



PHOTO COURTESY OF MICHAEL O'MALLEY  
Prosecutor Michael O'Malley is running in the March 19<sup>th</sup> Primary Election seeking the Democratic Party's approval to be the party's candidate for another term as Cuyahoga County prosecutor. See related article on page 3.

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Vol. 51, No.2 February 2024

# Plain Press

Cleveland's Westside Newspaper

## Questions remain about Assembly for the Arts funding

by Bruce Checefsky

Jeremy Johnson was hired as president and chief executive officer of Assembly for the Arts in 2021. Formerly executive director of Newark Arts, he grew up in the Hough and Glenville neighborhoods and attended University School on a scholarship before heading to college. His hiring was considered a homecoming for the career arts administrator. Johnson was paid \$100,325 plus benefits at the time of his appointment.

Johnson has used a variety of stump speeches to promote his message, repeating the need for equity by invoking the three-legged stool metaphor or using "expanding the pie" terminology to describe what many claim is a lackluster vision for the agency, created for the purpose of providing grants to individual artists.

Assembly for the Arts is funded, in part, by Cuyahoga Arts and Culture (CAC), and works closely with the agency to administer funding to

individual artists. Assembly for Action, the sister organization of Assembly for the Arts, is responsible for raising the \$1.5 million, or more, needed to launch a ballot campaign and organize grassroots support for renewing the cigarette tax before the current tax expires on January 1, 2027.

Fred Bidwell, board chair of the Assembly for Action, said in an op-ed last November in the *Plain Dealer* that he doesn't see a path for successfully launching this campaign "given the current atmosphere of confusion and mistrust in Cuyahoga Arts and Culture. Bidwell suggested a pause in the campaign and has not spoken publicly about whether the Assembly for Action will move forward, or when.

A report from ISO Arts Consulting, funded in part by the Gund Foundation, revealed an artist community expressing anger, exhaustion, frustration, hopelessness, and sadness related to the disrespect shown by CAC.

Jennifer Coleman, program director of Creative Culture and Arts for the George Gund Foundation, said in an op-ed published in the *Plain Dealer* in continued on page 5



PHOTO BY ANASTASIA PANTSIOS

President and Chief Executive Officer of Assembly for the Arts Jeremy Johnson



PHOTO BY ABE KURP

Sunday, January 7, 2024; Future Ink Graphics (FIG) Expositcion Navideña at the FIG Community Gallery at the Pivot Center for Art, Dance and Expression, 2937 W. 25<sup>th</sup> Street: An oil on Dura-lar artwork titled *Mongrel Dog* by artist Janol Daley.

## Dance Evert, CMSD debut innovative arts program

by Jennifer Morrison-Garza

Tom Evert of DANCE EVERT and Evert Education is partnering with Cleveland Municipal School District's Clara E. Westropp School of the Arts, through an Artist in Residence program, sponsored and funded by the Ohio Arts Council. Clara Westropp, located at 19101 Puritas Avenue, is the proud recipient of a year-long "Teach Arts Ohio" grant for the 2023-2024 academic calendar year. The \$14,000 arts-integrated "STEM" grant was co-authored by Jennifer Morrison-Garza, in collaboration with Euclid resident and professional dancer, Mr. Tom Evert.

"STEM" (or STEAM) encompasses the subjects of Science, Technology, Engineering, the ARTS, and Math. Mr. Evert's unique and cutting-edge programming teaches the Ohio core curriculum through the art of music and movement. He has engaged the students and their teachers in a 20-week arts, math and sciences residency, in the following interactive and hands-on "Evert Education" programs: Pre-K-K: "I Love Shapes!"; Grades 1&2: "Sun, Solar Energy & Water Cycles"; Grade 3:

"States of Matter: Solid, Liquid & Gas" & "Dancing with Worms"; and Grade 4: "Geometry in Motion."

Mr. Evert has been working twice weekly with the Clara Westropp students throughout the school year, along with the assistance of Mr. Chip Wilson, Westropp's Physical Education teacher. The students have been engaged in a variety of art forms in Westropp's spacious gymnasium, including music & movement, the use of nylon body-sized stretchy bands to make geometric shapes, as well as drumming and rhythm, all to be demonstrated in the culminating performance, to be held this upcoming May.

After being involved in arts education programming in the schools for almost 38 years, Mr. Evert has emerged as a prominent teaching artist and currently serves on the Ohio Arts Council's roster of professional teaching artists. He is also a nationally credentialed teaching artist through Young Audiences, NY. To date, he has had 2 successful residencies on Cleveland's West Side at Clara E. Westropp School of the Arts.

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## Resident reflects on history of corner slated for redevelopment

by Lynette Filipis

This month we continue to look at the history of the northwest corner of Pearl Rd. and Memphis Ave. which the Old Brooklyn Community Development Corporation (OBCDC) is seeking to "revitalize" with a \$31 million new construction project. It is the most historic section of Cleveland's Old Brooklyn neighborhood and has been on the National Register of Historic Places since 2005. A picture of St. Luke's United Church of Christ, one of the numerous historic commercial and institutional buildings on Pearl Rd. (and, also on Broadview Rd.) included in the Historic District designation, accompanies the online listing of the "South Brooklyn Commercial District".

While OBCDC pursues funding for a plan to tear down the major portion of this corner to erect a four-story building with commercial space on the first floor, residential space on the upper floors, and a brewery in the church proper portion of the former St. Luke's, another group of people in the Old Brooklyn neighborhood is still hoping to "Save Our Historic District".

This second in a series of articles will shed additional light on the history of downtown Old Brooklyn in the hope that someone in authority will realize that historic adaption of the existing buildings is superior to tearing down most of them and replacing the demo-ed area with new construction. Historic adaptation would accomplish the same

goals of adding new residential space, updated commercial space and new socialization space to downtown Old Brooklyn, but it would do so by using the existing historic structures. It is the method which has been employed in downtown Cleveland to put new residential, hotel, retail and restaurant space in buildings which formerly housed department stores, banks and other businesses.

In last month's article I wrote about the legacy of three generations of the Gates family, the first of whom arrived in Brooklyn Township in 1816. The first names of the major male players were Jeremiah, Charles and Howard. They were all millers, and Jeremiah's home continued on page 6



PHOTO COURTESY OF EVERT EDUCATION

Students demonstrate triangles, and are perfecting their polygons using stretchy body bands, during "Geometry in Motion" Program.



