

# The Good Word

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF BRECKSVILLE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH



## Open and Gathered Community—Thoughts About Online Communion

Back in April, I announced my decision not to do online communion while we were physically apart. I stated that, “I believe it is a sacrament that is rightly performed in the context of an ‘open, and gathered community.’ Yes, we are gathered together online for worship, but I don’t think I’m saying anything you don’t know when I say it’s not the same. It’s good, and important, and valuable, but it’s not the same.”

I also said, “Please know I didn’t come to this decision lightly, and it’s not necessarily a final decision. I do not know what the future holds—none of us do.”

Well, I can guarantee that when I wrote those words I had no concept of how long we would be physically apart. I still believe that holy communion is a sacrament that is

rightly performed in the context of an open and gathered community. However, my understanding of an “open and gathered community” has evolved over the past several months. I have felt a sense of community online that I didn’t know was possible. And I believe more fully that God’s Spirit can move through space in ways I honestly didn’t think were possible before.

I admit that I was limiting God’s ability with my own capacity to understand—it didn’t make sense how God could move through the internet and connect us no matter what time we were watching or where we were watching from. And a piece of me wanted to make sure that you were paying attention during the celebration of holy communion—that you weren’t

doing dishes or working on a project while worshipping, then pause and take communion like a snack, and then go back to doing whatever it was you were doing.

But all of that is more about me, isn’t it? It’s about *me* limiting God’s ability to work in mysterious ways. And it’s about me wanting to have control over the table. And it’s also about the Church and its traditions and doctrines, rather than God doing old things in new ways.

Even though I know full-well that communion isn’t about me or the church. It’s about us experiencing the unconditional love and forgiveness of Jesus Christ. Having an *open table* means that we believe God can work within and through the mess of our lives to bring redemption to anyone and everyone.

# WORSHIP WITH US

LIVE ONLINE SUNDAYS AT 9 AM  
SERMONS BY PHONE 440-526-0653  
WATCH ONLINE ANYTIME - 24/7  
SUNDAY REPLAY THURS @ 7 PM

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Published monthly by

**Brecksville United Methodist Church**  
65 Public Square, Brecksville, OH 44141  
*Article deadline 3rd Thursday monthly*

Editor, Melanie Smith  
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Help us tell God's story as it unfolds in our  
church and community.  
Send us your news!

*Continued from page one...*

All of that is to say that I have changed my mind. Through *lots* of prayer and discussion with our staff and my colleagues, I have decided that we will be celebrating Holy Communion online during our January 3<sup>rd</sup> worship service. That Sunday we will have a special "Covenant Renewal Service," where we will take the opportunity a new year brings us and renew our covenant of love and commitment to God. So I invite you to get your communion elements ready—some bread or crackers and juice or, dare I say, wine—and join us as we celebrate and remember the holy mystery that is God's unconditional and sacrificial love for us.

If you do not feel comfortable participating in communion online, that is perfectly ok—you are welcome to meditate on the words of the sacrament and remember God's redeeming love.

As we move into this new year, I pray that we might evolve and grow in our understanding of what God is capable of and truly allow God to lead us—as individuals and a church—to *the incredible things we haven't even imagined yet*.

Take care,



Rev. Heidi Welch, Senior Pastor

## JOHN WESLEY'S COVENANT PRAYER

I am no longer my own, but thine.  
Put me to what thou wilt,  
rank me with whom thou wilt.  
Put me to doing, put me to suffering.  
Let me be employed by thee or laid aside for  
thee, exalted for thee or brought low for thee.  
Let me be full, let me be empty.  
Let me have all things, let me have nothing.  
I freely and heartily yield all things  
to thy pleasure and disposal.  
And now, O glorious and blessed God,  
Father, Son, and Holy Spirit,  
thou art mine, and I am thine. So be it.  
And the covenant which I have made on earth,  
let it be ratified in heaven. Amen.



## **Yuletide Bikes** *a Success Amid Strange Circumstances*

On Monday, December 14 we opened up the church to folks who made appointments to come in and select bikes for themselves or their children. Throughout the day, eight families chose

24 bikes to take home for Christmas. One other bike was delivered to a young man who lives in the neighborhood around Pearl Road UMC and 22 bikes made their way to the city of Cleveland Heights for distribution to their most needy families. Having these 47 bikes fixed and ready to be given for Christmas was no easy feat this year. Purchasing the needed materials (tubes, tires, brakes etc.) was impossible throughout the summer and the market did not begin to open up again until the fall. We extend a huge thank you to Jinho and Jeremy for the work they have done to fix so many bikes and we look forward to welcoming our other bike mechanics back very soon!

