



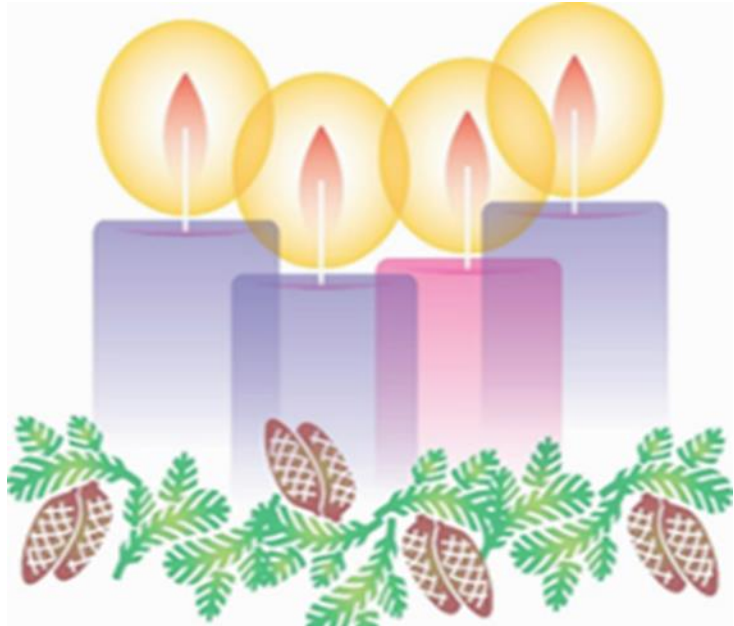
# Brecksville United Church of Christ

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

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

"Ring the bells  
that still can ring,  
forget your  
perfect offering,  
there is a crack  
in everything,  
that's how the  
light gets in."

- Leonard Cohen



December 18<sup>th</sup>, 2022 • 10:00 AM  
Fourth 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](mailto:buccoffice23@gmail.com) – web address: [www.BrecksvilleUCC.org](http://www.BrecksvilleUCC.org)***

<b>Please submit your announcements by noon on Wednesday – Thank You!</b>
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# Fourth Sunday of Advent / Cantata December 18<sup>th</sup>, 2022

Prelude

*Once in Royal David's City*

Gauntlett

Welcome & Announcements

Quiet Meditation as Peace Candle is Brought Forward

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*Even after all this time, the Sun never says to the Earth, "You owe me." Look what happens with a love like that. It lights up the whole sky. – Hafiz (1325-1390)*

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## ***Gathering in God's Presence***

*\* Please Stand as you are able.*

**\* Call to Worship:** *(Inspired by Psalm 80:1-7, 17-19)*

One: We come seeking a sign from You, the Eternal One.

**All: Restore us, O God; let your face shine, that we may be saved.**

One: We come seeking to know You, the One who dwells with us always.

**All: Restore us, O God; let your face shine, that we may be saved.**

One: We come seeking to witness your love, a child to be born in a coming night.

**All: Restore us, O God; let your face shine, that we may be saved.**

Hymn of Praise

*O Come, All You Faithful*

#135, v. 1-3

**\* Invocation [Unison]** *(Inspired by Psalm 80:1-7, 17-19)*

**God of love - ferocious love, fierce love, unending love, everlasting love - We gather with gratitude for the ways your love has called us out of bleakest night and into your marvelous light. We know of your renown, and we stand in awe of your work. In our own time revive it; in our own time make it known. Give ear, O Shepherd of Israel. Stir up your might in this place. Give us life, and we will call on your name as we worship you in spirit and in truth. Amen.**

**\* Words of Assurance**



## ***Lighting the Advent Candle***

One: Elizabeth had lost hope of ever having a baby. The presence of new life filled her with hope.

**All: May the light of Christ fill us with hope.**

One: Elizabeth did not know why Mary came rushing through her doors, but the leap of her unborn child filled her with the knowledge of the Lord. The knowledge of the Lord filled her with peace.

**All: May the light of Christ fill us with peace.**

One: John the Baptist, while in the womb of his mother, expressed the joy of generations to come. The faith of Mary filled the unborn babe with joy.

**All: May the light of Christ fill us with joy.**

One: In a moment filled with hope, in a moment filled with peace, in a moment filled with joy, Mary opens her mouth to sing, "My soul magnifies the Lord, and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior..." Mary rejoices in the God who helps the oppressed; Mary rejoices in the God who loves the hungry. Mary, unseen by the powerful of the world, is filled with the light and made powerful by a God bent on overturning the world with a young woman and newborn babe.

**All: We have lit the Advent Candles symbolizing Hope, Peace and Joy. Now we light the candle symbolizing Love. Like the first disciple Mary, let the light of Christ fill us with love.**

## ***One Candle is Lit***

Come, wander where lion and lamb gently play,  
where evil is banished and faith takes the day,  
a babe in a manger to fool the world's eyes.

One candle is lit for God's loving surprise.

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

One: Please join me in prayer.

**All: God of Love, we thank you for bringing the light of Christ into the world. May the love shared by Elizabeth and Mary serve as a beacon for our own affections. May we, like Mary, create love that exalts the lowly and makes low the proud. May we all bear the light that changes the world. Amen.**

## ***God Is Still Speaking***

(See back of bulletin for complete readings)

First Reading     **Isaiah 7:10-14 (The Inclusive Bible)**

Gospel Reading   **Matthew 1:18-25 (NRSV)**

Continuing Testament by Edward Hays

**Sermon**

***Emmanuel***

Pastor John King

**Children's Pageant**

**"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]**

We dedicate these gifts that have been shared for the fortification of the beloved community. Let these gifts do justice in the world so that all may know they are loved by God. Amen.

