and relatively secure financial situation at BUCC.

Although contributions do not fully fund the church's operations, our savings still make up the shortfall, and the congregation always digs deeper when special needs (e.g., roof repairs) arise.

Yet that also poses some challenges. BUCC can maintain deficits as long as the savings hold out, but the deficits are persistent and current contributions are heavily dependent upon a few large donors. We must therefore remember that BUCC's expense levels are more assured than the current level of contributions. Although the congregation has always been good about contributing more when needed, it is much easier to do so for a one-time expenditure on property than an ongoing need for operating cash.

Even more important, perhaps, the current financial condition could limit BUCC's ability to reach out in new ways. Financially, there is a major difference between surviving and thriving. As the congregation envisions where this church will go on its next step into the future, the Finance Committee recommends that consideration of the financial wherewithal be incorporated as part of that vision.

As part of our annual stewardship drive, we emphasize all the talents and time that we can give. And while time, talent, and monetary contributions are equally valued, the reflection on our current financial status and future ministry will be an important consideration for our next called pastor. Please prayerfully consider what you can give as we provide a sustainable, stable loving church home.

NEWS FROM OCWM

The next hunger meal will be served on Sunday, December first at Iglesia Emmanuel on West 41st Street. The menu will be mostaccioli with meatballs, tossed salad, bread and butter, and cookies for dessert. The usual beverages (milk, fruit drink, water, and coffee) will be served also.

The sign-up board will appear in the narthex for you to indicate your willingness to participate. Two shifts are planned. The first shift will be from 2:00 PM through 4:00 PM to set up and prepare, and the second shift will be from 3:00 PM through 5:00 PM to serve and cleanup. The sign-up board will have directions to the church.



The next offering will be received on Sunday, December 22nd to benefit retired clergy and lay employees by supplementation of pensions, health premiums, and emergency grants. Additional interpretive Information will appear in Sunday bulletins.

Have you noticed the miracle mitten tree doing its thing in the narthex? The tree has been in place only for a short time, and already (at this writing) it is almost overflowing with hats, mittens, gloves, and scarves. These “decorations” will be taken to the hunger centers by our volunteer. This will be repeated three or four times during the cold weather.

The other tree to appear in the narthex will be used for Prentiss Autism Center of the Positive Education program located in Fairview Park. Currently over 90 students from over 30 different school districts in northeast Ohio are being served. All of these students have significant cognitive delays and severe behaviors, as well as a diagnosis of autism. Selected students are asked what would make their Christmas more enjoyable, and the item is written on a tag which is used to “decorate” the tree. The tag will indicate a student’s size where appropriate. BUCC members and friends are asked to select a “decoration” and return the desired item by the middle of December. Look for the tree in the narthex

OPEN & AFFIRMING MINISTRY (ONA)

DECEMBER

World AIDS Day

Celebrated on December 1st, World AIDS Day is an international day dedicated to raising awareness of the AIDS pandemic caused by the spread of HIV infection and mourning those who have died of the disease. Government and health officials, non-governmental organizations, and individuals around the world observe the day, often with education on AIDS prevention and control.



Human Rights Day

Human Rights Day is celebrated annually across the world on December 10th. The date was chosen to honor the United Nations General Assembly's adoption and proclamation of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) on December 10, 1948. The day is normally marked both by high-level political conferences and meetings and by cultural events and exhibitions dealing with human rights issues.

It is also the traditional day that the five-yearly United Nations Prize in the Field of Human Rights and Nobel Peace Prize are awarded. Many governmental and non-governmental organizations active in the human rights field also schedule special events to commemorate the day, as do many civil and social-cause organizations.



