



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***

"As a Latino, I have seen how day laborers stand in the corners from the early hours of the morning, waiting for someone to hire them. I know that the workers who are standing at the corner of the park, the market, or the hardware store have probably been up since four or five in the morning. I also know that those who are not hired will probably have nothing to eat that night."

- Pablo A. Jimenez



25th Sunday in Ordinary Time, September 24th, 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!

25th Sunday in Ordinary Time

September 24th, 2023

Prelude

By Whatever Name We Call You

Niedmann

*"...you are grander, so much wiser than our minds perceive.
Labels limit understanding, God, you have no peers."
(Dosia Carlson, 1990)*

Welcome & Announcements

Quiet Meditation as Peace Candle is Brought Forward

*"All human nature vigorously rejects grace because grace changes us,
and the change is painful." - Flannery O'Connor*

Gathering in God's Presence

** Please Stand as you are able*

***CALL TO WORSHIP:** *(written by David Long-Higgins)*

Leader: Loving God, raise Your light from the abyss of night,

All: Bearing up everything necessary for revealing the gifts of this day.

Leader: Grant me grace to release everything weighty to You, trusting Your
promised Sustenance of Spirit,

**All: Helping, holding and healing everything and everyone in Your eternal
embrace.**

Leader: Let each breath bear a new beginning, filling me ever anew with Your
presence,

**All: Reshaping my thinking, molding my Spirit, opening my heart for exhailes
of grace, bearing blessing to others.**

Leader: May no momentary heaviness outweigh Your promise to lighten the load

All: And bear new beginnings at every turn of today.

*** Hymn of Praise**

Simple Gifts

Shaker song

'Tis the gift to be simple, 'tis the gift to be free
'Tis the gift to come down where we ought to be,
And when we find ourselves in the place just right,
'Twill be in the valley of love and delight.

When true simplicity is gained,
To bow and to bend we shan't be ashamed,
To turn, turn will be our delight,
Till by turning, turning we come 'round right.

(Joseph Brackett, 1848)

***INVOCATION: [UNISON]**

God of life and love, throughout the ages you have revealed that our love can be too small, too tribal, too petty. Open our hearts to your vision: a vision where all are loved, all have dignity, all are valued and all are included. May we see beyond our privilege to embrace a vision of empathy and compassion for your beloved creation. 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)

Readings

(See back of bulletin for complete readings)

Old Testament Reading - Jonah 3:10 4:1-11 (NRSV)

New Testament Reading - Matthew 20:1-16 (NRSV)

Continuing Testament by Michael K. Honey



Time with Young Worshippers



Anthem

Generous God

Brackenbury

*1. Generous God, true to your promise, abounding in love,
endless compassion you lavish on us; willingly we sing your praise.*

*You do not change. We can depend on your grace to remain,
in every moment your truth stays the same; blessings are new every day.*

Refrain: We're celebrating your goodness to us, for all that you've done and will do.

*Gratitude rises and pours out as worship to you. We can't stay silent when faced with such love,
our voices declare you are good, Oh for you, you are a generous God.*

*2. Generous God, who as a parent is rooting for us,
fiercely defending the children you love,
our refuge, our strength and our rock.*

Welcomed as friends, you hold us close when the night closes in.

Gently remind us that we'll dance again; joy breaks with every new dawn. (Refrain)

*Mmm. ooh, grace is freely given. A loving and welcoming God you are,
a wonderful, powerful God you are, a mighty, magnificent God you are,
yes you, you are a generous God. You are a generous God, faithful beside us. (Refrain)*

(Words and Music: David Brackenbury)

Sermon

"God is Unjust"

by Pastor John King

Hymn of Reflection

Surely No One Can Be Safer

#487

The Church at Prayer

Carol Miller, Allison Colbert, Marilyn Pay, Frances Posey, Joanne Frable (Sue Stenzel's sister), 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]**

Generous God of grace, from the many blessings we have received, we now dedicate these offerings. May they be a blessing to others strengthening the church to live the mission of Jesus Christ. Amen.



Going with God's Love

* Hymn of Departure

Christan, Rise and Act Your Creed

#537

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

Wisdom, Breathed from God

Ancient Sarum plainsong

(Today's sanctuary artwork is by Vincent van Gogh, entitled, "Old Vineyard with Peasant Woman".)

Readings

Old Testament Reading **Jonah 3:10 4:1-11 (NRSV)**

God saw what the Ninevites did; they turned from their evil ways. So God reconsidered the calamity about to befall them, and did not do it. But this was very displeasing to Jonah, and he became angry.

He prayed to the LORD and said, "O LORD! Is not this what I said while I was still in my own country? That is why I fled to Tarshish at the beginning; for I knew that you are a gracious God and merciful, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love, and ready to relent from punishing. And now, O LORD, please take my life from me, for it is better for me to die than to live."

And the LORD said, "Is it right for you to be angry?"

Then Jonah went out of the city and sat down east of the city, and made a booth for himself there. He sat under it in the shade, waiting to see what would become of the city.

The LORD God appointed a bush, and made it come up over Jonah, to give shade over his head, to save him from his discomfort; so Jonah was very happy about the bush.

But when dawn came up the next day, God appointed a worm that attacked the bush, so that it withered. When the sun rose, God prepared a sultry east wind, and the sun beat down on the head of Jonah so that he was faint and asked that he might die. He said, "It is better for me to die than to live."

But God said to Jonah, "Is it right for you to be angry about the bush?"

And he said, "Yes, angry enough to die."

