

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*

Most young adults I know aren't looking for a religion that answers all of their questions, but rather a community of faith in which they feel safe to ask them.

- Rachel Held Evans



Third Sunday in Lent, March 20th, 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!

Third Sunday in Lent - March 20th, 2022

Meditation Music

*"Are we that wait—sufficient worth—
That such Enormous Pearl
As life—dissolved be—for Us—
In Battle's—horrid Bowl?"*
--Emily Dickinson

Gathering in God's Presence

(Please Stand as you are able.)

Prelude

The Rowan Tree

Scottish traditional melody

*I heard the voice of Jesus say, 'Behold, I freely give
the living water; thirsty one, stoop down and drink, and live':
I came to Jesus, and I drank of that life-giving stream;
my thirst was quenched, my soul revived, and now I live in him.*

Horatius N. Bonar (1808-1889)

Bearing the Light of Peace / Bearing the Light of Christ

*** Call to Prayer:**

One: Hope rides on the springtime air carried aloft upon the turbulent wind,

ALL: Filling field and forest, city and town, with the incense of new life.

One: With awe and joy we greet the sun, our mysterious daystar,

ALL: Which warms and feeds our planet with energy and light and life.

One: On this day of the equinox, we celebrate that the sun has signaled once again the beginning of a new season of life.

ALL: Great and generous are you, our God, who has given us the rich variety of ever-changing seasons.

1. There's a wideness in God's mercy, like the wideness of the sea;
there's a kindness in God's justice, which is more than liberty.

There's no place where earthly sorrows are more felt than in God's heaven;
there's no place where earthly failings have such kindly judgment given.

2. For the love of God is broader than the measures of our minds;
and the heart of the Eternal is most wonderfully kind.

If our love were but more faithful, we would gladly trust God's word;
and our lives would show thanksgiving for the goodness of our God.

(Music: Dutch melody, arr. Julius Röntgen, 1906; words: Frederick William Faber, 1854; alt.)

*** Invocation: [UNISON]**

Father of Fire, Mother of Mystery, teach us the lesson of spring as all creation comes alive— tree and bush, flower and plant— in the season of the resurrection of creation. Grant us the gift, O God, to do the same. Teach us, O glorious Spring, the lesson that nothing dies completely. At the death of my body, help me to know that I have not entered an endless winter, but simply a stage in the unfolding mystery whose name is Life. On this day of the spring equinox, may I taste with delight the freshness and vitality of new birth, and come forth from the womb of winter youthful, with hope, and fully alive in the presence of our God. Amen.

*** Pastor's Call to Prayer: (Pastor John)**

Our souls thirst for God. Sometimes it's like we are parched and thirsty. Yet, we've only taken a small sip of the Living Water Jesus offers us. We have failed to drink deeply of God's wisdom. So as Scripture says, "Come, all who are thirsty, come to the water. Drink and have your fill. Live with mercy and you shall receive mercy. God's well of steadfast love will never run dry."

*** Invitation to Confession / Invitation to Growth:**

Pastor John: God, you call us to step more boldly into the light, as we awaken to become who you desire us to be. May we acknowledge our transgressions in stillness and in silence, so that we may prepare our hearts for growth.

--- (MOMENT OF SILENCE) ---

(Continued on next page)

* Invitation to Confession / Invitation to Growth: (cont.)

All: We confess that we have not always brought forth good fruit. In the midst of chaos and frenzy, we have often lost our way. Our feet have strayed from the place where we met you. Our egos have kept us from seeing our missteps. Yet, with you, we know there's another chance for change. There is another opportunity to bear good fruit. We are called to be the change that sustains generations. Let us lean toward your light and love in this Lenten season of growth and transformation.

* Words of Assurance: (Pastor John)

God's grace and mercy abound. God is with us in the change. God's everlasting arms embrace us. Each of us is beloved, affirmed, and set free. Amen.

Gathered Here (sung 2 times)

#742

Gath-ered here in the mystery of this hour, gath-ered here in one strong
bod-y, gath-ered here in the strug-gle and the power, Spir - it draw near.

God Is Still Speaking

(See back of bulletin for complete readings)

Continuing Testament From *Prayers for a Planetary Pilgrim*,
by Edward Hays

First Reading
Second Reading

Isaiah 55: 1-3, 5d-12 (The Voice)
Luke 13:1-9 (NRSV)

Time with Young Worshippers

Anthem:**Come to the Water**

Foley

Betsey Wilson, flute

*O let all who thirst, let them come to the water.**And let all who have nothing, let them come to the Lord:**without money, without price. Why should you pay the price, except for the Lord?**And let all who seek, let them come to the water.**And let all who have nothing, let them come to the Lord:**without money, without strife. Why should you spend your life,
except for the Lord?**And let all who toil, let them come to the water.**And let all who are weary, let them come to the Lord:**all who labor, without rest-- How can your soul find rest, except for the Lord?**And let all the poor, let them come to the water.**Bring the ones who are laden, bring them all to the Lord:**bring the children without might. Easy the load and light: come to the Lord.**Words suggested by **Isaiah 55:1-2; Matthew 11:28-30*****Sermon****Theological Blame Game**

Pastor John King

Hymn of Reflection:**When Peace, Like a River**

#438, v. 1-3

1. When peace, like a river, upholds me each day,
when sorrows like sea billows roll,

Whatever my lot, you have taught me to say, "It is well, it is well with my soul."

