



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*

"I once
was lost,
but now
I'm found.
Was blind,
but now
I see."

— John Newton



A NEW VISION

Fourth Sunday of Lent - March 19th, 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!

Fourth Sunday of Lent - March 19th, 2023

Prelude

La ténèbre (The darkness)

Berthier (Taizé Community)

Betsey Wilson, flute

*"Our darkness is never darkness in your sight:
the deepest night is clear as the daylight."*

(© 1991 Ateliers et Presses de Taizé, published in North America by GIA Publications, Inc.)

Welcome & Announcements

Quiet Meditation as Peace Candle is Brought Forward

*"Blessed are they who see beautiful things in humble places
where others see nothing." – Camille Pissaro*

Gathering in God's Presence

** Please Stand as you are able.*

*** Call to Worship:**

Leader: Kindred of God, a new vision of leadership is called forth and God calls upon the least likely, the unheard of, and the humble of heart to assemble to receive anointing.

All: In peace, we anoint the forgotten, the youngest, smallest, and unlikeliest of siblings whom God has raised up to serve.

Leader: Though the call may involve risk and danger, we are called to listen, obey, and live a love unwavering.

All: In peace, we anoint the disinherited and dismissed.

Leader: God's call does not depend on our outward appearance or our earthly achievements.

All: In peace, we anoint neighbor and kin alike, knowing God looks upon the heart. Let us open our hearts to God this day. Amen.

*** Hymn of Praise**

Amazing Grace

#547

*** Prayer of Invocation: [Unison]**

Anointed One, your love comes peaceably into our lives if we will but let it. We are so fixated on the familiar, and the expected, that we often lose sight of what you are raising up right in our very midst. Enliven us with your Spirit this day so that we might get a glimpse of your peace. Take what we might imagine as too small for your kingdom and use it to open the world to your overflowing abundance and provision for all that you have created. In the name of Jesus the Christ 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 **1 Samuel 16: 1-13 (The Voice Translation)**

Gospel Reading **John 9:1-41 (The Message)**

Continuing Testament By Marcus Borg



Time With Young Worshippers



Anthem

Blin' Man Stood on the Road an' Cried Traditional spiritual, arr. White

Blin' man stood on the road and cried. (twice) Cryin', Oh, Lord, show me the way.

Blin' man stood on the road and cried.

Cryin', help me, Oh Lord, if you please, if you please. Help me, Lord, if you please.

Cryin', Oh Lord, show me the way. Blin' man stood on the road and cried.

Lord, I stood on the road and cried. (twice) Cryin', Oh Lord, show me the way.

Blin' man stood on the road and cried.

(Music and Words: traditional spiritual; arr. Clayton White, Copyright © 2006 by GIA Publications, Inc.)

Sermon

“New Vision”

by Pastor John King

Hymn of Reflection

O Grant Us Light

#469

The Church at Prayer

Suzanne Patrick, Dorie Gabor, Caroline Chandler, Joanne Frable (Sue Stenzel's sister), Jim Brownlow (Betsey Wilson's brother), Evelyn Seager, George Snider, Mac Hoppel, Dassie Matsuoka, Kathy Smith, Jon Thompson, Phyllis Hassler, Rose Kaval, Tina Ortiz, Terry Heiman, Cindy Burton, Elizabeth Gadus, Ann Klonowski, Sheila Day, Betty Kaul, Jan Wardlaw, Stan McCain, Dottie Faust, 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 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 and Thanksgiving: [Unison]

Generous God, accept our offerings, and use these gifts for the healing and tender care of your hurting world. May your cup of love overflow and abide with those who are hurting and heartbroken, forgotten and despised, so that we may all be made whole. Amen.

Going with God's Love

* Hymn of Departure

Be Now My Vision

#451

Carrying the Light of Christ into the World – Acolyte

* Circle of Community



* Benediction

Postlude

Kyrie Eleison (Lord, Have Mercy)

Berthier (Taizé Community)

Announcements:

TODAY'S FLOWERS are dedicated by Lois Lorenzo, on the 3rd anniversary of the passing of Rudy Lorenzo, "In fond memory of my husband and Bridget's father."

ONE GREAT HOUR OF SHARING – There is a special offering being taken **today** – please see the insert in today's bulletin for more information.

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 – This week's study will cover chapters 6 & 7. We will meet tomorrow evening at 6:30, and if you wish to attend remotely, the link is on the church's website calendar.

MINDFULNESS & MEDITATION has a new meeting space! Until the heat is restored in the Parlor, we will be meeting downstairs in Pilgrim Hall, on Wednesdays from 11am – noon.

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!"

MAUNDY THURSDAY SOUP SUPPER - Please join us in Fellowship Hall, for a soup supper at **6:30 pm on Thursday, April 6th**. It will be followed by a service at 7:00 pm. If your last name begins with N-Z, please bring a loaf of bread to share.

