

THE GOOD WORD



On the first Sunday of 2025, I chose a star word* out of the basket. It was the only card that was facing up, as if God was saying, "Here, Heidi. This one is for you."

The word was Eunoia and underneath it was written the words "(Greek) beautiful thinking."

Rus (my husband) lovingly teases me that God and I have a very direct relationship—when God speaks to me, I hear it loud and clear and I know exactly what God is saying. There's no, "God, I don't understand... what do you mean?" God speaks, and my response is, "Ah. Got it." (Or more often I sigh and think, "Really? Do I have to?")

Continues on next page....

***Star words are a prayer practice that many churches begin on Epiphany Sunday. Use the word to connect with and look for God in the coming year. Need a star word? Stop by or call the church office, or use the star word generator at BUMCLinks.com.**



Work-ship Returns! Sunday, Feb. 23

Work as worship = Work-ship! We set aside a Sunday to participate in an act of service as worship, assembling 35,000 meals to be sent around the world to people in need. We partner with Rise Against Hunger for this event. Our first Work-Ship event was organized by a church member in the mid twenty-teens. This is our fifth event at Brecksville UMC!

They may look like simple bags of rice and soy, but Rise Against Hunger meals represent the hopes and dreams of people worldwide. 733 million people worldwide do not receive enough nutrition to lead an active, healthy life or provide for themselves and their families. Our work is at the heart of the mission to end hunger. The meals we pack will join millions of meals being sent around the globe this year. These meals help end hunger in remote communities worldwide.

All are welcome to participate, but registration is required. Visit BUMCLinks.com to learn more and to sign up.

Each meal costs about \$2.50. Our Missions & Community Engagement budget will pay any costs our donations can't cover.



Brecksville UMC

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FROM THE PASTOR



Continued from page one....

When I read the “beautiful thinking,” my mind immediately went to how critical I’d been about myself in recent weeks. Thoughts like, “Why did you do that?” “You’re so dumb.” “Why can’t I be like <insert name here>?” had filled my mind. So to me, God was saying, “You need to clean up your thoughts—thoughts matter, and yours aren’t helping anyone. In fact, they’re hurting.”

As I write this, we’re in the midst of our worship series Fully Alive, digging into the seven deadly sins: how they show up in our lives and what it would look like to move towards more positive, life-giving virtues. And it’s interesting how with each of these sins, our thoughts play a major role. What we think about matters. Whether it’s about ourselves, others, the natural world, or God, negative thoughts breed disconnection and harm, and positive thoughts grow connection and health.

So in this “year of healing,” what would it look like for each of us to start with healing our thoughts?

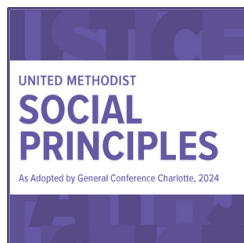
For me, I know those nasty, judgmental thoughts (particularly the ones about myself) creep up when I’m tired from trying to do too much. So “healing” first begins with getting more sleep. Then, I give myself a huge dose of grace—it’s OK if a meeting doesn’t go perfectly or I am short with my kids. What matters is what I do next—do I take a deep breath and apologize, or do I double-down and continue the harm? Do I allow God’s unconditional love to grow, or do I further the disconnect between myself and others/God?

What does “healing your thoughts” look like to you? What thoughts are only causing you and others harm? What thoughts do you need to cultivate? May this blessing remind you of the goodness that dwells within you, just waiting to be released:

**You are a blessing—known, chosen,
and called for a purpose. May you
boldly live into this truth, recognizing
and cherishing your inherent worth so
that you may honor God’s image in
others. Trust in your belovedness as
you enter the redemptive work God
has invited you into this year.**

Pastor Heidi

Rev. Heidi Welch, Senior Pastor



Methodist Social Principles

Sundays, February 9 through March 2 at 9:30 - Ask about online options!

The United Methodist Church believes God's love for the world is an active and engaged love, a love seeking justice and liberty. We care enough about people's lives to risk interpreting God's love, to take a stand, to call each of us into a response, no matter how controversial or complex. We are challenged to engage in deliberative reflection and encourage intentional dialogue between faith and practice. Join Rev. Kathy Dickriede and friends to learn what our Social Principles say and discover ways we can each live into them. Members of our congregation will share their stories and hearts each week!



