

Searching for Jesus

So that from this we can deduce

That in the infinite distances

There must be a place

There must be a place

Where all is light

And the light from that high place

Where all is light

Simply hasn't gotten here yet.

—Lawrence Ferlinghetti

Approaching Christmas through the journey of Advent, just how would you describe your faith? Are you hope-full, peace-full, joy-full, love-full? Are you fear-less? Or are things a bit unsettled? Wherever you may find yourself, we ask that you join us in our Advent pilgrimage. A real ingredient of the story cycle is the presence of darkness. It is in our brokenness that we discover our need for God. It is in our weakness that we find we must reach out for one another. It is in our darkness that we constantly search for light.

So, this year, we are searching for Jesus. We seek to be fear-less. We set out in pursuit of hope rather than fear. We set out in pursuit of peace rather than any acceptance of violence. We set out in pursuit of joy rather than sadness. We set out in pursuit of love rather than hate.

We will be contemplative and we will be active. We will ask that you participate in worship in new ways, as we plan to construct a collective piece of art during our journey. A portion of every service will be devoted to this creation. We ask that you bring yourselves, your hopes, your dreams, your loves, and your joys. We will spend time together trying to better understand ourselves and our relationships. It sounds so simple, yet we all know it is complicated. Won't you please make plans to actively join us as we set out in search of Jesus together? - Rev. Clark Stein

Centering Prayer Service for Advent, December 7 at 7:30 pm Christmas Eve Services at 5, 8 and 10 pm Christmas Day Service at 10 am



Sunday Morning Worship 8:45 Contemporary Worship 10:00 Coffee & Classes for All Ages 11:15 Traditional Worship

The Crib and Toddler Room is open throughout the morning!

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TRANSFORMATION HAPPENS HERE

We have an Extraordinary Jesus who is our Lord and Savior! Through our faith, Jesus helps us to create true transformation in the lives of the people we touch.

In the Transformation Videos shown in the Stewardship Campaign, we saw Jesus acting in powerful ways right here through our congregation. If you

wish to view these great videos again, visit the stewardship page of our church website: www.brecksvilleumc.com/qiving.

Our congregation is stepping forward to support even more Transformation yet to come. Through mid-November, we received 96 Pledges of \$297,362 to the Operating Budget, toward a goal of \$500,000. We also received 70 Planned Expense Fund commitments for \$97,448, toward a goal of \$250,000.

Jesus has truly blessed us with this wonderful progress, and more pledges and commitments are received almost daily. We invite you to submit your pledge and commitment this week. Help be a part of our great Transformation story!

Please also look at the Planned Expense Fund Guidelines approved by Administrative Board, and the Trustees' 15 Year Planned Expense Inventory, also found under the website "Giving" tab. We owe our Trustees a huge THANK YOU for their tremendous effort to develop this new resource. This is a powerful proactive planning tool which will help guide us all to keep our church building and parsonage in good repair for many decades to come.

That 15 Year Inventory shows the Trustees' best estimate of future cumulative costs of at least \$878,000 to take good proactive care of the our church home. The current \$250,000 Planned Expense Fund Goal should get us through the first 5 years (barring unexpected surprises) of that Plan. In turn, that helps all of us get right back to our main purpose for being, transforming people's lives in Christ!

Blessings, Your Finance Committee



Have you seen the new linen cabinet in the kitchen pantry? It was built as generous Eagle Scout project coordinated by Dave Dzurilla.

We are using this cabinet, which locks, to store and protect our nicer tablecloths and table skirts so they will always be available for church func-

tions. Some tablecloths are stored in unlocked cabinets in the pantry as well. All of the linens may be used for in-church and church affiliated activities. When you are planning your event, don't forget to call and reserve your linens!

Please contact Ruth Herman, Barb Harper, Mary Kotnik, or Gretchen Mates and schedule a time to pick them up. If you don't have a church directory, please call the church office for their phone numbers. While we understand that this adds an extra step, we hope you will agree it's worth it to ensure that our linens are here for use for years to come! Thank You!

- Brecksville United Methodist Women

Centering Prayer Service

Wednesday Evening, December 7 at 7:30 pm A special worship service for Advent.

This service has become a favorite annual tradition and provides a quiet moment for reflection and growth during the Advent season. This year, we invite you to help us create a community art project that represents some of the ways we search for—and find—Jesus, during Advent and throughout the year. Bring some expression of your own search for Jesus.... Photograph... Sketch or Drawing... Painting... Written Prayer or Meditation... Song Lyrics or Sheet Music... and other creative ideas are WELCOME!

