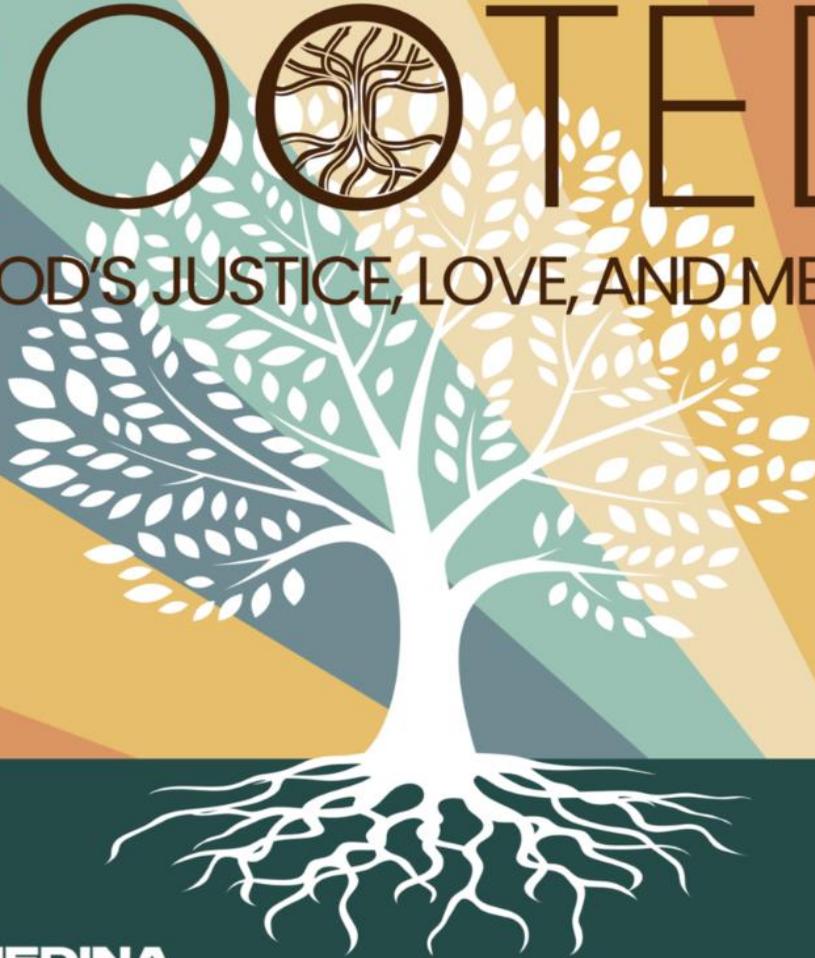


COMMIT

ROOTED

IN GOD'S JUSTICE, LOVE, AND MERCY





Rooted: In God's Justice, Mercy, and Love

August 24 – September 26

This six-week series invites us to cultivate lives rooted in God's justice, mercy, and love. We are living in what the Rev. Dr. David Long-Higgins calls "these whiplash times," and it's good to stay rooted and strong in our values. Drawing from Jesus' teachings in Luke and the prophetic and pastoral witness of the lectionary, we'll explore how faith takes root not just in belief—but in practice, ethics, relationships, and priorities. As summer ends and routines reset, this is a time to remember what grounds us.

**Those who are able please stand*

RINGING OF THE BELL

PRELUDE "Be Thou My Vision" – arr. John Carter

Cathy Fafrak, Piano

WELCOME

PASSING OF THE PEACE

*OPENING HYMN

"Be Now My Vision"

SLANE 10.10.9.10

Ancient Irish text, c. 8th century; transl. Mary E. Byrne, 1905; versified Eleanor H. Hull, 1912; adapt.

