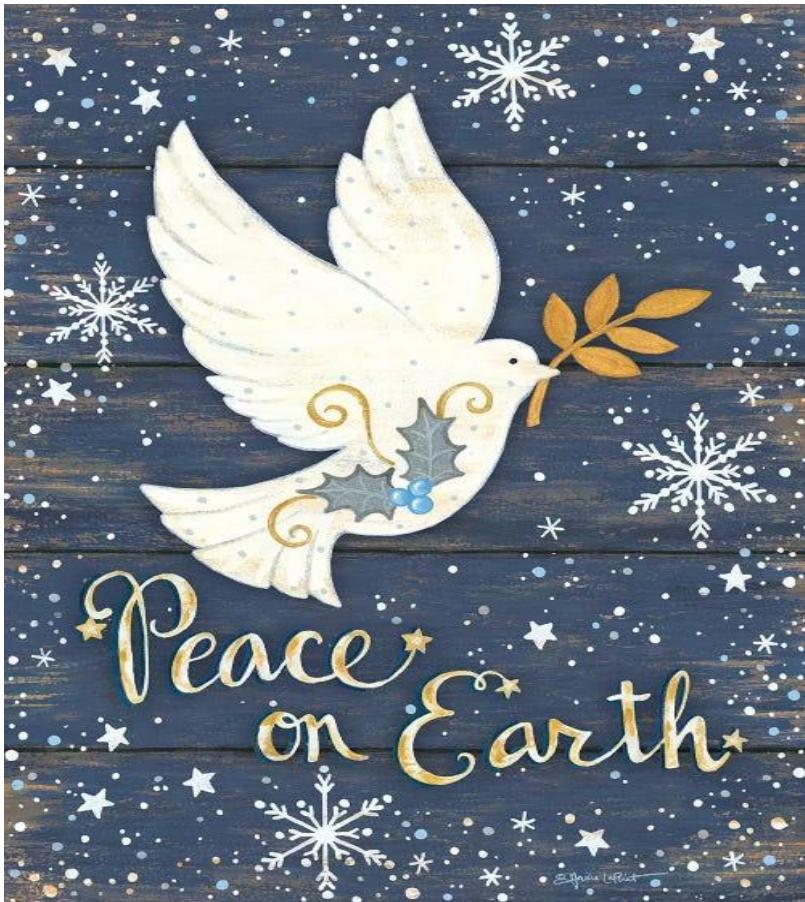


THE *Pillar*
BRECKSVILLE UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

December 2024



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

Pastor's Ponderings.....

♪ “It’s beginning to look a lot like Christmas!” ♪ For families all around our community this season is filled with many activities. Sometimes it can seem exhausting. I hope that you will find a sanctuary in your church community, a place of peace to replenish your spirit. Church at Christmastime is not just one more activity to add to the list. It is rather, a sanctuary. Let it be our spiritual grounding that restores peace and purpose to the other busy-ness.

Here are some of the ways I hope your church community can be a place of spiritual restoration:

The Christmas Cantata is an annual tradition at Brecksville UCC. Our Choir has been working on it for months already. If the fire of your Christmas spirit has grown dim, then come and get stoked on December 15.



The Season of Advent. It gets confusing, because all around us, advertisers promote the idea that the Christmas season goes from Thanksgiving until Christmas day. But Christmas was the church’s idea in the first place; and for us, the Christmas season begins on Christmas Eve and ends ♪“on the twelfth day of Christmas,” January 6. The four Sundays before Christmas are Advent, a time of spiritual nourishment. Allow yourself space for extra prayer.

Advent Devotional: Every day of the Advent and Christmas seasons, read the Advent reflections, written by your sisters and brothers, members of Brecksville UCC. Let it be a gift to yourself. Keep a space clear in your hectic schedule to pray and meditate during Advent.

The Children's Christmas Play happens on the following Sunday, December 22 during the Sunday Service. Please, bring the whole extended family to participate in a tradition that goes back generations.



