



# 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***

*"We are leaves  
of one branch,  
the drops of one  
sea, the flowers  
of one garden."*

*- Jean Baptiste  
Lacordaire,  
19th century*



**Fifth Sunday of Easter, April 28<sup>th</sup>, 2024 • 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](mailto:buccoffice23@gmail.com) – web address: [www.BrecksvilleUCC.org](http://www.BrecksvilleUCC.org)***

|                                                                           |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Please submit your announcements by noon on Wednesday – Thank You!</b> |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------|

# Fifth Sunday of Easter

## April 28<sup>th</sup>, 2024

Prelude

***God Is Love***

Mahler

*"Let us love one another for love is God's way.  
In each deed that we do, with each word that we say."  
(Tune: Michael Mahler, b. 1981; text based on 1 John 4:7-21)*

Welcome & Announcements

Quiet Meditation

---

*"Living together is an art."  
- William Pickens, in a speech to a meeting of Congregationalists,  
Oak Park, Illinois, November 2, 1932*

---

### ***Gathering in God's Presence***

*\* Please Stand as you are able*

**\* CALL TO WORSHIP:** *(inspired by John 15:1-8)*

One: Jesus said, "Abide in me, as I abide in you."

**All: We gather that we may be with you. Abide with us, dear Jesus.**

One: Live as a branch is joined to the vine. Live watered in this love.

**All: Live where we can grow. Remain here where God loves you. Abide here with us.**

Hymn of Praise

***You Are the Way***

#40

**\* PRAYER OF INVOCATION:** [UNISON]

O God, live here with us. Nurture us, and prune us where we are not growing. Encourage us to see your light again. Live here with us, O God. Remain here. Abide in us.

**\* Pastor's Prayer**

**\* Song of Praise:**

**Glory to God**

Pablo Sosa 1988



## **Readings**

(See back of bulletin for complete readings)

**First Reading - 1 John 4: 7-8, 11-16 (NRSV)**

**Gospel Reading - John 15:1-17 (NRSV)**

**Continuing Testament - By Suzanne Simard**



## **Time with Young Worshipers**

**Anthem**

**I Am**

**Melley**

*Refrain: I am the Gate: whoever enters by me will be saved.*

*I am the Vine: those who abide in me bear much fruit.*

*I am the Light of the world. I am the Good Shepherd.*

*I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life.*

*1. Abide in me as I in you, you that I call my friends.*

*Whatever you ask in my name, it will be done for you.*

*2. I came that you might have life and have it abundantly.*

*I know my own, and they know me. Follow me, and know my voice. (Refrain)*

*3. Walk no more in darkness; I give you the light of life.*

*The One who sent me lives in me. Hear the truth and be set free.*

*4. I go before you now; lift up your hearts with joy.*

*I am with you always, till the end of time. (Refrain)*

*(Music: Paul Melley, b. 1973; text: John 10:9-11; 14:6, 14; 15:4, 5; Paul Melley; © 2007, GIA Publications, Inc.)*

**Sermon** by Pastor John King

**Hymn of Reflection**

***O for a World***

**#575**

### ***The Church at Prayer***

The Family and Friends of David Ritchey, of Ann Kelly and of Joanne Frable, Leroy Ford, Phyllis Hassler, Cliff Stenzel, George Snider, Sue Renovetz, Joe Blasko, Russ King, Jon Thompson, Gayle Colbert, Marilyn Pay, Frances Posey, Mac Hoppel, Dassie Matsuoka, Kathy Smith, Rose Kaval, Bee Ortiz, Terry Heiman, Cindy Burton, Elizabeth Gadus, Sheila Day, Jan Wardlaw, Stan McCain, Kathleen Stewart, Ann Klonowski, "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**

**\* Doxology: [UNISON]**

**Our Lord has risen as he said,  
And life has triumphed over death.  
We celebrate these holy days  
With gifts of gratitude and grace. Amen.**

**\* OFFERTORY PRAYER: [UNISON]**

O God, let these gifts grow to reach the whole world with love. Remain in these gifts, O God, so that future generations might know that we love them as much as we love you. Amen.

