

Fourth Sunday of Advent

December 20th, 2020

"[God's love is] like when you sit in front of a fire in winter – you are just there in front of the fire. You don't have to be smart or anything. The fire warms you." –Desmond Tutu

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/>

THE CHRISTMAS FUND THE CHRISTMAS FUND is today's special collection! 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). Your donation will meet such basic needs as food, utilities, health premium supplementation, help covering prescriptions, and basic living expenses. Also, emergency grants for active and retired UCC clergy and lay employees are provided, to assist in covering unexpected costs such as large medical expenses or home damage resulting from natural disasters. Please be generous, as these funds are critical for a sustainable quality of life for these Veterans of the Cross.

THE BUCC IS A "SUPER-SPREADER" . . . OF CHRISTMAS CHEER! (see picture on screen)

Many thanks to all who contributed to the gift collection for the Prentiss Autism Center. Through your generosity, we were able to provide gifts for each of the 15 children and give each family a \$25 Giant Eagle gift card. BUCC's very own Darlene Kelly, the principal at the center, will deliver the gifts to each family on December 21st. Thanks again for bringing Christmas cheer to these families in need!

***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 fill up with donations 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 next one is on 1/24!). For those who are able to deliver their items to the church, please call the office the day before you come, so we can make sure the back doors are unlocked when you arrive. The number at the church is **(440)-526-4364**.

(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: Please remember our houseless brothers and sisters as the days get colder! Our goal is to deliver donations to local shelters on the last Sunday of every month, through the end of March. **MANY THANKS** to all who made last month's delivery to St. Herman House such a success! If you wish to drop off your donation at the church, please call the office in advance, so that Anne can make sure the back doors are unlocked when you arrive. (The church office phone number is **440-526-4364**.) Your donations can be placed in the brown quilted bag, located on the bench inside the back entrance. Interested persons may also contact Elizabeth, by either phone call or text at **440-319-6384**, or by email at elizgadus@gmail.com. There are several more local shelters in need, and our plan is to "sock it to" as many as possible!

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>

Announcements (continued)

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!

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](https://www.brecksvilleucc.org/giving)** for more info.

******2021 PLEDGE COLLECTION ENVELOPES** -- The small collection envelopes for next year have arrived. Joy has placed them on the pew bench just inside the back doors. If you would like a box, please call the church office to make arrangements for pickup. If you can't pick them up, call **440-526-4364**, and Anne will mail them to you.****

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 your donations of time, money, and talent that you provide to the Church!

Gathering in God's Presence

"If you have never known the power of God's love, then maybe it is because you have never asked to know it – I mean really asked, expecting an answer."

–Frederick Buechner, *The Magnificent Defeat*

Prelude: *Come, Emmanuel (from Emmanuel, Hope of Our Hearts)* Chisum/Gordon
Evelyn Seager, soprano; Jan Renovetz, alto; Don Seager, bass

Call to Worship:

- Leader (Kathleen): All you who come today, know how deep, how high, how broad is the love of God for you in Jesus the Christ.
- **People (Cliff): God's love for us is deeper than the ocean, higher than the sky, wider than the prairie, longer lasting than time itself.**
- Leader: God calls us to step into that love as we step into worship. Let the music embrace you; let the prayers support you; let the sacrament enfold you in God's love.
- **People: We come into worship because God came into the world.**
- Leader: Let us worship the God who calls us into life in love!

Hymn of Praise: *O How Shall I Receive You* Teschner

1. O how shall I receive you, how meet you on your way,
blessed hope of every people, my soul's delight and stay?

O Jesus, Jesus, give me now by your own pure light,
to know whate'er is pleasing and welcome in your sight.

2. Love caused your incarnation; love brought you unto me;
your thirst for my salvation procured my liberty.

O love beyond all telling, that led you to embrace
in love, all love excelling, our lost and fallen race.

3. You come, O Christ, with gladness, in mercy and good-will,
to bring an end to sadness and bid our fears be still.

In patient expectation we live for that great day
when a renewed creation your glory shall display.

(Paul Gerhardt, 1653; transl. Catherine Winkworth, 1863, and others; alt.)

