



# Brecksville

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# United Church of Christ

23 Public Square • Brecksville • Ohio • 44141 • 440-526-4364

*"Despite all the  
crassness of life,  
despite all the  
hardness of life,  
despite all the harsh  
discords of life, life is  
saved by the singing  
of Angels."*

*Howard Thurman*



**Pastor**  
• John King

**Christmas Eve, December 24<sup>th</sup>, 2024 • 10:00 PM**  
**Director of Music**  
• David Debick

**Financial Secretary**  
• Joy Garapic

**Administrative Assistant**  
Miranda Lacefield

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:**

**Monday – Thursday 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)**

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



**December 24th, 2024**

**Prelude**

**In the Bleak Midwinter**

**Holst**

**Silent Meditation**

*"The inn was full... There are many of you who think to yourselves: "If only I had been there! How quick I would have been to help the baby!" Why don't you do it now? You have Christ in your neighbor. You ought to serve your neighbor. For what do you do to your neighbor in need you do th the Lord Christ himself. - Martin Luther, Christmas Sermon 1534*

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

*\* Please Stand as you are able*

**CALL TO PRAYER:** *(Based on Psalm 96 and Luke 2: 1-14)*

**One:** *Sing to our God a new song;  
Sing to our God all the earth.*

**ALL:** ***Glory to God in the highest heaven,  
Peace on earth to all!***

**One:** *The heavens are telling the glory of God,  
Let the earth rejoice, let trees of the forest sing for joy!*

**ALL:** ***Glory to God in the highest heaven,  
Peace on earth to all!***



**LIGHTING THE ADVENT CANDLE**

Rev. John: This evening, we celebrate the birth of Jesus, who came as the Light to a world in darkness. We have prepared for this celebration by throughout the four Sundays of Advent. We have lit the Advent Candle symbolizing HOPE. As night falls, and the shadows grow long, we wait in hopeful expectation for the coming light.

**All: (sing) O come, O come, Emmanuel, and ransom captive Israel, that mourns in lonely exile here until the child of God appear.**

Rev. John: We have lit the Advent Candle symbolizing PEACE. As war and violence swirl around us, we watch for the coming Prince of Peace.

**All: (sing) O come, desire of Nations, bind all people in one heart and mind. Bid all our sad divisions cease, and fill the world with Heaven's peace.**

Rev. John: We have lit the Advent Candle symbolizing JOY. As we struggle amid the shadows and gloom, we drink deeply from the font of all joy.

**All: (sing) O come, Key of David come, and open wide your heavenly home; make safe the path to endless day, to death's destruction close the way.**

Rev. John: We have lit the Advent Candle symbolizing LOVE. As love seems a rare commodity in our world, we cling to the love that will not let us go.

**All: (sing) O come, thou Dayspring, come and cheer our spirits by thine advent here; Love stir within the womb of night, and death's dark shadows put to flight.**

Rev. John: Now we light the CHRIST CANDLE. It is a symbol of the Light of Christ which has come into the world. People of God, rejoice, for a child has been born for us, a son given to us; authority rests upon his shoulders; and he is named Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Creator, God of Peace.

**PRAYER OF INVOCATION: [UNISON]**

*O God of the Baby of Bethlehem,  
We come into your presence with praise and thanksgiving.  
We hear the glad tidings of the angel voices,  
We come to experience this good news of great joy for all the people.  
As the shepherds traveled to Bethlehem,  
We have traveled here – excited, expectant, hopeful; a bit skeptical.  
Let the words of sacred scripture seep into our hearts,  
to be treasured and pondered anew.  
We are here; we are ready, O God!  
Let the light of your love break forth! Amen.*

**Anthem - Celebrate the Child Michael Card**

Refrain: Celebrate the Child who is the Light, now the darkness is over.  
No more wandering in the night. Celebrate the Child who is the Light!

