



Brecksville

United Church of Christ

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

***Loving, Serving and Accepting All People
with God's Life-Changing Power***

“Don’t judge
each day by
the harvest
you reap, but
by the seeds
you plant.”

- Robert Louis
Stevenson



17th Sunday of Ordinary Time, July 30th, 2023 • 10:00 AM

Pastor

• John King

Director of Music

• David Debick

Financial Secretary

• Joy Garapic

Office Manager

• Anne Melfo

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.*

Office Hours:

Mon., Tues., Wed., Thurs.: 9:30am - 12:30pm

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!

17th Sunday of Ordinary Time
July 30th, 2023

Prelude

Earthly Paradise

Schmidt

*"Underneath the swollen leaf there's a tiny flower;
Look inside and you will see an earthly paradise."*

(Music: Harvey Schmidt; lyrics: Tom Jones; Copyright 1970 by Tom Jones and Harvey Schmidt; Portfolio Music, Inc.)

Welcome & Announcements

Quiet Meditation as Peace Candle is Brought Forward

*"We cannot force someone to hear a message they are not ready to receive, but
we must never underestimate the power of planting a seed." – Tamara Kulish*

Gathering in God's Presence

** Please Stand as you are able*

*** Call to Worship:**

One: God's message is like a seed planted in good soil. We nurture it and cultivate its growth.

Many: We welcome The Word with praise and thanksgiving.

One: God is still speaking. God's Voice is like yeast in dough, raising the whole mass of dough.

Many: We listen to hear that voice, for it loves and embraces, challenges, renews and restores. We want to share that word with all.

One: The Word is a treasure; it offers a future with hope, and creates growth among us all.

Many: We receive The Word among us with rejoicing. We celebrate now in spirit and in truth!

*** Hymn of Praise**

We Plant a Grain of Mustard Seed
(Sung to the hymn tune BROTHER JAMES' AIR)

#540

*** Prayer of Invocation: [UNISON]**

Holy One, you know us already. Help us to know you better. Let us see you all around us. Fill our worship with your Spirit so that we may learn to recognize your presence in all places. Amen.

Assurance of Grace

*** Song of Praise:**

Glory to God

Pablo Sosa, 1988

Glo - ry, glo - ry, glo - ry! Glo - ry to God in the high - est, And on earth be

peace to all peo - ple, for God loves us all.

Readings

(See back of bulletin for complete readings)

Old Testament Reading - Romans 8:26-28, 31-39 (The Message translation)

New Testament Reading - Matthew 13:31-35, 44-48 (NRSV)

Continuing Testament by Mary Oliver

Time With Young Worshippers



Musical Offering

Earthen Vessels

Foley

Jon Thompson, bass

*Refrain: We hold a treasure, not made of gold, in earthen vessels, wealth untold;
One treasure only: the Lord, the Christ, in earthen vessels.*

- 1. Light has shown in our darkness,
God has shown in our hearts
With the light of the glory
Of Jesus the Lord. (Refrain)*
- 2. He has chosen the lowly
Who are small in this world;
In His weakness is glory,
In Jesus the Lord. (Refrain)*

(Music and words by John Foley SJ; Copyright © 1975, 1978 John B. Foley, SJ and New Dawn Music; OCP Publications, 1997)

Sermon by Pastor John King

Hymn of Reflection *Sois la Semilla (You Are the Seed)*

#528

(Pastor John will sing verse one in Spanish, then the whole congregation will join in singing verse one again, in English.)

The Church at Prayer

The family and friends of Dottie Faust, the family and friends of Rudy Lorenzo, Marilyn Pay, Joanne Frable (Sue Stenzel's sister), Russ King, George Snider, Mac Hoppel, Dassie Matsuoka, Kathy Smith, Jon Thompson, Rose Kaval, Tina Ortiz, Terry Heiman, Cindy Burton, Elizabeth Gadus, Ann Klonowski, Sheila Day, Jan Wardlaw, Stan McCain, Dottie Faust, Kathleen Stewart & Joe Blasko (her father), "Edna House", 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: [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**

- * 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.

*** Dedication Prayer: [UNISON]**

God of Love, we share as we can of our resources, our time, and our lives.
Bless our gifts and multiply them for your purposes. Amen.

Going with God's Love

- * Hymn of Departure** *Love Divine, All Loves Excelling*

#43

Carrying the Light of Christ into the World – Acolyte

*** Circle of Community**

As we move to form a circle around the pews, we will sing **Halle, Halle, Hallelujah (3 times) Hallelujah, Hallelujah**. After the benediction is pronounced, we will sing it once more. Our circle is open near the door as a symbol of our welcome to new people to our community of faith.



*** Benediction**

Postlude

Sing Praise and Bless the Lord (Cantate Dominum)
Berthier (Taizé Community)

Announcements:

FOR OUR WEBSITE – If you have a couple of minutes after worship today, please consider participating in our short video interviews for the website. We're recording in the sanctuary, and asking folks to share what you love about Brecksville UCC – some of your first impressions and why you choose to support our church. Don't worry about planning something brilliant to say, just be natural and genuine, and speak from the heart!

