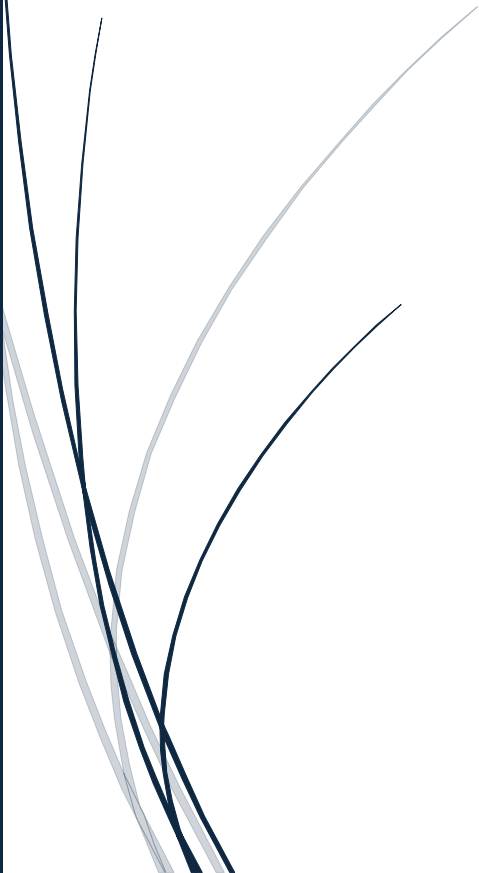




1/1/2026

Annual Report for 2025



Brecksville United Church of Christ

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**Brecksville United Church of Christ
2025 Officers and Ministry Chairs**

Moderator: Sherrill Witt – Year 3
Assistant Moderator: Armand Eusano
Treasurer: (Vacant after April 2025)
Clerk: Evie Novak

Librarian: Susan Snyder
Receptions: Sue Stenzel
Scheduling: Spiritual Life
via Breeze

Ministries:

Christian Education

Co-Chairs: Tracey Gibb & Danyel Esser (Year 1)

Communications & Outreach

Chair: Jenn Elting (Year 1)

Fellowship

Co-Chairs: Mary Kidd & Betsey Wilson (Year 1)

Facilities

Chair: Cliff Cribbs (year 5+)

Finance:

Chair: Bill Witt (year 5)

Human Resources

Co-Chairs: Paul Kuzmins & Jeff Thompson

Social Justice

Chair: Diane Gressley (Year 2)

Spiritual Life

Chair: David Pastor (Year 1)

Stewardship/Leadership Development

Chair: Carole Snider (Year 1)

Church Statistics

New / Returning Members – 2

Marianne Hoppel

Mac Hoppel

Member Losses – 14

Deaths – 1	2/09/2025	Clifford Stenzel
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Transfers – 13

Jackie Cassara

Kathleen Fagan

Melanie Falls

Craig Fink

Linda Gagnon

Kathy Goshe

Rose Kaval

Vincent Kaval

Mark Lehman

Tina Posey

Robert Petrus

Pat Rehm

Karen Sandstrom

Total Members as of 2/1/2025 - 170

Total Members as of 1/1/2026 – 158

Moderator's Report

It became clear to me this past year that people come to church for many reasons. Some come for the ritual and comfort of hearing music, scripture and a sermon. Some come for the personal connections forged and maintained over many years. Some come for the genuine acceptance and freedom they may not have found in other churches.

Some come to find ways to be of service to others or to further explore their personal spiritual paths. Some come for the snacks and events. Church attendance and support should not be transactional, but it often is. If you are not receiving emotional, spiritual or personal value, you are not going to come nor are you going to be supportive.