PHOTO BY ABE KURP

Sunday, January 7, 2024; Three Kings Day celebration, Pivot Center for Art, Dance and Expression, 2937 W. 25<sup>th</sup> Street: Gabriela Quinones, age 10, and Xavier Quinones, age 7, celebrate their new gifts. Enjoying the festivities with them are Angela Balaguer and Awilda Resto.

**ARTS**  
**BORDERLIGHT THEATRE FESTIVAL** is now accepting applications for its upcoming 2024 event (which will run from July 24 to July 27, in and around Playhouse Square). Established and emerging companies in theater,

dance, circus, immersive experiences, puppetry, street theater, spoken word, stand-up comedy and more are encouraged to visit [borderlightcle.org/apply](http://borderlightcle.org/apply) to apply for the fringe portion of the festival by February 4.

**BRENT KIRBY'S 10X3:** Bop Stop

(2920 Detroit Ave.) is proud to present 10x3, a songwriter/band showcase hosted by Brent Kirby on the first and third Wednesday of each month from 7pm-10pm. It is a pre-arranged open mic, showcasing 10 songwriters/bands, presenting 3 songs each, with at least 2



of the songs required to be originals. This month's events will be held on February 7 and February 21. Admission is free, but donations are encouraged at the door. The event will also be live-streamed on Bop Stop's Facebook page at showtime.

**FAMILY OPEN STUDIO:** Arthouse Inc. (3119 Denison Ave.) offers a family-friendly, pay-what-you-can art workshop on the third Saturday of each month from 1pm-3 pm. This month's Family Open Studio will be on Saturday, February 17. Children are welcome but must be accompanied by an adult. Visit [arthouseinc.org](http://arthouseinc.org) to sign up or call 216-398-8556 for more information.

**MOCA OPENING CELEBRATION:** Cleveland's Museum of Contemporary Art (moCa) will kick off its 2024 Winter/Spring season at our free opening celebration Friday, February 2 from 7 pm-9:30 pm. The season includes three new exhibitions: The United States de-

but of Manabu Ikeda's *Flowers from the Wreckage*; a two-location experience of Andrea Bowers's *Exist, Flourish, Evolve*, located at moCa (11400 Euclid Ave.) and the Great Lakes Science Center (607 Erieside Ave.); and a new immersive mural created by Ariel Vergez, presented in partnership with Julia de Burgos Cultural Arts Center. If you have questions or if there are additional access services or accommodations that can make your experience more inclusive, please contact [access@moacleveland.org](mailto:access@moacleveland.org).

**MUSIC NEAR THE MARKET:** Come enjoy free live music and our magnificent Beckerath pipe organ every Wednesday of the year at 12:15 pm at Trinity Lutheran Church (2031 W. 30 St). For more information or to receive program notices, please contact Robert J. Myers at 216-283-1700.

**NEAR WEST THEATRE** (6702 Detroit Ave.) offers a variety of ways for you to get involved in local theater, including auditioning for upcoming productions, volunteering as a backstage crew member, and volunteering at the box office. For a full list of opportunities and to apply, visit [nearwesttheatre.org/get-involved](http://nearwesttheatre.org/get-involved). Questions? Email [info@nearwesttheatre.org](mailto:info@nearwesttheatre.org). Please also note that we are committed to diverse, inclusive casting. We will cast artists without regard to disability, race, age, sexual orientation, color, gender identity, etc.

**ST. PAUL'S STREET STUDIO:** Missing a chance to play live music or share poetry in person? Check out the St. Paul's Street Studio and join us to share music/spoken word in a peaceful atmosphere of respect. We provide a piano, drums, acoustic guitars, and microphones...and an encouraging circle of listeners. All are welcome! The event is held at St. Paul's Community Church, 4427 Franklin Blvd from 1 pm - 2:30 pm in the sanctuary. This month's session is on Saturday, February 10. For more information, contact Ian Heisey at 216-973-1486 or [heisey2140@sbc-global.net](mailto:heisey2140@sbc-global.net).

**WRITERS UNPLUGGED:** Come hear local author Susan Patrone talk about her latest novel, *The Musical Mozinskis*, Wednesday, February 7 at 7 pm at the South Branch of the Cleveland Public Library (3096 Scranton Rd) as part of its Writers Unplugged series. Books will be available for purchase and signing at the end of the event.

**BLACK HISTORY MONTH FREE FILM SCREENINGS:** Celebrate Black History Month with free screenings of the following short films about Cleveland-area Black history presented by the Cleveland International Film Festival: *From Mopping the Floors to Making the Cakes: The Story of Archie's Hough Bakeries*, *Olympic Oaks: Continuing Jesse Owens' Legacy*, and *Station Hope: A Conversation* Saturday, February 3 from 2 pm-4 pm at the Jefferson Branch of the Cleveland Public Library (850 Jefferson Ave). Stay after the films for a discussion with Tyrone Owens, cousin of Jesse Owens.

**FREE JAZZ CONCERT:** The Theron Brown Group, one of the hottest jazz groups in all of Ohio, returns to perform on Saturday, February 3 at 2 pm in honor of Black History Month on the third floor of the Main Branch of the Cleveland Public Library (325 Superior Ave. NE)

**INVENTORS AND INNOVATORS WORKSHOP:** In this free workshop for children and teens, we will use stop-motion animation to create short

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## Open letter urges Mayor Bibb to save Cudell Commons

To the Editor:

Dear Mayor Bibb and Area Leaders:

We are writing to you to voice our concerns about Cleveland Metropolitan School District's plans to build a new Marion Seltzer Elementary School on what is now parkland at Cudell Commons Park, land that was gifted to the City of Cleveland by renowned architect Frank Cudell over 100 years ago to be used for park and boulevard purposes forever. (a copy of the 1906 deed was included in the correspondence with the mayor). CMSD's plans for a sprawling school will destroy 40 trees and eat up nearly half of the park's green space, replacing the current school site with a parking lot.

### LETTER

Despite hearing numerous concerns from people living near the park about the loss of green space and mature trees, CMSD declined to alter their plans

in any way, repeatedly touting their "community engagement process" that never really took any of the community's concerns into consideration.

