

# The Good Word

A newsletter of Brecksville United Methodist Church. July Issue. Published June 28



OPEN DOORS. HONEST WORSHIP. DETERMINED SERVICE.

*Making disciples of Christ for the transformation of the world*

65 PUBLIC SQUARE, BRECKSVILLE, OHIO 44141



*Pictured: Maddie Piorkowski, Megan Louttit, Grace Auble, Kristen Kubek and Director of Youth Ministry, Dana Schwendeman.*

## Scholarship Winners Announced

The Worship/Music Committee is pleased to announce the 2019 scholarship winners are Grace Auble, Kristen Kubek, Megan Louttit, and Madeline Piorkowski. These fine young women have blessed us with their musical talents enhancing our worship experience. We will miss them as they leave us for new challenges but will delight in their future achievements. Each recipient will receive a check for \$1500, made possible by your outstanding support to the Annual Scholarship Golf Outing. More information will be coming on a future scholarship event. - *The Music & Worship Board*



Open Table Worship

Friday, July 19 at 6 pm

Nehemiah Mission

6515 Bridge Avenue,  
Cleveland



## Countdown Commenced!

*Vacation Bible School Blasts Off July 8—12*

We're preparing for a week of fun and exploring where God's power can take us. 111 astronauts are registered to take the challenge to 'go beyond' with **faith, boldness, kindness, thankfulness** and **hope**.

You can help by saving items for craft projects! Bring donations to church by July 7.

- Empty plastic water bottles
- Empty clear two liter bottles
- 16 ounce (1 pint) mason jars

If you'd like to help by supplying snack food items, pick up a ticket for an item or two at worship on June 30. We appreciate any way you are willing to help make Vacation Bible School a success. Please keep our 111 participants and 50+ volunteers in your prayers in the weeks leading up to, and during the week of, VBS! - *Jenny Gee, Dir. of Education*





## SUMMER SUNDAY WORSHIP TIMES

**8:30 Worship on the Lawn**  
**10 Worship in the Sanctuary**  
*Nursery care available at both services!*

### Our Staff

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Help us tell God's story as it unfolds in our church and community. Send news items and story ideas to the church office!



*Introducing the Welch Family: L-R Joseph, Rus, Corrie and Pastor Heidi*

## Getting to Know the Welch Family

**Where did Pastor Heidi grow up?** Conneaut, Ohio.

**And where did Pastor Heidi go to school?** She has a Master of Divinity from Methodist Theological School in Ohio and a Bachelor of Arts in Religious Studies from Youngstown State University.

**How did Pastor Heidi and Rus meet?** Rus's parents were Pastor Heidi's pastors in Conneaut, but that's not where the story begins. Ask her about it!

**What ages are the Welch family children?** Joseph is 9 and loves music, math and dance. Cornelia (Corrie) is 5 and loves princesses and the color pink. Their dog, Hans, is 5. (Corrie says "Like me!") The kids will be attending Chippewa School this year!

**Where has the Pastor Heidi served previously?**

- Medina United Methodist Church
- Johnsonville Grace United Methodist Church
- Steam Corners United Methodist Church

**What does Rus do for a living?** A professional chef, Rus works at Crumb & Spigot in Chagrin Falls. He has also been a food and fashion photographer, and a contributor to the magazine *Edible Cleveland*.

**Be forewarned!** Rus tends to fall asleep during sermons. He blames it on his late hours working as a chef, especially on Saturdays. But, both of his parents were pastors and he developed the gift of knowing what the sermon was about—even with his eyes closed—because his mom would quiz him after service.

**Summersault or cartwheel?** Pastor Heidi says "definitely summersault." She is looking forward to exploring Brecksville with her family, especially the hiking trails. Rus and Joseph love making new friends and have already met several of the neighbors. The Welch's look forward to meeting you, too!

Greetings, Brecksville!

