



THE *Pillar*
BRECKSVILLE UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

AUGUST 2024



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

Pastor's Ponderings.....

“Our God reigns!”

I sang it loudly and boldly at religious gatherings in my youth. I sang it with 20,000 people in the stadium at Notre Dame University. I sang it alongside thousands of others on a hillside at youth conferences. In groups that large, the fervor and energy of our proclamation filled my heart to the brim. It was ecstatic. It was beautiful.

And it was problematic.

With a three-syllable refrain, we punched each word pretty hard. But we always sang the pronoun loudest. Properly sung, the message was clear: “OUR God reigns!” Not theirs; OURS. Behold a subtle yet important shift. We glide, almost imperceptibly, from community to tribalism.

It’s like rooting for the Guardians. Why am I happy when they win? Is it because the Guardians have morally superior character? No. Better policy proposals? Nope. We root for our team simply because they are our team. We feel allied with those around us. They are OUR team and if OUR group beats THEIR group, we feel better. There it is: tribalism.

Which is fine. Teams build community. We thrill to the sight of a ball moving across a line, as if it actually meant something. The danger comes in the form of religious tribalism. It’s all fun and games until someone gets hurt.

Brian McLaren writes of how religious tribalism blinds us to the beauty of our fellow human beings, and binds us to a narrow, fear-driven vision of the world. Through the centuries, we built walled cities and parapets around our tribe. Then we expanded them.

Tribalism perpetuates cycles of violence and division. “The longer we remain stuck in the old tribal identities that pit us against one

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

another, the longer we will fail to address the global challenges that require our collective wisdom and cooperation.”¹

Something about being human still drives us toward tribalism. Bonding with our community helped us survive. It also led us to slaughter our foes, wipe out other cultures and subjugate people of other religions. All the while singing “OUR God reigns!” ever more boldly.

Religious tribalism insidiously hijacks the power of community. Cults do this. Tribalism exploits our love and friendship to create an “us vs. them” worldview. This worldview fundamentally shifts how we see one another. Are we working toward understanding and the common good? Or are we working toward conquest and domination?

Why am I loyal to my tribe? No reason: they are my tribe. When it comes to baseball, that’s fine. But when it comes to the things that really matter, such as faith, family and patriotism, my allegiance really ought to demand more thoughtful deliberation.

Nationalism takes tribalism to a dangerous level. From Berlin in 1929, Einstein said, “Nationalism is an infantile disease. It is the measles of humankind.” Another genius, Bruce Springsteen, echoed, “Blind faith in anyone or anything will get you killed.” Nationalism and patriotism both evoke love of country. But Merriam-Webster clarifies that nationalism has an exclusionary aspect not found in patriotism. Nationalism implies a superiority not associated with patriotism. In the same way, I love my family and I’m devoted to them like no other. But I don’t think that my family is better than yours. Similarly, nationalism takes patriotism down a dangerously selfish and exclusionary path.

Rev. Jim Wallis writes: “White Christian nationalism doesn’t cross lines, it creates them. It seeks to divide us, leading this country down a path that starts with fear, that turns to hate, and ultimately

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¹ McLaren, Brian, The Great Spiritual Migration, p. 45.

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

leads to violence. White Christian nationalism defies what Jesus says about loving our neighbor, and even our enemies.”²

The U.S.A. is not a Christian country. The U.S.A. is a country of Christians, Muslims, Jews, Buddhists, Hindus, Jains, atheists, and others. Those of us who follow Jesus build our moral and ethical character to be compassionate, empathetic and respectful. When there is broad consensus, those norms become laws. When there is not broad consensus, as in the case of abortion, we respect the autonomy of the individual to make their own decisions.

I agree with Jim Wallis that Christian Nationalism is dangerous. It leads us down the path of other nations that have attempted to codify matters of faith into law. Think, for example, the Taliban or nations with Sharia law. That kind of marriage between faith and politics rarely works out well.

Let's be patriots. Let us love our homeland and make it wonderful. Vote. Campaign. Advocate. And let's be faithful disciples of Jesus, walking the path of love with honesty, humility and compassion. Along the way, we will meet a wonderful community of people different than ourselves. They have diverse beliefs, cultures, traditions and values. That is not a problem to be fixed; it is a blessing to be celebrated.

