

**March 14th, 2021**  
Fourth Sunday in Lent

“Snakes don’t hiss anymore these days.  
They’re calling you babe, bro, sister & BFF.”  
–rasarab

**Announcements**

**WELCOME** to all guests or visitors worshiping 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 either 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/>

**COVID VACCINE** - If you are eligible for a COVID vaccine and want to be vaccinated, but are struggling to secure an appointment (internet issues, trouble hearing, etc.), you can contact **Evie Novak** at **440-479-9743** for assistance. (If anyone is able to provide transportation to and from appointments, please reach out to Evie.)

**HOLY WEEK:** Because the choir cannot rehearse and perform together per pandemic protocol, Dave Debick will be reviewing CD recordings of BUCC Choir music from past years, and he will "extract" a few recordings for this year's services. Maundy Thursday recordings are not available, since those services were all held downstairs in Pilgrim Hall after our annual soup suppers. Dave will be recruiting a volunteer singer and/or instrumentalist for that service.

***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 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 this year are available on the pew bench just inside the back doors. If you haven't gotten yours yet, Joy has sent your envelopes for the first quarter in with your year-end statement. To pick up your envelopes, please call the church office to make arrangements for the doors to be unlocked. If you can't pick them up, notify **Anne** and she will mail them to you. The church office phone number is: **440-526-4364**, and **Anne's email** is **buccoh@sbcglobal.net**.

**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 your generous donations of time, money,  
and talent that you give to our Church!*

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

**Meditation:** *"Nothing but a symbol? People die for symbols. People have hope because of symbols. They're not just lines. They're histories, cultures, traditions, given shape."* – Roshani Chokshi, ***The Gilded Wolves***

**Prelude Music:**                    ***Sanctify Me, Oh God***                    Rexband  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fmaVASzr6DQ>

### **Call to Worship:**

- ◆ Leader (Diane): God calls us from a life we cannot keep to a life we cannot lose.
- ◆ **People (Janet): Our earthly lives come close to God's heavenly life in the thin place we call worship, where heaven and earth meet to celebrate each other.**
- ◆ Leader: When we give ourselves over to God, God gives us back to ourselves, changed and stretched.
- ◆ **People: When we give our lives to God, God gives us back eternal life in Jesus Christ.**
- ◆ Leader: Let us draw near to God as God draws near to us. Let us worship God!

**Hymn of Praise:**                    ***As Moses Raised the Serpent Up***  
 Melody from Sixteen Tune Settings, 1812

1. As Moses raised the serpent up, God's Child is lifted high;  
 And all who in that Child believe shall never, never die.
2. For God so loved the world that God, all human life to free,  
 Gave to the world God's Child that all might live eternally.
3. That Child was sent into the world not to condemn but save;  
 Now through Christ's name all are redeemed--what wondrous love God gave.  
(Based on John 3:14-17; versification The New Century Hymnal, 1993)

### **Prayer of Approach & Confession:**

**People (Janet): We come to confess with familiar words the familiar sins that plague us from week to week. Why do the same things continue to beset us, O God? We say harsh words, have harsh thoughts, take harsh actions. We look where we should not look, we long for a life we should not long for, we put down people we should build up. We think too little of ourselves and dare nothing. We think too highly of ourselves and risk everything. Help us to be the people you made before we let sin in the door as a houseguest who won't leave. Put in us a clean heart, O God, in the love of Christ. Amen**

## Words of Assurance:

- ◆ Leader (Diane): The Apostle Paul wrote to the Corinthians: “The one who raised the Lord Jesus from the dead will also raise us with Jesus and present us with you to God in person. All this is for your benefit, so that the grace that is reaching more and more people may cause thanksgiving to overflow to the glory of God.
- ◆ **People (Janet): This is why we don’t lose heart. Though outwardly we are wasting away, yet inwardly we are being renewed day by day. Our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all.” Amen**

## Song of Praise: *Gathered Here* (sung 2 times)

Gathered here in the mystery of this hour,  
Gathered here in one strong body,  
Gathered here in the struggle and the power,  
Spirit draw near.

## Readings

### First Reading: Numbers 21:4-9 *Snakes on a Plain*

They traveled from Mount Hor along the route to the Red Sea, to go around Edom. But the people grew impatient on the way; they spoke against God and against Moses, and said, “Why have you brought us up out of Egypt to die in the wilderness? There is no bread! There is no water! And we detest this miserable food!” Then the Lord sent venomous snakes among them; they bit the people and many Israelites died. The people came to Moses and said, “We sinned when we spoke against the Lord and against you. Pray that the Lord will take the snakes away from us.” So Moses prayed for the people.

The Lord said to Moses, “Make a snake and put it up on a pole; anyone who is bitten can look at it and live.” So Moses made a bronze snake and put it up on a pole. Then when anyone was bitten by a snake and looked at the bronze snake, they lived.

### Second Reading (read by Pastor Allan): John 3:14-21 *Lift the Lord on High*

Just as Moses lifted up the snake in the wilderness, so the Son of Man must be lifted up, that everyone who believes may have eternal life in him. For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him. Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe stands condemned already because they have not believed in the name of God’s one and only Son. This is the verdict: Light has come into the world, but people loved darkness instead of light because their deeds were evil. Everyone who does evil hates the light, and will not come into the light for fear that their deeds will be exposed. But whoever lives by the truth comes into the light, so that it may be seen plainly that what they have done has been done in the sight of God.