It's hard to believe the day is finally here that I get to be your pastor! I came to meet with your Staff Parish Relations Committee in March to see if we would be a good fit together, but God has been placing Brecksville UMC on my heart for months. My husband Rus "teases" me that when I pray, God responds often audibly. (I don't know how to explain that I know it's God's voice, I just do.) Well, last fall I began to have the sense that things were going to be changing for my ministry—I had no idea what this was to look like, but I knew in the next year things would look different. I began to pray, and one day in September I heard the name "Brecksville." Rus had just started working in Independence, so after taking the kids to visit him at the restaurant we drove past Brecksville UMC. Joseph (our 9-year-old) asked, "Mom, where are we going?" I simply said, "To look at a church."

Then I started seeing and hearing "Brecksville" all over the place:

- A bumper sticker on the back of a black Passat (the same car I drive) while driving in Strongsville
- Driving on interstates I'd driven a thousand times, the signs for "Brecksville: this way" and "Brecksville: this many miles" would stick out e.v.e.r.y. t.i.m.e.
- Teens mentioning to me when they were playing Brecksville in sports: football, volleyball, basketball, lacrosse (they never did this before!)
- Going through an old Memory Box and finding a note about meeting at Brecksville UMC for Chrysalis team meetings.
- When it was announced that Pastor Clark was moving to Hudson, I had three clergy colleagues—at separate times—ask me, "Are you going to Brecksville?"

When I (finally) met with Pastor Steve (the District Superintendent) and he asked if I would be interested in coming to Brecksville UMC, I laughed out loud. He was a bit taken aback until I told him how God had already laid the name "Brecksville" on my heart months ago.

To me, all these little signs together show that God is constantly at work in our lives. It just takes an open heart to know and open eyes to see. Where do you see God already at work in your life and at BUMC?

I am confident God has placed us together in this next season for a reason. I don't know what that reason is yet, but I am praying for guidance and knowledge, and I ask that you will pray with me. How is God calling us to work together in the future?

Thank you for welcoming my family and me so well! I'm excited to see what God can do with us and through us as we work together to bring God's kin-dom on earth!

Take care,

Pastor Heidi

*"Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus."*

- Philippians 4:6-7



## 7 Suggestions

*For welcoming our new pastor*

It's a time of transition for Brecksville United Methodist Church and for Pastor Heidi! How can we prepare for the arrival of our new pastor and make the most of a new beginning?

1. **Pray Daily** for Pastor Heidi and her ministry.
2. **Send a note of welcome.** Mail a card or letter to Rev. Heidi Welch, 7780 Plantation Drive, Brecksville, OH or e-mail [pastor@brecksvilleumc.com](mailto:pastor@brecksvilleumc.com).
3. **Repeat your name.** There are hundreds of us and only a four Welchs! Wear a name tag on Sundays and try to remind Pastor Heidi of your name often as you can as she gets to know us all.
4. **Things will be different.** Pastor Heidi's not going to do things exactly like Pastor Clark did. Embrace her uniqueness.
5. **Be prepared to follow.** Where is the Spirit leading us with Pastor Heidi's appointment? Open your heart and mind and listen.
6. **Make room for errors.** No one gets it right 100% of the time, not even pastors, who are human after all! Be quick to forgive if mistakes are made.
7. **Accentuate the positive.** Every pastor has more strengths than weaknesses. Let's each strive to speak positively about our pastors, both publicly and privately.

Pastor Heidi comes to us to encourage our faithfulness, challenge our presuppositions, to bring out God's best in us, and to help us grow in our faith. Welcome her with love!

*Adapted from "7 Suggestions For Welcoming a New Pastor" at [www.churchleadership.org](http://www.churchleadership.org)*

## What We're Wondering About: *Itinerant Ministry*

John Wesley, the founder of the Methodist movement, preached up to 40,000 sermons in his lifetime. He was an "itinerant" preacher, traveling from town to town in England, setting up Methodist societies.