Trad. Irish mel; harm. David Evans, 1927 © Oxford Univ. Press

Unison



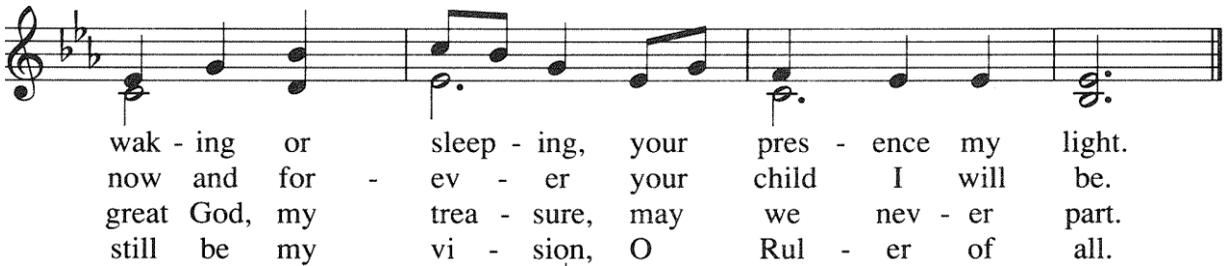
1 Be now my vi - sion, O God of my heart;
 2 Be now my wis - dom, and be my true word;
 3 Rich - es I need not, nor life's emp - ty praise,
 4 Sov - ereign of heav - en, my vic - to - ry won,



noth - ing sur - pass - es the love you im - part—
 ev - er with - in me, my soul is as - sured;
 you, my in - her - i - tance, now and al - ways;
 may I reach heaven's joys, O bright heav - en's Sun!



You my best thought, by day or by night,
 Moth - er and Fa - ther, you are both to me,
 You and you on - ly are first in my heart,
 Heart of my own heart, what - ev - er be - fall,



***CALL TO WORSHIP** (from *Enfleshed, Liturgy That Matters*)

As people of faith, we are called to be mindful

To be intentional with our lives

To be aware of all we have and need

To be awake to the world

As people of faith, we are equipped to take actions

To align behavior and values

To root deeply in integrity

To bear brave risks together

Let us worship and grow in faith and love

ANTHEM "As We Break the Bread" -by Jay Althouse

Chancel Choir

MESSAGE FOR THE WHOLE FAMILY OF GOD

Stacie Yates

Backpack Blessing

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

SCRIPTURE Luke 14:25-33 (N.T. pg. 73)

Brad Rice, Liturgist

Deuteronomy 30:15-20 (O.T. pg.179)

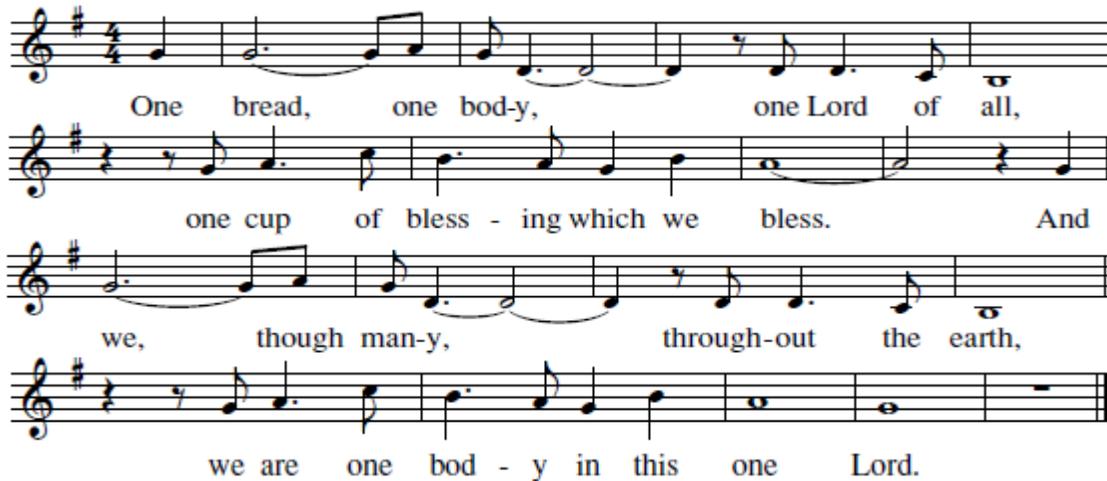
SERMON "Commit"

