

# STEEPLEVUES

## *A Letter From The Pastor*

By Pastor Matt Merriman

*“Teacher, which commandment in the law is the greatest?” Jesus said to him, “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.’ This is the greatest and first commandment. And a second is like it: ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’ On these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets.”*

Matthew 22:36-40

Brunswick UMC Family and Friends,

There have been a lot of changes in the UMC in recent months and I know that these changes have caused anxiety for many of you. Let me specifically address two concerns: the appointment of clergy who identify as LGBTQ+ and same sex marriages. Soon after the General Conference, Bishop Malone recorded a video in which she addresses both of these issues and assures congregations that nothing will be forced on them. Her video can be found on the conference webpage at <https://www.eocumc.com/> and on her Vimeo account page at <https://vimeo.com/showcase/6659437/video/944465912> .

Please take time to watch the video so you can hear about these changes straight from the top. Essentially, Bishop Malone assures all of us that the conference will not force a clergy person who identifies as part of the LGBTQ+ community to serve a church that is not ready for such an appointment. The Conference and the UMC will also not force a congregation to allow same sex unions in their church. That decision will be made by the local church. Within our congregation, any decisions about these items would be made through the Leadership Board which functions both as Staff Parish Relations Committee and Administrative Council. I hope that these facts ease some of your worries.

That having been said, I really want to share with you some things that are happening in our church. The first week of June, I went on the youth mission trip to Lumberton, N.C. where we worked to repair flood damaged homes. We took 15 youth and 6 adults. Many of the youth who attended don't really have much of a background in church. They came because someone invited them.

(cont. next page)



(Pastor's article cont.)

These unchurched kids represent a huge percentage of all the youth and young adults in our community. Just getting them involved was a huge win for our mission of growing disciples for Jesus Christ.

As the week went on and our group grew closer, I began to hear these kids identify themselves with the Brunswick UMC. One girl, who had never really gone to church before, called us “her church.” I continued to hear this kind of sentiment throughout the week. Kids are beginning to identify with our church because BUMC has become one of their “safe places” where they can be authentic and true to themselves while exploring their spiritual selves and growing closer to God.

All of this is happening in a world where many youth and young adults are distancing themselves from church because of the hate-filled and angry messages they receive from purported “Christians” on the internet, on social media, and in the news. Clearly our group of kids did not receive that message from our church and that is wonderful news. However, I do need to say that many youth and young adults consider themselves to be allies of the LGBTQ+ community. They have friends and loved ones who identify as part of that community and a large percentage of youth will not be part of any church that devalues a person because of who they love. What I’m saying here, is that the recent changes at General Conference to remove all restrictions against those who identify as LGBTQ+ are one of the reasons that a lot of these kids feel welcome and safe among us.

Let me end this by reiterating my message of inclusiveness. We have always known that many of us have differing opinions about theology, politics, and many other topics. In the past, we have been able to love each other regardless of differences. I hope that going forward we will continue to do that. First and foremost, each one of us is a beloved child of God. Each one of us is here to serve Jesus Christ, to make disciples, and to share Jesus’s love to all people.

I hope we can set aside our differing opinions and Biblical interpretations and follow the example of Jesus in our scripture above. If we simply love God with everything we have and love others as much as ourselves, then all the rest will fall into place.

Blessings to all,  
*Pastor Matt*



Happy  
**INDEPENDENCE**  
Day!





# Finance Report

By Pastor Matt



The finances of our Church continue to hold steady. Monthly giving is at a level that allows us to meet salary, pay the bills, and fund our missions and ministries, but the checking account continues to have a fairly low balance. At the end of May, our checking balance was \$16,675.73 which is not a lot considering the monthly cost of running our church.

We are very blessed to have some reserve funds in various investments. Our money market account at Huntington Bank held \$44,148.80 at the end of May. Much of this money is part of our building and maintenance funds and so is restricted to those uses. We also have an investment account with the Methodist Foundation of Ohio which held \$96,169.76 at the end of May. This is a sort of savings account should we encounter a need for more funds. Our church has an endowment fund of \$12,456.84 with the Foundation which is also restricted in its possible uses. Finally, the proceeds from the sale of the parsonage have grown to \$266,506.34. This money is also invested at the Foundation and we are required by the rules of the UMC to hold onto these funds for 5 years after the sale of the parsonage.

In summary: God is good and God's creation is a place of abundant resources. We have decent money put away and invested while still having enough given on a monthly basis to cover the costs of all our missions and ministries. But, it would be good to see a bump in our regular giving. Please prayerfully consider your finances and consider giving more, or beginning to give if you don't already.

