



Pillar

THE
BRECKSVILLE UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

NOVEMBER 2024



I WILL
GIVE
THANKS
TO THE
LORD
WITH MY
whole heart

I WILL
RECOUNT
ALL OF
YOUR
wonderful
DEEDS

PSALM 9:1

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

Pastor's Ponderings.....

I write this column one week before the election. There is a palpable sense of anxiety. It seems to cover our nation like a blanket. We find ourselves living in separate realities, consuming isolated silos of information – and misinformation. We're wound pretty tight.

Still, we are neighbors.

I recently received a pamphlet in the mail with instructions to copy it and distribute to the congregation. It presented two columns, one for each presidential candidate, with a side-by-side comparison. It was written to “guide voters on issues that matter to Christians.” The issues: banning abortion, protecting gun rights, building a border wall, banning same sex marriage, etc.

If any of these “issues that matter to Christians” mattered to Jesus, he didn’t say a thing about any of them.

These are the issues that Jesus actually talked about: “Stop judging so that you will not be judged. (Matthew 7:1) Do to others as you would have them do to you. (Matthew 7:12) Take care of the hungry, the homeless and the stranger. (Matthew 25:37) These are the issues that mattered to Jesus. He called it, The Reign of God. He said it is at hand, in fact, it is within you (Matthew 4:17, Luke 17:21.)

Jesus never told us to love our church. Jesus never told us to love our party, our ideology, or our nation. Jesus told us to love our neighbor. THAT is the mission of the church. So let’s make sure that we maintain, in this church, a focus on the mission.

Let’s keep our eye on the ball, and not get distracted by every flashy “emergency.”

Let’s keep this church as a sanctuary, a safe space, a healing space. “A river in a time of dryness, a harbor in the tempest,” as the band U2 sings.

Pastor's Ponderings.....

Conflict is inevitable. Peter and Paul argued bitterly (Galatians 2:11-14.) The disciples argued with each other behind Jesus' back (Mark 9:33-35). Conflict happens in nations, and, sadly, churches; that should not surprise us.

That is why we have established processes for handling conflict. Our congregation has a Pastoral Relations Committee. We also have a separate Human Resources Committee, which manages personnel matters common to every workplace. These two groups have recently been established in accordance with best practices as recommended by the UCC. Whenever there is a conflict in the congregation, it is imperative that we utilize these resources. They ensure that every voice is heard, that misunderstandings are clarified, and that our direction is guided by prudent listening, facts, faith, and healthy communication. When there are more serious conflicts, we also enlist the help, mediation and resources of the UCC Living Water Association. This is a good way to strengthen the congregation to be that "harbor in the tempest."

As we navigate changing currents in our church and in our nation, the mission from Jesus remains the same. Love your neighbor. Vote with love. Speak with love. Act with love. Work with love. Gather as a congregation – in love.

Someday, maybe we'll get it all together and become a more perfect union, a more perfect congregation. In the meantime, we are pilgrims on our way, learning, listening patiently to one another, growing, hopefully in the direction of kindness.

As Connie Schultz wrote: "Feet forward; heart wide open."

Breathe. Stay focused on Jesus and his mission: "Love your neighbor."



FROM THE MINISTRIES OF BUCC

FINANCE

A check in the amount of \$525 is being sent to the Living Water Association for the NIN fund. Neighbors in Need focuses on Mental Health Justice this year.

One third of this offering supports the Council for American Indian Ministry (CAIM). Two thirds of the funds are used for Justice and Witness Ministries to provide grants to UCC churches and organizations.

Thank you for your support and generosity.

Statement of Financial Assets Available September 30, 2024:

Sources of Cash

PNC Bank	9,002
US Bank	0
First Federal of Lakewood	<u>4,126</u>
Liquid Cash	<u>13,129</u>

First Federal CD	32,588
United States Treasury Securities	<u>133,907</u>
Cash Balance	<u>179,623</u>

*Spendable Endowment – 0642	95,223
*Restricted Endowment – 0641	67,860
*Stock Bequest – Market Value	<u>41,965</u>
Equity Value	<u>205,048</u>

Total Financial Assets	384,671
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Less:

Restricted Endowments	(67,860)
Current Liabilities – Budgeted Expenses	(10,078)
	<u>(77,938)</u>

