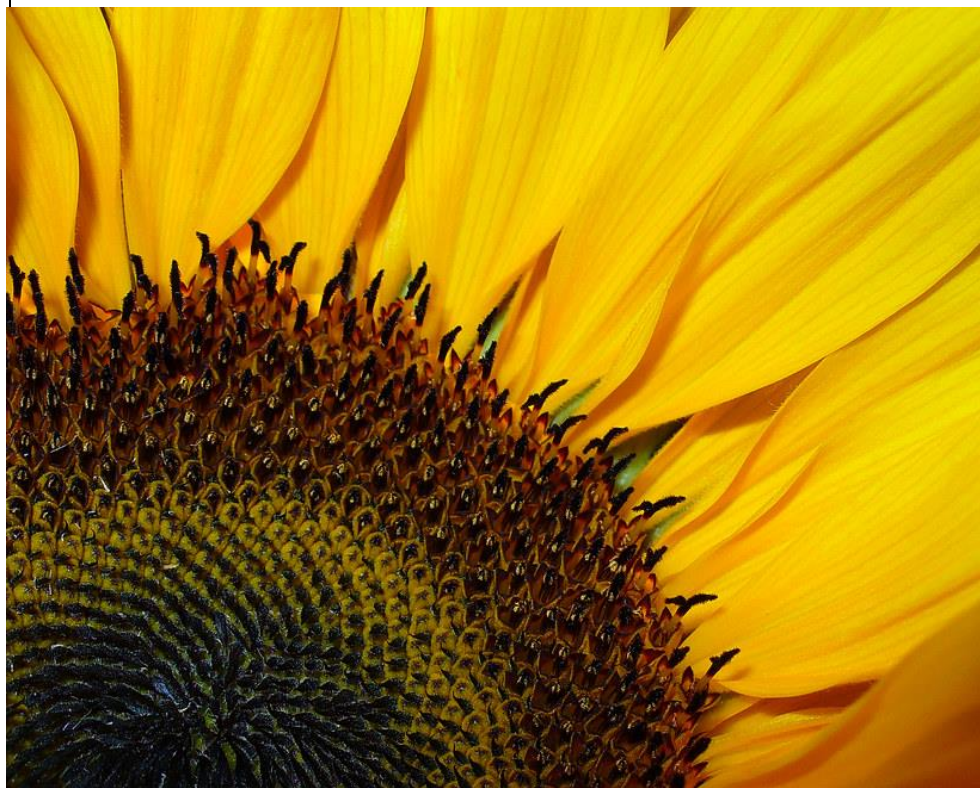




THE *Pillar*  
BRECKSVILLE UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

SEPTEMBER 2023



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TO BE LOVING, SERVING, AND ACCEPTING  
OF ALL PEOPLE  
WITH GOD'S LIFE-CHANGING POWER  
AND GRACE

## ***Pastor's Ponderings.....***

I've ruined vacations. Yeah, sorry about that, Tim, Dan and Bill. But I think I figured out what went wrong. I went on vacation with the desire to have myself a great time. As a result, I was not kind to those who got in my way or delayed my arrival at the ski lift the moment it opened. I did not have a great time; and neither did they.

I've improved. The breakthrough came on one trip where I decided the primary goal of my vacation was actually to make sure **THEY** - my traveling companions - had a great time. Turns out, I had a good time too.

In the process, I discovered two things:

1. I was acting like a jerk, and I needed to knock it off.
2. I could apply the same principle to life.

It's an odd paradox. The harder I try to grab more for myself, the sadder I become. And the harder I work for the happiness of my travelling companions, the happier I became.

*The greatest is the one who serves. Those who seek to lose their lives will find it.* These are the words of Jesus. Surely, Jesus took a lot of vacations because he figured this out long before me.

Perhaps you have one of those Bibles with the words of Jesus printed in red letters. I'm a "red letter Christian." Because there's a lot of stuff in the Bible that is hard to swallow. The red letters, the words of Jesus, help decode, or even cancel, the bad stuff in the Bible.

My favorite example of a bad Bible verse is Psalm 137:9 *Blessed are they who take your babies and smash them against a rock.* I like babies. So, please don't do that.

And we don't need to try to explain it away to make it right. Simply put, it is in the Bible, it is wrong and we don't need to pretend it isn't. We can learn a lot from some of the weird stuff in the Bible. But we don't need to replicate it in our actions. The red letters help us to sort it out.

## ***Pastor's Ponderings.....(continued)***

Technically, Moses became the first person to download a document from the cloud using a tablet. But if we believe that the entirety of the Bible came to us as some sort of instruction manual downloaded directly from God, then we're missing something important. The Bible was written by communities that experienced something sacred and tried to write it down. We study the Bible to sift the inspired message from the historical-cultural context in which it came. Because when we've taken the cultural context as eternal truth our faith has made us into real jerks sometimes.