## Contemporary Reading:

“A talk with a serpent”, from *Ghostwritten*, by David Mitchell

“Go on, my dear,” urges the snake. “Take one. Hear it? ‘Pluck me,’ it’s saying. That big, shiny red one. ‘Pluck me, pluck me now and pluck me hard.’ You know you want to.”

“But God,” quotes Eve, putting out feelers for an agent provocateur, clever girl, “expressly forbids us to eat the fruit from the Tree of Knowledge.”

“Ah, yessssss, God ... But God gave us life, did He not? And God gave us desire, did He not? And God gave us taste, did He not? And Who else but God made the damned apples in the first place? So what else is life for but to taste the fruit we desire?”

Eve folds her arms schoolgirlishly. “God expressly forbade it. Adam said.” The snake grins through his fangs, admiring Eve’s playacting. “God is a nice enough chap in His way. I daresay He means well. But between you and The Tree of Knowledge, he is terribly insecure.”

“Insecure? He made the entire bloody universe! He’s omnipotent.”

“Exactly! Almost neurotic, isn’t it? All this worshiping, morning, noon, and night. It’s ‘Oh Praise Him, Oh Praise Him, O Praise Him, Oh Praise the Everlasting Lord.’ I don’t call that omnipotent. I call it pathetic. Most independent authorities agree that God has never sufficiently credited the work of virtual particles in the creation of the universe. He raises you and Adam on this diet of myths while all the really interesting information is locked up in these juicy apples. Seven days? Give me a break.”

**Musical Offering:** *The Cross of Christ* Wood/Nugent; arr. Chris and Mary McDonald  
Online recording courtesy of The Lorenz Corporation  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9y0FdxymA2c>

**Sermon:** *Jesus Lifted Up* Pastor Allan Lane

**Hymn of Reflection:** *God Loved the World* Anon., adapt. Edward Miller

1. God loved the world, and loving gave a wondrous gift, the lost to save,  
That all who would in Christ believe should everlasting life receive.
2. Christ Jesus is the ground of faith, who was made flesh and suffered death;  
All who confide in Christ alone are built on this chief cornerstone.
3. If you are sick, if death is near, this truth your troubled heart can cheer;  
Christ Jesus saves us all from death; that is the firmest ground of faith.  
(Heiliges Lippen und Herzens Opfer, Stettin, 1778; transl. August Crull, 1845; alt.)

## **The Church at Prayer**

Joe Wilson and family (on the loss of his father, Jack), Ann Roha (daughter-in-law of Max Roha), Bill Toneff, Fred Pedersen, Ann Klonowski, Lenore Harris, David Pastor, Elizabeth Gadus, Phyllis Hassler, Joanne Cook, Sheila Day, Joanne K. and Jim C., Max Roha, Betty Kaul, Anna Mary Fisher, Jan Wardlaw, Suzanne Patrick, Stan McCain, Dottie Faust, "Edna House", Jon Thompson, Tina Ortiz, Dassie Matsuoka, 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 (Diane): When life gets heavy and the burden feels overwhelming, people look to the church for assistance. They know that God's people will do what they can to help. Let the people of God now present their offerings to God and lighten the burden for those who come to our doors.

**[BrecksvilleUCC.org/giving](http://BrecksvilleUCC.org/giving)**

### **Offertory Hymn:**

Winter has come, it's taken hold.  
The days are short, the nights are cold.  
The poor need food and help and heat.  
We send our gifts, their needs to meet.  
Amen!

### **Prayer of Dedication:**

**People (Janet): We look to you to bring the healing the world needs, O God. We are happy to play our part in your plan. Receive these gifts and offerings from us, and use them to bring justice and healing. Amen**

## Hymn of Departure: *God Our Author and Creator*

Southern Harmony, 1835; harm. John Ferguson, 1973

1. God our Author and Creator, in whose life we find our own,  
make our daily witness greater, by our lives make your love known.  
Help us show how love embraces those whom fear and greed down-trod;  
in all yearning hearts and faces let us see a child of God.

2. Like those first apostles, Savior, give us strength to love and serve:  
when our fainting spirits waver, fire our hearts and steel our nerve.  
Teach us wisdom and compassion: bid our restless thoughts be still;  
by your guidance help us fashion lives conformed unto your will.

3. Keep us faithful, Holy Spirit, help us bear the message true,  
that at last all lands may hear it: "God is love; Christ died for you."  
Join our lives in mighty chorus till we come from every place,  
with all those who went before us, to the fullness of God's grace.

(Carl P. Daw, Jr., 1985)

## Going With God's Love

### Carrying the Light of Christ Into the World

Circle of Community

The image shows two staves of musical notation in G major (one sharp) and 4/4 time. The melody is written on a treble clef staff. The lyrics are: "Hear our prayer, O God, Hear our prayer, O God; in - cline your ear to us, and grant us your peace." The music consists of quarter and eighth notes, with some rests. The piece ends with a double bar line.

## † Benediction

**Postlude:**

***A Place for Healing Grace***

Sorenson

Online recording courtesy of Hal Leonard and Shawnee Press Church Choral  
[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ELn\\_miEeuBQ](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ELn_miEeuBQ)

**Special Thanks:**

**March 14, 2021**

**Lay Reader** Diane Gressley  
**Responder** Janet Renovetz  
**CE** Mindy Wade  
**Slide Runner** Kate Klonowski  
**Zoom Host** Jim Duffy

**March 21, 2021**

**Lay Reader** Jon Thompson  
**Responder** Julie Bernard  
**CE** Mindy Wade  
**Slide Runner** Kate Klonowski  
**Zoom Host** Sue Maier

*Have a Blessed Week*