Net Financial Assets Available	306,733
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Budgeted Deficit (Revised)	<u>(44,954)</u>
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Available Cash / Deficit (years)	6.8 Years
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SOCIAL JUSTICE

HABITAT FOR HUMANITY – Volunteers needed! On Saturday, November 23rd, we are planning a workday for a forever home project that we are quite passionate about. We do need a few volunteers to join us that day. Dan Maier is in contact with the Habitat organization, and you can reach him directly by his email listed in the church directory – if you need a directory, please contact the church at (440) 526-4364, or request by email at buccoffice23@gmail.com. Please let Dan know if you will participate or if you have any questions about the event. Habitat will provide tools and water for the day and we ask that you bring your own lunch. This will be from 9am-3pm, and will take place at 10522 Grandview Avenue, in Cleveland, OH.

SPIRITUAL LIFE

INPUT REQUESTED – As a congregational church, input from you, the congregation, is essential. The Spiritual Life Ministry is inviting you to keep an eye out during your week for potential continuing testament readings, bulletin cover art and verbiage, and musical offerings. When you stumble across something that speaks to you, please email it to Pastor John (buccpastor23@gmail.com) or to the office (buccoffice23@gmail.com), with a brief note detailing where you see your contribution fitting in.

You'll notice scriptures for upcoming weeks listed in the Sunday bulletin – ideas that address those particular scriptures are especially welcome. In October, our Music Director started a once-monthly brainstorming session scheduled on the first Thursday of the month, at 6:15 pm in the sanctuary. Everyone is invited! At BUCC, WE ARE ONE, and we look forward to your unique input into our shared journey.

SPIRITUAL LIFE (*continued from page 5*)

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 3rd.

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 picture(s) downstairs to the We Remember Table before church. You may write a short dedication at that time or bring one with the picture.

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.



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 24th, when BUCC will ring in the holiday season with our own "Hanging of the Greens" celebration/pizza party.

STEWARDSHIP/LEADERSHIP

THANKSGIVING POTLUCK! It is fall and that means it's Stewardship season! By now you have been reading inserts in the bulletins. Sunday, November 17th 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!

Gossip

The Bible has several verses that caution against gossip. Here are a few:

- *Proverbs 16:28: "A perverse person stirs up conflict, and a gossip separates close friends."*
- *Proverbs 20:19: "A gossip betrays a confidence; so avoid anyone who talks too much."*
- *James 1:26: "Those who consider themselves religious and yet do not keep a tight rein on their tongues deceive themselves, and their religion is worthless."*
- *Ephesians 4:29: "Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen."*
- *2 Corinthians 12:20: "For I am afraid that when I come, I may not find you as I want you to be, and you may not find me as you want me to be. I fear that there may be discord, jealousy, fits of rage, selfish ambition, slander, gossip, arrogance, and disorder."*
- *1 Timothy 5:13: "They get into the habit of being idle and going about from house to house. And not only do they become idlers, but also busybodies who talk nonsense, saying things they ought not to."*

Why does the Bible have so much to say about gossip? I used to think gossip was harmless, petty chit chat. Then I became a pastor and began to see how destructive gossip can be. If not checked, it can divide and destroy congregations.

Rumi said, “Before you speak let your words pass through three gates. Is it true? Is it necessary? Is it kind?”

I wrote that down. I printed it out. I shared it with loved ones. I’m sharing it with you.

Gossip jumps over all three gates. Is it true? Well, who knows, but, you know, people are saying... Is it necessary? Um, heck no, but it’s juicy. Is it kind? Of course not, but who cares? It’s been said that “A lie can travel halfway around the world before the truth can get its boots on.” But in a digital age, gossip speeds along the information superhighway. It destroys lives. It destroys careers, families and yes, churches.

Gossip is one of the most pernicious and difficult weeds to pull. It’s easy to see in others; trickier to identify in ourselves. Churches have always been fertile ground for such troubles. Like weeds in a garden, gossip consumes precious resources without producing much that’s worthwhile.

Direct, open, honest communication is the hallmark of a healthy church. Gossip is the surest symptom of a dysfunctional church – or church member. Bottom line: If you have something to say, say it to those who need to hear it. If that’s not safe, communicate with an authority who needs to hear it. Otherwise, heed Grandma’s advice: if you don’t have something nice to say, don’t say anything at all.

