



*On the willows*

**REBUILD**

*A journey through Nehemiah*

September 12, 2021

10:30 a.m.

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# UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST, CONGREGATIONAL

217 E. Liberty St. Medina, Ohio 44256 330-725-4559

[www.uccmedina.org](http://www.uccmedina.org)



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## **“WELCOMING, LOVING, SERVING, WHERE GOD HAS NO LIMITS”**

*Please take a moment to sign the friendship pads, (located at the end of each pew) so that you know who is worshipping near you and you may greet them by name.*

*\*Those who are able please stand*

### **RINGING OF THE CHURCH BELL**

**PRELUDE** “Sweet Hour of Prayer” – arr. Teresa Wilhelmi

Cathy Fafrak, Pianist

### **WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS**

### **PASSING OF THE PEACE**

**CHORAL INTROIT** “Psalm 137” – Luigi Cherubini, paraphrased & arr by Richard Proulx

**\*CALL TO WORSHIP** (From When you Meet Someone Deep in Grief by Patricia McKernon Runkle)

Leader: Slip off your needs and set them by the door.

**People: Enter barefoot this darkened chapel**

Leader: Hollowed by loss

**People: Hallowed by sorrow**

Leader: Its gray stone walls and floor.

**People: You, congregation of one**

Leader: Are here to listen not to sing.

**People: Kneel in the back pew.**

Leader: Make no sound.

**People: Let the candles speak.**

*(Silence is kept)*

Leader: Amen.

**People: Amen.**

### **\*HYMN**

**“Lift Thy Head, O Zion, Weeping”**

Karoly Jeszenske, c. 1674; tr. Williams Toth, 1905-

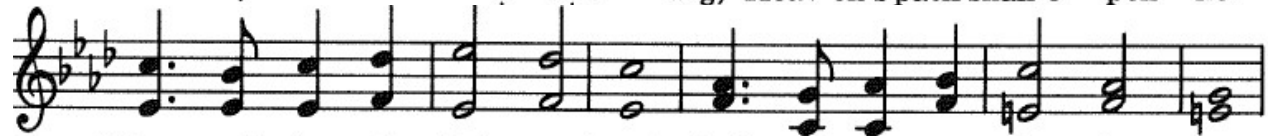
MAGYAR 8.7.8.7.7.8.8.  
*Hymn of the Hungarian Galley Slaves, 1674*



1 Lift thy head, O Zi - on, weep - ing, Still the Lord thy Fa - ther is;  
2 Though the sea his waves as - sem - ble And in fu - ry fall on thee,  
3 Though the hills and vales be riv - en God cre - a - ted with his hand,  
4 Though in chains thou now art griev - ing, Though a tor-tured slave thou die,



Thou art dai - ly in his keep - ing, And thine ev - ery care is his.  
Though thou cry, with heart a - trem - ble, "O my Sav - ior, suc - cor me!"  
Though the mov - ing signs of heav - en Wars pre - sage in ev - ery land,  
Zi - on, if thou die be - liev - ing, Heav - en's path shall o - pen lie.



Rise and be of glad - some heart, And with cour - age play thy part;  
Though un - trou - bled still he sleep Who thy hope is on the deep,  
Yet, O Zi - on, have no fear: Ev - er is thy help - er near;  
Up - ward gaze and hap - py be, God hath not for - sak - en thee;



Soon a - gain his arms will fold thee To his lov - ing heart and hold thee.  
Zi - on, calm the breast that quaketh; Nev - er God his own for - sak - eth.  
He hath sought thee, he hath found thee; Lo! his wings are walls a - round thee.  
Thou his peo - ple art, and sure - ly He will fold his own se - cure - ly. A - men.

**SCRIPTURES**

Psalm 137  
Nehemiah 1

Jim Kiser, Liturgist

**ANTHEM**

"Make Strong for Service" – Luigi Cherubini, arr. Richard Proulx

Chancel Choir

**CHILDREN'S MESSAGE**

Stacie Yates

### The Lord's Prayer

Our Father 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.

### PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

Joys and Concerns

Pastoral Prayer

### SERMON

"On the Willows"

Rev. Luke Lindon

### OFFERING OURSELVES AND OUR GIFTS

#### Offering Invitation

Thank you for continuing to financially support the work and mission of the church! You can give in many ways of your time, talent and treasure. You can send your offering via mail or online at [uccmedina.org/give](http://uccmedina.org/give). You can also give of your time and talent of writing and calling one another to strengthen the ties that bind. Let us now sing the doxology to our God, from whom all blessings flow.

