



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*

**My spirit rejoices
in God my savior!**



*"The root of joy is
gratefulness...It
is not joy that
makes us
grateful; it is
gratitude that
makes us joyful."*

-- David Steindl-
Rast, 20th century

Third Sunday of Advent, December 17th, 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!



Third Sunday of Advent December 17th, 2023 - Children's Pageant

Prelude **Magnificat**

"Dajte mi zlatih strun", a Slovenian Marian hymn, adapt. Debick

Welcome & Announcements

Quiet Meditation

"Joy is the infallible sign of the presence of God."

-- Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, 20th century

Gathering in God's Presence

** Please Stand as you are able*

***CALL TO PRAYER:** *(Based on Psalm 34 and Luke 1)*

Leader: O magnify our God with me and let us exalt God's name together.

All: Our souls magnify the Eternal One. Our spirits rejoice in God our Savior!

Leader: We will bless God at all times; God's joy shall continually be in our voice.

All: Our souls magnify the Creator. God's mercy endures from generation to generation.

Leader: Let our souls rejoice in the Holy One; Let the humble hear and be glad.

All: Our souls magnify the Lord, for the Mighty One has done great things.



Lighting of the Advent Candle - JOY

Leader: We read in Isaiah 61: "I will greatly rejoice in the Eternal One, my whole being shall exult in my God."

Mary proclaimed, "My soul proclaims your greatness, O God, and my spirit rejoices in you, my Savior."

St. Paul told the Thessalonians, "Rejoice in God always!"

We have lit Advent Candles symbolizing Hope and Peace. Today we light the candle symbolizing Joy.

[Lighting the Advent Candles]

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.

(Words: Christina G. Rossetti, 1872, alt.)

***Hymn of Praise**

Awake! Awake, and Greet the New Morn

#107

*** INVOCATION: [UNISON]** *(Inspired by Isaiah 61:1-4, 8-11)*

Let us pray: God of Mary, and all of the lowly who seek to be lifted – God of Isaiah, who felt the Spirit upon him calling him to bring Good News – let your Spirit fall upon us in this hour.

Bind our broken hearts. Awaken us to the joyful freedom in your Spirit.
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 - 1 Thessalonians 5:16–23 (God's Word translation)

Gospel Reading - Luke 1:46-55 (The Inclusive Bible translation)

Continuing Testament - by Connie Schultz



Children's Pageant Sing Along "*Christmas Joy*" (see insert)

Cast

<i>Narrators</i>	Claire Esser, Cammie Rogers Ward
<i>Mary</i>	Dorothy Cook
<i>Joseph</i>	Arthur Cook
<i>Main Angel</i>	Mackenzie Oliver
<i>Angels</i>	Natalie Corrado, Josie Hatala, Evelyn Kuzmins
<i>Shepherds</i>	Graham Esser, Robbie & Davey Tomlinson
<i>Wisemen</i>	Edison Elting, Peter Kuzmins, Sean Tomlinson
<i>Star</i>	Holden Esser
<i>Sheepcat</i>	Mira Corrado
<i>Innkeeper</i>	Amelia Elting
<i>Director</i>	Miss Mindy Harris Wade

Time with Young Worshipers

The Church at Prayer

Ann Kelley, Sue Renovetz, Jon Thompson, Cliff Stenzel, Allison Colbert, Marilyn Pay, Frances Posey, Russ King, George Snider, Mac Hoppel, Dassie Matsuoka, Kathy Smith, 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]**

We dedicate these gifts that have been shared for the fortification of the beloved community. Let these gifts usher joy into this world and signal to the people that God is still setting captives free. Amen.

Communion

Communion Music

Within Our Hearts Be Born

Joncas

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

O Come, O Come, Emmanuel

#116, verses 4-5

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

Savior of the Nations, Come!

16th century German

Readings

First Reading

1 Thessalonians 5:16–23 (God’s Word translation)

Always be joyful. Never stop praying. Whatever happens, give thanks, because it is God’s will in Christ Jesus that you do this. Don’t put out the Spirit’s fire. Don’t despise what God has revealed. Instead, test everything. Hold on to what is good. Keep away from every kind of evil. May the God who gives peace make you holy in every way.

