



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*

*"Hope is not
pretending that
troubles don't
exist. It is the
trust that they will
not last forever."*

- Liz Chase



First Sunday of Advent, December 3rd, 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 - 1:30pm

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!

First Sunday of Advent, December 3rd, 2023

Prelude

Wait for the Lord

Berthier (Taizé Community)

"Wait for the Lord: keep watch, take heart."

Welcome & Announcements

Quiet Meditation

"Stay awake.. Stay awake." – Jesus, Mark 13:35 & 36

Gathering in God's Presence

** Please Stand as you are able*

***CALL TO PRAYER:** *(based on Mark 13:24-37)*

Leader: We come into God's presence in hopeful anticipation. We await the coming of the Christ.

Response: The sun may be dimmed, the moon may lose its light, the stars may fall from the sky...

Leader: Still, the Spirit stays with us.

Response: God sends heavenly messengers from the four winds, From the ends of the earth to the ends of heaven.

Leader: We hear Jesus' words, "Keep awake! Be alert!"

LIGHTING OF THE FIRST ADVENT CANDLE

One: This is the day we begin our journey to the child Jesus, his mother and the manger.

All: May we kindle God's light together as we journey in hope.

One: It is a journey shrouded in a fading sun and a growing uncertainty as the world turns cold. And still we journey.

All: May we care for God's light as we journey in hope.

One: We journey because we are drawn to God's light at the end.

All: May we shine God's light together as we journey in hope.

[Lighting the Advent Candle]

(Continued on next page)

ADVENT CANDLE PRAYER:

One: We light this candle in HOPE. We bring this light of hope with us, together, on this journey. Seeking goodness only, for our neighbors and for ourselves, may we kindle God's light of hope within us.

Advent Hymn

In the Bleak Midwinter

#128, verse #4

What can I offer, poor as I am?
If I were a shepherd, I would bring a lamb.
If I were a wise one, I would do my part;
but what I can I offer: all my heart.

* Hymn of Praise

Awake! Awake, and Greet the New Morn

#107

* INVOCATION: [UNISON]

God of the ages, we'd invite you to come down and dwell among us, yet we know that you are already and always with us -- Emmanuel, God with us, God beside us, God before us, God behind us, and God within us. Let your face shine so that we might remember you more clearly. Be our light, that we may reflect you as we worship you in spirit and in truth. Amen.

* Words of Grace

*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 - Ephesians 1:11-19 (The Message Translation)

Second Reading - Mark 13:24-37 (The Voice Translation)

Continuing Testament - by Rainer Maria Rilke



Time with Young Worshippers



Anthem

Patience, People

Foley

Patience, people, till the Lord is come.

1. Keep awake, be ready for your God.

You do not know the day of God's arrival.

Refrain: Patience, people, for the Lord is coming.

Patience, people, till the Lord is come.

2. We have seen the purpose of the Lord.

We know of God's compassion and God's mercy. (Refrain)

3. Steady your hearts, for the Lord is close at hand.

Yes, stay awake, preparing for God's coming.

Patience, people, for the Lord is coming.

*(Words and Music: John Foley, S.J.; Copyright © 1977 by John Foley and
North American Liturgy Resources; words adapt. D. Debick)*

Sermon by Pastor John King

Hymn of Reflection

Keep Awake, Be Always Ready

#112

The Church at Prayer

Sue Renovetz, Cliff Stenzel, Allison Colbert, Marilyn Pay, Frances Posey, Russ King, George Snider, Mac Hoppel, Dassie Matsuoka, Kathy Smith, Jon Thompson, Rose Kaval, Bee Ortiz, Terry Heiman, Cindy Burton, Elizabeth Gadus, Ann Klonowski, Sheila Day, Jan Wardlaw, Stan McCain, 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

*** Invitation to the Offering**

*** Offertory Hymn** We long for the Messiah's birth,
a bold new age upon the earth
of justice, peace, and hope renewed.
Receive our gifts for greater good. Amen.

*** PRAYER OF DEDICATION AND THANKSGIVING: [UNISON]**

Pastor For the wondrous ways this offering will breathe hope into community,

All: We dedicate these gifts.

Pastor: For the ways it'll help us live out God's mission,

All: We dedicate these gifts.

Pastor : Let these gifts strengthen our call to carry out God's justice and mercy.

Holy Communion

Communion Music: *En prière*

Fauré

***PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING: [UNISON]**

We give thanks, almighty God, that you have refreshed us at your table by granting us the presence of Jesus Christ. Strengthen our faith, increase our love for one another, and send us forth into the world in courage and peace, rejoicing in the power of the Holy Spirit; through Jesus Christ our Savior. Amen.

Going with God's Love

* Hymn of Departure

How Shall I Receive You

#102

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.

The musical score is written for two staves in G major (one sharp) and 4/4 time. The melody is simple and repetitive, with lyrics 'Hal-le, hal-le, hal - le - lu - ja.' repeated twice. Chords are indicated above the notes: A, E, A, D, Bm, E, C#7, F#m, Bm, E7sus4 E7, and A.

Benediction

Postlude

O Heavenly Word, Eternal Light

Plainsong, Mode 2, Nevers MS.,
13th cent.



Readings

First Reading

Ephesians 1:11-19 (The Message Translation)

It's in Christ that we find out who we are and what we are living for. Long before we first heard of Christ and got our hopes up, he had his eye on us, had designs on us for glorious living, part of the overall purpose he is working out in everything and everyone.

It's in Christ that you, once you heard the truth and believed it (this Message of your salvation), found yourselves home free—signed, sealed, and delivered by the Holy Spirit. This signet from God is the first installment on what's coming, a reminder that we'll get everything God has planned for us, a praising and glorious life.

