

BRECKSVILLE UNITED CHURCH of CHRIST

23 Public Square • Brecksville • Ohio • 44141 • 440-526-4364

*Loving, Serving and Accepting All People
with God's Life-Changing Power*

*"Pain insists upon
being attended to.
God whispers
to us in
our pleasures,
speaks in
our consciences,
but shouts in
our pains.
It is God's
megaphone
to rouse
a deaf world."*
— C.S. Lewis



First Sunday in Lent, March 6th, 2022 • 10:00 AM

Pastor

• Rev. John King

***Director of
Music***

• David Debick

***Financial
Secretary***

• Joy Garapic

***Office
Manager***

• Anne Melfo

Ministers – All of Our Members

Affirmation of Welcome

We are an Open and Affirming Congregation, welcoming ALL of God's children.

Whether you are single, married, divorced, separated, or partnered,

You Are Welcome Here!

Whatever your race, ethnicity, or age,

You Are Welcome Here!

Whatever your gender identity or sexual orientation,

You Are Welcome Here!

Whatever your religious background, creed, or spirituality,

You Are Welcome Here!

Whatever your social or economic circumstances,

You Are Welcome Here!

Whatever your health conditions, impairments, or mobility needs,

You Are Welcome Here!

Whoever we may be, wherever we are on our life's journey,

We welcome one another to this place,

Even as God welcomes us all in Jesus Christ!



- *Please sign our guest book in the narthex before you leave - if you are interested in learning more about our church, please feel free to speak to our pastor.*
- *Hearing difficulty? Please talk to any usher about a Personal Sound receiver available for your use.*

Office Hours:

Mon., Tues., Wed., Thurs.: 9:30am - 12:30pm

Church Phone: 440-526-4364

e-mail: buccoffice23@gmail.com – web address: www.BrecksvilleUCC.org

Please submit your announcements by noon on Wednesday – Thank You!

First Sunday in Lent - March 6th, 2022

Meditation Music

“One word frees us of all the weight and pain of life: That word is love.” — Sophocles

Gathering in God’s Presence

(Please Stand as you are able.)

Prelude

Don't Be Afraid

John Bell (The Iona Community, Scotland)

*Don't be afraid, my love is stronger, my love is stronger than your fear.
Don't be afraid, my love is stronger and I have promised, promised to be
always near.*

Bearing the Light of Peace / Bearing the Light of Christ

*** Call to Prayer:**

One: We may be entering this season arid, dry from pain and injustices.

Many: And yet, God is still hydrating our spirits.

One: We may be wandering, feeling as if we have no direction.

Many: And yet, God is guiding us in the wilderness.

One: We may be fearful, wondering what comes next.

Many: And yet, God is surrounding us with peace.

One: We may begin our Lenten journey spiritually arid, aimless, and anxious.

Many: But the Spirit of Strength will never leave our side.

*** Hymn of Praise *Lord Jesus, Who through Forty Days* #211**

1. Lord Jesus, who through forty days for us did fast and pray,
Teach us with you to mourn our sins, and close by you to stay.

2. As you with Satan did contend, and did the victory win,
O give us strength to persevere, in you to conquer sin.

3. And through these days of penitence, and through this Passiontide,
Yes, evermore, in life and death, O Christ, with us abide.

4. Abide with us, till when this life of suffering shall be past,
An Easter of unending joy we may attain at last.

(Music: *Day's The Whole Booke of Psalms*, 1562; words: Claudia F. Hernaman, 1873; alt.)

Prayer of Invocation: [Unison]

Divine Sojourner, As we wander far into the wilderness, may your light sustain us. May the questions that fill our minds with doubt drift away into the sands of the journey. May we dig within our souls to remove the prejudices deep within us. Wherever we wander in this season, may your Holy Glow refocus our attention on our relationship with you and the ways we connect with our siblings. Amen.

* Prayer of Reflection, Repentance and Growth:

ALL: God of the Road, we journey together into the wilderness again. In this time filled with new spiritual practices and studies, our minds will be “tested.” Doubts will creep in as we seek your presence. At times, we will slide away from our responsibilities to care for our neighbors.

ONE: Will hurtful words from others taunt us, and inhibit our growth with you? Will negative images in our minds draw us away from our practices? Will we snooze to the needs of this world and ignore the pain in our communities?

ALL: Deliver us from the temptations of this world and the tests that we impose upon ourselves. Amen.

Assurance of God's Grace: (Pastor John)

When we aimlessly wander throughout this Lenten journey, God follows us – even into the depths of the wilderness. May we see God's presence, knowing we are never alone on arid days and in barren lands. Amen!