*\*Doxology (Thomas Ken, 1674; adapted)*

**Praise God from whom all blessings flow; Praise Christ all creatures here below;  
Praise Holy Spirit, Comforter: One God, triune, whom we adore. Amen.**

*\*Prayer of Dedication (From the Rev. David Long-Higgins, Heartland Conference Minister of the UCC)*

Leader: O Love, Thank-you for silence  
Rising, resting, holding Heart and mind

**People: In sacred submersion  
Of Spirit beyond my knowing  
But through which I am known.**

Leader: Gift descending or arising  
I know not how or why

**People: Only that eternity visits in the precious gift of now.**

Leader: Let me receive it

**People: Not trying to figure it out**

Leader: As if created by me in some laboratory of ego

**People: Aching to be noticed  
As guard against the unknowing**

Leader: Necessary to be formed

**People: By You, O Love, who is Life.**

Leader: Yes, Love,  
Let me receive the gift you yearn to offer

People: Unmade by me Yet making me  
 Leader: If I will surrender my will to You  
 People: Into the precious  
 Presence You are  
 And are always  
 Becoming. Amen.

**\*HYMN**

**"God of the Ages"**

NATIONAL HYMN 10.10.10.10

Daniel C. Roberts, 1876

George W. Warren, 1892



*Trumpets, before each stanza*  
*(optional)*

1. God of our fa - thers, whose al - might - y hand
2. Thy love di - vine hath led us in the past;
3. From war's a - larms, from dead - ly pes - ti - lence,
4. Re - fresh thy peo - ple on their toil - some way;



Leads forth in beau - ty all the star - ry band  
 In this free land by thee our lot is cast;  
 Be thy strong arm our ev - er sure de - fense;  
 Lead us from night to nev - er - end - ing day;



Of shin - ing worlds in splen - dor through the skies,  
 Be thou our rul - er, guard - ian, guide, and stay,  
 Thy true re - li - gion in our hearts in - crease;  
 Fill all our lives with love and grace di - vine,



Our grate - ful songs be - fore thy throne a - rise.  
 Thy word our law, thy paths our cho - sen way.  
 Thy boun - teous good - ness nour - ish us in peace.  
 And glo - ry, laud, and praise be ev - er thine.

**\*BENEDICTION** (Go in Pieces, a benediction by Pádraig Ó Tauma)

Leader: the task is ended

**People: go in pieces**

Leader: our concluding faith is being rear-ended  
certainty's being amended

People: **and something's getting mended  
that we didn't know was torn**

Leader: we're unravelling

**People: and are traveling to a place of  
new-formed-patterns,**

Leader: with delusion as a fusion of  
loss, and hope, and pain and beauty.

**People: so, the task is ended**

Leader: go in pieces  
to see and feel your world.

**People: Amen.**

**\*CONGREGATIONAL RESPONSE "God Be with You"**

**God be with you 'til we meet again; By His counsels guide uphold you;  
With His sheep securely fold you; God be with you 'til we meet again.**

**\*POSTLUDE** "Recessional for a Joyful Day" – Dale Wood

Cathy Fafrak, Organist

**MORE THAN CHURCH ON SUNDAY"**

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Stacie Yates, Director of Christian Education  
Nicole Rubino, Co-Director of Youth  
Jim Kiser, Director of Music; Cathy Fafrak, Organist  
Rebecca Rosen, Nursery Supervisor  
Jennifer Vilimonovic, Director of Hobby Horse Preschool  
Jack Sharpe, Maintenance; Dan Daubner, Custodian

# THE PILGRIM MESSENGER

## SEPTEMBER 12, 2021

**“WELCOMING, LOVING, SERVING, WHERE GOD HAS NO LIMITS.**

**MORE THAN CHURCH ON SUNDAY!”**

Live streaming of the Sanctuary service is available at [www.uccmedina.org/live](http://www.uccmedina.org/live)

**September 12, 2021 thru September 19, 2021**

### **WEEK AT A GLANCE**

<b>Sun</b>	<b>RALLY DAY!</b>
8:15 am	Chapel Worship
9:00 am	Gathering Worship
9:40 am	Choir Warm-up
10:30 am	Traditional Worship & Noisy Coin Offering
11:30 am	<b>All-Church &amp; New Member (Covid Class) Ministry Fair</b>
<b>Mon</b>	7:00 pm <b>Evangelism Team Meeting</b>
<b>Tues</b>	7:00 pm Bible Study
	7:00 pm <b>Worship Team Meeting</b>
<b>Wed</b>	10:30 am Quilters
	7:00 pm Gathering Band Practice
	7:00 pm <b>DELT Meeting</b>
<b>Thurs</b>	
<b>Fri</b>	
<b>Sat</b>	
<b>Sun</b>	8:15 am Chapel Worship
	9:00 am Gathering Worship
	10:30 am Traditional Worship
	11:30 am <b>Caring Team Meeting</b>
	4:00 pm <b>Youth Group Kick Off</b>

