



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*

*"In this life we
are to become
heaven so that
God might find
a home here."*

- Meister Eckhart,
14th century



21st Sunday of Ordinary Time, August 25th, 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 – web address: www.BrecksvilleUCC.org

Please submit your announcements by noon on Wednesday – Thank You!

WORSHIP IN THE PARK SUNDAY AUGUST 25TH, 2024



Welcome & Announcements

Quiet Meditation

"How do we remain faithful to our own spiritual imagination and not betray what we know in our own bodies? The world is holy. We are holy. All life is holy."

- Terry Tempest Williams, Leap, 21st century

Gathering in God's Presence

** Please Stand as you are able*

*** CALL TO WORSHIP:**

One: God is gracious and merciful.

All: God's love is bountiful.

One: We are all God's beloved

All: We listen for we long to hear God's voice.

One: In the beauty of the morning, and the calm of the night,

All: We call on you, knowing that you have already met us here.

One: And so we pause, for this hour of prayer, leaning back into your open arms,

All: Inclining our ears to hear your voice, opening our eyes to behold your grace.

(See hymn sheet)

Hymn of Praise

Morning Has Broken

Traditional Gaelic melody

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

O God, you have words of eternal life. We do not come here to eat bread that fills us for a day. Rather we come to be nourished by you and that the love you have for us fills us for a lifetime. May this food strengthen our discipleship. Grant that it will renew in us our commitment to proclaiming the gospel of peace through our ministries of peace and justice in the name of Christ Jesus. Amen.

*** Pastor's Prayer**

*** Song of Praise:**

Glory to God

Pablo Sosa 1988

Glory, glory, glory – glory to God in the highest! (twice)
And on earth be peace to all people, for God loves us all. (twice)

Readings

(See back of bulletin for complete readings)

First Reading - Ephesians 6:10–20

Gospel Reading - John 6:56-69

Continuing Testament – By Nadia Bolz-Weber



Time with Young Worshipers



Sermon

(See hymn sheet)

Hymn of Reflection

I Sing the Mighty Power of God

18th century German

The Church at Prayer

Gayle & Allison Colbert, the family and friends of Phyllis Hassler, Cliff Stenzel, George Snider, Sue Renovetz, Joe Blasko, Russ King, Jon Thompson, 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]** Praise God from whom all blessings flow;
Praise Christ the Word in flesh born low;
Praise Holy Spirit evermore;
One God, Triune, whom we adore. Amen.

*** BLESSING OVER THE GIFTS: [UNISON]**

Accept our offerings of praise in grateful thanksgiving for your presence in our lives and the many blessings you bestow upon us. Consecrate our offering, O God, that it may become bread to fill the emptiness and heal the brokenness of the lives in this community and beyond. And may we be reminded that our real life begins when we give with generous hearts to proclaim the gospel in the name of Christ Jesus. Amen.

Going with God's Love

(See hymn sheet)

*** Hymn of Departure** ***Joyful, Joyful, We Adore You*** Beethoven

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.

Two staves of musical notation in G major (one sharp) and 4/4 time. The melody is written on a treble clef. The lyrics are written below the notes. The first staff has a key signature change to D major (two sharps) for the second half. The second staff continues the melody and includes a key signature change to D major (two sharps) for the final half. Chord symbols are written above the notes: A, E, A, D, Bm, E, C#7, F#m, Bm, E7/sus4, E7, A.

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**

Readings

First Reading

Ephesians 6:10–20

Finally, be strong in the power of the Eternal. Put on the whole armor of God, so that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For our struggle is not against enemies of blood and flesh, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers of this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places. Therefore take up the whole armor of God, so that you may be able to withstand on that evil day, and having done everything, to stand firm. Stand therefore, and fasten the belt of truth around your waist, and put on the breastplate of righteousness. As shoes for your feet put on whatever will make you ready to proclaim the gospel of peace. With all of these, take the shield of faith, with which you will be able to quench all the flaming arrows of the evil one. Take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.

Pray in the Spirit at all times in every prayer and supplication. To that end keep alert and always persevere in supplication for all the saints. Pray also for me, so that when I speak, a message may be given to me to make known with boldness the mystery of the gospel, for which I am an ambassador in chains. Pray that I may declare it boldly, as I must speak.