1. You know this is no fable, Godhead and manhood became one.

We see He's more than able, and so we live to God the Son! (Refrain)

2. Firstborn of creation, Lamb and Lion, God and man,

The Author of Salvation, Almighty wrapped in swaddling bands! (Refrain)

(Words and Music by Michael Card; Copyright 1989 Birdwing  
Music/Mole End Music)

***Readings***

**(See back of bulletin for complete readings)**

**First Reading: - Isaiah 9:2-7 (NRSV)**

**Gospel Reading: - Luke 2:1-14 (NRSV)**

**HYMN: Angels We Have Heard on High # 125**

**Continuing Testament: John 1:1-18 (The Voice Translation)**

***Sermon: The light by Rev. John King***

***Hymn of Reflection: What Child is This? # 148***

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

Gayle & Allison Colbert, Cliff Stenzel, Sue Renovetz, Joe Blasko, Jon Thompson, Marilyn Pay, Frances Posey, Mac Hoppel, Rose Kaval, Bee Ortiz, Terry Heiman, Cindy Burton, Elizabeth Gadus, Sheila Day, Jan Wardlaw, Stan McCain, Kathleen Stewart, Ann Klonowski, Kathy Repko, "Edna House", people who are unemployed and under employed.

*(Please let the office know of any additions, corrections, or changes to our prayer lists.)*

### **Prayers of the Church**

#### **Silent Meditation**

#### **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***

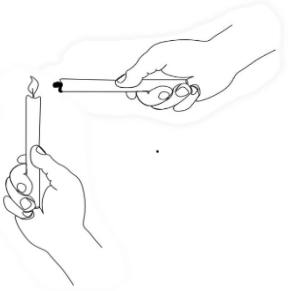
#### **\* Invitation to the Offering**

**\* 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.

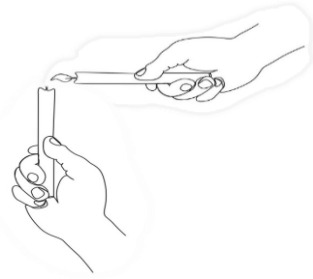
#### **\* PRAYER OF DEDICATION: [UNISON]**

O God of Hope, God of Peace, God of Joy, God of Love, we pray you bless these gifts, that they might become a blessing to this world you love so very much. May those who receive them know that you are with them, in this holy season and in all their days to come. In the name of the Child of Bethlehem, Emmanuel the Light of the World, we pray. Amen.





DO light candles this way. The flame stays safely on the bottom. The rising heat lights the candle above.



DON'T light candles this way. Wax will drip onto hands and seat cushions. It hurts and is difficult to clean.

## Hymn **Silent Night, Holy Night**

Christmas Prayer – Rev. John

## Hymn: Joy to the World #132

### **\*Benediction** (based on Isaiah 9:6)

Leader:     *A Child is born to us! A Son is given!  
He is named Wonderful Counselor,  
Mighty God, Prince of Peace!  
He is called Son of God  
He is for us, Light of the World  
Christ is born!  
Merry Christmas!  
God bless you all this night, and always, Amen.*

**Postlude**

**Before the Marvel of This Night**

**Schalk**

## Readings

### **First Reading Isaiah 9:2-7 (NRSV)**

" The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; those who lived in a land of deep darkness— on them light has shined.  
You have multiplied the nation, you have increased its joy; they rejoice before you as with joy at the harvest, as people exult when dividing plunder.  
For the yoke of their burden, and the bar across their shoulders, the rod of their oppressor, you have broken as on the day of Midian.  
For all the boots of the tramping warriors and all the garments rolled in blood shall be burned as fuel for the fire.  
For a child has been born for us, a son given to us; authority rests upon his shoulders; and he is named Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.  
His authority shall grow continually, and there shall be endless peace for the throne of David and his kingdom.

### **Gospel Reading Luke 2:1-14 (NRSV)**

In those days a decree went out from Emperor Augustus that all the world should be registered.  
This was the first registration and was taken while Quirinius was governor of Syria.  
All went to their own towns to be registered.  
Joseph also went from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to the city of David called Bethlehem, because he was descended from the house and family of David.  
He went to be registered with Mary, to whom he was engaged and who was expecting a child.  
While they were there, the time came for her to deliver her child.  
And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in bands of cloth, and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn.  
In that region there were shepherds living in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night.  
Then an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified.  
But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid; for see—I am bringing you good news of great joy for all the people:  
to you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is the Messiah, the Lord.  
This will be a sign for you: you will find a child wrapped in bands of cloth and lying in a manger."

And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God and saying,  
"Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace!"

**Continuing Testament** – John 1:1-14 (The Voice Translation)

Before time itself was measured, the Voice was speaking.

The Voice was and is God.

This celestial Word remained ever present with the Creator;

This Word shaped the entire cosmos.