***Going with God's Love***

**\* Hymn of Departure**      *Help Us Accept Each Other*

#388

**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.



**\* Benediction**

**Postlude**

***Praise, I Will Praise You, God***

Frayse

## Readings

### **First Reading** – *God is Love* **1 John 4: 7-8, 11-16 (NRSV)**

Beloved, let us love one another, because love is from God; everyone who loves is born of God and knows God. Whoever does not love does not know God, for God is love. Beloved, since God loved us so much, we also ought to love one another. No one has ever seen God; if we love one another, God lives in us, and God's love is perfected in us.

By this we know that we abide in God and God in us, because God has given us of God Spirit. And we have seen and do testify that God has sent Jesus as the Savior of the world. God abides in those who confess that Jesus is the Son of God, and they abide in God. So we have known and believe the love that God has for us.

God is love, and those who abide in love abide in God, and God abides in them.

### **Gospel Reading** – *Jesus the True Vine* **John 15:1-17 (NRSV)**

Jesus said, "I am the true vine, and my Abba is the vine grower who cuts off every branch in me that doesn't bear fruit, but prunes the fruitful ones to increase their yield. You've been pruned already, thanks to the word that I have spoken to you. Live on in me, as I do in you. Just as a branch cannot bear fruit of itself apart from the vine, neither can you bear fruit apart from me.

I am the vine; you are the branches. Those who live in me and I in them will bear abundant fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing. Those who don't live in me are like withered, rejected branches, to be picked up and thrown on the fire and burned. If you live on in me, and my words live on in you, ask whatever you want and it will be done for you. My Abba will be glorified if you bear much fruit and thus prove to be my disciples.

As my Abba has loved me, so have I loved you. Live on in my love. And you will live on in my love if you keep my commandments, just as I live on in Abba God's love and have kept God's commandments.

I tell you all this that my joy may be yours, and your joy may be complete.

This is my commandment: love one another as I have loved you.

## Readings

**Continuing Testament** – Excerpted from *Finding the Mother Tree*, by Suzanne Simard.

Working to solve the mysteries of what made the forests tick, and how they are linked to the earth and fire and water, made me a scientist. I watched the forest, and I listened.

The trees soon revealed startling secrets. I discovered that they are in a web of interdependence, linked by a system of underground channels, where they perceive and connect and relate with an ancient intricacy and wisdom that can no longer be denied. I conducted hundreds of experiments, with one discovery leading to the next, and through this quest I uncovered the lessons of tree-to-tree communication, of the relationships that create a forest society. The evidence was at first highly controversial, but the science is now known to be rigorous, peer-reviewed, and widely published.

These discoveries are challenging many of the management practices that threaten the survival of our forests, especially as nature struggles to adapt to a warming world.

One of the first clues came while I was tapping into the messages that the trees were relaying back and forth through a cryptic underground fungal network. When I followed the clandestine path of the conversations, I learned that this network is pervasive through the *entire* forest floor, connecting all the trees in a constellation of tree hubs and fungal links. A crude map revealed, stunningly, that the biggest, oldest timbers are the sources of fungal connections to regenerating seedlings. Not only that, they connect to all neighbors, young and old, serving as the linchpins for a jungle of threads and synapses and nodes. I'll take you through the journey that revealed the most shocking aspect of this pattern—that it has similarities with our own human brains. In it, the old and young are perceiving, communicating, and responding to one another by emitting chemical signals. *Chemicals identical to our own neurotransmitters. Signals created by ions cascading across fungal membranes.*

The older trees are able to discern which seedlings are their own kin.

The old trees nurture the young ones and provide them food and water just as we do with our own children. It is enough to make one pause, take a deep breath, and contemplate the social nature of the forest and how this is critical for evolution. The fungal network appears to wire the trees for fitness. And more. These old trees are mothering their children.



