



Brecksville

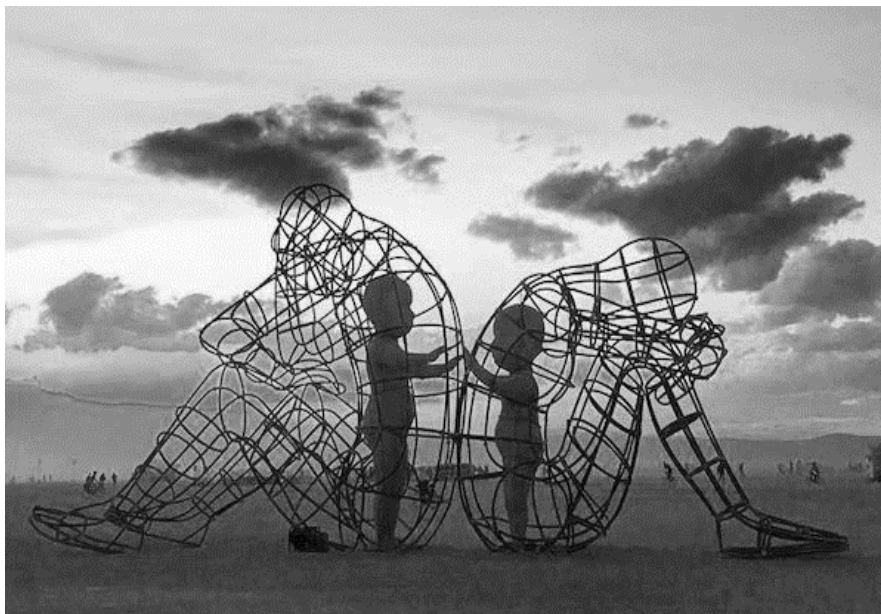
United Church of Christ

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

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

*"It doesn't
matter how
strong your
opinions are.
If you don't use
your power for
positive change,
you are indeed
part of the
problem."*

– Coretta Scott
King



Milov, Alexander. **Love**. 2015, Burning Man Festival

24th Sunday in Ordinary Time, September 17th, 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 - 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!

Just Peace Sunday - September 17th, 2023

Prelude ***Come and Sing the Praise of the Lord*** Israeli melody, arr. Bell
With Percussion Group

Welcome & Announcements

Quiet Meditation as Peace Candle is Brought Forward

“It isn’t enough to talk about peace. One must believe in it. And it isn’t enough to believe in it. One must work at it.” – Eleanor Roosevelt

Gathering in God’s Presence

** Please Stand as you are able*

***CALL TO WORSHIP:**

Leader: Prepare the way of the Lord!

All: God of Justice and Peace we need you.

Leader: We were dead in our trespasses and sins in which we once lived.

All: God of Justice we remember.

Leader: But while we were sinners Christ died for us. God who is rich in mercy, out of love, made us alive together with Christ.

All: God of Peace we repent.

Leader: It is God who breaks down the dividing wall of hostility. God who comes proclaiming peace to those who are far off and those who are near.

All: God of all, help us renew and be renewed in your love.

*** Hymn of Praise** ***Blest Are They*** (see insert) Haas

***INVOCATION: [UNISON]**

Come, true light. Come, treasure without name. Come, reality beyond all words. Remember us in your light, for the darkness of our world tries to define us. Remember us, who are impoverished by the cost of the division and violence we have set before one another. Remember us, as we remember the reality that all people are made in your image. Come, remember us and your world. Amen.

***Assurance of Grace**

***Song of Praise:**

Glory to God

Pablo Sosa, 1988

Glory, glory, glory! Glory to God in the highest, (twice)
And on earth be peace to all people, for God loves us all. (twice)

WELCOME **NEW MEMBERS**

Carolyn Klima

Claudia Griesmer

Lori Molesky

Invitation

Statement from Scripture

Questions of New Members

*** Congregational Welcome**

Pastor: I invite all in the congregation to stand as you are able. Let us, the members of Brecksville United Church of Christ, express our welcome and affirm our mutual ministry in Christ.

People: We welcome you joyfully as members of this congregational family. We will walk this path with you, promise you our friendship, our support and our prayers. Empowered by the Holy Spirit may we continue to grow together in God's grace and give witness to Jesus Christ by our faith, our hope and our love.

*** Closing Prayer**

*** Greeting of Christian Love**

Pastor and Representatives: In the name of Jesus Christ, and on behalf of the Brecksville United Church of Christ, we welcome you as members of this church.