Rupertus Meldenius, a 17th-century Lutheran theologian sums it concisely: “In essentials, unity. In non-essentials, diversity. In all things, charity.”

² Wallis, Jim. The False White Gospel: Rejecting Christian Nationalism, Reclaiming True Faith, and Refounding Democracy (pp. 10-11). St. Martin's Publishing Group. Kindle Edition.



FROM THE MINISTRIES OF BUCC

FACILITIES

All cement areas in the front of the church have been power washed. The rear entrance/cement areas have been power washed.

The steeple and the rear doors have been painted, as well as the exterior of the parlor bay window.

The installation of the front doors has been completed.

We are reviewing the remaining lights that need to be converted to LED. The library and lower level have nonfunctioning lights.

Additionally, there are several overhead lights in Pilgrim Hall that need to be addressed.

The chandelier in the narthex will have new LED bulbs, and the sconces will be washed in the next few weeks.

FELLOWSHIP/MEMBERSHIP

Church Picnic



The annual church picnic will be held right after the worship in the park, on August 25th. Pack your picnic basket with your favorite side dish and/or dessert to share. We will be providing hot dogs and hamburgers, table service and lemonade and/or iced tea. If you bring a cold dish, we ask that you please pack it in some ice. There are electrical outlets for crockpots.

Please fill out your information on the sign-up sheet, so that we can determine quantities for the food and beverages that the church is providing.

FINANCE

Statement of Financial Assets Available June 30, 2024:

Sources of Cash

PNC Bank	12,729
US Bank	7,828
First Federal of Lakewood	<u>26,126</u>
Liquid Cash	<u>46,683</u>

Certificate of Deposit	32,588
United States Treasury Securities	<u>133,907</u>
Cash Balance	<u>213,178</u>

*Spendable Endowment – Market Value	94,308
*Restricted Endowment – Market Value	66,877
*Stock Bequest – Market Value	<u>41,352</u>
Equity Value	<u>202,537</u>

Total Financial Assets	415,714
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Less:

Restricted Endowments	66,877
Current Liabilities – Budgeted Expenses	<u>14,092</u>
	<u>80,969</u>

Net Financial Assets Available	334,745
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Budgeted Deficit (Revised)	<u>(44,954)</u>
Available Cash / Deficit (years)	7.7 Years

LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

Are you interested in helping the youth and adults of BUCC? Please consider becoming the chairperson of the Christian Education Ministry. No experience is necessary, other than wanting to help out. Miss Mindy does a wonderful job with the kids. What we need is someone to help coordinate activities for adults and report to council. Please talk to Bridget Sproul or Pastor John if interested.

SOCIAL JUSTICE



MOM'S DEMAND ACTION **UPDATE** – Hello all! The recent assassination attempt, combined with the fact that so far 2024 has seen a record number of mass shootings year-to-date, means we need to do more to drive the implementation of common-sense gun laws. One way you can do that is by participating in Mom's Demand Action (momsdemandaction.org).

I know that back in 2018 we were able to help flip our State Representative seat to a gun sense candidate (Phil Robinson - learn more at ohiohouse.gov/members/phillip-m-robinson-jr).

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MOMS DEMAND ACTION (*continued*)

Here are some MDA events you can participate in during the month of August:

- Take action now by sending letters to your representatives. Check here: <https://momsdemandaction.org/act/>
- **Thursday, August 8, 7:00pm:** Participate in the OH-Cleveland-Quarterly Supporter Meeting at the Fairview Park Library.
- **Monday, August 12, noon:** OH Statewide Lunch & Learn: Letters to the Editor Training / Virtual.
- **Thursday, August 15th noon AND 7pm:** Ohio Statewide Moms 101, virtual meetings.
- **Thursday August 19 7pm:** OH Statewide-Focus on Elections virtual meeting.
- **Thursday August 21 7pm:** OH Statewide Training: Perfect your Pitch, virtual.

