



St. John's United Church of Christ  
**Second Sunday of Lent**  
 February 25, 2024



\* Please stand if it is comfortable to do so.

L=Leader, P=People

**PRELUDE**

**CHURCH BELLS**

**WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS**

Mission Message: St. John's Pre-School

\***CHORAL INTROIT** *Surely the Presence of the Lord* # 263

\***GOD CALLS US TO WORSHIP** (responsively)

L: Ever-present God, forever seeking us and always teaching us:

**P: Open our minds to the truth of your care.**

L: Open our hearts to the gentle power of your love.

**P: Open our lips to share stories of faith.**

L: Open our hands to create beauty, to do justice and to show kindness.

**P: Open our souls to the breath of your Spirit.**

L: Open our mouths to sing boldly and loudly your praises.

**P: Open our hands to do your will in our lives each and every day.**

\***OPENING HYMN** *Near the Cross* (vs. 1 & 3) #587

\***WE INVITE GOD TO WORSHIP** (unison)

**Lent arrives, and we are looking for direction. Our fragmented lives and self- concern pull at our intentions, unsettling our faith and diluting our commitment. We want to change. Where do we begin? We look to Jesus, how he lived and loved, what he said and what his followers called "the Way." O Lord, let this Lent be different as we examine ourselves, our faith, our hope. Guide us, Father, in the "way" of Lent and life. Amen.**

\***RESPONSE** *How Great Thou Art* (chorus only) #33

**SPECIAL MUSIC** St. John's UCC Pre-School

**CHILDREN'S MESSAGE** (children come forward during *Jesus Loves Me* and leave during *Jesus Loves the Little Children*)

**OFFERING INVITATION**

L: Let us show our gratitude for God's generosity by returning a portion.

\***DOXOLOGY** #46

\***PRAYER OF DEDICATION** (unison)

**P: Help us to give with generous hearts, O God, and not out of a sense of duty but desire. Let us give, not because we feel we have to, but because we want to. Let us not feel imprisoned by rules of giving or what others give, but rather free us to see the potential good that comes of our gifts. Out of our bounty, and in gratitude, we give to others through Christ our Lord. Amen.**

**WE GATHER IN PRAYER**

Silent Prayers – Pastoral Prayer-The Lord's Prayer (debtors/debtors)

Congregational Response *Lord, Jesus, Who through Forty Days* (v.3) #180

**SCRIPTURE:**

Old Testament: Ezekiel 18:30-32

New Testament: Luke 15:11-24

L: This is the Word of God

**P: Thanks be to God**

**SERMON** This Lenten Road: *The Road Home*

\***CLOSING HYMN** *Lift High the Cross* (vs. 1, 3, 4) #108

\***BLESSING** (responsively)

L: Stand firm in the Lord. Trust the promises of God. Live powerfully in the Holy Spirit.

**P: We walk with Jesus through his earthly journey to Jerusalem and know that our God walks with us as well and is big enough to handle anything we may encounter. Amen.**

\* **CONGREGATIONAL RESPONSE** *Go In Peace* #445

\* **POSTLUDE**

**Never put a period where God has put a comma, God is still speaking!**



## ANNOUNCEMENTS, JOYS AND CONCERNS

- **Continuing Prayer Requests: Bruce Deckard, Don Osborne, Jr., Dale Linneweber, and Gary Meyer and family. For the silent trials and struggles everyone is carrying, let's include all in our prayers.**

### Addresses for Shut-ins and Others

**Norma Meyer, Colonial Assisted Living**, - Room 142, 1622 S Hart Street Road, Vincennes, IN 47591

**Susie Milligan, Colonial Assisted Living**, - 1622 S Hart Street Road, Vincennes, IN 47591

**Leona Conway, Willow Manor**, -request correspondence be sent to 2009 Forbes Rd. Vincennes IN

**Marge Beamon, Remains in rehab**. Please send cards and notes to, 1401 Ritterskamp Avenue.

**Franklyn Schroeder, Oak Village Health Care Center** – 200 4<sup>th</sup> Street, Oaktown, IN 47561

Home  
**Alexander Family**  
**Bruce Deckard**



If you have a caregiving need such as a hospital stay, a visit or desire communion, please contact the church office, Janet Goodman (co-chair of Caregivers) or any caregiver listed below. We would appreciate your help and want to make sure everyone is blessed by St. John's when you need it! St. John's UCC Caregivers- Ed and Brenda Cummings, Cindy Deckard (co-chair), Connie and Dan Coulter, Peggy Meyer, Ray Pieper, Terry and Janet Goodman, Lonny Vieck, Larry and Betsy Marchino.



