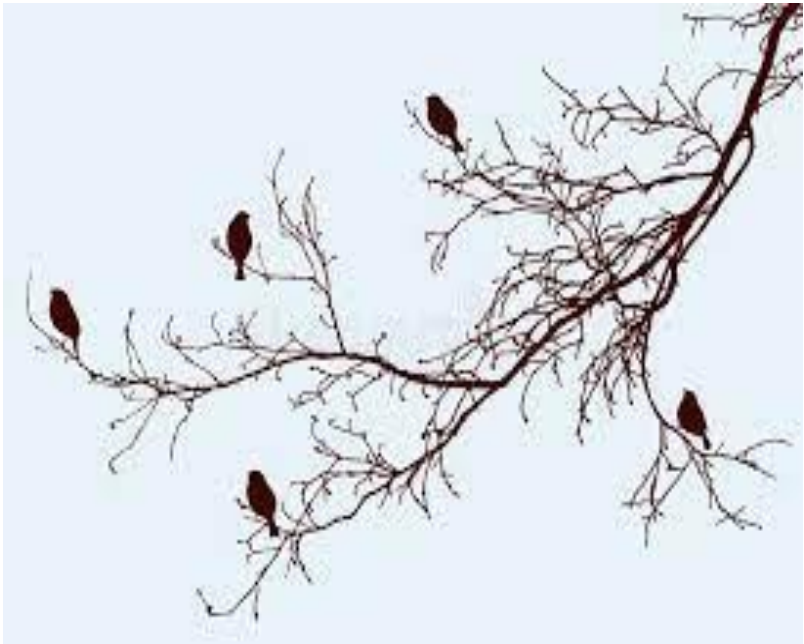




THE *Pillar*
BRECKSVILLE UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

MARCH 2023



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

Pastor's Ponderings.....

The *Lake Institute on Faith and Giving* has done extensive research on the financial well-being of congregations. They encourage churches to follow certain “best practices” when it comes to money. One of these best practices was something really spoke to me. I needed to hear it because, well, um, actually, I sort of, well this is awkward, I kind of feel weird talking with y’all about money.

“We hear you,” they told me, like a well-trained counsellor. “Lots of pastors feel icky talking about money.” I watched one rookie pastor maintain a financial Mona Lisa smile until the day church council announced the money was all gone and the church would close permanently in a few weeks. Church leaders that don’t communicate clearly and frequently about finances have stood by pleasantly and watched the congregation drive over a financial cliff. That’s not happening here.

As schoolkids, we would parody our parish priest’s preaching with a one sentence sermon: “We need more money.” I hope I don’t sound like that. We’ve all seen money-grabbing preachers. It’s ugly. I hope we know that’s not who we are or what we do.

But there is a better approach. We can develop a biblical theology and a personal spirituality of giving. And we can develop evidence-based solutions that are demonstrably proven to keep us healthy.

Electronic donations are one of the top three indicators of a financially healthy church. Today, I want to encourage you to consider online giving.

The Lake Institute’s evidence is clear. “We find a positive relationship between congregations that embrace innovative donation technologies and reported growth in both revenue and size.” Congregations that increase online giving consistently experienced growth in revenue.

I used to drop a check in the collection plate. But Sundays were busy. Sometimes I ran out of time. Sometimes I’d forget. Sometimes I saw that our balance was getting low, so I’d skip a week. In other words, my giving was haphazard.

(Continued on next page)

Pastor's Ponderings (continued)

Then I started giving electronically; I set up recurring donations. Here's what I noticed:

- It was easy to start and pause online giving.
- Online giving was much easier and faster than paper donations.

But here's the most important thing I noticed. At the end of the year, my year-end giving statement matched my pledge card. Exactly. That's because my donations were no longer driven by the level of chaos in my life.

Katie and I discerned what to pledge in a prayerful and intentional way. We decided based on our desire to be active participants in the growth of our church. Then we set up electronic donations to make it happen. Effortlessly. Reliably. Consistently.

So, I encourage you please consider electronic recurring donations. It will help you to save time and know that you are on track with whatever YOU decide to give. It will help your church with more predicable resources.

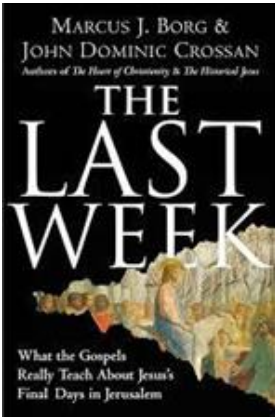
To set up online donations, just go to www.BrecksvilleUCC.org/Giving. If it gets confusing just give me a call; I'll pretend to transfer you to our technical support department. Or call someone on the Finance Ministry. Or ask a five-year-old; they're pretty fluent with technology.

