

The Good Word

OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF BRECKSVILLE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

WHAT'S INSIDE...



Drive In Communion



Back-To-School Backpack Drive



VBS Was a Virtual Success

THE DAYS BETWEEN SUNDAYS

For months now, I've been talking about this "holy disturbance": how God is doing a new thing in the midst of upheaval. Because our God is in the business of transformation, making things new, and rebirth, we are not called to stay the same, but grow with God. However, I have failed to acknowledge an important part of the transformation process: recognizing that we need to let go of the "old," because it was harmful to us or does not serve us anymore—we've outgrown it.

As a general rule, as humans, we don't like to recognize that the "old" isn't serving us anymore, because the assumption is that that means we were "wrong" or "not good enough." On the contrary, whatever is being left behind or made new was good and helpful at

one time, but now, as we continue to grow as disciples and in our understanding of God, we must shed what doesn't "fit" anymore so we can continue to grow. The cocoon is integral to the growth and transformation of a caterpillar into a butterfly, but at some point, it must break free in order to become what God has created it to be.

It's no secret that the Church (not just Brecksville UMC, but the greater "Church") is changing. And really, it's been changing for years and decades. It's been increasingly difficult to get people to attend worship services on Sunday mornings: travel sports, weekends away, the death of cultural Christianity, and increased mobility means worship attendance has flat-

lined or decreased. Yet, we (the Church) have insisted that Sunday mornings are the most important, and in order to be a part of the church, you must come to the church building on Sundays.

But COVID-19 forced us out of that cocoon.

We have recognized that we can worship from anywhere. AND that the most important thing about being the church doesn't happen on Sunday mornings, but in the days between Sundays. We've seen that we can reach people who do not live in the same geographical area as we do, and that they can become an active part of our church community through online bible studies and worship.

Continued on next page...



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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 front page.

It's not that Sunday mornings and the church building are not important; unlike the butterfly, we're not going to completely discard our cocoon. But we do need to break free of its confinement so that we can continue to grow as a church—as a body of Christ.

But first, in order to truly transform with God, we must acknowledge that it is time to grow. To mourn the loss of what we once had—decades ago when everyone gathered every Sunday to worship together and be in community. To confess that it is not serving us as well anymore, yet we clung to it because it was what we knew and comfortable. Ask for forgiveness because we got caught up in our own comfort and ignored the Spirit leading us to something new.

And then receive God's forgiveness with excitement, knowing that we go into the unknowns of the future with God leading us and giving us what we need to grow.

Yes, we will still have Sunday morning gatherings. Yes, we will still use our beautiful, prime downtown location. But what exactly those things look like, only God knows. And we will continue to investigate ways we can connect with people in new ways, on Sundays and every day in between.

Because the community that is Brecksville UMC is pretty super awesome. And our God is beyond amazing! And it would be plain selfish to keep those things to ourselves. So let us break free of our cocoon and soar with God!

Pastor Heidi

Rev. Heidi Welch, Senior Pastor



Our first "Drive-In Communion Service" went extremely well! It was a joy to see people in person and to celebrate and receive Holy Communion together. We plan to make this a monthly occurrence, on the first Sunday of the month, as health orders and weather permit.

Mark your calendars and for communion on Sunday, August 2 at 11 am or 12 pm.

Bring your own bread and juice and a copy of the [communion liturgy](#).

Participants will be invited to park in every other spot, joining the service from your tailgate or lawn chair behind your car. Don't forget to wear your masks!

We will share a short, meaningful service together. No, it's not what we're used to, but God is present in every circumstance, and God will meet us as we gather around this unusual "table." Join us!

Because of limited space, we're asking everyone to reserve a space for their car. If both services fill we will add more! **One car per registration.** There are 30 parking spaces available per service. In the event of rain, the service will move to 8/9.

