



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*

“There is an
invincible
summer
in every
personality
which one can
learn by
going in the
depth of
the winter.”

— Robert Frost



December 11th, 2022 • 10:00 AM
Third Sunday of Advent / Cantata

Pastor

• 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 of Advent / Cantata

December 11th, 2022

Prelude

Magnificat

Praetorius

Welcome & Announcements

Quiet Meditation as Peace Candle is Brought Forward

"You either get better or you get bitter. It's that simple. You either take what has been dealt you and allow it to make you a better person, or you allow it to tear you down. The choice does not belong to fate, it belongs to you. – Josh Shipp

Gathering in God's Presence

* Please Stand as you are able.

* **Call to Worship:** (Inspired by *Luke 1:46b-55, The Magnificat*)

One: Our souls magnify the Lord. Our spirits rejoice in God our Savior!

All: We come today with eager hope, awaiting God's new revelation.

One: The mighty One has done great things! God's mercy covers generations.

All: We come today with ready peace, trusting with anticipation.

One: The One who lifted up the lowly and filled the hungry, dwells with us.

All: We come today with fervent joy, we worship with great expectation.

Hymn of Praise

Come, O Long-Expected Jesus

#122

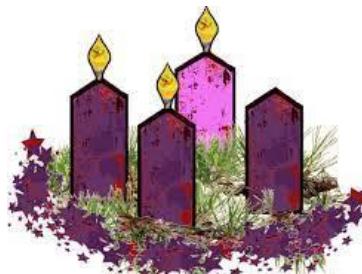
* **Invocation [Unison]**

God of Mary, Ruth, Bathsheba, and Rahab - God of us all, your children here and your children afar - we enter this moment of worship with eager anticipation.

We know that even before a child would come to lead the way, you were leading our way. From the valleys of the shadows of death, to the tables in the presence of enemies, you have never left us nor forsaken us. Your rod and your staff have guided us. Guide us now, O God.

Make your presence known as we worship you in spirit and in truth. Amen.

* **Words of Grace**



Lighting the Advent Candle

One: This morning, hear a call to rejoice.

All: May we rejoice always. For God is with us, and we are with God.

One: Sometimes we are troubled. We wonder, "What should we do?"

All: We humbly return to kindness, to justice, and to holiness.

One: On this third Sunday of Advent, we light a candle of joy, a visible symbol of the joy announced by angels and shepherds in Bethlehem, the joy Jesus brings to the world.

All: Joy to the world! The Lord is come!

One: We have lit the candles symbolizing "Hope" and "Peace." Now we light the candle symbolizing "Joy."

(Light two purple candles and one pink candle.)

One Candle is Lit

Come, festively sing while awaiting the birth,
join angels in dancing from heaven to earth.

Wave banners of good news, lift high thankful praise.

One candle is lit for the joy of these days.

(Music: William J. Kirkpatrick, 1895; text: Mary Anne Parrott, 1988)

One: Let us pray in one voice.

All: Gracious and loving God, as we await the coming of the One whom you sent, grant that our waiting might be the active kind. Give us the courage to meet the challenge of altering our thoughts and feelings about the world around us, so that our actions might also be changed. Help us to keep our priorities straight, our passions properly pointed, and our eyes fixed joyfully on you. Remind us of the call to follow you with kindness, justice and compassion. We pray in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

WELCOME **NEW MEMBERS**

Garret & Gary Brezina

Gayle Colbert

Kate Matthews

Shelly Novotney

Marilyn Pay

Invitation

Statement from Scripture

Questions of New Members

*** Congregational Welcome**

Pastor: I invite all in the congregation to stand as you are able. Let us, the members of Brecksville United Church of Christ, express our welcome and affirm our mutual ministry in Christ.

People: We welcome you joyfully as members of this congregational family. We will walk this path with you. We promise you our friendship, our support and our prayers. Empowered by the Holy Spirit may we continue to grow together in God's grace and give witness to Jesus Christ by our faith, our hope and our love.

*** Closing Prayer**

*** Greeting of Christian Love**

Pastor and Representatives: In the name of Jesus Christ, and on behalf of the Brecksville United Church of Christ, we welcome you as members of this church.