September 8th  
11:00 am



Mark your calendars now and save the date. Rally Day and the Church Picnic will be held on September 8 following the worship service. Like last year, we will have a bouncy house and the ice cream truck will be here. We'll grill burgers and hot dogs, provide chips and watermelon. Katie will organize games for the kids. Let the church office know if you can help.

## Wedding Coordinators:

We are in need of a few more Wedding Coordinators to assist the wedding party and the pastor during the rehearsal and the wedding. If you are interested in learning more, please call Julie Buttle at (216) 408-6888.



## The Up Side

Quotes from today's positive thinkers

*"The point of life is **connection**- with God, with our own hearts and with the people God puts in our distinctive corner of the world."* from **Untangle Your Emotions: Naming What you Feel and Knowing What to Do About It**, by **Jennie Allen**

*"The people who make a difference are not the ones with the credentials, but the ones with the concern."* By **Max Lucado Pastor**

# Annual Conference 2024 Report

I was the lay delegate to the 55th session of Annual Conference which was held at the John S Knight Center in Akron. For those who are unaware of what Annual Conference is, it's the annual business meeting of all the churches within the East Ohio Conference of the United Methodist Church. Delegates are made up of all clergy, as well as lay delegates from each church, and this year approximately 640 voting members were in attendance. Representing our church was Pastor Matt, Pastor Susan and myself.

The experience of the conference is centered around taking care of the business of the church, as well as connecting and re-connecting with others, communal worship, and hearing inspiring messages from a variety of speakers. The theme was "Faith, Hope, Love" based on Isaiah 40:30 "... but those who hope in the Lord will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary, they will walk and not be faint."

During the conference's services and celebrations, we remembered church leaders who passed away, celebrated retirements as well as commissioning and ordination of clergy. Throughout the week many reports were shared about the great things our members are doing throughout East Ohio to help make disciples of Jesus Christ in our communities.

During our business sessions, the conference approved the variety of committee reports for the year including one presented by Pastor Matt as the chair of the board of benefits. We approved a few issues including a 5% increase to pastors earning the minimum salaries, several resolutions dealing with our commitments to promote peace, assisting those in our communities who are in need of affordable housing, and a resolve to welcome all people into our church family.

Within the past several years, the conference as well as the United Methodist Church as a whole, has been working to reorganize for the purpose of efficiency and to utilize finances better. Earlier this year, the conference has reduced the number of districts down to 4. Our church is now a part of the Western Plains District. The General Conference also has announced that starting in September, the East and West Ohio Conferences will both be served by one bishop.

Another decision that was made is one we are very familiar with. Many churches including our own has gone to the single board model, and all 4 new districts have also begun operating in this way. We voted to align the conference governance in this new board model allowing East Ohio to function more effectively and efficiently.

Finally, the best part of the conference are the inspiring messages brought to us by the many speakers, musicians, and prayers throughout the week. The focus was centered on renewing our strength as we are running the race God set before us, and exploring what we, pastors and laity alike, can do to take care of ourselves in order to be most effective in ministry.

You can read all about the conference at [www.eocumc.com](http://www.eocumc.com). A complete recap article, the video we watched in the June 16th service, photos and full videos of the entire conference can be found here.

Respectfully submitted,

*Chris Chidsey*

Lay Delegate to EOC Annual Conference

# Kidz Connect – Summer Fun



In the month of June, we spent time together having fun and spreading God's love! At the beginning of the month, the young kids volunteered at the Brunswick Library cleaning up and helping the librarians prepare for the summer reading program! We also went to Fore Corners Mini Golf and put our putt putt skills to the test! Of course, we ended with delicious ice cream right after, too! On June 30th from 4pm-6pm, all kids PreK-5th grade are welcome to come to our cooking class where they will learn how to bake in the kitchen! In July, we have the following upcoming events...

**July 5th @ 12:00 pm**

**Picnic at the Playground.**

Meet at Neura Park with a packed lunch and hang with friends!

**July 14th @ 12:30 pm**

**Kidz Day at Cedar Point.**

Purchase your own ticket and meet by Kiddie Kingdom entrance to ride rides with friends.

**July 21st @ 4:00 pm-6:00 pm**

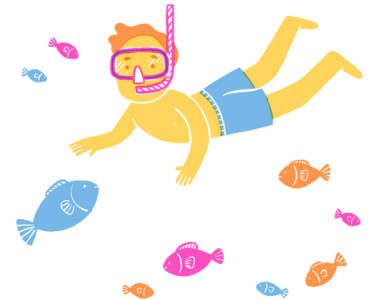
**Wacky Water Olympics at BUMC**

Bring your swimsuit and towels!

