



Brecksville

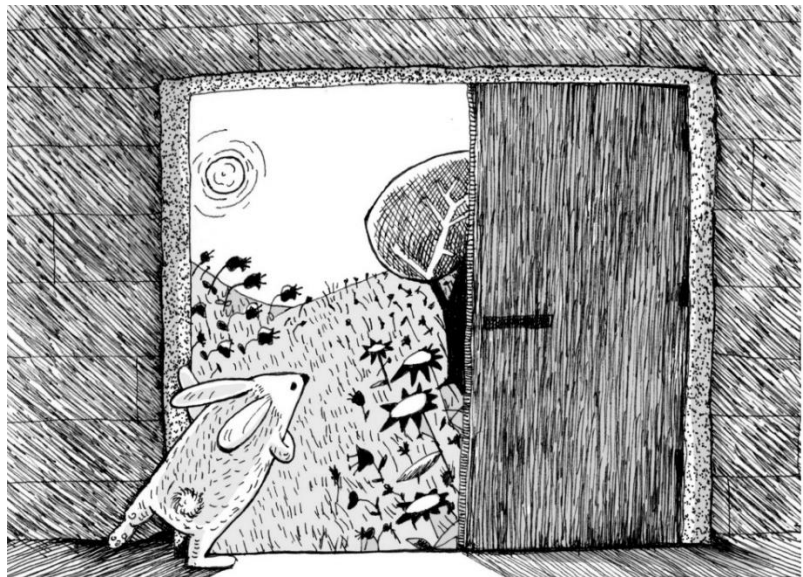
United Church of Christ

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

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

"... Enter into the Light" – John 3:21

"It is not more
surprising
to be born
twice . . .
everything
in nature is
resurrection."
- Voltaire



Second Sunday in Lent - March 5th, 2023 • 10:00 AM

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!

Second Sunday in Lent

March 5th, 2023

Prelude

Meditation

Mussorgsky

Welcome & Announcements

Quiet Meditation as Peace Candle is Brought Forward

*"Yesterday I was clever, so I wanted to change the world.
Today I am wise, so I am changing myself." — Rumi*

Gathering in God's Presence

** Please Stand as you are able.*

*** Call to Prayer:**

Leader: From the safety and comfort of home, God called Abram and Sarai to go from all they knew to embrace a future yet to be revealed.

All: "Go!" God says, and our hesitant hearts place one foot in front of the other to trust God and to go forth into the unknown.

Leader: By night, Nicodemus came seeking greater insight into the teachings of God for the journey set before him. Jesus called him out of the shadows and towards a life born anew.

All: "Go!" God calls us to go towards a new life that awaits us. We reach towards God who has not come to condemn the world but to offer a salve that can heal all wounds.

Leader: We fear the unknown and that which we lack in understanding. "How can this be?" we proclaim with Nicodemus. And yet, God's call is one that urges us to go with our whole self into that unknowing, trusting that God will provide a way.

All: Love calls us forth into lives of transformation, born again into new paths of faith. Though we do not know our final destination, God has promised to never leave us alone. Let us follow the One who shows us the way.

* Hymn of Praise

Love Divine, All Loves Excelling

#43

* **Invocation [Unison]**

God of calls and courage, you draw us towards your loving embrace even as we face what seems like impossibility. We experience heartache and grief, injustice and cruelty, fear and anxiety as daily teachers on this path of faith. As you call us to go into an uncertain and unknown future, O God, grant us the courage needed to let go of all that we have known so that we can take hold of the new life you are bringing about even now. Though we may not know where we are going, God, your way is revealed moment by moment, step by step, and breath by breath. In the name of the One who so loves the world we pray. Amen.

* **Assurance of God's Call**

* **Song of Praise:**

Glory to God

Pablo Sosa, 1988

Glory, glory, glory –
glory to God in the highest! (2X's)

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

Readings

(See back of bulletin for complete readings)

First Reading **Genesis 12:1-4 (The Inclusive Bible)**

Gospel Reading **John 3:1-9, 16-21 (The Voice Translation &
The Inclusive Bible Translation)**

Continuing Testament by Valarie Kaur



Time With Young Worshippers



Anthem

Born Again

Third Day

1. *(Men) Well, today I found myself, after searching all these years.
And the man that I saw, he wasn't at all who I thought he'd be.
(Women) Well, I was lost when You found me here, and I was broken beyond repair.
Then You came along and You sang Your song over me.
Chorus: It feels like I'm born again, it feels like I'm living
for the very first time, for the very first time in my life.*
 2. *Make a promise to me now, reassure my heart somehow,
that the love that I feel is so much more real than anything.
I've a feeling in my soul, and I pray that I'm not wrong,
that the life I have now, it is only the beginning. (Chorus)*
 3. *Wasn't looking for something that was more than what I had yesterday.
Then You came to me, and You gave to me life and love
that I've never known, that I've never felt before. (Chorus)*
 4. *I'm living for the first time. It feels like I'm breathing,
it feels like I'm moving for the very first time.
I'm living for the first time in my life.*
- (Music: Third Day; words: Mac Powell; © 2008 Consuming Fire Music, ASCAP)*