God Is Still Speaking

First Reading **Isaiah 35:1-8 (The Inclusive Bible)**
Gospel Reading **Matthew 11:2-11 (The Inclusive Bible)**
Continuing Testament by Reta Halteman Finger

Sermon *What You Hear and See* **Pastor John King**
Christmas Cantata **“Adore Him” (see program)**

The Church at Prayer

Friends of Bill Toneff, family and friends of Lenore Harris, Suzanne Patrick, George Snider, Dorie Gabor, Mac Hoppel, Dassie Matsuoka, Kathy Smith, Phyllis Hassler, Jeanne Cowden, Rose Kaval, Tina Ortiz, Terry Heiman, Cindy Burton, Elizabeth Gadus, Ann Klonowski, Sheila Day, Betty Kaul, Jan Wardlaw, Stan McCain, Dottie Faust, Jon Thompson, 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: [UNISON]

...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

*The Invitation

*** 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 [Unison]

For the wondrous ways this offering will bless this community, we dedicate these gifts. For the many ways it'll help us live out God's mission, we dedicate these gifts. May these gifts strengthen our call to do justice, love mercy, and walk humbly with the Holy One. Amen.

Going with God's Love

Hymn of Departure

Joy to the World

#132



Carrying the Light of Christ into the World – Acolyte

* Circle of Community

As we move to form a circle around the pews, we will sing ***Halle, Halle, Hallelujah (3 times)*** ***Hallelujah, Hallelujah.*** After the benediction is pronounced, we will sing it once more. Our circle is open near the door as a symbol of our welcome to new people to our community of faith.

A musical score for the hymn 'Joy to the World'. The score is in G major (two sharps) and common time. It consists of two staves of music. The top staff has lyrics: 'Hal-le, hal-le, hal - le - lu - ja.' with chords A, E, A, D, Bm, and E. The bottom staff has lyrics: 'Hal-le, hal-le, hal - le - lu - ja.' with chords A, C7, F#m, Bm, E7sus4, E7, and A. The music is repeated twice more with the same chords and lyrics.

† Benediction

Postlude

Venez, Divin Messie! (Come, Divine Messiah!)

Traditional French, arr. Gagnon

BUCC ANNOUNCEMENTS . . .

The following email was received:

"The gathering after Bill Toneff's Celebration of Life (December 3) was perfect and completed the service beautifully. A HUGE THANK YOU goes to all who assisted in any way. That would be the bakers, coffee & drink makers, those who set up tables and chairs and the decorators - including that adorable birdy tree! And, least we don't forget, the clean-uppers!"

Most gratefully,

*Karin Tanquist, Susan Jones, Doug Fawcett, Pat Coy,
Clyde Witt & Anne Melfo"*

DEADLINE TO ORDER POINSETTIAS – The deadline to buy a poinsettia dedication is Monday, December 12th (tomorrow!). To order, please complete the form on the back of today's bulletin & leave it in the church office, with your payment. If you have any questions, ask Janet Renovetz or call the office at 440-526-4364.

2022 CHRISTMAS FUND - On Sunday, December 18, we will hold a special collection for the UCC Christmas Fund. The Christmas Fund has been caring for active and retired clergy and lay employees of the United Church of Christ for over 100 years, providing emergency grants, supplementation of small annuities and health premiums, and Christmas "Thank You" gift checks each December to our lower-income retirees. United Church of Christ congregations and members have blessed the Christmas Fund with their generosity for many years. This year, your care and compassion will be especially appreciated by those servants of the church who are facing a time of need. Donations can be made in church on 12/18/22 or online at www.christmasfund.org. Checks can be made payable to "The Christmas Fund."

MUSIC – If you'd like to hear more contemporary music at Sunday services, please feel free to contact Dave Debick with song titles or names of performers you're interested in. His church email is: buccmusic23@gmail.com We can't promise that sheet music will be available for every request, but your input/feedback is always welcome and appreciated.

SNOW HERDING – It's that time of year again when the Facilities Ministry is looking for "snow herders" to keep the entrances clear and safe. Please sign up through Breeze – and remember, if there's no snow, you're free to go! Thank you!

NOTE: The church's voicemail is still unavailable. The congregation will be notified when that service is up and running again.

Readings

First Reading

Isaiah 35:1-8 (The Inclusive Bible)

Let the desert and the wilderness exult!

Let the Arabah rejoice and bloom like the crocus! Let it blossom profusely, let it rejoice and sing for joy! The glory of Lebanon is bestowed on it, the splendor of Carmel and Sharon. They will see the glory of YHWH, the splendor of our God.

Strengthen all weary hands, steady all trembling knees. Say to all those of faint heart:

“Take courage! Do not be afraid! Look, YHWH is coming, vindication is coming, the recompense of God - God is coming to save you!”

Then the eyes of the blind will be opened, the ears of the deaf will be unsealed. Then those who cannot walk will leap like deer and the tongues of those who cannot speak will sing for joy.

Waters will break forth in the wilderness, and there will be streams in the desert. The scorched earth will become a lake; the parched land, springs of water. The lairs where jackals used to dwell will become thickets of reed and papyrus. And through it will run a highway, a road called the Sacred Path.

