



THE *Pillar*
BRECKSVILLE UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

APRIL 2025



Photo by: Lori Molesky

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

Pastor's Ponderings.....

Safe Home

These are indisputably difficult times. The world seems upside down. Some of our most cherished values (acceptance, honesty, inclusion, charity, and equality) are at best, not a priority and at worst, conceptualized as threatening and harmful. It feels like we are being gaslit at the highest order and it is all so.... disorienting. Our nervous systems have not evolved to handle the 24/7 anxieties of the digital age. We are left with unresolved negativity nearly every day.

The analogy that resonates most with me is that we are driving home through a thick fog. It feels unsettling and dangerous and requires maximum effort to stay the course and not crash the car. What we all want most when we are driving home is to arrive safely. Hopefully, home is truly a place where our nervous systems will have an opportunity to settle down.

Home is my safe place. But imagine that when we arrive home, it is not safe. Imagine that home is a place of conflict, abuse, fear, and rejection. That home environment will not help us move out of survival mode.

BUCC is home. For many, BUCC is the safe refuge so many need when nervous systems are being pushed to their limits, the ground underneath feels shaky and we are making our way through the thick fog that is not expected to clear any time soon. We all contribute to making BUCC a safe home where we are unconditionally valued.

I have not met anyone at BUCC who cannot make others feel safe and valued. That is special. That is a gift. Right now, it may be our most important resource.

If something is preventing us from showing up to give and receive the love that is so desperately needed at this time, my prayer is that we find an answer to that as quickly as possible. The answer is usually within us. Jesus tells us so¹. This is good news because we only ever have control over our own thoughts and behaviors. We can wish and hope

¹ 1 Mark 1:15 "The reign of God is at hand." Matthew 4:17 "The kingdom of heaven is at hand." Luke 17:21 "The kingdom of God is within you."

that others will become what we want them to be, but it will only ever be a wish.

So, maybe the answer is to show up as the person we most want to be, the person you feel most proud of, the highest version of ourselves. The person who is driven by an intense desire to give love and live with integrity. I believe everyone's highest self puts being kind over being right, forgiveness over resentment, and healing over hurt.

To help us move in that direction, I hope that you can join us for our congregational retreat on Saturday, April 5. Rev. Tina Green will be our guide as we explore practical and biblical ways to live as a community of kindness. I hope that you will be a part of it.

We all hurt one another, often unintentionally. Change brings conflict. That is part of the human experience. But handling our hurts and conflicts from an aspirational place aligning with love, healing and growth.... that can also be a part of our human experience as we follow Jesus' path.

Blessings, Pastor John

Congregational Retreat:

Register for this year's congregational retreat here:

<https://forms.gle/2cESKbDqHJXG9Cqy5>

You can also sign up for the retreat by calling the church office or calling Pastor John on his cell phone.

We'll gather for our church retreat on Saturday, April 5, starting at 9:30 am at the Greenwood Village Community Center, 830 Village Club Rd, Sagamore Hills, OH 44067.

This year, our retreat will be led by Rev. Tina Green, from Fairport Harbor United Church of Christ.

Her theme will focus on building a community of kindness. We sense our communities struggling to live with kindness. Whether at city hall, Congress, around the dinner table, or around the communion table, we strive to live with love and acceptance, while also setting safe boundaries against harmful behaviors. Pastor Tina will help us to develop skills that are rooted in Christ, and grounded in practical principles.



FROM THE MINISTRIES OF BUCC

Music Ministries

Open Invite to sing the "Hallelujah Chorus" on Easter! - We've decided to try something new this year. Several choir members have expressed interest in singing the "Hallelujah Chorus" from Handel's Messiah on Easter Sunday. Many people are already familiar with this masterpiece. If you're interested in singing it with BUCC's choir on Easter (April 20), you are cordially invited - family and friends included - to join us! We'll rehearse the "Hallelujah Chorus" 4 times before Easter: Thursdays March 27, April 3 and 10 at 7 PM, and Saturday April 19 at 11 AM. We'll also practice on Easter morning at 9:15 before service begins. If you're interested in singing with us, try to come to at least 2 of these practices so you're comfortable singing on Easter. Recordings of each vocal part will be provided. High school students are welcome to participate.



Youth Choir-

Photo by Jeff Thompson
captured 3/16/2025 during the
youth choir performance during
worship.

Music Continued...