We would like to hear from you, Mayor Bibb, regarding how this development supports your vision of ensuring equitable access to quality public parks. Cudell Commons Park is the only park in the Cudell neighborhood. Wiping it out with the construction of this school will force nearby residents to walk 30 minutes or more to reach the type of quality green space you have been promising as part of your Citywide Parks & Recreation Master Plan. While Cities like East Cleveland are looking to the future by turning the current blacktop schoolyard at Caledonia Elementary School into a dynamic community green space and outdoor classroom, Cleveland is stuck in the past and dead set on eliminating

Cudell's legacy park, which will also irreparably damage the neighborhood's already suffering tree canopy.

It is hard to reconcile what is happening at Cudell Park with the goals of the Citywide Parks and Recreation Master Plan, ironically spearheaded by Jamie DeRosa, who facilitated the trading of Cudell Park for land in other parts of the city that will be or already has been sold to developers. And while we are fortunate to have the support of the Northeast Ohio Sierra Club, it is also hard to wrap one's head around the lack of public support from groups like the Trust for Public Land and the Cleveland Parks and Greenspace Coalition, groups who believe "everyone should have access to the outdoors" and whose stated missions are to "create parks and protect land for people" and "represent residents and organizations...to collectively and

continued on page 6

## Cuyahoga County Prosecutor Michael O'Malley seeks re-election

by Bruce Checefsky

Cuyahoga County Prosecutor Michael C. O'Malley is campaigning on a public safety platform, citing confidence from the public as the reason to keep him in office. The two-term incumbent is running against Cleveland State University law professor Matthew Ahn in the March 19 Democratic primary.

O'Malley and Ahn had been seeking endorsements from the Cuyahoga County Democratic Party, but in a statement issued last month by the Executive Committee, neither candidate in the race was endorsed. The non-endorsement comes amid a leftward shift among Democrats, according to Cuyahoga County Democratic Party Chair David Brock. The party also declined to endorse a candidate in 2016. O'Malley collected the most votes but lost the endorsement by less than two percent.

As Cuyahoga County Prosecutor, O'Malley oversees 230 prosecuting attorneys, 170 administrative staff, and 15 units, which include appeals, crime strategies, economic crimes, major drug offenders, and juvenile justice.

"The public appreciates the job my office does with local law enforcement and solving violent crimes," said O'Malley in an interview with the Plain Press. "I think that is the key to the election."

Among the accomplishments he lists while serving in office is the Cuyahoga County Juvenile Detention Center, where roughly one-third, or about 1,000, of the juvenile cases each year are diverted. The juveniles are screened, evaluated, and then placed into programs on a path to productive lives.

The Center came under fire when Tim McDevitt, a deputy court administrator for the Juvenile Division, and Mark Stanton, a former Cuyahoga County public defender, called the facility understaffed and unsafe, creating an 'inadequate and dangerous situation'.

O'Malley disagrees with the characterization that the center is unsafe.

"We decreased the escalation of violence and criminal activity that we have seen in the past," he said. "In 2019, we worked with the juvenile court judges, their staff, and my office, and it was a big accomplishment," he added.

O'Malley also takes credit for creating the Adult Diversion Center, a 50-bed facility with staff onsite 24/7 that works with law enforcement to help individuals exhibiting signs and symptoms of mental illness or addiction. Individuals receive care and are linked to community resources in a treatment environment rather than going to the County Jail. Oriana House operates The Center on E. 55th Street in Cleveland. Police and families can bring people in for treatment.

"We created the Diversion Center to divert low-level offenses, keep people out of County Jail, and get them healthy again," he said. "Safety concerns spurred the center to get people into restorative environments."

Juvenile bindover, a process where a juvenile court judge transfers a case to an adult court to be tried and sentenced as an adult, has become a central issue of the election campaign, brought on by his opponent.

"Some people have made juvenile bindover a big issue. We see about 15 to 20 discretionary bindover cases every year, even less this year," he explained. "In the larger scheme of things, we see about 3,000 juvenile cases and over 12,000 adult cases a



PHOTO BY ABE KURP

Sunday, January 7, 2024; Three Kings Day celebration, Pivot Center for Art, Dance and Expression, 2937 W. 25th Street: Angel, Alejandro and Isabela Salmeron hold their gifts as they pose for a photo with the Three Kings – (L-R) Luis Madera, Elizander Rivera, and Reynaldo Melendez.

year, and while important, juvenile bindover is not a large part of what we do."

O'Malley said his opponent has radical ideas about revamping the juvenile bindover program. Crime victims in Ohio have certain rights detailed in the Ohio Constitution, called Marsy's Law or the Ohio Crime Victims' Bill of Rights. Prosecutors must meet with victims and their families to get their input on the outcome of a case.

"My opponent decided that he would never file a motion for a court to determine whether there should be a discretionary bindover, and frankly,

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 Cleveland, OH 44102  
 Phone: (216) 621-3060  
 email: plainpress@gmail.com  
 Advertising email: plainpressads@yahoo.com  
 Website: https://plainpress.blog  
 Plain Press © Established in 1971  
 Circulation: 21,000 copies.  
 Published monthly.  
 Member of the Neighborhood and Community Media Association of Greater Cleveland  
 Distribution area: Cuyahoga River west to W. 140, Lake Erie south to the Lower Big Creek Valley. Available free at over 500 locations.  
 Managing Editor: Charles E. Hoven;  
 Editor: Deborah Rose Sadlon;  
 Editorial Assistant: Abe Kurp;  
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 Photo Editor: Coriana Close;  
 Reporters: Bruce Checefsky & Erik Ault,  
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## ARTS FUNDING

continued from page one

December that Cuyahoga County must find a sustainable public arts funding tax strategy that might “evolve into multiple streams of funding, from taxation, government, corporate, and new philanthropic players over time,” while adding that local philanthropy is ready to assist in supporting this work.

The CAC board voted in December to approve \$400,000 to the Assembly for the Arts to manage the Support for Artists program for 2024, adding another \$100,000 after board president Nancy Mendez acknowledged that CAC had deliberately not paid out grants to individual artists in 2018 and 2019 and again in 2021. The additional money gives Johnson \$500,000 for individual artists and artist support programs.

Most of the available funds are restricted grants for programs designed by four pass-through or regranting institutions that include SPACES, Cleveland Public Theater, Julia De Burgos Cultural Arts Center, and Karamu House, with administrative costs totaling \$120,000, incurred by both Assembly for the Arts and the regranting organizations, will be deducted from the total, leaving the artists with even less money. Johnson did say the additional \$100,000, which was unexpected, will have no administrative overhead, and artists could expect unrestricted grants ranging from \$8,000 to \$10,000.