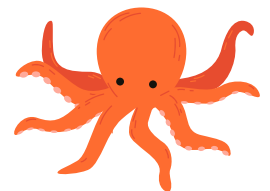
## Vacation Bible School

### "Scuba: Diving into Friendship with God"

July 8-12 from 6:00-8:00



Join Brunswick UMC as we take a deep dive under water to learn more about what Friendship with God is like! Kids will be taken deep into an amazing undersea adventure where they'll experience the ever-flowing, never-ending love of God. WE LOVE HOW: Kids will be immersed in the Word and discover what living water is really all about! Crafts, Games, Music, Snacks and so much more will be offered! This event is free and open to all PreK-5th graders. Registration is open NOW at [www.brunswickumc.org](http://www.brunswickumc.org).





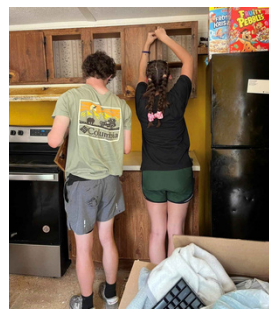
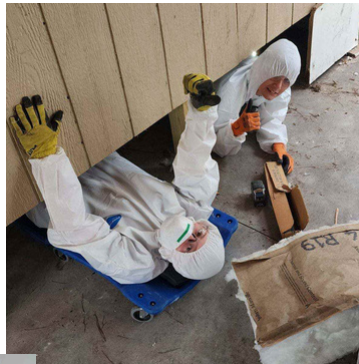
# Youth Connection

# Youth Mission Trip

The youth mission team had a very successful and exciting trip during the first week of June! They had exceeded the expectations of the TEAMeffort staff, Baptists on Mission

Staff, and our own chaperones! During the week, we painted a wheelchair ramp and porch, installed drywall and painted the interior of a small church, built a deck, installed insulation, ripped out carpet, demolished an old bathtub and started to demo a kitchen too! Our youth worked really hard being the hands and feet of Jesus.

We hope you will join us on Sunday, June 30th during the 10:00 am worship service to hear stories and see pictures from our trip. We also hope you will stay after for a free spaghetti lunch, as we say Thank You to everyone for your support. Planning for the summer 2025 mission trip is in the works. If you are interested in attending - please talk to Katie Kintop.





# Youth Connection

## Youth Group

The youth group has slowed down a bit for the summer, but we still have fun activities planned! We will be heading to Cedar Point on July 28th immediately following the church service. If you or your child plan on attending, please contact Katie. We need a head count ahead of time so we know how many cars to take.

## Music Department



## Summer Music Opportunities

This summer, we will be putting together a choir, bell choir, and church band for one Sunday of special music.

I invite you to join us!

### **Choir:**

Rehearsal - Wednesday, July 31 & Wednesday, August 7 - 6:30-7:15

Sing in church - Sunday, August 11 - 10:00 am

### **Bell Choir:**

**Rehearsal** - Wednesday, July 31, Wednesday, August 7 & Wednesday, August 14 - 7:15-8:00

**Perform in church** - Sunday, August 18 - 10:00 am

### **Church Band:**

**Rehearsal** - Sunday, July 21 & Sat. July 27 - 11:00-11:45 am

**Perform in church** - Sun Jul 28 - 10:00 am

**Drum set player?** I'm looking for a drum set player that would be willing to play with praise songs on Sunday July 28th. We would work out a rehearsal time together.

If you would like to join us, please contact me at [christopherchidsey@gmail.com](mailto:christopherchidsey@gmail.com).



Dear BUMC Congregation,  
Thank you for all the kindness you have shown us following the sudden death of our son, Marty. We have been overwhelmed with your thoughtfulness....every one has helped put a patch on our broken hearts. How fortunate we are to be a part of such a caring church family! Thank you again.

Blessings,  
Barb & Bob Stieger

## The Up Side

Quotes from today's positive thinkers

*"God can't bless who you pretend to be. He can only bless who you really are."*

**Michael Todd, lead pastor of Transformation Church in Tulsa, Oklahoma**

*"When we help other people, we establish an experience or a connection with them-but we also remind ourselves of the value that we bring to the world."*

**Dr. Vivek Murthy,  
US Surgeon General**

# Operation Christmas Child

By Marcia Taylor



Just a reminder: We are using the bookmarks on the Welcome Center to communicate what items to bring in July. Take as many as you wish, purchase the items written on the bookmarks and return the items to the box in the Gathering Area marked OCC. Have fun and know you are making a difference in a child's life.