## **Happy New Year from Missions & Outreach** *Thank you so very much for your generosity in 2020!*

- Brecksville UMC was able to send over \$2200 to UMCOR from our Thanksgiving Collection!
- The Hat and Mitten Tree, and Non-perishable Food Tree continue to grow with your donations. We will collect through January 10.
- Volunteers from our church filled all the shifts for Salvation Army Bell Ringing at the Broadview Heights Giant Eagle on 12/18 – thank you!

## **The Bread Ministry**

*A new opportunity for volunteering. Have you heard of it?*

We take unneeded food from a local restaurant to local food pantries to feed those who are hungry. Want to help? We try to have about 8 teams taking turns on Saturday mornings picking up day old Panera goodies from the Panera at the Broadview Heights and Brecksville rest areas on the turnpike. (You do not need to go on the turnpike to access the rest areas.) Pick-up is between 7:30 am – 9:30 am or so. Currently, we have been getting 8-10 garbage bags/boxes of leftovers that we take to area agencies such as Parma Heights Food Pantry, St. Augustine’s Kitchen, Guidestone, or another agency of your choice who can accept the donation on a Saturday. It’s a great activity for an individual, a team of two or a family. Generally, 2-3 months are opened-up at a time for scheduling and you pick the Saturday or Saturdays that work for you – no set rotation. Sound like a great way to help a lot of folks? Please contact Mary Kotnik (330) 256-3262 for information or to join the Bread Ministry!

*- Submitted by Mary Kotnik, Missions & Outreach Committee*



## **JANUARY**

*Spread cheer in the New Year!*

We continue to surround one person or family in prayer each week—and it’s been wonderful! Be a part of it! Drop a note in the mail to these folks to let them know you are praying for them:

Week of January 3

### **Carol Johnson**

(Sue Hastings’ Mother)  
7005 Stadium Drive, Apt 420  
Brecksville, OH 44141-1887

Week of January 10

### **Betty Monnin**

6611 Timberland Drive  
Independence, OH 44131-6564

Week of January 17

### **Mary Reid**

1830 Hampton Run  
Broadview Hts, OH 44147-3290

Week of January 24

### **Lois Moston**

8212 Wyatt Rd  
Broadview Hts, OH 44147-1346

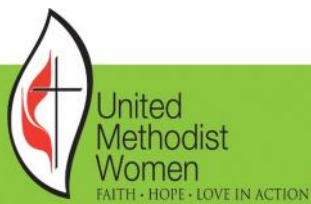
Week of January 31

### **Joe & Ruth Holmes**

7946 Seth Payne Street  
Brecksville, OH 44141-1318

Pastor Barbara says, “Be a blessing for those in our church family you may not see on Facebook or at the grocery store. They will be thrilled to hear from you. Thanks for being loving, caring people of Christ!”

***Check back next month  
for a new list!***



## Brecksville United Methodist Women History

Thanks to William F. Long, BUMC Church Historian, we have his book, “The Church by Chippewa Creek” to remind us about the UMW history. Here are some excerpts:

The United Methodist Women are an active community of women who develop creative, supportive fellowship and global ministry of the church....

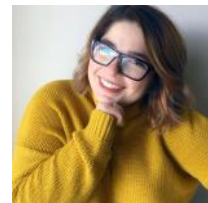
Although men held most of the official positions in the church, the women were responsible for the vitality of the church since they arranged the social activities that, in many respects, held the church together. In addition, most married women did not work outside of their homes prior to World War II, so they could get together during the week for activities such as the Ladies’ Aid Society....

In 1977, members of the UMW produced the play *Merry and Martha*, which delighted the audience. Mrs. Klein was the dramatist and the Church Bells, directed by Eleanor Anderson, performed. Handbell ringers included Doris Roche, Ann Loesch, Karen Kraushaar, Barbara Kaufman, Mildred Hobart and Joann Fox.

The UMW also engaged in more service-oriented activities. The Morning Circle, a family-oriented group, was started in 1977 with Deann Faulk as leader. In 1980 UMW was involved in Head Start, West Side Community House and Berea Children’s Home. Toward the end of the 1980s, the UMW was involved in the World Day of Prayer, the Hunger Fund Luncheon and the Samaritan Council Conference.

- Submitted by Sharon Judson

## The Lesson Our Youth Taught Me in 2020... that I’m Taking into 2021



As we ring in the New Year, it makes us all reflect a little bit on what the previous year held. And boy, oh boy, was 2020 really something. The clock striking midnight isn’t going to magically transform the current chaos of the world, nor will it wipe clean the slate of 2020. But maybe that celebratory shout of “Happy New Year!” can bring us a little something that we all have been missing... hope. For many, hope feels like a distant notion, something that lives in the land of toxic positivity and innocence. But hope is not lost in the fog of the pandemic and social chaos. How do I know that? Because that is the lesson that our youth taught me in 2020, they taught me how to hope.