He plans to create a paid artist advisory committee to help determine how to distribute grant money. Information will be available on the Assembly for the Arts website by the end of January at [assemblycle.org](http://assemblycle.org).

Rather than give Assembly for the Arts the entire \$500,000 to distribute directly to artists without adding layers of administration — the reason for the nonprofit in the first place —

CAC voted, behind closed doors and without public input, to structure the artist support program by adding the regranting institutions. Johnson agreed with their decision.

Three of the four organizations are located less than a few miles from each other in a county of more than 450 square miles with a population of 1.25 million. SPACES and Cleveland Public Theater are on Detroit Ave., and Julia De Burgos Cultural Arts Center is on Archwood Avenue in the Brooklyn Centre neighborhood. Karamu House, in the Fairfax neighborhood on the East Side of Cleveland, received \$575,000 in artist project support over five years. Artists without a relationship with these small groups of organizations usually miss out on the opportunity for funding.

Johnson said that he made the decision to fund the same four organizations in 2024 as based on a review of their performance from previous years. Assembly for the Arts never released a call for applications from the many countywide 501(c)3 nonprofits that might have been interested in the program, nor did he solicit proposals.

“The more pass-through organizations [other than SPACES, Cleveland Public Theater, Julia De Burgos Cultural Arts Center, and Karamu House] means more layers. We have not issued a call for applications,” he said. “We do not want to create layers of middlemen between the dollars and individual artists. We are not trying to create more pass-through organizations.”

But he did exactly that by inviting SPACES, Cleveland Public Theater, Julia de Burgos Cultural Arts Center, and Karamu House, as middlemen, adding another layer of administration that drains money away from the artists.

Assembly for the Arts will control

issuing the checks going out to artists, whether in partnership with other organizations or unrestricted, suggesting that centralizing the process could reduce costs. Not so, according to Johnson, administrative fees will remain the same.

Artists have been critical of the artist support program managed by the pass-through or regranting organizations, saying the creative process is limited to thematic, pay-to-play programming that does not support their work but is instead used to promote the CAC’s and Assembly for the Arts’ social and political agendas and the programmatic agendas of the participating organizations. Artists pay for their own art supplies and production costs. Money for basic living costs like housing, health care, and transportation is minimized.

Karamu House recently announced that seventeen local artists will receive awards in 2024 through the Room in the House Fellowship (RITH). The awards are meant to “empower artists’ creative practice through a \$5,000 financial award, digital exhibition presence, and space at Karamu for creation, exhibition, and performance. Applications for the fellowship were open to Cuyahoga County-based artists with a demonstrated commitment to their visual arts or performance-based work and alignment to Karamu’s vision of socially and culturally responsive art that celebrates the Black experience,” according to their website.

SPACES will offer \$4,000 in awards to 12 artists and collectives for project-based support through the Urgent Art Fund, which supports production expenses and artist commissions that are socially, politically, or culturally responsive. Julia De Burgos Cultural Arts Center plans to give ten \$5,000 artist grants with preference to projects that support and celebrate the Latino/a/x and Hispanic communities of



PHOTO BY ABE KURP

Sunday, January 7, 2024; Cleveland Museum of Art Community Arts Center at the Pivot Center for Art, Dance and Expression, 2937 W. 25<sup>th</sup> Street: A winter scene of trees in the forest.

Cuyahoga County.

CAC invited Cleveland Public Theater (CPT) to apply for artist support funding in 2019, which they received in 2020. But a year later, they were told the program had ended. CPT did not get invited back until recently.

Johnson said he is in contact with Bidwell over the levy campaign and is closing in on the field of contributors. An announcement could be made following the April quarterly meeting.

“We continue to work

on raising money. We are paying consultants. I think you could look forward to something after our meeting,” he said. “We do need to heal, but we also need to raise money. The wheels are turning. We are still meeting with people.”

**Editor’s note:** This article first appeared in [coolcleveland.com](http://coolcleveland.com).

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PHOTO BY ABE KURP

Sunday, January 7, 2024; Cleveland Museum of Art Community Arts Center at the Pivot Center for Art, Dance and Expression, 2937 W. 25<sup>th</sup> Street: The buffalos in this artwork were created by Parade the Circle guest artist Liza Goodell in 2015. The artwork titled, *Grasslands*, is made of coax cable, cotton, hot glue, wire, burlap, papier-mâché, and clear acrylic ornaments.

## RESIDENT REFLECTS continued from page one

at 3506 Memphis Ave. and Howard 's home at 4248 W. 35th St. are both still standing. Since they are residential rather than commercial buildings, they are not included in the National Register's Commercial District. They are, however, important components of the historical nature of the area. Jeremiah built the original portion of his brick home in 1820; it is the oldest home in Old Brooklyn.

The first settlers who came to the Cleveland section of the Western Reserve were largely from New England and Upstate New York. In 1795 approximately three dozen investors who called themselves the Connecticut Land Company purchased most of the Western Reserve from the State of Connecticut and in 1796 (the date of Cleveland's founding) they began to survey the land.

Among the investors were brothers Richard and Samuel Lord, and Samuel's son-in-law, Josiah Barber, became their partner soon afterwards. They set up a land office called the Lord & Barber Realty Company and sold tracts of land in Brooklyn Township to the incoming settlers.

In 1812, James Fish and his cousins Moses and Ebenezer Fish, and their families came to Brooklyn Township to buy property. They settled along today's Denison Ave. (Newburg Rd. in those days) in Brooklyn Centre. In 1813, Ozias/Oziah Brainard also settled along Newburg Rd. and in 1814, many more Brainards (as well as folks with the surnames Hinckley, Ackley and

Young) arrived in Brooklyn Township. Being part of a church congregation was as important to many of the settlers as building their homes and establishing their businesses/means of livelihood. And so, in 1814, north of today's Big Creek Valley (Countryman's Creek in the early days), a group of Methodists gathered. At first the members met in each other's homes for classes and worship, then in 1818 they officially became a congregation. Ebenezer Fish, Seth Brainard and Ozias/Oziah Sylvanus were among the church's founders. The original name of the congregation was Brooklyn Methodist Episcopal Church. It was the first church congregation founded in Brooklyn Township and the first Methodist congregation founded in the entire Cleveland area.

