

@BrecksvilleUMC

THE GOOD WORD

January 2026

A Little Good Word

This issue of *The Good Word* is intentionally small! It's being published in conjunction with our [Winter Spiritual Trail Guide](#) for 2026. Learn more in our weekly bulletins, e-news and on our website, BrecksvilleUMC.com.

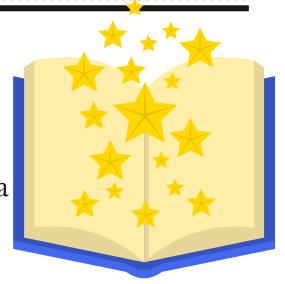
Pearl Road Dinner on the Move!

Help feed the hungry January 26

If you have been part of the Pearl Road Team in the past, your next opportunity to serve will be a little different! The Pearl Road kitchen has moved - but we'll still be providing much needed nutrition to people who need it. Want the details? Sign up at BUMCLinks.com

Children's Book Drive Sparks Lifelong Learning

Your gently used children's books can help foster a love of reading and learning for kids in communities throughout greater Cleveland.



Hands on service. The Missions & Community Engagement Team is launching a new partnership with the Cleveland Kids' Book Bank in January. On the second Saturday of every other month (January, March, May, etc.) Kathy and Matt Auble will lead a team of volunteers traveling to the Book Bank's warehouse to sort books. Talk to the Aubles or visit BUMCLinks.com to be part of this good work!

Let's send them along with a load of books. "A book in the hands of a child is a magical thing! Reading fuels imaginations, teaches empathy, supports academic achievement, and helps parents build bonds with their kids. **Gently used children's books only.** (Please place outdated, torn, yellowed, or moldy books in the recycling bin.)

Bring your donations to the collection bin on the first floor!

**Scout Troop 175 on Inactive Status**

Boy Scouts of America was founded 114 years ago in Texas, and just a little more than a decade later, Troop 175 was chartered in Brecksville - at what is now the United Church of Christ. The troop met at Village Hall, Brecksville School and at the home of Scout Master Bill Klein. In 1942, our church became the troop's sponsor. They have been part of our church for 83 years!

Character development and camping have always been key focuses of the program. So much else has changed. In the mid-sixties, Brecksville had enough natural land that the scouts would often walk to their weekend camping trips. In the mid 70's the troop numbered more than 80 members.* In an effort to become more inclusive, Boy Scouts of America became Scouting America in 2025. Through it all, Troop 175 was there. In the light of dwindling membership and involvement the Troop is taking a pause. If you have been part of the troop, save the date of July 7, 2026 - a Centennial Reunion at Ottawa Point Picnic area in Brecksville Reservation. We honor their long legacy, lift a prayer of thanks for their leaders, and recognize their many positive contributions to our church and community. We share the traditional Scout benediction "***May the Great Scoutmaster of all Scouts be with us until we meet again.***" Amen!

*Find more Troop 175 History in [The Church by Chippewa Creek](#) by Bill Long.

Brecksville UMC

☎ 440-526-8938

✉ office@brecksvilleumc.com

📍 65 Public Square, 44141

🌐 www.brecksvilleumc.com ✨

Senior Pastor, Rev. Heidi Welch
Pastor@brecksvilleumc.com

Education Director, Jenny Gee
Jenny@brecksvilleumc.com

Wiggle Room Coordinator,
Matthew Botzman
Matthew@brecksvilleumc.com



Director of Music Ministry
Machala Comenschek-Slike
Machala@brecksvilleumc.com

Organist/Accompanist
Sean Brown
Sean@brecksvilleumc.com

Communication & Connection
Melanie Smith
Melanie@brecksvilleumc.com

Office Manager
Anthy Morgan-Imes
Anthy@brecksvilleumc.com

Finance Manager
Shannon Kantorowski
Shannon@brecksvilleumc.com

Facilities Managers
Jeff & Scott Hastings
Facilities@brecksvilleumc.com

Published monthly by
Brecksville United Methodist Church
65 Public Square, Brecksville, OH
44141

NEW Submission deadline
3rd WEDNESDAY monthly
Editor, Melanie Smith
melanie@brecksvilleumc.com

Looking at 2025 with God Eyes



"I don't want a "new" year... can't I have a gently used 1992 or 2005 instead?" I recently heard this statement while scrolling through social media, and I feel it deep in my bones! It seems like we come to the end of the year and think, "This year has been awful—next year has to be better! Bring on the new!" And then the new year brings its own sort of... "interesting" ... and we end the year ready to leave the last year in the past, and dreaming of all the wonderful possibilities held in the next 365 days. After all that 2025 brought, it's tempting to want to forget it and look forward to the future.