PFLAG - Parents and Friends of Lesbians and Gays. This is a local and national organization that has been in the Cleveland Area for 35 years. One of the services provided is a Monthly Support Group Meeting. The group is led by a licensed Psychologist and Social Workers. The purpose is to provide support and education to family and friends of people coming out Gay, Lesbian, Trans, Bisexual or Questioning. The group is free and meets at Trinity Cathedral on the second Tuesday of the month 6:45 pm -8:30 pm. For more information, call Mark Lehman, LISW at 330.631.4415

SPIRITUAL LIFE

Our longtime Member Bill Toneff has recently been moved to Elmcroft of Sagamore Hills.

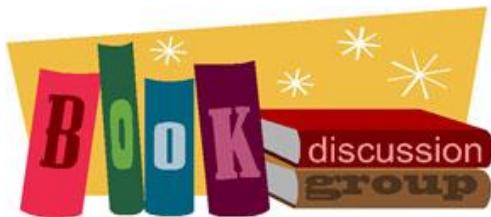
If you would like to send a card, please feel free to utilize our cards that we offer in The Commons area. His new Address is:

Bill Toneff
997 W. Aurora Rd.
Room 220
Sagamore Hills, OH 44067



NOTES AND ASIDES

BOOK DISCUSSION



Our next book for discussion is *There* by Tommy Orange. It is a novel about Native American Indians. We will meet in the Parlor on Monday, December 2nd at 1 p.m. All are welcome to attend.

FLOWERS **Jan Renovetz**

Flowers in the chancel area add a special touch to our Sunday morning worship. Our flower ministry is small in numbers and would welcome more members to help. Please take a moment and consider joining us. You don't have to be a florist, an artist or anyone special to come up with an original arrangement or just a vase of colorful flowers. All ideas are worth exploring to make the chancel beautiful for all of us to enjoy. You may talk to me in Pilgrim Hall on Sundays or give me a call at home 330-467-9357. Thanks.



FOOD PANTRY

DECEMBER- Small Canned Hams, Canned Sweet & White Potatoes, Cranberry Sauce, Canned Mixed Vegetables, Pie Crust Mix, Canned Pumpkin, etc.



THE MITTEN TREE is now in the narthex, awaiting "decorations" of hats, mittens, scarves, etc. for delivery to those who will need them in the cold weather ahead. Last year, the tree filled up and was emptied at least three times. Let's see if we can come up with at least four "fill-ups" this year.

MUSIC

CHRISTMAS CANTATA - 2019 Christmas Cantata - On Sunday December 22 at our regular 10 o'clock service, BUCC's choir will present a contemporary lessons and carols program titled, *Emmanuel--God with Us!* Arranged and composed by Lloyd Larson, the program is a wonderful blend of traditional and contemporary Christmas music. The choir will be accompanied by flute, French horn, trumpet, violin, percussion, and narrators. Plan on joining us for this BUCC tradition. Bring a friend!



MESSAGES FROM BUCC OFFICE

A Call To Skilled Talent! I am looking for someone who is proficient in computers, and able to be my backup for vacation time, sick time, etc. I will teach you the Bulletin, and other important weekly tasks. If you are interested, please give me a call at the Office at 440-526-4364.



All Members, and Ministries, kindly write your upcoming meetings, events, or plans on the main *Church Calendar in the Office*.

Also, please send me an email when you would like correspondence to be published in our Bulletin, Pillar, or for an email blast.
buccoh@sbcglobal.net Thank you!!! Jeannette

Wishing you all a very Merry Christmas!

A NOTE OF THANKS



Anna Mary Fisher wishes to thank you all again for your cards and phone calls, she really appreciates them.



Happy, Happy December Birthdays to the following BUCC Members!
Please share in their joy and wish them a Happy Birthday!