2025 was a year of intense and emotional change at Brecksville United Church of Christ. Our long-term Music Director of 22 years resigned in March and we found many talented people to help us through the end of the year until we interviewed and hired our new Music Minister, Bret Tassone in January 2026. In June 2025, after prayerful consideration and consultation with conference leadership, Pastor King and the Church Council mutually agreed that it was in the best interest of both Pastor King's ministry and our church's mission to conclude our pastoral relationship. We are grateful for Pastor King's service during his time with us and wish him well in his future ministry. Following Pastor King's departure, we experienced a wonderful wide range of clergy, through what is known as "pulpit supply", until our Interim Minister, Jeff Jackson, started with us in late September.

Jeff is well-suited to the transition process and knows how to help guide our church to its next leader. He is here to make us feel comfortable in tradition and continuity, but he is also charged to make us look at ourselves before we reach out to new leadership. Who are we? Is our mission still the same? Why do we come to church? Why do we support the church? This is our task for 2026 – to be sure that we are the church that is well-positioned for this changing and challenging world.

It has been one of the greatest honors of my life to have served you for the last three years. The friendships, concern and support you provided have taken me on a true faith journey, which I never expected but am so grateful to have experienced. I learned what compassion and forgiveness really mean and that the soul and spirit of the church are truly its members. Thank you.

Respectfully Submitted,

Sherrill Witt

Christian Education

Chairs: Danyel Esser and Tracey Gibb

Members: Marla Corrado, Karen King, Susan Snyder, Cait Moury, Mindy Harris, Diane Gressley

While the Ministry regrouped under new chairs in 2025, Mindy Harris kept Christian Education moving along providing weekly Sunday School activities for all ages. She also led the Lenten project and annual events for Easter, Halloween and Christmas. We remain grateful for her steady presence for the children of BUCC. In addition to Sunday activities, the children also created cards for sick or homebound church members, which we aim to repeat in 2026.

Facilities Ministry

Major facility repairs projects for 2025 included:

Church building:

- Steeple painting (approx. \$5,000)
- Front steps repairs/cement (approx. \$2,000)
- Heating system major repairs (approx. \$6,100)
- Plumbing repairs (approx. \$6,000)

Rental property:

- New roof/gutters/soffit repairs (approx. \$16,000)
- Plumbing repairs/hot water heater (approx. \$2,000)

General facilities maintenance:

- Lawn service (approx. \$2,500)
- Landscape maintenance (\$900)
- Snow removal (approx. \$16,000)
- Custodial services (approx. \$24,000)

Respectfully Submitted,

Cliff Cribbs

Fellowship

Co-Chairs: Mary Kidd, Betsey Wilson

Members: Robin Coyer, David Pastor, Annette Pedersen, Kathy Smith, Sue Stenzel, Sherrill Witt

This ministry is all about bringing our Church Community together and offering opportunities to connect outside of worship. In 2025 we had a snowy game night, Mardi Gras potluck, went to the Cleveland Museum of Art for the “Picasso & Paper” exhibition, organized a trip to cheer on the Akron Rubber Ducks baseball team (rained out 3 innings in), celebrated BUCC Dads on Father’s Day, staged a yummy Summer Ice Cream social, supported the BBH Pride event in June, coordinated an “Around the World” church picnic along with our outdoor worship service, managed a tricky fall Cuyahoga Valley Scenic RR trip (unfortunately canceled by CVRR) and helped out Stewardship’s Thanksgiving community meal. It was an eventful year with more activities planned for 2026!

Respectfully Submitted,

Betsey Wilson

BUCC Finance Ministry Annual Report for Fiscal Year 2025

Chair: William Witt

Ministry Members: Vincent Kaval (Treasurer-resigned April 2025), Joy Garapic (Financial Secretary – retired 12/31/2025), Wes Novak, Fred Pedersen, Bruce McCain, David Pastor, Robert Petrus, Brian Esser, Sherrill Witt (Recording Secretary)

The Finance Ministry oversees all ongoing financial reports, including preparing & presenting monthly reports to Council and preparing & presenting the annual BUCC Budget to Council & the Congregation. In addition, responsibilities include monitoring all monies entering & leaving the BUCC bank accounts & the United Church Fund.

