

## FIRST SUNDAY AFTER CHRISTMAS

December 29, 2024

Luke 2:45-52

### Who is This Child?

Jesus was missing. Mary and Joseph were present. So were the shepherds and their sheep. Even the angel took its place in the nativity scene. But no Jesus figurine. The young mother searched the house many times, but to no avail. Was the new puppy to blame? Or did the figurine get placed in the box marked "ornaments" rather than the one that read "nativity"?

The mother eventually gave up looking.

Then, while taking down the Christmas decorations, the box marked "nativity" fell over. There on the floor was the Jesus figurine, tangled in a clump of straw used to adorn the nativity scene. He was exactly where he was supposed to be all along.

While technically Christmastide doesn't end till Jan. 6 with the celebration of Epiphany, many of the festive trimmings are being packed away and, with them, many a baby Jesus figurine.

But how do we keep Christmas in our hearts long after the decorations are gone? Will we remember who this child is for us come spring or summer?

It might feel jarring to go from infant Jesus to 12-year-old Jesus in a week, but today's reading from Luke does just that, bringing us to the temple where a precocious pre-teen is discussing matters of faith with religious leaders.

Jesus' parents find him there after a three-day search upon discovering their son was not in the group that they were travelling with from Jerusalem back to their home in Nazareth.

Mary's agitation is not helped when Jesus says to her, "Why were you searching for me? Didn't you know I would be in my Father's house?"

Good question, Jesus.

Didn't Mary remember that holy night of your birth 12 years ago? It was a night the angels sang, and shepherds left their flocks to adore you. Did the challenges and stresses of parenting make her forget?

Will being back to the challenges and stresses of life after the holidays are packed away deaden our senses to the Holy One?

As Christmas becomes a distant memory will we have a Mary moment — or two — forgetting who this child is? And if we find ourselves searching for Jesus, will we know to look in our hearts first. For he is always there, waiting for us to find him.

*God of Christmas promises, we praise You for the greatest gift we could ever receive, Your Son, Jesus. As we make our way into a new year, help us to keep the words of the old hymn in our hearts, the words that remind us that "this, this is Christ the King, whom shepherds guard and angels sing." In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen.*



8.5" x 14" UCC SUNDAY BULLETIN SERVICE

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St. John's United Church of Christ  
**First Sunday after Christmas**  
**December 29, 2024**



\* Please stand if it is comfortable to do so. **Bold print** is everyone in unison

**WELCOME, ANNOUNCEMENTS, GREET ONE ANOTHER** (be seated)

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

**PRELUDE**

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

Behold, the Morning Star of heaven;

**Among beasts of the earth he is stabled.**

The all-seeing eyes have closed in sleep.

**The fullness of eternity is sealed in skin.**

He who cradled all worlds is himself cradled in a mother's arms.

**Behold, God, is one of us.**

\* **OPENING HYMN** *O Come, All Ye Faithful* (vs. 1,2,4) #148

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

**Come, O Long Expected Jesus, born to set your people free. We have sung through our Advent-waiting and have arrived at the Christmas season when we remember your birth, your incarnation, the Word becoming Emmanuel, God with Us, remind us of your presence throughout the year and be present with us in our worship today. Amen.**

\* **RESPONSE** *Away in a Manger* #147

**CHILDREN'S MOMENT** *Jesus Loves Me*

**OFFERING INVITATION**

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

\* **RESPONSE** *In the Bleak Midwinter* (v.4)

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

**Source of life, may the works of our hands bring you honor. May the life we live reflect the risen Word of life. May the service we offer be inspired by the Breath of life. Amen.**

**WE GATHER IN PRAYER**

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

Congregational Response: *Angels We Have Heard on High* (v.1) #155

**LESSONS AND CAROLS**

Scripture	Isaiah 9: 2-7	
Carol	Lo, How a Rose E're Blooming	#160
Scripture	Luke 2:1-7	
Carol	<i>Infant Holy, Infant Lowly</i>	#163
Scripture	Luke 2: 8-20	
Carol	<i>I Saw Three Ships</i> (vs. 1-3, 5-6)	(on screen)
Scripture	Matthew 2: 1-2, 9b-12	
Carol	<i>As With Gladness</i>	#173
* <b>CLOSING HYMN</b>	<i>Go, Tell it On the Mountain</i>	#167

\* **BLESSING** (responsively)

Cradle Christ in your hearts, bow in the presence of the Holy, and return to your homes with praise on your lips and joy in your soul.

**Hallelujah! The Lord is Come!**

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

\* **POSTLUDE**

**THANK YOU** to everyone who helped make our Advent season so special: readers, liturgists, acolytes, Advent candle lighters, musicians, teachers, multi-media, church staff, EVERYONE! We are a blessed church family of faith.