Not sure what to do? We'll have paper, pens and art supplies available at the soup supper, or you can work together with a friend! Don't forget: our Images of Faith photo exhibit is still up around the building. A guiet walk around to look at those photos might provide you with inspiration!

Community Soup Supper Join us before the service for a simple soup supper,

lovingly prepared by the church staff. Fellowship Hall, 6 pm. Free and open to all!

Searching for Jesus Transforming Your Heart Through Prayer
A special series for the season, Sundays at 10 am A special series for the season. Sundays at 10 am.

Don't miss this opportunity to learn from some of our area's leading instructors. Every Sunday during Advent!

Discovering Yourself in the Story

November 27 with Sister Marian Durkin Sister Marian has been a spiritual director for over ten years, directs group retreats, and guides individuals in Spiritual Direction.

Listening with Your Heart

December 4 with Rev. Sharon Seyfarth Garner Sharon is trained in the art of lectio divina, centering prayers and the spiritual exercises of St. Ignatius.

Finding Your Center

December 11 with Rev. Liz Nau Liz returns to teach us the art of Centering Prayer, a method of silent contemplation that enables us to experience God's transformative presence within us.

Awakening Your Senses

December 18 with Jenny Gee and Dana Schwendeman Prayer and devotion stations will be arranged throughout the church, giving you the opportunity to put your prayer into practice through self-guided meditation.



Do you have news to share? Contact Melanie! office@brecksvilleumc.com or 440-526-8938

On Thursday, November 3, family and friends gathered for a funeral service in the Sanctuary to say goodbye to Olive Priest, a beloved member of Brecksville UMC since 1967. Rev. Clark Stein officiated. Our prayers surround her husband, Fred, whose love for Olive seemed to grow stronger each year since they met in 1942. While we share Fred's sorrow, we remember the words of Jesus that "whoever lives and believes in me, shall never die" John 11:25-26.

We celebrate the arrival of Logan Anthony Vastartis, son of James and Amanda, grandson of Mark and Catherine, and great grandson of Bob Johns. Congratulations, Vastartis family!



December 13 at Noon

Holiday Ham

Spend your lunch hour at BUMC. FREE if you RSVP! office@brecksvilleumc.com 440-526-8938



Allen McCrodden	1	Daniel Soltis	9	Carol Wilson	18
Jack Burrows	2	Josh Kesling	10	Jeff Fesler	19
Dave Dobos	2	Joan Quade	10	J. Donald Moorhead	19
Sue Ellenberger	2	Scott Schneider	10	Nathan Petznick	19
Mollie Mitchell	2	David Schroedel	10	Hudson Schneider	20
Marisol Wylie	2	Angela Archacki	11	Carol Dambaugh	21
Ronnie Rajkovich	3	Barb Berry	11	Megan Louttit	21
Ed Crist	4	Amy Piorkowski	11	Amanda Auble	23
Nicholas Mihalich	4	Greg Urso	11	Logan Hricko	25
Diane Ellis	5	Mitchell Bell	12	Kayla Kosla	26
Bruce McCrodden	6	Penny Burns	12	Anastasia Brachna	28
Mike Memmer	6	Steve Piorkowski	12	David Brown	28
Katie Pasek	6	Trinity Crouch	13	Christine Drescher	29
Joyce Rossborough	6	Kiira Olszko	13	Sylvia Fowler	29
Karen Schroedel	6	Shirley Harper	14	Brandon Schroedel	29
Rachel Dubin	8	Sydney Hazelton	15	Mary Lou Bennett	30
Steve Harper	8	Ruth Moorhead	15	Darell Fisher	30
Vivian Bielinski	9	Hannah Stein	15	Sharon Hotaling	30
Charles Helm	9	Dale Meyer	16	Bob Jaite	30
Joyce Johnson	9	Elinor Rowan	17	Connor Hulten	31
				John Scott	31



As people of faith, we find God's presence in those who have been blessings to us. At our weekly Staff Meetings this month, we lifted up the following people in prayer, thanking God for them and the way they touch the lives of others. People like the Men's Small Group who volunteer their time to help clean the church building and whose kindness and caring of the church staff is so appreciated. We love you guys!

