



THE *Pillar*
BRECKSVILLE UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

AUGUST 2026



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

Pastor's Ponderings...

Preparing the Way for What Comes Next

Over the past several months, Brecksville United Church of Christ has listened carefully through the Mission Cafés, surveys, and shared conversations. Together, we have named a congregation shaped by welcome, belonging, compassion, resilience, and hope. We have also heard a desire for broader participation, clearer communication, more shared leadership, sustainable ministry, stronger intergenerational relationships, and a more visible connection with the wider community.

This discernment has prepared the way for two important efforts that will now move forward alongside one another. The Search Committee will begin seeking the pastor God is calling to serve with this congregation. At the same time, congregational leaders and ministry teams will continue focusing on the future—giving special attention to what has been heard throughout this transition process.

The work of the congregation is not being placed on hold during the pastoral search. Council, ministry leaders, and members will begin exploring how the hopes and concerns expressed through the Cafés can shape priorities, strengthen ministry, invite wider participation, and guide decisions. The search for a pastor and the work of congregational renewal belong together. The goal is not only to find the right pastoral leader, but also to continue becoming a congregation ready to enter a healthy and faithful partnership.

Before the search could begin, the Transition Team completed one of the most important tasks of this season: preparing the Congregational Profile. Armand Eusano, Council Chair; Sue Maier, Transition Team Chair; Carol Miller; Heidi Spangler; Sherill Witt; Bill Witt; Betsey Wilson; and Jim Duffy gathered information, reviewed congregational responses, studied the congregation's

history and community context, and worked carefully to present an honest and hopeful account of Brecksville UCC.

The profile is more than a document advertising a pastoral position. It tells the story of who this congregation is, what has been learned, what is valued, where growth is needed, and what kind of future is being sought. It gives the Search Committee a strong foundation and helps prospective candidates discern whether God may be calling them into partnership with this congregation.

Much of this work happened quietly and required many hours of conversation, research, writing, editing, and prayer. Please join in offering deep gratitude to the members of the Transition Team for their thoughtful and faithful service.

As the Search Committee begins its work, the next chapter is already taking shape. It will be shaped not only by the pastor eventually called, but by the ministry, leadership, imagination, and participation of the whole congregation as we continue listening carefully and moving faithfully toward the future.

Jeff



FROM THE MINISTRIES OF BUCC

Thank you to all who participated in BBH Pride this year!



Church Clean Up- We are looking for volunteers to come in on your own time and pace to pull weeds and trim bushes around the church.

Called to Care Volunteers Needed-Called to Care helps make sure people in the congregation are remembered and supported through cards, phone calls, visits, and prayer. Volunteers are needed to help extend this care. Whether you can send an occasional card, make a friendly call, offer a visit, or hold someone in prayer, there is a place for you. Please contact the church office or Evie Novak to become part of the Called to Care team.



Faith, Friends & Favorite Foods!

Worship in the Park/Church Picnic

Sunday, August 30 10:00 am

Sagamore Hills Park
Rose Mary Snell
Pavilion
11551 Valley View Rd.
Sagamore Hills

Please bring:

- ✓ A favorite friend
- ✓ A favorite dish to share
- ✓ Printed copies of the recipe and why this one is meaningful to you

Remember:

- ☐ Don't go to church
- ☐ There's a playground for little worshippers!
- ☐ This is beloved and annual BUCC tradition!

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Worship in the Park- On August 30, our worship in the park will include a Blessing of Friendships. We invite you to begin thinking about the friendships that have carried you, surprised you, steadied you, or helped you become more fully yourself. Some of those friends may be present with us. Some may be far away. Some may be remembered with gratitude. Together, we will give thanks for the holy gift of companionship.



Attention BUCC "Artists!" - Our spring Paint & Sip art event was such a hit that we're bringing it back this fall... with a spooky twist!

Details and the event date are coming soon, but there's one thing you'll need to do now: start looking for a landscape or painting of a house (thrift stores and attics are a great place to look!)

At the event, you'll transform your picture by adding a spooky guest and festive fall décor, creating a one-of-a-kind Halloween masterpiece you'll be proud to hang in your home! Truly, no two will be alike!

Stay tuned for more details... if you dare!