## ST. JOHN'S UCC STAFF and VOLUNTEERS

Pastor	Rev. Debbie Jo Atkins
Liturgist	John Riggs
Head Usher	Steve Cooper
Organist	DeEtta Welte
Music Director, Pianist	Becky Brockman
Children /Family Ministry Coordinator	Will Meyer
Nursery Attendant	Darcie Bahr
Projection	Jill Doggett
Sound	Brian Fillingim
Church Secretary	Angie Robinson
Church Board President	Jana Vieck
Greeters	Jim & Elaine Workman

**MESSY CHURCH** will be held on January 8th from 5:30-7:00 pm. The theme is There's Snow-body Like You. Lots of activities, Boomwhackers, with a Taco Bar and Nachos for dinner. Join us!

ADULT BIBLE STUDY on The Gnostic Gospels will be held at 10:30 am and 6:30 pm on Tuesdays, January 21, 28, & February 4, 11. The Gnostic Gospels are 52 texts discovered in 1945 in Nag Hammadi, Egypt. They include 'secret' gospels poems and myths attributing to Jesus sayings and beliefs which are very different from the New Testament. We will be focusing on the Gospel of Thomas, the Gospel of Phillip, and the Gospel of Mary Magdalene. If we have time, we will also look at the Gospel of Judas. If more time is needed, we will add more sessions. Pastor will have some background info on these gospels to prepare for this study and copies are available in the church office.

For over 100 years, **The Christmas Fund** has been caring for active and retired clergy, plus lay employees of the United Church of Christ, by providing emergency grants, supplementation of small annuities and health premiums, and Christmas "Thank You" gift checks to our lower-income retirees. Please consider giving using the Christmas Fund envelopes in your bulletin.



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, DECEMBER 29**

Pastor Debbie out of Office  
Adult Sunday School 9:15 am  
Worship 10:30 am  
Children's Church

#### **MONDAY, DECEMBER 30**

Pastor Debbie Out of Office  
BABE Store 12-5:30 pm  
Friends 5-6:15 pm

#### **TUESDAY, December 31**

Pastor Debbie out of Office  
New Year's Eve

#### **WEDNESDAY, January 1**

Pastor Debbie out of Office  
New Year's Day  
Office Closed

#### **FRIDAY January 3**

Pastor Debbie out of Office  
Phoebe's Mission 4:30-6 pm

### **LOOKING AHEAD**

#### **SUNDAY, January 5**

Adult Sunday School 9:15 am  
Worship 10:30 am  
Children's Church  
Confirmation Class 5pm

#### **MONDAY, January 6**

BABE Store 12-5:30 pm  
Friends 5-6:15 pm  
Evangelism & Membership

#### **WEDNESDAY, January 8**

Messy Church 5:30-7 pm  
Christian Ed 6:30 pm  
Choir 7pm

#### **THURSDAY, January 9**

Technology Comm. 10 am  
Dinner at Applebee's 6 pm

#### **SUNDAY, January 19**

Annual Congregational Meeting –Following Service|  
CFM Soup Sale



**Continuing Prayer Requests:** Laura Sanders, Bruce Deckard, Gary Meyer, Don Osborne, Jr., Carole Klein's family, Franklyn Schroeder's family, and Luis Prada (pastor Debbie's brother-in-law). Let's include everyone in our prayers for the silent trials and struggles everyone is carrying.

- Continued prayers for **Patrick Gott**, Gabrielle Gerhardt's husband, who remains at Deaconess. **Donna Gerhardt** is recovering from Covid. Prayers appreciated for this family.
- Please keep **Norma Phegley** in your prayers as she grieves the death of her son.
- Vern Houchins** continues to consult with his physicians. Please continue praying for Vern and Marilyn.
- Norma Meyer**, Gary Meyer's mother, is recovering from surgery after a recent fall.
- Continued prayers are appreciated for Eric and Cheryl Meyer's Niece's husband, **Warren**. He is home recovering from a successful heart ablation procedure.

**Addresses for Shut-ins and Others**

**Norma Meyer**, Colonial Assisted Living, - Room 142, 1622 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, - 3801 C Wing Room 3, Old Bruceville Rd , Vincennes, IN 47591  
**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.



The annual Congregation Meeting is scheduled immediately following Church on January 19, 2024. Please plan to attend.

## Sandy's Pantry



**What Is Sandy's Pantry?**

Providing free, non-perishable food items for Vincennes University students who are experiencing food insecurity. The Pantry is open on one Tuesday and Thursday of each month from 11 am - 12:30 pm at the church's rear parking lot entrance.

### How Can I Help?

**HOURS OF OPERATION**

**One Tuesday & Thursday Of Each Month 11 am – 12:30 pm**

**Nov. 10 / Nov. 12 Other Dates TBA**

**Contact**  
**Brenda Fillingim**  
**812-882-2720**

**Sandy's Pantry relies on the support of individuals from St. John's UCC.**

Donations For Non-Perishable Food That Could Consist Of:

- Mac & Cheese	- Canned Meats
- Vegetables	- Cereal
- Canned Fruits	- Peanut Butter
- Rice & Beans	- Canned Soups
- Healthy Snacks	- Coffee & Tea

- An Extra Donation In Your Pledge Envelope Marked "Sandy's Pantry"
- Cash Donation Dropped Off In The Church Office Marked "Sandy's Pantry"