Brecksville United Church of Christ presents:

Windsong, Cleveland's Feminist Chorus

Jessica L. Gallagher-Steuver, Artistic Director
Megan Denman, accompanist

Sunday April 27 at 4:00 PM

Free-will offering, light reception
Brecksville UCC is located near the intersection
of Routes 82 & 21 at 23 Public Square
in Downtown Brecksville.
The building is handicapped accessible.
For further information call 440-526-4364.

ides with PosterMyWall.com

Free Concert Series - On Sunday April 27 at 4:00 PM, Brecksville UCC will host a free concert featuring Windsong, Cleveland's Feminist Chorus. The ensemble recently celebrated its 45th anniversary. Windsong performs a wide variety of musical styles, and its repertoire focuses largely on women's pursuit of justice and equality in society. A free-will offering will be received and a light reception will follow the program. Note: As the group numbers approximately 40 women, we will need many volunteers to help supply finger foods for the reception, to serve as ushers and greeters, etc. Sue Stenzel will start recruiting for this event at the beginning of April. For further info, contact Sue. Plan on joining us for what promises to be an inspiring musical experience. You can view select Windsong performances on YouTube.

From Bob and Caroline Chandler:

"We have in our possession a Burberry woman's raincoat, which we obtained by being the last persons in church, cleaning the kitchen. It was raining, and this coat was the last coat on the rack, so my wife had no choice but to wear it home. Someone wore home our woman's London Fog raincoat. This is not an unusual mix-up. If anyone has any knowledge to help us clear up the mix up, please contact us."



From Sue, Jennifer, Erika and CJ:

"To our church family,

Many thanks for your expressions of sympathy in the passing of Cliff in February.

We had a small ceremony with just us, but we know there is so much more to Cliff's life. With that in mind we wanted to extend an invitation to join us and "Celebrate Cliff", Saturday, April 12th at 1:00 PM, here at BUCC.

Following the celebration, we will gather in Pilgrim Hall"



March Attendance

Date	Adults	Children	Online	Total
March 2 nd	62	7	51	120
March 9 th	50	7	38	95
March 16 th	60	12	36	108
March 23 rd	46	2	34	82
March 30 th	40	6	37	83
TOTAL	258	34	196	488



HOLY WEEK

HOLY WEEK SCHEDULE:

4/13 Palm Sunday	10 am Service
4/17 Maundy Thursday	6:30 pm Seder meal with Soup Supper
4/18 Good Friday	7:30 pm Tenebrae Service
4/20 Easter Sunday	10 am Service

Called To Care

Submitted by Evie Novak

As a member of BUCC's Called to Care team, I am aware that many of our members are currently caring for a loved one. My brother and I are providing support for our parents who both have dementia, and I've joined a monthly support group offered through United Church Homes, The Center for Abundant Aging. Our group's organizer, Rev Darla Metz, MDiv, recently shared the below article from the Caregiver Action Network. If you are a friend of one of our caregiving BUCC members, there are many ways you can help them. If you are a caregiver yourself, you might find useful resources like this article on the Caregiver Action Network website:

<https://www.caregiveraction.org/>. If you are interested in joining the United Church Homes support group, which meets via Zoom, you can visit bit.ly/3Bd4Buw to sign up.

How To Help A Caregiver: Simple Ways to Provide Support & Care

Being a family caregiver can be an incredibly rewarding experience, but it often comes with significant physical, emotional, psychological, and financial strain. Caregiving can also lead to feelings of isolation as caregivers devote so much time and energy to their loved ones that they often lose touch with others or can no longer participate in regular activities. Friends and family who haven't experienced caregiving may not fully understand the demands or may distance themselves out of fear of saying the wrong thing. However, offering support doesn't need to be complicated or intimidating.

Here are some meaningful ways you can help a caregiver:

Listen And Provide Emotional Support

One of the simplest yet most profound ways to help a caregiver is by listening. Caregivers often face days that are more challenging than others and may need someone to talk to, even if it's just to vent. Whether it's a family member, friend, or co-worker, let them know you're available and that you care. Offer your full attention without judgment. Caregivers may not be looking for solutions, but rather a compassionate listener. Avoid sharing stories about other caregivers or asking why they don't place their loved one in a nursing home—this can often feel judgmental. Simply listening and offering validation can be an enormous source of comfort.

Offer Practical Help

Rather than offering a vague "let me know if there's anything I can do," try being specific with your offer to help. Many caregivers hesitate to ask for help even when they need it most. You can make a difference by offering to assist with errands, chores, or daily tasks that they may not have time to manage. Some thoughtful actions include:

- Bringing over a meal.
- Doing household chores like laundry or dishes.
- Running errands or picking up groceries.

- Shoveling snow, mowing the lawn, or walking the dog.
- Giving them a gift card for grocery delivery or a favorite takeout restaurant.

These simple tasks can alleviate a significant burden from a caregiver's shoulders and provide much-needed relief in their day-to-day routine.

Give Them A Break

Caregiving is often a 24/7 job, and caregivers rarely get the chance to rest. Offer to step in for a few hours to give them a break. Whether you stay with their loved one or arrange for a trusted individual or professional caregiver to cover for them, this time can allow caregivers to recharge. Even a brief break to run errands, see a friend, or simply relax can help restore energy and improve emotional well-being.

For more resources on giving caregivers a break, visit Caregiver Action Network's Caregiver Help Desk.