Prayer for the Congregation During the Search Process

God of welcome and wisdom,
guide us through this season of search and transition.

Bless the Search Committee with patience, courage, honesty and care.
Sustain them in the effort of listening, discerning, meeting, wondering
and deciding. Protect them from weariness, pressure, and anxiety, and
surround their work with trust and prayer.

Bless each potential candidate who may enter this process.
May they be met with dignity, openness, and grace.
Help us remember that they, too, are listening for your call.

Bless this congregation as we continue the work of ministry.
Keep us faithful in worship, generous in service, gentle with one
another, and open to the future you are preparing.

Shape us into a community where all belong,
where truth is spoken with grace,
where gifts are shared in love,
and where Christ's welcome is visible in all we do.

Lead us toward the pastoral partnership that will help us grow in faith,
trust, joy and service.

Give us open hearts, steady spirits, and hopeful lives as your mercy is
made new among us.

Amen.

BUCC Pastoral Search Committee 2026

Thea Cunningham

Peg Duffy

Diane Gressley

Carol Miller

Evie Novak

Heidi Spangler

Sue Stenzel

Tim Wallis

Joe Wilson (chair)

We received nearly 30
nominations for the Pastoral
Search Committee, and we are
grateful to everyone willing to
serve. Every nominee brings valuable gifts that would have benefited
the committee.



Per our Constitution, the committee is limited to nine members. The selected members were chosen through an AI-assisted process using information gathered from the nomination submissions, along with insights from the Mission and Vision Café sessions, to create a well-balanced representation of our congregation. Each selected person was contacted individually and agreed to serve.

We are confident this committee will work well together, and we will support them throughout the search process. As provided by our Constitution, the final pastoral candidate(s) will lead a Sunday worship service, allowing the congregation to meet them, share their perspectives, and help inform the final call decision.**

**BUCC Constitution: "The Pastoral Search Committee will recommend a candidate to Church Council. Upon the concurrence of the Church Council, the candidate will be invited to meet the congregation and conduct a worship service. The church council shall call a special congregational meeting to act upon a call to the pastorate. An 80% affirmative vote of those active and associate members present and voting shall constitute a call. The search process is to be repeated if the call is not confirmed by vote or if the call is not accepted by the candidate."

IN the convent and OUT in the world and into BUCC By Carol Miller

Growing up in the 1950s as a good Catholic girl my golden rule was: "don't talk, don't ask, and certainly never even think about any relationship outside of traditional heterosexual marriage." Accordingly, the only culturally acceptable options for me were to marry a man or end up being a spinster. A select few had the option to hear a calling from God to be a nun – so I decided I heard that calling loud and clear.

In high school I was taught by nuns who belonged to one of the most progressive orders in the Cleveland area. So, after graduation I joined that order and lived with hundreds of women who were as naïve about sexuality as I was. We were warned against engaging in "particular friendships" and were told that we should "channel our sexual energy into good works." After 3 years I made vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience and became Sister Carol Miller. I then moved from the secluded and sheltered motherhouse to the near west side of Cleveland to attend nursing school. The neighborhood was a hotbed of social activism, and I enthusiastically immersed myself with numerous groups addressing social injustices. After I got my nursing license I applied for a job with the Visiting Nurse Association but was told I would be called

Ms. Miller because they were nonsectarian and non-religious. Although I did not recognize it at that time, living as an undercover nun was a precursor to the common experience of LGBTQIA+ individuals living in secret.

As a nurse working in the inner city, I focused my social activism by advocating for issues related to neglect and victimization of older adults. This led me into a “particular friendship” with a highly visible elected official who advocated for older adult issues. Because it was challenging to sneak out of the convent and sleep with her, I decided I should leave the convent.

Fast forward to 1990: After being in and out of two relationships with women, I was living alone for the first time in my life. This time of intense soul searching included serious questioning of familiar religious teachings that judged my personal lifestyle negatively and even as sinful. I committed to building my next relationship on shared spirituality and seeking a connection with the Divine. When Pat & I met we immediately found that we enriched each other spiritually as well as in many other aspects. We began searching for a church where we would feel welcome in all aspects, including at the communion table, which in our previous experiences excluded anyone who was deemed “not in good standing” with traditional church teachings.