Today, "Itinerancy" refers to the commitment by pastors to go and serve wherever their bishops send them. In the Wesleyan tradition, United Methodist pastors are "called to be sent." Before they are ordained or licensed, clergy in the UMC agree to serve where their bishop appoints them.

The primary purpose that drives all appointments is the **mission** of the church, *to make and mature disciples of Christ for the transformation of the world*. Appointments are not made to make a pastor happy or a congregation content, but to match clergy and congregation to best minister to the people in the community of the church. The goal is to match the gifts and graces of a particular pastor with the ministry needs of a particular congregation. In this "serial leadership" of consecutive pastors – no two are alike – over time, the combination of skills blends to form a broad base of developed ministries. Pastors are called to be sent, Wesley believed, because there is a "probability of doing more good by going thither than by staying longer where we are."

***Where do you believe God is calling Brecksville United Methodist Church?***



### Kids' Yoga:

*Monday, July 29 from 11—11:45 am*

Join Yoga Squirrel for a kids' yoga class at Brecksville United Methodist Church. This class is for kids ages 4-10. Your child will participate in a forty-five minute yoga class designed especially for children. These yoga classes will incorporate a variety of yoga poses, music, breathing and relaxation techniques, and interactive activities in a fun and relaxed environment. The cost is \$10 per child.

Register at:

<https://form.jotform.com/91706123261146>

### Looking for some family fun this summer?

Check out these two classes coming up at Brecksville United Methodist Church! Invite your friends!

### Family Yoga:

*Saturday, August 3 from 10—10:45 am*

This class is for kids ages 4 and up and their adult family members. Any combination of family members welcome (parents, grandparents, adult siblings, etc.) This class will include movement, partner/group yoga poses, breathing practices, interactive games and activities, and relaxation. This class is a great opportunity to enjoy quality family bonding time through yoga! The cost is \$20 for 1 adult/child pair plus \$5 per additional family member.

Register at:

<https://form.jotform.com/91705937963167>



# YOUTH NEWS



## YSP Sunday, June 30

*One Worship Service at 10 am*

A group of our high school students spent the week of June 16 in Racine, Wisconsin serving that community with essential home repairs, meeting youth from across the country, building friendships, and strengthening their faith. Come hear all about it as they lead worship on Sunday, June 30. The theme of this year's camp was *Relentless*.

## East Ohio Camp: Reach Out

*Grades 8 – 2019 High School Grads*  
Sunday, July 14 – Saturday, July 20  
**Cost: \$335. Scholarships available!**

Mission and community define the REACH OUT experience. Come find out what our mission is all about! For one week this summer, join the Reach Out camp family and celebrate God's presence in your life - the One who inspires us to love and equips us to serve. Open to youth starting 8th grade in fall of 2019 through youth starting college in fall of 2019, our week together at Lakeside, Ohio is centered around an off-site mission trip and small group faith study along with amazing worship, fellowship, and fun! No matter where you are in your faith journey, come grow and encounter God's love in a new way. For more information contact Chasity Op-phile at [cravecumc@gmail.com](mailto:cravecumc@gmail.com) or Jamie Schwendeman at [jschwendemail@gmail.com](mailto:jschwendemail@gmail.com).

View more about Reach Out at [www.reachouteoc.com](http://www.reachouteoc.com)



Zach Brachna continues to collect pull tabs for Nordonia Schools' Knights Caring for Knights! The money raised is used to send bags of food home with kids who might not otherwise have food to eat over the weekend during the school year. Want to help? Collect pull tabs from sodas, soup cans, and the like and bring them to the collection jar in The Parlor!

## Share God's Love

with Habitat and Thrivent's Faith Build

in partnership with  THRIVENT®



## Habitat Faith Build

Volunteers of all abilities, age 16 or older, are encouraged to join our work team on Saturday,

**July 13 or August 10**

Together with other area churches, we are rehabbing two houses on Roehl Avenue in the historic Clark/Fulton neighborhood in Cleveland. Come help two partner families prepare their houses to become homes!

