



THE *Pillar*
BRECKSVILLE UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

MARCH 2024

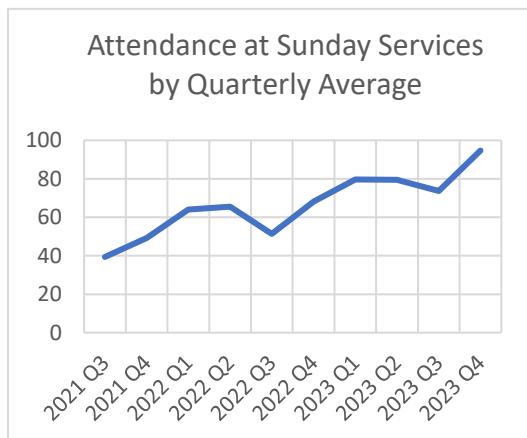


LOVING, SERVING, AND ACCEPTING
ALL PEOPLE
WITH GOD'S LIFE-CHANGING POWER
AND GRACE

Pastor's Ponderings.....

Growth happens in various ways. My son grows taller every day. His sister is growing financially, and we're all (in fits and starts) growing emotionally, and spiritually. Brecksville United Church of Christ is also growing in every way that matters.

Attendance is growing steadily as you can see in the chart. Last year alone, we welcomed 28 new members, and celebrated three baptisms. Most new folks tell me they first showed up because someone invited them. They returned because of the hospitality and authenticity of this congregation. Don't underestimate the power of a personal invitation to "come and see." (John 1:39, 46) All of us can share the Good News. When we do, the church grows.



Children's Sunday Attendance



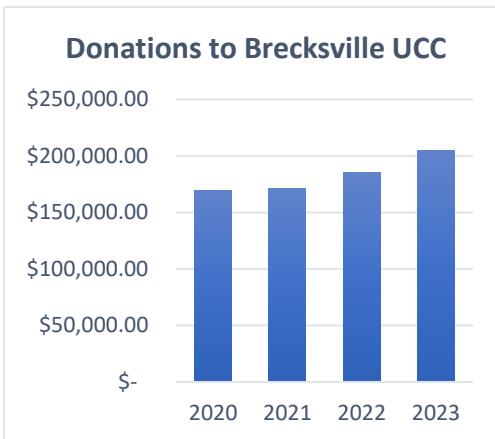
Kids participation is also growing. They bring new life and smiles to the congregation. Kids also bring us new ideas and hope for the future. The charts also indicate a recurring dip in Q3, reflecting summer vacation travels.

Finances are growing. We've had sacred conversations about stewardship. You have stepped up in ways that exceed expectations. When I began here in February 2022, our budget deficit was over \$75,000.

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

This was causing us to spend our reserves at a rate that would leave us financially depleted in just a few years. Last year, that trend reversed.

Because of your generous stewardship, you changed that deficit into a \$3,000 *surplus*! This is an extraordinary manifestation of your faith and commitment to Christ and to this congregation. Thank you.



Our faith is growing on the rock-solid foundation of Jesus' teachings. Over the past year I have made many home visits and hospital visits. As I listen to you, as we study and pray together, we are growing on the path of discipleship. By the bold and beautiful ways that you put your faith into action, our witness to the community grows stronger.

I'm growing too. Yes, around the waistline, but more importantly, I'm growing in the freedom to preach from the heart. Jesus' message is, at core, one of love, acceptance and service. You have helped me to find my voice in a way that is more authentically personal. And I deeply appreciate the ways that you have shared your faith when I open the mic during the sermons. Consistently, I grow by the faith witness you give.

Yes, we are growing. And I am so excited to see the ways that we will continue to grow in the months and years to come.



FROM THE MINISTRIES OF BUCC

FELLOWSHIP/MEMBERSHIP



Hello all!

It is time for game night on Saturday,
March 23, at 5:00 pm.

Join us in Fellowship Hall,

for a fun evening

of games -

dominoes, euchre, and/or whatever
games you like!

Invite a friend or come alone –
just bring a snack to share and
we will provide drinks.

Contact Kathy Smith if you have questions.



SPIRITUAL LIFE

MAUNDY THURSDAY - Please join us in Fellowship Hall for a soup supper at 6:30 pm on Thursday, March 28, followed by a service at 7:00 pm.

Side Note: BUCC has the most amazing chefs! We're looking for four volunteers to make soup for this event (1 ½ - 2 gallons each). And if your last name begins with M-Z, please bring a loaf of bread to share. Thank you!

GOOD FRIDAY – Please join us on Friday, March 29th, for a **Tenebrae** service. Tenebrae is a deeply moving and austere service, based on a medieval monastic ceremony. The word "Tenebrae" means darkness. It's a meditation on the passion and death of Jesus on calvary. As the service progresses, lights are extinguished until we are left in complete darkness. The primordial symbols of light and darkness, music and silence lead us to a place of profound prayer.