Review of the Income Statement ending 12/31/25 shows:

- 1.) Total Income increased \$17,721 vs Budget
- 2.) Operating Deficit decreased \$48,538 vs Budget.
- 3.) Rental Income decreased \$12,921 vs Budget.
- 4.) Net Operating Deficit decreased \$35,617 vs Budget.

The deficit is primarily due to higher than anticipated Church Building Repairs and Rental Property Repairs.

Expense details as follows:

A.) Personnel decreased	\$42,768
B.) Office increased	416
C.) Utilities increased	790
D.) Maint. & Repair Increased	7,682
E.) Insurance. & Other decreased	1,288
F.) Internal Ministries increased	4,063
G.) Ext. Soc.Justice Increased	139
H.) Rental Income decreased	12,921

Review of Financial Assets as follows:

A.) Cash	\$ 21,253
B.) CD's & Treasuries	176,552
C.) United Church Funds	<u>156,287</u>
TOTAL Financial assets	\$ 354,093
Less: Restricted & Escrowed Funds	<u>89,738</u>
Net Assets Available	\$ 264,355

2025 Deficit vs Assets Available = 6.4 Years

Human Resources Annual Report

Co-chairs: Paul Kuzmins, Jeff Thompson (effective November 2025)

Members: Cliff Cribbs, Sherrill Witt and chairs

2025 was an active and meaningful year for BUCC staffing. In December HR interviewed Brett Tassone to be our new Music Director after the resignation of our prior Music Director in March of 2025. Brett started in January 2026 and brings fresh energy and leadership to our music ministry. With the departure of our Head Pastor in May 2025 we were blessed to secure Rev. Jeffrey Jackson in late September as our Interim Minister to guide us during this transitional period. We are grateful to have individuals of their caliber joining our community.

We also want to take a moment to recognize Miranda Lacefield, whose continued excellence as Office Manager keeps our day-to-day operations running smoothly. Her dedication, vast knowledge and professionalism are a constant gift to our Church.

In 2025 the HR Ministry oversaw a significant revision to the BUCC Employee handbook prompted by the requirements of our new insurance carrier. Evie Novak led the effort with great skill and thoroughness, most notably the new chapter addressing harassment and inappropriate behavior. This addition strengthens our commitment to maintaining a safe, respectful and Christ-centered workplace for all staff and volunteers, and ensures that BUCC meets current standards expected by our insurance provider. The HR Ministry is most grateful to Evie for her exceptional work on this important project.

Respectfully Submitted,

Paul Kuzmins, Co-Chair

Social Justice Ministry (Our Church's Wider Mission) Annual Report

Chair: Diane Gressley

Members: Carol Miller, Armand Eusano, Jeff Thompson

Mission Offerings for UCC:

- One Great Hour of Sharing - \$420
 - Neighbors in Need - \$712
 - Strengthen the Church - \$179
 - Christmas Fund - \$525
- Additional Giving to Edna House - \$1050

Events and Programs:

- Diane Gressley attended **Common Ground at the Border** in Sahuarita AZ in January with visits to shelters & meeting immigrants at the border.
- **Pasta Dinner** cooked by Armand Eusano in February raised \$750
- **Little Annie's Hope Train** collected items for cancer patients
- **Colony Cupboard** collected items for children/families of the Middle and High School of Brecksville Broadview Heights Schools
- **The Immigrant Walk** in April at Plymouth UCC in Shaker Hts. provided an experience and insight into ongoing border and immigrant issues.
- **The Garden of 11 Angels** clean-up in May sponsored by the Western Reserve Land Conservancy brought BUCC members in to help. Director Renee Boronaka spoke with BUCC members via Continuing Testament and at Fellowship Hour to raise awareness of environmental issues
- **Rainbow Rock painting** in May with Carol Miller during Fellowship Hour
- **Cleveland Pride Parade** on June 7 downtown with members attending
- The BUCC booth at the **BBH Pride Event** on June 14 was well-attended and supported.
- **Food Drive** in November provided a car full of food for the Emergency Assistance Center in Northfield due to shortages from changes in the SNAP program
- Several donations to **our Mitten Tree** in the narthex provided hats, gloves and scarves to the Emergency Assistance Center
- **Adopt-A-Family for Christmas** provided gifts and gift cards to the Refine Church in Brookly OH for 2 families experiencing hardship due to ICE detentions and arrests
- Community Meals were served May 29th at Pearl Road UMC (48 people) and November 30th at The Wholeness Project (12 served). Brookside Community Center sent our church \$15,000 to use for future events when Bethany UCC closed its doors and liquidated its assets, giving its money to churches that have been long-standing members of the Brookside Cluster of Churches.

