

Brecksville United Church of Christ



March 26, 2023 - Fifth Sunday in Lent

Artwork by Karen Sandstrom

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!

Fifth Sunday of Lent - March 26th, 2023

Prelude *We Ponder Your Steadfast Love*

McMane

Welcome & Announcements

Quiet Meditation as Peace Candle is Brought Forward

"Love is a terrible thing to hate." – unknown

Gathering in God's Presence

** = "Please Stand as you are able."*

*** Call to Worship:**

One: Breath of Life, you animate us.

Many: We come before you are seeking revival from within.

One: Holy One, when you speak, great things happen.

Many: Empower us to make great things happen.

One: Matchless One, you bring good things to life.

Many: We desire to bring good things to life too.

*** Hymn of Praise**

How Firm a Foundation

#407

Baptism of Layla Grace Martinez (see insert)

*** Prayer of Invocation: [UNISON]**

Giver of Life, come and revive us again. Indwell us with your spirit and let our souls awake to joy. We come boldly that you might breathe on us. May what we experience with you today change us forever and for the better. Amen

*** Assurance of God's Call**

*** Song of Praise:**

Glory to God

Pablo Sosa, 1988

Glo - ry, glo - ry, glo - ry! Glo - ry to God in the high - est, And on earth be

peace to all peo - ple, for God loves us all.

Readings

(See back of bulletin for complete readings)

First Reading **Ezekiel 37-1-14**

Gospel Reading **John 11:1-45 (Lazarus)**

Continuing Testament By Keith Mannes



Time With Young Worshippers



Anthem

Dry Bones

Traditional spiritual, arr. Fettke/Grassi

Craig Ramsey, drums

(Music and Words: Traditional spiritual; arr. by Tom Fettke & Thomas Grassi;

Copyright © 2018 by Alfred Music)

Sermon by Pastor John King

Hymn of Reflection

When Peace, Like a River

#438

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]**

Divine Sustainer, receive this offering that we gladly give. May it be used to revive and restore those in need. Amen.

Going with God's Love

*** Hymn of Departure** *My Life Flows on in Endless Song* #476

Carrying the Light of Christ into the World – Acolyte

* Circle of Community

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

* Benediction

Postlude	<i>My Soul Thirsts for God</i>	Jennings
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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 – This week's study will cover chapter 8, "Easter Sunday." We will meet tomorrow evening at 6:30, and if you wish to attend remotely, the link is on the church's website calendar.

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 19th, 2023 – Adults: 50; Kids: 6; Live Stream: 13; Total: 69

Readings

First Reading Ezekiel 37-1-14

The hand of YHWH was upon me, and it carried me away by the Spirit (רוח ruah) of YHWH and set me down in a valley—a valley full of bones.

God made me walk up and down among them. And I saw that there was a vast number of bones lying there in the valley, and they were very dry. God asked me, “Mere mortal, can these bones live?” I answered, “Only you know that, Sovereign YHWH.”

And God said, “Prophecy to these bones, and say to them: ‘Dry bones, hear the word of YHWH! Sovereign YHWH says to these bones: I am going to breathe (רוח ruah) life into you. I will fasten sinews on you, clothe you with flesh, cover you with skin, and give you breath. (רוח ruah) And you will live; and you will know that I am Sovereign YHWH.’ ”

So I prophesied as I was commanded, and as I prophesied, suddenly there was a noise, a rattling, and all the bones came together, bone to matching bone. As I watched, sinews appeared on them, flesh clothed them, and skin covered them. But there was no breath (רוח ruah) in them.

Then God said to me, “Prophecy to the wind (רוח ruah); prophecy, mere mortal, and say to it (רוח ruah): ‘Thus says Sovereign YHWH: Approach from the four winds(רוח ruah), Breath (רוח ruah), and breathe on these slain, that they may live.’ ” I prophesied as I was commanded, and breath (רוח ruah) came into them; they came alive, and stood up on their feet—a vast multitude.