Despite social distancing, canceled plans, unmet expectations, and constant uncertainty, our youth have continued to persevere. They learned to go with the flow, connect in new ways, and cling tightly to dreams of justice. Youth ministry still happened in 2020, despite so many blocks in the road. Our young people challenged each other in anti-racism book clubs, grew their faith in devotional small groups, laughed while playing online games, became joyful with porch drop-offs, volunteered at Nehemiah Mission, and supported one another through tough days. Through all of this and more, they continued to show up and grow through this pandemic. And that is the true heart of hope. Our youth have shown me that the future is so incredibly bright, a shining beacon and they are holding the torch. We often think about all the ways we will teach and pass on wisdom to the younger generation, but these young folks really do have something to teach and pass onto us. May we all carry the torch of hope into 2021 and beyond. Happy New Year! With love,

*Dana*

Dana Schwendeman, Director of Youth Ministry  
E-mail [youth@brecksvilleumc.com](mailto:youth@brecksvilleumc.com) Voicemail 440-526-8938 x 237





**Love One Another.** He had one of THOSE weekends: fun, filled with family time, great weather, good food and friends. In a word- epic. He wanted to tell everyone at work about it, but realized he couldn't.

It started with a spontaneous Friday night gathering of close friends and their children. Saturday morning was his daughter's soccer game, where she scored a goal for the first time. The proud parents celebrated with a picnic for lunch, followed by a large birthday party with their extended family. The 3 of them camped out in their backyard under the stars that night, thanking God for all of their blessings. Sunday was an outdoor service at their church with a service project afterward, one of the little family's favorite things to do. As Sunday evening approached, he grew sad and anxious, as he usually did, about returning to work on Monday and the extra stress he faced trying to keep his secret. He knew his coworkers would share their stories freely about their weekends, but he would need to edit what he said. He was gay, and was fearful he would share one personal detail too many. He had not felt comfortable sharing who he was and who he loved at work, so he did what he felt he had to do to keep his job, to avoid discrimination, abuse, negative comments and possible termination. He had worked at this company for 10 years, had won numerous awards, was well respected - but no one really knew him. He avoided small talk and friendships because he had learned painful lessons at previous positions.

It is heartbreaking to imagine having to hide who you are and who you love at work out of fear. I wanted to include this fictional story to somehow make this issue more personal, more real. Think about how many hours you spend at work, and add the stress of hiding who you are to all those hours. Statistics don't tell the whole story. They are only numbers that can be impersonal and distant, but there are real people behind them. (See sidebar.)

One other issue I researched was dress codes/business attire and overall appearance requirements. Suffice it to say, this is another area that negatively impacts many in this population, especially transgender individuals. (On this note, watch for information in the near future on one way BUMC can help)

I am finding it difficult to find a way to end this piece, it is complex and deserves thoughtful consideration. There is so much information about these issues, but I think the first source of information we can turn to is scripture. So I will end with this:

***“A new command I give you: Love one another.  
As I have loved you, so you must love one another.  
By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another.”***  
- John 13:34-35

- ▶ 35 to 50% of the LGBTQ+ community hide their identity at work
- ▶ There is no Federal law that explicitly protects employees from discrimination due to sexual identity, gender identity or gender expression (and none in the state of Ohio.)
- ▶ LGBTQ + employee discrimination laws vary between states, and only 23 states ( and the District of Columbia ) bar discrimination based on sexual orientation AND gender identity in both public and private sectors
- ▶ Openly gay job applicants are 40% less likely to receive an interview, and transgender individuals have an unemployment rate 3 times higher than the national average
- ▶ 41% of transgender individuals in one survey were asked inappropriate questions about their surgical status / identities

Reference: <https://Everfi.com-2>  
articles by author Scott Raynor, last update Nov.23, 2020.



Share your news with your church family! Contact Melanie: [office@brecksvilleumc.com](mailto:office@brecksvilleumc.com) 440-526-8938

On November 28, this world said good bye to Fred Priest—at age 99. Fred was a beloved member of this congregation since 1967. Quick with a smile and a kind word, Fred is dearly missed. We take comfort in knowing that he is reunited with the love of his life, his dear wife, Olive. Please keep their daughters, Peggy, Pamela and Patricia, and their families, in your prayers.