## City Parade Outreach

The city is holding its summer parade again this year on July 7th at 2:00 pm. The parade will step off at Brunswick Middle School (1483 Pearl Road) and will end at Brunswick High School (3581 Center Road). As many of you know, our church has the best location for viewing the parade because of our location on the corner of Pearl and Center Roads. A few years back we had grilled hot dogs and passed them out to anyone attending the parade. We are planning to do that again.

Steve Sutton will grill the hot dogs but he will need some help. We would like to handout hot dogs, bottled water and freezer pops. Ruth Dodig is helping with purchasing the food and passing it out. We still need a few people to help with setup and cleanup, and a few more people to greet and hand out the items.

We hope you will join your church friends and family in enjoying the afternoon. Many of the youth from our church are involved in the Marching Band, Scouts, and other units in the parade. This is a great opportunity to get out and cheer on our kids! This is a perfect opportunity to be visible in the community and to make connections with the residents. Christ Community Connect!

Please let Karen know in the office if you're willing to help with this community outreach.



## July Birthdays

- 1 Harriet Radvansky
- 2 Kathy Brogan
- 2 Sica Peres
- 4 Jean Rice
- 6 Chelsea Buttle
- 6 Roger Jarrell
- 8 Heather Colbow
- 9 Sara Honse
- 10 Mary Lynn Janas
- 10 Jerry Stout
- 14 Cliff Schnear
- 15 Evert van Staden
- 16 Abigail Hammond
- 16 Sheila Schnear
- 17 Louise Wiatrak
- 18 Charlotte Pagrabs
- 18 Mary Rozar
- 19 Amanda Merriman
- 20 Greg Janas
- 20 JoAnn McMahan
- 21 Denise Lewis
- 21 Patti Stout
- 24 Bob Lewis
- 25 Grant Richard
- 26 Sandie Crane
- 26 Connor Stout
- 26 Amy Weinmann
- 27 Russ Arner
- 27 Diane Eyssen
- 27 Terri Wright
- 28 Fred Kappeler
- 29 Linda Hennis
- 30 Ron Chidsey
- 31 Tristin Anglin







# Hiking Club - Summer 2024

Get out in the great outdoors, enjoy some fresh air, and go on a hike with some of your church family. None of the hikes are very difficult. Please let me know if you plan on attending any of the hikes by putting your name on the sign-up sheet at the Welcome Center, or contacting me directly.

**Sunday, July 21st - 4:00 pm** - Columbia Reservation - Lorain County Metroparks. Address: 25145 Royalton Road, Columbia Station  
Length: 2 miles. Difficulty: 2/5 - mostly flat surface

**Sunday August 11th - 1:00 pm** - Kids Hike in Hinckley Park  
Explore the trails around the park and explore nature!  
Length: 1 mile at most. Difficulty 1/5

**Weather Policy:** Hikes will be cancelled in the event of thunderstorms or heavy rain. Otherwise, you can decide for yourself if you wish to hike in whatever weather conditions may be.

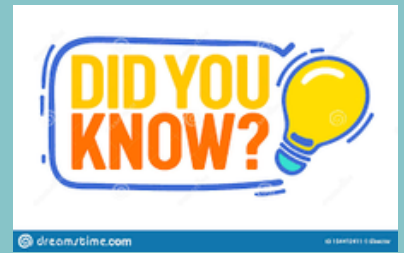
We hope you will join us for time together in the outdoors this summer! Wear solid footwear, bring water and enjoy spending time in God's creation.

Contact Chris Chidsey for more information and to RSVP at [christopherchidsey@gmail.com](mailto:christopherchidsey@gmail.com).



## Habitat Build

Anyone interested in helping with the Habitat Build here on Rocklyn Drive in Brunswick, there is a signup sheet at the Welcome Center. As a church we will be helping on Saturday, July 13. They start at 8:00 am and end at 2:00 pm with a lunch break at 11:30 am. If you can't make it that day and still want to help, there are various Wednesdays and Thursdays available. Habitat usually provides tools and equipment. However, if you want to bring your own, feel free. Look for bulletin announcements and we will email those who have signed up to help. Questions, call Bill Radcliffe at 216-970-5788.



Dear Congregation,  
The Trustees (now known as the Building Maintenance Team) of our church are on my mind, the most important unit of the church. They take care of the property that we own, the buildings, grounds, parking lot, equipment, legal work, insurance etc...

A safety concern was noticed and reported to them. They in turn checked it out, concurred and soon after had a price to repair the problem (\$4000). Not happy with the amount, they kept on it and found a company that repaired the item complete for \$285.00. The Trustees deserve a profound "Thank You" for their handling of this, saving us the money difference and the care they have for our church. Note they really watch the money for us and do care about God's house.