Register online here: <https://tinyurl.com/y4esp5bp>

Or call 440-526-8938 or email office@brecksvilleumc.com

Back To School BACKPACK DRIVE

We don't yet know what school will look like in the new year, but we do know that there are kids in need of back packs. Whether school is in the classroom or the living room - we want to equip students for learning. With your help, we can! Our Missions and Outreach Committee is working with two agencies to fill this need.

- The first agency is ***The Emergency Assistance Center*** for the Nordonia Hills and Twinsburg communities. We have committed to providing them 50 backpacks for teenage girls and 20 for teenage boys. The backpacks must be new, styled for older youth and be able to last the school year - so think sturdy.
- The second agency will be the Corner 65 Project of ***Nehemiah Missions***. Our challenge there will be 150 backpacks and school supplies. A detailed list of what type of backpacks – age appropriate for each child, etc. will be available soon (in next week's Thursday e-news, on our website, and our social media platforms.) We will be providing the details as we receive them.

Three Ways to Help

1. Buy a backpack and drop it off at church (details below.)
2. Order a backpack through Amazon Smile and have it delivered to the church. [Click here for our Amazon Wish List](#). Or visit smile.amazon.com and choose Brecksville United Methodist Church as your charity.
3. Make a monetary donation to the cause.

Drop Off

We have a short turnaround for the 70 Emergency Assistance Center backpacks - we need them by August 2. Can we do it?

- Please drop these off at church by August 2.
- There will be a bin/box inside the main church entrance off of the parking lot.
- The door is unlocked from 9 AM - Noon Monday through Friday.
- If you need a different drop off time, please contact the office to make other arrangements.

Let's try to meet these requests and come through for the children who are experiencing all sorts of difficult situations for a variety of reasons, including COVID-19. Thank you for your generosity! - *Mary Kotnik., Co-Chair, Missions and Outreach Committee*

August Worship Notes

*Sermon on the Mount Sermon
Series concludes*

August 2

Ask, Search, Knock

Matthew 7: 7-11

Parking Lot Communion

at 11 and 12

(see information on previous page)

August 9

Hearers & Doers

Matthew 7:24-29

August 16

Details coming soon!

August 23

Details coming soon!

Blessing of Backpacks and Devices

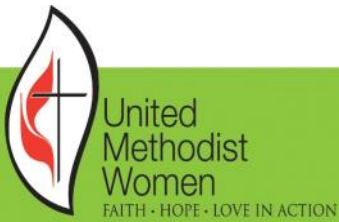
We'll

prepare for
the new
school year
with a
special
blessing of
the backpacks and devices
during the worship service



August 30

Details coming soon!



The recorded beginnings of Brecksville Methodist women's groups in our church dates back to 1938. Here is some of the history excerpted from *The Church by Chippewa Creek, A History of the Methodist People of Brecksville 1834-1998* by William F. Long.

"The Brecksville Methodist Ladies' Aid Society dates back to 1897, but its activities were only documented in detail starting in 1938. (The oldest record of the Brecksville Methodist Ladies Aid is a picture of 12 members taken about 1897 in front of the home where they were meeting.) The society had modest beginnings; the treasurer's report for 1938 showed a balance of \$33.97, which included money from the sale of fancy work, quilting, white elephants and an Imaginary Bake Sale.

Besides those activities, the Ladies' Aid Society organized a banquet for the Boy Scouts, held a bazaar in November, 1938 to sell baked goods and crafts to raise money to buy two new kerosene stoves for the church kitchen. (There was a Boy Scout Banquet that April. The Sub Debs, seven high school girls, served the meal. They were members of Dolly Beckwith's Sunday School class which met in the back pew of the church. The girls were warned by their mothers, "You serve from the right and take off from the left, don't be lollygaging with the boys, and for heaven's sake wipe off the orange Tangee lipstick.")