Rev. Meghan Malone

HYMN "One Bread, One Body"

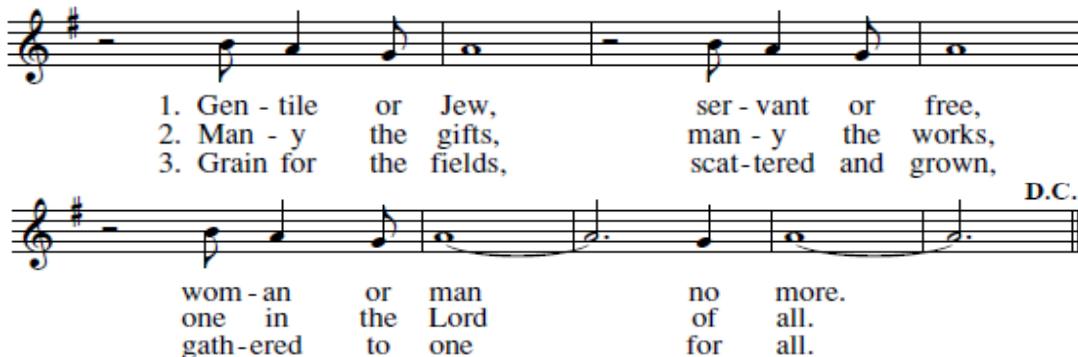
Words & music by John B. Foley, S.J., 1978 © JBF and New Dawn Music. Published by OCP Publications. ONE BREAD, ONE BODY 4.4.6.w/ refrain

Refrain



One bread, one bod-y, one Lord of all,
one cup of bless - ing which we bless. And
we, though man-y, through-out the earth,
we are one bod - y in this one Lord.

Verses



1. Gen - tile or Jew, ser - vant or free,
2. Man - y the gifts, man - y the works,
3. Grain for the fields, scat - tered and grown,
wom - an or man no more.
one in the Lord of all.
gath - ered to one for all.

D.C.

SACRAMENT OF HOLY COMMUNION

All are welcome at the Lord's Table. You do not need to be a member of the United Church of Christ to partake in the Holy Sacrament. All bread served is gluten free.

Invitation to the Table

The Words of Institution

Distribution of the Elements

Prayer of Thanksgiving

INVITATION TO GENEROSITY

There is an offering plate if you feel led to deposit your envelope or an offering there. You can also give through our Realm app or get the link to give by texting UCCMEDINA to 73256. You can also give through VENMO. Thank you for your prayerful consideration!

Offering Invitation

Jesus asks us to commit to expanding our family to include our neighbors. We belong to God and to each other, so let us open our hearts and bring together our gifts.

UCC Medina
@uccmedina



venmo

***Doxology** (words, Ruth Duck, ©2005, GIA Publications)

Praise God, the Source of life and birth; Praise God, the Word, who came to earth;
Praise God, the Spirit, holy flame; All glory, honor to God's Name! Amen.

***Give Thanks**

Giver of everything good, we dedicate our offerings to the good of our neighbor. May we do our part to pull our kin out from beneath scarcity and struggle. Amen.

***CLOSING HYMN**

"Hallelujah! We Sing Your Praises"

South African Spiritual (Sotho) © 1984 Ultryck, admin. by Walton Music Corp. All rights reserved. Used by permission

Hal - le - lu - jah! We sing your prais - es, all our
hearts are filled with glad - ness. Hal - le - lu - jah! We sing your
prais - es, all our hearts are filled with glad - ness.

Last time, Fine

Verses

1. Christ the Lord to us said: I am wine, I am bread, I am
2. Now Christ sends us all out, strong in faith, free of doubt, strong in
D.C.
wine, I am bread, give to all who thirst and hun - ger.
faith, free of doubt, to pro - claim the joy - ful Gos - pel.