**Prayer and Praise Notes**

Request prayer through our Prayer Chain. Call the Church Office 440.526.8938 or contact Elinor Rowan at 440.230.1540 or email [rowanel33@gmail.com](mailto:rowanel33@gmail.com)



Penny Lienert	3	Jennifer Custer	13	Kaitlyn Ellis	20
Michael Patrick	3	Steven Chen	14	Dan Auble	21
Michelle Shively	3	Maddy McBride	14	Pat Gordon	21
Emily Vincent	3	Joy Fenton-Jones	15	Nate Bender	22
Donna Sibits	4	Scott Ford	15	Bob Lundholm	24
Kaya Roberts	5	Donna Houston	15	Katie Hurder	25
Nate Machesky	6	Marianne Nolan	15	Sue Hastings	26
Claudia Monnett	6	Sam Papp	15	Bill Long	26
Lucas Juniper	7	Adalaide Spitzer	15	Emerson Knight	27
Autumn Lasich	7	Lois Moston	16	Kimmer Cave	28
Jasna Stacher	7	Aundrea Dumot	17	Donna Culley	28
Cole Mihalich	9	Eliot Slifcak	17	David Gardner	29
David Vastartis	9	Kim Johnson	18	Rick Dean	30
James Vastartis	9	Fred Loeffler	18	Jill Magistro	30
Nathan Hulten	10	Ellen Martin	18	Don Salsbury	30
Gerry McMaster	11	Jennifer Schneider	18	Kathy Goebel	31
Marc Vincent	11	Jessica Zawada	18	DJ Magee	31



As people of faith, we find God’s presence in those who have been blessings to us. At our weekly staff meetings prayers of thanks are lifted to God for the way lives are touched when we reach out to one another in service. Recently, we said prayers of thanks for people like Jinho Lee who works so diligently with bike





repair, and has helped countless people who didn’t have a bicycle have one! Our bike ministry is possible because of you, Jinho! The team of folks who helped deliver our Advent Kits - Sarah Pribble, Matt Mellott, Don Krolikowski, Jeff & Scott Hastings, Pastor Heidi, Dave Brown, Jennifer Schneider, the Aubles, Marla Knight, Beth Smith, the Watkins Family, Melanie & Jim Smith, Mary Kotnik, Becky Paroda, Sherry Petkovsek, Kathy Goebel, Dana & Jamie Schwendeman, Sharon Judson, Brenda Calovini, Pastor Barbara, Doug & Gail Huth, Ric Lesinski and Kristi Eberhardt. It takes a big team to make short work of 230 visits to doorsteps! Thank you! (How does Santa do it?) And Jane Petrie, who continued the tradition of hanging live wreaths on the church doors, even in this unusual year. Thank you, Jane, for the beautiful wreaths! You are each—named and unnamed—a gift from God, and we thank God for all of the ways that each of you use yours gifts to radiate God’s love!

**Church Council MEETING**

Thursday, January 21  
at 7 pm  
ONLINE

Join by computer, smartphone, other device - or by phone. Info in Sunday’s bulletin 1/10

# JANUARY 2021

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
<p><i>Experience Communion Online January 3</i></p>					1	2 <i>Bread Ministry TBD Visioning Team Mtg</i>
<p>3 <b>Epiphany Sunday</b> 9 Worship 9:45 Blood Drive 10 Coffee Hour No Adult Ed Today 11 Kids Connect</p>	4	5 <i>Twelfth Night</i> 7 Lectio Divina	6 7:30 Brkfst 10 Lectio Divina 7 Bible Study	7  10 Staff Mtg	8	9 <i>Bread Ministry TBD</i>
<p>10 <b>Baptism of the Lord</b> 9 Worship 10 Coffee Hour 10:30 Adult Ed 11 Kids Connect 7 Virtual Youth Group</p>	11 <i>Human Trafficking Awareness Day</i>	12 7 Lectio Divina	13 7:30 Brkfst 10 Lectio Divina 7 QPR 7 Bible Study	14  10 Staff Mtg	15	16 <i>Bread Ministry TBD</i>
<p>17 <b>Human Relations Day</b> 9 Worship 10 Coffee Hour 10:30 Adult Ed 11 Kids Connect 7 Virtual Youth Group</p>	18 <i>Martin Luther King Jr. Day</i>	19 10 Stitch'n'Time 7 Lectio Divina 7:30 Trustees	20 7:30 Brkfst 10 Lectio Divina 7 Bible Study	21  10 Staff Mtg 7 Church Council Mtg  <i>Good Word Deadline!</i>	22	23 <i>Bread Ministry TBD</i>
<p>24 9 Worship 10 Coffee Hour 10:30 Adult Ed 11 Kids Connect 7 Virtual Youth Group</p>	25	26 7 Lectio Divina	27 7:30 Brkfst 10 Lectio Divina 7 Bible Study	28 	29	30 <i>Bread Ministry TBD</i>
<p>31 9 Worship 10 Coffee Hour 10:30 Adult Ed 11 Kids Connect 7 Virtual Youth Group</p>						

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We encourage everyone to stay home and *help stop the spread*, but realize that there may be times that you need to visit the church office.