SPRING RETREAT

When: Saturday, March 9, 10 am – 4 pm

Where: Greenwood Village Garden Room (in Sagamore Hills)

\$20 freewill offering

Join us for a time of renewal and fellowship! This retreat is designed to provide a sacred space for "THE FIVE R's: Rest, Reflection, Relaxation, Refreshment and Renewal".

Don't worry, it won't be all seriousness and navel-gazing! There will be time for community and fun, and yes, lunch will be provided (though you can certainly bring your own if you have special dietary needs.) If you'd like to bring a side dish to share you are more than welcome, but it's not a necessity.

Pastor John will lead us, focusing on the practice of meditation, starting with the basics. We'll try out some different meditation techniques and look at some of the ancient sources of meditation in the Eastern and Western traditions.

Please call the office to register, or sign-up after worship on Sundays. We look forward to seeing you there!



HOLY WEEK SCHEDULE:

3/24	Palm Sunday	10 am Service
3/28	Maundy Thursday	6:30 pm Soup Supper, followed by service
3/29	Good Friday	7:30 pm Tenebrae
3/31	Easter Sunday	10 am Service

General Information:

Members Armand Eusonio, Diane Gressley and Sherrill Witt are looking into obtaining an AED (automated external defibrillator). This is a small, portable device that would be kept in the church, and used in the event of a sudden cardiac emergency. It is designed to be used by the lay person and if it's approved for purchase, Armand will provide a brief tutorial on the device for the congregation. The device is very easy to operate and can be lifesaving, and the American Heart Association highly recommends that AED's be made available in all gathering places. Please feel free to contact Armand if you have any questions or concerns.

PRIVACY MATTERS - Our services are broadcast live online, and recordings of services are available for replay and sharing. That allows us to expand our outreach, but it also brings additional concerns. Please keep in mind:

- Children who come up for the "Time with Young Worshippers" will be seen and heard online. By permitting your child to come forward, be aware that this implicitly gives the church permission to share their participation online.

- We are glad to include your prayer intentions in our communal prayer. But keep in mind that HIPAA laws do not permit us to disclose personal medical information without permission. With that in mind, please either ask permission to publicly share their health information in our prayers OR keep them anonymous by the way you phrase your prayer.
- If you sit in the first few pews, you will be visible online. If you prefer to avoid being seen online, avoid those pews. But if you don't mind, please consider migrating to the front pews. When our videos show empty pews, the sanctuary looks vacant even when it is full. So, please populate those first pews to ensure that our online presence accurately depicts the vibrant and growing congregation that we truly are.

HOLY GROUNDS – I will be at the Brecksville Panera for coffee at 8:15 most Tuesday mornings. Anyone is welcome to stop by. There's no need for an RSVP or agenda, so you never know who might show up. Of course, if you are looking for a more traditional meeting in my office, you can always set that up too. But if you're just looking for casual conversation, stop by at Panera any Tuesday for a visit and some "holy grounds." – Pastor John



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 - while she 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 and would like to utilize the nursery, check in with Amelia prior to the start of service. You will find Amelia in the Nursery or in Ms. Mindy's classroom. Please fill out a Nursery information form and be available by text if our Nursery Attendant needs you to return to the nursery for any reason. Thank you!

SCAM ALERT! Someone has gotten hold of our database and sent out text messages asking for money from BUCC members. We have notified the police about this. The fake texts say that they are from Pastor John and request money. If this ever happens to you, please delete it. The pastor would NEVER ask you for money outside of normal church contributions. Notify the church immediately if you receive such a message. If you have sent money to them, please contact the church office so we can follow up with the police.



IMPORTANT DATES – March is Women's History Month, starting with Zero Discrimination Day on 3/1. This day was first celebrated by the UN on 3/1/2014.

March 8th is International Women's Day, a day to bring awareness to the fight for gender equality. Although it is a holiday in some countries, it is a normal day in the United States, and as such, businesses and schools are open.¹

March 10th is both the first day of Ramadan and the start of Daylight-Saving Time. The 17th is St. Patrick's Day, and the 19th is St. Joseph's Day. March 20th marks both the International Day of Happiness and the Spring Equinox (Coincidence? I think not.)

We finish off the month with the Day of Trans Visibility on March 31st. This is a day to celebrate the lives and cultural achievements of the trans community. This observance date was founded in 2009 by transgender activist Rachel Crandall.

¹ <https://www.calendarr.com/united-states/international-women-s-day>



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

Lucy	Brown	March 03
Mindy	Harris-Wade	March 08
Tia	Began	March 11
Benjamin	Rehling	March 12
Kate	Klonowski	March 14
Livy	Klonowski	March 16
Spencer	Whyte	March 16
Ann	Kelley	March 22
Kathleen	Stewart	March 24
Joseph	Wilson	March 25
Kathy	Pastor	March 28
Mark	Rehling	March 29
Bill	Witt	March 29
Susan	Snyder	March 30

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



CALENDAR

MARCH 2024

Fri., MARCH 1

OFFICE CLOSED

Sat., MARCH 2

SUNDAY, MARCH 3

10am Worship Service

11:30am Membership

Mon., MARCH 4

6:30pm Lenten Study Group

7pm Facilities

Tue., MARCH 5

8:15am "Holy Grounds"
(Brecksville Panera)

6:30pm AA in Pilgrim Hall

7pm Spiritual Life

Wed., MARCH 6

11am Mindfulness &
Meditation

6pm SCR

Thu., MARCH 7

7pm Seasonal Choir

8pm Adult Choir

Fri., MARCH 8

OFFICE CLOSED

Sat., MARCH 9

10am SPRING RETREAT

SUNDAY, MARCH 10

10am Worship Service

Mon., MARCH 11

6:30pm Lenten Study Group

Tue., MARCH 12

8:15am "Holy Grounds"
(Brecksville Panera)

6:30pm AA in Pilgrim Hall

6:30PM OCWM

Wed., MARCH 13

11am Mindfulness &
Meditation

7pm Council

Thu., MARCH 14

7pm Seasonal Choir

8pm Adult Choir

Fri., MARCH 15

OFFICE CLOSED

Sat., MARCH 16

SUNDAY, MARCH 17

10am Worship Service

Mon., MARCH 18

6:30pm Lenten Study Group

Tue., MARCH 19

8:15am "Holy Grounds"
(Brecksville Panera)

6:30pm AA in Pilgrim Hall

Wed., MARCH 20

11am Mindfulness &
Meditation

6pm Braver Angels

7pm Stewardship

Thu., MARCH 21

7pm Seasonal Choir

8pm Adult Choir

Fri., MARCH 22

OFFICE CLOSED

Sat., MARCH 23

SUNDAY, MARCH 24

10am Worship Service

3pm Hunger Meal

Mon., MARCH 25

6:30pm Lenten Study Group

Tue., MARCH 26

8:15am "Holy Grounds"
(Brecksville Panera)

6:30pm AA in Pilgrim Hall

Wed., MARCH 27

11am Mindfulness &
Meditation

Thu., MARCH 28

MAUNDY THURSDAY

6:30pm Soup Supper

7pm Worship Service

Fri., MARCH 29

GOOD FRIDAY

7:30pm Worship Service

Sat., MARCH 30

SUNDAY, MARCH 31

EASTER SUNDAY

10am Worship Service



PARTICIPANTS IN WORSHIP

MARCH 3, 2024

Head Usher: Diane Gressley
Ushers: Evelyn Seager
TBD
Lay Reader: Kate Matthews
Greeter: TBD
Counters: Marge Culver
Janet Renovetz
Nursery Asst.: TBD
Acolyte: TBD
A/V: Fred Pedersen
Flowers: Peg Duffy
Snack: Lois Lorenzo
TBD
Setup/Serve: TBD
Cleanup: TBD
Snow Herder: TBD

MARCH 10, 2024

Head Usher: TBD
Ushers: Evelyn Seager
TBD
Lay Reader: Bridget Sproul
Greeter: Lori Molesky
Counters: Marge Culver
Lori Molesky
Nursery Asst.: TBD
A/V: Jim Duffy
Flowers: Peg Duffy
Snack: TBD
Setup/Serve: TBD
Cleanup: TBD
Snow Herder: TBD

MARCH 17, 2024

Head Usher: TBD
Ushers: Evelyn Seager
TBD
Lay Reader: Jim Duffy
Greeter: Peg Duffy
Counters: Marge Culver
Lori Molesky
Nursery Asst.: TBD
Acolyte: TBD
A/V: TBD
Flowers: Peg Duffy
Snack: Peg Duffy
Setup/Serve: TBD
Cleanup: TBD
Snow Herder: TBD

MARCH 24, 2024

Head Usher: TBD
Ushers: TBD
Lay Reader: Sherrill Witt
Greeter: Lori Molesky
Counters: Marge Culver
TBD
Nursery Asst.: TBD
A/V: Jim Duffy
Flowers: Kathy Pastor
Snack: TBD
Setup/Serve: TBD
Cleanup: TBD
Snow Herder: TBD

March 31, 2024

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

The Pillar

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Brecksville

United Church of Christ

23 Public Square
Brecksville, Ohio 44141

FIRST CLASS

Phone: 440-526-4364

E-mail: buccoffice23@gmail.com

Web: www.BrecksvilleUCC.org

Moderator: Sherrill Witt
sherrill@mex.net

Pastor: Rev. John King
buccpastor23@gmail.com

Office Hours: (Mon. – Thu.)

9:30 a.m.– 1:30 p.m.

Dir. of Music: Dave Debick
buccmusic23@gmail.com

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Financial Secy. : Joy Garapic
buccfinance23@gmail.com

Pillar Editor: Anne Melfo
buccoffice23@gmail.com