***ANNOUNCEMENTS**

***BENEDICTION**

Jesus, help us to carry our crosses like you.

Your way is costly, but it is the way that leads to life.

If we choose to follow you, let us choose it with our whole heart.

We choose blessings, for ourselves and our descendants.

Go in peace, to do your part, having counted the cost, and choosing to live.

We will go, hearts turned towards God, arms open and ready to serve. 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 "Mighty Maker of All" – Rachel Sawyer**

Cathy Fafrak, Organ

****Please join us for Coffee Hour in Fellowship Hall following the service****

Coffee Hour is hosted this week by Hobby Horse Preschool

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Jack Sharpe, Maintenance & Custodian

THE PILGRIM MESSENGER

SEPTEMBER 7, 2025

**“WELCOMING, LOVING, SERVING, WHERE GOD HAS NO LIMITS.
MORE THAN CHURCH ON SUNDAY!”**

Live streaming of the 10:30 a.m. Sanctuary service is available at www.uccmedina.org/live

September 7 thru September 14, 2025 WEEK AT A GLANCE

Sun	RALLY DAY BLESSING OF THE BACKPACKS 8:15 am Chapel Worship 9:00 am Gathering Worship 10:30 am Sanctuary Worship 2:00 pm Trekking Through Autumn 3:30 pm Vibes Video Crew 5:00 pm Youth Group Kick-off Brunswick Skate Station
Mon	7:00 pm Finance/Stewardship Meeting
Tues	7:00 pm Property & Grounds Meeting 7:00 pm Worship Team Meeting
Wed	10:30 am Quilters 6:00 pm Bell Choir 6:30 pm Gathering Band Rehearsal 7:00 pm Discipleship & Education Team 7:15 pm Choir Rehearsal
Thurs	6:30 pm Bible Study
Fri	
Sat	
Sun	8:15 am Chapel Worship 9:00 am Gathering Worship 9:45 am Choir Warmup 10:00 am Children's Choir 10:30 am Sanctuary Worship 10:30 am Jesus Vibes 10:30 am Teen Church 11:45 am Mission Team Meeting 11:45 am Safety Team Meeting 3:00 pm Confirmation Kick-off

BACKPACK BLESSING TODAY!

Today, September 7th we will bless our backpacks, and any kind of bag that may be headed into a school building this year! Bring yours for a special Medina UCC tag and blessing.

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

Scripture: Luke 14:25-33 & Deuteronomy 30:15-20
Sermon: “Commit” Rev. Meghan Malone

Communion Table: The flowers on the communion table are given by Arnold & Cheri Ingraham in honor of their anniversary.

JESUS VIBES STARTS TODAY

Jesus Vibes will start up today, September 7th. It will be a year full of changes that we are very excited about. Looking forward to a year of fun, learning, growing and fellowship!

YOUTH GROUP KICK-OFF

Youth group begins again today, September 7th! We'll be meeting at Brunswick Skate Station for roller skating from 5:00-7:00pm. Admission and skates will be paid for by the church, and we'll have pizza for a snack as well. Parents are welcome to hang out, but do not have to stay.

VIBES VIDEO CREW

Vibes Video Crew is for youth 2nd grade and up who are interested in making videos based on scriptures to be shown during church. We will meet on the 1st and 3rd Sundays before youth group from 3:30-4:30. We will be writing the scripts, making props/sets, making videos and editing them to be shown during the church service. **Our first meeting will be today, September 7th.** We will meet in rooms 9/10 at 3:30. A schedule will be available at our first meeting! Come join the fun!

COFFEE HOUR TODAY!

Join us for our 1st coffee hour of the season on September 7th to celebrate Rally Day! Coffee hours follow the 10:30 worship service and are in Fellowship Hall. Please consider signing up to host a future coffee hour. Hosting is simple! If you have any questions, Liz Wolff will be your “go to” person for help in Sept., Oct. and Nov. Signups are in the East Room Hallway.