Fully Alive - Join the Conversation

Tuesdays at 7 pm in the Parlor

Our Winter Sermon Series, *Fully Alive*, is based on the book by Elizabeth Oldfield, which argues that the themes, rituals and communities of Christianity are a source or spiritual strength when things fall apart - and that the concept of sin can be liberating. Join Pastor Heidi and friends on Tuesday evenings to discuss!

Let's Talk - Podcast

Sundays at 9:30 in room 301 and Online

For Kids: Sunday School & Sprouts

Sundays at 9:30 and 10:30 on the 4th Floor



Youth Group
Feb '25
Schedule

2 FEB YOUTH GROUP IN THE YOUTH ROOM
5-6pm>Holy Troublemakers> Hide & Seek

9 FEB NO YOUTH GROUP- SUPER BOWL SUNDAY

16 FEB YOUTH MOVIE NIGHT
5-7pm> Fresh Popcorn and Candy> Watch a movie on the big screen!

23 FEB YOUTH GROUP IN THE YOUTH ROOM
5-6pm>Holy Troublemakers> Extreme Spoons

Reach out to

Dana



YOUTH@BRECKSVILLEUMC.COM

for more
youth info

Youth Movie Night- Sunday, February 16 from 5-7 pm

Let's stay in and watch a movie! We will have fresh popcorn, candy, and crafts to enjoy while we watch a movie as voted on by YOU! Text "MOVIE" to 833-556-1171 and let your voice be heard. This is a perfect event to bring a friend and beat those Sunday Scaries. We hope to see you there!



VBS 2025 - Road Trip - July 7 to 11



Buckle up your seat belt and travel with us on an exciting journey to discover that God's presence is EVERYWHERE! This year's VBS is called Road Trip and it is based on Joshua 1:9 - "The LORD your God is with you wherever you go." Kids from pre-school to grade 6 will explore new places, make new friends, and experience God's goodness together. Registration opens April 1.



United
Women
in Faith

faith

action

sisterhood

United Women in Faith meets the first Thursday of most months in the church parlor. Gathering for fellowship and refreshments begins at 9:30 am. Programs begin at 10 am.

Upcoming Program

February 6 – **Kate Valentine** – Developing Earth Friendly Habits in Your Yard with Kate Valentine, local author, environmental advocate and founder of NEO LEAP, an environmental action organization.

UWF Bookmark

Pick up a copy of the new UWF Bookmark at church on Sunday morning.

ASBURY BREMETH CIRCLE

Second Thursday of the Month - February 13

Fellowship starts at 9:30 - study begins at 10 am

Women of faith gather for conversation (BYO coffee or tea!) at 9:30 then begin our study with Jenny Gee at 10. In February we will go on location with Ray Vander Laan as he explores the turbulent history of Israel's prophets and kings. He will help us see how their stories can help us build our devotion to and trust in God today.

EVE CIRCLE

Interested in joining other women of faith in acts of service and love? Be a part of Eve Circle! We meet several times during the school year, in the evening, for hands on projects that help women, children and the elderly in our communities. To learn more, talk to Lynn Hobzek or email UWF@BrecksvilleUMC.com.

Join our mailing list!
Email UWF@Brecksvilleumc.com



Why is camp such an important part of the life of a young person? What is the POWER of camp?

- **Transformed Lives** – away from the craziness of their routine, campers discover the truth that God loves them and has a plan for their lives.
- **Nature & Adventure** – in beautiful spots in Ohio, campers explore nature and have new adventures surrounded by God's creation.
- **Temporary Community** – freed from the expectations and pressures of others, campers are freed to be who they were created to be.
- **Lifelong Friendships** – forged through shared experiences.
- **Adult Mentors** - caring counselors sharing experiences help campers prepare for their future.

A life-changing experience is right around the corner for the young people in our congregation and community. Learn how you can support the spiritual development of the children and youth through East Ohio Camps:

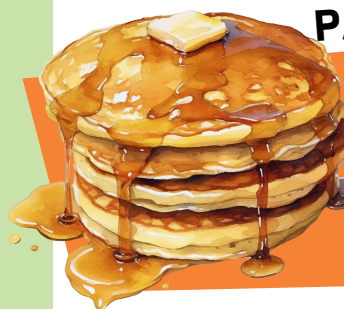
www.eocumc.com/camps

Join the Joyful Gathering Team!