Soon settlers were moving south into what became the Brighton/South Brooklyn/Old Brooklyn section of Brooklyn Township and some of them were also Methodists. In those days there was only a low-level bridge over the Creek and the Creek's banks were steep and sometimes dangerously slippery to descend and ascend. The Methodists in Brighton wanted to have a church on their side of the valley. And so, in 1844, Brighton Methodist Episcopal Church was founded as an offshoot of Brooklyn Methodist Episcopal Church. It was the precursor of Pearl Road United Methodist Church (4200 Pearl Rd.) which is still one of the important historic structures on the northwest corner of Pearl Rd. and Memphis Ave.

In my January article I mentioned a cemetery called the "Old Burying Ground Lot" which is reputed to have

been the first public cemetery located in the area about which I have been speaking. I thought that I would write about it in this month's article, but the topic requires more research. More research is also needed for the Brighton Methodist Episcopal Church. I plan to return to them next month.

In the meantime, here are some thoughts from Old Brooklyn resident Susan Hudak who has been reading (my articles and others) about what's being planned for the corner –

*I love Old Brooklyn. My parents moved to South Hills in 1960 when I was a child, and my husband and I purchased their home in 1982 when they down-sized. We raised three children here and have seen many changes in the neighborhood since then. It is inclusive and a good place to live.*

*I have noticed that cities that are respected and visited are the ones that hold on to and cherish the history of their area. Cleveland's downtown, for instance, has undergone a revitalization and many of the historic buildings have had their facades stripped away to reveal the original architecture.*

*The intersection of Pearl and Memphis is home to an unusually shaped triangular building which is officially called the Greenline Building. I was reading that there are plans to demolish it and rebuild that corner. There are few buildings constructed in this shape and I have always considered it to be a beautiful structure. I am sure that it is of historical significance and feel that it would be a mistake to destroy it. I hope that the current plan is reconsidered before we lose this gem of a structure.*

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## CUDELL PARK LETTER continued from page 3

equitably empower resident change-makers." Why aren't these groups representing and empowering the residents trying to save Cudell Park?

The Cleveland Parks and Greenspace Coalition was created to ensure that parks and greenspaces in Cleveland are considered critical civic infrastructure because access to quality greenspace is a human right, not a privilege. They also believe that resident ownership is vital for successful community parks, and that transparency in greenspace investment is mandatory. Why would

this group, who should be perfectly poised to support the residents in this David vs. Goliath battle with CMSD over a neighborhood park, decline to intervene? What could be more important than acting on their own stated mission and beliefs?

This isn't the first time Cleveland tried to build on Cudell Commons Park. In 1954, residents living near Cudell Park declared war on the City's proposal to build a new fire station in the park at West Boulevard and Detroit Avenue. (*Cleveland Plain Dealer*, February 19, 1954, page 24). The situation from nearly 70 years ago is eerily similar to what's going on today, with then City Councilman Richard Masterson taking a tongue lashing from residents who said the city passed the ordinance to build the fire station without notifying them, saying that had they known they would have shown up to object. Ultimately, Mayor Anthony J. Celebrezze instructed the Safety Department to look for an alternate site for the fire station, (*Cleveland Plain Dealer*, March 2, 1954, page 19) and it was built at its current

location at W. 99th and Madison. As the saying goes, those that fail to learn from history are doomed to repeat it. (Winston Churchill)

During the Michael R. White administration, City Councilman Martin J. Sweeney was in favor of a church being built at Emery Park, which would require a significant portion of the park be sold to the church. Mayor White told Councilman Sweeney simply that, "The City doesn't sell park property." A few years later, under the administration of Jane Campbell, the church was built.

Our final question for you, Mayor Bibb, is what type of mayor do you want to be? One who prioritizes development over the health and well-being of its citizens, allowing parks to be sold or traded away, or one who stands for protecting valuable greenspace and mature, legacy trees that provide shade, clean air, and help combat climate change?

Please don't set this precedent, Mayor Bibb. Save Cudell Park.  
*The Friends of Cudell Commons Park*

# Plan for Good Health



## Protect your health and the people you love.

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For more information on how **Western Reserve Area Agency on Aging Public Health** can help you plan for good health, scan this QR code.



For additional information about our services, contact WRAAA's **Aging & Disability Resource Center** at 216.621.0303

This project is supported by the Administration for Community Living (ACL, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS)) through USAging as part of a financial assistance award to USAging totaling \$74,999,835 with 100 percent funding by ACL/HHS. The contents are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily represent the official view of, nor an endorsement, by USAging ACL/HHS, or the U.S. Government.

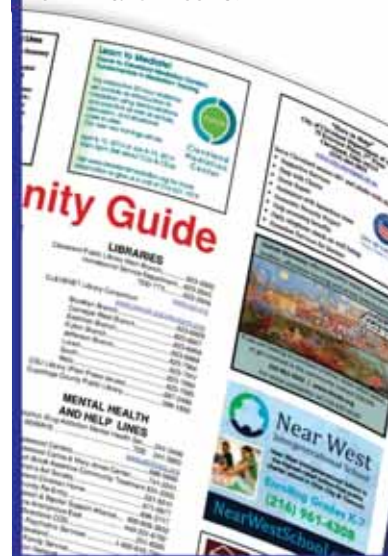


## Attention: Non-Profit Organizations, Government Offices and Public Officials!

The Plain Press Community Guide will be published in our March Issue.

The guide offers free listings of names and phone numbers – additional information can be placed in the guide by purchasing a square in the guide.

For more information contact Ed Tishel at [plainpressads@yahoo.com](mailto:plainpressads@yahoo.com)



**Plain Press  
Community  
Guide  
Be There!  
Buy a Square!**

## ARTS PROGRAM

continued from page one

The Ohio Arts Council (OAC) is a state agency that funds and supports quality arts experiences to strengthen Ohio communities culturally, educationally, and economically. The Ohio Arts Council was created in 1965 to foster and encourage the development of the arts and to assist with the preservation of Ohio's cultural heritage. With funds from the Ohio Legislature and the National Endowment for the Arts, the OAC provides financial assistance through grant writing to artists and art organizations. Such funding supports artists and makes art activities available for a broad segment of the Ohio public, and it provides services that help to enhance the growth of the Arts. For more information on the Ohio Arts Council, please view [www.OAC.ohio.gov](http://www.OAC.ohio.gov).