Refrain: It is well with my soul, it is well, it is well with my soul.

2. Though evil should tempt me, though trials should come,
let this blessed assurance control,

That Christ has regarded my helpless estate, and has paid life and blood
for my soul: **(Refrain)**

3. My sin--oh, the bliss of this glorious thought--my sin--not in part, but in whole--
Is nailed to the cross and I bear it no more. Praise the Lord! Praise the Lord,
O my soul! **(Refrain)**

4. O God, speed the day that is filled with your light,
when clouds are rolled back as a scroll;

The trumpet shall sound and the Lord shall appear, "even so"--it is well
With my soul. **(Refrain)**

(Music: Philip P. Bliss, 1876; words: Horatio G. Spafford, 1873; 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

Call to Share Our Tithes and Offerings: (Pastor John)

The Prophet Isaiah asks one of the most basic questions of Christian stewardship. Isaiah asks, "Why do you spend your money for that which is not bread, and your labor for that which does not satisfy?" But let this be the day we decide to make a difference, as we choose to dedicate our resources for the growth of God's kingdom on Earth.

*** Offertory Hymn:** **We now are in the time of Lent,
To learn again what Jesus meant.
His life and message are so great,
We send these gifts to celebrate. Amen.**

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

For the wondrous ways this offering will bless this community, we dedicate these gifts. For the ways it'll help us nurture caring relationships with our neighbors, we dedicate these gifts. Let this offering, and the works of our hands and feet, bear good fruit in the world.



Holy Communion

- † 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, 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 *Lift Every Voice and Sing***

#593

1. Lift every voice and sing, till earth and heaven ring,
ring with the harmonies of liberty;
Let our rejoicing rise, high as the listening skies,
let it resound loud as the rolling sea.

Sing a song full of the faith that the harsh past has taught us,
Sing a song full of the hope that the present has brought us;

Facing the rising sun of our new day begun, let us march on till victory is won.

2. Stony the road we trod, bitter the chastening rod,
felt in the days when hope unborn had died;
Yet with a steady beat, have not our weary feet,
come to the place for which our people sighed?

We have come over a way that with tears has been watered,
We have come, treading our path through the blood of the slaughtered,
Out from the gloomy past, till now we stand at last where the white gleam
of our bright star is cast.

3. God of our weary years, God of our silent tears,
God who has brought us thus far on the way;

God, who by your might, led us into the light, keep us forever in the path, we pray.
Lest our feet stray from the places, our God, where we met you,
Lest our hearts, drunk with the wine of the world, forget you;
Shadowed beneath your hand, may we forever stand, true to our God,
true to our native land.

(Music: J. Rosamond Johnson, 1921; words: James Weldon Johnson, 1921; alt.)

Hear Our Prayer, O God

#769

Hear our prayer, O God, Hear our prayer, O God;
in -
cline your ear to us, and grant us your peace.

† Benediction (Pastor John)

As we go forth to bear good fruit,
May God be with us in our hunger and thirst.
May our ears be ever inclined, listening for the good news.
May praises be on our lips even in the bleakest valley,
And May the God of peace equip us with every good thing,
to carry out God's desire for the world.
Amen.

Postlude

Healing River of the Spirit

Morris

*Wellspring of the healing Spirit,
stream that flows to bring release,
as we gain ourselves, our senses,
may our lives reflect your peace.
Grateful for the flood that heals us,
may your Church live out your grace.
As we meet both friend and stranger,
may we see our Saviour's face.*

Ruth C. Duck (b. 1947)

Announcements

TODAY'S FLOWERS are dedicated by Peg & Jim Duffy, "With gratitude in honor of our 45th wedding anniversary."

LENTEN STUDY – This Tuesday (3/22), will be the third of our six-week Lenten study of the book ***The Heart of Christianity***, by Marcus Borg. To prepare for this meeting, read through chapters 5 & 6. We will meet from 6:45 – 8:15pm, and you may attend either in-person or online - to join online, go to the website's calendar and click on the meeting listing.

MUSIC – It's still not too late to join BUCC's seasonal choir, which is beginning to prepare special music for Holy Week! Practices run 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!

FLOWERS - Flowers in the chancel area add a special touch to our Sunday morning worship. BUCC is now using the computer program Breeze to sign up and participate many ways in the Sunday services, flowers being one of them. If you care to provide flowers for the service, please sign in the flower space the week you would like to do it. You will be bringing in an arrangement, cut flowers or a plant, then taking it home or giving to someone you care about.

Dedications are handled another way. There is a calendar on the wall just inside the double doors to the narthex. Please put your name on the calendar for the date you would like, take a form from beneath the calendar and fill it out, and turn in with your payment to Joy Garapic. A member of our flower team will have the flowers up front on the designated Sunday. You may take the flowers with you following the service. See Janet Renovetz if you have questions.

