

THE *Pillar*  
BRECKSVILLE UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

MAY 2026



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

***Pastor's Ponderings.....***

**More Than a Meeting: Why Conversation Matters**

There is something good that happens when people sit down together and talk with one another. I do not mean talking to meet or to make decisions - not even to chit chat or just to pass along information. I mean the kind of conversation where people have enough time to listen, to reflect, to laugh a little, to remember, and to say what is really on their hearts.

This reminds me of something I once heard from a missionary. She said that a great deal of her mission was simply having coffee with people. I have never forgotten that. It sounded almost too ordinary at first. But the more I thought about it, the more true it seemed. So much of life and faith is formed in those simple moments when people sit down together and give each other their time and attention. Conversation can steady us. It can help us feel less alone. It can give someone room to say out loud what they have been carrying quietly. It can help us hear another person more fully than we had before. Sometimes a relationship changes not because of some dramatic event, but because two people had enough time to speak honestly and listen carefully.

That is true in congregational life as well. A congregation is not shaped only by decisions, plans, committees, or programs. It is also shaped by the quality of its shared life. It is shaped by whether people know one another. It is shaped by whether trust has room to grow. It is shaped by whether people are willing to make space for one another's stories, questions, concerns, and hopes. That is one of the gifts of the Mission Cafés. They created room for people to gather, to listen, and to speak with one another in ways that deepen connection rather than simply move us toward a task. Some people understand this right away. Others may not yet see what can come from a room where people are simply invited to talk and listen with care. Even so, every time that kind of space is created and given time, something good begins to take shape. People begin to know one another differently. Assumptions can soften. Trust can deepen. A congregation can become more than a group of people occupying the same space. It can become a people who are learning how to share a life.

It may be nothing more than a table, a cup of coffee, a thoughtful question, and a little unhurried (or only moderately hurried) time. It may be a very small moment but that is often where deeper community begins. That is where people may begin to discover again that they belong to one another. This is one of the ways God is shaping us. We are not only trying to do things together. We are learning how to be together.

Blessing to you all,

Jeff



## FROM THE MINISTRIES OF BUCC

The spiritual life committee would like to thank the church members who provided the delicious soups and breads for both our Ash Wednesday and Maundy Thursday soup/suppers. Also, thanks to the set up and cleanup crews once again proving that "many hands make light work."



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**LAST-MINUTE MART at BUCC** -Join us on Saturday, May 2nd from 10:00 AM – 3:00 PM in Pilgrim Hall for our LAST-MINUTE MART—just in time for Mother’s Day! 🌸

Shop a wonderful selection of local vendors, artists, crafters, and bakers while supporting a great cause. All vendor table fees will benefit BUCC!

We’re also looking for volunteers to help greet guests, direct vendors, and assist at the BUCC Trinket Table. If you’re interested in helping out, please contact Heidi Spangler for more information.

Come shop, support, and celebrate our community—we hope to see you there!

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**BBH PRIDE** - More details forthcoming - but **SAVE THE DATE** - Saturday June 27 is the 4th annual BBH Pridefest at Broadview Heights City Campus & Amphitheater 9543 Broadview Road, Broadview Heights from noon to 7

<https://bbhpride.org/pride-events/pridefest-2026/>



## A Sacred Moment of Naming

Recently in worship, Brecksville United Church of Christ shared in a beautiful and meaningful moment: a renaming ceremony for our Music Director, Olivia. The liturgy began with a simple but powerful truth: God has known each of us from the very beginning, and through all the changes and turnings of life, God continues to meet us with love, grace, and blessing. In that spirit, we gathered to honor Olivia as she claimed her name among us.

It was a tender and joyful moment, and it also felt deeply true to who BUCC strives to be. We speak often of being a community of acceptance, love, and blessing. We proclaim that we are loving, serving, and accepting all people with God's life-changing power. In this moment, those words were not just stated; they were lived.

As a congregation, we had the privilege of receiving Olivia's name with gratitude and care, honoring her dignity and celebrating her truth. That is holy work. It is also the kind of witness the church is called to offer: not silence, not mere tolerance, but joyful welcome, deep respect, and the courage to make room for people to live openly and honestly as who they are.

For a church like Brecksville UCC, being Open and Affirming is not simply a statement on paper. It becomes real in moments like this one, when love is made visible and when the community gathers around a person with tenderness and joy. This ceremony reminded us that welcome is something we practice, and that the church is at its best when it becomes a place where people are seen, named, and blessed.

We give thanks for Olivia, for her ministry among us, and for the gift of sharing this sacred moment together.