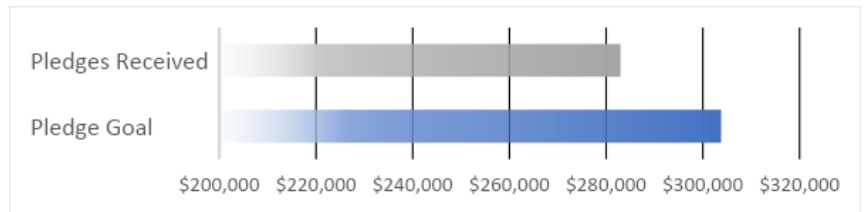
In addition, the members of the society all agreed to give gifts to the kitchen that Christmas to furnish it with additional supplies, and they also found the time and money to buy a gallon of Glocoat to wax the church pews. Although their activities might seem incidental, the sense of community this group fostered was very important to the growth of the church.—

Submitted by Sharon Judson, UMW

The Summer Slump?

An update from the Finance Committee

My days are spent thinking of creative ways to beat the heat and nights are spent catching lightening bugs. Summer is here, and it is hard to believe that it's halfway over! If you are a parent of small(ish) children, you may feel like you have been on one, very long, summer vacation since March! As we settle into these slow-paced days, it is easy to log off or tune out. While we have remained within striking distance of our giving goals, we are starting to see the typical summer dip in contributions and are now at a 7% deficit. We hope that you continue to faithfully give to your church as these long days roll on into fall.



We thank you for your continued support in such an unsettling time. As always, feel free to ask any questions! - *Yours in faith, Becky Paroda on behalf of the Finance Committee* finance@brecksvilleumc.com

3 WAYS TO GIVE



Give

securely online
[onrealm.org/
BrecksvilleMethodist/
give/now](http://onrealm.org/BrecksvilleMethodist/give/now)



Text

"GiveBUMC"
to 73256



Mail

your gift to
65 Public Square,
Brecksville, OH 44141

**UNITED
METHODISTS
STAND AGAINST
RACISM**

UMC.org/EndRacism

United Methodist Church
The people of The United Methodist Church

8:46 Prayer—The United Methodist Council of Bishops has asked every United Methodist everywhere to join in prayer at 8:46 am and pm. Pray for our church as we take a stand against racism. Imagine the power of a concert of prayer heard around the world!" Find resources here:

[http://www.brecksvilleumc.com/root/
bumconline/News/read/?ID=4628](http://www.brecksvilleumc.com/root/bumconline/News/read/?ID=4628)

The Church Council, using recommendations from the church staff and current public health guidelines, has put together a guide to help us make planning decisions until all in person church activities can resume. We are looking forward to the day when we can safely gather again, and we hope that these guidelines will help each of us make good choices and show care for one another until that day arrives.

PUBLIC EMERGENCY				
NO ALERTS No Health Orders	YELLOW ALERT Level 1	ORANGE ALERT Level 2	RED ALERT Level 3	PURPLE ALERT Level 4
<p><i>BUMC Standards</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • in person worship services without social distancing measures • live streamed services • Sunday School Classes for all ages • All in-person events resume 	<p><i>BUMC Standards</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • in person indoor service • small groups • in person mission/service opportunities • live streamed services <p><i>Health Orders</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stay home is you're sick • Maintain 6' distance from non-household members • Wear masks • Wash hands, use sanitizer, don't touch your face, etc. 	<p><i>BUMC Standards</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • in person outdoor service • small groups • live streamed services <p><i>Health Orders</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Same guidelines as level 1 • Decrease in-person interactions outside the household. 	<p><i>BUMC Standards</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • live streamed services • In-person special outdoor services • Small groups <p><i>Health Orders</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Same guidelines as level 1 & 2 • Consider necessary travel only. • Limit attending gatherings of any number. 	<p><i>BUMC Standards</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pre-recorded worship service • No in-person church activities <p><i>Health Orders</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Same guidelines as level 1-3 • Stay at home!

AT ALL LEVELS: the church will require hand sanitizing, face masks be worn and physical distancing for all functions inside the church and on church grounds. Remember the phrase "cleaning, screening, and distance in-betweening!"

OUTSIDE GROUPS (support groups & preschool) will be empowered to make their own decisions for their groups, and will be informed of our policy/recommendations.