Then God said to me, “Mere mortal, these bones are the whole House of Israel. The people keep saying, ‘Our bones are dry, our hope is gone, and we are doomed.’ Prophecy, therefore, and say to them, ‘Thus says Sovereign YHWH: I am going to open your graves and raise you up from the dead, my people. I will return you to the land of Israel. When I open your graves and raise you up, you, my people, will know that I am YHWH. 14 Then I will put my Spirit (רוח ruah) into you and you will return to life, and I will settle you back on your own land. Then you will know that I, YHWH, have spoken and made all this happen, says Sovereign YHWH.’ ”

Readings

Gospel Reading: “Lazarus” John 11:1-45

There was a certain man named Lazarus, who was sick. He and his sisters, Mary and Martha, were from the village of Bethany. Mary was the one who had anointed the feet of Jesus with perfume and dried his feet with her hair, and it was her brother Lazarus who was sick. The sisters sent this message to Jesus: “Rabbi, the one you love is sick.”

When Jesus heard this, he said, “This sickness will not end in death; it is happening for God’s glory, so that God’s Only Begotten may be glorified because of it.” Jesus loved these three very much. Yet even after hearing that Lazarus was sick, he remained where he was staying for two more days. Finally he said to the disciples, “Let’s go back to Judea.”

They protested, “Rabbi, it was only recently that they tried to stone you - and you want to go back there again?”

Jesus replied, “Aren’t there twelve hours of daylight? Those who walk by day don’t stumble, because they see the world bathed in light; those who go walking by night will stumble because there is no light in them.” After Jesus said this, he said to the disciples, “Our beloved Lazarus has fallen asleep. I am going to Judea to wake him.”

The disciples objected, “But Rabbi, if he’s only asleep, he’ll be fine.” Jesus had been speaking about Lazarus’ death, but they thought he was talking about actual sleep.

So he said very plainly, “Lazarus is dead! For your sakes I am glad that I wasn’t there, that you might come to believe. In any event, let us go to him.”

Then Thomas, “the Twin,” said to the rest, “Let’s go with Jesus, so that we can die with him.”

When Jesus arrived in Bethany, he found that Lazarus had already been in the tomb for four days. Since Bethany was only about two miles from Jerusalem, many people had come out to console Martha and Mary about their brother. When Martha heard that Jesus was coming, she went to meet him, while Mary stayed at home with the mourners. When she got to Jesus, Martha said, “If you had been here, my brother would never have died! Yet even now, I am sure that God will give you whatever you ask.”

“Your brother will rise again!” Jesus assured her.

Martha replied, “I know he will rise again in the resurrection on the last day.”

Jesus told her, “I am the Resurrection, and I am Life: those who believe in me will live, even if they die; and those who are alive and believe in me will never die. Do you believe this?”

(Continued on next page)

Readings

Gospel Reading (continued)

“Yes!” Martha replied. “I have come to believe that you are the Messiah, God’s Only Begotten, the One who is coming into the world.” When she had said this, Martha went back and called her sister Mary. “The Teacher is here, asking for you,” she whispered. As soon as Mary heard this, she got up and went to him.

Jesus hadn’t gotten to the village yet. He was at the place where Martha had met him. Those who were there consoling her saw her get up quickly and followed Mary, thinking she was going to the tomb to mourn. When Mary got to Jesus, she fell at his feet and said, “If you had been here, Lazarus never would have died.”

When Jesus saw her weeping, and the other mourners as well, he was troubled in spirit, moved by the deepest emotions. “Where have you laid him?” Jesus asked.

“Come and see,” they said.

Jesus wept.

The people in the crowd began to remark, “See how much he loved him!” Others said, “He made the blind person see; why couldn’t he have done something to prevent Lazarus’ death?” Jesus was again deeply moved. They approached the tomb, which was a cave with a stone in front of it.

“Take away the stone,” Jesus directed.