One of the really special things about Brecksville UMC is that we genuinely like each other and enjoy spending time together. Did you know that there was a team of awesome people who get together to brainstorm fun ways we can 'joyfully gather'? Do you have some ideas you want to see come to life? Do you just want to sit in on a meeting and see what we are all about? Plan to join us in the Parlor on Sunday, February 16 after the 10:30 service.

Boy Scout Troop 175

PANCAKE BREAKFAST



Sunday February 9 at 11:30 am
Come to Fellowship Hall and enjoy a hot breakfast after church - a "thank you" to the church from Troop 175.



FROZEN FOOD MINISTRY

Did you know that our church is in the frozen food business? Since August we have had a wonderful group of volunteers that drive to Strongsville United Methodist Church each Sunday at 9 am to pick up frozen food that has been collected from local restaurants. This food is actually leftovers... twice removed! Let us explain.

Strongsville UMC discovered that local restaurants were basically tossing "good frozen leftover food" into dumpsters each week as new deliveries were arriving. The church's Blue Bus Mission consists of a group of volunteers who go from restaurant to restaurant gathering this food. The food is used to make and deliver meals for nearly 250 people each week. Brecksville UMC volunteers travel to Strongsville UMC each week to collect Strongsville's leftovers and we pass that food along.

The frozen food we collect helps the following organizations: Community Meals for Trials for Hope, Pearl Road, and Nehemiah Mission. We also deliver to B. Riley House in Cleveland and The Gathering Place ~ Elevate Coffee House in Wellsville, Ohio. In addition to delivering food and meals, we prepare a warmed-boxed meal that Trials for Hope delivers weekly to people who live outside.

This mission has been such a blessing as we are providing an opportunity for servants who are ready to serve. We are also reaching out to the community as well as uniting with our neighboring churches. All good things.

Thank you to our wonderful servants who are helping with this mission: Matt and Kathy Auble, Dave Brown, The Bendlak Family, Bob Fehlner, Maggie Jones, John Leitch, Eric and Cathy Loutitt, Heidi Slagle, Melanie Smith and Catherine Vastartis.

We always have room for more volunteers. If you are interested in serving in any capacity with this mission, please contact us! - *Submitted by Matt and Kathy Auble*

DETERMINED SERVICE



CLIMATE JUSTICE JOURNEY

NORTH CAROLINA FLOOD RELIEF
JULY 15 - 20, 2025*

*Register by January 30
Details at BUMCLinks.com



Summer Mission Trip Forming

We have a unique opportunity to join with other United Methodists from West Ohio to help clean up and rebuild after Hurricane Helene. From July 15-20, 2025, a Volunteers in Mission (VIM) team will travel to Western North Carolina on a Climate Justice Journey. The six-day journey will include two travel days, three days of disaster response work, and one day of eco-immersion.

Anyone is welcome to join this team, which will be made up of members from different churches who will come together to make a difference in the lives of hurricane survivors.

A few details:

- The cost of the trip is \$400 per person, or \$1000 per family and includes housing and most meals. But don't let money be a barrier to participation. Our Missions & Outreach Team can support you!
- Register by January 31, with a \$100 deposit, to lock in the \$400 rate.
- The Mission Team will likely be housed at Lake Junaluska Retreat Center.
- Meals will be prepared by chefs traveling as part of the group.

Find more information and a link to the registration form at BUMCLinks.com.



What is Bread on Bridge?

We provide a fresh, hot meal for the residents of the community surrounding Nehemiah Mission and the refugees housed there.

How can I help?

So many ways! Plan a meal, shop for ingredients, help prep the meal or serve at Nehemiah Mission and get to know and love the people you're serving.

Why do we do it?

Nehemiah Mission is a United Methodist Urban mission and has been serving their community in changing ways for many decades. This project is an opportunity to build relationships with the people we serve and to share our blessings.

When do we do it?

This is a bi-monthly service project. Food can be prepped on Sundays after church and the meal is served on Tuesdays, early dinner. We are serving in February, April, June, August, October and December in 2025.