Contact the office for details or sign up on Sunday in the Lobby!

*Stay Connected! Contact Dana Schwendeman*  
440-526-8938 ext. 237 or [youth@brecksvilleumc.com](mailto:youth@brecksvilleumc.com)



@bumcyouthmin



@bumcyouthmin



@BrecksvilleumcYouth



## MILESTONES

*News of the Fellowship*

E-mail or phone Melanie  
with news to share!

[office@brecksvilleumc.com](mailto:office@brecksvilleumc.com)

440-526-8938

We are pleased to announce the arrival of Emma Grace Vastartis, daughter of Allyson and David. Emma joins sisters Ava, Ryleigh and Harper. All are doing well, grandparents are thrilled!

*- Mark and Catherine Vastartis*

Dear BUMC, It was an honor receiving the Music & Worship scholarship because BUMC has been my family since the day that I was baptized, and it has been a huge part of my childhood. I'm glad that I will be moving on with BUMC in my corner. Thank you for this scholarship. I will use it wisely!

*- Maddie Piorkowski*



July is a busy, busy time for Fellowship Hall with Vacation Bible School followed by two weeks of Brecksville Little Theater Camp.

Save the Date for the  
**RETURN OF LUNCH  
BUNCH**

Tuesday, August 13 at noon



Jerry Bartholomew	1	Diana Jacob	13	Paul Frank	22
Brett Bender	2	Jeanne Quade	13	Matthew Mellott	22
J.J. Hotaling	2	Betsy Urso	14	Anthony Robusto	22
Derek Ritterbusch	2	Jane Whitehead	14	Ruth Herman	23
Kathleen Koteles	3	Debbie Falko	15	Nathan Olszko	23
Elizabeth Romance	3	Robert Kubicek	15	Elizabeth Jaszczak	24
Sarah Ford	4	Bill Neidinger	15	Carl Opatrny	24
Jim Lee	4	Matthew Nurre	16	Allison Toensing	24
Johnny Santora	4	Jim Fredrick	17	Addison Cave	25
Douglas Geib II	5	Stephanie Ling	17	Larry Kaminski	25
Pat Prominski	5	Cara Santora	17	Matthew Manocchio	25
Gabrielle Marotto	6	Camille Baker	18	William Olszko	26
Janet Beck	7	Taylor Heisler	19	Carl Rossborough	26
Wendy Chenney	7	Tim Kenney	19	Laurie Riccardi	27
Emily Telischak	7	Kay Mendlik	19	Mary Cay Derry	28
Kevan Fisher	8	Alexander Sebastian	19	Ruby Ludwig	28
Jon Wygonski	8	Adriana Sottosanti	19	Patricia Frank	29
Kate Falko	9	Wade Hurley	20	Richard Koloda	29
Kevin Machesky	9	Amy Hazelton	21	Janet Patterson	29
Tracy Scott	9	Zachary Kardos	21	Paul Dadas	30
Matt Hof	10	Miles Paroda	21	Rachel Machesky	30
Karen Memmer	10	Nick Rajkovich	21	Laurie Robusto	30
Joan Bloch	11	Stefan Wygonski	21	Beth Smith	30
Dave Lienert	12			Bryan Smith	30








As people of faith, we find God's presence in those who have been blessings to us. At our weekly staff meetings over the last weeks, prayers of thanks were lifted to God for the way lives are touched when we reach out to one another in service. People like all of the people who helped with Confirmation including the Watkins Family, Marianne Nolan, Deanne Kloss and Bill Rittman. Megan Louttit, who cheerfully stepped in to lead singing on a Sunday in May. All of the people who made the first month of Alex's Lemonade Stand a success: Sarah, Addy, Austin, Catherine, Ryleigh, The Kardos Family, and The Watkins Family. So many folks put so much into Pastor Clark's farewell picnic—we just can't name you all. Thank you for helping surround Pastor Clark and Kathy with love. We're thankful for each of you, and all of the ways that you serve as the hands and feet of Christ everyday, in so many ways!