### **NOISY COIN OFFERING**

**SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 12<sup>th</sup>**

Look under the couch cushions, in the washing machine and check pockets. We will be having a noisy coin offering on Sunday, September 12<sup>th</sup> as part of Rally Day. All the money collected will go to help support Innocent, the now young man who we adopted from Uganda. Let's make lots of noise on September 12<sup>th</sup>!

**Worship Highlights:** 8:15, 9:00 & 10:30 am

Scriptures: Psalm 137 & Nehemiah 1:1-7

Sermon: "On the Willows"  
Rev. Luke Lindon

**Communion Table Flowers:** The flowers today are given by Wendy & Kevin Swantek in memory of Wendy's dad, Glenn Sager.

### **TODAY IS RALLY DAY**

**SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 12<sup>th</sup>**

It's hard to believe that school has started, and we are getting ready to start another program year. On Sunday, September 12<sup>th</sup> we will officially "kick off" another year of Sunday School. There will be a scavenger hunt and a special treat. We will also be introducing some new ideas for our Sunday mornings together. Make sure you come to experience all the fun we will be having. See you there!

### **TODAY, A SPECIAL WELCOME FOR OUR "COVID" NEW MEMBER CLASS**

Due to rising numbers of Covid, Coffee Hours will be postponed till further notice. However, today, **September 12<sup>th</sup> we will welcome our February 2021 new members from the pandemic class in church.**

To honor them, please help yourself to a boxed cupcake as you exit the church service and weather permitting, a cup of coffee under the pergola.





Our next series, REBUILD starts today, September 12<sup>th</sup>. We're disoriented. We're feeling loss we don't have a name for. How can we plan for the future when everything is in ruins? Our sacred stories can help us. Our ancestors in faith have been here before. We'll look at the prophet Nehemiah and how he navigated an uncertain time. Few things stifle the imagination than ungrieved grief. We shall walk through the stages of grief together and imagine a future we can build toward.

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### TEACHERS NEEDED!

We are going to be trying some new and exciting things with Sunday School this year. One thing that hasn't changed is that we need adults to help on Sunday mornings with the children. If you are interested in working with the children once a month, please see Stacie Yates or email her at [stacie@uccmedina.org](mailto:stacie@uccmedina.org) for more information.

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### NEIGHBORS IN NEED OFFERING

**OCTOBER 3, 2021**

What an intense year we have each had to endure! Much has changed in the world since last year's Neighbors in Need Special Mission Offering. Justice issues – from women's rights to racial bias to income gaps – continue to be laid bare, making the Neighbors in Need Offering on October 3<sup>rd</sup> even more critical. We trust you know that funds raised from the offering allow for tracking and informing you about what justice concerns require your attention. To that end, this year's campaign shines a spotlight on the issue of homelessness. As a group, the homeless have already faced much. With many Americans losing income due to the coronavirus, this vulnerable community will likely grow. Thus, it is important we pay attention to those in need. We continue to bring assistance to those through grants and numerous other activities. Please give generously to this special offering on October 3<sup>rd</sup>.

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### CHURCH DIRECTORY UPDATE

Unfortunately, our new church directories will be delayed. Because of changes in our system, it has proven to be quite difficult to try and print a new directory.

We will get it together, but at this point we may just wait for any New Member information we get so that they will be included. We hope to have the directories done by October 10<sup>th</sup>.

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### LITURGIST SIGN-UP

Check out the bulletin board in the East Room hallway to sign up to be a liturgist during September, October and November at the 10:30 Sanctuary service. Questions? Talk to Pastor Luke or call the church office.

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### YOUTH GROUP KICK OFF

**September 19<sup>th</sup> - 4:00-6:00 pm at Church**

Mark your calendars now. Youth Group will kick off the year on Sunday, September 19<sup>th</sup>. We will be having a pizza party and playing some fun 'Minute-to-Win-it' games. Youth group is open to all youth who are in grades 3-12. Come enjoy good food, fun and fellowship.

