



# Brecksville

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# United Church of Christ

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

*"Most young adults I know aren't looking for a religion that answers all of their questions, but rather a community of faith in which they feel safe to ask them."*

*- Rachel Held Evans*

***Third Sunday in Lent, March 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2025 • 10:00 AM***



**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.

**\*\*LARGE PRINT BULLETINS AVAILIABLE UPON REQUEST\*\***

**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!**

## Third Sunday in Lent Sunday March 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2025

### Prelude

### Walk Worthy    Martin

Armand Eusanio, clarinet

"Walk worthy of the Lord. Come give your heart to Christ.  
Live always bearing fruit for him. Live strengthened by his might."  
(Words: J. Paul Williams; © Timespan Music Inc. and Purifoy Publishing)

### Welcome & Announcements

### Silent Meditation



*Are we that wait—sufficient worth—  
That such Enormous Pearl  
As life—dissolved be—for Us—  
In Battle's—horrid Bowl?  
-Emily Dickinson*



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

*\* Please Stand as you are able*

### **\*CALL TO PRAYER:**

One: Hope rides on the springtime air carried aloft upon the turbulent wind,

**ALL: filling field and forest, city and town, with the incense of new life.**

One: With awe and joy we greet the sun, our mysterious daystar,

**ALL: Which warms and feeds our planet with energy and light and life.**

One: At this time of the spring equinox, we celebrate that the sun has signaled once again the beginning of a new season of life.

**ALL: Great and generous are you, our God, who has given us the rich variety of ever-changing seasons.**

### Hymn of Praise

### Come to the Water    Foley (see insert)

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

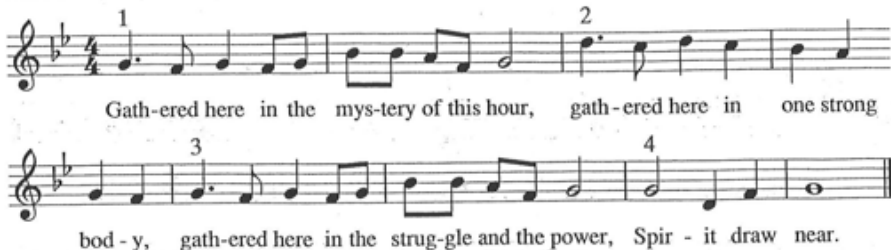
Father of Fire, Mother of Mystery, teach us the lesson of spring as all creation comes alive— tree and bush, flower and plant— in the of the resurrection of creation. Grant us the gift, O God, to do the same. Teach us, O glorious Spring, the lesson that nothing dies completely. At the death of my body help me to know that I have not entered an endless winter, but simply a stage in the unfolding mystery whose name is Life. On this day of the spring equinox may I taste with delight the freshness and vitality of new birth and come forth from the womb of winter youthful with hope and fully alive in the presence of our God. Amen.

**\*Pastor's Prayer**

**\*Gathering Song:                      Gathered Here (sung twice)**

742

*Text and music: Phil Porter, 1990*



*This chant may be sung as a round.*

## **Readings**

(See back of bulletin for complete readings)

**First Reading: - Isaiah 55: 1-3, 5d-12**

**Gospel Reading: - Luke 13:1-9**

**Continuing Testament: Excerpts from the last sermon preached by St. Oscar Romero**

Time with Young Worshipers

## **Anthem                      Create in Me a Clean Heart    Haas**

Refrain: Create in me a clean heart, O God. (twice)



1. Have mercy on me, O God. In the greatness of your love, cleanse me from my sin; Wash me. (Refrain)
2. Be patient with me, O God. Help me bear abundant fruit. Bring me back to life; Restore me. (Refrain)
3. Stay close to me, O God. In your presence keep me safe. Fill me with your spirit; Renew me. (Refrain)
4. Your salvation is joy to me. In your wisdom show the way. Lead me back to you; Teach me. Refrain)

(Words and Music: David Haas)

**Sermon: "Dual Citizenship"** by Leroy Ford

## **Hymn of Reflection              There's a Wideness in God's Mercy    #23**

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

Gayle & Allison Colbert, Sue Renovetz, Joe Blasko, Jon Thompson, Marilyn Pay, Frances Posey, Mac Hoppel, Rose Kaval, Bee Ortiz, Terry Heiman, Cindy Burton, Elizabeth Gadus, Jan Wardlaw, Kathleen Stewart, Kathy Repko, Lois Lorenzo, The family of Cliff Stenzel, "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]**

For the wondrous ways this offering will bless this community, we dedicate these gifts.

For the ways it'll help us nurture caring relationships with our neighbors, we dedicate these gifts. Let this offering, and the works of our hands and feet, bear good fruit in the world.