### WHAT'S NEW?

Most of us have been Christians a long time. We are familiar with everything about the church. It's comfortable. We know what to expect. There are no surprises. Now imagine you have never been inside a church before and come to worship for the first time. Sound unbelievable? Unfortunately, it is very common. We have at least 1 ½-2 generations who are all but missing from the church. I can't tell you the number of weddings I've performed where a member of the bridal party will enter the sanctuary and say something like, "Wow, this place is beautiful. What do you do here?" Usually, they have never been inside a church. Sounds crazy to us but it is true.

So how can we be more welcoming in our worship? The first is to make our order of worship more understandable. Those who are unfamiliar with worship often feel as though they don't "fit in" or unwelcome because they don't understand the "secret, coded, language of the church. They have no idea what is an "Invocation," "Benediction," "Gloria Patri" or "Doxology." They don't understand so they don't come back. They don't feel welcome, so they don't come back.

One of the easiest changes to make is to rephrase some of our worship language. An Invocation is labeled, "We Invite God to Worship." The Call to Worship becomes, "God Calls us to Worship," thereby explaining what is happening at that point. The Benediction becomes the "Blessing" and the Sermon becomes the "Message." All simple, low-threatening changes that help newcomers understand and feel more welcomed. Take note of the bulletin this morning and you will see some of this put into practice. Can we accept the changes if they mean newcomers might better accept Christ as their Savior?



## ST. JOHN'S UCC STAFF and VOLUNTEERS

Pastor	Pastor Debbie Jo Atkins
Liturgist	Jana Vieck
Head Usher	Jill Doggett
Organist	DeEtta Welte
Music Director, Pianist	Becky Brockman
Children /Family Ministry Coordinator	Will Meyer
Nursery Attendant	Darcie Bahr
Projection	Jill Doggett
Sound	Jonathan Lange
Church Secretary	Angie Robinson
Church Board President	Jana Vieck
Greeters	Eric & Cheryl Meyer



Virtual Worship Service is still available on the church website, [myucc.org](http://myucc.org).  
Worship Services are also "Live Streamed" on the Church's FACEBOOK page



### **THIS WEEK in the Life of St. John's**

**SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 25**  
Sunday School 9:15 am  
Worship 10:30am  
Celebrating our Preschool, Preschool Presentation

**MONDAY, FEBRUARY 26**  
BABE Store 12-5:30  
FRIENDS 5-6:15pm VU Bowling Cntr.

**TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 27**  
Sandy's Pantry 11-12:30pm

**WEDNESDAY, February 28**  
Laundry Love 6-8pm  
Choir 7pm

**THURSDAY, February 29**  
Sandy's Pantry 11-12:30pm  
Girl Scouts 4:30-6:30pm  
Dinner & Conversation  
CoCo's 5:00pm (Vincennes time)

## Laundry Love



### **What Is Laundry Love Mission?**

Laundry Love takes place at the Vincennes Laundromat, (1815 North 6th street). On the last Wednesday of each month from 6-8 pm, volunteers from St. John's pay for up to 5 loads of laundry for any family that evening and 3 loads of laundry for those who are single.



### **How Can I Help?**

**Laundry Love relies on the support of individuals from St. John's UCC.**

- An Extra Donation In Your Pledge Envelope Marked "Laundry Love"
- Cash Donation Placed In The Laundry Love Containers Located In The Back Of The Church
- Volunteer At The Laundromat

### **HOURS OF OPERATION**

**Last Wednesday  
Of Each Month**

**Contact  
Jana Vieck  
812-882-8720**

### **LOOKING AHEAD**

**SUNDAY, March 3**  
Sunday School 9:15 am  
Worship 10:30am

**MONDAY, March 4**  
BABE Store 12-5:30  
Evangelism & Membership 6:30pm

**WEDNESDAY, March 6**  
Choir 7pm

**THURSDAY, March 7**  
Dinner & Conversation TBA