



THE *Pillar*
BRECKSVILLE UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

NOVEMBER 2023



TO BE LOVING, SERVING, AND ACCEPTING
OF ALL PEOPLE
WITH GOD'S LIFE-CHANGING POWER
AND GRACE

Pastor's Ponderings.....

"Blessed is the one who grabs your little children and smashes them against a rock." Psalm 137:9

Yes, it's in the Bible. And it is wrong, very wrong no matter how you try to spin it. So usually, we preachers will quietly omit that verse.

But don't turn away. Read it. I hope we can all agree, atheists and devout believers, smashing babies is always a bad idea. No matter which child, no matter which rock.

CNN warned me before showing a graphic image of a dead Jewish baby killed by Hamas militants. The number of children reported killed in Gaza during Israel's military response has reportedly surpassed 3,000. But killing children – must I really write this in 2023? – killing children is never a blessing. Psalm 137:9 is wrong on that point.

Psalm 137 is a poignant song of longing for a homeland during exile.

By the rivers of Babylon, we sat down and cried...

They said, "Sing a song from Zion for us!"

How could we sing the LORD's song in a foreign land?

Our hearts break for the exiles longing for home. With God, we stand with the oppressed. Israel, Palestine, I hear you. I stand with you. Except for that whole part about smashing babies. I cannot accompany you all the way to verse nine.

After wandering in the desert, the Israelites, freed from slavery in Egypt, look across the Jordan. Deuteronomy 34 sets the borders of the land of Israel. Joshua led the Israelites to wipe out the Canaanite inhabitants and seize their land. Through the centuries, that land was seized by the Babylonians, the Persians, the Greeks, the Romans, the Muslims, the Christians, the Ottoman empire, and the British empire.

This geopolitical morass began as a religious problem. Christians, Jews, and Muslims have been squabbling over this real estate. We each look to our sacred texts and seek justification for our premise that it's "mine." After all, God gave it to "my people," not "you people." Religious leaders started this problem; we must be part of fixing it. Perhaps that day will come when the world's religious fervor is about sharing Earth's resources with grace, instead of dominating them with violence.

Religion started this problem. So, it feels disingenuous for faith leaders to tell governments to fix what is really just our own bad theology. Let's start by fixing the problem with our religion.

Pastor's Ponderings (continued)

Bad faith leaders sow tribalism and fear. Good faith leaders reconcile and heal. Religion started this problem. Bad theology gets people killed. Good spirituality seeks peace and coexistence.

Spiritual growth means finding the humility to recognize when we've gotten carried away with ourselves. And until we pastors, rabbis and imams, and all people of faith, get it together and fix that bad theology, then we are merely shifting the blame. We are telling our politicians to find the remedy to the intractable argument that we began with our extremist theology.

Bad theologians can't just point to politicians and escape culpability. We need to reorient our spirituality. Remember these core principles: Love one another. Treat others the way you want to be treated. Share your bread with the hungry. Welcome the stranger and the exile. Forgive. Heal.

Our sacred texts challenge us clearly to seek ways of peace, to work for justice, to live with compassion, to welcome the stranger. Surely the scriptures find substantial grounds for peace and reconciliation; at least as substantial as whatever flimsy scriptural arguments could justify what is happening now.

Perhaps when we religious folk prioritize the shared teachings of compassion, justice and respect for human dignity, values shared by all three Abrahamic religions, we can participate in solving the problem we began. Our faiths teach us to promote peace and reconciliation. There will always be grudges to hold and innocent lives to avenge. Until we seek a higher path.

Love is the path. Peace is the destination.



FROM THE MINISTRIES OF BUCC

FINANCE

Quarterly dues of \$2,275 have been sent to Living Water Association. The check included the collection for Neighbors in Need which amounted to \$975, a large increase over 2022. NIN is a special offering which supports works of justice and compassion in the US and abroad.

STATEMENT OF CASH AVAILABLE AS OF SEPTEMBER 30th:

	09/30/23
Sources of Cash	
PNC Bank	13,688
US Bank	3,848
First Federal of Lakewood	<u>59,592</u>
Liquid Cash	77,128
Certificate of Deposit	<u>60,642</u>
Cash Balance	137,770
Spendable Endowment – Market Value	91,607
Restricted Endowment – Market Value	63,884
Stock Bequest	<u>88,006</u>
Equity Value	243,498
Total Financial Assets	381,268
Less:	
Restricted Endowments	63,884
Current Liabilities – Budgeted Expenses	<u>13,087</u>
	76,791
Net Financial Assets Available	304,297
Budgeted Deficit (Revised)	<u>(69,897)</u>
Available Cash / Deficit Years	4.4 Years

SPIRITUAL LIFE



ALL SOULS SERVICE – The All Souls service is a loving and reverent remembrance of loved ones who passed away this year (between last November and today). This year’s service will take place on Sunday, November 5th.