Christmas Eve service begins at 10:00 p.m. As always, it will be a candlelight service. This year, we will have the option of holding an LED candle, instead of a lighted candle. That way everybody can safely participate. Obviously, this is one of the most sacred of all our gatherings. Christmas celebrates the birth of Jesus, the light of the world. It is full of nostalgia for Christmases past, and hope for

Christmases future. But all we really have is Christmas present. Make a plan and invite your family to gather at church on Christmas Eve, so that they can create some memories of their own.

It's true. ♫"There's no place like home for the holidays." So invite your family to come home for Christmas, back home to church. Let your extended family know how much it would mean to you if they could join you again back in your church home. We are family here. Especially at Christmas, we gather, we pray, we support one another, and we celebrate. Christmas blessings to you and yours.

Rev. John King





Music Ministry

Annual Christmas Cantata

On Sunday December 15 at our regular 10 AM service, Brecksville UCC's choir will present this year's holiday cantata, titled *Together for Christmas*.



Composed by Pepper Choplin, the cantata is an eclectic selection of contemporary and traditional Christmas music.

Our regular choir will be joined by seasonal choir singers, along with flutes, trumpet, trombone, violin, percussion, and narrators.

We hope you will join us on Dec 15 for this inspiring musical tradition. Bring a friend!

WELCOME MIRANDA LACEFIELD!

We are delighted to introduce our new BUCC Office Manager and Pastoral Administrative Assistant, **Miranda Lacefield**.



She is a longtime member of the UCC and is currently serving as Administrative Coordinator for the UCC Camp, *Templed Hills* in Bellville OH. Miranda will be working remotely until the end of this year, then she will be in the office for regular office hours. You can reach her by using the same email address (buccOffice23@gmail.com) or by calling the church office phone number.

FINANCE**Brecksville United Church of Christ
Statement of Financial Assets Available
October 31, 2024****10/31/24****Sources of Cash**

| | |
|---------------------------|---------------------|
| PNC Bank | 2,736 |
| US Bank | 0 |
| First Federal of Lakewood | <u>4,126</u> |
| Liquid Cash | <u>6,862</u> |

| | |
|-----------------------------------|-----------------------|
| First Federal CD | 32,588 |
| United States Treasury Securities | <u>133,907</u> |
| Cash Balance | <u>173,356</u> |

| | |
|-------------------------------|-----------------------|
| *Spendable Endowment – 0642 | 83,662 |
| *Restricted Endowment – 0641 | 66,618 |
| *Stock Bequest – Market Value | <u>43,858</u> |
| Equity Value | <u>194,138</u> |

| | |
|-------------------------------|----------------|
| Total Financial Assets | 367,495 |
|-------------------------------|----------------|

Less:

| | |
|---|-------------------------|
| Restricted Endowments | (66,618) |
| Current Liabilities – Budgeted Expenses | <u>(10,229)</u> |
| | <u>(76,847)</u> |

| | |
|---------------------------------------|------------------------|
| Net Financial Assets Available | 290,648 |
| Budgeted Deficit (Revised) | <u>(44,954)</u> |
| | |

| | |
|----------------------------------|---------|
| Available Cash / Deficit (years) | 6.5 Yrs |
|----------------------------------|---------|

Volunteer Opportunities - Stay tuned...

Food Bank

Every day, Northeast Ohio families, seniors, and school-age kids are still struggling to access the nutritious food they need. With your support, the Food Bank and our 1000+ community agency partners will be here for the holidays and beyond. This year, the Greater Cleveland Food Bank has served more individuals and families than ever before.

The Social Justice Ministry toured the Cleveland Food Bank last month and learned of many great volunteer opportunities. In the near future we will welcome Otto Tyson to speak with us about the mission of the Cleveland Food Bank, and to discuss the many different ways that we can contribute to alleviating hunger in our community. .

Habitat for Humanity

Habitat for Humanity works in more than 70 countries — we have helped more than 59 million people improve their living conditions since 1976.



Habitat works together with families, local communities, volunteers and partners from around the world so that more people are able to live in affordable and safe homes.