One more thing: when we pass the plate at church, the offerings that we bring forward become a symbolic expression of support for our church and our mission. Even though *you* know that you gave online, you still might want that symbolic action of putting your donation in the plate. That's good. It means you understand the *spirituality* of giving and the liturgical significance of that moment.

So, look for little yellow cards in the pews. They say, "I give online." Please put that card in the plate as a tangible expression of your electronic donation. As we bring the donations forward and prayerfully dedicate our offerings, you will know that you are fulfilling your pledge and helping to strengthen our church for the next century and beyond. And thanks. Always. Thank you for being an important contributor to Brecksville United Church of Christ.

- Rev. John King

**FROM THE MINISTRIES
OF BUCC**



CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

LENTEN SERIES – This year's Lenten series will cover the book ***The Last Week: What the Gospels Really Teach About Jesus's Final Days in Jerusalem*** (Borg & Crossan). We'll meet at 6:30pm, every Monday through March 27th. Please contact the office at 440-526-4364 to register

If you're interested but you've missed the first few sessions, we encourage you to still join us!

FACILITIES

- We will be doing a walkthrough of the church in the coming months to clean out unneeded items, to reduce clutter and junk.
- Door stoppers have been added to several doors.
- Parlor, Narthex and Education wing lights have been upgraded to LED.
- The Community of Saint Bridget, which uses the parlor for their services, has offered to replace the parlor carpeting.
- The entrance lights were replaced with new fixtures and are now working.
- The Upper Commons and Parlor heating systems are being repaired (new motor for roof unit).

FINANCE

"Where is my box of pew envelopes?" They finally arrived! It has been decided that we will not have boxes after this year, because so many members are paying on line or having their banks send checks directly to the church.

There are green envelopes in the pews, which can be used for contributions. These can be used on Sundays, or take a few to mail in later.

STATEMENT OF CASH AVAILABLE (as of 1/31/23):

	<u>1/31/23</u>	<u>1/31/22</u>
Sources of Cash		
General & Rental fund	(2,155)	71,459
Market Value of Spendable Endowment	86,380	100,550
Spendable Restricted Funds	<u>159,075</u>	<u>147,798</u>
Total Available	243,300	319,807
Uses of Cash:		
Short Term Liabilities	<u>9,327</u>	<u>10,650</u>
Total Needed	<u>9,327</u>	<u>10,650</u>
Net Cash Available	<u>233,973</u>	<u>309,157</u>
Budgeted Deficit	(81,297)	
Available Cash / Deficit (years)	2.9	
Actual Deficit		(60,043)
Available Cash / Deficit (years)		5.1

MEMBERSHIP

It's the Great Mug Cleanout! We seem to have a fantastic problem -- we've been welcoming a lot of new members, who of course get 'mugged', but where to put their mugs? The mug cubbies in Pilgrim Hall are quite full, and the whole thing could use a good cleaning.

(Continued on next page)

MEMBERSHIP *(continued)*

To help with this, we have pulled ALL of the mugs out of the cubby, given them all a once over, and sorted them on the tables in Pilgrim Hall. The ones with names are lined up alphabetically, and those without (or if we can no longer read the name) are off to the side on the tables. The next time you are at the church, please take a look and see if you can claim your mug as well as those of any family members and put it in the appropriate cubby.

We have also set aside a 'Memorial' space for mugs of members who have passed. The current plan is to create a Memorial Mug Shelf so that they can rest in a spot of honor.

Can't find your mug? Did it break or get lost some time in the past? Well now's your chance to get a new one! There is a sign-up sheet by the mugs in Pilgrim Hall for replacement mugs. We are asking for a \$10 donation to the church General Fund for all replacements. If you joined recently and for some reason didn't get a mug, please let us know and we'll fix that problem as quickly as possible!

Our goal is not to get rid of a bunch of mugs, but to make sure that all members have one and that all the 'orphan mugs' find a good home. If you have any questions, please feel free to reach out to Sue Maier.



GAME NIGHT – “*WHEN?* March 24, 6:00pm. *WHERE?* BUCC. *WHY?* Why not?!”

Enjoy a night of fun & games with church family - bring a game to share (optional), a snack or appetizer to share, and a friend to enjoy the fun. Beverages will be provided, and YOU will provide the fun and fellowship!”