Gospel Reading

Luke 1:46-55 (The Inclusive Bible translation)

Mary said: “My soul proclaims your greatness, O God, and my spirit rejoices in God, my Savior. For you have looked with favor upon your lowly servant, and from this day forward all generations will call me blessed. For you, the Almighty, have done great things for me, and holy is your Name. Your mercy reaches from age to age for those who fear you. You have shown strength with your arm; you have scattered the proud in their conceit; you have deposed the mighty from their thrones and raised the lowly to high places. You have filled the hungry with good things, while you have sent the rich away empty. You have come to the aid of Israel your servant, mindful of your mercy— the promise you made to our ancestors— to Sarah and Abraham and their descendants forever.”

Continuing Testament – by Connie Schultz

Because it was snowing, I walked slowly after class.

Because I walked slowly, I looked up at the sky.

Because I looked up, I met this lonely red leaf.

Because I am human, I wondered aloud, What else have I missed on my rush out the door?

Announcements:

LIGHTING OF THE ADVENT CANDLE – Please consider volunteering to light the Advent Wreath candles for next Sunday, 12/24. 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 of friends – thank you!

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!

ANNUAL CONGREGATIONAL MEETING - BUCC Council has set the annual Congregational Meeting to approve the Budget and Slate of Officers for the 2024 Church Year for Sunday, January 14, 2024 immediately following the regular worship service.

In lieu of the usual December meeting for presentation of the Slate of Officers and preliminary Budget, Council has agreed to prepare and send out this information to all congregation members via e-mail no later than December 27th. Hard copies will be available at the office or mailed upon request to anyone who would prefer it. This will allow proper time for church members to review the Budget and Slate of Officers and respond to Council with comments or questions prior to the January 14th meeting.

Attendance on Sunday, December 10th, 2023 – Adults: 87; Kids: 13; Livestream: 27; Total: 127

Special Thanks



DECEMBER 17, 2023

Head Usher:	Jill Zedan
Ushers:	Evelyn Seager Sue Stenzel
Lay Reader:	Bridget Sproul
Greeter:	Lori Molesky
Advent Candle:	Cait Moury & Family
Counters:	Marge Culver Janet Renovetz
A/V Team:	Jim Duffy
Flowers:	Janet Renovetz
Snack:	Miss Mindy Jesse Wade
Set Up/Serve:	Casey Oliver Jesse Wade
Clean Up:	Kathy Pastor <i>Volunteer Needed</i>
Snow Herder:	<i>Volunteer Needed</i>



DECEMBER 24, 2023

Head Usher:	<i>Volunteer Needed</i>
Ushers:	Peg Duffy Evelyn Seager
Lay Reader:	Sherrill Witt
Greeter:	Sherrill Witt
Advent Candle:	<i>Volunteer Needed</i>
Counters:	Lori Molesky <i>Volunteer Needed</i>
A/V Team:	David Pastor
Flowers:	Janet Renovetz
Snack:	Peg Duffy <i>Volunteer Needed</i>
Set Up/Serve:	<i>Volunteers Needed</i>
Clean Up:	<i>Volunteers Needed</i>
Snow Herder:	<i>Volunteer Needed</i>



Poinsettias dedicated by:

Julie Bernard & Linda Kriynovich	In memory of Anton, Julie, and Lori Gorenc
Bob & Caroline Chandler	In memory and in honor of those who came before
Allison & Gayle Colbert	In memory of Martha & Donald Colbert – the best parents Allison could have; and Sandra Wibert – the most wonderful caring mom Gayle could have
Jane & Cliff Cribbs	In memory of loved ones
Joy Garapic	In memory of William Garapic, loving husband, father and grandfather.
Claudia Griesmer	In memory of my father, Donald Repasky
Mary Kidd	
Lois Lorenzo	In memory of Rudy Lorenzo
Carol Miller & Pat Rehm	In memory of John & Lorraine Urban, and Jack & Max Urban In honor of the Miller, Rehm, Olle, Dutle & Unetic families
Wes & Evie Novak	In honor of Wesley & Pamela Novak, Nancy Karras & Jayson Kopp
Fred & Annette Pedersen	In honor of family
Eric Rahnenfuehrer	In memory and in honor of Jan & Marjorie Rahnenfuehrer
Janet & Dan Renovetz	In honor of our families, near and far
Miriam Rosewicz	In memory of loved ones
Kim Smith	In memory of Mr. & Mrs. Clifford Adair, Drew Smith, Fred Miller & Amanda Horkey In honor of Shirley Smith & Kenny Miller
Sherrill Witt	In memory of Shirley & Arch Duncan In honor of all the new BUCC members, those who work for peace & Rev. John King and Family
Jill Zedan	In memory of Bobby, Pres, Joan & Jack In honor of Jacob Brock, my son-in-law who has served 3 tours of duty in the Mideast