Sermon

“Enter Into the Light”

by Pastor John King

Hymn of Reflection

God Loved the World

#208

The Church at Prayer

The family and friends of Jeanne Cowden, Dorie Gabor, Caroline Chandler, Jim Brownlow (Betsey Wilson's brother), Joanne Frable (Sue Stenzel's sister), Suzanne Patrick, George Snider, Mac Hoppel, Dassy Matsuoaka, Kathy Smith, Phyllis Hassler, 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 Thanksgiving & Dedication [Unison]**

O God who calls us to go out into the world with generosity, may these gifts call us from our lives of comfort and towards a faith journey that embraces your love, justice, and compassion for a world in need of your healing. In the name of Christ we pray. Amen.

Holy Communion

**Communion Hymn *Bread of the World, in Mercy Broken* #346 - AND -
Jesus Is Here Right Now #348**



Prayer after Communion: [UNISON]

Almighty God, we give you thanks for the gift of our Savior's presence in the simplicity and splendor of this holy meal.

Unite us with all who are nourished by Christ's body and blood, that we may faithfully proclaim the good news of your love and that your universal church may be a rainbow of hope in an uncertain world; through Jesus Christ our Redeemer. Amen.

Going with God's Love

* Hymn of Departure *God Our Author and Creator*

#530

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 **Hear Our Prayer, O God** (**below**). 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.



The image shows two staves of musical notation in G major (one sharp) and 4/4 time. The melody is simple and hymn-like. The lyrics are: "Hear our prayer, O God, Hear our prayer, O God; in - cline your ear to us, and grant us your peace."

* **Benediction**

Postlude

The Love of God Will Carry Us

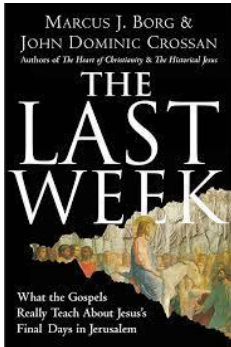
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“NOTHING GREAT IS
EVER ACHIEVED
WITHOUT MUCH
ENDURING.”

- ST. CATHERINE OF SIENA

Announcements:

LENTEN PROJECT – In the next few weeks, the kids will be selling their handmade items during coffee hour. All of the proceeds for this year's Lenten project will go to the Cleveland Foodbank.



LENTEN SERIES – The second session of our Lenten Study series is tomorrow evening (Monday) at 6:30. We are covering the book *The Last Week: What the Gospels Really Teach About Jesus's Final Days in Jerusalem* (Borg & Crossan). Registration is required, and all of the sessions are on Monday evenings at 6:30, through March 27th.

This week, prepare by reading chapters two and three.

SEASONAL CHOIR – It's not too late to join us in preparing for Holy Week! Practices are on Thursday evenings, from 7:00–7:50. If you enjoy singing in a group setting, consider joining us on this musical/spiritual journey. All are welcome to participate, including high school students.

ONE GREAT HOUR OF SHARING – A request from the OCWM (Our Church's Wider Mission) ministry:

"Hello everyone, I am writing this to let you know that we are going to have our annual "One Great Hour of Sharing" offering on Sunday, March 19th. I hope that you will be able to join in the support of this very worthy cause.

Thank you,
Rob Grow"

GAME NIGHT – The following event is brought to you by the Membership Ministry:

"*WHEN?* March 24, 6:00pm. *WHERE?* BUCC. *WHY?* Why not?!"

Enjoy a night of fun & games with church family - bring a game to share (optional), a snack or appetizer to share, and a friend to enjoy the fun. Beverages will be provided, and YOU will provide the fun and fellowship!"

Cover art, "Into the Light," by Karen Sandstrom.

Attendance on Sunday, February 26, 2023 – Adults: 53; Kids: 5; Live Stream: 11; Total: 69

Readings

First Reading: "The Call of Abram" Genesis 12:1-4 (The Inclusive Bible)

YHWH said to Abram, "Leave your country, your people, and the home of your parents, and go to a place I will show you. I will make of you a great people. I will bless you and make your name so great that it will be used in blessings. I will bless those who bless you, and I will curse those who curse you. And all the people on the face of the earth will be blessed through you." Abram, who was 75 years old when he left Haran, began the journey as YHWH had instructed, and his nephew Lot went with them.

Gospel Reading: "Nicodemus" John 3:1-9, 16-21 (The Voice & The Inclusive Bible translations)

Nicodemus was one of the Pharisees, a man with some clout among his people. He came to Jesus under the cloak of darkness to question Him.

Nicodemus said, "Teacher, some of us have been talking. You are obviously a teacher who has come from God. The signs You are doing are proof that God is with You."

Jesus said to Nicodemus, "I tell you the truth: only someone who experiences birth for a second time can hope to see the kingdom of God."

Nicodemus responded, "I am a grown man. How can someone be born again when he is old like me? Am I to crawl back into my mother's womb for a second birth? That's impossible!"