Readings

(See back of bulletin for complete readings)

Old Testament Reading - Amos 5:21-24

New Testament Reading - Matthew 18:21-35 (*The Message*)

Continuing Testament by John Pavlovitz



Anthem

Forgiveness

Mellencamp

1. *When I think of all the wrong I've done,
I can't believe it's me I'm talkin' about.
I bet the same goes for you.
There is plenty of goodness in this world.
I hope someday to find it all.
I hope the same goes for you. (twice)*

*Refrain: Thank God for forgiveness. I don't know how else we could get along.
Without forgiveness, without forgiveness.*

2. *I'd like to say I'm sorry now. I hope this message is not too late.
I hope the same goes for you, (twice) (Refrain)*

3. *If there is peace of mind at all, I'd like to know it someday.
I bet the same goes for you. (3 times) (Refrain)*

(Words and Music: John Mellencamp; Copyright © 2006 Belmont Mall Publishing; adm. by Sony/ATV Music Publishing)

Sermon

*“By checking this box ☐ , I agree to the terms and conditions
of this prayer.”*

by Pastor John King

Hymn of Reflection

There's a Wideness in God's Mercy

#23

The Church at Prayer

Carol Miller, Allison Colbert, Marilyn Pay, Frances Posey, Joanne Frable (Sue Stenzel's sister), Ken Anderson (friend of Eric Rahnenfuehrer) Russ King, George Snider, Mac Hoppel, Dassie Matsuoka, Kathy Smith, Jon Thompson, Rose Kaval, Bee Ortiz, Terry Heiman, Cindy Burton, Elizabeth Gadus, Ann Klonowski, Sheila Day, Jan Wardlaw, Stan McCain, 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]**

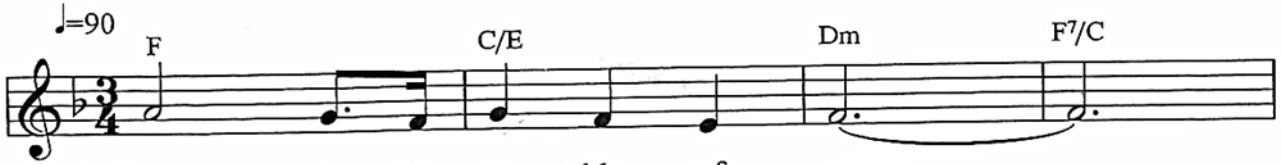
We thank you God from whom are all blessings. We thank you for bringing us together in a community of hope that can dream of a world filled with justice, mercy, and peace. Bless these gifts given in hope and love that they may become a part of your peacemaking works in this world. Amen.

Communion

*Communion Hymn

Come to the Table of Grace

Hamm



1. Come	to	the	ta - ble	of	grace.	_____
2. Come	to	the	ta - ble	of	peace.	_____
3. Come	to	the	ta - ble	of	love.	_____
4. Come	to	the	ta - ble	of	joy.	_____



Come	to	the	ta - ble	of	grace.	_____
Come	to	the	ta - ble	of	peace.	_____
Come	to	the	ta - ble	of	love.	_____
Come	to	the	ta - ble	of	joy.	_____



This	is	Christ's	ta - ble	not	just	yours	or	mine.
This	is	Christ's	ta - ble	not	just	yours	or	mine.
This	is	Christ's	ta - ble	not	just	yours	or	mine.
This	is	Christ's	ta - ble	not	just	yours	or	mine.



Come	to	the	ta - ble	of	grace.	_____
Come	to	the	ta - ble	of	peace.	_____
Come	to	the	ta - ble	of	love.	_____
Come	to	the	ta - ble	of	joy.	_____

Communion Prayer of Thanksgiving:

Bountiful God, we give you thanks that you have refreshed us at your table by granting us the presence of Christ. Strengthen our faith, increase our love for one another, and send us forth into the world in courage and peace, rejoicing in the power of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Going with God's Love

* Hymn of Departure

O for a World

#575

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.

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

People of the Lord

Scheer

Readings

Old Testament Reading

Amos 5:21-24

I hate your festivals; I despise them. I'm not pleased with your religious assemblies. Even though you bring me burnt offerings and grain offerings, I won't accept them. I won't even look at the fellowship offerings of your choicest animals.

Spare me the sound of your songs. I won't listen to the music of your harps.

But let justice flow like a river and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream.

New Testament Reading

Matthew 18:21-35 (The Message)

At that point Peter got up the nerve to ask, "Master, how many times do I forgive a brother or sister who hurts me? Seven?"

Jesus replied, "Seven! Hardly. Try seventy times seven.

"The kingdom of God is like a king who decided to square accounts with his servants. As he got under way, one servant was brought before him who had run up a debt of a hundred thousand dollars. He couldn't pay up, so the king ordered the man, along with his wife, children, and goods, to be auctioned off at the slave market.

"The poor wretch threw himself at the king's feet and begged, 'Give me a chance and I'll pay it all back.' Touched by his plea, the king let him off, erasing the debt.

"The servant was no sooner out of the room when he came upon one of his fellow servants who owed him ten dollars. He seized him by the throat and demanded, 'Pay up. Now!'

"The poor wretch threw himself down and begged, 'Give me a chance and I'll pay it all back.' But he wouldn't do it. He had him arrested and put in jail until the debt was paid. When the other servants saw this going on, they were outraged and brought a detailed report to the king.