# July 2019

BRECKSVILLE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH [www.brecksvilleumc.com](http://www.brecksvilleumc.com)

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
 Ann & Bill Rittman	1	2 10 Staff Mtg	3 6:30 Breakfast	4  <b>CHURCH OFFICE CLOSED</b>	5 Lundholm & Herzing Mowing 9:30 Moms Club 4 Wedding Rehearsal	6 Bread Ministry: Brachna  1:30 Auble/Bianchi Wedding
<b>7 Communion</b> Pastor Heidi's First Sunday <b>8:30 Worship on the Lawn</b> 9:30 Alex's Lemonade Std <b>10 Worship</b>	8	9 1 Staff Mtg	10 6:30 Breakfast	11 Auble & Spencer Mowing	12 	13 Bread Ministry: Kotnik  8:30 Habitat for Humanity Faith Build, Work Day #1
<b>VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL—9 AM—12 PM</b>						
<b>14</b> <b>8:30 Worship on the Lawn</b> 9:30 Alex's Lemonade Std <b>10 Worship</b>	15	16 10 Staff Mtg 10 Knitting 7:30 Trustees	17 6:30 Breakfast	18 Brown & Sendry Mowing 	19  <b>6 Open Table Worship at Nehemiah Mission</b>	20 Bread Ministry: Santora
<b>Brecksville Little Theater Summer Camp</b>						
<b>REACH OUT CAMP AT LAKESIDE</b>						
<b>21</b> <b>8:30 Worship on the Lawn</b> 9:30 Alex's Lemonade Std <b>10 Worship</b>	22	23 10 Staff Mtg 7 Finance	24 6:30 Breakfast 5:30 Wed. AA Anniversary Party	25 Gee & Gee Mowing	26 	27 Bread Ministry: Hastings
<b>Brecksville Little Theater Summer Camp</b>						
<b>28</b> <b>8:30 Worship on the Lawn</b> 9:30 Alex's Lemonade Std <b>10 Worship</b>	29 11 Kids' Yoga	30 10 Staff Mtg	31 6:30 Breakfast	<b>July Closer Schedule:</b> June 30—July 6—Holmok July 7—13—Holmes July 14—20—Gezze July 21—27—Lundholm July 28—August 3—Hudacek		



## Brecksville UMC

65 Public Square, Brecksville, Ohio 44141

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6/16 + \$135 = \$261  
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**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.



# Suggestions for Churches with a Young Pastor

Churches that receive a young pastor need to remember how lucky they are. Many congregations say they want a younger pastor, but few have the opportunity. They ought not, however, assume their church will automatically reach younger people simply because of the age of the pastor. Having a young pastor might improve the likelihood of a congregation connecting with young people, but not without openness to other kinds of change. Congregations sincere in their desire to work with a younger pastor to reach emerging generations must be flexible and open to new ideas and possibilities. Take the initiative in asking the young pastor for ways in which your church can become more inviting for younger people.

Congregants are encouraged to treat a young clergyperson as a pastor, not as they would act toward their children or grandchildren. It can be helpful to consider how one regards other young professionals. A patient being treated by a young doctor, for example, may not be able to help thinking, "That doctor is young enough to be my child or grandchild." But that kind of thinking is quickly set aside in deference to the doctor's professional role. In the end, many older people find themselves reassured when dealing a younger professional who has the benefit of more recent training. This is the same kind of regard the congregation can offer to a young pastor. Show respect for your pastor by avoiding any remarks about age that could appear to lessen the pastor's standing. One reason such support is important is that, while laity quickly discover the gifts younger clergy bring and accept their leadership, the same may not be true for staff now supervised by someone younger than they are. Pay special attention to language you and others use for young clergywomen, who routinely report the use of "little lady," "cute," and "darling."