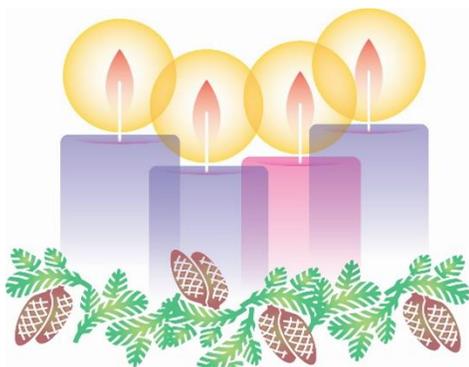
Prayer of Approach & Confession:

- **People (Cliff):** Sometimes we grow dizzy, O God, and we fall to the ground. How we got there we do not know. What we should do next we are not sure. But we look up and there you are looking down. We do not need to approach you because you are already here; we do not need to confess because you have already seen it all. You saw us get dizzy; you saw us fall. Did sin go to our heads, or did sin grab our ankles? Does it matter? Sin had us and took us down. We fell. Reach down to us in Christ and lift us up to walk again in your way. We ask it in the name of the One who showed your love, Amen

Words of Assurance:

- **Leader (Kathleen):** The apostle John wrote: "This is how we know that we belong to the truth and how we set our hearts at rest in God's presence:"
- **People (Cliff):** "If our hearts condemn us, we know that God is greater than our hearts, and God knows everything!" In Jesus Christ, God has forgiven us! Thanks be to God! Amen

Fourth Sunday of Advent



One Candle is Lit

Kirkpatrick

4. Come, wander where lion and lamb gently play,
Where evil is banished, and faith takes the day.

A babe in a manger astounds the world's eyes.
One candle is lit for God's loving surprise.!

(Mary Anne Parrott, 1988)

Family Leaders: Kate and Adam Lane

Kate: Let love rule in your hearts and guide your feet.

Adam: For God is love, and God has shown the way.

Kate: Let love overflow in its abundance and pour out into a world in need of love.

Adam: The love of God has been poured out for us, and spills over into the world through the people of God. Let us light the candle of Love.



The Candle of Love is Lit



Readings

First Lesson (read by pastor Allan)

2 Samuel 7:1-11 *David and the Temple*

After the king was settled in his palace and the Lord had given him rest from all his enemies around him, he said to Nathan the prophet, "Here I am, living in a house of cedar, while the ark of God remains in a tent." Nathan replied to the king, "Whatever you have in mind, go ahead and do it, for the Lord is with you." But that night the word of the Lord came to Nathan, saying: "Go and tell my servant David, 'This is what the Lord says: Are you the one to build me a house to dwell in? I have not dwelt in a house from the day I brought the Israelites up out of Egypt to this day. I have been moving from place to place with a tent as my dwelling. Wherever I have moved with all the Israelites, did I ever say to any of their rulers whom I commanded to shepherd my people Israel, "Why have you not built me a house of cedar?"' Now then, tell my servant David, 'This is what the Lord Almighty says: I took you from the pasture, from tending the flock, and appointed you ruler over my people Israel. I have been with you wherever you have gone, and I have cut off all your enemies from before you. Now I will make your name great, like the names of the greatest men on earth. And I will provide a place for my people Israel and will plant them so that they can have a home of their own and no longer be disturbed. Wicked people will not oppress them anymore, as they did at the beginning and have done ever since the time I appointed leaders over my people Israel. I will also give you rest from all your enemies. The Lord declares to you that the Lord himself will establish a house for you.'"

Second Lesson

Luke 1: 26-38 *Mary and the Angel*

In the sixth month of Elizabeth's pregnancy, God sent the angel Gabriel to Nazareth, a town in Galilee, to a virgin pledged to be married to a man named Joseph, a descendant of David. The virgin's name was Mary. The angel went to her and said, "Greetings, you who are highly favored! The Lord is with you." Mary was greatly troubled at his words and wondered what kind of greeting this might be. But the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary; you have found favor with God. You will conceive and give birth to a son, and you are to call him Jesus. He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give him the throne of his father David, and he will reign over Jacob's descendants forever; his kingdom will never end." "How will this be," Mary asked the angel, "since I am a virgin?" The angel answered, "The Holy Spirit will come on you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. So the holy one to be born will be called the Son of God. Even Elizabeth your relative is going to have a child in her old age, and she who was said to be unable to conceive is in her sixth month. For no word from God will ever fail." "I am the Lord's servant," Mary answered. "May your word to me be fulfilled." Then the angel left her.

Contemporary Lesson

From *Overcoming Exclusion*, by Miroslav Volf (Croatian Protestant theologian at Yale)

"Forgiveness flounders because I exclude the enemy from the community of humans even as I exclude myself from the community of sinners. But no one can be in the presence of the God of the crucified Messiah for long without overcoming this double exclusion—without transposing the enemy from the sphere of the monstrous...into the sphere of shared humanity, and herself from the sphere of proud innocence into the sphere of common sinfulness. When one knows [as the cross demonstrates] that the torturer will not eternally triumph over the victim, one is free to rediscover that person's humanity and imitate God's love for him. And when one knows [as the cross demonstrates] that God's love is greater than all sin, one is free to see oneself in the light of God's justice and so rediscover one's own sinfulness."