Memorial Mug Tree

Following the service during our coffee hour in Pilgrim Hall, we will dedicate our new Memorial Mug Tree. The mugs (or another symbol) displayed in our community gathering space will be a lasting memory of folks from our church family who have gone before us. If you have your loved ones BUCC mug, please bring it that day. A few spirited mugs are still congregating in the vicinity and will be lovingly placed on all Souls Day.

A heartfelt Thank You to Leroy Ford, the designer and builder of our new memorial, and Sue Maier for initiating this project.

We Remember Table

Pictures are a lovely way to remember family and friends who have passed into the next life, recently or long ago. A dedicated table space will be available in Pilgrim Hall after the All Souls service, for you to share a picture of someone who was dear to you. Please bring your loved one downstairs to the “We Remember Table” before church. You may write a short dedication at that time or bring one with the picture.

SPIRITUAL LIFE *(continued)*



ADVENT IS UPON US! - "Hanging of the Greens" refers to the practice of adding evergreen plants (live or artificial) to a congregation's worship space. The tradition had its origin in pagan pre-Christian culture, but like many other traditions, Christians adopted this practice and understand it to be a symbol of the Eternal, coming to dwell among us as Word made flesh. The Greens can also be seen as a sign of life and growth, overcoming and flourishing in the dead of winter.

Please join us following worship on Sunday, November 26th, when BUCC will ring in the holiday season with our own "Hanging of the Greens" celebration/pizza party."

ADVENT BOOK – Many thanks to all those who contributed to this year's Advent book! Keep an eye out for your copy to come with an email at the end of the month. Hard copies will also be available at the church.

STAFF/CONGREGATION RELATIONS (SCR)

BUCC NURSERY – If you love little children and want to share some of your time with our infants and toddlers, please consider signing up on Breeze to be a Nursery Assistant on Sundays during the church service. We are blessed that our own Amelia Elting has volunteered to be our Nursery Attendant until we can hire a permanent staff member to fill the position. We will be exploring the feasibility of hiring an attendant in the first quarter of 2024. While Amelia is very capable, she may require a helping hand on occasion, so we are looking for several volunteers who are willing to check in with her prior to the start of the service to see if she needs help.

If you are a parent of an infant or toddler, check in with Amelia prior to the start of service, if you want to utilize the nursery. You will find Amelia in the Nursery or in Ms. Mindy's classroom. We ask parents of Nursery children to please fill out a Nursery information form – they are in the Nursery, in a binder near the door. We also ask that you be available by text if our Nursery Attendant needs you to return to the nursery for any reason. Thank you! -- Evie Novak, SCR

STEWARDSHIP/MEMBERSHIP

THANKSGIVING POTLUCK!

It is fall and that means it's Stewardship season! By now you have been hearing from speakers during Sunday services and reading inserts in the bulletins. Sunday, November 12th is the day we bring in our pledge cards and celebrate by feasting at our Thanksgiving meal. We invite everyone to join in the fellowship! Please sign up at church or call in to let us know how many will be coming and what side dish or dessert you will bring to share. This is one of our most favorite Sundays of the year! Please come and bring your family or friends!



Announcements:

SPECIAL THANKS to Armand Eusanio & Jeff Thompson for the new microwave in the kitchen. This will make prepping for potlucks so much easier – thanks so much for your generosity!



AL KLONOWSKI – There will be a memorial tree planting for Al on Monday, Nov. 6th at noon. It will take place in Independence, on the corner of Selig Blvd. and Kathy Lynn Drive (near the Civic Center, between the library and the baseball diamond). All are welcome.



MINDFULNESS & MEDITATION – There will be no meditation group on Wed., Nov 22, due to the Thanksgiving holiday. Plans are being made for a field trip to Trinity Episcopal Church in downtown Cleveland, for a labyrinth walk in early December.



SPECIAL THANKS to Marge Culver, who so generously gives of her time every week. Marge assists by proofreading and assembling the Sunday bulletins & the monthly Pillars, in addition to stuffing envelopes for bulk mailings, and even filling in behind the desk when needed! Finally, if there's an event at the church – a concert, a memorial service, etc. - she can always be found helping with setup, serving and/or cleanup. In this season of giving thanks, I'm taking this opportunity to express my sincere gratitude for Marjorie Culver.





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

Miriam	Rosewicz	November 02
Mike	Westerberg	November 02
Dassie	Matsuoka	November 03
Sue	Stenzel	November 09
Amelia	Tyler	November 09
Dan	Maier	November 13
Joe	Gagliano	November 14
Caroline	Chandler	November 17
Andrew	Wilson	November 17
Tim	Wallis	November 22
Wes	Novak	November 23
Melanie	Kuzmins	November 26

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



Happy Thanksgiving!

