



THE *Pillar*
BRECKSVILLE UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

NOVEMBER 2026

August



September



October



November



December



January



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



A LOOK BACK...

August

Faith, Fellowship & Fun at BUCC- The small but mighty Fellowship



Ministry offers a variety of ways to connect beyond the Sunday service. On August 16th we gathered for a Strawberry Social following worship, complete with fresh strawberries, mini sponge cakes and ice cream. It was a sweet way to top off our summer! Worship in the Park was another big success on August 30th. This year's theme was "Faith, Fellowship & Favorite Foods." We teamed up with Spiritual Life for a slightly drizzly but fabulously delicious end-of-summer picnic. Attendance was impressive with many friends joining us

Leadership Retreat- BUCC's August Leadership Planning Party brought together leaders and volunteers for a lively morning of conversation, planning, and shared imagination. There was excellent energy in the room as participants worked around four areas of congregational life: Worship & Spiritual Growth, Education & Learning, Connection & Belonging, and Social Justice.

The gathering helped move ideas from the Mission Café process into practical planning for the year ahead. Participants named priorities, shared possibilities, and began thinking about how responsibilities can be distributed more broadly so that ministry does not depend on the same few people carrying everything.

Just as important as the plans themselves was the spirit of the morning. The conversation was hopeful, creative, and engaged, with a real sense that BUCC has both good ideas and people ready to help bring them to life. The Planning Party offered an encouraging glimpse of what shared leadership can look like as the congregation moves into its next chapter.

BUCC Communications Updates - Several changes to BUCC's communications took place this fall. The Pillar transitioned to a quarterly publication, giving each issue more room for stories, photos, ministry updates, reflections, and a look ahead at upcoming events. The weekly email continues as The Weekly BUCC Post, providing timely week-to-week announcements, volunteer opportunities, and updates.

BUCC also launched a newly redesigned website at brecksvilleucc.org, with an updated, easy-to-navigate format and convenient access to worship information, ministries, events, news, past issues of The Pillar, Breeze, church documents, and online giving. Along with the website update, staff transitioned to official @brecksvilleucc.org email addresses, creating a more consistent and professional way for members to stay in touch with the church. A special thank-you goes to Tim Wallis for leading the website redesign and to Heidi Spangler for leading the Google Workspace setup and for sharing their time and expertise to help make these improvements possible.

September

Rally Day & Summer of 2026 Mini-History Museum

Rally Day was celebrated on September 13 with a fun and creative BUCC Summer of 2026 Mini-History Museum! Members of all ages were invited to share something that represented their summer—from 4-H projects and camp experiences to trips, hobbies, books, creations, adventures, and special memories.

The museum featured a wonderful collection of objects, photos, projects, souvenirs, and other items that helped tell the story of how our congregation spent the summer. It was a great way for children, youth, and adults to share their experiences and celebrate the many things we did, learned, created, and enjoyed throughout the summer.

Thank you to everyone who participated and helped make Rally Day a memorable celebration!

Pastor Jeff's Ministry at BUCC

In September, Pastor Jeff Jackson concluded his ministry with Brecksville UCC after sharing that he would not be renewing his Covenant Agreement with the church.

After seven years of transitional ministry, including three full-time interim pastorates, Pastor Jeff planned to begin a season of sabbatical for rest, renewal, and discernment. During his time at BUCC, Pastor Jeff helped guide the congregation through a period of

reflection, growth, and transition. Together, the congregation explored its identity, priorities, and hopes for the future. During his ministry, the congregational profile was completed and the search for a settled pastor got underway. As Pastor Jeff concluded his time with us, he expressed gratitude for the congregation and confidence in BUCC's



future, noting the new energy, clarity, and hope he had seen developing within the church.

We are grateful for Pastor Jeff's ministry and leadership among us and wish him a meaningful and restorative time as he begins this next chapter.

On September 8th and 9th, BUCC hosted preachers from Eastminster Presbytery (PCUSA), Living Water Association (UCC), and Northeast Ohio Synod (ELCA) gathered for a workshop sponsored by the CTS Preacher's Studio for Renewal and hosted by the Great



Lakes Call Finder. Led by Anna Carter Florence and Jake Myers from Columbia Theological Seminary, the event focused on exploring upcoming lectionary texts together, discovering fresh approaches to reading Scripture, moving from text to sermon with an eye on what familiar stories might say this year, enjoying meaningful poetry, engaging in roundtable discussions, and making new friends. Good things happen when we come together to serve the Lord and we look forward to ecumenical events in the future alongside our siblings in Christ.



Banner making - Join BUCC's new banner-making group, "THE BANNER BUNCH!" Several members got together in September to revive the "Banner Ladies" group that created the beautiful felt banners hanging in our sanctuary. Sue and Betsey tested the waters by making a colorful banner for our wonderful choir. The group then selected Advent as the theme of the next banner. Stay tuned for more information! Ask Sue Stenzel or Betsey Wilson for more information. If you can cut, you can cut it!