YOUTH MINISTRY

Youth Summer Break

July 31- August 11

Dana will be taking a “stay-cation” from July 31 - August 11. There will not be Instagram devos, Zoom devos, or any other youth programming during that time. We encourage you to soak up the summer sun and spend time with your loved ones!

ZOOM Escape Room

August 16 at 8 pm

How do you do an Escape Room on Zoom? Find out on Aug 16 at 8 pm. Solve puzzles, work together, and escape before the clock runs out! This event is even more fun when you invite friends. It's on Zoom so any friend can join, no matter their location! Sign up required before August 10. Why not e-mail Dana right now at youth@brecksvilleumc.com?

Outdoor Movie Night

August 30 - Time TBD

We are going to try to have a fun movie night, but are still working out the details. Save the date on your calendar and Dana will update as the event gets closer!

Contact Dana

E-mail

youth@brecksvilleumc.com

Voicemail

440-526-8938 x 237



@BUMCYouthMin

linktr.ee/bumcyouth



VBS was a Virtual Success! Months ago, we realized that we couldn't count on being able to gather together safely in July. So we made some tough decisions... we decided to cancel in person VBS and plan for a virtual event. It turned out to be a super fun week and incredibly rewarding to see our awesome teachers bring the fun of VBS and the joy of knowing Jesus better into the homes of our participants. Thirty seven families and 70 children participated!

Grace Auble worked hard at creating and editing our opening and closing sessions, with Bridget and Erin Gee as our puppet mascot Sparky. Each of the sessions were filmed at Squire's Castle in North Chagrin Reservation. Adrienne Leska taped instructional videos to teach all the songs and their accompanying dance moves. The Davis (Leanne, Evan, Ella and Eddie) family taught science, George Gee taught games with the help of our neighborhood kids, Jennifer, Payton and Hudson Schneider and Michelle, Hannah, Joe and Eliza Botzman taught and prepared kits for all the crafts. Joe Botzman also taught the kids the sign language for our phrase of the day. Becky, Miles and Owen Paroda recorded great videos for story time. We were able to purchase all the materials needed to do the activities and bag everything up for our gophers to deliver right to the kids' doors. I was told there was a lot of squealing when they arrived!

The YouTube videos will remain up so if you have anyone you know who might enjoy Virtual Bible School have them search the Brecksville UMC [YouTube Channel](#) and tune in to the fun. - *Jenny Gee, Dir. of Christian Education*



www.YouTube.com/c/BrecksvilleUnitedMethodistChurch



Welcome Home Block Party... it's all about the love.

We love our late summer gathering on the square so much! The rocket car and bounce house and delicious potluck dishes, the music and fellowship and Kona Ice treats- it is all SO GREAT! This year the event seems a little... er... ironic? Did you actually even venture far from your home this summer? The Gee family had to cancel our vacation plans. So we aren't really welcoming each other back home... and we know that we love each other much more than we love a good rocket car ride, so it's clear that we cannot safely gather to see one another. What is a church family to do?

Well, like everything else - we'll get creative!

- **A Summer Retrospective:** We've all been up to *something* this summer. Did you refresh a space in your home, explore new hiking trails, hone a skill, complete a giant picture puzzle, dote on your perennials or create some art? We want to hear all about it. Record a short video or photos of yourself, or the whole family being awesome (we already know you are) and send it to us. Did you finish reading a stack of books? Send us a "shelfie" - a picture to share with friends. Maybe you learned a new song, or dusted off an instrument. We'd love to hear it! We will piece together videos, photos and audio you send in so we can all share in one another's semi-quarantined worlds.
- **A Recipe Collection:** Send in your 'go-to' potluck recipe! Or better yet a video of you creating your signature dish. We all ask each other "What is in this? It's delicious!" over the picnic table... now we won't need to ask! We promise not to all make the same thing next year!
- **A Different Kind of Church Family Photo:** Send in an individual or family picture. We will create a collage that mimics our group photo that Don K. takes from the balcony each year. We sure won't ever forget 2020 but this will be a really great reminder and historic record of these strange times for our church. Don't have a photo? Not good with technology? Contact us and we'll send a photographer over to snap a "porch portrait"!