But what if we didn't? What if instead of focusing on the future, we pause and reflect on the past, looking with "God-eyes?" Searching for the moments of hope and joy in the midst of the struggle and chaos?

When I do that, I see a year that showed us that our values aren't just something we say, but how we live our faith at Brecksville UMC.

We are a people who **worship honestly**—sometimes laughing and celebrating together (Easter Sunday, VBS recap Sunday); sobbing, lamenting, and holding one another close (the Sunday after Easter, All Saints Sunday); or gathering to worship God and connect with one another while the gray sky permeates our mood.

We can make *anything*—packing 35,000+ meals, decorating the church, the BUMC Flea, unloading a semi-full of pumpkins—into a **joyful gathering!**

We desire **lifelong learning**, no matter our age: adults exploring different ways to connect with God through Ignatian Spiritual Practices, kids seeing God in nature during Summer Sprouts, and seven youth confirming their faith and saying, "Yes, I want to follow Jesus!"

We discover new ways of **courageous inclusion**, like our TRANSforming Church Culture training and Allyship training, and serving gluten, allergen, and alcohol-free communion elements.

And **determined service** is the heartbeat of who we are: making and delivering meals for Cleveland's unhoused each week, packing 120 Valentines bags for Ronald McDonald House patients (an idea from one of our kids!), and sending a team to North Carolina to help with hurricane clean up.

This year was tough—there's no getting around that. And yet, God's hope, joy, and goodness were present.

I wonder what you would discover if, before completely immersing yourself in the new year, you paused to reflect on the last year, looking with God-eyes. My guess is you'd find God's loving fingerprints throughout the past 365 days.

Pastor Heidi

January BIRTHDAYS



3 Michael Patrick	12 Shelly Meek	20 Sherry Petkovsek
3 Michelle Shively	13 Jennifer Custer	21 Dan Auble
3 Matthew Vann	13 Jim Smith	21 Pat Gordon
4 Wesley McDonough	14 Kaya Matuch	21 Benjamin Weber
4 Donna Sibits	14 Maddy McBride	22 Louis Samblanet
5 Kaya Roberts	15 Joy Fenton-Jones	23 Kennedy Romance
6 Nate Machesky	15 Marianne Nolan	23 Harper Winkler
6 Claudia Monnett	15 Sam Papp	26 Sue Hastings
7 Maxwell Hunt	15 Adalaide Spitzer	27 Emerson Knight
7 Lucas Juniper	16 Janelle Valenti	28 Kimmer Cave
7 Autumn Lasich	17 Eliot Slifcak	28 Donna Culley
9 Cole Mihalich	18 Kim Johnson	29 David Gardner
9 David Vastartis	18 Ellen Martin	30 Jill Magistro
9 James Vastartis	18 Jennifer Schneider	30 Don Salisbury
11 Brandon Houff	18 Jessica Zawada	31 DJ Magee

**If you would like to be added to - or to opt out of - the monthly birthday list, please email melanie@brecksvilleumc.com*



Brecksville UMC is a thriving community of faith because of people like you who care for one another and reach out in service to those who are in need. We are thankful for *all* of the helping hands who created warm welcome for our

True & Chosen Name worship service in November, including Linda Crouch, Lynn Hobzek, Kim Petro and everyone who baked. Thank you for your loving care! Kathy Auble and Bob Fehlner took food safety training and are now Serve Safe Certified – ensuring that our food ministry is creating safe space for everyone. Way to go , Kathy and Bob! Kim Vann and her family were the creative engine behind the beautiful decorations throughout the church, and Jane Petrie donated live wreaths for each exterior church door. We are so thankful for their gifts of beauty and design. Speaking of creative, how about that Sew4Good team? They have found so many ways throughout 2025 to create for others. We are thankful for the ways you use your gifts. Catherine Vastartis has a heart for serving our neighbors at Chippewa Place, and we are thankful for her vision of quarterly craft days there – as well as all of the helping hands who help her make it a reality. Did you know that there's a team who get together each month to help get this publication in the mail to you? It wouldn't be possible without Sue Ellenberger, Linda Crouch, Joan Bloch and others!



