



Brecksville

United Church of Christ

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

*"God is the true
Father and Mother
of Nature and all
natures that are
made to flow out of
God to work the
divine will, will be
restored and
brought again into
God."*

-Julian of Norwich



Fourth Sunday in Lent, March 30th, 2025 • 10:00 AM

Pastor
• John King

Director of Music

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 – web address: www.BrecksvilleUCC.org

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

Fourth Sunday in Lent Sunday March 30th, 2025

Prelude

Psalm 23: Surely Goodness, Surely Mercy
by Shane Barnard

Welcome & Announcements

Silent Meditation



*The earth is at the same time mother, she is the mother of all that is natural,
mother of all that is human. She is the mother of all, for contained in her
are the seeds of all.*

—Hildegard of Bingen



Gathering in God's Presence

** Please Stand as you are able*

***CALL TO PRAYER:** (Inspired by Psalm 32)

One: Happy are those who experience the grace of God

ALL: Who find forgiveness and mercy from the Holy One.

One: Happy are those who experience the steadfast love of God

ALL: Who find peace even in times of trial.

One: Happy are those who experience rest in God

ALL: Who find sabbath to renew their spirit.

Hymn of Praise

O God, How We Have Wandered

#202

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

Holy God, Holy Renewal,

After times of broken relationships, painful injustices, and feeling deserted,
we enter this season yearning for restoration and your comforting grace. In
this time of wilderness and reflection, we evaluate the relationships
between us and our neighbors. Fill our weary souls with hope. Lead us on
roads of renewal, and focus our minds as we ponder our callings in your
realm. Amen.

***Gathering Song: Be Still and know #743**

(See back of bulletin for complete readings)

Gospel Reading: - Luke 15:1-3, 11-32

Continuing Testament: Hildegard of Bingen



Anthem

**Psalms 23: Shepherd Me, O God
by Marty Haugen**

Sermon: "Sibling Rivalry & Sibling Revelry" by Leroy Ford

Hymn of Reflection **Amazing Grace** **#547**

PRAYER OF REFLECTION AND GROWTH: [UNISON]

Holy Breath of Life,

There are moments when our decisions do not take into consideration the well-being of our neighbors. There are times when our reactions turn inward instead of building healthy reconciliation. How is it that we are holding back our neighbor's rebirth? How are our implicit and explicit biases restricting God's grace and radical love? How do our actions and biases impede our own spiritual growth?

Urge us to be life-giving agents of your love. May each of our steps be healing not only to us, but to our siblings on the journey. Amen.

Assurance of God's Grace

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]**

Loving God, Holy Fountain of Blessings,

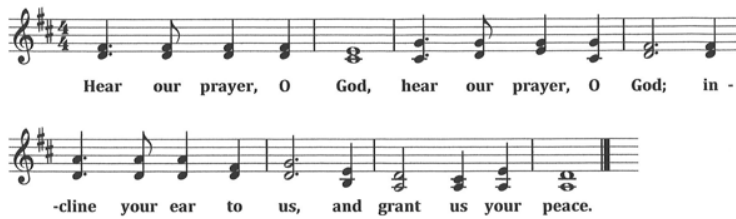
With gratitude, we celebrate the offerings we share with you and this community today. May they enliven our spirits, building excitement around us, and creating a culture of giving. Open us to new possibilities for using our gifts to build the dignity of all and to strengthen our neighborhoods. Amen.

*** Hymn of Departure** Surely No One Can Be Safer **#487**

Carrying the Light of Christ into the World (Acolyte)

* Circle of Community **Hear Our Prayer, O God**

George Whelpton, 1897



**Benediction*

Postlude

Readings

First Reading James 1:22-27 (God's Word Translation)

Do what God's word says. Don't merely listen to it, or you will fool yourselves. If someone listens to God's word but doesn't do what it says, he is like a person who looks at his face in a mirror, studies his features, goes away, and immediately forgets what he looks like. However, the person who continues to study God's perfect laws that make people free and who remains committed to them will be blessed. People like that don't merely listen and forget; they actually do what God's laws say. If someone thinks that they are religious but can't control their tongue, they are fooling themselves. That person's religion is worthless. Pure, unstained religion, according to God who loves us, is to take care of orphans and widows when they suffer.

Gospel Reading Luke 15:1-3, 11-32 (NRSV)

Now all the tax collectors and sinners were coming near to listen to him. And the Pharisees and the scribes were grumbling and saying, "This fellow welcomes sinners and eats with them."

So he told them this parable:

"There was a man who had two sons.

The younger of them said to his father, 'Father, give me the share of the property that will belong to me.' So he divided his property between them.

A few days later the younger son gathered all he had and traveled to a distant country, and there he squandered his property in dissolute living. When he had spent everything, a severe famine took place throughout that country, and he began to be in need.

So he went and hired himself out to one of the citizens of that country, who sent him to his fields to feed the pigs.

