



# Brecksville

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# United Church of Christ

23 Public Square • Brecksville • Ohio • 44141 • 440-526-4364  
***The Baptism of Christ, January 12, 2025 • 10:00 AM***

*"Through baptism,  
we are drenched  
in the grace of God,  
marked forever  
as beloved."*

*- Desmond Tutu*



**Pastor**  
• John King

**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!**

**Sunday January 12th, 2025**

**The Baptism of Christ**

**Prelude**

**Take Me to the Water      Dilworth**

"Take me to the water. Take me to the sea.

Take me to the river so that my spirit can be free."

(Words: Rollo Dilworth; Copyright © 2006 by Hal Leonard Corp.)

**Welcome & Announcements**

**Silent Meditation**



*"You are my Own, my Beloved."*

*Luke 3:22 - The Inclusive Bible*



**Gathering in God's Presence**

*\* Please Stand as you are able*

**CALL TO PRAYER:** (Based on Psalm 29)

**One:** *People of God, we desire to be refreshed, renewed and changed.*

*Let us hear again the call we heard in baptism  
that encourages us and strengthens our resolve  
to be God's people in faithfulness and peace-loving justice.*

**All:** ***Ascribe to our God, O heavenly beings,  
ascribe to our God glory and strength.***

**One:** *Ascribe to our God a glorious name;  
worship our God in holy splendor.*

**All:** ***The voice of our GOD is over the waters;  
the God of glory thunders,  
the Lord, over mighty waters.***

**One:** *The voice of our God is powerful;  
the voice of our God is full of majesty.*

**All:** ***May our God give strength to the people!  
May the Lord bless the people with peace!***

**PRAYER OF INVOCATION: [UNISON]**

**Creating, Calling, and Faithful God,  
we come to this time and place to be with you,  
to worship you, and to learn from you.**

**Your Spirit was above the waters of creation  
Your Spirit was above the waters of the Red Sea  
As you people crossed from slavery to freedom.  
Your Spirit was over the waters of the Jordan River  
As John baptized Jesus, your beloved Son.**

**May your Spirit be with us again this day.  
Water refreshes and cleanses, it both causes death and brings new life.  
So too, may your Spirit refresh and cleanse our souls,  
Let us die to sin, and rise to new life in you.  
Amen.**

**Song of Praise:      Mark How the Lamb of God's Self-Offering      #167**

**Readings**

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

**First Reading: - Isaiah 43: 1-7 (The Voice Translation)**

**Gospel Reading: - Luke 3: 15-23 (God's Word Translation)**

**Continuing Testament: by Richard Rohr**

Time with  
Young Worshipers



## **Anthem                      Down Galilee's Slow Roadways                      Horman, arr. Debick**

1. Down Galilee's slow roadways a stranger traveled on  
from Nazareth to Jordan to be baptized by John.  
He went down to the waters like soldier, scribe, and slave,  
but there within the river the sign was birth and grave.
2. Arising from the river he saw the heavens torn;  
it seemed the sky so open revealed the Spirit's form.  
The holy dove descended amid a glorious voice:  
"You are my own beloved, my child, my heart, my choice."
3. We too have found a roadway; it led us to this place.  
We all have had to travel in search of hope and grace.  
But now beside this water again a voice is heard.  
"You are my own, my chosen, beloved of your Lord."

(Text: Sylvia G. Dunstan, 1991; text © 1991 GIA Publications, Inc.; music: John D. Horman, 1998)

## ***Sermon: "Affirmed by Love" by Rev. John King***

## **Hymn of Reflection                      On Jordan's Bank                      (See insert)**

### ***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]**

**Faithful God,  
Bless us in our baptismal calling  
to be in ministry of showing hospitality to others.  
We offer the gifts that we have been given to be used  
For the lifting up of those who are hurting,  
And for the building of your Kingdom on Earth  
Receive and multiply our gifts for life-giving ministry. Amen.**



## Going with God's Love

\* Hymn of Departure      Crashing Waters at Creation      #326  
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.

### \* Circle of Community (continued)

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**

**Roll Jordan Roll**

**African American spiritual**

Baptized before without the choice,  
But this time consciously, of grace  
Unto supremest name,  
Called to my full, the crescent dropped,  
Existence's whole arc filled up  
With one small diadem.  
- Emily Dickinson

## Readings

### **First Reading Isaiah 43:1-7 (The Voice Translation)**

A reading from the book of the prophet Isaiah:

Remember who created you, O Jacob?

Who shaped you, O Israel?

See, you have nothing to fear. I, who made you, will take you back.

I have chosen you, named you as My own.

When you face stormy seas I will be there with you with endurance and calm;

you will not be engulfed in raging rivers.

If it seems like you're walking through fire with flames licking at your limbs, keep going; you won't be burned.

Because I, the Eternal One, am your God.

I am the Holy One of Israel, and I will save you.

I have traded in nations to win you back,

Egypt, Cush, and Seba, in exchange for your freedom.

Because you are special to Me and I love you,

I gladly give up other peoples in exchange for you;

They are trivial by comparison to your weighty significance.

So don't be afraid. I am here.

I will reunite you with your children,

bringing them back from wherever in the world they are—East, West, North, or South.

No place will be able to hold you when I demand your release, when I order them,

"Bring My children—My sons and daughters—from far away.

Bring the ones who are called by My name;

the ones I made, shaped, and created."

### **Gospel Reading Luke 3:15-23 (God's Word Translation)**

People's hopes were rising as they all wondered whether John was the Messiah.

John replied to all of them, "I baptize you with water. But the one who is more powerful than I is coming. I am not worthy to untie his sandal straps. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire.



