

Third Sunday of Advent

December 13th, 2020

“Joy is the infallible sign of the presence of God.”
–Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, 20th century theologian

Announcements

WELCOME to all guests or visitors worshipping with us today in this Zoom format! We are doing everything we can to keep the service open to all, yet secure. In the eventuality of a disruption of the service, we will email information on how to re-enter the service with a password.

FAMILIES WITH YOUNG CHILDREN - We encourage you to share this service with your children, as well as take part in the virtual activities with Ms. Mindy at 9:30 (1/2 hour before every service). The link for this can be found in the email you may have received, on our Facebook page and/or on our church website:

<https://brecksvilleucc.org><https://brecksvilleucc.org/services/childrens-time-online/>

SPREAD CHRISTMAS CHEER AT THE PRENTISS CENTER FOR AUTISM! We will be purchasing Christmas gifts for students at the Prentiss Center for Autism again this year. BUCC member Darlene Kelly, who is Principal of the center, has identified fifteen students that we can help. You can pledge \$50 to sponsor gifts for an individual student, or contribute any other amount you choose - any funds over the cost of gifts will be used to purchase grocery store gift cards for the families.

Donations can be mailed to Matt Wolbert at 7465 Brecksville Road, Independence, 44131, or by Venmo to: @Matthew-Wolbert-1 (there's a picture of a sunflower plant with his account). Thank you for sharing the holiday spirit with these families in need!is

WE WOULD LIKE TO DELIVER THE GIFTS ON OR ABOUT DECEMBER 18TH.

THE CHRISTMAS FUND will be received on December 20, 2020. Your donations to this fund provide **direct** financial assistance to individual UCC clergy and lay church employees, not to programs or institutions. Our retired clergy and lay employees rely on monthly pension supplementation (especially lower income retirees). This fund meets such basic needs as food, utilities, health premium supplementation, help covering prescriptions, and living expenses. The annual Christmas “Thank You” gift is a reminder that they have not been forgotten - please be generous, as these funds are critical for a sustainable quality of life for these Veterans of the Cross!

***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!***

Announcements (continued)

THE MITTEN TREE: The Mitten Tree is set up in the lower lobby of the church (inside the back door). It is so wonderful to watch its magical branches replenished again this year for our neighbors in need. As usual, your generosity has been inspiring! You are welcome to continue bringing in any new/gently-used (or newly-created!) hats, mittens, gloves and scarves, which will find new homes when we provide hunger meals. The back doors are open Mon. - Thu. from 9 – noon, for those who are able to deliver their items. If you have a contribution but are unable to get to the church, please reach out to Kate Klonowski at (216) 534-3498 or keightykay@gmail.com, to arrange for a pickup.

SOCK IT TO ME SUNDAY: Elizabeth Gadus is collecting socks for the homeless, and will distribute them on the last Sunday of every month (hereby referred to as “Sock It To Me Sunday” until further notice). Although her primary target is St. Herman’s, she’ll also be on the lookout for other shelters in need. Your donations can be placed in the brown quilted bag, located on the bench inside the back entrance. Interested persons may contact Elizabeth by phone call or text at **440-319-6384**, or by email at **elizgadus@gmail.com**. Please take this opportunity to share during this giving season, and thank you in advance!

ADVENT & CHRISTMAS MUSIC INVITATION* - An email has gone out to everyone who helped with music last year - if you have not received the message, and wish to share some music over the holidays, please don't hesitate to contact Dave Debick. Dave can help you choose a song if needed, and rehearsal time is also provided as needed. Dave can be reached either by email at **buccmusic@sbcglobal.net**, or by phone at **216-408-7949**. High school students are welcome to participate!

***NOTE: Social distancing is practiced and masks are worn during these rehearsal/recording sessions.**

BUCC MASKS make great stocking stuffers! Interested parties can place an order by either calling the BUCC office at **440-526-4364**, or sending your request in an email to **buccoh@sbcglobal.net**. Masks are available by pick up or delivery (no extra charge) – please let Anne know what your preference is when ordering. These masks bear the UCC slogan “Still Speaking,” and our church’s name. Suggested donation is \$10, and all proceeds go toward the BUCC general fund.