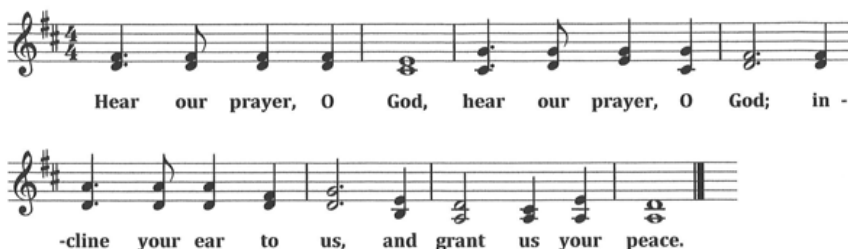
**\* Hymn of Departure**              Lord, Make Me More Holy              #75

Carrying the Light of Christ into the World (Acolyte)

### **\* Circle of Community**

## **Hear Our Prayer, O God**

George Whelpton, 1897



### **\*Benediction**

**Postlude**

**Fantaisie**

**Couperin**

## Readings

### **First Reading Isaiah 55: 1-3, 5d-12 (The Voice translation)**

If you are thirsty, come here;

come, there's water for all.

Whoever is poor and penniless can still

come and buy the food I sell.

There's no cost—here, have some food, hearty and delicious,  
and beverages, pure and good.

I don't understand why you spend your money for things that don't nourish  
or work so hard for what leaves you empty.

Attend to Me and eat what is good;

enjoy the richest, most delectable of things.

Listen closely, and come even closer. My words will give life,

for I will make a covenant with you that cannot be broken.

The Eternal, the Holy One of Israel, has made you beautiful.

So turn your attention and seek the Eternal One while it is still possible;

Let those who are busy plotting violence and doing wrong

stop right now, turn, and do right.

Let them turn back to the Eternal so they can experience compassion.

God will excuse our past wrongs. Our God's forgiveness is inexhaustible.

### **Gospel Reading Luke 13:1-9 (New International Version)**

Now there were some present at that time who told Jesus about the

Galileans whose blood Pilate had mixed with their sacrifices. Jesus

answered, "Do you think that these Galileans were worse sinners than  
all the other Galileans because they suffered this way? I tell you, no!

But unless you repent, you too will perish. Or those eighteen who died  
when the tower in Siloam fell on them — do you think they were more  
guilty than all the others living in Jerusalem? I tell you, no! But unless you  
repent, you too will perish."

Then he told this parable: "A man had a fig tree growing in his vineyard,  
and he went to look for fruit on it but did not find any. So he said to the  
man who took care of the vineyard, 'For three years now I've been  
coming to look for fruit on this fig tree and haven't found any. Cut it  
down! Why should it use up the soil?'

“‘Sir’, the man replied, ‘leave it alone for one more year, and I’ll dig around it and fertilize it. If it bears fruit next year, fine! If not, then cut it down!’”

**Continuing Testament Excerpts from the last sermon preached by St. Oscar Romero in the Cathedral of San Salvador, El Salvador on March 23, 1980. The following day, Romero was assassinated at the altar.**

The great task of Christians is to become absorbed in God’s kingdom and, with our spirits so absorbed, to work also on history-making projects. It is a good thing to unite in the people’s organizations; it is a good thing to create political parties; it is a good thing to take part in government. All that is good, as long as you embody the kingdom of God and try to implant it wherever you’re working— as long as you’re not a plaything of earthly ambitions...

(At this point in his preaching, Romero announces, at length, the many Salvadorans who were tortured, raped, killed and mutilated in the week before. These sermons were broadcast live via radio, providing the only news of those events. Then, he concluded his sermon as follows)[1]

I would like to make an appeal especially to the men of the army, and concretely to the National Guard, the police, and the troops. Brothers, you are of part of our own people. You are killing your own brother and sister campesinos, and against any order a man may give to kill, God’s law must prevail: “You shall not kill!” (Ex 20:13).

No soldier is obliged to obey an order against the law of God. (Applause)  
No one has to observe an immoral law. It is time now for you to reclaim your conscience and to obey your conscience rather than the command to sin. The church defends the rights of God, the law of God, and the dignity of the human person and therefore cannot remain silent before such great abominations. We want the government to understand well that the reforms are worth nothing if they are stained with so much blood.

In the name of God, then, and in the name of this suffering people, whose laments rise up each day more tumultuously toward heaven, I beg you, I beseech you, I order you in the name of God: stop the repression! The liberation the church preaches is just as we have studied it today in the holy Bible. It is a liberation that respects above all the dignity of the

person, the saving power of the common good of the people, and the transcendent vision that looks first of all toward God and derives its hope and its strength from God alone. You can read this and all of Romero's sermons at [www.romerotrue.org.uk](http://www.romerotrue.org.uk)

## **Announcements:**

### **One Great Hour of Sharing - Special Offering Collection will be Sunday**

**March 30** - "Here's another way to put it: You're here to be light, bringing out the God-colors in the world. God is not a secret to be kept. We're going public with this, as public as a city on a hill. If I make you light-bearers, you don't think I'm going to hide you under a bucket, do you? I'm putting you on a light stand. Now that I've put you there on a hilltop, on a light stand—shine! Keep open house; be generous with your lives."