NEW SIGNAGE – The Facilities ministry has concluded that signage is necessary at the church's parking lot entrance. The lettering will match the signage over the front doors, and the cost of each letter is \$75. Your contribution in any amount will be greatly appreciated! Be sure to designate your contributions "Rear Signage".

SAVE THE DATE - Let's Go Bowling! The Membership ministry is planning a bowling outing on **Sunday April 30, from 1-3 pm**, at North Woods Lanes in Macedonia (10435 Valley View Road). The price is \$14.00 per person, which includes bowling for 2 hours, shoe rental, 2 pieces of pizza and beverages (soft drinks and water). See David Pastor to sign up – you can obtain his contact info by calling or emailing the church office.

FOOD DONATIONS - Please note the basket outside the church office accepts nonperishable food items any time. We have several church members who take the items to local food banks, once it is filled. Feel free to contribute at any time!

Attendance on Sunday, March 12th, 2023 – Adults: 71; Kids: 11; Live Stream: 7; Total: 89

Readings

First Reading

1 Samuel 16: 1-13 (The Voice Translation)

The Eternal One spoke to Samuel, "How long will you mourn over Saul? I have rejected him as king over my people Israel. Now take your horn, fill it with oil, and depart. I have selected a new king for me from among the sons of Jesse of Bethlehem."

But Samuel responded, "How can I do that? If King Saul hears I am anointing a new king, he will kill me!"

The Eternal One directed him, "Take a heifer with you, and say, 'I have come to sacrifice to the Eternal One.' Invite Jesse to that sacrifice, and when he arrives, I will show you what to do. You will anoint for me the one I show to you."

Samuel did as the Eternal One had told him, and he went to Bethlehem. The elders of the city came out to him, unsure of what business he had there, saying, "Do you come in peace?"

Samuel said, "Yes, in peace. I have come to sacrifice to the Eternal One. Sanctify yourselves and come with me." And Samuel consecrated Jesse and his sons and invited them to the sacrifice as well.

When they came, he noticed the eldest son, Eliab. Samuel thought to himself, *Surely this is the one the Eternal One will anoint.* But the Eternal One instructed Samuel, "Take no notice of his looks or his height. He is not the one, for the Eternal One does not pay attention to what humans value. Humans only care about the external appearance, but the Eternal considers the inner character."

So Jesse called his other son, Abinadab and brought him to Samuel. Samuel looked at him and said, "The Eternal has not chosen him either." Then Jesse brought his next son, Shammah in front of Samuel. Samuel looked at him and said again, "The Eternal has not chosen him either." Jesse walked seven of his sons in front of Samuel, and each time, Samuel refused them because the Eternal One had chosen none of them. Then Samuel said to Jesse, "Are all your sons here?"

Jesse answered, "All but the youngest. He is off keeping the sheep."

Samuel said, "Send for him, and bring him here. We will not rest until he arrives."

Jesse sent for the youngest son, David, and he came in front of Samuel. He was a handsome boy, with a healthy complexion and bright eyes. Samuel heard Eternal One calling, "Rise and anoint him, because this is the one I choose as your king." Then Samuel took the horn filled with olive oil and anointed David as king.

Readings

Gospel Reading: “The Man Born Blind” John 9:1-41 (The Message)

Walking down the street, Jesus saw a man blind from birth. His disciples asked, “Rabbi, who sinned: this man or his parents, causing him to be born blind?”

Jesus said, “You’re asking the wrong question. You’re looking for someone to blame. There is no such cause-effect here. Look instead for what God can do. We need to be energetically at work for the One who sent me here, working while the sun shines. When night falls, the workday is over. For as long as I am in the world, there is plenty of light. I am the Light of the world.” He said this and then spit in the dirt, made a clay paste with the saliva, rubbed the paste on the blind man’s eyes, and said, “Go, wash at the Pool of Siloam” (Siloam means “Sent”). The man went and washed—and saw!

Soon the town was buzzing. His relatives and those who year after year had seen him as a blind man begging were saying, “Why, isn’t this the man we knew, who sat here and begged?” Others said, “It’s him all right!” But others objected, “It’s not the same man at all. It just looks like him.” He said, “It’s me, the very one.”

They said, “How did your eyes get opened?”

He said, “A man named Jesus made a paste and rubbed it on my eyes and told me, ‘Go to Siloam and wash.’ I did what he said. When I washed, I saw.”

“So where is he?”

“I don’t know.”

They marched the man to the Pharisees. This day when Jesus made the paste and healed his blindness was the Sabbath. The Pharisees grilled him again on how he had come to see. He said, “He put a clay paste on my eyes, and I washed, and now I see.”

Some of the Pharisees said, “Obviously, this man can’t be from God. He doesn’t keep the Sabbath.” Others countered, “How can a bad man do miraculous, God-revealing things like this?” There was a split in their ranks. They came back at the blind man, “You’re the expert. He opened your eyes. What do you say about him?” He said, “He is a prophet.”