He would gladly have filled himself with the pods that the pigs were eating; and no one gave him anything.

But when he came to himself he said, 'How many of my father's hired hands have bread enough and to spare, but here I am dying of hunger!

I will get up and go to my father, and I will say to him, "Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you;

I am no longer worthy to be called your son; treat me like one of your hired hands."

So he set off and went to his father. But while he was still far off, his father saw him and was filled with compassion; he ran and put his arms around him and kissed him.

Then the son said to him, 'Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you; I am no longer worthy to be called your son.'

But the father said to his slaves, 'Quickly, bring out a robe—the best one—and put it on him; put a ring on his finger and sandals on his feet.

And get the fatted calf and kill it, and let us eat and celebrate; for this son of mine was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found!' And they began to celebrate.

"Now his elder son was in the field; and when he came and approached the house, he heard music and dancing.

He called one of the slaves and asked what was going on.

He replied, 'Your brother has come, and your father has killed the fatted calf, because he has got him back safe and sound.'

Then he became angry and refused to go in. His father came out and began to plead with him.

But he answered his father, 'Listen! For all these years I have been working like a slave for you, and I have never disobeyed your command; yet you have never given me even a young goat so that I might celebrate with my friends.

But when this son of yours came back, who has devoured your property with prostitutes, you killed the fatted calf for him!"

Then the father said to him, 'Son, you are always with me, and all that is mine is yours.

But we had to celebrate and rejoice, because this brother of yours was dead and has come to life; he was lost and has been found."

Continuing Testament From- Hildegard of Bingen (1098-1179 A.D.)

"I heard a voice speaking to me: 'The young woman whom you see is Love. She has her tent in eternity... It was love which was the source of this creation in the beginning when God said: 'Let it be!' And it was. As though in the blinking of an eye, the whole creation was formed through love. The young woman is radiant in such a clear, lightning-like brilliance of countenance that you can't fully look at her... She holds the sun and moon in her right hand and embraces them tenderly... The whole of creation calls this maiden 'Lady.' For it was from her that all of creation proceeded, since Love was the first. She made everything... Love was in eternity and brought forth, in the beginning of all holiness, all creatures without any admixture of evil. Adam and Eve, as well were produced by love from the pure nature of the Earth."

Announcements:

Flowers- In memory of my longtime friend Phyllis Dzlura, who passed away a year ago. "Na zdjowie kolezai"- Janet Renovetz

From Sue, Jennifer, Erika and CJ- "To our church family, Many thanks for your expressions of sympathy in the passing of Cliff in February. We had a small ceremony with just us, but we know there is so much more to Cliff's life. With that in mind we want to extend an invitation to join us and "Celebrate Cliff", Saturday, April 12th at 1:00 PM, here at BUCC. Following the celebration, we will gather in Pilgrim Hall"

One Great Hour of Sharing - Special Offering Collection is TODAY- "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.

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.

Retreat- We'll gather for our church retreat on Saturday, April 5, starting at 9:30 am at the Greenwood Village Community Center, 830 Village Club Rd, Sagamore Hills, OH 44067.

This year, our retreat will be led by Rev. Tina Green, from Fairport Harbor United Church of Christ.

Her theme will focus on building a community of kindness. We sense our communities struggling to live with kindness. Whether at city hall, Congress,

around the dinner table, or around the communion table, we strive to live with love and acceptance, while also setting safe boundaries against harmful behaviors. Pastor Tina will help us to develop skills that are rooted in Christ, and grounded in practical principles.

THIS WEEK'S CALENDAR includes the following

Tue. Apr 1	8:15 am – “Holy Grounds” at Panera 6:00 pm – AA “Love & Tolerance” (Pilgrim Hall) 7:00 pm – Spiritual Life
Wed. Apr 2	1:00 pm – Stewardship/Leadership Meeting
Thur. Apr 3	6:30 pm – Music Committee 7:00 pm - Choir Practice
Sat. Apr 5	9:30 am – Church Retreat (Greenwood Village Club House- In the Garden Room)

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.



**“Faith means believing in things
you’ve never seen...like your feet!”**



March 30th, 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
Snacks:	Volunteers Needed
Set Up/Serve:	Volunteers Needed
Clean Up:	Volunteers Needed

April 6th, 2025

Early Usher:	Volunteers Needed
Late Usher:	Volunteers Needed
Greeter:	Volunteers Needed
Reader:	Volunteers Needed
Flowers:	Annette Pedersen
Counters:	Marjorie Culver Kathy Pastor
A/V:	David Pastor
Snack:	Volunteers Needed
Set Up/Serve:	Volunteers Needed
Clean Up:	Volunteers Needed
Communion Bread:	Volunteers Needed



Attendance last Sunday, March 23rd, 2025 – Adults: 46; Kids: 2; Online: 34; Total: 82
 Next week's scripture readings will be, **Ezekiel 37:1-14** and **John 11:1-44**



**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