Mr. Evert currently serves as the Executive Director of DANCE EVERT, which he co-founded with his life-long partner Susana Weingarten Evert at

Shore Cultural Centre in Euclid, Ohio, in 1986. He also serves as the primary teaching artist, choreographer, and performing artist. He holds both painting/sculpture and dance degrees from Ohio University. His critical acclaim as a professional performing artist developed while performing for the Paul Taylor Dance Company in New York City. He has toured extensively both nationally and internationally.

Dance Evert's mission, since its inception, has been to integrate the Arts into the schools and community through curriculum, professional and student development, arts advocacy, and performance. Mr. Evert's vision is in the "transformational power and value of dance and art in our lives". He continues to develop his noted educational STEM (or STEAM) programming, integrating the Arts with math and sciences. His renowned "Geometry in Motion", "Forces in Motion", and "Dancing with Worms" continue to be popular residency programs within the area public and private schools, and after-school library

programs.

Dance Evert continues to grow and expand its programming and staff. It recently launched the "ESPIRAL Community Dance Theatre", held Tuesdays and Thursdays from 6 to 8, at the historic Shore Cultural Centre auditorium stage in Euclid, Ohio, for all those community members interested in dance and theatre. Registration is on-going and currently open for all abilities and levels of training, ages 14-senior adult. Created and led by DANCE EVERT co-founder Susana Weingarten Evert, ESPIRAL is a unique and inclusive opportunity for those who have wanted to participate in dance training, informal studio showings, community events, and formal staged performances.

For more information on DANCE EVERT, ESPIRAL Community Dance Theatre, and Mr. Tom Evert's unique instructional approach, which integrates the art of dance and the core curriculum, please visit [www.danceevert.org](http://www.danceevert.org).

## COMMUNITY BOARD

continued from page 2

biographical trailers about African American inventors and innovators. Learn how to use clay or LEGO figures to represent the historical individuals in your animations. Wednesday, February 7 from 3:30 pm-5:30 pm at the Fulton Branch of the Cleveland Public Library (3545 Fulton Rd.).

**WRITERS&READERS:** Join us for a free screening of *HUSH: Help us say Help*, a documentary film that explores mental health within the Black community, Friday, February 23 from 5:30 pm-8:30 pm at the Louis Stokes Wing of the Main Branch of the Cleveland Public Library (525 Superior Ave. NE). Breaking down the stigma around mental illness, the film grippingly explores the Black community's challenges through personal stories and expert commentary. Stay for a book signing and an impactful panel conversation with director Antwon Lindsey and local advocates discussing available resources and ways to support mental wellness and those struggling.

### CAREERS

**WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS** provided by the West Side Catholic Center offer individualized employment services and job readiness training. Classes run from four to fifteen weeks depending on the career track. We offer Culinary and Environmental Services Career tracks along with many other good job opportunities with supportive employers. The program includes a stipend allowance, free transportation and meals, a job acceptance bonus, a 90 day on the job bonus, one-on-one guidance, and computer lab assistance. Start dates are January 31, February 28, and March 27. For more information, call Ellen Saracina at 216-631-4741 (ext. 143).

### COMMUNITY

**BENJAMIN ROSE SENIORS PROGRAM:** Please join the Cleveland West Side village for a program on Monday, February 26 at 3pm at the Carnegie West Branch of the Cleveland Public Library (1900 Fulton Rd.). The topic: "Benjamin Rose: Let's Rethink Aging Services in Your Community." Learn about programs and services that you or family members can use.

**COLLECTIVE THOUGHTS:** A news discussion group that meets on the second and fourth Sunday of every month from 9 am to 10 am at Harbor and Bridge at 4321 Bridge Ave. The next two meetings will be Sunday, February 11 and Sunday February 25. The meetings are a chance to read, reflect, and respond to difficult and divisive issues. We often talk about local issues (housing, policing, politics, gentrification, etc.), and sometimes talk about more broad ones. Email Matt at [harborandbridgecc@gmail.com](mailto:harborandbridgecc@gmail.com) for a copy of the article we'll be discussing at the next meeting.

**POLICING COMMITTEE MEETINGS** are an opportunity to regularly engage with local Cleveland police commanders and officers to identify

problems, learn about available resources, and discuss ways to improve your community. The First District Policing Committee hosts its meetings on the first Thursday of each month at 6 pm at St. Ignatius of Antioch (10205 Lorain Ave.), in the cafeteria. It will host its next meeting on Thursday, February 1. The Second District Policing Committee meets on the second Tuesday of every month at 6 pm at Bridge CLE at 3389 Fulton Rd. (on the northeast corner of Trowbridge and Fulton). It will host its next meeting on Tuesday, February 13.

**TREMONT THINK AND DRINK:** Join us for an engaging book discussion while enjoying your favorite beverage at Lincoln Park Pub (2609 W 14 St) Monday, February 12 at 7 pm. This month, we will be discussing *Quietly Hostile*, a collection of essays by Samantha Irby.

### COMMUNITY GUIDE

**PLAIN PRESS** will publish the annual Community Guide in the March issue. In the Community Guide, the *Plain Press* offers nonprofit organizations and government agencies serving residents in the *Plain Press* target neighborhoods a free listing of their name and phone number. New organizations that have not been listed in the Community Guide in the past should email their contact information to: [plainpress@gmail.com](mailto:plainpress@gmail.com). Organizations that have changed their name or phone number should also send that information to the *Plain Press*. The *Plain Press* offers ads in the guide for organizations that wish to place additional information in the guide beyond their name and phone number. To advertise in the guide, contact Ed Tishel at [plainpressads@yahoo.com](mailto:plainpressads@yahoo.com).

### ENERGY ASSISTANCE

**APPLICATIONS:** To apply for the Winter Crisis Program (WCP), Home Energy Assistance Program (HEAP), or Home Weatherization Assistance Program, visit [energyhelp.ohio.gov](http://energyhelp.ohio.gov) or download the Energy assistance Program Application. You can also call the Ohio Department of Development for an application at 800-282-0880. Call 711 for TDD services, for those who are hearing impaired.