**On Saturday May 9** from 9 am to 12 noon, several of us are gathering to clean up with the Western Land Conservancy at the Garden of 11 Angels located at 12205 Imperial Avenue, Cleveland. This is an annual event that several of us participated in last year. The Conservancy does provide all the tools and equipment needed for the clean up, you just have to show up. They do have snacks and water as well. You can sign up at



<https://wrlandconservancy.org/event/garden11angels-spruce-up-26/> or just let Diane Gressley know that you plan to attend. If you would like to carpool to the site, let us know.



**On Sunday May 10** for Mother's Day, we will be collecting a special offering for the Edna House. We have a long standing relationship with the women at the Edna House. More

than just teaching the residents to abide by the 12 steps of recovery, they also provide life lessons, job skills, and help women build responsibility and self-respect that stay with the women long after they leave The Edna House. What makes their program vastly different from traditional sober homes or institutional recovery centers comes down to simplicity. The residents are provided a safe, focused environment, in which women eat, sleep, and breathe their own recovery. The women take responsibility through ownership of the house and commitment to a structured daily life. And most importantly, we provide access to the recovery community that is the essential link towards making real, lasting change in a woman's life. Please check out their website as they do offer open house tours - and later this year we will participate in the Recovery Race 5K Run/Walk on Saturday September 26 at 9 am.

<https://ednahouse.org/>



**On Sunday May 24** - Pentecost Sunday - we will be collecting the UCC offering for Strengthen the Church. The Strengthen the Church (STC) Offering 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. By your generosity to this offering, you build up the Body of Christ. 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. The theme for 2026 is Sent Forth in Love. Participating in the offering helps foster connections with the wider church and create possibilities for the church of tomorrow.



***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
Jeff	Thompson	May 29
Peg	Duffy	May 30



# CALENDAR

## MAY 2026

**Fri., MAY 1**  
**\*OFFICE CLOSED\***

**Sat., MAY 2**  
10:00am Last Minute Mart

**SUNDAY, MAY 3**  
10am Worship Service

**Mon., MAY 4**  
5pm Fellowship  
7pm Facilities

**Tue., MAY 5**  
2pm Spiritual Life  
6pm AA in Pilgrim Hall  
6:30pm Social Justice

**Wed., MAY 6**  
11am Mindfulness and  
meditation  
4pm Stewardship

**Thu., MAY 7**  
7pm Choir

**Fri., MAY 8**  
**\*OFFICE CLOSED\***

**Sat., MAY 9**  
9am Garden of 11  
Angels

**SUNDAY, MAY 10**  
*Mother's Day*  
10am Worship Service

**Mon., MAY 11**

**Tue., MAY 12**  
6pm AA in Pilgrim Hall

**Wed., MAY 13**  
11am Mindfulness and  
meditation  
7pm Council

**Thu., MAY 14**  
7pm Choir

**Fri., MAY 15**  
**\*OFFICE CLOSED\***  
6:30pm Brecksville  
Squares

**Sat., MAY 16**

**SUNDAY, MAY 17**  
10am Worship Service

**Mon., MAY 18**

**Tue., MAY 19**  
6pm AA in Pilgrim Hall  
7:30pm Communication &  
Outreach

**Wed., MAY 20**  
11am Mindfulness and  
meditation  
6pm Braver Angels

**Thu., MAY 21**  
10:30am Called to Care  
7pm Choir

**Fri., MAY 22**  
**\*OFFICE CLOSED\***

**Sat., MAY 23**

**SUNDAY, MAY 24**  
10am Worship Service

**Mon., MAY 25**  
**MEMORIAL DAY**  
**\*OFFICE CLOSED\***

**Tue., MAY 26**  
6pm AA in Pilgrim Hall

**Wed., MAY 27**  
11am Mindfulness and  
meditation

**Thu., MAY 28**  
7pm Choir

**Fri., MAY 29**  
**\*OFFICE CLOSED\***  
6:30pm Brecksville  
Squares

**Sat., MAY 30**

**SUNDAY, MAY 31**  
10am Worship Service



# *The Pillar*

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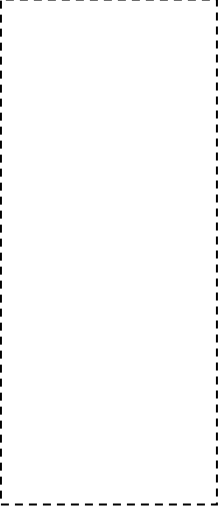
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FIRST CLASS



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