(Matthew 5:14-16, The Message)

One Great Hour of Sharing (OGHS) is a vital special mission offering of the United Church of Christ. It connects you to disaster relief, refugee assistance, and development efforts around the globe. When disasters strike, or when individuals are displaced due to violence or poverty, OGHS ensures immediate response and ongoing recovery.

Through your support, OGHS funds comprehensive development programs in areas such as healthcare, education, agriculture, food security, microfinancing, and women's empowerment. By partnering with Global Ministries and international response networks, OGHS maximizes its impact. Your contributions help meet urgent needs while addressing the root causes of vulnerability, ensuring long-term, sustainable solutions for affected communities.

**PRM-** Do you have a concern about the church, the Pastor, something else? We have just the place for you to go to have your concerns addressed. It's called the Pastoral Relations Ministry or PRM (formerly the Pastoral Relations Committee, PRC).

What is the PRM? It is a standing committee of BUCC devoted to promoting strong relations between the congregation and our Pastor, John King. It is not unique to us but is a recommended ministry in all UCC churches. What does this mean to you? It means that if you have a concern or issue with either the church or Pastor John you can come to anyone on the PRM, tell them your issue, and it will be brought to the

attention of our Pastor. I can promise you that all concerns will be taken seriously and will be addressed in a timely manner. Of course, you are also free to bring your concern directly to Pastor John's attention. This would, of course, be a great first option. If, however, you are not comfortable doing that then bring your concerns to one of the Ministry members and we will bring it to him directly. The members of this Ministry are Bob Chandler, Jill Zedan, Mark Lehman, Melanie Kay Falls, Chairperson. We are eager to help you in any way we can.

**Open Invite to sing the "Hallelujah Chorus" on Easter!** - We've decided to try something new this year. Several choir members have expressed interest in singing the "Hallelujah Chorus" from Handel's *Messiah* on Easter Sunday. Many people are already familiar with this masterpiece. If you're interested in singing it with BUCC's choir on Easter (April 20), you are cordially invited - family and friends included - to join us! We'll rehearse the "Hallelujah Chorus" 4 times before Easter: Thursdays March 27, April 3 and 10 at 7 PM, and Saturday April 19 at 11 AM. We'll also practice on Easter morning at 9:15 before service begins. If you're interested in singing with us, try to come to at least 2 of these practices so you're comfortable singing on Easter. Recordings of each vocal part will be provided. High school students are welcome to participate. Contact Dave Debick with any questions.

**Flowers-** This Sunday's flowers are dedicated by Lois Lorenzo and Bridget Sproul in honor of Rudy Lorenzo.

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

Tue. Mar 25	8:15 am – "Holy Grounds" at Panera 6:00 pm – AA "Love & Tolerance" (Pilgrim Hall)
Thur. Mar 27	5:30 pm – Youth Choir 7:00 pm - Choir Practice





### March 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2025

Early Usher: **Volunteers Needed**  
Late Usher: **Volunteers Needed**  
Greeter: Sherrill Witt  
Reader: **Volunteers Needed**  
Flowers: Sue Stenzel  
Counters: Marjorie Culver  
Janet Renovetz  
A/V: **Volunteers Needed**  
Snacks: Sue Stenzel  
Set Up/Serve: Janet Renovetz  
Sue Stenzel  
Clean Up: Janet Renovetz  
Sue Stenzel

### March 30<sup>th</sup>, 2025

Early Usher: Jill Zedan  
Late Usher: Mark Lehman  
Greeter: Sue Stenzel  
Reader: Sherrill Witt  
Flowers: Janet Renovetz  
Counters: Marjorie Culver  
Janet Renovetz  
A/V: Fred Pedersen  
Snack: **Volunteers Needed**  
Set Up/Serve: **Volunteers Needed**  
Clean Up: **Volunteers Needed**



Attendance last Sunday, March 16<sup>th</sup>, 2025 – Adults: 60; Kids: 12; Online: 36; Total: 108  
Next week's scripture readings will be, **James 1:22-27** and **Luke 15:1-3, 11-32**



**CELEBRATE EASTER  
WITH FLOWERS IN OUR SANCTUARY**

*This year we will be using azaleas as our Easter flowers. If you would like to dedicate a flower, please fill out this form and return with payment to the office or the collection basket. Don't forget to check below if you will take it home after Easter or donate it to the church for homebound members or decoration. Thank you!*

**DEADLINE – April 2**

**I Enclose \$15 for each Azalea      cash: \_\_\_\_\_      check : \_\_\_\_\_**

**Please check one:**

**I will take the flower(s) home \_\_\_\_\_**

**I will leave the flower(s) for church use \_\_\_\_\_**

**"In Memory of \_\_\_\_\_**

**"**

**"In Honor of \_\_\_\_\_**

**"**

**Other      " \_\_\_\_\_**

**"**

**Your Name**