



THE *Pillar*
BRECKSVILLE UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

FEBRUARY 2024



i will give you a new
heart, and a new spirit
I will put within you

ezekiel 36:26

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

Pastor's Ponderings.....

The Lenten Study Group begins on Monday, February 19 at 6:30 p.m. in the parlor. As before, this will be a six-week book discussion group. You can either join in person or online. The problem is, the book has not yet been written.

I am writing a book. Whether or not it will ever get published (or even finished), I don't know. But this is a book that has been on my mind for a long time. I'm writing as a way of exploring some ideas and clarifying them, at least for myself and perhaps others. And I invite you to be a part of it by sharing your stories.

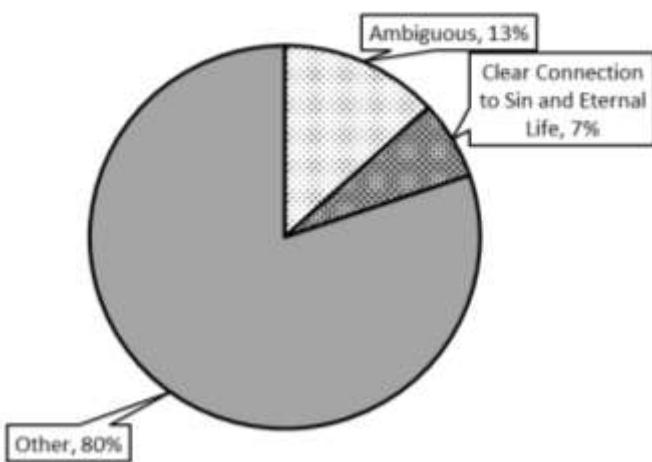
The book aims to explore a more expansive understanding of salvation, as presented in the Bible. Most of us grew up hearing about salvation in a very specific way that went something like this: *"The blood of Jesus washes away our sins, saving us from hell and granting us eternal life with God in heaven. To receive this salvation, we must accept Jesus as our Lord and Savior."*

But salvation, as described in the Bible, means a lot more than that. Sin is not always the problem and forgiveness of sins is not always the remedy.

By my count, variations of the words "saved" or "salvation" appear in the NRSV Bible 501 times. But how many times do those have to do

with Jesus' blood, forgiveness of sins or eternal life? I found 33 *clear* references to salvation as forgiveness of sin and eternal life (7%). There were 66 *ambiguous* references (13%). The other 402 biblical references to salvation are not connected to eternal life at all.

Biblical References to Salvation



Pastor's Ponderings.....(continued)

So, 80% of biblical references to the words “saved” or “salvation” have nothing to do with what many Christians think about when asked, “Are you saved?” I want to know, what does salvation mean in those verses?

Moses sang “God is my strength and my might and has become my salvation.”¹ Moses was singing of the salvation that comes when slaves are set free.

The Bible is full of references to salvation in this way. To the exile, salvation is about homecoming.² To the blind, salvation is sight.³ To the woman with scoliosis, salvation is standing tall.⁴ To the ten lepers, salvation is about healing, restoration to the community and gratitude.⁵

I’m not writing this book for theologians. I’m writing it for you, and I want to keep it accessible and relevant. Theology books can get very esoteric; but Jesus’ path is beautifully practical. So, each biblical concept of salvation will be accompanied by the witness of lived experiences. I look forward to hearing some of your stories.

The Bible speaks of salvation as liberation; perhaps you can share a way in which Jesus’ way set you free. When we reflect on how the woman with scoliosis experienced salvation, I invite you to share how Christ has helped you to stand tall. How has your vision been restored? How have you been reunited with your community? How have you experienced salvation, not merely as a future hope, but as a lived experience? And, yes, with your permission, I would like to print some of your stories in this book too.

Each week I will present a new chapter. You may choose to receive it as a printed copy. Or you may choose to help trees experience salvation by requesting an electronic copy to read on a PC, phone, or tablet. If you would like to register, just contact the church office, or fill out the form in the bulletin.

¹ Exodus 15:2

² Isaiah 62:1, 11

³ Luke 4:18, John 9

⁴ Luke 13:10

⁵ Luke 17:11



FROM THE MINISTRIES OF BUCC

COMMUNICATIONS & OUTREACH

GOOD NEWS FOR OUR OUTREACH - BUCC can continue to spread our positive messages of hope and inclusion using the banners above our front door!

Brecksville City Council approved our request to keep displaying our banners in front of the church building. This comes after a complaint was filed against us. The issue was that our banners were technically out of line with current ordinances. Thanks to Pat Walker for her extraordinary assistance throughout this process, and thanks to the church members who attended the meetings at City Hall.

We will begin cycling through our set of banners, including our famous "Rainbow Flag".