### EDUCATION

**FREE CLASSES FOR SENIORS:** Through Program 60, Ohio residents aged 60 and older can register for regularly scheduled credit and noncredit courses at Tri-C on an audit, tuition-free, space available basis. Must register in person at an Enrollment Center. [tri-c.edu/program60](http://tri-c.edu/program60), 216-987-6000, [enroll@tri-c.edu](mailto:enroll@tri-c.edu)

**SCHOLARSHIPS FOR WOMEN:** Cleveland-area women aged 25 and up who are currently enrolled in a four-year or graduate degree program are encouraged to apply for \$2,000 or more in financial aid from College Club West for the 2024-25 school year, at [collegeclubwest.org/scholarships](http://collegeclubwest.org/scholarships). The deadline to apply is March 15. Scholarships will be awarded based on educational goals, financial need, and academic record.

### ELECTION

**EARLY IN-PERSON VOTING,**

ahead of the March 19 primary election, will begin Wednesday, February 21. The Cuyahoga County Board of Elections (2925 Euclid Ave.) will be open nearly every day for voting until Sunday, March 17. For a full list of hours, visit [boe.cuyahogacounty.gov/voters/vote-early-in-person](http://boe.cuyahogacounty.gov/voters/vote-early-in-person). Please note that you must now bring a valid photo ID in order to vote.

**VOTE-BY-MAIL APPLICATIONS** are available at [boe.cuyahogacounty.gov](http://boe.cuyahogacounty.gov) or by calling 216-443-8683 (VOTE). Applications must be received at the Board of Elections by Tuesday, March 12 at 8:30 pm. Once you receive your ballot in the mail, fill it out and mail it to the Cuyahoga County Board of Elections at 2925 Euclid Ave. Cleveland, OH 44115. Ballots must be postmarked by Monday, March 18 to count.

### FOOD

**CHANGES TO MAY DUGAN FOOD DISTRIBUTION:** Since January 8, the May Dugan Center (4115 Bridge Ave.) no longer offers drive thru food distribution and has returned to in-person pickup only. Distributions are available Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays every week. Each time you will receive pantry bags, produce and meat (when available). Appointments are available between 11:30am-6:30pm on Monday and Wednesday, and between 11:30am-3:30pm on Fridays. Appointments are encouraged, but walk-ins will be accepted. Questions? Call 216-631-5800 (ext. 300) or visit [maydugancenter.org/food](http://maydugancenter.org/food). **COMMUNITY SHARE-A-MEAL:** Please join us for a free meal on Wednesday, February 7 and Wednesday, February 21 at St. Ignatius of Antioch Church, 10205 Lorain Ave. All are welcome. Join us in the cafeteria and enter through the rear door. Doors open at 4:30 pm for coffee, appetizers, and catching up with friends. Dinner will be served at 5:30 pm. A mini food pantry is available on occasion. Community meals are held the first and third Wednesdays of each month.

**FOOD ASSISTANCE:** Apply for the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) and other public benefits over the phone at: 216-738-2067 or text FOOD to 63566 for information regarding SNAP applications, food pantries, free produce and hot meals.

**FREE FRESH PRODUCE** is available at Orchard STEM School (4200 Bailey Ave.), via the monthly mobile food pantry sponsored by the Greater Cleveland Food Bank the first Wednesday of every month. This month, the pantry will be held on Wednesday, February 7. While you're there, don't forget to join us for our Parent TownHall Meeting, located in the Inquiry Garden. It is a great opportunity to offer your input and feedback, as well as address your concerns, to help our staff understand how to best serve you and your family.

### HOMELESS

**IF YOU NEED SHELTER** contact *Cuyahoga County's Coordinated Intake office* at 216-674-6700. Hours of operation: 8 am – 8 pm, Monday – Friday.



PHOTO BY ABE KURP  
Sunday, January 7, 2024; Three Kings Day celebration, Cleveland Museum of Art Community Arts Center at the Pivot Center for Art, Dance and Expression, 2937 W. 25<sup>th</sup> Street: This unlabeled artwork, an image of a person assembled using a variety of beans, sits on an easel in a community room where staff and volunteers from Julia de Burgos Cultural Arts Center offer supplies and work with community members on art projects for the Three Kings Day celebration.

After hours and weekends please call 2-1-1 for an on-call Coordinated Intake representative. If it is after hours women in need of assistance may also go directly to Norma Herr Women's Center, 2227 Payne Avenue, and staff will assist you in contacting Coordinated Intake the following day.

### RECREATION

**ROCK HALL'S CLE VIP PROGRAM** offers current Cleveland residents free admission to the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame. The free CLE VIP tickets are available online only, at [rockhall.com/ticketing](http://rockhall.com/ticketing), and upon arrival at the museum you must show proof of residency such as a driver's license, state ID, or photo ID with a City of Cleveland address. Children under 18 without an ID may gain entrance with their parent or guardian. Limited to five minors (without ID) per one adult admission.

### TAXES

**AARP TAX PREPARATION ASSISTANCE:** Volunteers from AARP will be on hand to help seniors and most other individuals file federal and state tax forms for free, every Friday from February 9 to April 12 at the West Park Branch of the Cleveland Public Library (3805 W 157th St). Registration required. Call 216-623-7102 to check eligibility and schedule an appointment. Visit [aarp.org/money/taxes/aarp\\_tax-aid](http://aarp.org/money/taxes/aarp_tax-aid) to find additional locations and to review the list of documents you will need to bring to your appointment in order to complete your tax return.

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### SEEKING RENTAL

**PROPERTY OWNERS NEEDED:** If you are a property owner with nice, clean, reasonably priced apartments, and are looking for tenants, please call Jim Schlecht of the Northeast Ohio Coalition for the Homeless at 216-357-1612.

**FREE TAX PREPARATION ASSISTANCE** is also available at various Cuyahoga EITC Coalition community locations, including the Clark Branch of Dollar Bank (3115 W. 25 St.), the Gordon Square Arcade (6516 Detroit Ave.) and The Centers' Gordon Square location (5209 Detroit Ave). By appointment only! To find additional locations or to schedule an appointment, visit [refundohio.org](http://refundohio.org) or call 2-1-1.

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## Get a fresh start in 2024 with Legal Aid

by **Tonya Sams**

Happy New Year! With a new year is an opportunity for a fresh start and The Legal Aid Society of Cleveland can help!

Legal Aid has been offering free civil legal services to those with low incomes (up to 200% federal poverty guideline) since 1905 – the fifth oldest legal aid organization in the United States. Legal Aid serves residents in Ashtabula, Cuyahoga, Geauga, Lake, and Lorain counties. Legal Aid cannot assist with applications for benefits or criminal cases.