That's why, when I heard of the solid trust you have in the Master Jesus and your outpouring of love to all the followers of Jesus, I couldn't stop thanking God for you—every time I prayed, I'd think of you and give thanks. But I do more than thank. I ask—ask the God of our Master, Jesus Christ, the God of glory—to make you intelligent and discerning in knowing him personally, your eyes focused and clear, so that you can see exactly what it is he is calling you to do, grasp the immensity of this glorious way of life he has for his followers, oh, the utter extravagance of his work in us who trust him—endless energy, boundless strength!

Second Reading

Mark 13:24-37 (The Voice Translation)

Jesus said, be alert, and remember how I have warned you. *As Isaiah said* in the days after that great suffering, “The sun will refuse to shine, and the moon will hold back its light. The stars in heaven will fall, and the powers in the heavens will be shaken.”

Then you will see (*as Daniel predicted*) “the ‘Descendent of Earth’ coming in the clouds,” *clothed* in power and majesty, who will send out heavenly messengers and gather together all the chosen from the four corners of the world, from every direction and every land.

Learn this lesson from the fig tree: When its branch is new and tender and begins to put forth leaves, you know that summer must be near. In the same way, when you see *and hear* the things I've described to you taking place, you'll know the time is drawing near.

It's true—this generation will not pass away before all these things have happened. Heaven and earth may pass away, but these words of mine will never pass away.

Take heed: no one knows the day or hour when the end is coming. The messengers in heaven don't know, nor does the Son. Only Abba God knows. So be alert. Watch for it and pray, for you never know when that time might approach.

Readings

Second Reading (*continued*)

This situation is like someone who went on a journey; they departed, leaving servants in charge of the house. Each of them had their own job to do; the porter stood at the door, watching. So stay awake, because no one knows when the owner of the house is coming back. It could be in the evening or at midnight or when the rooster crows or in the morning. *Stay awake*; be alert so that upon returning, the master won't find you sleeping.

Continuing Testament – From *The Book of Hours*, by Rainer Maria Rilke

Book I, Poem 45

You come and go. The doors swing closed
ever more gently, almost without a shudder.
Of all who move through the quiet houses,
you are the quietest.

We become so accustomed to you,
we no longer look up
when your shadow falls over the book we are reading
and makes it glow. For all things
sing you: at times
we just hear them more clearly.

Often when I imagine you
your wholeness cascades into many shapes.
You run like a herd of luminous deer
and I am dark. I am a forest.

You are a wheel at which I stand,
whose dark spokes sometimes catch me up,
revolve me nearer to the center.
Then all the work I put my hand to
widens from turn to turn.

Announcements:

TODAY'S FLOWERS are dedicated by Annette and Fred Pedersen, "In honor of our church family."

LIGHTING OF THE ADVENT CANDLE – For the next three Sundays, (December 10th, 17th & 24th), we'd like to invite volunteers to light the Advent Wreath candles. Please sign up via the weekly email from Breeze, or contact the office at 440-526-4364. Sign up is open to individuals, couples and/or groups – thank you!

HUNGER MEAL – This afternoon BUCC is hosting the Hunger Meal at Iglesia Emmanuel (3388 West 41st St. Cleveland). This is an opportunity to help with serving and talking with the people who come for the meal we prepare. Our presence at the meal is a visible reminder of BUCC in the community. Please bring a baked good for dessert after the meal.

THE CHRISTMAS FUND FOR THE VETERANS OF THE CROSS & THE EMERGENCY FUND – "*Grace upon Grace.*" - John 1:16

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.

"Grace upon grace" is a reminder of the great gifts of God to us, and an expression of our grateful response to that fullness. Your gifts to the Christmas Fund allow the United Church Board for Ministerial Assistance to provide grace, hope, and joy through financial relief to UCC pastors, lay church leaders, and their families. This year, your care and compassion will be especially appreciated by those servants of the church who are facing a time of need. Thank you!

BUCC NURSERY – If you are thinking about utilizing the nursery on Sunday, please let Amelia Elting know prior to the start of service. We ask parents to please fill out an information form, which can be found in the Nursery in a binder near the door. Also, we are looking for several volunteers to check in with Amelia prior to the start of the service, to see if she needs help. Thank you!

Attendance on Sunday, November 26th, 2023 – Adults: 71; Kids: 7; Livestream: 25; Total: 103

Special Thanks:



DECEMBER 3, 2023

Head Usher:	Jill Zedan
Ushers:	Evelyn Seager Heidi Spangler
Lay Reader:	Jon Thompson
Greeter:	Lori Molesky
Advent Candle:	<i>Volunteers Needed</i>
Counters:	Marge Culver <i>Volunteer Needed</i>
A/V Team:	Fred Pedersen
Flowers:	Annette Pedersen
Snack:	Lois Lorenzo <i>Volunteer Needed</i>
Set Up/Serve:	Lois Lorenzo <i>Volunteer Needed</i>
Clean Up:	<i>Volunteers Needed</i>
Snow Herder:	<i>Volunteer Needed</i>

DECEMBER 10, 2023

Head Usher:	<i>Volunteer Needed</i>
Ushers:	Evelyn Seager Heidi Spangler
Lay Reader:	Jim Duffy
Greeter:	Jon Thompson
Advent Candle:	Peg Duffy
Counters:	Marge Culver Jeff Thompson
A/V Team:	Annette Pedersen
Flowers:	<i>Volunteer Needed</i>
Snack:	Sue Stenzel <i>Volunteer Needed</i>
Set Up/Serve:	Sue & Cliff Stenzel
Clean Up:	Sue Stenzel <i>Volunteer Needed</i>
Snow Herder:	<i>Volunteer Needed</i>

[illegible]