Our church staff and volunteers will take what you send in and turn it into something that we can all enjoy together. Details coming soon!

Jesus told us time after time to **love one another** and up until now that has looked like a gathered community that comes together to know and understand each other's needs and learn about God's love. During a crisis like this, let that love be your guide. Show your love by keeping each other in prayer and keeping to the physical distancing and mask wearing guidelines.

I cannot wait to see what you have all been up to! - Jenny Gee, on behalf of the Fellowship Committee

SEPTEMBER PREVIEW SUNDAY SCHOOL

Sunday school for all ages will begin in September. Depending on where the state of Ohio is on the new color-coded chart will determine how we will meet. For children in grades preschool through eighth grade we will be meeting virtually. Much more information will follow with specifics, but rest assured that there will be fun family lessons with all the materials you need delivered right to your door each month. We will use our YouTube channel and Zoom throughout our time apart to reach our kids and families.

Adults: Small groups will continue to meet throughout the week and new Sunday morning classes will be forming. Do you have a passion to lead? Reach out to Pastor Heidi or Jenny to share your ideas. We will be sure you have all the materials and resources you need to teach your lessons. If you don't see yourself teaching but would like to see a subject covered in a class let us know that too!

- Jenny Gee,
education@brecksvilleumc.com

Twelve Women of the Bible An Online Study for Women

Sunday evenings 7—8:30 pm through October 4

It is not too late to join us, or to invite others to join us as we journey together in spirit, wonder, and discovery. This online study is free, and open to all. Invite your friend or cousin or sister from another state! for conversation about women of the Bible. Register and learn more here:

www.brecksvilleumc.com/root/bumconline/news/read/?ID=4640





MILESTONES

News of the Fellowship

Are you celebrating a big anniversary? A retirement? An engagement? A new baby?

Share your news with your church family!

E-mail or phone Melanie with news to share!
office@brecksvilleumc.com
440-526-8938



@BrecksvilleUMC

Streaming Page

Our Website

Parking Lot Communion

YouTube

Podcast on iTunes

Facebook

Instagram



Daniel Jaszczak	1	Dave Stoffer	8	Joan Olszko	19
Tish Kwiatkowski	1	Laina Culley	9	Kyle Romance	20
Skip Smith	1	Betty Monnin	9	Roger Wadsworth	20
Susan Hurst	2	Valorie Bender	10	Rob Wilson	20
Katrina Orr	2	Allison Engler	10	Grace Auble	21
Nick Orr	2	Ryan Shijo	10	Ben King	21
Kaitlyn Robinson	2	Beth Dadas	11	Mark Robinson	21
Chris Davis	3	Maddie Holt	11	Nathan Robinson	21
Bennett Eberhardt	3	Heather Manocchio	11	Rebecca Urso	21
Karen Fisher	3	Lori Rusterholtz	11	Jill Zawada	21
Jeff Hastings	3	Trey Shively	12	Ann Zupanc	22
Gabriel Vastartis	3	Brad Toman	12	Megan Juniper	23
Steven Vastartis	3	Mark Vastartis	12	Chelsea Croy	24
J.T. Zawada	3	Tanya Palmer	13	Andy Dorman	24
Catherine Derry	4	Lue Andree	14	Caroline Eschbaugh	24
Kristi Eberhardt	4	Aleyna Gee	14	Helen Lee	26
Joan Filips	4	Beverly Gooding	14	Christopher Nurre	26
Judy Novak	4	Barbara Tereshko	14	Raegan Papp	26
George Smith, Jr.	5	Kathy Auble	15	Bob Snyderwine	26
Karen Walburn	5	Chuck Gezze	15	Bridget Gee	27
Sam Burrows	6	Matthew Johnson	17	Oliver Bellone	28
Lily Jatsek	6	Karin Meyer	17	Bryn Bisco	28
Frank Pasek	6	Nancy Lundholm	18	Kristin Bisco	29
Brooke Barnum	7	Sarah Lundholm	18	Jamie Hocutt	29
Sally Crist	7	Emma Santora	18	Hilary Houff	29
Mary Jane Opatrny	7	Bob Tschannen	18	Pat Neville	30
Adrienne Leska	8	Samuel Donze	19	Grant Palmer	30
Jeffrey Mihalich	8	Robin Engler	19	Andrew Scott	31