Call Legal Aid if you need help with: **Housing:** foreclosure; eviction; landlord/tenant issues; utilities; public housing; **Work:** unemployment compensation; IRS tax issues; sealing criminal records; securing a valid ID or professional license; **Money:** loans (school, payday, auto, debt); public benefits (food stamps, energy assistance, cash assistance, supplemental security income); bankruptcy; **Family:** domestic violence; divorce; custody; immigration; education; estate planning; **Health:** medical bill collection; access to medical records; Medicare and Medicaid; marketplace tax credits and penalties.

Legal Aid was able to help Tiffany (name changed to protect privacy). Several years ago, Tiffany was arrested for domestic violence, but was never charged or convicted. Unfortunately, the

record of that arrest continued to appear on background checks, interfering with her ability to gain employment. Tiffany's Legal Aid attorney researched the situation, contacted the arresting law enforcement agency, and asked them to request that the Bureau of Criminal Investigation seal the records regarding Tiffany's arrest. Sometime later, Tiffany's Legal Aid attorney received confirmation from the arresting law enforcement agency. Tiffany's arrest record had been sealed as requested, giving her the fresh start she was seeking.

Legal Aid provides more detailed information on these topics on our website. Go to [lasclev.org](http://lasclev.org), click on "Services & Resources", then "Legal Resources" and choose a topic.

Legal Aid attorneys provide one-on-one consultation at Brief Advice Clinics. These brief clinics are held in libraries, community centers and other trusted sites. Some are based on a first come, first serve basis while some are by appointment only. For more information on our brief clinics, go to [lasclev.org](http://lasclev.org), click on the "Events" tab, then "Clinics".

Attorneys also represent clients at court and administrative hearings and go into the community to educate residents regarding their rights and the services that are available to prospective clients.

If you have quick questions regarding



PHOTO BY ABE KURP

**Sunday, January 7, 2024; Cleveland Museum of Art Community Arts Center at the Pivot Center for Art, Dance and Expression, 2937 W. 25<sup>th</sup> Street: Mural showing participants in Parade the Circle by artist Derek Brennan.**

tenants' rights and rental housing, call the Tenant Info Line at 440-210-4533 or 216-861-5955. For quick questions regarding employment, unemployment and student loans, call the Economic Justice Info Line at 440-210-4532 or 216-861-5899.

Help is also available by calling Legal Aid at 888-817-3777 during

normal business hours or by applying online 24/7 at [lasclev.org/contact/](http://lasclev.org/contact/). When speaking with a Legal Aid intake specialist be sure to have income information and necessary documentation related to your legal issue on hand. If English is not your first language, Legal Aid can provide interpreters and translation. Legal Aid also uses the Ohio

Relay Service to support those who have a communication limitation.

To request an outreach/education event or materials for your community group, email: [outreach@lasclev.org](mailto:outreach@lasclev.org).

Tonya Sams is a Development & Communications Manager at The Legal Aid Society of Cleveland.

## CUYAHOGA COUNTY PROSECUTOR SEEKS RE-ELECTION

continued from page 3

that violates the Ohio Constitution," he said.

O'Malley added that his opponent has not practiced law or tried a case in Ohio and has only been licensed in the state since June 2022. (Ahn has practiced in the federal court system in Ohio, according to his campaign manager, Ellen Kubit.)

"He does not realize," said O'Malley, "that major criminal offenses like aggravated murder could be a discretionary bindover and has made a pledge that would suggest that even people accused of the most violent offenses will remain in juvenile court, which shows his lack of understanding of the law and not prioritizing the victims. We represent victims and their families."

After an arrest, a judge or magistrate decides to release an individual or hold them in pretrial detention while they await trial. When deciding to release someone for pretrial, a judge or magistrate can set bail and assign conditions for the individual to remain in the community. Ohio's law sets a process for judges to deny bail.

Cash bail guarantees that a defendant will return for a trial or hearing; otherwise, the bail gets forfeited to the government. Critics of cash bail say the system is unfair to low-income people and people of color.

O'Malley follows the decision of the Common Pleas judges and bond commissioners when asked about cash bail reform or doing away with the practice of a cash-for-release program and would not comment other than to say that unless there is a safety issue for the victim or a flight issue, he will work with the courts.

"[They] do what they feel is best in their particular cases. I do not play a role in it. We go with whatever the bond commissioner recommends," he said. "If the Common Pleas judges decide to do away with cash bail, I would support them."

The debate continues over the proposed new Cuyahoga County Jail site. Cuyahoga County Council voted last year to purchase 72 acres in Garfield Heights for \$38.7 million. The Council also voted to extend the current 0.25% sales tax set to expire in 2027. The new jail could cost more than \$780 million.

O'Malley would have preferred a site closer to Cleveland, where the jail is now. While serving on the Justice Center Steering Committee, he voted against a proposal for a shipping con-

tainer storage yard at 2700 Transport Road. He later threatened to file legal action against the Cuyahoga County Council and the County Executive if they moved forward with the jail site, citing contamination and environmental issues. The site would have required

installing a vapor mitigation system to prevent methane and benzene gases from collecting inside the jail.

"Transport Road was a terrible site for the jail. I was afraid of litigation down the line where employees or prisoners would sue because of health issues," said O'Malley, whose vote was critical to the decision. "I would

have preferred to accumulate sites from the Cleveland Land Bank and get closer, but that was not my decision. We cannot put people on a hazardous site."

**Editor's Note:** An article by Bruce

Checefsky titled "Matthew Ahn is running for Cuyahoga County prosecutor" appeared in the January 2024 issue of the *Plain Press*. If you missed the January issue of the *Plain Press*, you can visit <https://plainpress.blog> to read it.

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[www.FranklinCircleChurch.org](http://www.FranklinCircleChurch.org)



## Our Neighborhood Churches Welcome You

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SUNDAY: 9AM AND 11AM

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1ST FRIDAYS: 7PM

**Confession:**

SATURDAYS: 3:30-4:30PM

SUNDAYS: 10AM-10:45AM

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Sundays: 7:30am, 9:30am

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a very warm and integrated school family; caring faculty & staff;

welcome to all faiths, races and ethnic heritages; after-school programs, clubs and more. For more information call: 216-961-8557. Tours are offered upon request. On campus and virtual classes offered.