OCWM

At Brecksville UCC, we are answering the call of “doing justice and seeking peace” by meeting each month to write to our legislators. Drawing on issues which have been identified by the National UCC as areas for advocacy, we’ll make our voices heard by writing. **The next session will be on Tuesday March 14 at 6:15 pm, at Panera in Brecksville.** The topic will be announced on Sunday prior to the session.

If you are unable to attend but would like to write on your own, please call the church office (440-526-4364) to receive contact information for Ann Kelley. She will reply to you with specifics about the issue, sample language and addresses of our legislators. Beginning in March, stamped postcards will be available in the Church office for this purpose.

ADDITIONAL SOCIAL JUSTICE LEARNING OPPORTUNITY – Are you interested in Racial Justice? On March 16, 2023, 3:30-4:30 pm, there will be a webinar via Zoom entitled, *Join the Movement Toward Racial Justice* as part of the UCC’s “Thursdays for the Soul” series.

You can register for this session by visiting:

<https://www.ucc.org/event/join-the-movement-toward-racial-justice/>

If you are unable to join the webinar at that time, after the airing, you can view it here:

<https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PL6VgfHt6zEy7yDgdSE-fLLYEVaNBM2943>

FROM THE MINISTRY CHAIR: “Hello Everyone - I am writing this to let you know that we are going to have our annual **One Great Hour of Sharing** offering on Sunday, March 19th. I hope that you will be able to join us in supporting this very worthy cause. Thank you, Rob Grow”

SPIRITUAL LIFE

MAUNDY THURSDAY - Please join us in Fellowship Hall for a soup supper at 6:30 pm on Thursday, April 6, followed by a Tenebrae service at 7:00 pm in the Sanctuary. If your last name begins with N-Z, please bring a loaf of bread to share. Thank you!

(Continued on next page)

SPIRITUAL LIFE *(continued)*

SEASONAL CHOIR – It's not too late to join us in preparing for Holy Week! Practices are on Thursday evenings, from 7:00–7:50. During Holy Week, we commemorate events that are central to our faith: Jesus' triumphant entry into Jerusalem (Palm Sunday); the Last Supper and Institution of Holy Communion (Maundy Thursday); Christ's crucifixion, death, and burial (Good Friday); and his miraculous Resurrection on Easter morning. If you enjoy singing in a group setting, consider joining us on this musical/spiritual journey. All are welcome to participate, including high school students.

JOYFUL NOISE (our youth choir) will begin practicing again on March 2nd and 9th (Thursdays) at 5:30. The plan is to present an easy song to the congregation on Sunday March 12th and assess our turnout for the group. We're hoping to reenergize this choir, but we understand that there are many after-school activities competing for the children's time. If your kids enjoy singing songs around the house, please encourage them to check out our youth choir. We have a great time together learning about Jesus and his message of love and acceptance of others. The songs are fun and easy to learn. Feel free to contact Dave D. with any questions.

STEWARDSHIP/LEADERSHIP & DEVELOPMENT

The Stewardship/Leadership Development Ministry is requesting that interested members and friends sign up to be part of the Receptions Team. Sue Stenzel has offered to head up this important ministry of BUCC. This is not the regular after service Coffee Hour - these receptions could be for funerals, concerts, or other special events that take place at the church at different times.

If you would be willing and able to help out when a reception occurs, please let Sue Stenzel or Bridget Sproul know by sending an email or text or telling them in person. We need individuals who are willing to set up, serve, clean up, and cook or bake. Would you be willing to be on a list to be called occasionally to help out? Please let us know, and Thank You so much for being a caring, sharing member of our church!

MARCH

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

Lucy	Brown	March 03
Dorothy (Dottie)	Faust	March 05
Mindy	Harris-Wade	March 08
Tia	Began	March 11
Benjamin	Rehling	March 12
Kate	Klonowski	March 14
Livy	Klonowski	March 16
Spencer	Whyte	March 16
Ann	Kelley	March 22
Kathleen	Stewart	March 24
Joe	Wilson	March 25
Kathy	Pastor	March 28
Mark	Rehling	March 29
Bill	Witt	March 29
Susan	Snyder	March 30

