

The

Pillar

Brecksville United Church of Christ

DECEMBER 2020



***To Be Loving, Serving, and Accepting
Of All People
with God's Life-Changing Power and Grace***

Pastor's Ponderings.....

Let me share an Advent Prayer by Walter Brueggemann:

“In our secret yearnings
we wait for your coming,
and in our grinding despair
we doubt that you will.
And in this privileged place
we are surrounded by witnesses who yearn more than do we
and by those who despair more deeply than do we.
Look upon your church and its pastors
in this season of hope
which runs so quickly to fatigue
and in this season of yearning
which becomes so easily quarrelsome.
Give us the grace and the impatience
to wait for your coming to the bottom of our toes,
to the edges of our fingertips.
We do not want our several worlds to end.
Come in your power
and come in your weakness
in any case
and make all things new. Amen”

In the midst of our anticipation of the Birth, we are surrounded by reports of that Death. We are waiting for the Messiah who saves us eternally, in the same way as we wait for the vaccine that will give us back the life we once took for granted. We know what it is to hope in the midst of despair, to anticipate joy in the midst of sadness, to long for a peace that seems a long time coming, to experience the happiness of love and the fear of loss of the ones we love, in the same breath. The poem captures the ambiguity of this moment, this Advent, when we are truly waiting in weakness with impatience for the salvation that God will send. As in the poem, the end of all our secret yearnings is the One who makes all things new, and the vaccine that will make all things as they used to be.

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Pastor's Ponderings (continued)

But, of course, in both cases, afterwards, everything is changed anyway. Let us use the emotions that we are feeling as we wait for the advent of a vaccine, to explore our emotions as we wait for the Advent of the Savior. Hope, Peace, Joy, Love, Christ: Advent. May God give us all these things as we wait for Christ.



FROM THE MINISTRIES OF BUCC

FINANCE

In a year marked by social upheaval, Council thought the congregation would appreciate a brief update on BUCC's finances.

Congregational support has been reflected in strong continuing financial contributions. Admittedly, through October, pledge income has fallen roughly \$18,000 short of what we expected by this point in 2020. We do hope that gap will close as people make additional gifts through the remainder of the year. Gratefully, too, nonpledge contributions have been a little stronger than we had expected:

	Actual 2020 10 of 12	Budget 2020 10 of 12	Actual 2019 10 of 12
<i>Pledge Income</i>	\$87,223	\$105,537	\$106,418
<i>Nonpledge Income</i>	\$22,117	\$20,833	\$22,804

At the same time, our inability to meet in person has saved on operating costs. The 2020 budget had projected that total church costs for the year would be roughly \$248,000, but expected total
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FINANCE (continued)

expenses have run closer to a \$207,000 annual rate. Also, we anticipated a deficit of roughly \$62,000, including income from the rental of church property. However, if we project the year-to-date trends through December, the 2020 deficit could be close to \$40,000. Obviously, the deficit would be much lower if the contribution gap closes.

In a difficult year for fellowship, the church can celebrate the steadfast financial support of the congregation. At the same time, we must remember that we are drawing on cash reserves to keep the church operating. And the potential for continuing deficits poses a major challenge to the future of this church. We both thank the congregation for their continuing financial support, and hope people realize how very much each and every gift contributes toward the future of this community of faith.

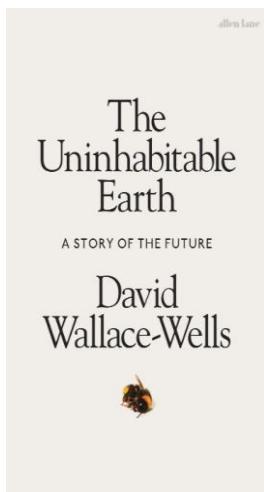
-- Bruce McCain, Treasurer



CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

The Mitten Tree: Thank you to those who have already provided “decorations” for the Mitten Tree’s magical branches! It’s going to be a cold winter, so please keep them coming! You are welcome to bring in any new/gently used (or newly-created!) hats, mittens, gloves and scarves. We, in turn, give these items to our neighbors in need, during Hunger Meals throughout the winter months. You can find the Mitten Tree in the lower lobby, just inside the back entrance of the church (the doors will be unlocked during regular church hours). If you have a contribution but are unable to stop by the church, please reach out to Kate Klonowski **(216) 534-3498** or **keightykay@gmail.com** to arrange for a pickup.