Dan Maier and Pastor John King volunteered to help build a home in November. Would you like to volunteer too? Talk to Pastor John, Diane Gressley, or anyone on Social Justice Ministry.

SOCIAL JUSTICE

Hunger Meal

On Sunday December 29 we are sponsoring a free meal at Pearl Road United Methodist Church at 4200 Pearl Rd, Cleveland. This will be from 3pm until 6pm. Please look for a sign up board in the narthex over the next few weeks. We usually serve between 60-100 people. We will need people to serve or you can bring items such as baked goods, cookies or desserts or bread. We will take them over to the church that Sunday. If you do have any questions, please see Diane Gressley on the Social Justice Ministry.



Christmas Fund - Special Collection

The Christmas Fund has been caring for active and retired clergy and lay employees of the United Church of Christ for over 100 years, providing emergency grants, supplementation of small annuities and health premiums, and Christmas "Thank You" gift checks each December to our lower-income retirees.

The Christmas Fund for the Veterans of the Cross and the Emergency Fund is one of the UCC's special mission offerings. Our Congregation will collect this special offering on Christmas on December 29.

Praying our goodbyes:

Sadly, we announce the passing of three special friends of the Brecksville UCC family.

George Snider, a long time member of BUCC passed away on November 24. Please keep his wife, Carole, and their family in your prayers.

Jorge Antonio Cordova Ramirez – from El Salvador died while saving his son from drowning in the Pacific Ocean. Jorge has spoken with our congregation by video several times. We have sponsored his daughter, Guadalupe “Lupita” through college. She just graduated one week before Jorge died. Please pray for the family. Jorge’s mother-in-law, Juanita also died in the same incident. Jorge’s son, Jason survived, but is obviously traumatized by what happened.

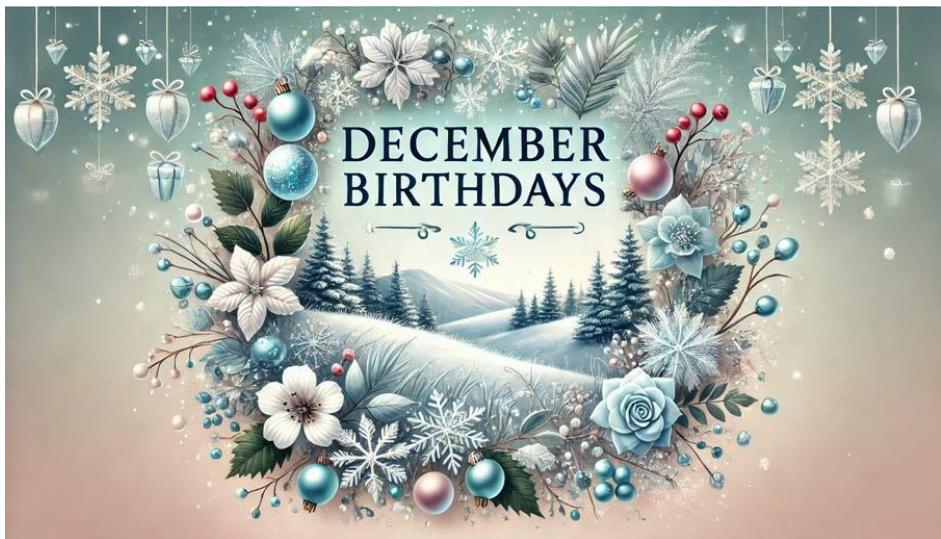
Pat Frank, who often played organ as a substitute musician at Brecksville UCC, passed away at the end of November. We will miss her joyful spirit and extraordinary gift of music.

STEWARDSHIP



December comes upon us so quickly that we often forget to take a few quiet moments, embrace the present and appreciate what blessings we may have. I hope that we all can do so after this tumultuous year. We hope that friends and family, as well as your Church, are a source of solace and support during this time when the light of Christ's arrival begins to shine ever brighter in anticipation of His coming. Love, compassion and yes, even joy,

can be part of this time, even if your personal challenges are many. Generosity of spirit lifts us all. We hope that your gift to BUCC may be part of this.



