



Brecksville

United Church of Christ

23 Public Square • Brecksville • Ohio • 4414

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,
Whatever your race, ethnicity, or
age,

Whatever your gender identity or
sexual orientation,

Whatever your religious
background, creed, or spirituality,
Whatever your social or economic
circumstances,

Whatever your health conditions,
impairments, or mobility needs,
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!



Sunday August 16, 2026

Office Hours: Monday – Thursday 9:30am - 1:30pm

Church Phone: 440-526-4364

e-mail: buccoffice23@gmail.com – web address: www.BrecksvilleUCC.org

Pastor

• Jeff Jackson

Financial Secretary

• Wes Novak

Office Manager

• Miranda Lacefield

Music Director

• Olivia Tassone

****LARGE PRINT BULLETINS AVAILABLE UPON REQUEST****

- 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.

Announcements:

Please submit the announcements you would like to have printed in the bulletin by noon on Tuesday – Thank You!

Strawberry Shortcake Social- TODAY following worship! Bring your appetite.

Worship in the Park- On August 30, our worship in the park will include a Blessing of Friendships. We invite you to begin thinking about the friendships that have carried you, surprised you, steadied you, or helped you become more fully yourself. Some of those friends may be present with us. Some may be far away. Some may be remembered with gratitude. Together, we will give thanks for the holy gift of companionship. Join us at 10am at the Sagamore Hills park Rose Mary Snell Pavilion (11551 Valley View Rd. Sagamore Hills), bring a friend, a dish to share (with copies of the recipe and why this one is meaningful to you) and remember don't go to church! There's a playground for little worshippers, we hope to see you at this beloved and annual BUCC tradition!

Attention BUCC "Artists!" - Our spring Paint & Sip art event was such a hit that we're bringing it back this fall... with a spooky twist!

Save the Date- October 2nd 6PM! There's one thing you'll need to do now: start looking for a landscape or painting of a house (thrift stores and attics are a great place to look!) At the event, you'll transform your picture by adding a spooky guest and festive fall décor, creating a one-of-a-kind Halloween masterpiece you'll be proud to hang in your home! Truly, no two will be alike!

Called to Care Volunteers Needed-Called to Care helps make sure people in the congregation are remembered and supported through cards, phone calls, visits, and prayer. Volunteers are needed to help extend this care. Whether you can send an occasional card, make a friendly call, offer a visit, or hold someone in prayer, there is a place for you. Please contact the church office or Evie Novak to become part of the Called to Care team.

THIS WEEK’S CALENDAR includes the following

Tue. Aug 18 6:00 pm – AA “Love & Tolerance” (Pilgrim Hall)
 7:30 Communication and Outreach

Wed. Aug 19 11:00 am – Mindfulness and Meditation

Thur. Aug 20 10:30 am – Called to Care

Fri. Aug 21 6:30 pm – Brecksville Squares

Volunteers:	<u>August 16, 2026</u>	<u>August 23, 2026</u>
Early Usher:	Diane Gressley	<i>Volunteers Needed</i>
Late Usher:	Jill Zedan	<i>Volunteers Needed</i>
Greeter:	Jeff Thompson	Jeff Thompson
Reader:	<i>Volunteers Needed</i>	<i>Volunteers Needed</i>
Flowers:	Armand Eusanio	<i>Volunteers Needed</i>
Counters:	Janet Renovetz	Janet Renovetz
	Sue Stenzel	<i>Volunteers Needed</i>
A/V:	Aidan Cunningham	Aidan Cunningham
Snack:	Fellowship	<i>Volunteers Needed</i>
Set up:	Fellowship	<i>Volunteers Needed</i>
Clean Up:	Sue Stenzel	
	Fellowship	<i>Volunteers Needed</i>

Twelfth Sunday after Pentecost

Boundary-breaking Christ, widen my mercy beyond every line I have inherited.

Prelude

Give Me Jesus

arr. Faye López

Welcome & Announcements

Call to Worship and Bringing of the Light *I know that God loves me*

I know that God loves me. I know that God loves me.

**Proudly placed on this earth so that others might see
just how much my God loves me. (3x)**

**Proudly placed on this earth so that others might
see just how much my God loves me.**

***Call to Prayer**

One: We come to worship the God who meets us in one another.

Many: In friendship, kindness becomes a place to stand.

One: We come with the people we know well, and among people whose stories we are still learning.

Many: In friendship, strangers can become companions.

One: Christ keeps widening the circle of mercy, calling us beyond the boundaries we have inherited.

Many: May our lives grow wider with the love of Christ.

One: Come, let us worship God.

Many: Let us make room for grace among us.

***Gathering Song**

In Christ Alone

In Christ alone my hope is found, He is my light, my strength, my song;
This Cornerstone, this solid Ground, firm through the fiercest drought and storm.

What heights of love, what depths of peace, when fears are stilled, when strivings cease.

My Comforter, my All in All, here in the love of Christ I stand.

In Christ alone, who took on flesh, fullness of God in helpless babe!
This gift of love and righteousness, scorned by the ones He came to save.
'Til on that cross as Jesus died, the wrath of God was satisfied.
For ev'ry sin on Him was laid; Here in the death of Christ I live.

There in the ground His body lay, Light of the world by darkness slain;
Then, bursting forth in glorious Day, up from the grave He rose again!
And as He stands in victory, sin's curse has lost it's grip on me;
For I am His and He is mine, bought with the precious blood of Christ.

No guilt in life, no fear in death, this is the pow'r of Christ in me;
From life's first cry to final breath, Jesus commands my destiny.
No pow'r of hell, no scheme of man, can ever pluck me from His hand;
'Til he returns or calls me home, here in the pow'r of Christ I'll stand!