Song of Praise: *Glory, glory, glory –
Glory to God in the highest! (2X's)* Pablo Sosa, 1988

*And on earth be peace to all people,
For God loves us all! (2X's)*

God Is Still Speaking

(See back of bulletin for complete readings)

First Reading

Deuteronomy 26:1-11 (NRSV)

Second Reading

Luke 4:1-13 (NRSV)

Continuing Testament

***Life Of Pi*, by Yann Martel**

 ***Time with Young Worshippers*** 

Anthem: ***So Longs My Soul*** Lawton, arr. Drummond

*As pants the hart for running streams when heated in the chase,
so longs my soul, for you, my God, and your refreshing grace.*

*Refrain: So longs my soul, O God, it longs for you, so longs my soul.
So longs my soul, O God, it longs for you and your refreshing grace.*

*God of my strength, how long should I, like one forgotten, mourn?
With broken heart I lie exposed to my oppressors' scorn. (Refrain)*

*So why cast down, my restless soul? hope still and you shall sing
the praise of One who is my God, and love's eternal spring. (Refrain)*

Sermon ***Coming in for a Landing*** Pastor John King

Hymn of Reflection: ***What a Friend We Have in Jesus*** #506

1. What a friend we have in Jesus, all our sins and griefs to bear!
 What a privilege to carry everything to God in prayer!

Oh, what peace we often forfeit, oh, what needless pain we bear,
 All because we do not carry everything to God in prayer.

2. Have we trials and temptations? Is there trouble anywhere?

We should never be discouraged; take it to our God in prayer!
Can we find a friend so faithful, who will all our sorrows share?
Jesus knows our every weakness; take it to our God in prayer!

3. Are we weak and heavy laden, burdened with a load of care?

Precious Savior, still our refuge, take it to our God in prayer!

Do your friends despise, forsake you? Take it to our God in prayer!
Jesus' arms will take and shield you; you will find a solace there.

(Music: Charles C. Converse, 1868; words: Joseph Scriven, 1855; alt.)

The Church at Prayer

Lenore Harris, Nancy Stella, Sue Renovetz, Bill Toneff, Rose Kaval, Suzanne Patrick, David Pastor, Fred Pesek, George Snider, Tina Ortiz, Phyllis Hassler, Terry Heiman, Joanne K., Dassie Matsuoka, Cindy Burton, Elizabeth Gadus, Ann Klonowski, Sheila Day, Jim C., Betty Kaul, Anna Mary Fisher, Jan Wardlaw, Stan McCain, Dottie Faust, Jon Thompson, Kathy Smith, Kathleen Stewart & Joe Blasko (her father), "Edna House", people who are unemployed and under employed.

(Please let the office know of any additions, corrections, or changes to our prayer lists.)

Silent Meditation

Prayers of the Church

Our Lord's Prayer

[the additional use of “Mother” is optional, according to one’s theological understanding]
...Our Father-Mother, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever, Amen.

Presenting Our Tithes and Offerings

***Offering Invitation: (Pastor John)**

Deuteronomy 26:2 (NRSV) declares this:

“...you shall take some of the first of all the fruit of the ground, which you harvest from the land that the Lord your God is giving you, and you shall put it in a basket and go to the place that the Lord your God will choose as a dwelling for his name.”

How do we spend our “first fruits”- the best in which we have? Have we kept it for ourselves? Have we dedicated these gifts to God and shared them with our neighbors who lack basic necessities? How is God calling us to share the best we possess?

Offertory Hymn: We bring our gifts because we care,
They are a part of what we share.
Our love is strong, it heals, uplifts.
With hearts of joy we share our gifts. Amen

***Prayer of Dedication/Blessing of the Gifts: [Unison]**

Holy Stream of Gifts, we share our gratitude for all of our fruits – from our possessions to knowledge and from our time to abilities. May our “best” be something that we do not hoard but that we freely give away. As we embrace this season of fasting and reflection, may we recognize the best of our talents, treasures, and time and share with God and neighbor. Amen.

Holy Communion

Communion Hymn: *Bread of the World, in Mercy Broken* #346

1. Bread of the world, in mercy broken, wine of the soul in mercy shed,
By whom the words of life were spoken, and in whose death our sins are dead.
2. Look on the heart by sorrow broken, look on the tears by sinners shed,
And be your feast to us the token that by your grace our lives are fed.

(Music: J. S. B. Hedges, 1868; words: Reginald Heber, 1827; alt.)



- † The Invitation
- † Prayer of Consecration
- † Words of Institution
- † Receiving the Bread and Cup

***Prayer of Thanksgiving: [Unison]**

Eternal God, you have called your people from east and west and north and south, to feast at the table of Jesus Christ. We thank you for Christ's presence and for the spiritual food of Christ's body and blood. By the power of your Holy Spirit, keep us faithful to your will. Go with us to the streets, to our homes, and to our places of labor and leisure, that whether we are gathered or scattered, we may be the servant church of the servant Christ, in whose name we rejoice to pray. Amen.