But if we look at the red letters, the black letters have a kind of filter.

Did you ever play the game, "Password?" As a kid, I rarely played Password. But I was intrigued by the cards. The cards had different colored letters that were all scrambled up. It was difficult to read them until I put them in the sleeve. The sleeve had a red cellophane window, which filtered out all but certain letters. That made it easy to understand a once difficult text.

For me, the red letters of Jesus are the key to unlock all the other texts. Without them, adhering to selective Bible texts could make me into a misogynistic, homophobic, judgmental, racist, slave-beating, polygamous, bacon-deprived jerk. I think no bacon is the thing that would really push me over the edge.

I can be a jerk sometimes. Especially on vacation. Maybe you've been one too – probably long, long ago. But I've found that the more I read the red letters, the more I can decode the others. And the more I do that, the kinder I become to you, my travelling companions, and the less jerk-like I become.

Perhaps we'd be better off if we tried less to act religious and tried more to do the red words: *Love one another. Treat others how you want to be treated. Forgive, like, a lot. Don't judge others. And don't worry so much.*

## ***Pastor's Ponderings.....(continued)***

Perhaps the red letters could make us better humans. Perhaps we'd discover that the journey is actually a lot more enjoyable, for us and our travelling companions, as we ride this rock around the Sun together.

***If God is Love, Don't Be a Jerk*** is the title of a book by John Pavlovitz. It's also a pretty good way to summarize the entirety of Jesus' red letters. I've found that this book – and the title – resonate with my experiences.

So, I'd like to begin a conversation around this book. Each chapter comes with four questions to talk about. But I'd rather not make it another church meeting. I'd like it to be a casual, home experience. So on that note, I'd like to invite you to my home to discuss the first couple of chapters. We'll have some snacks; feel free to bring your own drinks. Wine is ok with me, but, well, as the book says, I trust you to not "be a jerk." After that, you can volunteer to host the next couple of chapters at your place. I think doing this about once a month could be enjoyable.

If you are interested, just call the office or send me an email. We'll share the details after that.

In the meantime, read the red letters, and enjoy the ride.

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## FROM THE MINISTRIES OF BUCC

### **CHRISTIAN EDUCATION**

#### **RALLY DAY POTLUCK & SCHOOL SUPPLIES COLLECTION -**

Sunday September 10<sup>th</sup> is Rally Day at BUCC! This signals the beginning of our Fall and Winter church season.

It is our way of both coming together as a congregation and giving back to the community, by providing much-needed school supplies for students at underserved schools. We start the day with our traditional Sunday service at 10:00 AM, followed by a Potluck Dinner in Pilgrim Hall. We ask that you participate by bringing a **Main Dish** (lasagna, casserole, etc) or a **Dessert** to share AND some school supplies, which will be taken to a school in need. *We will have potluck sign-up sheets at church for the next 2 Sundays, so you can indicate what kind of food you will be bringing and help us avoid too much duplication.*

NOTE: Suggested school supplies are notebook paper, binders, notebooks, rulers, pencils, erasers, crayons, pencil pouches, glue sticks, book bags/backpacks, and anything you think would be appropriate. Great places to find these items are Dollar Tree, Marc's, etc.

Please help us make Rally Day 2023 a rousing success!!!

## **FINANCE**

**DEAR GROWERS** - So far this season, \$128 has gone into the General Fund to help reduce the deficit. Thanks for all the delicious produce!

## **SPIRITUAL LIFE**

**ADVENT** - We're thinking Advent, 2023, are you?! Our annual BUCC Advent Devotional is always highly anticipated. Simply select one of the pre-printed verses/dates that will be available during Fellowship Hour in early September and write a short reflection. To give Anne plenty of time to produce the booklet, submissions need to be in her hands by October 31. Inspiration is everywhere, so make a cup of cocoa and get writing!

**SATURDAY, OCTOBER 28 – FALL RETREAT** - Save this date for the return of the BUCC Fall Retreat! The retreat will be at Canalway Center in Cuyahoga Hts., from 10 am to 4 pm. The theme will be centered on JOY. More information and registration to come.

**ALL SOULS SERVICE** – The All Souls service is a loving and reverent remembrance of loved ones who passed away this year (between last November and today). Please submit the names of your departed loved ones and friends to the office email at: **buccoffice23@gmail.com**. This year's service will take place on Sunday, November 5<sup>th</sup>.