Jesus said, I tell you the truth, if someone does not experience water and Spirit birth, there's no chance they will make it into God's kingdom. Like from like. Whatever is born from flesh is flesh; whatever is born from Spirit (πνεῦμα/pneuma) is spirit (πνεῦμα/pneuma). Don't be shocked by My words, but I tell you the truth. Even you, an educated and respected man among your people, must be reborn to enter the kingdom of God. The wind (πνεῦμα/pneuma) blows all around us as if it has a will of its own; we feel and hear it, but we do not understand where it has come from or where it will end up. Life in the Spirit (πνεῦμα/pneuma) is as if it were the wind (πνεῦμα/pneuma) of God.

But Nicodemus said, "I still do not understand how this can be."

Jesus said, "God expressed love for the world in this way: God gave God's Son so that whoever believes will not face everlasting destruction, but will have everlasting life. Here's the point. God didn't send the Son into the world to judge; instead, He is here to rescue a world *headed toward certain destruction*. No one who believes in Him has to fear condemnation, yet condemnation is already the reality for everyone who refuses to believe, because they reject the name of the begotten Son of God."

(Continued on next page)

Readings

Gospel Reading: *(continued)*

“Why does God allow for judgment and condemnation? Because the Light, sent from God, pierced through the world’s darkness to expose ill motives, hatred, gossip, greed, violence, and the like. Still some people preferred the darkness over the light because their actions were dark. Some of humankind hated the light. They scampered hurriedly back into the darkness where vices thrive and wickedness flourishes.

Those who abandon deceit and embrace what is true, they will enter into the light where it will be clear that all their deeds come from God.”

Continuing Testament – By Valarie Kaur



“In our tears and agony, we hold our children close and confront the truth: The future is dark.

But my faith dares me to ask: What if this darkness is not the darkness of the tomb, but the darkness of the womb?

What if all the mothers who came before us, who survived genocide and occupation, slavery and Jim Crow, racism and xenophobia and Islamophobia, political oppression and sexual assault, are standing behind us now, whispering in our ear: You are brave. What if this is our Great Contraction before we birth a new future?

Remember the wisdom of the midwife: “Breathe,” she says. Then: “Push.”

Now it is time to breathe. But soon it will be time to push; soon it will be time to fight - for those we love - Muslim father, Sikh son, trans daughter, indigenous brother, immigrant sister, white worker, the poor and forgotten, and the ones who cast their vote out of resentment and fear.

In the name of the Divine within us and around us, we find everlasting optimism. Within your will, may there be grace for all of humanity.”

Special Thanks:

March 5, 2023

Head Usher: *Volunteer Needed*
Ushers: Evelyn Seager
Sue Stenzel
Lay Reader: Jim Duffy
Greeter: *Volunteer Needed*
Counters: Marge Culver
Janet Renovetz
Acolyte: *Volunteers Needed*
Peace Candle: *Volunteers Needed*
A/V Team: Betsey Wilson
Flowers: Lent
Snack: *Volunteers Needed*
Set Up/Serve: *Volunteers Needed*
Clean Up: *Volunteers Needed*
Snow Herder: *Volunteer Needed*



MARCH 12, 2023

Head Usher: *Volunteers Needed*
Ushers: Evelyn Seager
Carole Snider
Lay Reader: Michelle Rogers
Greeter: Sue Stenzel
Counters: Marge Culver
Janet Renovetz
Acolyte: *Volunteers Needed*
Peace Candle: *Volunteers Needed*
A/V Team: Jim Duffy
Flowers: Lent
Snack: Katie MacKeigan King
Set Up/Serve: Casey Oliver
Volunteer Needed
Clean Up: *Volunteers Needed*
Snow Herder: *Volunteer Needed*

LENTEN SERIES — Mondays, February 27 – March 27 at 6:30 PM

Let's reflect on the meaning of Holy Week with the book, The Last Week: What the Gospels Really Teach About Jesus's Final Days in Jerusalem, by Marcus Borg and John Dominic Crossan. You may be familiar with Marcus Borg; last year we studied his book The Heart of Christianity.

Using the gospel of Mark as their guide, Borg and Crossan present a day-by-day account of Jesus's final week of life. Informed, challenged, and inspired by the biblical texts, we meet the historical Jesus, who engages us and invites us to walk with him.

This study will help us to understand what happened in Holy Week and why Jesus died. This reveals that Jesus calls us to personal transformation and action on behalf of the oppressed and disadvantaged.

Sessions will be "hybrid"; you can join either in-person or online. We'll meet in-person in the Parlor and online at **[BrecksvilleUCC.org/announcements/calendar](https://www.brecksvilleucc.org/announcements/calendar)**.

If you would like to participate, please let us know so we can prepare a place for you and order books. Either fill out the registration form below and drop it in the collection plate, or email Pastor John at **buccpastor23@gmail.com**.

(To register, return the completed bottom portion in the collection plate today.)

Name(s): _____

Please order _____ book(s) (\$12 ea. – pay later)
quantity

I will get my own book(s)

How do you expect to join? In-Person Online Maybe little of both