Michael Pace, who so generously shared his time, gifts and learning with us by producing videos for our stewardship campaign. Harry Koberna, a man of many talents, who helps repair bikes, serves as an usher, and helps with church repairs with his considerable know-how. Thank you, Harry, for sharing your gifts! And the Evangelism Committee who put their hearts into our Veterans Day celebration, which gets better every year, and in welcoming our community into the church for the Christmas Parade reception. Thank you for radiating God's love!



Let's Fill the Tree!

Some trees are filled with ornaments and lights. Our Brookside Food Pantry tree will be filled with food and other necessities for our sisters and brothers at Brookside Food Center. The most needed items include: Canned Fruit, Soup, Cereal, Canned Meats (like tuna and chicken), Peanut Butter and Jelly, Personal Hygiene Items, Household Cleaners, Laundry and Dish Soap, and Paper Towels. *Please hold the cranberry sauce, green beans, and corn.* Thank you!



Christmas Concerts

The Brecksville Community Chorus concert is among our favorite holiday traditions, and you are invited to join us for an afternoon of wonderful music and singing. There will be TWO performances this year, Sunday, December 11. The first at 3 pm and the second at 7 pm!



Spread Christmas Cheer...

...by delivering a Poinsettia! Take a plant to people who were unable to attend Christmas Eve services or deliver a poinsettia to those working on Christmas Eve (the fire department, the police station, etc.) after the 10 o'clock service. Want to help? Contact the church office! 440-528 -8938 or office@brecksvilleumc.com



Warm Heads, Hands & Hearts

It's time to fill the Hat & Mitten Tree for those in need this winter. We extend a giant *thank you* to Mrs. Hildegard Krueger and her daughter, Astrid for knitting some 60 hats for the cause! Can we match their generosity? Let's fill the tree with hats, scarves, mittens, gloves and socks. We'll deliver donations after Christmas this year!



One Service at 10:00

Come celebrate the birth of Jesus with your church family! We will have one "come as you are" service—Christmas pajamas and Christmas sweaters encouraged—with carols and hymns of celebration. It will be a special, joy-full morning. Come be a part of it!



Building Partnerships... to build the Kingdom!

This year, Mission Committee is focused on building partnerships that will enable us to use not only our financial gifts but also our time and energy to transform our community, the city of Cleveland, and the world! In that Spirit, our gifts marked *Christmas offering* this year will support the following ministry partnerships:

Local: Habitat for Humanity... We had an awesome experience participating in the Apostles' Build in 2016, and we want to continue this partnership to help create new homes and transform communities in Cleveland in '17.

National: Midwest Food Distribution... MMDC is a cooperating depot in the United Methodist Committee on Relief Supply Network. Their mission statement is "to compassionately help God's people in need locally, nationally, and around the world." This continues a partnership from 2015.

International: Hands-on Education in Liberia... In the summer of 2017, a team of BUMC youth and adults will travel to Camphor Mission to provide a summer education program. Funds raised through Christmas offering will be used to provide daily food, clothing and educational supplies to students.

Coffee Hour Hosts for December

Council on Education

Stop by the Parlor during the 10 o'clock Sunday Education Hour for a treat and say hello!



You are invited to the Annual UMW Christmas Potluck Luncheon, a gift to the congregation and UMW hosted by Asbury Bremeth Circle. Join us Thursday, December 1 at 11:30 in the church parlor. A wonderful and inspirational speaker, Kevin Schaner, will discuss "The Jesse Tree, an Advent Symbol". Bring your favorite dish to share. The World Thank offering will also be collected.

Asbury Bremeth Bible Study will meet on Thursday, December 8 at 9:30 am in the Parlor. Admission? One item for the Child Advocacy and Domestic Violence group. Wish lists posted in the church and online.

Church Women United Annual Christmas Tea Friday, December 9 at 11:30 am. A carpool will depart the church parking lot at 10:45 am. Bring finger sandwiches or bite sized dessert to share. Items collected for the Child Advocacy and Domestic Violence group will be delivered, and we'll enjoy a nice program after lunch. For more information, contact Nancy Knowlton 440-838-4341



Church Yard Clean Up

Saturday, December 3 at 8:30 am

Come help prepare the church yard for winter. Many hands make light work!



All Youth Dinner Ugly Christmas Sweater Party



Who: All students grades 6-12th

What: A fun night filled with Christmas themed food and games

Where: Fellowship Hall When: December 4th, 5:00 pm

Why: Celebrate the Christmas season and hang out with friends

Middle School Christmas Party

On December 9th, our Middle School group will be having some yuletide fun at The Kwiatkowski Home! It is sure to be a fantastic and festive time, RSVP to Dana by Dec 6th!