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### COVID-19 VACCINE QUESTION & ANSWER

Stephanie Manhoff, a member of the church's Reopening Team, who works as a Registered Nurse for the Medina County Health Department, will be here after the service on Sunday, September 19<sup>th</sup> to provide information about the Covid-19 vaccine and answer any questions you may have. Paul DeSario, another member of the Reopening Team, who works for the Cuyahoga County Board of Health, will join Stephanie in answering questions. So, if you're interested in learning more about the COVID vaccines, or have questions about the vaccines, we'd encourage you to stick around after the service on the 19<sup>th</sup>. It'll be a great opportunity to get information directly from Health Department officials who are actually on the front lines working to inform the public about Covid-19.



## REGISTER NOW FOR NEW MEMBER CLASSES

Would you like to join our church family!? Join us for our next new member classes! The next classes will be held **Monday, September 20<sup>th</sup> & 27<sup>th</sup>**. **Classes will be held from 7 pm – 9 pm** in the New Library. New members will join the church on **Sunday, October 3<sup>rd</sup> at ONE UNIFIED SERVICE OF WORSHIP AT 10:00 a.m.** Childcare is provided if needed during class. Please [register here](#) or contact the Church Office at 330-725-4559 if you are interested and let us know if you will need childcare.

## COIN JARS FOR SENIORS

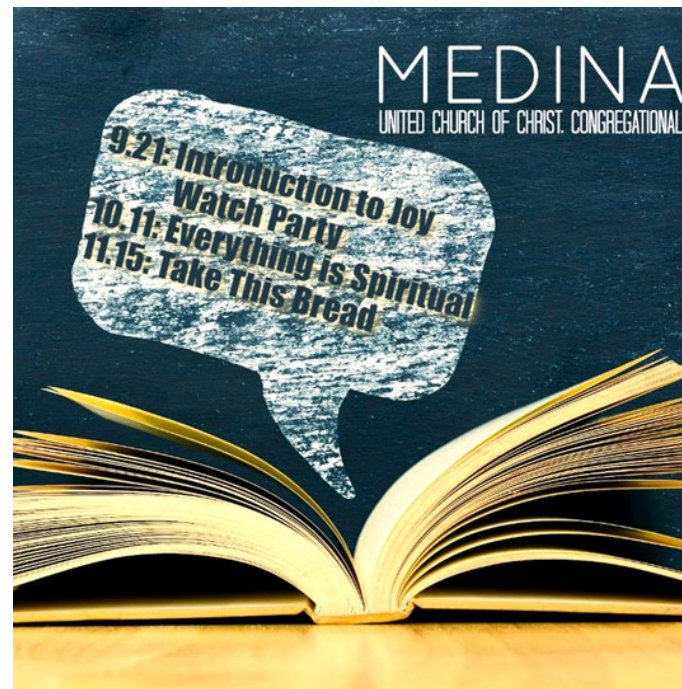
Last year our Coin Collection Jars were cancelled because of Covid-19. This year we will be collecting your spare change again to purchase meat for seniors living in high rises in Medina County. Feeding Medina County will handle distribution. The jars will be in the East Room for pick-up. Please take a jar and add your name to the sign-up sheet. We encourage all three services to help provide for our seniors during the Christmas holidays. **Jars will be collected on November 28th.**

## UPCOMING BOOK DISCUSSIONS

We had a wonderful time discussing Sue Monk Kidd's *Book of Longings*. We'll keep a monthly gathering going from now until the holidays. Please [CLICK HERE](#) to register.

On Tuesday, September 21<sup>st</sup> at 7 p.m. in Fellowship Hall, we'll gather and watch Rob Bell's *Introduction to Joy*. Happiness is fleeting, but Joy is something that never leaves. It's part-sermon, part standup comedy and suitable for ages 12 and up. Bring a friend and come ready to laugh, learn, and discuss!

Monday, October 11<sup>th</sup> at 7 p.m. we'll gather to discuss Rob Bell's book *Everything is Spiritual*. This book is so good, when I finished reading it, I flipped right over to the first page and started again. It's part memoir and spiritual guidance. I believe in our discussion we'll find that not only is God still speaking, but more constant and in more ways than we previously



realized.

We'll round out our Trinity of Book Studies with a book about SERVE on November 15<sup>th</sup> at 7 p.m. Sara Miles great book *Take This Bread* will be the subject of the night. A brilliant book about what happens when an atheist randomly walks into church and receives communion for the first time.

Each of these events are one night only. I hope you'll join us in Fellowship Hall for each of these events.