Going with God's Love

*** Hymn of Departure: *A Mighty Fortress Is Our God*** #439

1. A mighty fortress is our God, a bulwark never failing,
Our present help amid the flood of mortal ills prevailing.
For still our ancient foe does seek to work us woe
with craft and power great, and armed with cruel hate,
on earth without an equal.
2. Did we in our own strength confide, our striving would be losing,
But there is one who takes our side, the One of God's own choosing.
You ask who that may be? Christ Jesus sets us free!
With mighty power to save, victorious o'er the grave,
Christ will prevail triumphant.

(Continued on next page)

A Mighty Fortress Is Our God (continued)

3. And though this world with devils filled should threaten to undo us,
We will not fear for God has willed the truth to triumph through us.

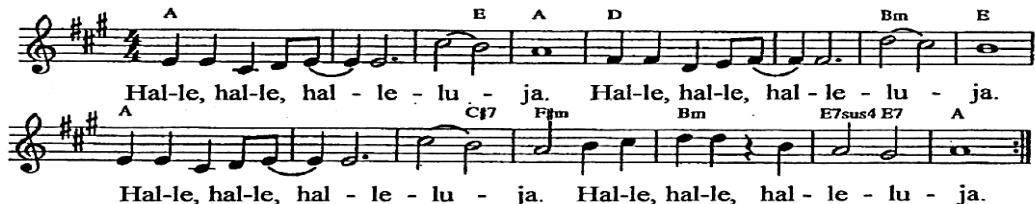
The powers of evil grim, we tremble not for them;
their rage we can endure, for lo, their doom is sure:
one little word shall fell them.

4. That word beyond all earthly powers forever is abiding;
The Spirit and the gifts are ours, for Christ is with us siding.

Let goods and kindred go, this mortal life also;
the body they may kill; God's truth shall triumph still;
God's reign endures forever.

(Music and words: Martin Luther, c. 1529; transl. F. H. Hedge, 1853; adapt. Ruth Duck, 1981)

Carrying the Light of Christ into the World – (Acolyte)



† Benediction (Pastor John)

As we wander on this journey,
May God the Divine Light open our souls to healing and wisdom.
May Christ the Sojourner lead us into oases of renewal in arid and barren times.
May the Spirit of Hope fill us with courage to carry on.
As Jesus embraced the struggles of the wilderness, may we find strength to abide in our
wilderness of the soul. Amen.

Postlude

Fugue in A Minor

Pachelbel

Announcements

LENTEN STUDY – This Tuesday (3/8), we will begin a six-week Lenten study of the book ***The Heart of Christianity***, by Marcus Borg. We will meet from 6:45 – 8:15pm, and our meetings will be "hybrid" – which means you can join sessions either in person OR online; whatever works best for you. You may attend as few or as many sessions as you choose, and the book (including a Kindle version) is available on Amazon.

MUSIC – It's not too late to join BUCC's seasonal choir, which is beginning to prepare special music for Holy Week with our regular choir. Practices run weekly through the six weeks of Lent, on Thursday evenings from 7:00 to 7:45. Holy Week is scheduled for April 10 (Palm Sunday) through April 17 (Easter). CDs will be provided to help make the learning process easier. High school students are welcome to participate!

HOLY GROUNDS – I will be at the Brecksville Panera for coffee at 8:15 most Tuesday mornings. Anyone is welcome to stop by. There's no need for an RSVP or agenda, so you never know who might show up. Of course, if you are looking for a more traditional meeting in my office, you can always set that up too. But if you're just looking for casual conversation, stop by at Panera any Tuesday for a visit and some "holy grounds."

– Pastor John

Readings

First Reading

Deuteronomy 26:1-11 (NRSV)

When you have come into the land that the LORD your God is giving you as an inheritance to possess, and you possess it, and settle in it, you shall take some of the first of all the fruit of the ground, which you harvest from the land that the LORD your God is giving you, and you shall put it in a basket and go to the place that the LORD your God will choose as a dwelling for his name. You shall go to the priest who is in office at that time, and say to him, "Today I declare to the LORD your God that I have come into the land that the LORD swore to our ancestors to give us."

When the priest takes the basket from your hand and sets it down before the altar of the LORD your God, you shall make this response before the LORD your God: "A wandering Aramean was my ancestor; he went down into Egypt and lived there as an alien, few in number, and there he became a great nation, mighty and populous. When the Egyptians treated us harshly and afflicted us, by imposing hard labor on us, we cried to the LORD, the God of our ancestors; the LORD heard our voice and saw our affliction, our toil, and our oppression. The LORD brought us out of Egypt with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm, with a terrifying display of power, and with signs and wonders; and he brought us into this place and gave us this land, a land flowing with milk and honey. So now I bring the first of the fruit of the ground that you, O LORD, have given me." You shall set it down before the LORD your God and bow down before the LORD your God.