High School Christmas Party

Save the date! On December 11th, high school will be getting together to have a wonderful Christmas time! We will be having a cookie exchange and Christmas karaoke. Wanna join the fun?

RSVP to Dana by Dec 8th! youth@brecksvilleumc.com

Youth Ministry Winter Break Dec 14–Jan 7

It can be difficult to slow down and really enjoy this time of the year, so we will be taking a little break to help our students do just that. May you have a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!



Important Dates

December 4: All Youth Dinner

December 9: Middle School Christmas Party

December 11: High School Christmas Party

December 14 to January 7:

Youth Winter Break (no meetings or events)



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SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
Character of the state of the s				1 11:30 UMW Christmas Potluck Luncheon 6:15 Bell Choir 7:30 Chancel Choir 8:30 Men's Ensemble	2 5 Fridays@5 Women's Ensemble	3 7:30 Greater Cleveland Food Bank 8:30 Church Yard Clean Up Day
4 Communion In Pursuit of PEACE 8:45 Worship 10 Coffee & Classes 10 Lectio Divina 11:15 Worship 3 Youth Board 5 All Youth Dinner 6 HS Youth Group	5 Community Choruses Rehearse Here	6 10 Staff Mtg 4:15 Kid's Ensemble 5:30 MS Youth 7 Evangelism	7 6:30 Breakfast 4 Youth Ensemble 6 Soup Supper 7 Evening Circle 7:30 Advent Worship Service	9:30 Asbury Bremeth 6:15 Bell Choir 7:30 Chancel Choir 8:30 Men's Ensemble	9 5 Fridays@5 Women's Ensemble 6 Middle School Christmas Party	10 5:30 Staff Christmas Party
11 In Pursuit of LOVE 8:45 Worship 10 Coffee & Classes 10 Centering Prayer 11:15 Worship 3 & 7 Community Chorus Concerts 6 HS Christmas Party	12	13 10 Staff Mtg 12 Lunch Bunch 4:15 Kid's Ensemble 7 COM	14 6:30 Breakfast 4 Youth Ensemble 7 Bible Study	15 6:15 Bell Choir 7:30 Chancel Choir 8:30 Men's Ensemble	DEADLINE Delivery to Brookside Food Center	17
18 In Pursuit of JOY 8:45 Worship 10 Coffee & Classes 10 Prayer Stations 11:15 Worship	19	20 10 Staff Mtg 10 Stitch'n'Time 4:15 Kid's Ensemble 7 Gifts & Mem 7 Finance 7:30 Trustees	21 6:30 Breakfast 4 Youth Ensemble 6:30 Worship Band Rehearsal	7:30 Chancel Choir	23	Christmas EVE Services at 5, 8 & 10
Christmas 10:00 Worship	26 Church Offices Closed	27 10 Staff Mtg	28 6:30 Breakfast	29	30 Reminder that church office closes at 12:30!	31



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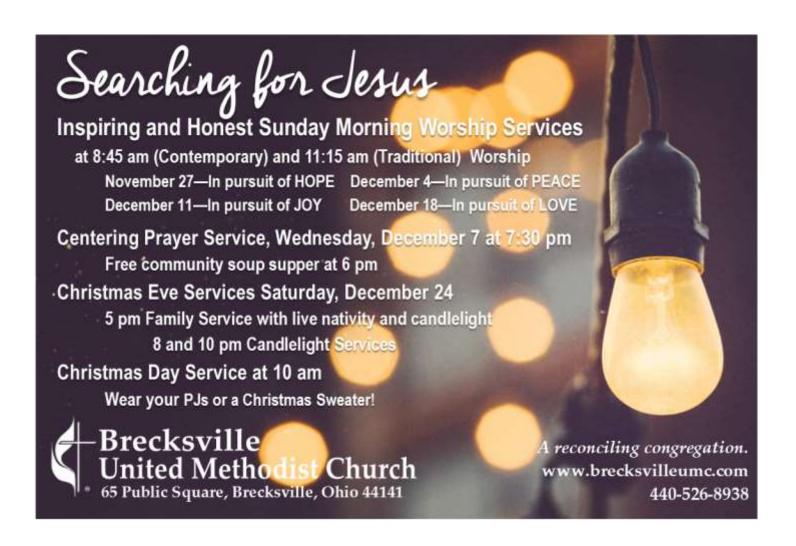
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"And you must think constantly about these commandments I am giving you today.