The Jews didn’t believe it, didn’t believe the man was blind to begin with. So they called the parents of the man now bright-eyed with sight. They asked them, “Is this your son, the one you say was born blind? So how is it that he now sees?”

His parents said, “We know he is our son, and we know he was born blind. But we don’t know how he came to see—haven’t a clue about who opened his eyes. Why don’t you ask him? He’s a grown man and can speak for himself.”

(Continued on next page)

Readings

Gospel Reading (continued)

(His parents were talking like this because they were intimidated by the Jewish leaders, who had already decided that anyone who took a stand that this was the Messiah would be kicked out of the synagogue. That's why his parents said, "Ask him. He's a grown man.")

They called the man back a second time—the man who had been blind—and told him, "Give credit to God. We know this man is an impostor."

He replied, "I know nothing about that one way or the other. But I know one thing for sure: I was blind ... I now see."

They said, "What did he do to you? How did he open your eyes?"

"I've told you over and over and you haven't listened. Why do you want to hear it again? Are you so eager to become his disciples?"

With that they jumped all over him. "You might be a disciple of that man, but we're disciples of Moses. We know for sure that God spoke to Moses, but we have no idea where this man even comes from."

The man replied, "This is amazing! You claim to know nothing about him, but the fact is, he opened my eyes! It's well known that God isn't at the beck and call of sinners, but listens carefully to anyone who lives in reverence and does God's will. That someone opened the eyes of a man born blind has never been heard of - ever. If this man didn't come from God, he wouldn't be able to do anything."

They said, "You're nothing but dirt! How dare you take that tone with us!" Then they threw him out in the street.

Jesus heard that they had thrown him out, and went and found him. He asked him, "Do you believe in the Chosen One?"

The man said, "Point him out to me, sir, so that I can believe in him." Jesus said, "You're looking right at him. Don't you recognize my voice?"

"Yes, I believe," the man said, and worshiped him.

Jesus then said, "I came into the world to bring everything into the clear light of day, making all the distinctions clear, so that those who have never seen will see, and those who have made a great pretense of seeing will be exposed as blind."

Some Pharisees overheard him and said, "Does that mean you're calling us blind?"

Jesus said, "If you were really blind, you would be blameless, but since you claim to see everything so well, you're accountable for every fault and failure."

Readings

Continuing Testament – From *The Heart of Christianity*, by Marcus Borg

Excerpts from Chapter 9, “Sin and Salvation”:

Is “sin” the best comprehensive term for naming our problem?

... When sin becomes the one-size-fits-all designator of the human condition, then forgiveness becomes the one-size-fits-all remedy. And this is the problem. If the issue is blindness, what we need is not forgiveness, but sight. If the issue is bondage, what we need is not forgiveness, but liberation...

But forgiveness doesn't address the problems themselves. We may pray, “Forgive us our blindness,” but if we're blind, we need to see—forgiveness doesn't help us to see...

Should we use “sin” as the blanket designator, the common denominator, the root diagnosis of what ails us? Or should we use it as one designator among the many biblical images for what ails us? For very practical reasons, I favor letting go of sin as the umbrella description for the human problem. It would remain as one way of speaking about what is wrong.

The problem is not simply that we have been bad and have rebelled against God (though that may be true), but that we are blind, estranged, lost, in exile, self-centered, wounded, sick, paralyzed, in bondage, grasping, and so forth. Forgiveness doesn't speak to these issues. But the central images of the Christian life as a “way” do: it is a way of return from exile, of reconnection; it is way of liberation from bondage; a way in which our sight is restored; a way of having our hearts opened by spending time in thin places; a way that leads from being lost to finding and being found.



Special Thanks:

March 19, 2023

Head Usher: Diane Gressley
Ushers: Evelyn Seager
Carole Snider
Lay Reader: ***Volunteer Needed***
Greeter: ***Volunteer Needed***
Counters: Marge Culver
Janet Renovetz
Acolyte: ***Volunteer Needed***
Peace Candle: ***Volunteer Needed***
A/V Team: Fred Pedersen
Flowers: Janet Renovetz
Snack: Carole Snider
Volunteer Needed
Set Up/Serve: Pat Rolfe
Volunteer Needed
Clean Up: ***Volunteers Needed***
Snow Herder: ***Volunteer Needed***



MARCH 26, 2023

Head Usher: Diane Gressley
Ushers: Evelyn Seager
Carole Snider
Lay Reader: Jill Zedan
Greeter: Kathy Pastor
Counters: Marge Culver
Janet Renovetz
Acolyte: ***Volunteer Needed***
Peace Candle: ***Volunteer Needed***
A/V Team: David Pastor
Flowers: Lent
Snack: Lois Lorenzo
Jon Thompson
Set Up/Serve: Pat Rolfe
Volunteer Needed
Clean Up: ***Volunteers 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, MARCH 29, 2023

I Enclose \$12 for _____ Easter Plant(s) cash: _____ or _____
check

Message:

“In Memory of _____”

“In Honor of _____”

Other _____

Your Name(s)