ONLINE REGISTRATION FOR JESUS VIBES & YOUTH GROUP

Time to fill out youth registration forms! Please use the QR code to complete the youth registration form for each of your children (ages preschool - 12th grade) by September 7th, 2025. Please contact Stacie Yates (stacie@uccmedina.org) or Meghan Malone (meghan@uccmedina.org) with any questions. Here is a direct link as well: <https://onrealm.org/uccmedina/PublicRegistrations/Event>



NEW MEMBER CLASS

If you've been thinking about joining our church family, we invite you to our **New Member Class on Monday, September 22nd at 7pm** in the new library. It's a relaxed time to learn more about who we are, who you are, ask questions, and get connected. Those who wish to join will be welcomed into membership during worship on Sunday, October 5th – a day of celebration for all of us!

SERMON PREP STUDY

Join us each week on Monday starting on September 15th at 2pm in the new library, as we gather around the scripture for the upcoming Sunday's worship. We'll read together, ask questions, share insights, and wrestle with how this ancient story speaks into our world today. This isn't about having all the answers - it's about curiosity, conversation, and community.

ENDOWMENT FUND COMMITTEE

The Endowment Committee would like to share that a generous bequest has been received from William and Janet Graham. William was past moderator as well as having held many other positions within the church. Janet, a professional educator, served on the Endowment Committee during the early founding years.

At this time, we want to remember that this is God's money. We as the Endowment Committee are committed to making responsible decisions for the church and its mission on the square.

Thank you, Endowment Committee: Kelly Charnley, Matt Yates, Bonnie Shuman, Alan Parkhurst, Kent Daugherty and Jane Langol ex-officio.

DONATION OF THE MONTH: SEPTEMBER

This month we're asking for non-perishable food items for tiny pantries in Medina. The youth group will take a walk to distribute these donations at the beginning of October! Please choose items that are lightweight and not made with glass. Canned meats (with a pull tab to open), fruit cups or applesauce, granola bars, jars of peanut butter, and cooking oils are some great options that help fill people's pantries.

FALL CLEANING!?

Following Luke's and Meghan's sermon "Break the Rules" instead of Spring cleaning, the Property and Grounds Team is "Fall" Cleaning the old garage on **Saturday, September 27th**. We will be purging and eliminating items that have accumulated in the grey garage over the years. Please stop by the office and ask Cindy and/or Cathy for a key to enter the garage to verify items that you want to keep. Labels will be provided to identify the items you need for your ministry at Medina UCC.

Please call/ email Carl Skorepa at 330-421-3189/ carlskorepa@yahoo.com with questions or for additional access times. To quote John Wesley: "Cleanliness is next to Godliness."

TREKKING THROUGH AUTUMN 2025

Get out and explore your Medina County Parks with your church friends! Hike 8 trails this fall to receive an award from the Park District (backpack for first timers, pin for veterans). Hikes leave promptly at 2:00 PM on Sundays. All hikes are 2 miles or less. Award tracking sheets will be available at the first few hikes and in the church office. No RSVP required, come to any you can. Rain or shine except if storming. Look for Pastor Luke, Kate Lindon, and/or Stacie Yates. Email Kate at katewlindon@gmail.com to be added to the email reminder list. Watch future Pilgrim Messengers for updates on which park we will hike.

Second Hike: 9/14: Mugrage Park, 4985 Windfall Rd, Medina, 1.1 miles

BLESSED MINDS – Book Study

Tuesday, Sept. 23rd from 7-8 pm.

The Rev. Dr. Sarah Lund visited us in the Spring. We will be reviewing her book Blessed Minds! Copies can be found at your favorite bookseller or the eBook through the Medina library.