Church members can also take time to remember what it was like to be young or to be responsible for a young family. Then they may not be too quick to criticize a young

pastor who struggles with the number of night meetings on the calendar. Expecting around the clock availability from a pastor is unreasonable, regardless of his or her age.

Remember how important your support and care can be for young pastors. Many patterns and attitudes are shaped in those early years of ministry. Pray for them. Invite them for a meal. Understand their special challenges. Many are away from their support networks. Increasing numbers bring substantial educational debt. Be their advocate for adequate compensation, proper parsonage standards, and observance of maternity and paternity leave. Also encourage habits that can sustain the pastor over a long-term ministry such as regular Sabbath, time for renewal and sermon preparation, vacation time, and continuing education.

Younger and older generations in the church would do well to keep in mind the adage "We're all in this together." Especially within the community of faith, what unites us in Christ is far greater than what divides us as representatives of one generation or another. We are called in "all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love and making every effort to maintain the unity of the Spirit . . ." (Ephesians 4:2-4 NRSV)

*Adapted from The Crisis of Younger Clergy by Ann A. Michel and Lovett H. Weems, Jr. (Abingdon Press, 2008) with additions from young clergy participants in the Lewis Center's Lewis Fellows Program. Used by permission.*

For more information, please visit [churchleadership.com/programs/young\\_clergy.htm](http://churchleadership.com/programs/young_clergy.htm)

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for Church Leadership



# Suggestions for Churches with a Clergywoman

**Celebrate your new pastor.** Know that your new pastor continues a tradition of women in ministry going back to biblical times. Do all that you typically do to welcome a male pastor, including praying for her daily. Give her a generous opportunity to fulfill her ministry, and let any judgment be by the biblical standard of fruitfulness.

**Treat her as your pastor first.** Avoid putting gender first in conversations about her. Talk about her as you would a new male pastor. Use the proper title, or ask what she would like to be called. Avoid using terms of affection, and resist language such as “woman pastor” or “lady pastor.” And do not lower compensation due to gender or assumptions of other sources of income or benefits coverage.

**She will bring unique gifts for ministry.** Learn your pastor's gifts rather than making gender assumptions. She has both strengths and limitations, just as your male pastors had. Most of your delights and objections will not be gender-based. Respect different types of leadership. Some male pastors are not very good. The same goes for women. If she isn't serving your church well, it is not because she's a woman.

**Expect some resistance but avoid making very much of it.** Expect some push back, especially if this is a new experience for your church. A few may leave, but far more are likely to join. Resist assuming the worst and making too much of it. Clergywomen are common in today's world. Avoid allowing negative voices to dominate. Ask people to keep an open mind. Most resistance is based on the unknown.

**Avoid stereotyping and assumptions.** Keep pastoral expectations as before. Don't assume she will be good with children but not finance. Don't expect her to bring treats for meetings. Women often have family responsibilities but so do many men. Resist asking about her personal life, relationships, or family plans that you would not ask a male pastor.

**Some things may not fit.** Be open to repainting the office and replacing the pastor's chair if it no longer fits the occupant. The pulpit may need adjustment for height, and

make sure the sound system works for a female voice, especially if it's high or soft.

**Make sure there is a trusted feedback group.** Your new pastor needs regular honest feedback from those committed to her success. Assure that someone is asking your new pastor how things are going *and listen*. A trusted group that listens makes the pastor more open to receiving feedback she needs to improve.

**Avoid references to appearance.** Avoid making comments about her size, shape, or appearance. How she dresses or does her hair should not be a topic of conversation. Avoid such comments that would never be made to a male pastor.