Please call 440-526-8938 or email [office@brecksvilleumc.com](mailto:office@brecksvilleumc.com)



*Socialize with us!*

## Wednesday Night Bible Study

A new study - The book of Philipians

ONLINE starting 1/6 at 7 pm

Anyone can join from anywhere!

email [pastor@brecksvilleumc.com](mailto:pastor@brecksvilleumc.com)



**Open Doors.**  
*Welcoming all  
of God's children.*

Brecksville United Methodist Church is called to the ministry of reconciliation. We embrace diversity as a gift. We celebrate our human family's diversity of sexual orientation, gender identity, race, ethnicity, age, faith history, economic status, marital status, physical and mental ability, and education. We affirm that all people are created in the image of God and as beloved children of God, all are worthy of God's love and grace. We welcome the full inclusion of all people in the life and ministries of Brecksville United Methodist Church as we journey toward reconciliation through Christ.



# PRAYER

a study by Philip Yancey

In souls filled with love, the desire to please God is continual prayer.

—John Wesley

Is prayer your steering wheel or your spare tire?

- Corrie Ten Boom

Pray as though everything depended on God.  
Work as though everything depended on you.

—St. Augustine

I have been driven many times upon my knees by the overwhelming conviction that I had nowhere else to go. My own wisdom and that of all about me seemed insufficient for that day.

—Abraham Lincoln

The value of persistent prayer is not that God will hear us, but that we will finally hear God.

—William McGill

Prayer is exhaling the spirit of man and inhaling the spirit of God.

—Edwin Keith

Why must people kneel down to pray? If I really wanted to pray I'll tell you what I'd do. I'd go out into a great big field all alone or in the deep, deep woods and I'd look up into the sky—up—up—up—into that lovely blue sky that looks as if there was no end to its blueness. And then I'd just feel a prayer.

—L.M. Montgomery, *Anne of Green Gables*

## Sundays at 10:30 on Zoom

How is your prayer life? The new year seems like a great time to reinvigorate our prayer practices. Join us on Zoom, Sundays at 10:30 beginning January 10 for Philip Yancey's thought provoking and inspiring study simply called 'Prayer'. Yancey will address the questions of 'What is prayer?' 'How does it work?' and most importantly, 'Does it work?' We will talk about ways to take his suggestions and use them on our own personal faith journeys.

Sign up today. <https://forms.gle/c9DgQo2GtpDvc2RF9>

No materials are required.



## Do you know the signs?

*Learn three simple steps to help save a life from suicide.*



Everyone's heard of CPR. The training helps save lives everyday. Have you heard of QPR? It stands for Question, Persude and Refer—three simple steps that can save a life.

Brecksville United Methodist Church is partnering with LifeAct and the QPR Institute to offer FREE ONLINE training for suicide prevention. The one hour class takes place on the second Wednesday of every month. Did we mention that it's FREE?

Because it's online, anyone can join from anywhere an internet connection exists. There are 30 spots available in every class. Can we fill them? Sign up here (or contact the church office): <https://forms.gle/DLk5w2B3rt43mWWi8>



**Youth Ministry Highlight**—The BUMC Youth Christmas Extravaganza was held online on December 20—with lots of fun for the 17 in attendance. If you are a young person in grade six through college, reach out to Dana for other opportunities for connection. Her email is [youth@brecksvilleumc.com](mailto:youth@brecksvilleumc.com).

# BLOOD DRIVE

## Brecksville United Methodist Church

**SUNDAY, JAN. 3**

**9:45 A.M. - 1:30 P.M.**

**VITALANT BLOODMOBILE**

**65 PUBLIC SQUARE, BRECKSVILLE**

At this time appointments are preferred & masks are required.

Please make an appointment & earn reward points at [vitalant.org/OhioDonorPortal](https://vitalant.org/OhioDonorPortal)  
Group code: 4230

Donors will receive a t-shirt OR 200 bonus points. An email will be sent with redemption instructions after your donation.

Donate blood. We'll let you know if you have the antibodies to help patients battling COVID-19.

Please eat before you donate. Bring a photo ID & a list of any medications that you take.