After reading an advertisement for BUCC in the North Coast Men’s Chorus program, we started attending services. The first time there I connected to the message of “Just love one another — no exceptions.” This golden rule was perfectly in synchrony with what I believed a Christian church should teach. Although the worship services shared similarities with what I had known all my life, the feeling of being welcomed as a LGBTQIA+ individual was a new experience. At BUCC I immediately experienced a powerful sense of belonging that has grown stronger through the years. Now attendance at worship is not something I need to do to keep in good standing; rather, it is something I want to do because it enriches my life in many ways. I thrive on the sense of community, acceptance, support, and commitment to social justice that is inherent to BUCC.



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

Michael	Corrado	August 02
Courtnei	Began	August 08
Kathy	Ford	August 09
Beth	Rehling	August 11
Dave	Bernard	August 15
Bryan	Chaikin	August 15
Carol	Miller	August 16
Bettina	Ortiz	August 18

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



CALENDAR

AUGUST 2026

Sat., AUGUST 1

SUNDAY, AUGUST 2

10am Worship Service

Mon., AUGUST 3

Tue., AUGUST 4

6pm AA in Pilgrim Hall

6:30pm Social Justice

Wed., AUGUST 5

11am Mindfulness &

Meditation

Noon Spiritual Life

Thu., AUGUST 6

Fri., AUGUST 7

OFFICE CLOSED

Sat., AUGUST 8

9am B.U.C.C Super

Team Planning Party

SUNDAY, AUGUST 9

10am Worship Service

Mon., AUGUST 10

Tue., AUGUST 11

6pm AA in Pilgrim Hall

Wed., AUGUST 12

11am Mindfulness &

Meditation

7pm Council

Thu., AUGUST 13

Fri., AUGUST 14

OFFICE CLOSED

Sat., AUGUST 15

SUNDAY, AUGUST 16

10am Worship Service

11:15am Strawberry
Shortcake Social

Mon., AUGUST 17

Tue., AUGUST 18

6pm AA in Pilgrim Hall

7pm Communications &
Outreach

Wed., AUGUST 19

11am Mindfulness &

Meditation

Thu., AUGUST 20

10:30am Call to Care

Fri., AUGUST 21

OFFICE CLOSED

6:30pm Brecksville

Squares

Sat., AUGUST 22

SUNDAY, AUGUST 23

10am Worship Service

Mon., AUGUST 24

Tue., AUGUST 25

6pm AA in Pilgrim Hall

Wed., AUGUST 26

11am Mindfulness &

Meditation

Thu., AUGUST 27

7pm Choir Practice

Fri., AUGUST 28

OFFICE CLOSED

Sat., AUGUST 29

SUNDAY, AUGUST 30

10am Worship in Park

11:15am Church Picnic

Mon., AUGUST 31

PARTICIPANTS IN WORSHIP

AUGUST 2, 2026

Early Usher: Jill Zedan
Late Usher: Evie Novak
Greeter: Jeff Thompson
Lay Reader: Diane Gressley
Flowers: TBD
Counters: Jan Renovetz
TBD
A/V: David Pastor
Snack: Jenn Elting
Set up: Jenn Elting
Clean up: TBD
Communion
Bread: Gayle Colbert

AUGUST 9, 2026

Early Usher: TBD
Late Usher: TBD
Greeter: Lori Molesky
Lay Reader: TBD
Flowers: TBD
Counters: Sue Stenzel
Jan Renovetz
A/V: Fred Pedersen
Snack: TBD
Set up: TBD
Clean up: TBD

AUGUST 16, 2026

Early Usher: TBD
Late Usher: Jill Zedan
Greeter: Jeff Thompson
Lay Reader: TBD
Flowers: TBD
Counters: Sue Stenzel
Jan Renovetz
A/V: TBD
Snack: TBD
Set up: TBD
Clean up: Sue Stenzel

AUGUST 23, 2026

Early Usher: TBD
Late Usher: TBD
Greeter: TBD
Lay Reader: TBD
Flowers: TBD
Counters: Jan Renovetz
TBD
A/V: TBD
Snack: TBD
Set up: TBD
Clean up: TBD

AUGUST 30, 2026

WORSHIP IN THE PARK

The Pillar

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Brecksville

United Church of Christ

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Brecksville United Church of Christ

FIRST CLASS