CONGREGATIONAL MEETING – Our final congregational meeting for 2020 will be held on Sunday, December 27th at 11:00, immediately following the Sunday service. The purpose of the meeting is to confirm the proposed 2021 slate of officers, and to present the tentative 2021 budget.

If you attend the December 27th service, please stay logged into Zoom afterwards to participate in the meeting. If you do not attend the service, you may join the meeting at 11:00 via our Zoom link:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/4780705901>

PASTOR SEARCH AND NOMINATING COMMITTEE: Over the next few weeks, the PSNC will be calling everyone from the BUCC and asking for your participation in a brief survey about our Church. Your input is essential in the process of selecting a new full-time pastor. You will be contacted by one of the following members of the committee: Beth Rehling, Ben Rehling, Jon Thompson, Cliffs Cribbs, Joy Garapic, Sherrill Witt and Alan Klonowski. For more information, call Sherrill Witt at 216-244-6916, or Cliff Cribbs at 216-970-6347. Thank you in advance for your insights!

Announcements (continued)

THE PASTOR IS IN! Pastor Allan is available every Tuesday, between 11 am and noon. You can contact him either by mail, email or phone - feel free to call either the church or his cell phone directly. You can also catch him online, by clicking on the same Zoom link that we use for Sunday services. He'd love to hear from you! Here's his contact information:

- BUCC address: **23 Public Square, Brecksville OH 44141**
- Email: **buccpastor@sbcglobal.net**
- BUCC Office phone: **(440) 526-4364**
- Pastor Allan's cell phone: **(513) 417-1537**
- Zoom link: **<https://zoom.us/j/4780705901>**

WEEKLY COLLECTION is still happening! Please don't forget to send in your pledges to the church by mail or (preferably) PayPal! Check out **BrecksvilleUCC.org/giving** for more info.

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED! If you would like to be the Zoom Host or the Slide Runner, (both very easy and done from the comfort of your own home!), please reach out to Heidi Spangler at **heidi@heidihoonthego.com**. We'd love to teach you.

COFFEE HOUR! After the service, we welcome all attendees to stay on Zoom to enjoy some time and fellowship with each other. Brew your favorite fairly-traded coffee or tea and a snack and catch up with friends!

*Many thanks
for all the donations
of time, money, and talent
that you provide to the
Church!*

Gathering in God's Presence

Meditation: "I slept and dreamt that life was joy. I awoke and saw that life was service. I acted and behold, service was joy."

- Rabindranath Tagore, Bengali poet, (1861-1941)

Prelude:

My Soul in Stillness Waits

Haugen

O Spring of Joy, rain down upon our spirits;
our thirsty hearts are yearning for Your word;
come, make us whole,
be comfort to our hearts.
(Marty Haugen, 1982)

Call to Worship:

- Leader (David): At Christmas, God is the great Giver.
- **People (Kathy): God gives us the baby born in Bethlehem, and with him God gives forgiveness, community, freedom from sin's power, unexpected joy, and eternal life.**
- Leader: Joy comes with the gift, for God is with us, Emmanuel. Joy comes when sickness is healed, when the burden of guilt is lifted, when the tragedy of death is overcome by the triumph of life.
- **People: What we never dared hope could be, has happened. We awoke, and the dream of eternal life with God and each other still carried on.**
- Leader: In joy, let us worship God!

Hymn of Praise:

Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus

Prichard

1. Come, thou long-expected Jesus, born to set thy people free;
from our fears and sins release us; let us find our rest in thee.
Israel's strength and consolation, hope of all the earth thou art;
dear desire of every nation, joy of every longing heart.

2. Born thy people to deliver, born a child and yet a king,
born to reign in us forever, now thy gracious kingdom bring.
By thine own eternal Spirit rule in all our hearts alone;
by thine all-sufficient merit raise us to thy glorious throne.