Gospel Reading

Matthew 11:2-11 (The Inclusive Bible)

While John was in prison, he heard about the works the Messiah was performing, and sent a message by way of his disciples to ask Jesus, “Are you ‘The One who is to come’ or do we look for another?”

In reply, Jesus said to them, “Go back and report to John what you hear and see: ‘Those who are blind recover their sight; those who cannot walk are able to walk; those with leprosy are cured; those who are deaf hear; the dead are raised to life; and the anawim—the ‘have-nots’—have the Good News preached to them.’ Blessed is the one who finds no stumbling block in me.”

As the messengers set off, Jesus began to speak to the crowds about John: “What did you go out to the wasteland to see—a reed swaying in the wind? Tell me, what did you go out to see—someone luxuriously dressed No, those who dress luxuriously are to be found in royal palaces. So what did you go out to see—a prophet? Yes, a prophet—and more than a prophet!

It is about John that scripture says, ‘I send my messenger ahead of you to prepare your way before you.’ The truth is, history has not known a person born of woman who is greater than John the Baptizer. Yet the least born into the reign of heaven is greater than he.”

Readings

Continuing Testament – by Reta Halteman Finger

I was called “John the Baptist” because of that great revival movement we had down by the Jordan River. We were all so hopeful then, especially after my cousin Jesus showed up. I suspected he was The One to save our people, even after he asked me to baptize him. But when I heard that heavenly voice announcing, “This is my Son,” I knew. Judgment was coming! Jesus would know how to separate the wheat from the chaff and burn the chaff with unquenchable fire (Matthew 3:11-17)!

I was on a roll. We Jews would live by Yahweh’s law, Rome’s yoke would be cast off, and everything would change. I kept preaching and baptizing, and I even chastised Herod Antipas for his unlawful marriage (Mark 6:17-18), confident he was part of the “chaff.” Jesus was our Messiah, the Anointed One of Israel—and I had been his forerunner (Matthew 3:2-3). Yet here I am—chained to a wall in Herod’s dreary prison cell. What went wrong?

I assumed Jesus would gather and train disciples to prepare for a revolution. But rumors from my own disciples tell me this is not happening. He’s sending them out on missions to Jews, but not as I expected. They don’t even carry a backpack or a staff. Their only weapon is against physical diseases. And their promised rewards are arrests, floggings, and trials (Matthew 10:1-25). This sounds like a parody of what I was hoping for! Jesus acts more like a teacher and healer—even a prophet—but not like a king, not like an anointed Messiah!

When a few of my faithful disciples brought me food, I was feeling so disillusioned that I sent them to search for Jesus and ask him one simple question: “Are you the one who is to come—or are we to wait for another?” (Matthew 11:3). What will he say?

(*Sojourners Magazine*, February 2021)

Special Thanks:

December 11, 2022

Head Usher: Evie Novak
Ushers: Dave Bernard
Evelyn Seager
Lay Reader: Jim Duffy
Greeter: Bill Witt
Counters: Marge Culver
Janet Renovetz
Acolyte: Arthur Cook
Peace Candle: Dorothy Cook
A/V Team: Fred Pedersen
Flowers: Dorie Gabor
Snack: Cliff Stenzel
Carol Miller
Betsey Wilson
Set Up/Serve: Julie Bernard
Linda Kriyovich
Clean Up: Julie Bernard
Linda Kriyovich
Snow Herder: Cliff Cribbs

December 18, 2022

Head Usher: *Volunteer Needed*
Ushers: Evelyn Seager
Volunteer Needed
Lay Reader: Rose Kaval
Greeter: Sherrill Witt
Counters: Marge Culver
Janet Renovetz
Acolyte: *Volunteer Needed*
Peace Candle: *Volunteer Needed*
A/V Team: Jim Duffy
Poinsettias: Janet Renovetz &
Sue Stenzel
Snack: Jon Thompson
Volunteer Needed
Set Up/Serve: Julie Bernard
Casey Oliver
Clean Up: Julie Bernard
Casey Oliver
Snow Herder: *Volunteer Needed*

CELEBRATE CHRISTMAS WITH POINSETTIAS IN OUR SANCTUARY



Your Donation will buy plants which will be shared after Christmas with those who are ill, 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 – MONDAY, DECEMBER 12

***I Enclose \$13.50 _____ or other _____ for _____ Poinsettias
#***

In Memory of _____ or In Honor of _____

Of _____

Your Name

I WILL HELP DELIVER PLANTS TO SHUT-INS _____

*****PLEASE LET US KNOW IF YOU WOULD LIKE TO KEEP YOUR POINSETTIA OR
LEAVE IT HERE FOR SHUT-INS AND OTHERS*****

WILL KEEP _____ WILL NOT KEEP _____