"The king summoned the man and said, 'You evil servant! I forgave your entire debt when you begged me for mercy. Shouldn't you be compelled to be merciful to your fellow servant who asked for mercy?' The king was furious and locked him up until he paid back his entire debt. And that's how God is going to treat each one of you who doesn't forgive unconditionally anyone who asks for mercy."

Readings

Continuing Testament – From *If God Is Love, Don't Be a Jerk*, by John Pavlovitz (excerpts from pp. 105-108)

Most of us have heard the phrase God is love, which is true because both are nearly impossible to quantify with words or comparisons to anything else. “God is like . . .” That’s the problem, isn’t it? Whatever answers we come up with, whatever words or attributes or ideas feel at all accurate, are going to be woefully incomplete...

Most of the time we find ourselves anthropomorphizing God. We can’t help but attach human characteristics or touchstones to whatever holds this all together—and that’s usually where trouble starts, because we use the mirror as a reference point more than anything else.

Jonah is a good example of this. He’s a rather petty prophet, if you ask me. He gets more credit than perhaps he should, because he’s got a cool backstory with some pretty memorable special effects. Despite what our children’s books and Sunday school teachers have led us to believe, the narrative of Jonah isn’t about a grown man using a giant fish as a three-day Airbnb; it’s about a bitter religious zealot who wants God to hate the people he hates, and avoids a deity who he suspects has a far bigger heart than he does—and he doesn’t want to yield to it... In fact, Jonah’s contempt for the Ninevites is so great that when God inevitably comes through and shows a benevolence wide enough to embrace them in their obstinacy and immorality, he sulks like a fourth grader and openly resents the grace they receive. “I knew it!” he scolds his Maker. “I knew you’d let them off the hook and do that whole forgiving thing, and this is why I was trying to avoid this entire briny, stinking disaster!” Jonah didn’t really want to love his neighbor as much as he wanted his neighbor to feel the wrath of a God who was as angry and vengeful as he was. I really get that guy...

That’s the painful truth about forgiveness: it’s rarely God who’s reticent to let people into the eternally opened arms of restorative grace—it’s usually us. It’s funny how the Almighty’s prejudices and biases end up mirroring our own, how similarly petty and vindictive the God in our heads becomes...

That’s one of the greatest challenges in the spiritual journey: to keep seeking to emulate the character of a God who will always out-love you, out-forgive you, out-welcome you. The daily task of the believer is to lean into the acts of kindness and hospitality that you most resist, toward the people you least want to bless—to aspire to a place just slightly higher than you feel capable of reaching, because that’s how renovation happens, within and around you...

Announcements:

TODAY'S FLOWERS are dedicated by Caroline and Bob Chandler, in honor of their wedding anniversary.

SAVE THE DATE! – The annual **Fall Retreat** is on Saturday, October 28th. More details in the coming weeks.

COMMUNION VOLUNTEERS NEEDED - Gayle Colbert prepares communion for us twice monthly, and for that we are exceedingly grateful. ON OCCASION, however, she needs a Sunday reprieve. We have a back-up helper but could use one or two more. You'd need to follow Gayle one Sunday to learn how she prepares communion, and then just be available on the very rare instance when she can't be with us. Interested/willing? Please touch base with either Anne Melfo or Gayle. Many thanks from the Spiritual Life Ministry!

RALLY DAY – The BUCC's Rally Day was filled with food and fellowship last Sunday. Many thanks to all who attended and contributed. We collected 141 lbs. of school supplies for students in need. Thanks again for your consistent generosity!

PRIVACY MATTERS – Please keep in mind that children who come up for the "Time with Young Worshipers" will be seen and heard online. By permitting your child to come forward, be aware that this implicitly gives the church permission to share their participation online. Also, if you sit in the first few pews, you will be visible online. Please consider migrating to the front pews, to ensure that our online presence accurately depicts the vibrant and growing congregation that we truly are.

Special Thanks:

SEPTEMBER 17, 2023

Head Usher: ***Volunteer Needed***
Ushers: Allison Colbert
Volunteer Needed
Lay Readers: Jon Thompson
Greeter: Peg Duffy
Counters: Marge Culver
Janet Renovetz
A/V Team: Fred Pedersen
Flowers: Sue Stenzel
Snack: Lois Lorenzo
Annette Pedersen
Set Up/Serve: Annette Pedersen
Volunteer Needed
Clean Up: Karen Sandstrom
Bob & Caroline Chandler



SEPTEMBER 24, 2023

Head Usher: Diane Gressley
Ushers: Allison Colbert
Kate Matthews
Evelyn Seager
Lay Reader: Rose Kaval
Greeter: Lori Molesky
Counters: Marge Culver
Janet Renovetz
A/V Team: David Pastor
Flowers: Tia Began
Snack: ***Volunteers Needed***
Set Up/Serve: ***Volunteers Needed***
Clean Up: ***Volunteers Needed***