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

Jon Thompson - December 4
Doug Fawcett - December 4
Kevin Smith - December 6
Grace Hunt - December 13
Genny Costanzo - December 20
Jim Duffy - December 20
Naomi Klonowski - December 20
Bob Chandler - December 21
Lauren Martinez - December 21
Linda Kriynovich - December 25
Dan Stewart - December 28
Amy Coyer-Westerberg - December 29

****If we omitted your birthday, sorry about that. Please let us know so we can add you to the BUCC Birthday List!***

CALENDAR

2024

Sun., DEC 1
10am Sunday Services
11:30am Membership

Mon., DEC 2
7pm Facilities Ministry

Tue., DEC 3
8:15am "Holy Grounds"
(Brecksville Panera)
6:30pm AA in Pilgrim Hall
7pm Spiritual Life

Wed., DEC 4
11am Mindfulness &
Meditation

Thu., DEC 5
6:15 Music Committee
7pm Seasonal Choir
8pm Choir Practice

Fri., DEC 6
OFFICE CLOSED

SUNDAY, DEC 8
10am Worship Service

Tue., DEC 10
8:15am "Holy Grounds"
(Brecksville Panera)
6:30pm AA in Pilgrim Hall
6:30pm Social Justice

Wed., DEC 11
11am Mindfulness &
Meditation
7pm Church Council

Thu., DEC 12
6:15 Music Committee
7pm Seasonal Choir
8pm Choir Practice

Fri., DEC 13
OFFICE CLOSED

Sat., DEC 14
10 am Cantata Practice

SUNDAY, DEC 15
Christmas Cantata
10am Worship Service

Tue., DEC 17
8:15am "Holy Grounds"
(Brecksville Panera)
6:30pm AA in Pilgrim Hall
7pm Communications &
Outreach

Wed., DEC 18
11am Mindfulness &
Meditation

Thu., DEC 19
7pm Adult Choir

SUNDAY, DEC 22
Kids Christmas Play
10am Worship Service

Tues., DEC 24
Christmas Eve
10 pm Christmas Eve
Candlelight Service

Wed., DEC 25
Christmas Day
Office Closed

Thu., DEC 26
7pm Adult Choir

Fri., DEC 27
OFFICE CLOSED

SUNDAY, DEC 29
10am Sunday Services

Tue., DEC 31
8:15am "Holy Grounds"
(Brecksville Panera)
6:30pm AA in Pilgrim Hall

VOLUNTEERS IN WORSHIP

DEC 1, 2024

Early Usher: TBD
Late Usher: Annette Pedersen
Lay Reader: Jim Duffy
Greeter: Lori Molesky
Counters: Marge Culver
Lori Molesky
Nursery Asst.: TBD
Acolyte: TBD
A/V: Fred Pedersen
Flowers: Maggie McNamara
Snack: TBD
Setup/Serve: TBD
Cleanup: Rose Kaval

DEC 15, 2024

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

DEC 8, 2024

Head Usher: Evie Novak
Ushers: TBD
Lay Reader: Rose Kaval
Greeter: Carol Miller
Counters: Marge Culver
Lori Molesky
Nursery Asst.: TBD
A/V: David Pastor
Flowers: Janet Renovetz
Snack: TBD
Setup/Serve: TBD
Cleanup: TBD

DEC 22, 2024

Head Usher: TBD
Ushers: TBD
Lay Reader: Armand Eusanio
Greeter: TBD
Counters: Marge Culver
Janet Renovetz
Nursery Asst.: TBD
A/V: TBD
Flowers: TBD
Snack: TBD
Setup/Serve: TBD
Cleanup: TBD

Can you volunteer?
Log into Breeze.
Look for "EVENTS" and
see what's open.
Thanks!

The Pillar

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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

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

Financial Secy.: Joy Garapic
buccfinance23@gmail.com

Pillar Editor: Miranda Lacefield
buccoffice23@gmail.com

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