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

Continuing Testament

From *Prayers for a Planetary Pilgrim*, by Edward Hays

Prehistoric priesthoods set this day apart as sacred, as a feast to celebrate the resurrection of the Earth. The Sun, radiant and healing, revitalizes the dark and dormant, as days and nights are again of equal length on the day of equinox. May the eternal experience of spring prepare each of us for a personal rebirth and resurrection. May it be a sacred sign of the promise that life rises out of death.

A true planetary pilgrim experiences this feast not as a spectator but as a concelebrant with the Earth and all creation. This day is both holy and magical, filled with hidden spirits and sounds. May your ears, eyes, and nose be attentive to the rebirth of green life pushing up through the Earth, even if it is still hidden from view. May you feel in your body the energy of the Sun calling for newness and life.

The Ancient Ones danced like children to the mystery of new life and sprouting vegetation. They lit great fires to banish the tired, aged spirits of winter and darkness. They built their bonfires to ward off the half-hidden fears that perhaps this time, this year, winter would not leave and they would die in the barren, icy darkness.

With reverence, let yourself be touched by this hidden memory as you respond to the tidal gravitational tug of planet Earth on this feast. Rejoice with all in the web of life, woven so tightly, as the season of spring begins.

See next page for
First & Second Readings

Readings

First Reading

Isaiah 55: 1-3, 5d-12 (The Voice translation)

If you are thirsty, come here; come, there's water for all. Whoever is poor and penniless can still come and buy the food I sell. There's no cost—here, have some food, hearty and delicious, and beverages, pure and good. I don't understand why you spend your money for things that don't nourish or work so hard for what leaves you empty.

Attend to Me and eat what is good; enjoy the richest, most delectable of things. Listen closely, and come even closer. My words will give life, for I will make a covenant with you that cannot be broken.

The Eternal, the Holy One of Israel, has made you beautiful. So turn your attention and seek the Eternal One while it is still possible; let those who are busy plotting violence and doing wrong stop right now, turn, and do right. Let them turn back to the Eternal so they can experience compassion. God will excuse our past wrongs. Our God's forgiveness is inexhaustible.

Second Reading

Luke 13:1-9 (NRSV)

At that very time there were some present who told Jesus about the Galileans whose blood Pilate had mingled with their sacrifices. He asked them, "Do you think that because these Galileans suffered in this way they were worse sinners than all other Galileans? No, I tell you; but unless you repent, you will all perish as they did. Or those eighteen who were killed when the tower of Siloam fell on them—do you think that they were worse offenders than all the others living in Jerusalem? No, I tell you; but unless you repent, you will all perish just as they did."

Then he told this parable: "A man had a fig tree planted in his vineyard; and he came looking for fruit on it and found none. So he said to the gardener, 'See here! For three years I have come looking for fruit on this fig tree, and still I find none. Cut it down! Why should it be wasting the soil?'"

"He replied, 'Sir, let it alone for one more year, until I dig around it and put manure on it. If it bears fruit next year, well and good; but if not, you can cut it down.'"

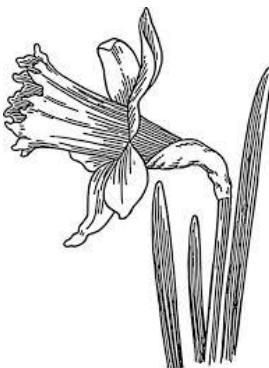
Special Thanks:

March 20, 2022

Head Usher: Sue Maier
Ushers: Evelyn Seager
 Volunteer Needed
Lay Reader: Rose Kaval
Greeter: Jon Thompson
Counters: Marge Culver
 Sue Stenzel
Acolyte: **Volunteer Needed**
Peace Candle: **Volunteer Needed**
A/V Team: Jim Duffy
Flowers: Julie Bernard
Snack: Melanie Kuzmins
 Sue Maier
Set Up/Serve: Melanie Kuzmins
 Sherrill Witt
Clean Up: Dave Bernard
 Sherrill Witt
Snow Herder: **Volunteer Needed**

March 27, 2022

Head Usher: Diane Gressley
Ushers: Jane Cribbs
 Volunteer Needed
Lay Reader: Cliff Cribbs
Greeter: Dave Bernard
Counters: Marge Culver
 Jon Thompson
Acolyte: Evelyn Kuzmins
Peace Candle: Peter Kuzmins
A/V Team: Betsey Wilson
Flowers: Tia Began
Snack: John Thompson
 Betsey Wilson
Set Up/Serve: Sue Stenzel
 Cliff Stenzel
Clean Up: Sue Stenzel
 Volunteer Needed
Snow Herder: **Volunteer Needed**



CELEBRATE EASTER WITH FLOWERS IN OUR SANCTUARY

Your Donation will buy plants that will be shared after Easter, with those who are ill or shut-in, or have recently lost a loved one. Please fill out the form at the bottom of this page, and turn it in to the Church Office.

DEADLINE – WEDNESDAY, APRIL 6, 2022

I Enclose \$12.00(?) for an Easter Plant: cash check#:

"In Memory of "

"In Honor of "

Other:

Your Name