If you have further questions, please contact me or anyone else in the Communication & Outreach Ministry. - Jim Duffy

FINANCE

A check in the amount of \$2,700 was sent to Living Water Association. This included \$2,275 for the 2023 fourth quarter dues and \$475 toward the Christmas Fund.

The Christmas Fund, also known as the Veterans of the Cross, has been providing emergency grants, supplementation of small annuities and health premiums, and Christmas "Thank You" checks each December to lower-income retirees for over 140 years. Thank you for your support!

STATEMENT OF CASH AVAILABLE AS OF DECEMBER 31ST:

| | 12/31/23 |
|---|-----------------|
| Sources of Cash | |
| PNC Bank | 37,375 |
| US Bank | 4,961 |
| First Federal of Lakewood | <u>60,273</u> |
| Liquid Cash | 102,610 |
| Certificate of Deposit | <u>95,614</u> |
| Cash Balance | 198,223 |
| Spendable Endowment – Market Value | 93,419 |
| Restricted Endowment – Market Value | 65,956 |
| Stock Bequest – Market Value | <u>69,818</u> |
| Equity Value | 229,193 |
| Total Financial Assets | 427,416 |
| Less: | |
| Restricted Endowments | 65,956 |
| Current Liabilities – Budgeted Expenses | <u>9,683</u> |
| | <u>75,640</u> |
| Net Financial Assets Available | 351,777 |
| Budgeted Deficit (Revised) | (44,954) |
| Available Cash / Deficit Years | 7.8 Years |

SPIRITUAL LIFE

MUSIC MINISTRY - Seasonal Choir will begin rehearsing for Holy Week on Thursday February 8, from 7-7:45 PM. Seasonal Choir is an excellent way to prepare for the important sacred observances of Holy Week, which this year fall between March 24 (Palm Sunday) and March 31 (Easter.) If you enjoy singing in a group setting but don't have time to commit to regular choir, seasonal choir provides a great opportunity for music, fellowship, and spiritual preparation for Holy Week. Contact Dave Debick with any questions.

(Continued on next page)

SPIRITUAL LIFE (continued)

**Sunday,
February 11**



**Wear a crazy hat,
enjoy New Orleans-style music
and come hungry for
our fabulous annual potluck!**

SOUPS ON! - Please join us for our annual Ash Wednesday soup supper, on February 14TH. We'll gather in Fellowship Hall for soup at 6:30 pm, followed by our Ash Wednesday service at 7:00. If your last name begins with A-M, please bring a loaf of bread to share (those with last names beginning with N-Z will be asked to contribute bread on Maundy Thursday).

Side Note: BUCC has the most amazing chefs! We're looking for six volunteers to make soup - three for Ash Wednesday and three for Maundy Thursday. If you're looking for an eager and appreciative audience to try out a new recipe, or if you already know you make a BUCC favorite, please let Betsey know. We're looking for about 40-50 servings (approximately 1 ½-2 gallons each) for either Ash Wednesday (February 14) or Maundy Thursday (March 28). Thank you!



Spring Retreat

Saturday, March 9
Greenwood Village
Clubhouse

More information
to come!

STEWARSHIP/LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

Many Thanks to our generous congregation for the big success of this past year's pledge drive! We have more pledges and a greater total of pledges than we have had in a very long time! You made 51 pledges totaling \$183,384. The average pledge was about \$3600. The median pledge was about \$2000. Your generosity is amazing!

Also, Thank You to everyone who stepped up to be a chairperson or co-chairperson of a ministry. We had more members join ministries than have done so in many years.

Our church is growing in number of members, pledges, and number of members involved in ministries!

Announcements:

FLOWERS - After twelve plus years of coordinating volunteers and chancel flowers, Janet Renovetz is now stepping down from her leadership role. It is with much appreciation that we thank Janet for all those years of ensuring that we had beautiful flower displays on the altar and doors! She has been helped by a team of talented members willing to share their vision of floral beauty. The leadership baton has been passed to Peg Duffy and Kathy Pastor (it takes two people to replace Janet, of course), who wish to streamline the process and discover additional creative spirits!

The sign-up calendar for dedications continues to be in the narthex (back of the church near the new member board). If you enjoy creating floral arrangements, please sign up through Breeze for a specific Sunday. The church will reimburse the cost of materials up to \$25, with your receipt. Peg and Kathy are happy to answer any questions you might have.

Thanks again Janet, for the time, energy and talent you have cheerfully shared, and we lift your family in prayer as you support your daughter in Arizona.