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## **SPIRITUAL LIFE (CONTINUED)**

### **BUCC MUSIC MINISTRY AUTUMN 2023:**

Adult Choir – Our first choir rehearsal of the new church season is scheduled for Thursday evening, September 7<sup>th</sup>, from 7:00-8:20. Participating in choir is an excellent way to prepare for upcoming church services - musically and spiritually. Practices are rewarding on many levels - lots of affirmation, camaraderie, good humor, and accessible music that reflects Christ's message of love and compassion. Check us out on Sept. 7<sup>th</sup> and see if you like what you hear and see. All are welcome!

Youth Choir – Our first practice is scheduled for Thursday, September 7<sup>th</sup>, from 5:30-6:00pm. We'll be preparing a simple welcoming song for Rally Day, which will be performed on the following Sunday (Sept. 10<sup>th</sup>). If your child(ren) cannot attend practice on the 7<sup>th</sup>, they are welcome to come on Sunday the 10<sup>th</sup> at 9:30 to run through the music. Dave will be emailing a recording of the song ahead of time, for the kids to listen to. Youth Choir music is easy and fun to sing! K through 5<sup>th</sup> graders are welcome to participate.

Seasonal Choir for Christmas Cantata – Our Christmas Cantata this year is scheduled for December 10<sup>th</sup>, at the regular morning service. It's titled *Sing Christmas*, composed and arranged by Joel Raney and Mary McDonald. The first seasonal choir practice is scheduled for Thursday, October 5<sup>th</sup>, at 7pm. If you enjoy singing music in a group setting but don't have time to commit to regular choir, consider participating in seasonal choir. Listening tracks are provided to help with the learning process. High school students are welcome to participate.

Free Concert – Our autumn free concert will feature the Tri-C Chorale, directed by Kira Seaton, and the Tri-C Community Band, directed by Joshua Fadenholz. This event is scheduled for Sunday October 29<sup>th</sup>, at 4:00pm. More information about this program will appear in the October Pillar.

## *Announcements:*

There are many serving pieces and plastic containers in the BUCC kitchen that do not belong there. Check to see if any of these items belong to you. Many thanks. - Lois Lorenzo



**PUZZLE MANIA!** When my Mom (Evelyn Seager) and I decided to bring a few extra puzzles in to share a couple of years ago, we had no idea how popular this idea would become! I've talked to many members that have dropped off and taken puzzles and enjoyed every one.

As with many good things, sometimes success can be a bit overwhelming -- we outgrew our little corner of the library fairly quickly, and we are now overflowing our space in Pilgrim Hall. As a result, we're going to do a "reset" at the end of September by donating the existing pile and starting over. Here's how you can help:

- Take the ones you want NOW! You can always bring them back to the new pile to share with others.
- Let me know if you have any preference on where you would like these to go -- I was going to call the local nursing homes to see if they would like them, but have no place in particular in mind quite yet.

I will be collecting whatever is left of the pile-o-puzzles on October 1<sup>st</sup>, so that we can start over. Thanks for making this fun!

- Sue Maier



Did you know that the UCC has a *Justice and Peace Action Network*? Check out their website by clicking here: [UCC Justice and Peace Action Network](https://p2a.co/o0Ur54O) , or by typing in this website address: <https://p2a.co/o0Ur54O> . There are over 30 issues listed there, on which you can take immediate action by sending emails to your Congressional Representatives, and by sharing information on social media. Find an issue or issues you are passionate about and get started!





***Happy, Happy SEPTEMBER Birthdays\* to the following  
BUCC Members! Please share in their joy and wish them a  
Happy Birthday!***

Phyllis	Hassler	September 01
Joanne	Cook	September 03
Gabriella	Gagliano	September 10
Mark	Lehman	September 11
Kathleen	Smith	September 11
Jill	Zedan	September 12
Rebecca	Anderson	September 14
Jane	Cribbs	September 15
Natalie	Corrado	September 17
Holden	Esser	September 17
Valerie	Tyler	September 17
Nancy	Stella	September 22
Carrie	Coyer-Westerberg	September 23
Matt	Wolbert	September 23
David	Debick	September 26

***\*If you have a SEPTEMBER birthday and are not included  
above, please contact the church office so we can add you to  
the BUCC Birthday List!***