Community Meal- On Sunday September 20, several members of BUCC provided a nourishing meal at the Wholeness Project on Fulton Avenue in Cleveland. We have been a long standing cluster of churches (Brookside) that offers these meals on a rotating schedule with many other churches in the area on 2 Sunday afternoons a month. In the past year we had to move the venue we were holding the meals due to renovations and that church. At the Wholeness Project, not all of the

participants who came to meals in the past, can make it to this new venue. So in the past year we have seen anywhere from 10 to 35 attendees. On September 20, it was a very slow start and we initially had 10 people, however, within the hour that we serve from 430 pm to 530pm we did serve a total of 19 people. All the participants said the Sloppy Joes were delicious ! If you want to assist in serving meals, the next BUCC schedule time is on Sunday March 28. And yes that is Easter Sunday, but it is a great opportunity to provide a meal and service with a smile to the local community in Cleveland. Please let Diane Gressley know if you want to participate. Thank you for your support and donations of food for these meals.

October

Pulpit Supply - Throughout October, we were pleased to welcome Pastor Dave Shackle back to the pulpit each Sunday. We are grateful for his ministry during this time of transition and for the encouraging messages and fellowship he shared with our congregation. We appreciated the opportunity to worship together.



Neighbors in Need Offering- On Sunday October 4th we collected a special offering: Neighbors in Need (NIN). This special offering of the UCC supports ministries of justice and compassion in the United States with one-third of the offering given to the Council for American Indian Ministries and the remaining two-thirds supporting UCC justice ministries. Thank you for your support and generosity!

Paint and Sip- We had a great time adding ghosts and pumpkins to finished artwork at our fall Fellowship event. Snacks and "sips" were bountiful, and we loved seeing the diverse creativity of our "artists!"



Standing Together for Justice: BUCC and Greater Cleveland Congregations- Over the past several months, BUCC has been getting to know Greater Cleveland Congregations (GCC), a coalition of congregations and community organizations across Northeast Ohio. GCC brings people of faith together to take public action on issues affecting our neighbors, including voter engagement, criminal justice, health equity, and economic and financial justice. As a congregation, we are now considering whether to join.

An Evening of Action - On Thursday, September 17, four BUCC members attended GCC's Judge Candidate Action Forum. The forum focused on pretrial justice and took place at the Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Cleveland in Shaker Heights. The evening centered on this November's four contested races for Cuyahoga County Common Pleas Court judge. These judges preside over felony criminal cases and decide who remains in jail before trial and who is released, as well as sentences for those convicted. These races are easy to overlook on the ballot, but the decisions these judges make deeply affect people's lives. More than 400 people from across the region filled the room. This was not a typical candidate forum. GCC calls these gatherings "actions," where members who have researched an issue ask candidates direct questions. The conversation that night was engaging, and candidates shared their thoughts on bail and the pretrial process. Our members came away feeling it was an empowering evening, a chance to see what happens when many congregations show up together and ask for accountability.

Why We're Considering Membership - GCC's strength comes from congregations acting together, in the belief that our faith calls us to care for our neighbors and to hold public institutions accountable. Joining would connect BUCC to a long-standing network and give our members opportunities to learn, build relationships with other congregations, and add our voice to work happening across Greater Cleveland.

Heidi Spangler is leading BUCC's involvement with GCC, and we hope to make a decision about joining early next year. Between now and then, we'll share updates and look for ways for members to learn more and weigh in.

Learn More

Events: GCC regularly hosts actions, trainings, and volunteer opportunities. Browse upcoming events at <https://greaterclevelandcongregations.org/events-2-2/>.

Voter Guide: GCC's 2026 General Election Voter Guide is available at <https://greaterclevelandcongregations.org/2026-gen-election-voter-guide/>.

Stay in the loop: You can join GCC's mailing list through their website. If you're curious about GCC or would like to share your thoughts about membership, please talk with Heidi Spangler.

2026–2027 Advent Devotional- This year, BUCC continued its beloved tradition of sharing an Advent devotional written by members of our church community. The 2026–2027 devotional expanded the journey through Advent, Christmas, and Epiphany, with each reflection connected to one of our seven Future Focus word categories. Thank you to everyone who signed up to contribute and shared your faith, reflections, and stories with our congregation. We are grateful for the time and thought each writer put into helping make this year's devotional a meaningful part of our journey together. Make sure to pick up your devotional this November.

Celebrating 210th Anniversary - This year, Brecksville United Church of Christ celebrated its 210th anniversary! We give thanks for more than two centuries of faith, fellowship, and service, and for all those who have helped shape our church community along the way. We look forward to continuing this legacy together for generations to come.