***Going with God's Love***

Hymn of Departure

*Good Christian Friends, Rejoice*

#129



***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.

Hal-le, hal-le, hal - le - lu - ja. Hal-le, hal-le, hal - le - lu - ja.

Hal-le, hal-le, hal - le - lu - ja. Hal-le, hal-le, hal - le - lu - ja.

**† Benediction**

Postlude

*As Shepherds Filled with Joy*

Traditional Puerto Rican carol

## ***BUCC ANNOUNCEMENTS . . .***

**WELCOME** to all our guests who are worshipping with us today. Please sign our guest book before you go and thank you for coming!

**2022 CHRISTMAS FUND** – Today we will have 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 today’s collection or online at **[www.christmasfund.org](http://www.christmasfund.org)**. Checks can be made payable to "The Christmas Fund."

**CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICE** – Please join us on Saturday, 12/24, at 10pm, for prayer, song and candlelight.

**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 7:10-14 (The Inclusive Bible)

Once more YHWH spoke to Ahaz and said, "Ask for a sign from YHWH your God; let it be deep as the netherworld, or high as the sky!"

But Ahaz answered, "I will not ask! I will not put YHWH to a test!"

Then Isaiah said, "Listen, O House of David! Is it not enough for you to weary those around you, must you also weary my God? Therefore, the Holy One will give you a sign: This young woman will become pregnant and will give birth. You will name the child "Immanu-El" that is, "God is Among Us."

### Gospel Reading

#### Matthew 1:18-25 (NRSV)

Now the birth of Jesus the Messiah took place in this way. When his mother Mary had been engaged to Joseph, but before they lived together, she was found to be with child from the Holy Spirit. Her husband Joseph, being a righteous man and unwilling to expose her to public disgrace, planned to dismiss her quietly.

But just when he had resolved to do this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, "Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife, for the child conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. She will bear a son, and you are to name him Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins."

All this took place to fulfill what had been spoken by the Lord through the prophet: "Look, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall name him Emmanuel," which means, "God is with us."

When Joseph awoke from sleep, he did as the angel of the Lord commanded him; he took her as his wife, but had no marital relations with her until she had borne a son; and he named him Jesus.





## Readings

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

As we approach the winter solstice, the sun seems to have halted in its long southerly journey. It seems to have slowed and paused, deciding whether to continue moving away from Earth, lessening in its light. It is as if it were contemplating a headlong plunge outward into darkness.

The prospect of such a decision terrified our ancient ancestors and so gave birth to one of the primal holy days - or rather holy nights - the winter solstice.

Fearful that darkness and death would rule over the Earth, our ancient forebears circled sacred fires built on hilltops and in holy places. Roaring prayers of red and yellow flames petitioned the gods to bring back the sun. On the winter solstice, the Old Ones danced about fires and chanted hymns to the sun's glory. They wanted to awaken the sun, lest they and all creation die in the freezing darkness of an endless winter.

Watching and waiting are the ritual activities of the winter solstice. It is a sacred night, full of echoes. If you listen carefully, you can hear century-old chants. The ancient ones saw, in this cosmic event, the death of an old sun and the birth of an infant sun.

Wrapped in December darkness, those in the northern hemisphere also have made it a vigil feast of the birth of the Son of God, the Light of Lights, the Prince of Peace.



# Special Thanks:

## December 18, 2022

**Head Usher:** *Volunteer Needed*  
**Ushers:** Evie Novak  
Evelyn Seager  
**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:** Mindy Harris-Wade  
Jon Thompson  
**Set Up/Serve:** Julie Bernard &  
Casey Oliver  
**Clean Up:** Julie Bernard &  
Casey Oliver  
Sue Stenzel  
**Snow Herder:** Wes Novak



## December 24, 2022

**Head Usher:** *Volunteer Needed*  
**Ushers:** Carol Miller  
Jon Thompson  
**Lay Reader:** Diane Gressley  
**Greeter:** Pat Rehm  
**Acolyte:** *Volunteer Needed*  
**Peace Candle:** *Volunteer Needed*  
**A/V Team:** Jim Duffy  
**Poinsettias:** Janet Renovetz &  
Sue Stenzel  
**Snow Herder:** *Volunteer Needed*

## December 25<sup>th</sup>, 2022 – Christmas Day

Please join us in Pilgrim Hall on  
Christmas morning, for carols, sharing  
and fellowship.



## 2021 Poinsettia Dedications

Dedicated by:

Julie Bernard &  
Linda Kriynovich In Memory of Tony, Julie & Lori Gorenc.

Jane & Cliff Cribbs In Memory of Loved Ones.

Peg & Jim Duffy In Memory of Aunt Jill.

Joy Garapic In Memory of William Garapic, beloved Husband,  
Father, and Grandfather.

Diane Gressley In Memory of Evan & Emma Gressley, and  
Pauline Farina.

Rose & Vince  
Kaval In Memory of our Families.

Eric Rahnenfueher In Memory of Jan & Marjorie Rahnenfueher.

David Ritchey

Sherrill & Bill Witt In memory of the following: Shirley & Arch Duncan,  
the Witt family, the McIntosh family, and the Bishop  
& Pearl families. And in honor of the Light & Love  
that radiates from BUCC year-round.

Jill Zedan In Memory of Beloved Family and Dear Friends who  
are especially missed during this season.

NOTES: \_\_\_\_\_

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