CHURCH PICNIC - The annual church picnic will be on August 27, following the "Worship in the Park" service at Sagamore Hills Twp. Park (maps are available). Pack your picnic basket with your favorite side dish-dessert to share, and we will provide hot dogs and hamburgers, table service and lemonade and/or iced tea. We are bringing back the pie baking contest, so find those great recipes and get ready for a possible prize. If you bring a cold dish, we ask that you please pack it in some ice. There are electrical outlets for crockpots.

We need a head count to ensure that we order enough for the grill, and the sign-up sheet will be available after today's service - please see Kathy Smith to add your name to the list!

"AIR QUALITY" – Too hot? Too cold? Feel free to send Pastor John a text - we care about you and want to make sure you feel comfortable.

HOLY GROUNDS – I will be at the Brecksville Panera for coffee at 8:15 most Tuesday mornings. Anyone is welcome to stop by. There's no need for an RSVP or agenda, so you never know who might show up. Of course, if you are looking for a more traditional meeting in my office, you can always set that up too. But if you're just looking for casual conversation, stop by at Panera any Tuesday for a visit and some "holy grounds." – Pastor John

Welcome
So glad you're here

Readings

Old Testament Reading

Romans 8:26-28, 31-39 (The Message translation)

The moment we get tired in the waiting, God's Spirit is right alongside helping us along. If we don't know how or what to pray, it doesn't matter. The Spirit does our praying in and for us, making prayer out of our wordless sighs, our aching groans.

Spirit knows us far better than we know ourselves, knows our pregnant condition, and keeps us present before God. That's why we can be so sure that every detail in our lives of love for God is worked into something good.

So, what do you think? With God on our side like this, how can we lose? If God didn't hesitate to put everything on the line for us, embracing our condition and sending the Son, is there anything else God wouldn't gladly and freely do for us?

And who would dare tangle with God by messing with one of God's chosen? Who would dare even to point a finger? The One who died for us - who was raised to life for us! - is in the presence of God at this very moment sticking up for us.

Do you think anyone is going to be able to drive a wedge between us and Christ's love for us? There is no way! Not trouble, not hard times, not hatred, not hunger, not homelessness, not bullying threats, not backstabbing, not even the worst sins listed in Scripture:

*"They kill us in cold blood because they hate you.
We're sitting ducks; they pick us off one by one."*

None of this fazes us because Jesus loves us. I'm absolutely convinced that nothing - nothing living or dead, angelic or demonic, today or tomorrow, high or low, thinkable or unthinkable - absolutely nothing can get between us and God's love.

Readings

New Testament Reading

Matthew 13:31-35, 44-48 (NRSV)

Jesus put before them another parable: "The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed that someone took and sowed in his field; it is the smallest of all the seeds, but when it has grown it is the greatest of shrubs and becomes a tree, so that the birds of the air come and make nests in its branches."

He told them another parable: "The kingdom of heaven is like yeast that a woman took and mixed in with three measures of flour until all of it was leavened."

Jesus told the crowds all these things in parables; without a parable he told them nothing. This was to fulfill what had been spoken through the prophet: "I will open my mouth to speak in parables; I will proclaim what has been hidden from the foundation of the world."

"The kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field, which someone found and hid; then in his joy he goes and sells all that he has and buys that field."

"Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant in search of fine pearls; on finding one pearl of great value, they went and sold all that they had and bought it."

"Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a net that was thrown into the sea and caught fish of every kind; when it was full, they drew it ashore, sat down, and put the good into baskets, but threw out the bad."

Readings

Continuing Testament – by Mary Oliver

The Summer Day

Who made the world?
Who made the swan, and the black bear?
Who made the grasshopper?
This grasshopper, I mean –
the one who has flung herself out of the grass,
the one who is eating sugar out of my hand,
who is moving her jaws back and forth instead of up and down –
who is gazing around with her enormous and complicated eyes.
Now she lifts her pale forearms and thoroughly washes her face.
Now she snaps her wings open, and floats away.
I don't know exactly what a prayer is.
I do know how to pay attention, how to fall down
into the grass, how to kneel down in the grass,
how to be idle and blessed, how to stroll through the fields,
which is what I have been doing all day.
Tell me, what else should I have done?
Doesn't everything die at last, and too soon?
Tell me, what is it you plan to do
with your one wild and precious life?

Special Thanks:

JULY 30, 2023

Head Usher: *Volunteer Needed*
Ushers: *Volunteers Needed*
Lay Reader: Jim Duffy
Greeter: Carol Miller
Counters: Marge Culver
Janet Renovetz
A/V Team: Tim Wallis
Flowers: Marla Corrado
Snack: Jenn Elting
Lois Lorenzo
Set Up/Serve: Betsey Wilson
Clean Up: *Volunteers Needed*



AUGUST 6, 2023

Head Usher: *Volunteer Needed*
Ushers: Allison Colbert
Volunteer Needed
Lay Reader: Jon Thompson
Greeter: Lori Molesky
Counters: Marge Culver
Janet Renovetz
A/V Team: *Volunteer Needed*
Flowers: Dorie Gabor
Snack: Lois Lorenzo
Set Up/Serve: Carole Snider
Volunteer Needed
Clean Up: Carole Snider
Volunteer Needed

NOTES