BUCC Worship Attendance-

Week:	Adults	Kids	Online	Total
Aug. 2	32	3	8	43
Aug. 9	Not recorded-----			
Aug. 16	30	1	4	35
Aug. 23	26	1	4	31
Aug. 30	52	3		55
Sept. 6	36	5		41
Sept. 13	Not Recorded-----			
Sept. 20	47	7	12	66
Sept. 27	46	3	2	51
Oct. 4	42	4	10	56
Oct. 11	33	6	7	46
Oct. 18	36	0	2	38
Oct. 25	31	2	11	44



LOOKING FORWARD...

November

ALL SAINTS SERVICE – The All Saints 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 1st.

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 Saints 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.

THANKSGIVING POTLUCK! It is fall and that means it's Stewardship season! Sunday, November 15th 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!

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 22nd, when BUCC will ring in the holiday season with our own "Hanging of the Greens" celebration/pizza party.



Nativity Scenes Wanted- Help us decorate the church in December. We want to borrow your Nativity Scene to create a village behind the Alter. Label it with your name and hand it to Mary or Betsey ASAP.

December

The Children's Christmas Play- Save the date, this year's Christmas Play will be on Sunday, December 13th. See Miss Mindy For details.

Mitten Tree- Please keep an eye out and an open heart for the annual mitten tree that will be in the narthex. Last year we filled the tree over 4 times and the items were delivered to the shelters. Note that scarfs, mittens, gloves and even unopened packages of socks are always needed this time of year.

The Christmas Fund – The Christmas Fund is one of the UCC's special mission offerings 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. We will hold this special offering on Sunday December 20.

The Christmas Cantata- Join us as the sounds of the season fill our sanctuary! Our Christmas Cantata on Sunday, December 20th, will feature our choir teaming with the Sorella Quartet to bring the Christmas story to life through music. Mark your calendar and enjoy this meaningful time of music, reflection, and Christmas joy.

Christmas Eve Service- Join us on Christmas Eve at 4:00 PM for our Christmas Eve worship service! We moved to this earlier service time last year and will continue the tradition this year. We look forward to celebrating the joy and hope of Christmas together!

Cookies, Crafts & Carols: A New Holiday Tradition at Brecksville UCC- This holiday season, Brecksville UCC is excited to welcome the community to our first Cookies, Crafts & Carols Holiday Market, taking place Saturday, December 19, in Pilgrim Hall from 10:00 am to 2:00 pm. The market will bring together local vendors offering handmade gifts and holiday treasures, live music on the stage, our signature Cookie-Rama, where visitors can browse a huge variety of homemade cookies

and pay by the pound, and a Trinket Table featuring gently used items donated by church members, with proceeds benefiting our general fund. And this is where we need you! There's still plenty of room to get involved:

Bakers: Cookie-Rama depends on a great variety of homemade cookies, big batch or small.

Vendors: We're still accepting applications from crafters, small businesses, and anyone with handmade gifts to share.



Vendor tables are \$35. Please fill out the form on Breeze if you are interested in a table - <https://buccoh.breezechms.com/form/eccddb48>

Donors: Looking to declutter before the holidays? Donate gently used, sellable items to our Trinket Table and support the church at the same time. You can leave donated items on the table in the library.

Everyone else: Simply showing up matters — come shop, listen to the music, and bring a friend or neighbor along.

Whether you can bake a dozen cookies, host a vendor table, donate a few treasures, or simply spend an afternoon with us, every bit of participation helps make this a success.

Mark your calendar for December 19, and help us spread the word. If you're on Facebook, visit our event page at <https://www.facebook.com/events/1073859782119470> and share it with your friends and neighbors. It's one of the easiest ways to help us fill Pilgrim Hall! We hope to see you there!

January

Un- Hanging the Greens- Please lend a hand this January to take down and store our beautiful holiday decor. This job always goes quickly, especially with many hands. The date will be announced soon, so keep an eye out for details! Thank you in advance!

Happy 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
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
Linda	Kriynovich	December 25
Dan	Stewart	December 28
Amy	Coyer- Westerberg	December 29
Cassy	Martinez	January 05
Maxwell	Hunt	January 07
Sue	Maier	January 07
Jeff	Jackson	January 16
Janet	Renovetz	January 18
Dorothy	Cook	January 22
Jonathan	Cook	January 30
Cliff	Cribbs	January 31



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23 Public Square

Brecksville, Ohio 44141

Phone: 440-526-4364

E-mail: Office@brecksvilleucc.org

Web: www.BrecksvilleUCC.org

Office Hours: (Mon. Wed. Thu.)
9:30 a.m. – 1:30 p.m.

Moderator: Armand Eusanio
apeusanio@gmail.com

Dir. of Music: Olivia Tassone
Music@brecksvilleucc.org

Financial Secy.: Wes Novak
Finance@brecksvilleucc.org

Pillar Editor: Miranda Lacefield
Office@brecksvilleucc.org

FIRST CLASS