These are just a few of the events - you can sign up for all of the above and also find more events at:

<https://momsdemandaction.org/events/>

SPIRITUAL LIFE

ADULT CHOIR 2024-25 - Our choir will begin weekly rehearsals starting on Thursday, September 5, from 7:00-8:15. The music we practice together is an excellent way to prepare spiritually for Sunday services. Rehearsals are filled with good humor, fellowship, and affirmation. Vocal recordings are provided on a regular basis to help with the learning process. New members are most welcome and encouraged to participate. Please consider checking us out in September! Contact Dave Debick with any questions or concerns.



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

Michael	Corrado	August 02
Courtni	Began	August 08
Kathy	Ford	August 09
Beth	Rehling	August 11
Dave	Bernard	August 15
Bryan	Chaikin	August 15
George	Snider	August 15
Carol	Miller	August 16
Bettina	Ortiz	August 18

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



CALENDAR

AUGUST 2024

Thu., AUGUST 1

Fri., AUGUST 2
OFFICE CLOSED

Sat., AUGUST 3
3pm ORDINATION!

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

Mon., AUGUST 5
7pm Facilities

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

Wed., AUGUST 7
11am Mindfulness &
Meditation
7pm Finance

Thu., AUGUST 8

Fri., AUGUST 9
OFFICE CLOSED

Sat., AUGUST 10
10am Liturgical Planning
Retreat

SUNDAY, AUGUST 11
10am Worship Service

Mon., AUGUST 12

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

Wed., AUGUST 14
11am Mindfulness &
Meditation
7pm Council

Thu., AUGUST 15
PILLAR DEADLINE

Fri., AUGUST 16
OFFICE CLOSED

Sat., AUGUST 17

SUNDAY, AUGUST 18
10am Worship Service

Mon., AUGUST 19
6:30pm Call to Care

Tue., AUGUST 20
8:15am "Holy Grounds"
(Brecksville Panera)
6:30pm AA in Pilgrim Hall
7pm Communications &
Outreach

Wed., AUGUST 21
11am Mindfulness &
Meditation

Thu., AUGUST 22

Fri., AUGUST 23
OFFICE CLOSED

Sat., AUGUST 24
4pm CSB

SUNDAY, AUGUST 25
10am Worship in Park
11:15am Church Picnic

Mon., AUGUST 26

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

Wed., AUGUST 28
11am Mindfulness &
Meditation
7pm Stewardship

Thu., AUGUST 29

Fri., AUGUST 30
OFFICE CLOSED

Sat., AUGUST 31

PARTICIPANTS IN WORSHIP

AUGUST 4, 2024

Early Usher: TBD
Late Usher: TBD
Greeter: Lori Molesky
Lay Reader: Robert Petrus
Flowers: Rob Grow
Bread: Lois Lorenzo
Counters: Marge Culver
Janet Renovetz
Nursery Asst.: TBD
Acolyte: TBD
A/V: Jim Duffy
Snack: TBD
Setup/Serve: TBD
Cleanup: TBD

AUGUST 18, 2024

Early Usher: TBD
Late Usher: TBD
Greeter: TBD
Lay Reader: Rose Kaval
Flowers: Bettina Ortiz
Bread: Kathy Fagan &
Linda Gagnon
Counters: Marge Culver
Janet Renovetz
Nursery Asst.: TBD
Acolyte: TBD
A/V: TBD
Snack: Carole Snider
TBD
Setup/Serve: TBD
Cleanup: TBD

AUGUST 11, 2024

Early Usher: Jill Zedan
Late Usher: TBD
Greeter: Peg Duffy
Lay Reader: Sherrill Witt
Flowers: Peg Duffy
Counters: Marge Culver
Janet Renovetz
Nursery Asst.: TBD
A/V: David Pastor
Snack: TBD
Setup/Serve: TBD
Cleanup: TBD

AUGUST 25, 2024

Early Usher: TBD
Late Usher: TBD
Greeter: TBD
Lay Reader: Kate Matthews
Flowers: Carole Snider
Counters: Marge Culver
Janet Renovetz
Nursery Asst.: TBD
A/V: TBD
Snack: Jenn Elting
TBD
Setup/Serve: Jenn Elting
TBD
Cleanup: TBD

The Pillar

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