

TWENTIETH
SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

October 6, 2024

Mark 10:2-16

Enfolding Love

Many times we find ourselves skipping over the topic of divorce that we have in the first part of Mark 10:2-16, in favor of the more polite dinner conversation of Jesus blessing the children.

Divorce is never easy to discuss. It's deeply personal with complexities unique to each couple. Yet many still weigh in with their opinions, just as they did in Jesus' day.

Here, it's the religious legal experts — the Pharisees — who bring the topic to Jesus, hoping to catch the rising star of the Galilee in a false statement.

They ask straight out, "Is divorce lawful?"

At the time, there were two main teachings about divorce circulating among the Jews. There was the teaching of Hillel, a liberal rabbi, and then there was the more conservative rabbi, Shammai. The Pharisees wanted to know which camp Jesus was in. Neither.

Jesus was in the God camp, reminding them — and us — that life is messy. It is only God who knows each tangled heart intimately.

Jesus proceeds to answer their question by asking one of his own, "What did Moses say?" The Pharisees acknowledge that Moses allowed a certificate of dismissal.

And there you go. Moses allowed — not God, Jesus points out. It was never the plan for God's beloveds to experience the heartache of separation.

In a perfect world, there would be a love so strong that the ties that bind would never break. But we don't live in a perfect world. We live in a fallen one where God has given us free will to make decisions. Thankfully, God's redeeming love has the power to repair the brokenness in our lives.

Let's now go beyond married couples. What about the "divorces" — the breakups and breakdowns — among siblings, co-workers, and dear friends?

What if we realize that our fragile hearts are always at risk of the "hardening" that Jesus spoke.

What if this day we made a vow to all humanity to keep our hearts forever opened, allowing the space for the Spirit to come and heal the hurts, forgive the betrayals and grant the patience needed in our trying moments?

What if the pressing question isn't about the lawfulness of divorce, but more about the condition of our hearts?

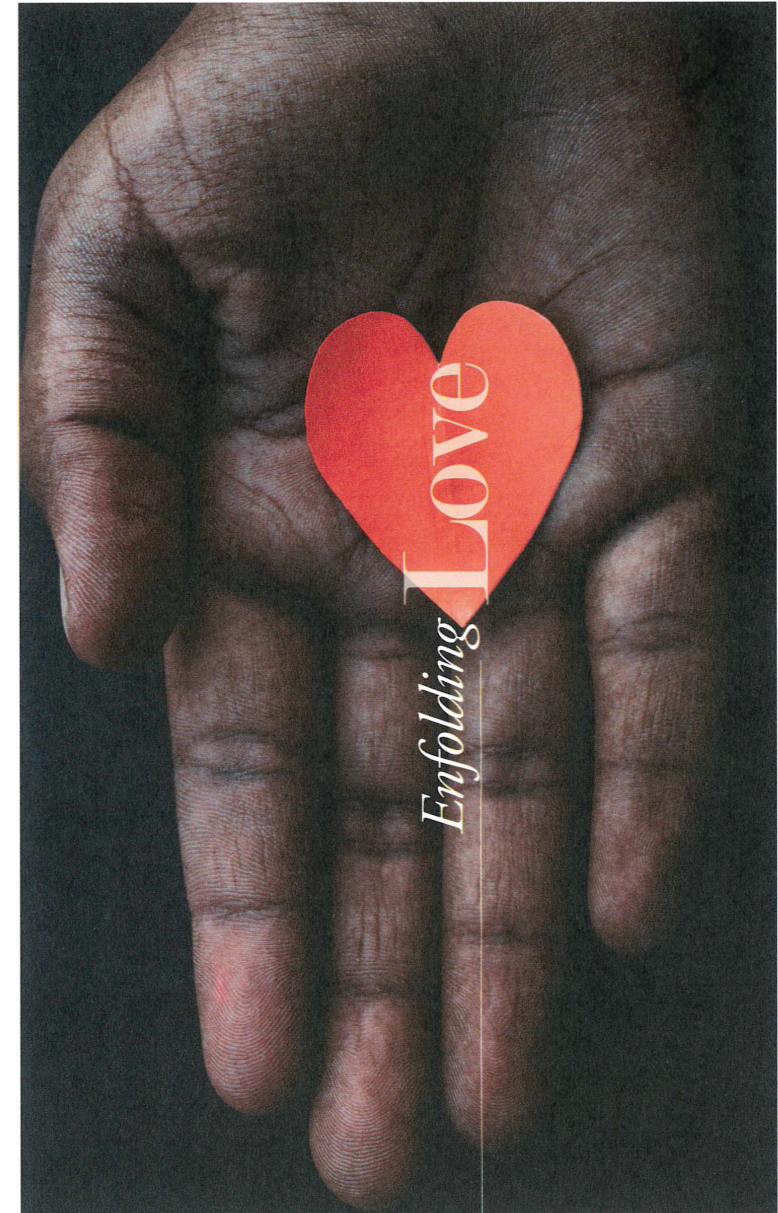
Loving God, we pray for Your enfolding love to come into our lives — revive relationships that are languishing, mend families who are torn, and grant peace and understanding for those whose partnerships have ended. May our hearts soften and beat in sync with Yours. Amen.