You must teach them to your children and talk about them when you are at home or out for a walk;

at bedtime and the first thing in the morning." - Deuteronomy 6:7

The commandments mentioned here are those transcendent principles of love, integrity, kindness, and faithfulness that are true for all people, in all cultures, at all times. Teaching these principals to our kids does not require that we have some kind of organized sit down with them each day, but instead that we infuse our casual, everyday conversations with messages of faith. Character training flows more out of your day-to-day encounters with your children than it does from formal teaching. Whether you talk about baseball or ballet, music or math, the color of the sky at dusk or the dew on the grass in the morning, every conversation can provide an opportunity to teach your children about the things of God.

Are you planning to do some of the fun and wonderful things that Cleveland has to offer during December? Talk with your kids before and after about some of the lessons of faith.

A Christmas Carol: How do you recognize your wrongs? How does Scrooge learn compassion and empathy?

The Nutcracker. If you could make something really special for someone this Christmas what would you make? Who would you make it for and why?

The Polar Express: Why can the boy and his sister hear the bell but the adults can't? Have you ever believed something other people told you wasn't true?

Cleveland Orchestra "At the Movies—*It's a Wonderful Life*": Talk about how each member of your own family enhances the others' lives. How can you show that every day?

Ice skating: Discuss often that our bodies are gifts and we can show God our gratitude by treating them with respect and enjoying all that we are able to do.

Pajama-Rama and *Frozen* at the Great Lakes Science Center: What do Anna and Elsa learn over the course of the movie? How can we apply the movie's lessons to our own life?

A Christmas Story at the Allen Theater: How do the characters in A Christmas Story demonstrate self-control? Why is this an important character strength?

How the Grinch Stole Christmas at the Connor Palace Theater: Would you be able to enjoy Christmas as much without presents? What else makes Christmas special?

Christmas decorations and lighting displays: Read the Christmas story in your Bible with your children before heading out to see all the beautiful lights of Christmas. Take special note in the stories of the star that announced Jesus' birth to both the shepherds and magi. It is good to remember the reason we string so many lights at this time of year. Deck the Halls at Stan Hywet Hall, weekends November 25-December 30

Nela Park Lighting Display early December until New Year's Eve

Cleveland Playhouse Festival of Trees

Zoo Lights at the Akron Zoo starting 11-25 from 6-9

Cleveland Botanical Garden— GLOW November 25 to December 31

Hale Farm Holiday Lantern Tours

Cleveland Metroparks offers a variety of winter programs: To observe nature requires patience and quiet watch-fulness. Imagination comes into play as children create special places and use natural items to create stories and play. All senses become engaged when children interact with the natural world. Look for events including bird feeding, card making and evergreens hikes.

Our faith is not just a weekend sport. It is a Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, Saturday, and Sunday lifestyle. Those teachable moments with our children can happen while they are on the soccer field, shopping at the mall, playing at the piano recital, fishing, or camping. And when your children give you those windows of opportunity, take them and teach them your strong values.

CHRISTMAS POINSETTIAS

Remembering family and friends with a church poinsettia is a beloved Christmas tradition of Brecksville United Methodist Church. This special fundraiser also beautifies the sanctuary for worship and helps the hungry! Like last year, instead of filling the altar area with many small flowers, we are ordering larger flowers to fill the space and only enough small ones to deliver to the home bound. Most importantly, all money raised above what's needed to purchase flowers will be given to the Brookside Food Pantry to help our hungry neighbors have a happier, healthier Christmas and New Year! Last year, we raised over \$500!

Do you know someone who would appreciate a visit and a plant? Please list their name here:

Can you help deliver plants in the community? If so, when are you available? 12/24 12/25 12/26 12/27 Use the order form on the back of this page to order your flowers. Orders due by Dec. 5!

Poinsettia Order Form

<u>Order deadline is Sunday, December 4.</u> Names will be in the bulletin on December 18 and Christmas Eve. Please include cash or check (made payable to BUMC) with your order. Return in the offering plate, deliver to the church office, or mail to the church at 65 Public Square, Brecksville, OH 44141.

	Enclosed i	is my payment for \$	(Suggested donation of \$10 for each order.)		
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