*I have had more comments about my hair style than I can count, including “I am so glad you cut your hair; your last hair style was distracting when you preached.”*

**Pay attention to boundary issues.** Take seriously any concerns a female pastor expresses about sexual harassment or unwanted actions involving staff, parishioners, or others. All clergywomen encounter such situations at some point. Train church leadership in how to recognize when harassment or sexism is at play. Members need reminding that “If you didn't say it to a male pastor, don't say it to a female pastor. If you didn't kiss your male pastor, don't do it now.”

*I'm the third female pastor, and I have no sense that people still object to having a female pastor, but they do still say inappropriate things!*

**The all purpose question to remember:** “Would you honestly ask (say, criticize) this if the pastor were a man? If so, okay. If not, drop it.”

*Clergywomen graduates of Lewis Fellows, a Lewis Center leadership development program for young clergy, provided the content for this resource.*

A companion Lewis Center resource is “Why Women Are Clergy.”

Subscribe now to *Leading Ideas*, the Lewis Center's free e-newsletter, for information, resources, and strategies for forward-thinking church leaders.  
[churchleadership.com/leadingideas](http://churchleadership.com/leadingideas)



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# Special REPORT



## 2019 General Conference **The Graceful Exit Option**

At the 2019 General Conference the Traditional Plan was adopted, which maintains the current language in the Book of Discipline concerning homosexuality and same sex marriages (see the June 2019 *Good Word*). The General Conference also approved the temporary Graceful Exit option, which grants each congregation the limited option to leave the United Methodist Church, with all their property, if they satisfy certain requirements.

Over 250 years ago, John Wesley laid out the framework for the church, including Wesley's Trust Clause. The Trust Clause means that even though the legal title to a church and its assets are held in the name of each local congregation, that property is actually held in trust for the benefit of each Conference. To sell or dispose of property, a local church must first get permission from its Conference.

This Graceful Exit option is extraordinary. A recent UM News Service article said that the exit option is the first exception in history to the Trust Clause.

### **Graceful Exit Requirements**

The Graceful Exit option is temporary. If a congregation completes all requirements before December 31, 2023, that congregation may leave the denomination, taking their church property with them. Those requirements are:

1. **Church Conference.** The local church must hold a Church Conference, under the Discipline's requirements. The decision to disaffiliate must be approved by a two-thirds majority vote of that congregation's professing members attending that meeting;
2. **Disaffiliation Agreement.** If the local church votes to disaffiliate, a written Disaffiliation Agreement must be entered into with the Conference. That Agreement must address the following minimum terms:
  - The local church must pay any unpaid apportionments for the 12 months prior to disaffiliation, plus an additional 12 months' apportionments;

- The local church will have the right to retain its real, personal, tangible and intangible property;
  - The local church must pay an amount equal to its pro-rata share of any aggregate unfunded pension obligations to the annual Conference -- that is, what the Annual Conference will owe to all of its retirees;
  - The local church must satisfy all other debts, loans and liabilities, or assign and transfer those liabilities to its new entity prior to disaffiliation; and
  - All payments must be made up front, prior to the effective date of the departure.
  - The Conference may impose additional requirements in that Disaffiliation Agreement.
3. ***Conference Approval.*** Once the above steps are completed, the Annual Conference must approve the local church's exit by simple majority vote.

### **Impact Upon Brecksville United Methodist Church**

This is a summary of the steps required if a congregation wishes to consider the Graceful Exit option. Although the amount varies each year, Brecksville United Methodist Church's apportionments in 2019 are \$76,694. We are seeking the amount of our pro-rata portion of any aggregate unfunded pension obligations, which number could be large. Thankfully, we have no mortgage or any other debt of any kind.

We will watch carefully and learn as much as we can so our local church can make informed decisions. As we learn about the alternatives, we will share them in monthly Good Word reports, in bulletins, and on our website and social media platforms.

**Brecksville United Methodist Church is a Reconciling Congregation. Our church family has made a commitment to open our doors with radical hospitality and welcome to all, and to minister to all people no matter their background, whom they love, their experience or where they are on their faith journey.**



## **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.