8 1/2" x 14" UCC SUNDAY BULLETIN SERVICE

Bulletin artwork and backpage stories copyright © 2024 United Church of Christ

BUL0106





St. John's United Church of Christ
Twentieth Sunday after Pentecost
 October 6, 2024



* Please stand if it is comfortable to do so. **Bold print** is everyone in unison
World Communion/Harvest Home

WELCOME, ANNOUNCEMENTS, GREET ONE ANOTHER (be seated)

CHURCH BELL (the bell invites us to worship) **PRELUDE**

GOD CALLS US TO WORSHIP (responsively)

Let everyone who thirsts come and drink deeply!
Here all who hunger may satisfy themselves freely.
 Why should we spend our money for that which is not bread?

Why do we labor for that which cannot satisfy?
 Here you may feast on the goodness of the Lord.
Now those who hunger and thirst for righteousness shall be filled.
 It shall be to the Lord a memorial,
And for us an everlasting sign that we shall not be cut off.

* **OPENING HYMN** *I Come with Joy* (v.1 & 2) #420

* **WE CONFESS OUR SIN TO GOD** (unison)

Searching God, we have wandered from home, gone off looking for something; some vague longing; something that thrills or excites; something that takes away this empty gnawing inside. We have wandered far, gotten lost, given up ever finding that which satisfies. Loving God, you have been with us in the search, you have beckoned us home. You have prepared a table for us, a huge welcoming party. Thank you for seeking us again and again. Amen.

GOD FORGIVES US

God hears our cry and sends the Spirit to change us and empower our lives in the world. Our sins are forgiven.

God's love is unconditional, and we are raised up as God's people, who will always be made new in the name of Jesus Christ.

* **RESPONSE** *Seek Ye First* (v.1) #354

CHILDREN'S MESSAGE (children please come forward) *Jesus Loves Me*

ANTHEM

Blessed Be The Name

Fettke

OFFERING INVITATION**

Let us give back to God with gratitude for all blessings received.

* **RESPONSE** *Now Thank We All Our God* (v.1) #715

* **PRAYER OF DEDICATION** (unison)

Thanks be to you, O God, for all good gifts, and especially for your inexpressible gift of the Lord Jesus. Help us, O Lord, to see wherein we have been blessed, and to be a blessing to others. Amen.

WE GATHER IN PRAYER

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

Congregational Response *Seek Ye First* (v.2) #354

SCRIPTURE: Old Testament: Job 1:1; 2:1-10

New Testament: Hebrews 1:1-4; 2:2-8

L: The Word of God for the People of God **P: Thanks be to God**

MESSAGE

The Merry Old Land of Uz

SACRAMENT OF HOLY COMMUNION

Invitation

Communion Prayer

God be with you. **And also with you.**
 Lift up your hearts. **We lift them to God.**
 Let us give thanks to God Most High.

It is right to give God thanks and praise.

Words of Institution; Consecration and Sharing of the Elements

Thanksgiving Prayer (unison)

We thank you, God, for inviting us to this table where we have known the presence of Christ and have received all Christ's gifts. Strengthen our faith, increase our love for one another and let us show forth your praise in our lives; through Jesus Christ our Savior. Amen.

* **CLOSING HYMN** *Let Us Talents and Tongues Employ* #422

* **BLESSING** (responsively)

Let us go forth as workers together with God proclaiming the Good News, performing deeds of mercy and kindness, and giving evidence of Christ's love in all that we do.

And may the grace of God be with us all. Amen.

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

* **POSTLUDE**

ST. JOHN'S UCC STAFF and VOLUNTEERS

Pastor	Rev. Debbie Jo Atkins
Liturgist	Ren Simmons
Head Usher	Ed Cummings
Organist	DeEtta Welte
Music Director, Pianist	Becky Brockman
Children /Family Ministry Coordinator	Will Meyer
Nursery Attendant	Darcie Bahr
Projection	Jill Doggett
Sound	Andrew Anson
Church Secretary	Angie Robinson
Church Board President	Jana Vieck
Greeters	Evangelism & Membership Committee



THIS WEEK in the Life of St. John's

SUNDAY, October 6

Adult Sunday School 9:15 am

Fellowship 10 am

World Communion Worship 10:30 am

Neighbors In Need Offering

Children's Church

Pet Blessing Vincennes Pet Port 2pm

MONDAY, October 7

Babe Store 12-5:30 pm

Friends 5-6:30 pm Fall Party (Aaron Vieck Residence)

Evangelism & Membership 6:30 pm

TUESDAY, October 8

Sandy's Pantry 11-12:30 pm

WEDNESDAY, October 9

Choir 7pm

THURSDAY, October 10

Pastor out of office

Technology 10 am

Sandy's Pantry 11-12:30 pm

Girl Scouts 4-6 pm

Dinner & Conversation

Kelso's 6pm

FRIDAY, October 11

Pastor out of office

Virtual Worship Service is still available on the church website, myucc.org. Worship Services are also "Live Streamed" on the Church's FACEBOOK page

Phoebe's Mission

What Is Phoebe's Mission?