## PASTOR'S Q & A

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**How could three such different religions as Judaism, Christianity and Islam come from one Abrahamic Tradition? And I got an English translation of the Koran at a yard sale. I was surprised how much is shared with Christians. Your thoughts?**

It's good to know your history and see the evolution of faith. Jesus was Jewish. He was rooted and shaped by that tradition. There is a big diversity within Jewish thought and theology, but what we can say for sure is that they believe God is one and that the Messiah hasn't come yet. Some Jewish folk don't even believe in the concept of the Messiah. What is certain for them, is that God has never been in human form. That's where the Christians come in. Not only has the Messiah come, but God was in Christ and is one but also three. God is Trinity.

The Christians had a large influx of Gentiles that took the tradition away from it's Jewish roots. There was a lot of animosity between the two traditions for a long time until along comes Mohammad in the early 600s and says, "Hey! I had a vision that is going to unite all the traditions!" It has 5 simple rules:

1. There is no god but God and Mohammad is God's Messenger.
2. Pray facing Mecca 5 times a day
3. Give alms to the poor
4. Fast
5. Make a pilgrimage to Mecca once in your life

Mohammad wrote the Koran and added much of the oral tradition around Mary which is present in Roman Catholic tradition but not the Bible. So there is a lot of overlap. Jesus is not God, but he is the Messiah who will come back at the end of time. Jesus is mentioned over 100 times in the Koran where Mohammad is mentioned 4 times.

Yet the unity that Mohammad had hoped for never happened. There is great differences not only between these faiths but also within the traditions. Jewish folk have Orthodox, Conservative, and Reform (with lots of strains of thoughts within those camps). Islam has Shia, Sunni, and Sufi (with lots of strains of thoughts within those camps). And we Christians have Orthodox, Roman Catholic, and Protestants... you get the picture.

It's good to learn from each tradition and lift up where we agree. We can always learn something, even if we don't agree with it. One group who is doing this rather well is the Interfaith Amigos. Rabbi Ted Falcon, the Rev. Don Mackenzie, and Imam Jamal Rahman gave a talk at my last church about how to be in relationship. They have more than a few books on the similarities and differences. They give me great hope. As does the Omaha Tri-faith Initiative. A UCC Church, a synagogue and a mosque all on one campus in Omaha, NE. They seek to learn and partner in the Abrahamic faith to heal divisions and witness to interfaith cooperation. To recognize that we are related, and we go all the way back to Abraham. Now sing with me! *Father Abraham had many sons! Many sons had Father Abraham! I am one of them, and so you are you. So let's all praise the Lord!*

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**The deadline for submission of articles for NEXT Sunday's *Messenger* is this Sunday at 11:30 am  
Please submit articles to the church office at [office@uccmedina.org](mailto:office@uccmedina.org)  
CHURCH OFFICE HOURS: 9:00 am – 3:00 pm MONDAY THRU FRIDAY**

Mark 8:27-38

### **Who Are You Jesus?**

The word “mandala” means a “special circle.” In many different countries people create mandalas as a way of praying or showing something about their beliefs. Some doctors have their patients make a mandala to help them express feelings they have trouble talking about. In Tibet, mandalas for peace are created in sand. The Navajo create similar sand paintings to heal sickness. When they are finished, they take the picture apart and sweep up the sand. Sometimes they sweep it into some water as a special blessing. They do this to remind themselves that everything in the world is always changing and the sand won’t stay the same forever. It starts out just as sand, then becomes a beautiful work of art, and then goes right back to being sand. But when they’re finished, the sand is special because it came from their art, and it knows their prayers.

You can make a mandala on your own or with a group. First, gather supplies: • items that can be used to create patterns within the mandala, such as buttons, marbles, checkers, bottle caps, building blocks, washers, scrabble tiles, mosaic tiles, pebbles, beads, seed pods, leaves • paper circle cut from an 8½” x 11” sheet of paper.

A meditation before making a mandala. Sit comfortably and close your eyes. Take three, slow deep breaths and imagine God’s Spirit filling you with love from head to toe. Think about something sad that is happening in the world, something that you want to see change. Imagine God’s Spirit moving in the world to answer that prayer. Imagine God’s Spirit bringing love into that situation. Now, imagine God’s Spirit forming a big circle, a circle of love in that place. Imagine what the circle looks like and what it feels like. When you are ready, open your eyes. Use the items you have gathered to make a picture of your circle. You can do whatever you wish with your circle. Don’t worry about making mistakes. Trust that God is with you in creating the right mandala for today.

*Today’s activity, on this Faith Formation Sunday, is adapted from Faith Practices: Praying and Making Ritual, Copyright © 2012 The Pilgrim Press. Faith Practices is an easily adaptable and inexpensive faith formation curriculum for all ages available at [thepilgrimpress.com](http://thepilgrimpress.com).*