Then you, together with the Levites and the aliens who reside among you, shall celebrate with all the bounty that the LORD your God has given to you and to your house.

Second Reading

Luke 4:1-13 (NRSV)

Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan and was led by the Spirit in the wilderness, where for forty days he was tempted by the devil. He ate nothing at all during those days, and when they were over, he was famished.

The devil said to him, "If you are the Son of God, command this stone to become a loaf of bread."

Jesus answered him, "It is written, 'One does not live by bread alone.'"

Then the devil led him up and showed him in an instant all the kingdoms of the world. And the devil said to him, "To you I will give their glory and all this authority; for it has been given over to me, and I give it to anyone I please. If you, then, will worship me, it will all be yours."

(Continued on next page)

Readings

Second Reading (continued)

Jesus answered him, "It is written, 'Worship the Lord your God, and serve only him.'"

Then the devil took him to Jerusalem, and placed him on the pinnacle of the temple, saying to him, "If you are the Son of God, throw yourself down from here, for it is written, 'He will command his angels concerning you, to protect you,' and 'On their hands they will bear you up, so that you will not dash your foot against a stone.'"

Jesus answered him, "It is said, 'Do not put the Lord your God to the test.'"

When the devil had finished every test, he departed from him until an opportune time.

Continuing Testament

From *Life Of Pi*, by Yann Martel

That a god should put up with adversity, I could understand. The gods of Hinduism face their fair share of thieves, bullies, kidnappers and usurpers... Reversals of fortune, yes. Treachery, yes. But humiliation? Death? I couldn't imagine Lord Krishna consenting to be stripped naked, whipped, mocked, dragged through the streets and, to top it off, crucified - and at the hands of mere humans, to boot. I'd never heard of a Hindu god dying... Devils and monsters did, as did mortals, by the thousands and millions—that's what they were there for. Matter, too, fell away. But divinity should not be blighted by death. It's wrong... Why would God wish that upon Himself? Why not leave death to the mortals? Why make dirty what is beautiful, spoil what is perfect?

Love. That was Rev. Martin's answer.

There is the story of Vishnu incarnated as Vamana the dwarf. He asks of demon king Bali only as much land as he can cover in three strides. Bali laughs at this runt of a suitor and his puny request. He consents. Immediately Vishnu takes on his full cosmic size. With one stride he covers the earth, with the second the heavens, and with the third he boots Bali into the netherworld...

That is God as God should be. With shine and power and might. Such as can rescue and save and put down evil. This Son, on the other hand, who goes hungry, who suffers from thirst, who gets tired, who is sad, who is anxious, who is heckled and harassed, who has to put up with followers who don't get it and opponents who don't respect Him—what kind of a god is that? It's a god on too human a scale, that's what.

There are miracles, yes, mostly of a medical nature, a few to satisfy hungry stomachs; at best a storm is tempered, water is briefly walked upon. If that is magic, it is minor magic, on the order of card tricks. Any Hindu god can do a hundred times better.

This Jesus is a god who spent most of His time telling stories, talking. This Son is a god who walked, a pedestrian god - and in a hot place, at that - with a stride like any human stride, the sandal reaching just above the rocks along the way; and when He splurged on transportation, it was a regular donkey. This Son is a god who died in three hours, with moans, gasps and laments. What kind of a god is that? What is there to inspire in this Son?

Love, said Rev. Martin.

Love.

-- *Life Of Pi*, Yann Martel (p. 54). HarperCollins. Kindle Edition

Special Thanks:

March 6, 2022

Head Usher: Jon Thompson
Ushers: Heidi Spangler
 Jamie Tyler
Lay Reader: Diane Gressley
Greeter: Dave Bernard
Counters: Marge Culver
 Dorie Gabor
Acolyte: **Volunteer Needed**
Peace Candle: Amelia Tyler
A/V Team: Tim Wallis
Flowers Dorie Gabor
Snack: Lois Lorenzo
 Valerie Tyler
Set Up/Serve: Julie Bernard
 Sherrill Witt
Clean Up: Sherrill Witt
 Volunteer Needed
Snow Herder: Dan Stewart

March 13, 2022

Head Usher: Jill Zedan
Ushers: Evie Novak
 Volunteer Needed
Lay Reader: Sherrill Witt
Greeter: Sue Stenzel
Counters: Marge Culver
 Evie Novak
Acolyte: **Volunteer Needed**
Peace Candle: **Volunteer Needed**
A/V Team: Jim Duffy
Flowers: Janet Renovetz
Snack: Katie MacKeigan
 King
Set Up/Serve: Katie MacKeigan
 King
 Volunteer Needed
Clean Up: Dave Bernard
 Carol Miller
Snow Herder: **Volunteer Needed**