# CALENDAR

## SEPTEMBER 2023

**Fri., SEPTEMBER 1**  
**\*OFFICE CLOSED\***

**Sat., SEPTEMBER 2**

**SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 3**  
10am Worship Service  
11:15am OCWM  
11:30am Membership

**Mon., SEPTEMBER 4**  
**\*OFFICE CLOSED\***  
**\*\*LABOR DAY\*\***

**Tue., SEPTEMBER 5**  
8:15am "Holy Grounds"  
(Brecksville Panera)  
6:30pm AA in Pilgrim Hall  
7pm Spiritual Life

**Wed., SEPTEMBER 6**  
11am Mindfulness &  
Meditation  
6pm SCR  
7pm Stewardship

**Thu., SEPTEMBER 7**  
5:30pm Youth Choir  
7pm Choir

**Fri., SEPTEMBER 8**  
**\*OFFICE CLOSED\***

**Sat., SEPTEMBER 9**

**SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 10**  
**RALLY DAY**  
10am Worship Service  
& Potluck

**Mon., SEPTEMBER 11**  
7pm Facilities

**Tue., SEPTEMBER 12**  
8:15am "Holy Grounds"  
(Brecksville Panera)  
6:30pm AA in Pilgrim Hall

**Wed., SEPTEMBER 13**  
11am Mindfulness &  
Meditation  
7pm Council Meeting

**Thu., SEPTEMBER 14**  
5:30pm Youth Choir  
7pm Choir

**Fri., SEPTEMBER 15**  
**\*OFFICE CLOSED\***  
**\*PILLAR DEADLINE\***

**Sat., SEPTEMBER 16**

**SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 17**  
10am Worship Service  
3pm **HUNGER MEAL**

**Mon., SEPTEMBER 18**

**Tue., SEPTEMBER 19**  
8:15am "Holy Grounds"  
(Brecksville Panera)  
6:30pm AA in Pilgrim Hall  
7pm Comm. & Outreach

**Wed., SEPTEMBER 20**  
11am Mindfulness &  
Meditation

**Thu., SEPTEMBER 21**  
5:30pm Youth Choir  
7pm Choir

**Fri., SEPTEMBER 22**  
**\*OFFICE CLOSED\***

**Sat., SEPTEMBER 23**

**SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 24**  
10am Worship Service

**Mon., SEPTEMBER 25**

**Tue., SEPTEMBER 26**  
8:15am "Holy Grounds"  
(Brecksville Panera)  
6:30pm AA in Pilgrim Hall

**Wed., SEPTEMBER 27**  
11am Mindfulness &  
Meditation

**Thu., SEPTEMBER 28**  
5:30pm Youth Choir  
7pm Choir

**Fri., SEPTEMBER 29**  
**\*OFFICE CLOSED\***

**Sat., SEPTEMBER 30**

# PARTICIPANTS IN WORSHIP

## SEPTEMBER 3, 2023

Head Usher: TBD  
Ushers: TBD  
TBD  
Lay Reader: Rob Grow  
Greeter: TBD  
Counters: Marge Culver  
Janet Renovetz  
A/V: Jim Duffy  
Flowers: Janet Renovetz  
Snack: TBD  
Setup/Serve: TBD  
Cleanup: TBD

## SEPTEMBER 17, 2023

Head Usher: TBD  
Ushers: Allison Colbert  
TBD  
Lay Reader: Jon Thompson  
Greeter: Carol Miller  
Counters: Marge Culver  
Janet Renovetz  
A/V: Fred Pedersen  
Flowers: Sue Stenzel  
Snack: TBD  
Setup/Serve: TBD  
Cleanup: TBD

## SEPTEMBER 10, 2023

Head Usher: Diane Gressley  
Ushers: Youth  
Peg Duffy  
Jim Duffy  
Lay Reader: Youth  
Rob Grow  
Greeter: Youth  
Jon Thompson  
Counters: Marge Culver  
Janet Renovetz  
A/V: TBD  
Flowers: Our Young Members  
Snack: TBD  
Setup/Serve: Carole Snider  
TBD  
Cleanup: Carole Snider  
TBD

## SEPTEMBER 24, 2023

Head Usher: Diane Gressley  
Ushers: Kate Matthews  
TBD  
Lay Reader: Rose Kaval  
Greeter: Lori Molesky  
Counters: Marge Culver  
Janet Renovetz  
A/V: TBD  
Flowers: Tia Began  
Snack: TBD  
Setup/Serve: TBD  
Cleanup: TBD

# *The Pillar*

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United Church of Christ

**23 Public Square**  
Brecksville, Ohio 44141

**Phone:** 440-526-4364

**E-mail:** [buccoffice23@gmail.com](mailto:buccoffice23@gmail.com)

**Web:** [www.BrecksvilleUCC.org](http://www.BrecksvilleUCC.org)

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**Moderator:** Sherrill Witt  
[sherrill@mcx.net](mailto:sherrill@mcx.net)

**Pastor:** Rev. John King  
[buccpastor23@gmail.com](mailto:buccpastor23@gmail.com)

**Dir. of Music:** Dave DeBick  
[buccmusic23@gmail.com](mailto:buccmusic23@gmail.com)

**Financial Secy.:** Joy Garapic  
[buccfinance23@gmail.com](mailto:buccfinance23@gmail.com)

**Pillar Editor:** Anne Melfo  
[buccoffice23@gmail.com](mailto:buccoffice23@gmail.com)

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FIRST CLASS