Respectfully Submitted,

Diane Gressley

Spiritual Life Annual Report

Chair: David Pastor

Members:

The Spiritual Life Ministry navigated a challenging year marked by leadership changes and musical transitions. Despite these challenges, the ministry coordinated worship services, special liturgical events, and seasonal programming throughout the year, ensuring continuity in worship life for our congregation.

The March Mardi Gras service and pot-luck went well with our always popular guest musicians providing New Orleans style jazz music for the service. Unfortunately, our Music Director resigned March 20th as we went into the Lenten season and replacement musicians were found for Cliff Stenzel's memorial service. We had a Maundy Thursday Seder meal with a guest rabbi, a Good Friday Tennebrae Service and Easter Sunday services that had reasonable attendance. April 27th was a previously planned Community Concert by Windsong, Cleveland's Feminist Chorus followed by a reception in Fellowship Hall.

Rob Keshock assisted BUCC as a temporary Music Director in May and helped with the Summer Solo Music Program when he was available. Several Spiritual Life ministry members left at this time when our Head Pastor left.

June saw Rev. Monica Harmon as worship leader for the month and we had Angie Lynard as our Guest Musician for Juneteenth Sunday. July and August brought us Revs. David Loar and Tom Gerstenlauer as our worship leaders until Rev. Jeff Jackson's arrival in late September.

Our annual August Worship In The Park with potluck was successful, as always. We want to thank Gayle Colbert for resuming our Communion prep starting in September for the 1st and 3rd Sundays each month. We are also offering only gluten-free bread for Communion. In October we began the Advent Booklet submission sign-ups. Rob Keshock took on the role of Music Director in early October for a probationary period and resigned in November. Chris Hatala and Eric Brubaker graciously assumed responsibility for providing music through the end of the year.

Hanging of the Greens took place November 23rd and Greens were "unhung" on Epiphany Sunday, January 4, 2026. Church Families participated in the weekly lighting of the Advent Candle beginning November 30th.

In December a poll of members resulted in our Christmas Eve Service being changed to 4:00 PM which was a great success and had a high turnout. Spiritual Life is looking for new members to assist with our many tasks throughout the Church year.

Respectfully Submitted,
David Pastor, Chair

Stewardship/Leadership Development

Chair: Carole Snider

Members: Sue Stenzel, Lori Molesky, Carol Miller, Joe Wilson (joined fall 2025)

The Ministry met every month and as the year moved closer to the fall we met more frequently as fall is the busiest time for this Ministry. During the year we expanded our goals to try to encourage more people to join in and help with the many tasks that must be done every Sunday (ushering, counting, snacks and set-up, etc.). Although not successful in recruiting, we were fortunate that the same people again stepped up to help.

Carol Miller unfortunately did not have the time to help us with the requirements of Stewardship as she had a publishing deadline to meet with her latest book. However, we received help, advice and encouragement from Council members so all was well. The fall Stewardship Campaign again included members speaking to the congregation each week for 4 weeks affirming their reasons for supporting BUCC.

We were able to enlist Jim Duffy to act as Assistant Moderator for one year and we know that he will be so helpful to Armand Eusanio who will become Moderator in 2026. We were also pleased to have Joe Wilson agree to be Treasurer for 2026 and Evie Novak will continue as Clerk to fill out our team of Officers.

Respectfully Submitted,
Carole Snider