This ministry helps low income families stretch their money by providing necessary household items that cannot be purchased with food stamps. Each month, families can stop by and pick up a box of toiletries and cleaning supplies donated by St. John's members.



How Can I Help?

Phoebe's Mission relies on the support of individuals from St. John's UCC.

- Donations For The Following:
 - Laundry Soap
 - Bar Soap
 - Deodorant
 - Shampoo
 - Toothpaste
 - Dish Soap
 - Toilet Paper
- An Extra Donation In Your Pledge Envelope Marked "Phoebe's Mission"
- Cash Donation Dropped Off In The Church Office Marked "Phoebe's Mission"

HOURS OF OPERATION

**First Friday
Of Each Month
4:30 - 6:00 pm**

**St. John's United Church of Christ
812-882-2720 www.myucc.org**

LOOKING AHEAD

SUNDAY, October 13

Pastor out of office

Adult Sunday School 9:15 am

Worship 10:30 am

Guest Singer Alan Pancake

Children's Church

MONDAY, October 14

Pastor out of office

Outreach & Missions 6:30 pm

Friends 5-6:15 pm

WEDNESDAY, October 16

Pastor out of office

Choir 7pm

THURSDAY, October 17

Pastor out of office

Technology 10 am

Dinner & Conversation Applebee's 6pm



ANNOUNCEMENTS, JOYS AND CONCERNS

- **Continuing Prayer Requests:** Bruce Deckard, Gary Meyer, Don Osborne, Jr., Family of Carole Klein, Family of Franklyn Schroeder, Luis Prada (pastor Debbie's brother in law) . For the silent trials and struggles everyone is carrying, let's include all in our prayers.
- Please keep Marge Beamon in your prayers, she has not felt good lately.

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, - Room 118, 1622 S Hart Street Road, Vincennes, IN 47591

Leona Conway, Aperion Care, - (Willow Manor under new ownership) C&D Hall Room 35, request correspondence be sent to 2009 Forbes Rd. Vincennes, IN

Marge Beamon, The Villages at Oak Ridge, -1694 Troy Rd. Washington, IN 47501

Home

Bruce Deckard

Gary Meyer

Michael Lankford

Gayle Huffer

Ellen Riggs



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.

**You may place your offering in the plate at the back of the sanctuary or online at myucc.org and click on the *contribute* button. Please prayerfully consider setting up regular online donations to continue our outreach into the community.

MESSY CHURCH is on track to launch on November 6th from 5:30-7:00 pm. Our theme is **Celebrate Harvest!** **Activities** will include a variety of crafts, such as making a birdfeeder, a gratitude game, making gingerbread, and more! **Dinner** will be mini corn dogs, mac & cheese, and raw veggies. **Worship** will be interactive and include a recap of everything we learned. Our Core Team is doing an **AWESOME** job preparing for this event, and we will soon have flyers for you to share with others. We will continue on the first Wednesday of each month.

How can you help with Messy Church? Volunteer to lead an activity (you don't have to do every month, just when you are available); help in the kitchen; assist with set-up or clean-up; there are so many ways to get involved as much or as little as you can. We appreciate everyone's help. We will also be posting lists of items we need to prepare for future crafts. Currently, we are looking for:

Cardboard tubes from paper towels or toilet tissue rolls (may be dropped off at the church office.

A "Paint Spinner" toy

Prayers for our new venture to share God's love with others.

We are so excited to be starting this new ministry and look forward to everyone becoming involved as they are able.

ALAN PANCAKE will be in concert during worship on October 13th while Pastor has a week of vacation.

CONFIRMATION CLASS is forming so please contact Pastor Debbie Jo if you haven't received a letter. The class will receive their books and personalized Bibles and enter into covenant with the congregation during worship on October 20th. The first class session will be that day from 5-6 pm.

REFORMATION SUNDAY is October 27th, and we will celebrate our faith journey that led us to who we are as Christ followers today. **WEAR RED!**

COSTUME BLESSING: Children (and those young at heart) are invited to wear their Halloween costumes to worship on October 27th. A special blessing for their safety will take place during the Children's Moment.

COMMUNION AT ST. JOHN'S UCC is open to EVERYONE, no matter their age, church affiliation or non-affiliation, Confirmed or not. If you belong to Christ you are welcome at the table. It is God's table, not ours. No one should be denied God's grace through the sacrament.