Then the LORD said, "You are concerned about the bush, for which you did not labor and which you did not grow; it came into being in a night and perished in a night. And should I not be concerned about Nineveh, that great city, in which there are more than a hundred and twenty thousand persons who do not know their right hand from their left, and also many animals?"

Readings

New Testament Reading Matthew 20:1-16 (NRSV)

Jesus said, "The kingdom of heaven is like a landowner who went out early in the morning to hire laborers for his vineyard. After agreeing with the laborers for the usual daily wage, he sent them into his vineyard.

When he went out about nine o'clock, he saw others standing idle in the marketplace; and he said to them, 'You also go into the vineyard, and I will pay you whatever is right.' So they went.

When he went out again about noon and about three o'clock, he did the same. And at about five o'clock he went out and found others standing around; and he said to them, 'Why are you standing here idle all day?'

They said to him, 'Because no one has hired us.'

He said to them, 'You also go into the vineyard.'

When evening came, the owner of the vineyard said to his manager, 'Call the laborers and give them their pay, beginning with the last and then going to the first.' When those hired about five o'clock came, each of them received the usual daily wage.

Now when the first came, they thought they would receive more; but each of them also received the usual daily wage. And when they received it, they grumbled against the landowner, saying, 'These last worked only one hour, and you have made them equal to us who have borne the burden of the day and the scorching heat.'

But he replied to one of them, 'Friend, I am doing you no wrong; did you not agree with me for the usual daily wage? Take what belongs to you and go; I choose to give to this last the same as I give to you. Am I not allowed to do what I choose with what belongs to me? Or are you envious because I am generous?'

So the last will be first, and the first will be last."

Readings

Continuing Testament – From an introduction written by Michael K. Honey, for the text ***All Labor Has Dignity*** (by Martin Luther King)

In the Poor People's Campaign, [Martin Luther] King challenged a system that created beggars. In Memphis, King invoked Jesus' parable of the Good Samaritan and asked people to put their own lives at risk to help others: "The question is not, 'If I don't help the sanitation workers, what will happen to me?' The question is, 'If I don't help the sanitation workers, what will happen to them?'" For years, King had called on middle-class people, especially ministers, to join the struggle of the poor, and now he infused that message into his support for the Memphis sanitation strikers.

He pressed his point home: "We've got to see it through. And when we have our march, you need to be there. Be concerned about your brother." His message was the union message: "You may not be on strike. But either we go up together, or we go down together."

In his last speech, King demonstrated a spiritual kinship and connection with the working poor that few could match. Memphis striker Clinton Burrows remembered, "It was just like Jesus would be coming into my life.... I was full of joy and determination. Wherever King was, I wanted to be there." At a time of great anxiety, King's speech calmed him. "He got up and spoke about the plans to kill him if he came to Memphis. He made it very clear that he didn't fear any man. That is a good spirit, to not fear any man. If you believe in right, stick with it."

The next day an assassin's bullet felled one of the most remarkable mass movement leaders in history.

King made this speech not to the hundreds of thousands who gathered to hear him say "I have a dream" at the Lincoln Memorial in 1963, but to several thousand people supporting a tumultuous, difficult strike by sanitation workers in Memphis. Those who were there remember King at his most prophetic, a man trying to carve out a stone of hope from the desperate year of 1968, when it seemed a mountain of despair blocked movements for change.

Announcements:

NEIGHBORS IN NEED – On October 1st (next Sunday), we will have a special collection for “Neighbors in Need”. Two-thirds of this offering is used by the UCC’s Justice and Witness Ministries, to fund a wide array of local and national justice initiatives, advocacy efforts, and direct service projects. Through our national Justice and Local Church Ministries office, you can find resources, news updates, and action alerts on a broad spectrum of justice issues. Neighbors in Need also supports our American Indian neighbors in the UCC. One-third of the offering supports the UCC’s Council for American Indian Ministries (CAIM). There are 20 UCC congregations on reservations and one urban, multi-tribal UCC congregation in Minneapolis, Minnesota.

BUCC NURSERY – If you love little children and want to share some of your time with our infants and toddlers, please consider signing up on Breeze to be a Nursery helper on Sundays during the church service. We are blessed that our own Amelia Elting has volunteered to be our Nursery Attendant, and we will explore the feasibility of hiring someone in the first quarter of 2024. Meanwhile, Amelia is very capable! She might require a helping hand on occasion, so we are looking for several volunteers to check in with her prior to the start of the service, to see if she needs help.

If you are a parent of an infant or toddler and think you might be interested in utilizing the nursery on any given Sunday, please let Amelia know, prior to the start of service. You will find Amelia in the Nursery or in Ms. Mindy’s classroom. We ask parents to please fill out an information form, which can be found in the Nursery in a binder near the door. We also ask that you be available by text if our Nursery Attendant needs you to return to the nursery for any reason.

Thank you,
Evie Novak, SCR

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

Attendance on Sunday, September 17th, 2023 – Adults: 67; Kids:5; Livestream: 8; Total: 80

Special Thanks:

SEPTEMBER 24, 2023

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



OCTOBER 1, 2023

Head Usher: Peg Duffy
Ushers: Allison Colbert
Evelyn Seager
Lay Reader: Rob Grow
Greeter: Jon Thompson
Counters: Marge Culver
Janet Renovetz
A/V Team: Fred Pedersen
Flowers: Dorie Gabor
Snack: Jenn Elting
Lois Lorenzo
Set Up/Serve: *Volunteers Needed*
Clean Up: *Volunteers Needed*