- Peg and Kathy



FEBRUARY

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

| | | |
|-----------|----------|-------------|
| Ian | Stewart | February 02 |
| Michelina | Fawcett | February 05 |
| Julie | Bernard | February 07 |
| Marjorie | Culver | February 08 |
| Cliff | Stenzel | February 13 |
| David | Pastor | February 27 |
| Diane | Gressley | February 29 |

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



CALENDAR

FEBRUARY 2024

Thu., FEBRUARY 1
7pm Adult Choir

Fri., FEBRUARY 2
OFFICE CLOSED

Sat., FEBRUARY 3

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 4
10am Worship Service
11:30 Membership

Mon., FEBRUARY 5
7pm Facilities

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

Wed., FEBRUARY 7
11am Mindfulness &
Meditation
6pm SCR
7pm Stewardship

Thu., FEBRUARY 8
7pm Seasonal Choir
8pm Adult Choir

Fri., FEBRUARY 9
OFFICE CLOSED

Sat., FEBRUARY 10

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 11
Mardi Gras & Potluck
10am Worship Service &
Potluck
11:30am OCWM

Mon., FEBRUARY 12

Tue., FEBRUARY 13
8:15am "Holy Grounds"
(Brecksville Panera)
6:30pm AA in Pilgrim Hall

Wed., FEBRUARY 14
ASH WEDNESDAY

11am Mindfulness &
Meditation
6:30pm Soup Supper
7pm Worship Service

Thu., FEBRUARY 15

7pm Seasonal Choir
8pm Adult Choir

Fri., FEBRUARY 16
OFFICE CLOSED

Sat., FEBRUARY 17

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 18
10am Worship Service

Mon., FEBRUARY 19
6:30pm Lenten Study Group

Tue., FEBRUARY 20
8:15am "Holy Grounds"
(Brecksville Panera)
6:30pm AA in Pilgrim Hall

Wed., FEBRUARY 21
11am Mindfulness &
Meditation
6:30pm Braver Angels
7pm Council

Thu., FEBRUARY 22
7pm Seasonal Choir
8pm Adult Choir

Fri., FEBRUARY 23
OFFICE CLOSED

Sat., FEBRUARY 24

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 25
10am Worship Service

Mon., FEBRUARY 26
6:30pm Lenten Study Group

Tue., FEBRUARY 27
8:15am "Holy Grounds"
(Brecksville Panera)
6:30pm AA in Pilgrim Hall

Wed., FEBRUARY 28
11am Mindfulness &
Meditation

Thu., FEBRUARY 29
7pm Seasonal Choir
8pm Adult Choir

PARTICIPANTS IN WORSHIP

FEBRUARY 4, 2024

Head Usher: TBD
Ushers: Evelyn Seager
Heidi Spangler
Lay Reader: Jill Zedan
Greeter: Carol Miller
Counters: Marge Culver
Nancy Stella
Nursery Asst.: TBD
Acolyte: TBD
A/V: TBD
Flowers: TBD
Snack: Lois Lorenzo
TBD
Setup/Serve: TBD
Cleanup: TBD
Snow Herder: TBD

FEBRUARY 11, 2024

Head Usher: TBD
Ushers: TBD
Lay Reader: Kate Matthews
Greeter: TBD
Counters: Marge Culver
TBD
Nursery Asst.: TBD
A/V: Fred Pedersen
Flowers: Katie MacKeigan King
Snack: POTLUCK
Setup/Serve: TBD
Cleanup: TBD
Snow Herder: TBD

FEBRUARY 18, 2024

Head Usher: TBD
Ushers: TBD
Lay Reader: Jim Duffy
Greeter: TBD
Counters: Marge Culver
Janet Renovetz
Nursery Asst.: TBD
Acolyte: TBD
A/V: TBD
Flowers: Carol Miller
Snack: TBD
Setup/Serve: Carol Miller
TBD
Cleanup: TBD
Snow Herder: TBD

FEBRUARY 25, 2024

Head Usher: TBD
Ushers: TBD
Lay Reader: Rose Kaval
Greeter: TBD
Counters: Marge Culver
Janet Renovetz
Nursery Asst.: TBD
A/V: David Pastor
Flowers: TBD
Snack: Jenn Elting
Setup/Serve: TBD
Cleanup: TBD
Snow Herder: TBD

FEBRUARY 14, 2024 – ASH WEDNESDAY

Reader: Dorie Gabor, Rose Kaval
Setup Crew: Allison Colbert, Jenn Elting, Anne Melfo, Betsey Wilson,
Tia Began + ? (*1 more needed*)
Soup: Jenn Elting, Lois Lorenzo, Anne Melfo, Tina Posey
Bread: Attendees with last names from A-N
Servers: Allison Colbert, Jenn Elting, Melanie Falls, Tina Posey
Cleanup Crew: Rose Kaval, David & Kathy Pastor, Betsey Wilson + ?
(*2 more needed*)

The Pillar

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United Church of Christ

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