As people of faith, we find God's presence in those who have been blessings to us. At our weekly staff meetings recently, prayers of thanks were lifted to God for the way lives are touched when we reach out to one another in service. In a time such as this, these gifts come in many forms, like the Rozman kids serenading us with "Jesus

Loves Me" and bringing a big smile to online worship; Craig Kotnik playing the guitar so beautifully for drive in communion, and helping to remind us that however we meet, it's holy ground; Sue Hastings leading Church Council with quiet grace, thoughtful insight and grounding guidance in these unprecedented times; and Brenda Calovini stepping out of her comfort zone and following a call to lead a small group. We thank God for each of you!

One link for all of our links:
linktr.ee/BrecksvilleUMC

August 2020

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
						1 Bread Ministry— Hastings
2 9 Worship Online 11 & 12 Parking Lot Communion 6:30 Anti-Racism Small Group 7 12 Women of the Bible Study	3 6 Kickboxing 6:30 Soil & Sacrament Small Group 9 Enneagram Small Group	4 10 Staff Mtg 5 Books to Grow Our Faith 7 Finance	5 10 Prayer Small Group 10 No Zoom Devos for Students Today 7 Bible Study	6 Mowing Team: Auble/ Spencer 7:30 Summer Choir Online	7	8 Bread Ministry— TBD
9 9 Worship Online 6:30 Anti-Racism Small Group 7 12 Women of the Bible Study	10 6 Kickboxing 9 Enneagram Small Group	11 10 Staff Mtg	12 10 Prayer Small Group 10 Youth Zoom Devos 7 Bible Study	13 Moving Team: Brown/ Sendrey Habitat Faith Build Work Day	14 WE ARE building ON FAITH	15 Bread Ministry— TBD Hoffman Wedding
16 9 Worship Online 6:30 Anti-Racism Small Group 7 12 Women of the Bible Study Zoom Escape Rm	17 6 Kickboxing 6:30 Soil & Sacrament Small Group 9 Enneagram Small Group	18 10 Staff Mtg 7:30 Trustees	19 10 Prayer Small Group 10 Youth Zoom Devos 7 Bible Study	20 Moving Team: Campbell/ Bloch	21	22 Bread Ministry— Millers
23 Blessing of back- packs & devices 9 Worship Online 6:30 Anti-Racism Small Group 7 12 Women of the Bible Study	24 6 Kickboxing 9 Enneagram Small Group	25 10 Staff Mtg	26 10 Prayer Small Group 10 Youth Zoom Devos 7 Bible Study	27 Moving Team: Lundholm/Herzing	28	29 Bread Ministry— TBD 9 - 12 Electronics Recycling Day
30 9 Worship Online 6:30 Anti-Racism Small Group 7 12 Women of the Bible Study Movie Night	31 6 Kickboxing 6:30 Soil & Sacrament Small Group 9 Enneagram Small Group	1 10 Staff Mtg 7 Finance	2 Church Council Reports Due 10 Prayer Small Group 10 Youth Zoom Devos	3 Moving Team: Auble/Spencer 7:30 Summer Choir	4	5 Bread Ministry— TBD

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.

We are available by appointment only - masks required.

Please call 440-526-8938 or email
office@brecksvilleumc.com

Electronic Service Requested

Non-Profit
US Postage
Paid
Cleveland, OH
Permit No.
928



Socialize with us!

SATURDAY, AUGUST 29

Electronics Recycling Day!

Bring your old computers, monitors, laser jet printers, devices, phones and office equipment to the church parking lot!