Musical Offering: *O Little Town of Bethlehem* Redner/Brooks
Allison Colbert, alto

Sermon: *Where God Lives* Pastor Allan Lane

Hymn of Reflection: *O Come, O Come, Emmanuel*
Melody from a 15th century French "Processional"

5. O come, O Key of David, come, and open wide your heavenly home;
Make safe the path to endless day, to hell's destruction close the way.

REFRAIN: Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to you, O Israel!

7. O come, Desire of Nations, bind all peoples in one heart and mind;
Make envy, strife, and quarrels cease; fill the whole world with heaven's peace.

REFRAIN

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, Dassie Matsuoka, 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

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 (Kathleen):** The apostle John wrote: "If anyone has material possessions and sees a brother or sister in need, but has no pity on them, how can the love of God be in that person? Dear children, let us not love with words or speech but with actions and in truth." Let us present our offerings to God.

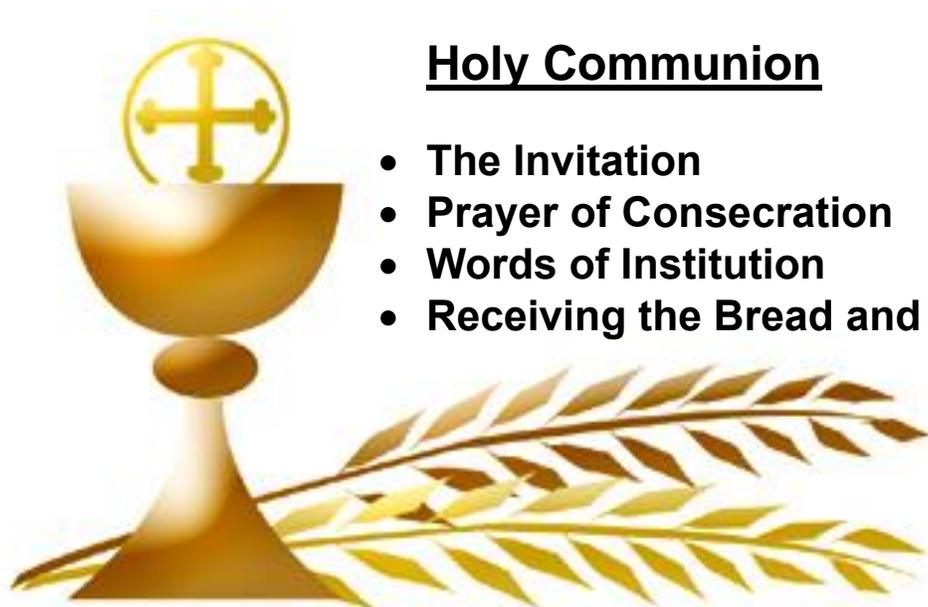
BrecksvilleUCC.org/giving

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 (Cliff):** Receive these offerings that represent the love in our hearts for the hurting and the needy of our world. May they help ease the way of many. Amen



Holy Communion

- **The Invitation**
- **Prayer of Consecration**
- **Words of Institution**
- **Receiving the Bread and Cup**

- **People (Cliff):** In love you gave yourself to us in Bethlehem. In love you have given yourself to us once more in the bread and the juice of the grape. In love, we give you thanks for your presence in us and in our community. Amen

Hymn of Departure: *Now Bless the God of Israel* Vaughan Williams

1. Now bless the God of Israel, who comes in love and power,
who raises from the royal house deliverance in this hour.
Through holy prophets God has sworn to free us from alarm,
to save us from the heavy hand of all who wish us harm.

2. Remembering the covenant, God rescues us from fear,
that we might serve in holiness and peace from year to year;
And you, my child, shall go before to preach, to prophesy,
that all may know the tender love, the grace of God most high.

3. In tender mercy, God will send the day-spring from on high,
our rising sun, the light of life for those who sit and sigh.
God comes to guide our way to peace, that death shall reign no more.
Sing praises to the Holy One! O worship and adore!
(Ruth Duck, 1985)

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: *Il Est Né (translation: "He is Born")* French carol

Special Thanks

December 20, 2020

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

December 24, 2020

Lay Reader Sue Stenzel
Responder Janet Renovetz
CE Mindy Wade
Slide Runner Kate Klonowski
Zoom Host David Pastor

December 27, 2020

Lay Reader Betsey Wilson
Responder Sue Stenzel
CE Mindy Wade
Slide Runner Kate Klonowski
Zoom Host Sue Maier

Thank You for Joining Us!