December 4:	Jon Thompson
	Doug Fawcett
December 6:	Kevin Smith
	Jacob VanDuyne
December 12:	Betty Einhart
December 13:	Grace Hunt
	Michael VanDuyne
December 17:	Shannon West
December 19:	David Durkit
December 20:	Genny Costanzo
	Naomi Klonowski
	Jim Duffy
	Jill Black
December 21:	Bob Chandler
	Lauren Haynes
December 25:	Linda Kriynovich
	Jesus
December 28:	Dan Stewart
	Valerie Duffy
December 29:	Amy Coyer-Westerberg

***If you have a December Birthday and are not included above,
please contact the church office so we can add you to the BUCC
Birthday List!***

CELEBRATE CHRISTMAS WITH POINSETTIAS IN OUR SANCTUARY



Your Donation will buy plants which will be shared after Christmas with those who are ill or shut-in or have recently lost a loved one. Please fill out the form at the bottom of this page, and turn it in to the Church Office

DEADLINE – SUNDAY, DECEMBER 15



I Enclose \$12.00 _____ or other _____ for
Poinsettias

In Memory _____ or
Honor _____ or _____
Of

Your Name

I WILL HELP DELIVER PLANTS TO SHUT-INS

****PLEASE LET US KNOW IF YOU WOULD LIKE TO KEEP YOUR POINSETTIA OR LEAVE IT HERE FOR SHUT-INS AND OTHERS****

WILL KEEP WILL NOT KEEP

CALENDAR

DECEMBER 2019

Sunday, DECEMBER 1 10am Worship Service 11 am Coffee Hour 1-4 pm Drum Up the Gifts Bazaar	Thurs., DECEMBER 12 1 pm Bible Study 4:30-5 pm Recorder/ Dulcimer/Guitar 5:30-6:15 pm Joyful Noise 7pm Seasonal Choir 8pm Choir	Sat., DECEMBER, 21 10 am Rehearsal for Cantata w/ Instruments 12 pm Cantata at Chippewa Place
Monday, DECEMBER 2 1 pm Book Discussion 7 pm Facilities/Lib.		Sunday, DECEMBER, 22 10 am Worship/ Cantata/Xmas Offering 11 am Coffee Hour
Tuesday, DECEMBER 3	Friday, DECEMBER 13 *OFFICE CLOSED*	Monday, DECEMBER 23
Wed., DECEMBER 4 7:15 pm Council	Sat., DECEMBER 14	Tuesday, DECEMBER 24 Christmas Eve 10 pm Candlelight Service
Thurs., DECEMBER 5 1 pm Bible Study 5:30-6:15 pm Joyful Noise 7pm Seasonal Choir 8pm Choir	Sunday, DECEMBER 15 *PILLAR DEADLINE* 10 am Worship/ Children's Pageant 11 am Coffee Hour	Wednesday, DECEMBER 25 Merry Christmas! *OFFICE CLOSED*
Friday, DECEMBER 6 *OFFICE CLOSED*	Monday, DECEMBER 16	
Sat., DECEMBER 7	Tuesday, DECEMBER 17	Thurs., DECEMBER 26
Sunday, DECEMBER 8 10 am Worship Service Annual Meeting 11 am Coffee Hour	Wed., DECEMBER 18	Friday, DECEMBER 27 *OFFICE CLOSED*
Monday, DECEMBER 9	Thurs., DECEMBER 19 1 pm Bible Study 5:30-6:15 pm NO Joyful Noise 7pm Seasonal Choir	Sat., DECEMBER 28
Tuesday, DECEMBER 10	Rehearsal for Cantata – with Instruments	Sunday, DECEMBER 29 10 am Worship 11 am Coffee Hour
Wednesday, DECEMBER 11	Friday, DECEMBER 20 *OFFICE CLOSED*	Monday, DECEMBER 30
		Tuesday, DECEMBER 31
		<u>~WELCOME 2020!~</u>