How do I sign up?

Visit BUMCLinks.com - or talk to Rev. Kathy Dickriede.

Christmas Giving Recap

Your gifts to our 2024 Giving Trees will make a real difference to so many. We delivered 255 "food tree" items to Open M, an East Ohio Advance Ministry providing pathways out of poverty by feeding the hungry, caring for the sick and strengthening the community. Established in 1968, Open M serves the needs of residents living in Akron and Summit County.

Because of your generosity, we were able to deliver 62 pairs of gloves, 76 hats, 9 scarves, 3 hat/glove sets, 26 pairs of socks, and 3 blankets to South Street Ministries. Inspired by the teachings of Jesus, South Street serves in community with the people of South Akron, Summit Lake, and Reentry communities.

Our Bike Tree was less successful. If you were one of the few folks who donated bike parts, *thank you!* Your gift will help get spokes to folks.

The Angel Tree fulfilled the wishlists for two organizations serving women in transition from poverty to health and wholeness. Puzzles, books, winter hats, slippers, handmade totes, body wash & lotions and hygiene items were delivered to Rahab Ministries in Akron. A handmade blanket, a baby gate and other items, diapers & wipes, handmade bibs and shoulder spit up covers, LOTS of baby clothing, toys, baby books and more were delivered to Womankind, a local organization serving pregnant women.



Sharing Love for Valentine's Day

Help assemble Gift Bags for Hospitalized Kids February 2

When 8-year-old Austin Pribble saw an organization at the Steelyard Commons Wal-Mart collecting for gifts for children in the hospital, he was inspired. "Our church could do that!"

Austin and his mom approached the Missions & Outreach Team and organized a January donation drive for items to create Valentine Gift Bags for hospitalized kids. We will deliver them to 120 patients.

Our Sew4Good group is creating handmade fabric gift bags and we will gather after church on Sunday, February 2 at 11:30 in Fellowship Hall to assemble the gifts. Mark your calendar and come lend a hand!

Thank you, Austin, for dreaming up this new way to love our neighbors!

BIKE FIX-IT DAY HELP NEEDED



Saturday, February 15 from 9 to noon Once each month we gather together to repair donated bicycles. Do you have some mechanical skills? Would you like to learn from one of our capable mechanics? Would you be willing to wash a bike or work on removing some rim rust? Mark your calendar for Saturday, February 15 from 9 to noon and help get more Spokes to Folks!



LEADERSHIP BOARD REPORT



As a relatively new member of Brecksville UMC, I was surprised and honored to be asked to prayerfully consider serving on the Leadership Board for a 3-year term. After accepting the call to serve, I was invited to attend and observe the last two meetings of 2024. Kathy Louttit, who has been attending BUMC for about 20 years, and Michael Houff, with whom I attended new member classes in the fall of 2023, also attended to observe before we were officially commissioned as members of the Leadership Board on January 5. Since then I have learned so much about the church as an organization. There are things I expected to learn about: mission, organizational structure, budgets, and ministry updates. But the element that has been most refreshing, and different from secular organizations I've been a part of, is the spiritual basis and focus. Each meeting starts and ends with prayer, and throughout our discussions we are reminded by one another and Pastor Heidi that we are here to create disciples, and our actions and decisions need to reflect that purpose. Considering the setting, this shouldn't have surprised me. But seeing faith in action during a business meeting is simply a new experience for me. I welcome it and am so grateful and humbled to be part of it.

Our January meeting began with an opening prayer and spiritual formation by Pastor Heidi. Fun fact: the pastor is not expected to always lead us in prayer; it's a responsibility shared and rotated among the members of the Leadership Board. But for the first meeting of the year, it was appropriate for her to start us off. And she's VERY good at leading in prayer - go figure! We then proceeded through the business on the agenda, starting with unanimous votes to re-elect Alan as our Chair and Matt as our Secretary, and to elect Jim Slagle as the new Vice Chair of Trustees a position required by the *Book of Discipline*. We also unanimously approved the Guiding Principles. We reviewed a proposal for a renovation to the Parsonage and after some discussion about the unknown costs that might arise, approved this proposal. We reviewed and discussed staff reports and the Pastor's report before the main event: a presentation by Shannon Kantorowski, Business Manager.