Help Them Take Care Of Themselves

Self-care often takes a backseat when someone is focused on their loved one's well-being. You can encourage caregivers to make their health a priority by offering specific support. Encourage them to see a doctor or mental health professional if they seem overwhelmed, stressed, or depressed. You can even offer to stay with their loved one during their appointment or help schedule it. Caregivers are prone to neglecting their own health, and your encouragement could help them maintain their well-being.

Additionally, you can help caregivers explore tools like the CAN Crisis Symptom Reporting Guide to ensure that they can manage difficult situations efficiently.

Keep Them Included And Show You Care

Caregivers often feel isolated because they may not be able to join in social events or gatherings. Continue to reach out, invite them to activities, and let them know you care. Even if they can't always participate, staying in touch helps them feel less alone. Call regularly, check in on how they are doing, and acknowledge the tremendous work they are doing.

Being a caregiver is tough, but with your support, their journey can be a little easier.

For additional tips and support, visit Caregiver Action Network's Rare Caregivers resources.

Final Thoughts On Supporting A Caregiver

Supporting a caregiver doesn't have to be complicated. By providing emotional support, offering specific help with daily tasks, giving them time to rest, and helping them prioritize their own health, you can make a big difference in a caregiver's life. Remember to show that you care, stay connected, and encourage self-care whenever possible. Caregivers need support just as much as those they care for, and your small actions can help lighten their load and improve their well-being.



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

Arthur	Cook	April 09
Brian	Esser	April 18
Nate	Hunt	April 22
Stu	Bailey	April 28
Claire	Esser	April 29
Sherrill	Witt	April 29

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



CALENDAR

APRIL 2025

Tue., APRIL 1

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

6:00pm AA in Pilgrim Hall
7pm Spiritual Life

Wed., APRIL 2

1:00pm Stewardship
Leadership

Thu., APRIL 3

7pm Choir Practice

Fri., APRIL 4

OFFICE CLOSED

Sat., APRIL 5

9:30am Church Retreat

SUNDAY., APRIL 6

10am Worship Service
11:30am Membership
12:00pm Interfaith
Pilgrimage Sikh
Temple

Mon., APRIL 7

7pm Facilities Meeting

Tue., APRIL 8

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

6:00pm AA in Pilgrim Hall
6:30pm Social Justice

Wed., APRIL 9

7pm Council

Thu., APRIL 10

10:30am Called to Care
7pm Choir Practice

Fri., APRIL 11

OFFICE CLOSED

1:00pm Islamic Masque

Sat., APRIL 12

1pm Cliff Stenzel's
Memorial

SUNDAY., APRIL 13

10am Worship Service

Mon., APRIL 14

Tue., APRIL 15

8:15am "Holy Grounds"
(Brecksville Panera)
6:00pm AA in Pilgrim Hall
7:30pm Communication
and Outreach

Wed., APRIL 16

6pm Braver Angels

Thu., APRIL 17

6:30pm Maundy Thursday
Seder meal with
Soup Supper

Fri., APRIL 18

OFFICE CLOSED

7:30pm Tenebrae Service

Sat., APRIL 19

SUNDAY, APRIL 20

HAPPY EASTER

10am Worship Service

Mon., APRIL 21

Tue., APRIL 22

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

6:00pm AA in Pilgrim Hall

Wed., APRIL 23

Thu., APRIL 24

7pm Choir Practice

Fri., APRIL 25

OFFICE CLOSED

Sat., APRIL 26 –

SUNDAY, APRIL 27

10am Worship Service
4pm Free Concert

Mon., APRIL 28

Tue., APRIL 29

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

6:00pm AA in Pilgrim Hall

Wed., APRIL 30

PARTICIPANTS IN WORSHIP

APRIL 6, 2025

Head Usher: TBD
Ushers: TBD
Lay Reader: TBD
Greeter: TBD
Counters: Marge Culver
Kathy Pastor
Nursery Asst.: TBD
Acolyte: TBD
A/V: David Pastor
Flowers: Annette Pedersen
Snack: TBD
TBD
Setup/Serve: TBD
Cleanup: TBD
Snow Herder: TBD
Communion
Bread: TBD

APRIL 13, 2025

Head Usher: TBD
Ushers: TBD
Lay Reader: TBD
Greeter: TBD
Counters: Marge Culver
Kathy Pastor
Nursery Asst.: TBD
A/V: Fred Pedersen
Flowers: Peg Duffy
Snack: TBD
Setup/Serve: TBD
Cleanup: TBD
Snow Herder: TBD

APRIL 20, 2025

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

APRIL 27, 2025

Head Usher: TBD
Ushers: TBD
Lay Reader: Kate Matthews
Greeter: TBD
Counters: Marge Culver
Janet Renovetz
Nursery Asst.: TBD
A/V: TBD
Flowers: TBD
Snack: Jenn Elting
Setup/Serve: Jenn Elting
TBD
Cleanup: TBD
Snow Herder: TBD

The Pillar

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Brecksville United Church of Christ

FIRST CLASS