PARTICIPANTS IN WORSHIP

DECEMBER 1, 2019

Lay Reader: Bridget Sproul
Head Usher: Sue Maier
Ushers: Bob & Caroline Chandler, David & Kathy Pastor
Acolyte: Olivia Klonowski
Peace Candle: Natalie Corrado
Sound: Kevin Smith
Comns Grtr: Max Roha
Flowers: Julie Bernard
Nursery: Marla Corrado
C.E Teacher: Kate Klonowski
Counters: Matt Wolbert, Jim Duffy
Servers: Cliff & Sue Stenzel
Snacks: Dorie Gabor, Marla Corrado
Clean-up: Jill Zedan, Sue Stenzel

DECEMBER 8, 2019

Lay Reader: David Ritchey
Head Usher: Jill Zedan
Ushers: David & Kathy Pastor, Kim Wallis, Kathy Smith
Acolyte: Joshua Anderson
Peace Candle: Amelia Tyler
Sound: Tim Wallis
Comns Grtr: Valerie Tyler
Flowers: Janet Renovetz
Nursery: Courtni Began
C.E Teacher: Beth Rehling
Counters: Marge Culver, Jan Renovetz
Servers: Linda Kriyovich, Julie Bernard
Snacks: Diane Gressley, Beth Rehling
Clean-Up: Bob & Caroline Chandler

DECEMBER 15 2019

Lay Reader: Kathleen Stewart
Head Usher: Kathy Smith
Ushers: Dave & Julie Bernard, Dan Stewart, Diane Gressley
Acolyte: Ryan Stewart
Peace Candle: Peter Kucmins
Sound: Ben Tomlinson
Comns Grtr: Dave Bernard
Flowers: Carole Snider
Nursery: Erin Tomlinson
C.E Teacher: Marla Corrado

Counters:

Servers:

Snacks:

Clean-Up:

Dave Bernard, Jim Duffy

Cliff & Sue Stenzel

Children's Program

Chad & Bridget Sproul

DECEMBER 22, 2019

Lay Reader: Betsey Wilson
Head Usher: Jan Renovetz
Ushers: George & Carole Snider
Acolyte: Carrie Coyer-Westerberg, Michelina Fawcett
Peace Candle: Amy Coyer-Westerberg
Sound: Evelyn Kucmins
Comns Grtr: David Pastor
Flowers: Marge Culver
Nursery: Poinsettias
C.E. Teacher: Courtni Began
Counters: Anne Melfo-Fawcett
Servers: Kathy Pastor, Jan Renovetz
Snacks: Julie Bernard, Sue Stenzel
Clean-Up: Choir Cantata
Jim & Peg Duffy

DECEMBER 24, 2019 – CANDLELIGHT SERVICE

Lay Reader: Cliff Cribbs
Head Usher: Jill Zedan
Ushers: David Ritchey, Jon Thompson
Comns Grtr: George & Carole Snider
Sound: Kathy Smith
Kevin Smith

DECEMBER 29, 2019

Lay Reader: Matt Wolbert
Head Usher: Caroline Chandler
Ushers: Diane Gressley, David Ritchey
Acolyte: Beth Rehling, Heidi Spangler
Peace Candle: Olivia Klonowski
Sound: Gabriella Gagliano
Comns Grtr: Doug Fawcett
Flowers: Fred Peseck
Nursery: Poinsettias
C.E Teacher: Kathy Pastor
Counters: Kate Klonowski
Servers: Marge Culver, Jon Thompson
Snacks: Cliff Stenzel, Carole Snider
Clean-up: Susan Snyder, Pat Rehm
Sue Stenzel, Jan Renovetz

continued next column ►

The Pillar

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United Church of Christ

FIRST CLASS

23 Public Square Moderator: Jim Duffy
Brecksville, Ohio 44141 jmorganduffy@gmail.com

Phone: 440-526-4364 **Pastor:** Pastor Allan Lane
E-mail: buccoh@sbccglobal.net

Web: www.BrecksvilleUCC.org **Director of Music:**
buccmusic@sbccglobal.net

Office Hours: (Mon – Thur.) **Financial Secretary:** Joy Garapic
9:00 a.m.– 12:00 p.m. buccfinance@sbccglobal.net

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