We have been blessed with Shannon's gifts for just a few months, but in a short amount of time working very part-time, she has made incredible progress and seems to have seamlessly folded into the fabric of the staff and church family. Her grasp of the financial position of the church is solid and growing, and she has a real knack for clearly explaining financial matters in a way that everyone can understand, even those of us who dread the idea of crunching numbers. While the financial picture is promising, the Board felt it appropriate to give Shannon another 30 days to round out the most accurate budget before approving it. That is scheduled to occur on February 13 at our next meeting.

Most exciting was the reporting of pledges for 2025. I'm so happy for our church family, as it's clear we are growing in our faithful commitment to the success of BUMC and our mission to create safe spaces to grow with God and one another. The pledge amount for 2025 exceeds that of 2024. Fourteen new givers pledged in 2025 who did not pledge in 2024. And forty-six (!!!) givers pledged more in 2025 than they did in 2024. The Alternative Revenue Team was also very successful, raising over \$14,000 in additional revenue through the Brecksville Flea, Pumpkin Patch, Close the Gap Campaign and our new cookbook. This is all AMAZING news worth celebrating! Thank you to each of you for your contributions of time, talents, and/or treasure to ensure the continued growth and success of this awesome church.

In closing I want to thank the outgoing members of the Leadership Board for their service in establishing this new form of governance. Zane Burgstahler, Eric Louttit, and Carolyn Jatsek brought knowledge, experience, and love for this church to the Leadership Board. I look forward to following their example, and will be excited to welcome another 3 new members to the Board this time next year. Might you be one of them? - Submitted by Maria Shurik

The 2025 Leadership Board: Kristi Eberhardt, Kathy Louttit, Michael Houff, Julie Kubeke, Alan Scheufler (chair), Matt Gabor, Jim Slagle, Maria Shurik, Deb Watkins, Rev. Heidi Welch.

December



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

Week of February 2

Faith McAllister

It's her birthday this week!

1500 Weaver Dr Apt 420

Granville, OH 43023-0305

Week of February 9

Andrew Kubek

It's his birthday this week

3593 Ridge Park Dr

Broadview Hts, OH 44147-2039

Week of February 16

Ruth Holmes

4036 Brookside Rd

Clarkston, MI 48346-1168

Week of February 23

Alison & Jason Bell

It's their anniversary this week

10208 Woodview Way

Brecksville, OH 44141

Nominate someone who could use a reminder that they are loved and prayed over!

Email Prayer@brecksvilleumc.com



Church Family, many thanks for your hugs, cards, prayers, and love during the past twelve months. Your support has kept me afloat during a long and difficult year with the deaths of both my husband and then my dad. What a blessing you have been to me!

Sue Long Ellenberger

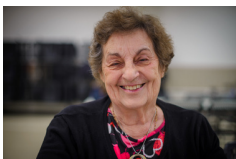
FEBRUARY BIRTHDAYS

1 Doris Cipolla	11 Doug Bender	19 Allie Spooner
1 Grant Kardos	12 Marla Hocutt	19 Zoey Tormento
2 Douglas Hubert	12 Nola Galioto	20 Matthew Ling
2 Gail Meyer	13 Bill Hurder	21 Emily Gardner
3 Colin Johnson	13 Andrew Kubek	21 Janet Narduzzi
4 Barbara Soltis	13 Monica Thelen	22 Dan Rajkovich
5 Faith McAllister	13 Leslie Hoffman	22 Steve Warth
5 Lynn Spencer	13 Mallory McCrodden	23 Erin Gee
6 Paul Olszko	14 Christian Bloch	23 Pastor Heidi Welch
6 Lena Galioto	14 Lucy Fesler	24 Janet Kleckner
7 Greg Spencer	14 Dorothy Jordan	24 Eric Louttit
7 Chloe Boldt	14 Leisa Scott	24 Paul Botzman
8 Becky Chen	15 Abby Smith	25 Nancy Wygonski
8 Nancy Knowlton	17 Emma Piorkowski	25 Ruth Hazlett
8 Stefanie Zaranec	17 Grace Ford	26 Matt Botzman
9 Chad Boldt	17 Stephanie Fisher	27 Angela Harper
9 Sarah Nurre	17 Christine Hudacek	27 Taylor Whitton
10 Pam Johnson	18 Scott Campbell	27 Emily Hastings
	18 Jack Kenney	