Martha said, “Rabbi, it has been four days now. By this time there will be a stench.”

Jesus replied, “Didn’t I assure you that if you believed you would see the glory of God?” So they took the stone away. Jesus raised his eyes to heaven and said, “Abba, thank you for having heard me. I know that you always hear me, but I have said this for the sake of the crowd, that they might believe that you sent me!”

Then Jesus called out in a loud voice, “Lazarus, come out!” And Lazarus came out of the tomb, still bound hand and foot with linen strips, his face wrapped in a cloth. Jesus told the crowd, “Untie him and let him go free.”

Readings

Continuing Testament – From “Jesus Unlimited: Why I Transitioned my Ordination out of the Christian Reformed Church,” by Keith Mannes

The bottom dropped out of my faith in “organized Christianity.” There was no truth for me in the church any longer. I didn’t know where Jesus was, but I was pretty dang sure where he wasn’t. Bereft, I went into the desert wilderness, and there beheld the bleached bones of my former beliefs, practices, and identity. I can tell you: Disillusionment stinks.

At the same time, I embarked on a two-year training process for chaplaincy. I worked on a suicide unit at a mental health hospital, and then for a year as a resident chaplain in a Tier-1 trauma hospital. From within the wilderness, I began to see signs of divine beauty in the depths of human suffering.

I remember weeping with a Muslim family at the bedside of their deceased loved one, with as deep a sense of fellowship as I had, over so many years, with my most beloved church members. Another time, I was present with a Hindu family during the death-process of their elderly mother. After she died, I escorted the family to the hospital exit, and there, in the dim and empty hallway of the early morning, suddenly one of her sons turned and hugged me, full-on, and we held each other. I believed, in that moment, Jesus was there, between us. Admittedly, this did not happen in every meeting with every person. Yet at frequent and startling moments, as I met with all sorts of people, I regularly saw flickering images of Jesus in them.

These people were sent to me while I was still in the desert, and it was as if God showed me a little stream or had uncorked within me an overflowing fountain. I found myself lavishly distributing Jesus in ways that were outside the limits of my church teachings and practices...

I used to think, as a Christian, that I had something unbelievers didn’t. Especially as a pastor, I had some eternal truth people needed to hear, something I needed to press upon them. Serving as a chaplain, the spiritual house of my construction crumpled like wet cardboard. I began to see Jesus was already within other people—in fact, flowing from them to me. I was cut to the heart with the realization that, largely, in my earlier life and ministry, I had been missing Jesus. Passing him by.

In a hospital room one day, I met a retired banker who welcomed me but told me upfront that he had given up on God long ago. I listened for a long time as he shared the very real and painful reasons for his blend of agnosticism and atheism. I presented no argument. Silence surrounded us for a few moments, and then I ventured to tell him my heart: “Yeah, I get it. I feel those things, too. It’s just - I just can’t help it - it seems to me like I experience God right now, just with you and me, right here.” It was quiet again, and then somehow we went on and talked about other things. Eventually, I had to leave, but right before I crossed the threshold of his door, he said, “Hey Chaplain...just so you know, about ten minutes ago, I started believing in God again.”

Special Thanks:

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: Janet Renovetz
Snack: Lois Lorenzo
Jon Thompson
Set Up/Serve: Pat Rolfe
Volunteer Needed
Clean Up: Betsey Wilson
Volunteer Needed
Snow Herder: ***Volunteer Needed***



April 2, 2023

Head Usher: ***Volunteer Needed***
Ushers: Evelyn Seager
Volunteer Needed
Lay Reader: Jon Thompson
Greeter: ***Volunteer Needed***
Counters: Marge Culver
Janet Renovetz
Acolyte: ***Volunteer Needed***
Peace Candle: ***Volunteer Needed***
A/V Team: Jim Duffy
Flowers: Janet Renovetz
Snack: Shelley Novotney
Volunteer Needed
Set Up/Serve: Shelley Novotney
Pat Rolfe
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, 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)