(Charles Wesley, 1744)

Prayer of Approach & Confession:

- **People (Kathy):** You, O God, are the one who puts joy in the world, yet joy is rare and hard to find. You are the one who offers yourself to us as a gift, yet You are a gift so many of us are reluctant to accept. You come as an infant and we think of You as a tyrant. You spent your life among us giving us all we needed, and we envision You as demanding. You call us in from the outside, and we put up walls on the inside. Forgive us our hard-heartedness and our stubborn misconceptions of You. Instead, in Your Spirit make us more like You. Make us people who put joy in the world. Amen

Words of Assurance:

- **Leader (David):** Paul wrote to the Romans: “May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in God, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.”
- **People (Kathy):** In the same letter Paul wrote, “Count yourselves dead to sin but alive to God in Jesus Christ.” Thanks be to God, for we are now dead to sin, but alive to God, and that is a reason for joy! Amen

Third Sunday of Advent



One Candle is Lit

Kirkpatrick

Come quickly, shalom, teach us how to prepare
For a gift that compels us with justice to care.

Our spirits are restless till sin and war cease.
One candle is lit for the Reign of God's Peace.

(Mary Anne Parrott, 1988)

Family Leaders: Dot and Stu Bailey

Dot: The angel said to the shepherds:

Stu: “Do not be afraid. I bring you good news that will cause great joy for all the people.”

Dot: What was that news, the news that brought great joy? It was that...

Stu: “Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; He is the Messiah, the Lord.”

Dot: Such news was so joyful that it made the angels sing:

Stu: “Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace among people of good will.”

Dot: The birth of Christ causes people to be filled with joy on earth, and in heaven causes the angels to break into song. Thanks be to God! Amen

The Candle of Joy is Lit

Readings

First Lesson

Isaiah 61:1-4, 8-11 *Good News To The Oppressed*

The Spirit of the Sovereign Lord is on me, because the Lord has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim freedom for the captives and release from darkness for the prisoners, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor and the day of vengeance of our God, to comfort all who mourn, and provide for those who grieve in Zion— to bestow on them a crown of beauty instead of ashes, the oil of joy instead of mourning, and a garment of praise instead of a spirit of despair. They will be called oaks of righteousness, a planting of the Lord for the display of God's splendor. They will rebuild the ancient ruins and restore the places long devastated; they will renew the ruined cities that have been devastated for generations.

“For I, the Lord, love justice; I hate robbery and wrongdoing. In my faithfulness I will reward my people and make an everlasting covenant with them. Their descendants will be known among the nations and their offspring among the peoples. All who see them will acknowledge that they are a people the Lord has blessed.” I delight greatly in the Lord; my soul rejoices in my God. For the Creator has clothed me with garments of salvation and arrayed me in a robe of God's righteousness, as a bridegroom adorns his head like a priest, and as a bride adorns herself with her jewels. For as the soil makes the sprout come up and a garden causes seeds to grow, so the Sovereign Creator will make righteousness and praise spring up before all nations.

Second Lesson

Luke 1: 46b-55 *Mary's Song*

And Mary said: “My soul glorifies the Lord and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior, for God has been mindful of my humble state as a servant. From now on all generations will call me blessed, for the Mighty One has done great things for me—holy is the name of our Creator. God's mercy extends to those who fear God, from generation to generation. God has performed mighty deeds; God has scattered those who are proud in their inmost thoughts. God has brought down rulers from their thrones but has lifted up the humble. God has filled the hungry with good things but has sent the rich away empty. God has helped His servant Israel, remembering to be merciful to Abraham and his descendants forever, just as She promised our ancestors.”

Contemporary Lesson

From The Museum of Innocence (inclusivized)

Orhan Pamuk

“In fact no one recognizes the happiest moment of their lives as they are living it. It may well be that, in a moment of joy, one might sincerely believe that they are living that golden instant ‘now,’ even having lived such a moment before, but whatever they say, in one part of their hearts they still believe in the certainty of a happier moment to come. Because how could anyone, and particularly anyone who is still young, carry on with the belief that everything could only get worse: If a person is happy enough to think they have reached the happiest moment of their life, they will be hopeful enough to believe their future will be just as beautiful, more so.”