CHRISTIAN EDUCATION & OCWM



The Social Justice Book Club is reading *The Uninhabitable Earth: Life After Warming*, by David Wallace-Wells. Meetings are on Thursday evenings at 7:00pm, and all are held via Zoom (using the same codes we use for church services). On 12/3 the discussion will cover “Part 3: The Climate Kaleidoscope: Storytelling - Politics of Consumption (pp. 157 – 217)”. The 12/10 meeting will cover “Parts 3 & 4: The Climate Kaleidoscope/The Anthropic Principle: History After Progress to (pp. 218 – 265)”. Please feel free to contact Kate Klonowski at **(216) 534-3498** or **keightykay@gmail.com** with any questions!

OCWM

The Christmas Fund: The year's final special collection will be received on December 20th. One of the unique aspects of this fund is that dollars go **directly** to those who have served or who serve the church, especially in moments of critical need. Your donations provide direct financial assistance to individual UCC clergy and lay church employees, **not** to programs or institutions. With support from Our Church's Wider Mission and the Fund for Ministerial Assistance, here is where your donations will go:

- To retired clergy and lay employees - especially lower income retirees – who rely on monthly pension supplementation to meet basic needs such as food, utilities and medical expenses.
- For quarterly health premium supplementation, in the form of subsidized premiums for the UCC Medicare Supplement Plan with Rx. This is important assistance to ensure that individuals can receive quality health care.

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OCWM (continued)

- To retired UCC clergy and lay church employees in the form of a Christmas “Thank You” gift check. This special gift at Christmas time reminds these Veterans Of The Cross that they have not been forgotten, and that the church is grateful for their service.
- As Emergency grants for active and retired UCC clergy and lay employees, to assist in covering unexpected costs such as large medical expenses or home damage resulting from natural disasters.

Please be generous, as these funds are critical for a sustainable quality of life for these “Veterans of the Cross”. **Thank You!**

Hunger Meal: Our next hunger meal will be served on Sunday, January 24, 2021, at Pearl Road United Methodist Church. At this writing, the logistics of preparing and serving the meal are uncertain, due to the coronavirus. More details will be posted in January’s Pillar, but one thing IS certain: one way or another, the hungry will be fed!

COMMUNICATIONS & OUTREACH

Worshiping Together in a Virtual Way: We have been successfully worshipping via Zoom since April. To join the service by phone, simply dial **1-929-205-6099** and enter the “meeting ID number”,. which is **478 070 5901 #** . During the call, if you want to say something that everyone can hear, press * and the number **6** on your phone (unmute). Press the same sequence again to put yourself back on mute. Simply hang up at the end of the service. If you wish to join worship on your computer, go to our website - **brecksvilleucc.org** – and under the **Worship** tab, click on “**Upcoming and Recent Services**”. Then click on the blue **“Join Zoom”** button.

STEWARDSHIP

In keeping with the theme of stewardship for ourselves, we are passing on some highlights from a Self-Care Seminar that Pastor Allan participated in. The three S's of care are:

1) Self-comfort: retreat; 2) Self-care: renew; 3) Sabbath: re-center

Self-Comfort: What can we do? Slow down. Deep breathing; nap; music, nature, sleep, walk, exercise; read something non-work related, create something, bake. Pay attention to your body and respond accordingly. What is your body telling you? Take an inventory of how each part of your body is feeling: what is tense, clenched?

Think of things you are still grateful for. Reframe the situation: I know you don't like this situation, but if you did like it, what would you like about it.

Self-Care: Self-care is a regular practice that contributes to physical wellness and mind-body-spirit well-being. This is in contrast to self-comfort, which may be more sporadic, "as needed" care. Self-care is a reminder about God being with us in all things. Self-care enables us to show up as we want for God, family and others.

Prayer: Appropriate communication with, and support from, God.

Sabbath: A Biblical warrant for being able to say, "I'm done for now." In Genesis, at the end of each day, God says, "It is good." It's as if God says, "That's enough for today. It's good." Sabbath rest is God proclaiming that rest is good, necessary, commanded, and made holy by God.

Consider reflecting on this prayer at the end of the day:
"Lord, it is night. The night is for stillness. Let us be still in the presence of God. It is night after a long day. What has been done has been done; what has not been done has not been done. Let it be. The night is dark - let our fears of the darkness of the world and of our own lives rest in You. The night is quiet - let the quietness of Your peace enfold us, all dear to us, and all who have no peace. The night heralds the dawn - let us look expectantly to a new day, new joys, new possibilities. In Your name we pray. Amen"

-- from *Night Prayer of A New Zealand Prayer Book/He Karakia Mihinare o Aotearoa*
(<https://liturgy.co.nz/lord-it-is-night>)

NOTES AND ASIDES

THIS MONTH'S PILLAR COVER ART is an award winning cross stitch, by Allison Colbert.