Thank you Trustees,  
*Dave Goodyear*



# A Message from Karen McGoughran

Change is hard especially when you have been a part of something for so long. I've been a member of BUMC since 1994 and obviously things are changing here and for all United Methodist Churches... but is it really?

Before I started working here, I don't think I even knew there was a Book of Discipline. During my time working in the church office, the only times we had to refer to the Book of Discipline were during Administrative Council meetings when we needed to check a procedure. So, for me, nothing really is changing directly to me as a member here at this church.

Being a member of this church or any church for that matter allows me to have an extended family. They are my support system and my friends. Some of them I even consider to be my sisters and brothers and working in the church office has also brought me extra moms and dads. Just as in any family there are differences in opinions. My brother, Keith and I have very different viewpoints on religion, and we interpret the Bible scriptures differently. I listen to his viewpoints, and I share my viewpoints with him, and we both continue to believe differently. I don't disown him or turn my back on him because he doesn't believe the same way I do. Why would I do that to my church family?

I come to church on a Sunday morning to worship God. I love the hymns and singing God's praises. I pray to God and listen to the sermon. Sometimes I can really relate to the sermon and sometimes I can't. Sometimes I can hear God speaking to me and sometimes I don't. But I always leave church fulfilled because I worshiped God and I got to see my church family. None of that is changing for me. Just because the Book of Discipline will be revised, that doesn't change my Sunday morning and my membership in this church.

The only thing that is changing, is that our United Methodist Church globally is now saying in the Book of Discipline that we should be accepting and loving to EVERYONE. Which is what Jesus taught us all along... (John 13:34-35) "I give you a new commandment, that you love one another. Just as I have loved you, you also should love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another." We should have been doing this all along.

Jesus teaches us to go out and make disciples. How are we to do that if we're excluding people from our church? What does that communicate to non-Christians? We have been alienating an entire population of people. Whether you believe homosexuality is a sin or not, doesn't change the fact that we as Christians are supposed to love Everyone. We are supposed to be bringing people to Christ. How do we expect a middle schooler or high school child to become a Christian when we're communicating that they are not worthy of our love or Christ's love because they are living a different life than what we agree with.

I am hearing a lot of opinions regarding this change and some of you are leaving our church, even after you've been here for over 50 years. It is really sad to see and breaks my heart. I ask you to think about what is actually changing for you personally. Are you willing to give up lifelong relationships because you don't agree with the changes to the Book of Discipline that I am assuming you have probably never read. Would you leave your own family because of a difference of opinion?

I don't expect my opinion to change your minds if you are considering leaving our church, but I do ask you to just consider my questions. Dig deep and pray about it. Maybe it's time to change your way of thinking. We should never be too old or "stuck in our ways" to grow in our Christian faith.

I pray for each of you and for our church. There are some really good things happening here and we can continue to do even greater things with everyone's support and willingness to live out what Jesus has taught us, Love your neighbor as your yourself.



# Office News!

Katie continues to struggle with holding youth events due to a lack of chaperones. Our child protection policy requires her to have at least one adult with her for every event and an adult male when there are boys in attendance. She has had to cancel youth meetings and activities because she doesn't have enough adults helping. Please consider helping in the fall.

## Address Changes

Marilyn Douglas  
The Avenue  
699 E Smith Rd. #132  
Medina, Ohio 44256

## Mail

Please remember to mail your donations and any other correspondence to the following:  
BUMC  
PO Box 85  
Brunswick, Ohio 44212



## Congratulations.

**Carter Jonathan Lewis**

**Born on June 4, 2024 at 7:02 am  
9lbs. 3 oz**

**Proud Parents are  
Kelly and Jonathan Lewis**

**Proud Grandparents are  
Denise and Gary Lewis**

## Office Hours:

Please plan your trips accordingly:

Monday thru Thursday:  
9:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.

Friday: 9:00 am - 12:00 pm

The office is closed on Friday afternoons.

## **CHURCH CONTACT INFORMATION: 330-225-3179**

**Matt Merriman, Pastor (Ext. 12)**

**Karen McGoughran, Office Manager (Ext. 10)**

**Katie Kintop, Youth Ministry Coordinator (Ext. 11)**

**[matt.merriman@brunswickumc.org](mailto:matt.merriman@brunswickumc.org)**

**[karen.mcgoughran@brunswickumc.org](mailto:karen.mcgoughran@brunswickumc.org)**

**[katie.kintop@brunswickumc.org](mailto:katie.kintop@brunswickumc.org)**