Musical Offering: *Jesu, joy of man's desiring* J. S. Bach
Becky Anderson, Betsey Wilson, flute

Sermon: *The Power of Joy* Pastor Allan Lane

Hymn of Reflection: *Now the Heavens Start to Whisper*
Johnson's Tennessee Harmony, 1818

1. Now the heavens start to whisper, as the veil is growing thin.
Earth from slumber wakes to listen to the stirring, faint within:
seed of promise, deeply planted, child to spring from Jesse's stem!
Like the soil beneath the frost-line, hearts grow soft to welcome him.

2. Heavy clouds that block the moonlight now begin to drift away.
Diamond brilliance through the darkness shines the hope of coming day.
Christ, the morning star of splendor, gleams within a world grown dim.
Heaven's ember fans to fullness; hearts grow warm to welcome him.

3. Christ, eternal Sun of justice, Christ, the rose of wisdom's seed,
come to bless with fire and fragrance hours of yearning, hurt, and need.
In the lonely, in the stranger, in the outcast, hid from view:
child who comes to grace the manger, teach our hearts to welcome you.
(Mary Louise Bringle, 2005)

The Church at Prayer

Friends and family of Betty Gifford, Lenore Harris, Susan Renovetz, David Pastor, Elizabeth Gadus, Phyllis Hassler, Joanne Cook, Sheila Day (friend of the Sniders), Joanne K. and Jim C. (friends of Ed & June Puwal), Max Roha, Betty Kaul, Justin Brownlow, Anna Mary Fisher, Bill Toneff, Jan Wardlaw, Suzanne Suerick (niece of Kathy Smith), Stan McCain, Dottie Faust, "Edna House", Jon Thompson, Tina Ortiz, Dassi Matsuoaka, Lee Sanderson, Kathleen Stewart & Joe Blasko (her father), Cindy Burton, people who are unemployed and under employed.

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

Silent Meditation

Prayers of the Church

The Church at Prayer (continued)

Our Lord's Prayer (the additional use of "Mother" is optional, according to one's Theological understanding)
 ...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

The Invitation:

- Leader (David): We are givers because God has given us something to give. We are sharers because God has shared with us. We reach into others' lives to help because God has reached into our lives to help. Let us present our gifts and offerings to God.

BrecksvilleUCC.org/giving

Offertory Hymn:

We bring our gifts because we care,
 They are a part of what we share.
 Our love is strong, it heals, uplifts.
 With hearts of joy we share our gifts. Amen

Prayer of Dedication:

- People (Kathy): May these gifts be a means of joy for those that receive them. With gratitude for the people's support of this church, we turn these gifts over to Your service, O God our Beloved. Amen

Hymn of Departure: *With Joy Draw Water* Irish traditional melody

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|---|--|
| <p>1. With joy draw water from the spring;
 salvation's living well.
 The Holy One is in your midst;
 glad praises sing and tell!</p> | <p>3. With love the poor will be received;
 the proud will turn aside;
 And faithfulness will be a path,
 and righteousness the guide!</p> |
|---|--|

4. The wolf shall lie down with the lamb; the calf and lion play.
 God's peace shall dwell within the land;
 a child shall show the way!

(Anne McKinstry, 1986, 1993)

Going With God's Love

Carrying the Light of Christ Into the World:

Circle of Community

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: *Comfort, Comfort Now My People* Trente quatre Pseaumes, Geneva, 1551
 Sung by the Choir and Congregation of First Plymouth Church, Lincoln, Nebraska
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=119C58F3dnQ>



Special Thanks

December 13, 2020

Lay Reader David Ritchey
Responder Kathy Smith
CE Mindy Wade
Slide Runner Kate Klonowski
Zoom Host Jim Duffy

December 20, 2020

Lay Reader Kathleen Stewart
Responder Cliff Cribbs
CE Mindy Wade
Slide Runner Kate Klonowski
Zoom Host Sue Maier

Thank You for Joining Us!