CALENDAR

NOVEMBER 2023

Wed., NOVEMBER 1

11am Mindfulness &
Meditation
7pm Stewardship

Thu., NOVEMBER 2

5:30pm Youth Choir
7pm Seasonal Choir
8pm Choir

Fri., NOVEMBER 3

OFFICE CLOSED

Sat., NOVEMBER 4

SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 5

10am Worship Service
11:30am Membership

Mon., NOVEMBER 6

7pm Facilities

Tue., NOVEMBER 7

8:15am "Holy Grounds"
(Brecksville Panera)
6:30pm AA in Pilgrim Hall
7pm Spiritual Life

Wed., NOVEMBER 8

11am Mindfulness &
Meditation
7pm Council

Thu., NOVEMBER 9

5:30pm Youth Choir
7pm Seasonal Choir
8pm Choir

Fri., NOVEMBER 10

OFFICE CLOSED

Sat., NOVEMBER 11

SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 12

STEWARDSHIP POTLUCK

10am Worship Service
11:15am OCWM

Mon., NOVEMBER 13

Tue., NOVEMBER 14

8:15am "Holy Grounds"
(Brecksville Panera)
6:30pm AA in Pilgrim Hall
7pm Communications

Wed., NOVEMBER 15

PILLAR DEADLINE

11am Mindfulness &
Meditation

Thu., NOVEMBER 16

5:30pm Youth Choir
7pm Seasonal Choir
8pm Choir

Fri., NOVEMBER 17

OFFICE CLOSED

Sat., NOVEMBER 18

SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 19

10am Worship Service

Mon., NOVEMBER 20

Tue., NOVEMBER 21

8:15am "Holy Grounds"
(Brecksville Panera)
6:30pm AA in Pilgrim Hall

Wed., NOVEMBER 22

Thu., NOVEMBER 23
THANKSGIVING DAY
OFFICE CLOSED

Fri., NOVEMBER 24

OFFICE CLOSED

Sat., NOVEMBER 25

SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 26

10am Worship Service

Mon., NOVEMBER 27

Tue., NOVEMBER 28

8:15am "Holy Grounds"
(Brecksville Panera)
6:30pm AA in Pilgrim Hall

Wed., NOVEMBER 29

11am Mindfulness &
Meditation

Thu., NOVEMBER 30

5:30pm Youth Choir
7pm Seasonal Choir
8pm Choir

PARTICIPANTS IN WORSHIP

NOVEMBER 5, 2023

Head Usher: TBD
Ushers: Evelyn Seager
TBD
Lay Reader: Jackie Cassara
Greeter: Jon Thompson
Counters: Marge Culver
Janet Renovetz
Nursery Asst.: TBD
Acolyte: Cammie Rogers Ward
A/V: Jim Duffy
Flowers: Sue Stenzel
Snack: Lois Lorenzo
Setup/Serve: TBD
Cleanup: TBD
Snow Herder: TBD

NOVEMBER 12, 2023

Head Usher: Peg Duffy
Ushers: Evelyn Seager
TBD
Lay Reader: Diane Gressley
Greeter: Lori Molesky
Counters: Marge Culver
Janet Renovetz
Nursery Asst.: TBD
A/V: Jim Duffy
Flowers: Carole Snider
Snack: POTLUCK
Setup/Serve: Sue & Cliff Stenzel,
et.al
Cleanup: Sue Stenzel, et. al
Snow Herder: TBD

NOVEMBER 19, 2023

Head Usher: Jill Zedan
Ushers: Evelyn Seager
Sue Stenzel
Lay Reader: Kate Matthews
Greeter: Michelle Rogers
Counters: Marge Culver
Janet Renovetz
Nursery TBD
Acolyte: Cammie Rogers Ward
A/V: TBD
Flowers: TBD
Snack: TBD
Setup/Serve: TBD
Cleanup: TBD
Snow Herder: TBD

NOVEMBER 26, 2023

Head Usher: TBD
Ushers: Evelyn Seager
Lay Reader: Rose Kaval
Greeter: Sue Stenzel
Counters: Marge Culver
Janet Renovetz
Nursery Asst.: TBD
A/V: TBD
Flowers: Karen Sandstrom
Snack: Jenn Elting
Setup/Serve: TBD
Cleanup: TBD
Snow Herder: TBD

The Pillar

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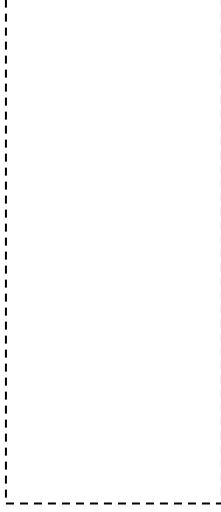
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FIRST CLASS



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Brecksville United Church of Christ