**If you would like to be added to - or to opt out of - the monthly birthday list, please email info@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. People like Amy Colligan, who stepped in to help lead caroling - with a joyful heart - at the last moment; and Catherine Vastartis, who helped organize our warming soup for that day. Jane Petrie continued the tradition of adorning our church doors with *beautiful* live evergreen wreaths for the Christmas season. Brian Bendlak felt called to help the tech team and set a date and learned how to help. Thanks for making that happen, Brian, and for your willingness to serve! The Bendlak Family has been regularly hosting coffee hour on Sunday mornings, too. We are so thankful for all of you! David Gardner read about our need for new members for the church closing team and reached out to ask about joining the rotation. Thank you, David, for your interest in helping to care for the church building. (It's a fun job!) ***We're thankful for each of you, named and unnamed!***



Celebration of Life - Pat Frank

Plans are being finalized. The date for the service and reception at the church will be announced soon.

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
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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	

FEBRUARY

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
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9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30	31					

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
						1 ReachOut Winter Retreat at Camp Zimmerman
2 8:30 Worship 9:30 Coffee & Classes 10:30 Worship 11:30 Valentines for Kids Project ReachOut Camp Retreat concludes	3 10:30 Lectio Divina	4 9:30 Tuesday Talk on Facebook 10:30 Staff Mtg 2:30 Food Prep 2:30 Chippewa Communion Svc. 7 Fully Alive Convo	5 6:30 Breakfast	6 9:30 UWF Mtg 6:30 Choir 8:30 Band	7  HAVE YOU UPDATED YOUR CONTACT INFO FOR THE 2025 GUIDEBOOK ?	8
9 Scout Sunday 8:30 Worship 9:30 Coffee & Classes 10:30 Worship 11:30 Pancake Breakfast  4 Pearl Rd Dinner 5 Youth Group  NO YOUTH GROUP TONIGHT	10 10:30 Lectio Divina	11 9:30 Tuesday Talk on Facebook 10:30 Staff Mtg 6:30 Eve Circle 7 Fully Alive Convo	12 6:30 Breakfast	13 9:30 Asbury Bremeth Study 6:30 Choir 7:30 Leadership Board 8:30 Band	14	15  BIKE FIX IT DAY 9 - 12 (TENTATIVE)
16 8:30 Worship 9:30 Coffee & Classes 10:30 Worship 5 Youth Group 11:30 JOYFUL GATHERING MTG	17 Presidents' Day 10:30 Lectio Divina NO SCHOOL OR MAIL TODAY	18 9:30 Tuesday Talk on Facebook 10 Stitch'n'Time 10:30 Staff Mtg 5-8 Sew4Good 7 Fully Alive Convo	19 6:30 Breakfast	20 Newsletter Deadline 6:30 Choir 8:30 Band	21	22
23  HAPPY BIRTHDAY 10:30 Work-shop! A day of service as we work together to Rise Against Hunger  HAPPY BIRTHDAY PASTOR HEIDI!	24 10:30 Lectio Divina	25 9:30 Tuesday Talk on Facebook 10:30 Staff Mtg 12 Bread on Bridge 5-8 Sew4Good 7 Fully Alive Convo	26 6:30 Breakfast 10 Newsletter Production Party	27 6:30 Choir 7 Engage GCC (location TBD) 8:30 Band	28 9:30 UWF Meeting	

Find calendar updates at www.BrecksvilleUMC.com

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Church Office Hours

Sunday—Thursday 9 to 3 pm

440-526-8938

info@brecksvilleumc.com



HORIZONS PRESCHOOL

FOR KIDS AGE 3 – 5

216-212-6626 or HorizonsBrecksville@gmail.com

Horizons Open Enrollment begins February 22

Class times available are :

3s AM class: Tues-Thurs. 9:05-11:35

4s AM class: Tues - Fri. 9:15-11:45

4s PM class: Tues - Fri. 12:15-2:45

5s PM class: Mon - Fri. 12:15-2:45

*Serving The Brecksville and
Broadview Heights Communities Since 1969*



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.