***Prayer of Openness [Unison]**

Boundary-breaking Christ, meet us in the places where our lives have grown narrow. Open us to people we have overlooked, to stories we have not heard, and to grace arriving from unexpected directions. Teach us the friendship that listens without fear, speaks truth with kindness, and makes room without demanding sameness. Widen our mercy, deepen our courage, and draw us more fully into your love. Amen.

***Assurance of Grace**

***Passing of the Peace**

One: As God's forgiven and renewed people, let us now greet one another with the peace of Christ. The Peace of Christ be with you!

Many : And also with you!

***Centering Song**

**O Lord, hear my prayer, O Lord, hear my prayer;
when I call, answer me.**

**O Lord, hear my prayer, O Lord, hear my prayer.
Come and listen to me. (3x)**

Continuing Testament: CIRCLES

From Leadership to Shared Participation

A circle has no place from which everyone else can only be watched. Each person is part of the shape, and each place around it matters.

Leadership is necessary in every community, but healthy leadership does more than complete tasks or make decisions. It helps people recognize their gifts, enter the work, and share responsibility without being left alone to carry it. Circles names the hope that participation will widen. It imagines leadership that draws people in, makes room for new voices, and helps responsibility move among many hands rather than settling again and again on the same few. The circle grows stronger when people are not only asked to attend, but trusted to contribute. Shared participation allows the life of the congregation to belong to all who are part of it.

Second Reading: Inspired by Aelred of Rievaulx, Spiritual Friendship

Friendship is not merely the pleasure of being liked, or the comfort of having someone near when life is easy. A true friend is not kept for usefulness, or gathered as proof that we are important, or held so tightly that they cannot be free. True friendship begins in goodwill. One person turns toward another with care that does not calculate, with trust that does not demand, with affection that seeks the other's good. In such friendship, two lives become more spacious. Joy can be shared without being diminished. Sorrow can be carried without becoming private. Truth can be spoken without contempt. Correction can be offered without cruelty. Silence can rest without fear. A friend helps us become more honest before God, not by managing our lives, but by walking near enough that we remember who we are. And when friendship is patient, faithful, and kind, it becomes more than companionship. It becomes a small sanctuary, a place where love is practiced, where the soul is strengthened, and where the presence of God may quietly be found.

Third Reading: Matthew 15:21-28

Then he called the crowd to him and said to them, "Listen and understand: it is not what goes into the mouth that defiles a person, but it is what comes out of the mouth that defiles." Then the disciples approached and said to him, "Do you know that the Pharisees took offense when they heard what you said?" He answered, "Every plant that my heavenly Father has not planted will be uprooted. Let them alone; they are blind guides of the blind. And if one blind person guides another, both will fall into a pit." But Peter said to him,

"Explain this parable to us." Then he said, "Are you also still without understanding? Do you not see that whatever goes into the mouth enters the stomach and goes out into the sewer? But what comes out of the mouth proceeds from the heart, and this is what defiles. For out of the heart come evil intentions, murder, adultery, sexual immorality, theft, false witness, slander. These are what defile a person, but to eat with unwashed hands does not defile." Jesus left that place and went away to the district of Tyre and Sidon. Just then a Canaanite woman from that region came out and started shouting, "Have mercy on me, Lord, Son of David; my daughter is tormented by a demon." But he did not answer her at all. And his disciples came and urged him, saying, "Send her away, for she keeps shouting after us." He answered, "I was sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel." But she came and knelt before him, saying, "Lord, help me." He answered, "It is not fair to take the children's food and throw it to the dogs." She said, "Yes, Lord, yet even the dogs eat the crumbs that fall from their masters' table." Then Jesus answered her, "Woman, great is your faith! Let it be done for you as you wish." And her daughter was healed from that moment.

Music offering

"I See the Light"

Armand Eusanio & Betsey Wilson

Sermon

Friendships are mirrors to presence By Rev. Jeff Jackson

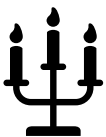
Hymn of Reflection

O Christ, the Healer, We Have Come

#175

Prayers of the Church In our Prayers

Jon Thompson, Marilyn Pay, Tina Ortiz, Cindy Burton, Jan Wardlaw, Kathleen Stewart, Kathy Repko, Chad Sproul, Dot Bailey, Jane Cribbs, Kathy Ford, Gabe Tassone, Carolyn Chandler, Allison Colbert, Gayle Colbert, Tony Cunningham, Pat Rehm, "Edna House", Search Committee
(Please let the office know of any additions, corrections, or changes to our prayer lists.)



Pastoral Prayer

The Savior'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.

Hymn of Intention

There Is a Name I Love to Hear

#52

Invitation to the Offering

Offering Music

*Offering Response

Alleluia

Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia, alleluia!

Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia, alleluia!



*Prayer of Dedication: [Unison]

Generous God,

receive these gifts and the lives from which they come.

Use what we offer to widen circles of belonging,

strengthen the bonds between us,

and make room for those too easily overlooked.

May our generosity become friendship in action

and your love made visible. Amen.

*Circle of Community Please join us in a circle around the sanctuary and lift your voices together and again after the benediction.

A musical score for two voices or instruments, written in treble clef with a key signature of two sharps (F# and C#) and a 4/4 time signature. The melody is simple and repetitive, with lyrics written below the notes. Chord symbols are placed above the staff at various points.

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

I Sing the Mighty Power of God

Let me take the next faithful step toward courage, justice, and peace.