Gospel Reading

John 6:56-69 (NRSV)

Those who eat my flesh and drink my blood abide in me, and I in them. Just as the living God sent me, and I live because of God, so is nourished by me will live because of me. This is the bread that came down from heaven, not like that which your ancestors ate, and they died. But the one who eats this bread will live forever.” He said these things while he was teaching in the synagogue at Capernaum.

When many of his disciples heard it, they said, “This teaching is difficult; who can accept it?”

But Jesus, being aware that his disciples were complaining about it, said to them, “Does this offend you? Then what if you were to see the Messiah ascending to where he was before? It is the spirit that gives life; the flesh is useless. The words that I have spoken to you are spirit and life. But among you there are some who do not believe.” For Jesus knew from the first who were the ones that did not believe, and who was the one that would betray him. And he said, “For this reason I have told you that no one can come to me unless it is granted by God.”

Because of this many of his disciples turned back and no longer went about with him. So Jesus asked the twelve, “Do you also wish to go away?”

Simon Peter answered him, “To whom can we go? You have the words of eternal life. We have come to believe and know that you are the Holy One of God.”

Readings

Continuing Testament – By Nadia Bolz-Weber

John's gospel bears witness to a sensual God. Jesus washed human feet, smelled perfume, and tasted abundant wine. He used spit and dirt to heal a blind man, and his gut churned when he looked upon the hungry crowds. Salty tears ran down his face. He smelled the stink of death on Lazarus, his friend. Jesus' very own flesh tore when he was beaten and crucified. When he rose from the dead, he told Thomas to touch his wounded side, which was not perfected, but bore the scars of having lived. Then as one of his final acts on earth, he ate grilled fish on a beach. These experiences of the body are not things to be spiritually transcended -- they are perhaps the very things in which we find Christ.

The Psalmist reminds us that God knit us together in our mother's womb, and that we are fearfully and wonderfully made. Of course I see at least two barriers to really, really believing this. First, there is the fact that as a middle-aged woman, my body seems to be deteriorating right before my eyes. How wonderfully and fearfully made is a body which ages, or grows fat, or develops cancer, or no longer produces insulin? The other barrier to believing our bodies are fearfully and wonderfully made is that we are literally bombarded by messages that say otherwise. Every billboard we see or commercial we hear tells us (a) your body is bad, and (b) your body can be "perfect" if you buy a certain product. And let there be no mistake, this is a billion-dollar industry.

Yet I wonder if maybe in the incarnation, God has done nothing less than baptized all human flesh -- baptized it -- not made it into our version of perfect. Perfection as we picture it and as it relates to human bodies is impossible. And perhaps the striving for an impossible perfection is a profound distraction from the way in which we are children born of God. Because as we know, the perfect is the enemy of the good. And even God, when finished creating the physical world including the human form, called it good -- not perfect, mind you, but good. So as we make our resolutions about losing weight or gaining muscle or lowering cholesterol, which are all perfectly fine, let us remember that we are born of God and made children of God and have no business calling what God pronounced good anything but good. Because if the Word became flesh and lived among us, then despite our botoxic quest for the illusion of perfection, God's creation is good.¹

¹ <https://sojo.net/preaching-the-word/word-made-flesh-and-indignity-having-human-body?parent=47321>

Announcements:



SEPTEMBER 8TH IS RALLY DAY AT BUCC! This signals the beginning of our Fall and Winter church season. It is our way of both coming together as a congregation and giving back to the community, by providing much-needed school supplies for students at underserved schools.

After our 10:00 AM service, we will have a Potluck Dinner in Pilgrim Hall. So please bring a main dish or dessert to share, **AND** some school supplies. Suggested supplies are: notebook paper, binders, notebooks, rulers, pencils, erasers, crayons, pencil pouches, glue sticks, book bags/backpacks, and anything you think would be appropriate. Great places to find these items are Dollar Tree, Marc's, etc. Thank you!

NOTE: if you're interested in learning more about volunteering within the church, please see Sherrill Witt or Bridget Sproul.

SPECIAL THANKS today to:

Usher: Jill Zedan
Flowers: Carole Snider
Reader: Sherrill Witt
A/V: Jim Duffy

TO DONATE ELECTRONICALLY – If you would like to make a donation to Brecksville United Church of Christ with your phone, please scan this QR code. **Thank you!**



Attendance on Sunday, August 18, 2024 – Adults: 60; Kids: 4; Livestream: ?; Total: 64
Next week's scripture readings will be James 1:17–27 & Mark 7:24-37 (NRSV).