Is it true? - Is it necessary? - Is it kind?



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

Miriam	Rosewicz	November 02
Robert	Petrus	November 05
Sue	Stenzel	November 09
Dan	Maier	November 13
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!***



CALENDAR

NOVEMBER 2024

Fri., NOVEMBER 1
OFFICE CLOSED

Sat., NOVEMBER 2

SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 3
10am All Souls Service
11:30am Membership

Mon., NOVEMBER 4
7pm Facilities

Tue., NOVEMBER 5
*****VOTE!*****
8:15am "Holy Grounds"
(Brecksville Panera)
6:30pm AA in Pilgrim Hall
7pm Spiritual Life

Wed., NOVEMBER 6
11am Mindfulness &
Meditation

Thu., NOVEMBER 7
6:15 pm Music Committee
7 pm Seasonal Choir
8 pm Regular Choir

Fri., NOVEMBER 8
OFFICE CLOSED

Sat., NOVEMBER 9

SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 10
10am Worship Service

Mon., NOVEMBER 11

Tue., NOVEMBER 12
8:15am "Holy Grounds"
(Brecksville Panera)
6:30pm AA in Pilgrim Hall
6:30pm Social Justice

Wed., NOVEMBER 13
11am Mindfulness &
Meditation
7pm Council

Thu., NOVEMBER 14
7 pm Seasonal Choir
8 pm Regular Choir

Fri., NOVEMBER 15
PILLAR DEADLINE
OFFICE CLOSED

Sat., NOVEMBER 16
4pm CSB

SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 17
10am Worship Service
THANKSGIVING
POTLUCK

Mon., NOVEMBER 18

Tue., NOVEMBER 19
8:15am "Holy Grounds"
(Brecksville Panera)
6:30pm AA in Pilgrim Hall
6:30pm Communications &
Outreach

Wed., NOVEMBER 20
11am Mindfulness &
Meditation
6 pm Braver Angels

Thu., NOVEMBER 21
7 pm Seasonal Choir
8 pm Regular Choir

Fri., NOVEMBER 22
8:15am "Holy Grounds"
(Brecksville Panera)
6:30pm AA in Pilgrim Hall

Sat., NOVEMBER 23
11am Mindfulness &
Meditation
7pm Stewardship

SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 24
10am Worship Service
HANGING OF THE
GREENS

Mon., NOVEMBER 25

Tue., NOVEMBER 26
8:15am "Holy Grounds"
(Brecksville Panera)
6:30pm AA in Pilgrim Hall

Wed., NOVEMBER 27

Thu., NOVEMBER 28
THANKSGIVING DAY

Fri., NOVEMBER 29
OFFICE CLOSED

Sat., NOVEMBER 30

PARTICIPANTS IN WORSHIP

NOVEMBER 3, 2024

Early Usher: Evelyn Seager
Late Usher: TBD
Greeter: Lori Molesky
Lay Reader: Armand Eusonio
Flowers: Annette Pedersen
Communion
 Bread: Jenn Elting
Counters: Marge Culver
 Janet Renovetz
Nursery Asst.: TBD
Acolyte: TBD
A/V: TBD
Snack: TBD
Setup/Serve: TBD
Cleanup: TBD

NOVEMBER 17, 2024

Early Usher: TBD
Late Usher: TBD
Greeter: TBD
Lay Reader: Kate Matthews
Flowers: Katie MacKeigan King
Communion
 Bread: Jenn Elting
Counters: Marge Culver
 Janet Renovetz
Nursery Asst.: TBD
Acolyte: TBD
A/V: Bryan Chaikin
Snack: TBD
Setup/Serve: TBD
Cleanup: TBD

NOVEMBER 10, 2024

Early Usher: Jill Zedan
Late Usher: TBD
Greeter: Carol Miller
Lay Reader: Rose Kaval
Flowers: Sue Stenzel
Counters: Marge Culver
 Janet Renovetz
Nursery Asst.: TBD
A/V: David Pastor
Snack: TBD
Setup/Serve: TBD
Cleanup: TBD

NOVEMBER 24, 2024

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

The Pillar

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