It's a Community Recycling Event

Let's show care for God's creation! Bring your old electronic equipment to the church parking lot between the hours of 9 am and 12 pm and we'll take them to WeldonPC for recycling.

- ▶ Computers
- ▶ Laser jet printers (no ink jets, please)
- ▶ Electronics
- ▶ Cell phones, house phones, phone systems
- ▶ Office equipment
- ▶ Monitors and screens

Can't make it on that date? Take it to Weldon PC
5829 Turney Rd, Garfield Heights, anytime in August!
Call them for details/with questions: 216-475-0661

What does it mean to be a Reconciling Congregation?

You may have seen the rainbow colored flame that signifies Brecksville United Methodist Church (UMC) is a Reconciling Congregation, but do you know what it means to be a Reconciling Congregation? A little historical context will help you to understand!

At the General Conference held in May 1984 this language was put into the *The Book of Discipline* (which outlines the law, doctrine, administration, organizational work and procedures of The United Methodist Church):

“homosexuality is incompatible with Christian teaching” and “no self-avowed practicing homosexual shall be ordained or appointed in the UMC.” Each General conference since then has debated the language regarding people in same gender relationships.

At about the same time, the Reconciling Ministries Network (RMN) was born and has adopted this mission statement: “Living into our shared baptismal covenant, Reconciling Ministries Network equips and mobilizes United Methodists to resist evil, injustice, and oppression as we seek justice for people of all sexual orientations and gender identities.”

RMN helps UMC congregations go through a discerning process culminating in a vote to become a Reconciling Congregation. There are currently 1,327 reconciling congregations and 43,060 individuals who are part of the reconciling community in the UMC.

In 2013 Pastor Clark Stein and Joy Fenton-Jones (aka Joy Parker) provided leadership and Brecksville UMC determined that we desired to become a Reconciling Congregation. We went through a period of intense education and study and then voted. On May 11, 2014 86% of the congregation voted to become a Reconciling Congregation. We adopted a Welcoming Statement and we added the rainbow flame to our sign.

Where are we now? Pastor Heidi greets and welcomes all people every Sunday regardless of sexual orientation. Under Pastor Heidi’s leadership, Brecksville UMC has created the Inclusion Task Force to help us to figure out how we step into our identity as a reconciling congregation. It is our desire to be a welcoming, affirming and inclusive congregation. We want to intentionally make space at our Brecksville UMC table for people who are LGBTQ and allies. We

seek to celebrate our human family’s diversity of sexual orientation and gender identity.

We have discovered that a number of our new members over recent years have intentionally searched for an inclusive congregation. They visited for a period of time, felt comfortable, and now are members of Brecksville UMC.

What will the future bring?

General Conference (the body of The UMC with the ability to make changes to The Book of Discipline) was scheduled for May 2020, however due to COVID-19, it has been postponed until August 2021. Plans have been put forth for voting at General Conference that address The UMC’s stance on LGBTQ inclusion. This delay has continued the harm done to our LGBTQ siblings and their allies. **However**, we at BUMC want to spread the word that we *already* are

creating and will continue to create a safe space for everyone. We believe 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.

In the coming months, the Inclusion Task Force will provide ways for individuals in our congregation to actively welcome and affirm our LGBTQ siblings. Please join us!

- Submitted by Linda Crouch, Inclusion Task Force Leader



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.

Who's Worshiping With Me When We Worship Online?

Making sense of "attendance" when the ushers can't count

I've been thinking about this quote from the sci-fi novel, *The Salmon of Doubt*, by Douglas Adams. "1. Anything that is in the world when you're born is normal and ordinary and is just a natural part of the way the world works. 2. Anything that's invented between when you're fifteen and thirty-five is new and exciting and revolutionary and you can probably get a career in it. 3. Anything invented after you're thirty-five is against the natural order of things." If you've been feeling like online worship is "against the natural order of things" you're not alone. Some days, it even seems strange to me, and I'm spending most of my waking hours thinking about it (and some of my sleeping hours, too!) But we've got some really good news about this new fangled thing.