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



CALENDAR

MARCH 2023

Weds., MARCH 1

11am Mindfulness & Meditation

Thu., MARCH 2

5pm Recorder/Dulcimer
7pm Seasonal Choir
8pm Choir

Fri., MARCH 3

OFFICE CLOSED

Sat., MARCH 4

SUNDAY, MARCH 5

10am Worship Service

Mon., MARCH 6

6:30 Lenten Series

Tue., MARCH 7

8:15am "Holy Grounds"
(Brecksville Panera)
6:30pm AA in Pilgrim Hall

Wed., MARCH 8

11am Mindfulness & Meditation

Thu., MARCH 9

5pm Recorder/Dulcimer
7pm Seasonal Choir
8pm Choir

Fri., MARCH 10

OFFICE CLOSED

Sat., MARCH 11

SUNDAY, MARCH 12

10am Worship Service

Mon., MARCH 13

6:30 Lenten Series

Tue., MARCH 14

8:15am "Holy Grounds"
(Brecksville Panera)
6:15pm Letter Writing
(Brecksville Panera)
6:30pm AA in Pilgrim Hall

Wed., MARCH 15

PILLAR DEADLINE

11am Mindfulness & Meditation

Thu., MARCH 16

5pm Recorder/Dulcimer
7pm Seasonal Choir
8pm Choir

Fri., MARCH 17

OFFICE CLOSED

 **Happy
St. Patrick's Day!**

Sat., MARCH 18

SUNDAY, MARCH 19

10am Worship Service

Mon., MARCH 20

6:30 Lenten Series



Tue., MARCH 21

8:15am "Holy Grounds"
(Brecksville Panera)
6:30pm AA in Pilgrim Hall

Wed., MARCH 22

11am Mindfulness & Meditation

Thu., MARCH 23

5pm Recorder/Dulcimer
7pm Seasonal Choir
8pm Choir

Fri., MARCH 24

OFFICE CLOSED

Sat., MARCH 25

SUNDAY, MARCH 26

10am Worship Service

Mon., MARCH 27

6:30 Lenten Series

Tue., MARCH 28

8:15am "Holy Grounds"
(Brecksville Panera)
6:30pm AA in Pilgrim Hall

Weds., MARCH 29

11am Mindfulness & Meditation

Thu., MARCH 30

5pm Recorder/Dulcimer
7pm Seasonal Choir
8pm Choir

Fri., MARCH 31

OFFICE CLOSED

PARTICIPANTS IN WORSHIP

MARCH 5, 2023

Head Usher: TBD
Ushers: Evelyn Seager
Sue Stenzel
Lay Reader: Jim Duffy
Greeter: TBD
Counters: Marge Culver
Janet Renovetz
Acolyte: TBD
Peace Candle: TBD
A/V: Betsey Wilson
Flowers: Julie Bernard
Snack: TBD
Setup/Serve: TBD
Cleanup: TBD
Snow Herder: TBD

MARCH 12, 2023

Head Usher: TBD
Ushers: Evelyn Seager
Carole Snider
Lay Reader: Michelle Rogers
Greeter: Sue Stenzel
Counters: Marge Culver
Janet Renovetz
Acolyte: TBD
Peace Candle: TBD
A/V: Jim Duffy
Flowers: Carole Snider
Snack: Katie MacKeigan King
Setup/Serve: TBD
Cleanup: TBD
Snow Herder: TBD

MARCH 19, 2023

Head Usher: Diane Gressley
Ushers: Evelyn Seager
Carole Snider
Lay Reader: Rose Kaval
Greeter: TBD
Counters: Marge Culver
Janet Renovetz
Acolyte: TBD
Peace Candle: TBD
A/V: TBD
Flowers: Janet Renovetz
Snack: Carole Snider
TBD
Setup/Serve: TBD
Cleanup: TBD
Snow Herder: TBD

MARCH 26, 2023

Head Usher: Diane Gressley
Ushers: Evelyn Seager
Carole Snider
Lay Reader: Jill Zedan
Greeter: TBD
Counters: Marge Culver
Janet Renovetz
Acolyte: TBD
Peace Candle: TBD
A/V: TBD
Flowers: Tia Began
Snack: TBD
Setup/Serve: TBD
Cleanup: TBD
Snow Herder: TBD

The Pillar

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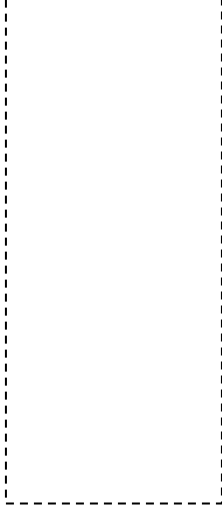
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FIRST CLASS



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