Reach out with a prayer and a note, call or text each week this month!

Week of January 4

Beverly "Bev" Gooding

Prayers for health and healing

67 Walden Ridge Dr
Hinckley, OH 44233-9276

Week of January 11

Craig Czarnota

To remind him he is loved

8341 Whitewood Rd
Brecksville, OH 44141-1527

Week of January 18

Herb & Nancy Einheit

Have a new address

6686 Hidden Lake Trail
Brecksville, OH 44141

Week of January 25

Scout Troop 175

c/o Jim Fredrick






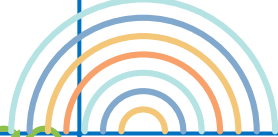




3425 Russett Dr
Broadview Hts, OH 44147-2615

*Nominate someone who could use a reminder that they are loved and kept in prayer!
Email Prayer@brecksvilleumc.com*

12 DECEMBER						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30	31			

JANUARY

02 FEBRUARY						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
<p>Read about Eve Circle's TLC Project, Stay & Play, our new Wellness Series, the Parents of Young Adults meet up and more in the Spiritual Trail Guide, upcoming bulletins and the weekly e-news!</p>				<p>1 Happy New Year 2026</p>	2	3
<p>4 Epiphany Sunday</p> <p>8:30 Worship</p> <p>9:30 Classes</p> <p>10:30 Worship</p> 	<p>5</p> <p>10:30 Lectio Divina</p>	<p>6</p> <p>10:30 Staff Mtg</p> <p>2 Mission Food</p> <p>2:30 Communion Service at Chippewa Place</p>	<p>7</p> <p>6:30 Breakfast</p>	<p>8</p> <p>9:30 Asbury Bremeth</p> <p>6:30 Choir</p> <p>8:30 Band</p> 	<p>9</p>	<p>10</p> <p>9 Book sorting day at the CLE Kids Book Bank</p> 
<p>11</p> <p>8:30 Worship</p> <p>9:30 Classes</p> <p>10:30 Worship</p> <p>STAY AND PLAY</p> <p>11:30</p> <p>5:30 Youth Group returns!</p> 	<p>12</p> <p>10:30 Lectio Divina</p>	<p>13</p> <p>10:30 Staff Mtg</p> <p>2 Mission Food</p> <p>6:30 Eve Circle TLC Project</p>	<p>14</p> <p>6:30 Breakfast</p> <p>Open enrollment for Horizons Preschool begins 1/15</p>	<p>15</p> <p>6:30 Choir</p> <p>7:30 Leadership Board Meeting</p> <p>8:30 Band</p> 	<p>16</p> 	<p>17</p>
<p>18</p> <p>8:30 Worship</p> <p>9:30 Classes</p> <p>10:30 Worship</p> <p>5:30 Youth Group</p>	<p>19</p>  <p>Church Office Closed</p>	<p>20</p> <p>10 Stitch'n'Time</p> <p>10:30 Staff Mtg</p> <p>2 Mission Food</p> <p>5 Sew4Good</p>	<p>21</p> <p>6:30 Breakfast</p> <p>LAST DAY</p> <p>to submit news for the February Newsletter!</p>	<p>22</p> <p>6:30 Choir</p> <p>7 Engage GCC online meeting</p> <p>8:30 Band</p> 	<p>23</p> <p>9:30 UWF Board Meeting</p>	<p>24</p>  <p>9 - Noon, Bike Fix It Day!</p>
<p>25</p> <p>8:30 Worship</p> <p>9:30 Classes</p> <p>10:30 Worship</p> <p>3 Pearl Rd Dinner</p> <p>5:30 Youth Group</p> <p>6 Wellness Talk</p>	<p>26</p> <p>10:30 Lectio Divina</p> <p>Parents of Young Adults Meet Up at Jolly's Pizza! 7 pm</p>	<p>27</p> <p>10:30 Staff Mtg</p> <p>2 Mission Food</p>	<p>28</p> <p>6:30 Breakfast</p> <p>10 Newsletter Production Party</p>	<p>29</p> 	<p>30</p>	<p>31</p>

Find calendar updates at www.BrecksvilleUMC.com/calendar