Many of us have become much more consistent in our worship habits. We took a snapshot of recorded attendance (that's the people who sign the attendance register or who "like" or "comment" while they're watching on Facebook or YouTube.) Over the last four weeks 70 people have 100% attendance. Perfect attendance! Last summer? Only 32 people did that. It's wonderful that we're choosing to make worship part of our life every week. Even when we travel, we're worshipping from our boats or the beach or our cabins.

We're reaching people at different times of the day and of the week. We know that 16% of the people who

watch worship services on our website are watching at a time other than Sunday morning at 9 am. And our YouTube viewers skew even more heavily to other times.

People are utilizing different ways to worship.

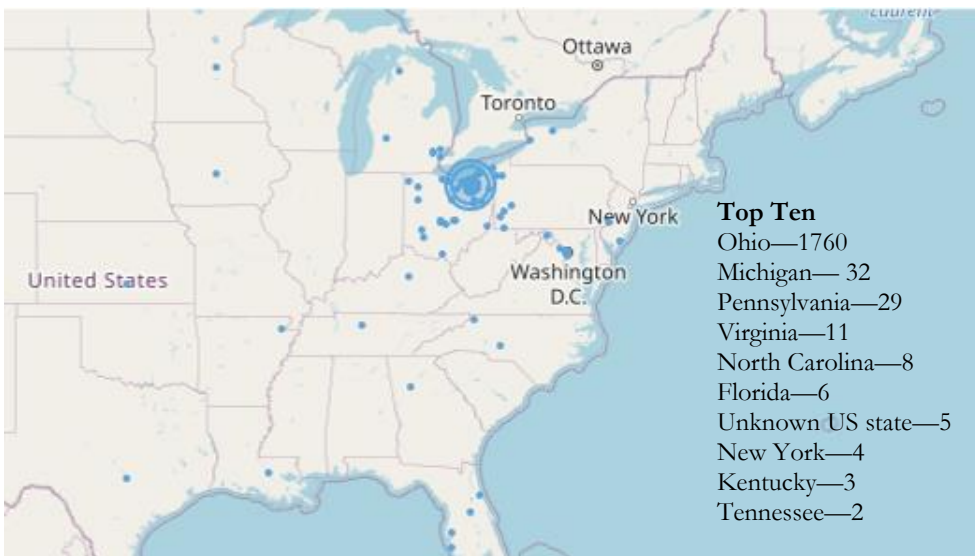
91,700 minutes of video have been viewed on our Facebook page since the beginning of April. 923 people saw last Sunday's service, and 84 of them were watching together at the same time on Facebook. We have reached 547 unique viewers on our website since we started streaming services. Our Sermon By Phone and our Podcast listeners are joining in every week as well.

We're not confined by geography. People all over the country and in different parts of the world are joining us. (Our top podcast listener lives in Dublin, Ireland!) Our mothers, fathers, grandparents, sisters and brothers are able to worship "with" us, even though we are apart. Five people who started worshipping with us online are now attending Bible Studies with us, too!

Best of all, we are receiving messages like this: "I started watching your Sunday service when the pandemic caused churches to move to on line services... You all bring joy to my life, and you have done so much to bless the lives of my dear family. I loved Malik in his pride shirt this morning, Jenny is wonderful every Sunday, and I also try to find her on Friday. The praise guys do a

great job, and I love the Sunday message.....always on point, and thought provoking. Thank you for everything you do!!"

It's difficult to get a concise count of true "attendance" numbers. Just know that if you're joining us online, even though you can't see the family sitting next to you, they're there. When this pandemic ends and we're able to gather in the sanctuary again, we'll still be able to share that wonderful experience with people all over the world. God is good!



Our streaming report tells us about people who are tuning in to worship services through our website, including where people are watching and the number of views from each region.

As Pastor Heidi reminds us, wherever we worship is sacred ground! - Submitted by Melanie Smith