# Announcements:

*At the beginning of the Sunday service, you are welcome to share announcements. Please keep this brief by avoiding details - share the essentials, then share how people can learn more details (e.g., see the bulletin announcement or talk to somebody). Also, feel free to share good news such as anniversaries, retirement, awards, etc.*

**SAVE THE DATE!** - On Sunday May 19 at 4:00 PM, Brecksville United Church of Christ will host a free concert featuring the **Cleveland State University Percussion Ensemble**, directed by Luke Rinderknecht. The program will include works by Becker, Cage, Green, Keown, Marceau, and Mellits. A free-will offering will be received, and a light reception will follow the program.

**HOLY GROUNDS** – Pastor John is at the Brecksville Panera for coffee at 8:15 most Tuesday mornings. Anyone is welcome to stop by. There's no need for an RSVP or agenda, so you never know who might show up. Of course, if you are looking for a more traditional meeting in his office, you can always set that up too. But if you're just looking for casual conversation, stop by at Panera any Tuesday for a visit and some "holy grounds."

**PLEASE DONATE ELECTRONICALLY** – Please support the ministry of Brecksville United Church of Christ.

If you would like to make a donation with your phone, please scan this QR code.

Open the camera on your smartphone, just like you would if you were taking a picture. Point your phone at this image to open a website where you can make an electronic donation. **Thank you!**



# Announcements: *(continued)*

**PRIVACY MATTERS** - Our services are broadcast live online, and recordings of services are available for replay and sharing. That allows us to expand our outreach, but it also brings additional concerns. Please keep in mind:

- Children who come up for the “Time with Young Worshippers” will be seen and heard online. By permitting your child to come forward, be aware that this implicitly gives the church permission to share their participation online.
- We are glad to include your prayer intentions in our communal prayer. But keep in mind that HIPAA laws do not permit us to disclose personal medical information without permission. With that in mind, please either:
  - Ask permission to publicly share their health information in our prayers, OR
  - Keep them anonymous by the way you phrase your prayer.
- If you sit in the first few pews, you will be visible online. If you prefer to avoid being seen online, avoid those pews. But if you don’t mind, please consider migrating to the front pews. When our videos show empty pews, the sanctuary looks vacant even when it is full. So, please populate those first pews to ensure that our online presence accurately depicts the vibrant and growing congregation that we truly are.

Attendance on Sunday, April 21, 2024 – Adults: 73; Kids: 12; Live Stream: 11; Total: 96

# Special Thanks

## APRIL 28, 2024

|               |                                               |
|---------------|-----------------------------------------------|
| Head Usher:   | <b><i>Volunteer Needed</i></b>                |
| Ushers:       | Kathy Pastor<br>Evelyn Seager                 |
| Lay Reader:   | Sherrill Witt                                 |
| Greeter:      | Sherrill Witt                                 |
| Flowers:      | <b><i>Volunteer Needed</i></b>                |
| Counters:     | Marge Culver<br>Kathy Pastor                  |
| A/V Team:     | David Pastor                                  |
| Snack:        | Jenn Elting<br><b><i>Volunteer Needed</i></b> |
| Set Up/Serve: | Jenn Elting<br><b><i>Volunteer Needed</i></b> |
| Clean Up:     | <b><i>Volunteers Needed</i></b>               |

Thank  
You



## MAY 5, 2024

|               |                                 |
|---------------|---------------------------------|
| Head Usher:   | <b><i>Volunteer Needed</i></b>  |
| Ushers:       | <b><i>Volunteers Needed</i></b> |
| Lay Reader:   | Diane Gressley                  |
| Greeter:      | Lori Molesky                    |
| Flowers:      | Maureen Stanley                 |
| Counters:     | Marjorie Culver<br>Lori Molesky |
| A/V Team:     | Jim Duffy                       |
| Snack:        | <b><i>Volunteers Needed</i></b> |
| Set Up/Serve: | <b><i>Volunteers Needed</i></b> |
| Clean Up:     | <b><i>Volunteers Needed</i></b> |

Notes: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_