BUCC MASKS are available! Interested parties can place an order by either calling the BUCC office at **440-526-4364**, or by sending your request in an email to **buccoh@sbcglobal.net**. Masks are available by pick up or delivery (no extra charge) – please let Anne know what your preference is when ordering. These masks bear the UCC slogan “Still Speaking,” and our church’s name. Suggested donation is \$10, and all proceeds go toward the BUCC general fund.



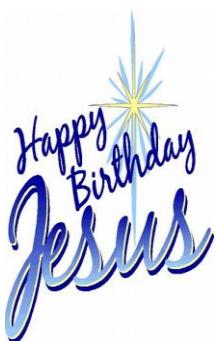
NOVEMBER'S ALL SOULS SERVICE:

The church received a beautiful card from Lois Lorenzo and the family of Rudolph “Rudy” Lorenzo, regarding our All Souls Day service last month. It was addressed to “Pastor Allan and all the people who helped make the Special Memorial Service a success”. The note inside read as follows:

“We really appreciate all the thought and effort that went into putting together this beautiful memorial service. During this COVID-19 period, we have not been able to have our regular gatherings of family and friends and grieve in a normal way – so your special service was greatly needed and appreciated. Family members of ours in California, Las Vegas, Detroit and here in our area were able to participate. It gave all of us some closure. Again, we thank all the fine caring people of the church and we look forward to one day being back and enjoying the services.”



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



December 4:	Jon Thompson
December 6:	Doug Fawcett
December 12:	Kevin Smith
December 13:	Jacob VanDuyne
December 17:	Betty Einhart
December 20:	Grace Hunt
December 21:	Michael VanDuyne
December 25:	Shannon West
December 28:	Naomi Klonowski
December 29:	Jim Duffy
	Bob Chandler
	Lauren Haynes
	Linda Kriynovich
	Jesus
	Dan Stewart
	Valerie Duffy
	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!***



CALENDAR

DECEMBER 2020

Tue., DEC. 1
11am Pastor's Virtual Office Hour

Wed., DEC. 2
7pm SCR Meeting

Thur., DEC. 3
7pm Book Club

Fri., DEC. 4
OFFICE CLOSED

Sat., DEC. 5

Sunday, DEC. 6
9:30am Zoom w/ Ms.Mindy
10 am Zoom Worship Service
11:15am Spiritual Life

Mon., DEC. 7

Tue., DEC. 8
11am Pastor's Virtual Office Hour

Wed., DEC. 9
7:15pm Council

Thur., DEC. 10
7pm Book Club

Fri., DEC. 11

Sat., DEC. 12

Sunday, DEC. 13
9:30am Zoom w/ Ms.Mindy
10am Zoom Worship Service

Mon., DEC. 14

Tue., DEC. 15
PILLAR DEADLINE
11am Pastor's Virtual Office Hour

Wed., DEC. 16

Thur., DEC. 17

Fri., DEC. 18
OFFICE CLOSED

Sat., DEC. 19

Sunday, DEC. 20
9:30am Zoom w/ Ms.Mindy
10am Zoom Worship Service

Mon., DEC. 21

Tue., DEC. 22
11am Pastor's Virtual Office Hour

Wed., DEC. 23

Thur., DEC. 24
10pm Zoom Christmas Eve Worship Service

Fri., DEC. 25
 **CHRISTMAS DAY** 

Sat., DEC. 26

Sunday, DEC. 27
9:30am Zoom w/ Ms.Mindy
10am Zoom Worship Service

Mon., DEC. 28

Tue., DEC. 29
11am Pastor's Virtual Office Hour

Wed., DEC. 30

Thur., DEC. 31



PARTICIPANTS IN WORSHIP

Dec. 6, 2020

Lay Reader: Bridget Sproul
Responder: Julie Bernard
C.E. Teacher: Mindy Harris
Slide Runner: Kate Klonowski
Zoom Host: David Pastor

Dec. 13, 2020

Lay Reader: David Ritchey
Responder: Kathy Smith
C.E. Teacher: Mindy Harris
Slide Runner: Kate Klonowski
Zoom Host: Jim Duffy

Dec. 20, 2020

Lay Reader: Kathleen Stewart
Responder: Cliff Cribbs
C.E. Teacher: Mindy Harris
Slide Runner: Kate Klonowski
Zoom Host: Sue Maier

Dec. 24, 2020

Lay Reader: TBA
Responder: TBA
Slide Runner: TBA
Zoom Host: David Pastor

Dec. 27, 2020

Lay Reader: Betsey Wilson
Responder: Sue Stenzel
C.E. Teacher: Mindy Harris
Slide Runner: Kate Klonowski
Zoom Host: Sue Maier



The Pillar

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Brecksville

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FIRST CLASS