His winnowing shovel is in his hand to clean up his threshing floor. He will gather the wheat into his barn, but he will burn the husks in a fire that can never be put out."

With many other encouraging words, he told the Good News to the people.

John spoke out against the ruler Herod because Herod had married his own sister-in-law, Herodias. He also spoke out against Herod for all the evil things he had done.

So Herod added one more evil to all the others; he locked John in prison. When all the people were baptized, Jesus, too, was baptized. While he was praying, heaven opened,

and the Holy Spirit came down to him in the form of a dove. A voice from heaven said, "You are my Son, whom I love. I am pleased with you."

Jesus was about 30 years old when he began his ministry.

### **Continuing Testament – by Richard Rohr**

After fourteen years as a chaplain in the Albuquerque jails, I am convinced that the reason people make great mistakes is because they have never heard what Jesus heard on the day of his baptism. They never heard another human voice, much less a voice from heaven, say to them, "You are a beloved son. You are a beloved daughter and in you I am well pleased." If we've never had anyone believe in us, take delight in us, affirm us, call us beloved, we don't have anywhere to begin. There's nothing exciting and wonderful to start with, so we spend our whole lives trying to say those words to ourselves: "I'm okay, I'm wonderful, I'm great." But we don't really believe it. The word has to come from someone greater than us. That's really a parent's primary job—to communicate to their child that they are a beloved, eternally-existing child of God. Our jails are filled to over-flowing with people who never heard this foundational message—and sadly, so is much of our world.

The only purpose of the gospel, and even religion, is to communicate that one and eternal truth. Once we have that straight, nothing can stop us and no one can take it away from us, because it is given only, always, and everywhere by God—for those who will accept it freely. My only job and any preacher's job is to try to replicate and resound that

eternal message of God that initiates everything good on this earth—  
You are beloved children of God!

## **Announcements:**

**Congregational Meeting on January 26th:** The BUCC Congregational Meeting will be on January 26, 2025 directly after our worship service. We hope that all members can attend this important meeting where we approve and vote on our Officers for the year 2025 as well as approve our Operating Budget. The slate of officers and the list of Ministry heads and members along with the Budget will be sent out via email by January 10th for your review, and there will be hard copies of these items available at that time for those who prefer paper copies for review.

**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!



## **SHARING GOOD NEWS**

At the beginning of the Sunday service you are welcome to share announcements. Please keep these 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 birthdays, anniversaries, retirement, awards, etc.

## **HOLY GROUNDS**

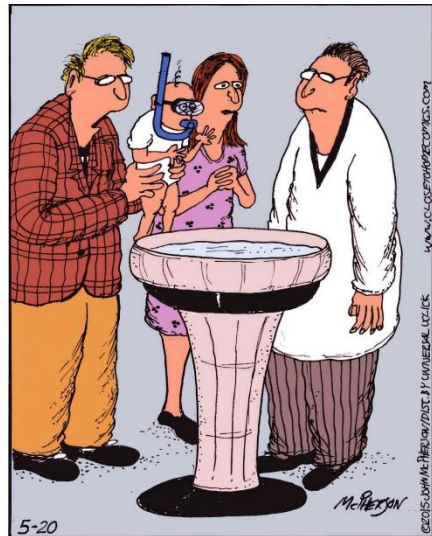
Join Pastor John for an informal conversation and a cup of coffee at Panera (Brecksville). On most Tuesdays, at 8:15-9:15 you can stop by anytime, to talk about whatever is on your mind. You never know who might stop by! Of course, if you are looking for a more private conversation, you can always set up an appointment with Rev. John anytime you like.

## **THIS WEEK'S CALENDAR includes the following:**

Tue. Jan 14	8:15 am – “Holy Grounds” at Panera 6:00 pm – AA “Love & Tolerance” (Pilgrim Hall) 6:30 pm – Social Justice
Wed. Jan 15	11:00 am – Mindfulness & Meditation (Parlor) 5:45 pm – Braver Angels 7:00 pm – Finance Meeting
Thur. Jan 16	5:30 pm – Youth Choir 7:00 pm - Choir Practice
Sat. Jan 18	4:00 pm – St. Bridget

**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.



**"We're a bit apprehensive about the baptism."**



we are thankful for you

### January 12th, 2025

Early Usher:	Jill Zedan
Late Usher:	<b>Volunteer Needed</b>
Greeter:	Evie Novak
Reader:	Robert Petrus
Flowers:	Katie MacKeigan King
Counters:	Marjorie Culver Kathy Pastor
A/V:	Betsey Wilson
Snacks:	Sue Stenzel Lois Lorenzo
Set Up/Serve:	Sue Stenzel
Clean Up:	<b>Volunteers Needed</b>
Snow Herder:	Wes Novak

### January 19th, 2025

Early Usher:	Annette Pedersen
Late Usher:	Mark Lehman
Greeter:	Lori Molesky
Reader:	Kate Matthews
Flowers:	<b>Volunteers Needed</b>
Counters:	Marjorie Culver Kathy Pastor
A/V:	Fred Pedersen
Snack:	Sue Stenzel
Set Up/Serve:	Sue Stenzel
Clean Up:	<b>Volunteer Needed</b>
Communion Bread:	Kathy Pastor
Snow Herder:	<b>Volunteer Needed</b>



Attendance last Sunday, January 5th, 2024 – Adults: 48; Kids: 5; Online: 31; Total: 84  
Next week's scripture readings will be, **1 Corinthians 12:4-11 (NRSV)** and **John 2:1-11 (NRSV)**