SEPTEMBER 11th PATRIOTS DAY

Thursday, September 11th is Patriot's Day and also the memorial for those who died on Sept. 11 in the NY Towers, Pentagon, Shanksville, PA and fire and medical first responders. Keeping the tradition of the last 24 years, the David Edinger family will be ringing the UCC church bells beginning at the first tower (8:46), 2nd tower (9:03), Pentagon (9:37) and Shanksville (10:03). Please come any time to help ring the remembrance. Children welcome.

MAKE A JOYFUL NOISE!

Rehearsals for all our UCC Music groups are starting for the year. If you are an adult or in high school and are interested in singing in the choir, contact tracy@uccmedina.org. Rehearsals are Wednesday evenings at 7:15 pm. Mrs. V directs the Children's Choir and they start practicing today at 10:00 in the Chapel. All children grade Pre-K through 8th grade are welcome! For more information, please contact her at jen@uccmedina.org

NOISY COIN OFFERING

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 21st

Look under the couch cushions, in the washing machine and check pockets. We will be having a noisy coin offering on Sunday, September 21st. 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 21st!

WE NEED YOUR POP TABS!

Just a reminder that we collect pop tabs for the Ronald McDonald Houses of Northeast Ohio. We will take any tab (pop, soup can, beverage, pet food, canned fruit and vegetables) in any color or size. There is a container in the Welcome Area in which to put your tabs. Thanks for collecting!

MISSION OPPORTUNITY

Join us for the annual **Step Up to Prevent Suicide Walk** on Sunday, September 21, at 1:00 p.m. As a proud WISE (Welcoming, Inclusive, Supportive, and Engaged) congregation, our church is sponsoring the walk this year as part of our commitment to reducing stigma and supporting mental health awareness. To join our church group, we will meet at 12:45 in front of the church entrance on the corner of Liberty and Broadway (be sure to stop by at the event registration table well beforehand to sign in and get your t-shirt first). To register, donate, or get more information, visit the event website. www.alternativepaths.org. We hope to see you there!



STEP UP TO PREVENT SUICIDE

COMMUNITY WALK

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

CHURCH OFFICE HOURS: 9 am – 3 pm MONDAY THRU THURSDAY; FRIDAY 9 am – 12 pm

Philemon 1:1-21

A New Identity

Grace to you and peace from God.

Wouldn't it be a wonderful world if we received letters from friends with the same salutation of that of the Apostle Paul? Better yet, wouldn't it be nice just to receive letters rather than texts and emails?

But I'm not here to talk about the lost art of letter writing. I want to discuss the seemingly lost art of seeing one another as siblings who belong to the family of God and, as such, truly able to love despite flaws, failures, and fickleness.

Onesimus was standing in the need of such redeeming and accepting love. The runaway slave had returned to his master, Philemon, but Philemon was not willing to take him back. Enter Paul, who steps in to mediate. He urges Philemon to not only welcome Onesimus with open arms but to welcome him as a beloved brother, not a slave.

Paul knew firsthand how our true identities were not found in the roles we were assigned, nor do they rest in familial bloodlines. Our true identities are steeped in the blood of Christ, making us all siblings of one another.

By the grace of God, Paul himself received a new identity going from "Saul the Feared Persecutor of Jews" to "Paul the Great Spokesperson for the Risen Lord."

Why couldn't Onesimus' identity change as well?

Philemon does as Paul says, and while we don't have subsequent letters to see how this new friendship progressed, we do have the legends. One has Onesimus becoming an influential Christian leader in Greece. Another has Onesimus becoming bishop of Ephesus.

While we aren't certain what is true or not, this we do know: Onesimus, whose name means "useful," reminds us today, that we, too, are useful in the eyes of God.

Our identities are not wrapped up in who we think we are, what others say of us, or what we do for a living. Our very being is found in Christ, and as such, Christ urges us to take on a new identity. Perhaps you are really a peacemaker, or bridge builder, or even a compassion sharer? What divine potential is within you?

Creator God, free us from the roles we play in life. May this day we embrace new identities as your beloved children, ready to be used for your purpose in making this world a loving and just place for all. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen.