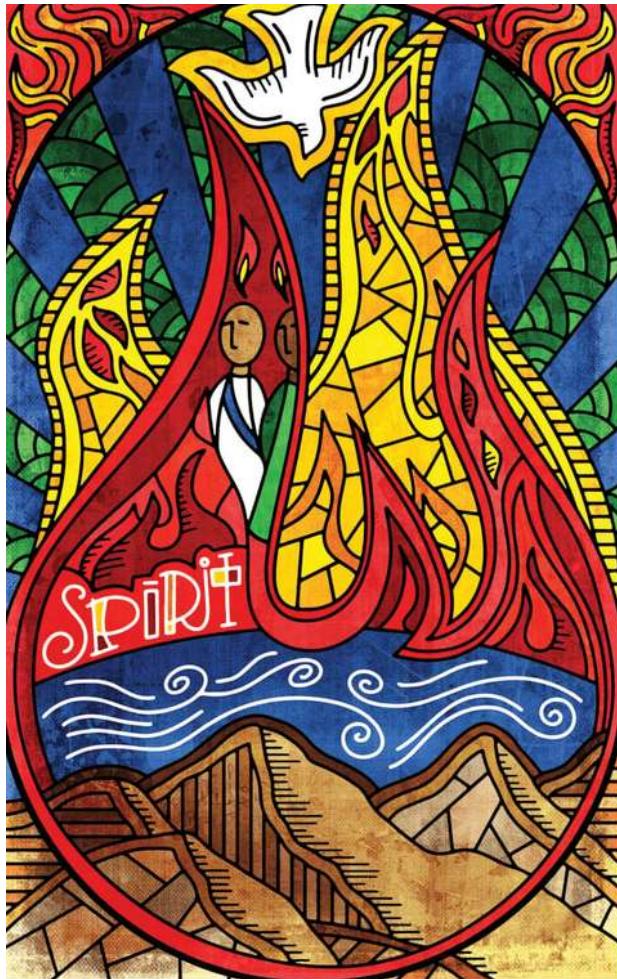




THE *Pillar* BRECKSVILLE UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

MAY 2024



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

Pastor's Ponderings.....

Behaviorism is a system of rewards and punishments to change behaviors. The behaviorism of B.F. Skinner, Pavlov and others provides a clear framework of positive and negative "reinforcements." Reward a pigeon with snacks and you can teach it to dance the Macarena. Punish it with electrical shocks and behavioral control is both highly effective and arguably unethical.

Ancient civilizations learned that such behavior management was effective at building compliant societies. Good behavior was rewarded; bad behavior was punished.

This became even more powerful when extended to the spiritual realm. Church authorities could manage other's behavior, especially sexual behavior, and tithing behavior, with a system of everlasting rewards and punishments. The blood of the cross was seen as a substitute for the myriad of blood sacrifices prescribed by the law.

But what if the whole point of Jesus's ministry was to announce that God's grace is sufficient? Jesus echoes centuries of prophets before him, who said no blood sacrifice was necessary in the first place. Amos provides a prime example of this:

Even though you offer me your burnt offerings and grain offerings, I will not accept them, and the offerings of well-being of your fatted animals I will not look upon... But let justice roll down like water and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream. (Amos 5:22–24)

The prophets repeat this message over and over.

- Sacrifice and offering you do not desire. (Psalm 40:6)
- For I desire steadfast love, and not sacrifice. (Hosea 6:6)

Perhaps Jesus's death on the cross was indeed salvific by revealing the insanity of a transactional system of spiritual rewards and punishments.

Pastor's Ponderings (continued)

Our relationship with God is not based on Skinnerian behaviorism. Our relationship with God is based on love and grace.

Jesus died because of collusion between religious leaders and government authorities. It was behaviorism at its finest. The display of crucifixions outside Jerusalem was a terrifying reminder to comply. Yet, Jesus stood up to the unholy alliance between the Sanhedrin and the empire. Jesus trusted that God's love was sufficient, that grace, not violence has the final word.

What if that is the meaning of Jesus's sacrifice on Calvary? Perhaps it's not about replacing one scapegoat with another, substituting one atoning blood sacrifice for another atoning blood sacrifice. What if bloodshed is not satisfying God at all?

I believe that our faith really is about amazing grace, not punishment. I believe discipleship is about love, not legalism. I have found that the consistent message resounding throughout scripture is that God desires mercy, not sacrifices (Matthew 9:13).

We don't need to complicate it. Jesus gave us one commandment: "Love one another." (John 15:12). Or look to the prophet Micah 6:8: "what does the Lord require of you but to do justice and to love kindness and to walk humbly with your God?"



FROM THE MINISTRIES OF BUCC



FACILITIES

Estimates for the painting of the steeple are being reviewed and references checked. We are currently leaning toward a contractor whose estimate is around \$4000. We will ask this contractor to provide an estimate for painting the back doors.

The final measurements for the front door replacement have been taken. The contract should be signed in the next week or two and the doors will be ordered. Installation is 12-14 weeks out at this time. The doors will be

white. Total cost for installation, doors and hardware will be \$16,531.

FINANCE

A check in the amount of \$3,274 was sent to the Living Water Association. The first quarter dues were \$2,690. The One Great Hour of Sharing (OGHS) amount was \$584.

OGHS is one of four mission offerings of the United Church of Christ. This Lenten offering supports the disaster, refugee, and development ministries of the UCC. This offering has a 69-year history as an ecumenical endeavor that now involves nine denominations and Church World Service.

Statement of Financial Assets March 31, 2024:**Sources of Cash**

PNC Bank	69,174
US Bank	7,826
First Federal of Lakewood	60,648
Liquid Cash	137,648
Certificate of Deposit	95,614
Cash Balance	233,262

Spendable Endowment – Market Value	94,035
Restricted Endowment – Market Value	65,660
Stock Bequest – Market Value	56,348

Equity Value	217,043
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Total Financial Assets	450.305
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Less:

Restricted Endowments	66,660
Current Liabilities – Budgeted Expenses	11,831
	78,941

Net Financial Assets Available	371,814
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Budgeted Deficit (Revised)	(44,954)
Available Cash / Deficit (years)	8.3 Years

SOCIAL JUSTICE
(Formerly OCWM)

The Edna House for Women in Cleveland, is a structured sober living facility designed to provide food, shelter, and sobriety services to women in need regardless of their ability to pay.

The Edna House is a grassroots organization with the basic guiding principle of one woman helping another ... then helping another ... and helping another. Over 86 percent of the women who have completed its program are sober today.

On Sunday May 5, Jenn Lasky, the executive director, will be at our 10 am service to discuss the Edna House and its successes. The following Sunday (**May 12**) we will have a collection for them, in celebration of Mother's Day. Please note that donations of specific items are readily accepted, but currently the need is for gift cards from Wal Mart, Sam's Club, etc., as well as monetary donations.

SOCIAL JUSTICE (*continued*)

THE “STRENGTHEN THE CHURCH” (STC) OFFERING will happen on Pentecost Sunday, May 19th. This collection reflects the shared commitment of people across the United Church of Christ, to cooperatively build up the UCC. Conferences and the national setting equally share the gifts given by members and friends through their local congregations. The funds raised support leadership development, new churches, youth ministry, and innovation in existing congregations. As God calls our congregations to be the church in new ways, your generosity will plant new churches, awaken new ideas in existing churches and develop the spiritual life in our youth and young adults.

SPIRITUAL LIFE

BRECKSVILLE UCC FREE CONCERT SERIES - On Sunday May 19, at 4:00 PM, we will host a free concert featuring the Cleveland State University Percussion Ensemble, directed by Luke Rinderknecht. The program will include works by Becker, Cage, Green, Keown, Marceau, and Mellits. A free-will offering will be received and a light reception will follow the concert. Plan ahead to join us on May 19th for an exciting program of percussion music. Bring a friend!

SUMMER MUSIC PROGRAM - During the month of May, Dave Debick will be recruiting volunteer singers and instrumentalists to share their musical gifts with the congregation at Sunday services over the summer months. This will allow our choir to take a well-deserved break from early June through Labor Day weekend. If you'd like to help out singing or playing an instrument for a musical offering, Dave will be happy to schedule you for a Sunday that's convenient for you. Rehearsal time is provided for each volunteer on an as-needed basis. Look for Dave at coffee hour during May to get signed up. High school students are welcome to participate!

ONA (OPEN & AFFIRMING) - June is Pride month and in preparation for the June 1st March/Festival, BUCC will be putting an ad in the ***Pride Guide***. Allison Colbert will be selling rainbow t-shirts, bracelets, pins, etc., through the month of May, to help defray the ad cost. Check out her table in the lobby every Sunday to buy/order merchandise, or for more info about the March/Festival!

STEWARDSHIP

INTENTIONAL CARING MINISTRY – “In the same way, let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Creator in heaven.” - Matthew 5:16

Many of us view BUCC as an extension of our own family. As brothers and sisters in Christ, we want to be there for one another when a need arises. There is a very good chance that most of us will need a helping hand at some point in our lives. Our current protocol for helping our members is to send out word through Sunday announcements, prayer requests or word of mouth, and those that can help, come running. Our Church Council and the Stewardship Ministry have considered that it may be beneficial to create a more structured intentional caring ministry.

We would like to gauge our members' interest in participating in such a ministry, whether that be in a leadership role or as a helping hand. We envision that this ministry will define ways in which our membership can be of service to one another, possibly through card writing, visiting, driving members to doctor appointments or to church, or organizing meals. This group may want to consider what resources are available - both monetary and human resources. Eventually the ministry may want to identify team leaders for different categories of member care and recruit members to serve on those teams.

If you have an interest in being a part of an intentional caring ministry, please contact Anne Melfo in the church office (440-526-4364), Bridget Sproul (Chair of the Stewardship Ministry), or any Stewardship member.

Important Notes:

GOSPEL SUNDAY THANKS – We hope you were able to join us for the VERY well-attended Gospel Sunday event the week after Easter. The incredible Angela Lynard led the choir and the congregation in both soul-searing and joyful hymns. We can't thank Angela enough for her amazing talent. Thanks also to Kate Matthews for introducing us to Angela.



BRECKSVILLE/BROADVIEW HEIGHTS

PRIDE – On June 8th, our church will again have a booth at the BBH Pridefest, at the Broadview Heights pavilion. Also, the BBH Pride group will be meeting on the first Sunday of every month in the church Parlor, at 4 pm.

GREETING CARD DONATIONS – Hello! First of all, a big thank you for all the greeting cards I have received over the past many years. These cards were lovingly recycled into birthday cards for the many hospice patients we recognized on their birthdays. I have enough cards ready to go currently, plus many beautiful cards yet to do. I do not need card donations at this time. Thank you again, from Heartland Hospice and myself, for your generosity. ☺ ☺ ☺

- Janet Renovetz



May Birthdays

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

Robin Coyer	May 05
Lindsey Maier	May 07
Gina Cook	May 12
Terry Heiman	May 18
Danyel Esser	May 21
Peg Duffy	May 30

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



CALENDAR

MAY 2024

Wed., MAY 1

11am Mindfulness & Meditation
7pm SCR

Thu., MAY 2

7pm Adult Choir

Fri., MAY 3

OFFICE CLOSED
11am Drumming

Sat., MAY 4

SUNDAY, MAY 5

10am Worship Service
11:30am Membership
4pm BBH Pride

Mon., MAY 6

7pm Facilities

Tue., MAY 7

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

Wed., MAY 8

11am Mindfulness & Meditation
7pm Council

Thu., MAY 9

7pm Adult Choir

Fri., MAY 10

OFFICE CLOSED
11am Drumming

Sat., MAY 11

SUNDAY, MAY 12

Mother's Day

10am Worship Service

Mon., MAY 13

7pm Communications & Outreach

Tue., MAY 14

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

Wed., MAY 15

11am Mindfulness & Meditation
6pm Braver Angels
7pm Stewardship

Thu., MAY 16

7pm Adult Choir

Fri., MAY 17

OFFICE CLOSED
11am Drumming

Sat., MAY 18

12pm CSB

SUNDAY, MAY 19

Pentecost

10am Worship Service
4pm FREE CONCERT

Mon., MAY 20



Tue., MAY 21

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

Wed., MAY 22

11am Mindfulness & Meditation

Thu., MAY 23

7pm Adult Choir

Fri., MAY 24

OFFICE CLOSED
11am Drumming

Sat., MAY 25

SUNDAY, MAY 26 – ARBOR DAY

Mon., MAY 27
MEMORIAL DAY
OFFICE CLOSED

Tue., MAY 28

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

Wed., MAY 29

11am Mindfulness & Meditation

Thu., MAY 30

7pm Adult Choir

Fri., MAY 31

OFFICE CLOSED
11am Drumming

PARTICIPANTS IN WORSHIP

MAY 5, 2024

Head Usher: TBD
Ushers: TBD
Lay Reader: Diane Gressley
Greeter: Lori Molesky
Counters: Marge Culver
Lori Molesky
Nursery Asst.: TBD
Acolyte: TBD
A/V: Jim Duffy
Flowers: Maureen Stanley
Snack: TBD
TBD
Setup/Serve: TBD
Cleanup: TBD

MAY 12, 2024

Head Usher: TBD
Ushers: TBD
Lay Reader: Robert Petrus
Greeter: TBD
Counters: Marge Culver
TBD
Nursery Asst.: TBD
A/V: Jim Duffy
Flowers: TBD
Snack: TBD
Setup/Serve: TBD
Cleanup: TBD

MAY 19, 2024

Head Usher: TBD
Ushers: TBD
Lay Reader: Sherrill Witt
Greeter: Lori Molesky
Counters: Marge Culver
Janet Renovetz
Nursery Asst.: TBD
Acolyte: TBD
A/V: Fred Pedersen
Flowers: TBD
Snack: TBD
Setup/Serve: TBD
Cleanup: TBD

MAY 26, 2024

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

The Pillar

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