

Brecksville United Church of Christ
March 5th, 2025

CALL TO WORSHIP

One: Lift up your voice like a trumpet!
Sound the alarms on the mountains.

**All: We gather to begin again
With fasting, mourning, and hoping.**

One: Take your space, take deep breaths.
The wilderness is beckoning.

**All: We gather to begin again
Restore to us the joy of your
salvation**

One: Create in us clean hearts, o God
Renew a righteous spirit

**All: We gather to begin again
The Lenten journey calls us forth**

One: Dust will praise, crushed bones will rejoice
Let us join the holy noise

**All: We gather to begin again
Help us to build where all seems broken
We must build where all seems broken**



HYMN **Savior, When in Tears and Dust #185**

INVOCATION

**God of the wanderers in the wilderness—
From Hagar to Elijah, and Miriam to Jesus— you have been with us in our hunger and our
thirst, in our doubt and uncertainty. We come to you in this moment of invocation desiring
your presence more deeply; yet we know that your presence needs no summoning; you need
no invoking for you are already and always with us. Emmanuel in the bleakness. Emmanuel in
our iniquities.**

**So, invoke us, O God. Renew us as we begin this journey of transformation. Restore us as we
strive to be our most compassionate selves. Revive us when we feel that all is lost. Help us to
mend what has broken, for the sake of justice and mercy as we walk humbly with you. Amen.**

READING - Isaiah 58:1-12 (NRSV)

Shout out, do not hold back! Lift up your voice like a trumpet! Announce to my people their rebellion, to the house of Jacob their sins. Yet day after day they seek me and delight to know my ways, as if they were a nation that practiced righteousness and did not forsake the ordinance of their God; they ask of me righteous judgments, they delight to draw near to God.

“Why do we fast, but you do not see? Why humble ourselves, but you do not notice?” Look, you serve your own interest on your fast day, and oppress all your workers. Look, you fast only to quarrel and to fight and to strike with a wicked fist. Such fasting as you do today will not make your voice heard on high.

Is such the fast that I choose, a day to humble oneself? Is it to bow down the head like a bulrush, and to lie in sackcloth and ashes? Will you call this a fast, a day acceptable to the Lord? Is not this the fast that I choose: to loose the bonds of injustice, to undo the thongs of the yoke, to let the oppressed go free, and to break every yoke? Is it not to share your bread with the hungry, and bring the homeless poor into your house; when you see the naked, to cover them, and not to hide yourself from your own kin?

Then your light shall break forth like the dawn, and your healing shall spring up quickly; your vindicator shall go before you, the glory of the Lord shall be your rear guard. Then you shall call, and the Lord will answer; you shall cry for help, and God will say, Here I am. If you remove the yoke from among you, the pointing of the finger, the speaking of evil, if you offer your food to the hungry and satisfy the needs of the afflicted, then your light shall rise in the darkness and your gloom be like the noonday. The Lord will guide you continually, and satisfy your needs in parched places, and make your bones strong; and you shall be like a watered garden, like a spring of water, whose waters never fail. Your ancient ruins shall be rebuilt; you shall raise up the foundations of many generations; you shall be called the repairer of the breach, the restorer of streets to live in.

READING Matthew 6:1-6, 16-21 (The Message Translation)

Jesus said, “Be especially careful when you are trying to be good so that you don’t make a performance out of it. It might be good theater, but the God who made you won’t be applauding.

“When you do something for someone else, don’t call attention to yourself. You’ve seen them in action, I’m sure—‘playactors’ I call them—treating prayer meeting and street corner alike as a stage, acting compassionate as long as someone is watching, playing to the crowds.

They get applause, true, but that’s all they get. When you help someone out, don’t think about how it looks. Just do it—quietly and unobtrusively. That is the way your God, who conceived you in love, working behind the scenes, helps you out.

“And when you come before God, don’t turn that into a theatrical production either. All these people making a regular show out of their prayers, hoping for stardom! Do you think God sits in a box seat? “Here’s what I want you to do: Find a quiet, secluded place so you won’t be tempted to role-play before God. Just be there as simply and honestly as you can manage. The focus will shift from you to God, and you will begin to sense God’s grace.

“When you practice some appetite-denying discipline to better concentrate on God, don’t make a production out of it. It might turn you into a small-time celebrity but it won’t make you a saint. If you ‘go into training’ inwardly, act normal outwardly. Comb your hair and wash your face. God doesn’t require attention-getting gimmicks. God won’t overlook what you are doing, but will reward you well.

“Don’t hoard treasure down here where it gets eaten by moths and corroded by rust or—worse!—stolen by burglars. Stockpile treasure in heaven, where it’s safe from moth and rust and burglars. It’s obvious, isn’t it? The place where your treasure is, is the place you will most want to be, and end up being.

CHOIR MUSIC Dust in the Wind Livgren

I close my eyes only for a moment, and the moment's gone.
All my dreams pass before my eyes, a curiosity.
Dust in the wind. All they are is dust in the wind.
Same old song. Just a drop of water in an endless sea.
All we do crumbles to the ground though we refuse to see.
Dust in the wind. All we are is dust in the wind. Oh____
Now, don't hang on. Nothing lasts forever but the earth and sky.
It slips away. And all your money won't another minute buy.
Dust in the wind.
All we are is dust in the wind. (twice)
Dust in the wind.
Everything is dust in the wind. (twice) The wind.
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WORDS OF ASSURANCE

OFFERING

PRAYER OF DEDICATION

One: For the wondrous ways this offering will bless this community and the world,

All: We dedicate these gifts.

One: For the ways it'll help us nurture caring relationships with our neighbors

All: We dedicate these gifts.

Let this offering, and the works of our hands and feet, help us build where all seems broken. Amen.

COMMUNION- Rev. John

MARKING WITH ASHES

All are invited to come forward to receive ashes on their foreheads or hands.

HYMN

Just as I Am

#207

BENEDICTION

"God, Grant that this tragic midnight [of our inhumanity to one another] will soon pass, and the bright daybreak of freedom, brotherhood [and sisterhood] will come into being." - Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.