Immersed in the practice of creating,

all things that exist were spoken into being.

This breath filled all things  
with a living, breathing light—

A light that thrives in the depths of darkness,

blazes through murky bottoms.

It cannot and will not be quenched.

A man named John, who was sent by God, was the first to clearly articulate the source of this Light. This baptizer put in plain words the elusive mystery of the Divine Light so all might believe. Some wondered whether he might be the Light, but John was not the Light. He merely pointed to the Light. The true Light, who shines upon the heart of everyone, was coming into the cosmos.

The Light entered our world; yet the world did not recognize the very Voice of their Maker. Creation did not recognize the Creator, they refused to listen. But for all who did receive and trust, the Voice gave them the right to be reborn as children of God; and bestowed this birthright not by human power or initiative but by God's will.

So the Voice took on flesh and became human and chose to live alongside us.

And we have seen Him, Jesus - enveloped in undeniable splendor— one true Child of God, evidenced in the perfect balance of grace and truth.

"Do not be afraid; for see—I am  
bringing you good news of great joy  
for all the people." Angel, Luke 2:10





## **Christmas Poinsettias**



*Julie Bernard and Lin  
Kriynovach*

*The Cook Family*

*Peg and Jim Duffy*

*Armand Eusanio and Jeff  
Thompson*

*Dorie Gabor*

*Joy Garapic*

*Gordon, Tracey and*

*Eleanor Gibb*

*Kathy Goshe*

*Claudia Griesmer*

*Kate Matthews and*

*Jackie Cassara*

*Robert L Petrus*

*Eric Rahnenfuehrer*

*Sue and Cliff Stenzel*

*Jill Zedan*

*In memory of Tony, Julie and Lori Gorenc*

*In memory of Our bestest dog Cricket*

*In memory of dear Aunt Jill*

*In memory of Armand's parents*

*Robert and Ann Eusanio*

*In memory of Jeff's parents*

*Jim and Gin Thompson*

*In memory of Armand's niece*

*Lee Ann Candela*

*In memory of my husband Steven Gabor*

*In memory of William Garapic,*

*husband, father, grandfather*

*In memory of Vivienne Grace Gibb*

*In memory of Rev.H. Robert Jewell*

*In memory of Kathy's mother*

*Betty Csek*

*In memory of Michelle Nader*

*In Memory of*

*Sister Therese Anne Cox*

*In memory of John W. Petrus*

*In memory of J.R. Mc Evoy*

*In memory of Jan Rahnenfuehrer*

*In memory of Marjorie Rahnenfuehrer*

*In memory of those we have lost, but will  
never forget*

*In honor of this congregation that will and has  
prevailed through hard times.*



**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. If you need assistance, ask an usher - or a grandchild. Thank you!



**SHARE YOUR INSPIRATION** – As a congregational church, input from you, the congregation, is essential. The Spiritual Life Ministry is inviting you to keep an eye out during your week for potential continuing testament readings, bulletin cover art, quotes, and hymns. When you find something that speaks to you, please email it to Pastor John buccpastor23@gmail.com)

You'll notice scriptures for upcoming weeks listed in the Sunday bulletin – ideas that connect to those particular scriptures are especially welcome. In October, our Music Director started a once-monthly brainstorming session scheduled on the first Thursday of the month, at 6:15 pm in the sanctuary. Everyone is invited! At BUCC, WE ARE ONE, and we look forward to your unique input into our shared journey.



# Special Thanks

## December 24th, 2024

Head Usher:	Annette Pedersen
Ushers:	Diane Gressley
Lay Reader:	Robert Petrus
Greeter:	Sherrill Witt
Counters:	Janet Renovetz
	<b>Volunteer Needed</b>
Acolyte:	<b>Volunteer Needed</b>
Peace Candle:	<b>Volunteer Needed</b>
A/V Team:	Fred Pedersen
Snow Herder:	<b>Volunteer Needed</b>



## **MERRY CHRISTMAS!**

I would like to wish each of you a Merry Christmas! I am grateful to Dave Debick, our music minister, Miranda Lacefield our pastoral administrative assistant, Sam Alai and our entire custodial team, for all the extra work required to keep our Christmas merry and bright.

We wish all of you and your families a very blessed Christmas, filled with light and love and joy. Merry Christmas, and "God bless us, everyone!"

- Rev. John King