

THIRD SUNDAY AFTER EPIPHANY

January 26, 2025

Luke 4:14-21

Take Heart

The first inauguration of a United States president took place on April 30, 1789, with George Washington assuming the role of a fledgling nation's commander in chief. His second inauguration was on March 4. It wouldn't be until 1937 that the inauguration date would change to what we are familiar with today — Jan. 20.

On this day, the elected leader delivers an inauguration speech, casting a four-year vision for the country. The speech is a pivotal and defining moment for both leader and the people. (No pressure at all on the speech writers.)

Here in Luke's Gospel, we have Jesus' defining moment — the divine inauguration speech — as he unrolls the scroll in his hometown synagogue and lays out God's vision for humankind, as echoed in the words of the prophet Isaiah.

Bring good news to the poor. Proclaim release to the captives. Recover the sight of the blind. Set the oppressed free.

Retired Episcopal Bishop Gene Robinson of New Hampshire once said that if we ever wanted to know what being a follower of Jesus was about, all we had to do was listen to Jesus' inaugural speech. For in it we learn that God's vision comes with action points that we are all being asked to carry out.

When was the last time, though, we preached the good news?

No, not from a pulpit but in the sharing of stories of God's redemption and restoration with friends and neighbors. And remember, preaching the good news doesn't need words. The best sermon illustration is the life we live.

How have we proclaimed release to captives?

That is, when have we spoken a word of hope, providing someone a glimmer of freedom from whatever was imprisoning them?

When have we recovered the sight of the blind, pointing out the beautiful God moments that are all around? Or, set the oppressed free by finding the courage to speak for someone long silenced?

Two thousand years ago, Jesus inaugurated his ministry outlining a call to action — and it is still one of the most promising, hopeful, inspiring — and timely — inaugural speeches today.

May we once again share the vision for a new day dawning in our communities as we remember what Jesus' ministry was about. May we ask ourselves this day: What is my role to play in shaping the destiny of God's kingdom?

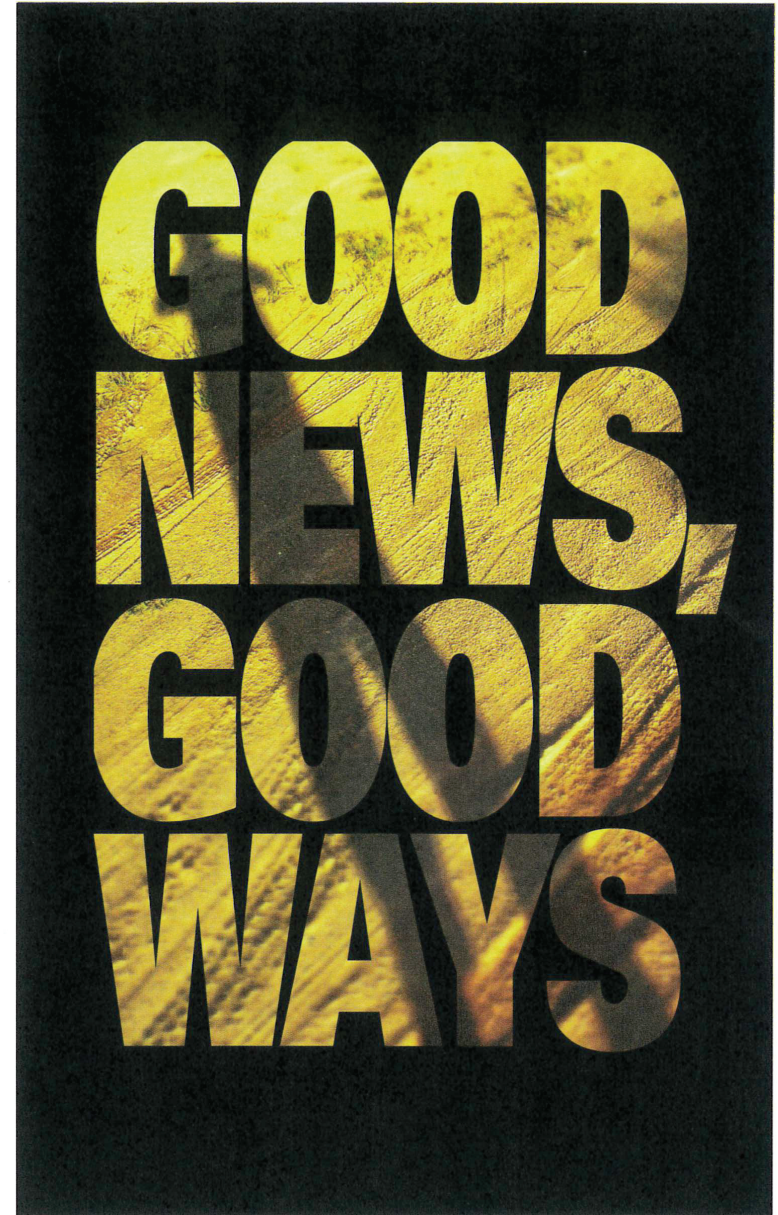
Loving God, empower us to builders of Your Kingdom, where the good news is heard, sight is restored, and captives are freed. Help us remember that just as the Spirit of the Lord was upon Jesus, so it is with us this day and always. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen.



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

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BUL0209





St. John's United Church of Christ
Third Sunday after Epiphany
 January 26, 2025



* 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)

The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me, because the Lord has anointed me to bring good tidings to the afflicted;

God has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to those who are bound;

To proclaim the year of the Lord's favor and the day of vengeance of our God;

To grant to those who mourn in Zion — to give them a garland instead of ashes,

The oil of gladness instead of mourning, the mantle of praise instead of a faint spirit;

That they may be called oaks of righteousness, the planting of the Lord, that God may be glorified.

***OPENING HYMN** *God of Change and Glory*

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

Loving God, we come to you in worship and thanksgiving. You are greater than we can understand; Open our eyes that we may see the wonderful truths you have shown to us in Jesus. You are more loving than our hearts can respond to; Help us to give ourselves to you in worship so that we learn what you want us to be. You are wiser than we can know; Quiet our minds as we worship you so that we can understand the things you are saying to us. We worship and adore you. Amen.

***RESPONSE** *I Am the Light of the World!* (chorus) #469

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

INSTALLATION OF CHURCH BOARD

OFFERING INVITATION**

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

***RESPONSE** *Great is Your Faithfulness* (chorus) #86

***PRAYER OF DEDICATION** (unison)

God of all creation, we offer our gifts in gratitude for all that we have been given. Use our gifts and our lives with mercy and grace, that through us -- others might see you. Amen.

WE GATHER IN PRAYER

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

Congregational Response: *Here I Am, Lord* (chorus) #452

ANTHEM

What Makes Me Sing Schram

SCRIPTURE:

Old Testament: Psalm 19

New Testament: Luke 4:14-21

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

MESSAGE

Pick Me! Pick Me!

***CLOSING HYMN** *When I Needed a Neighbor* (On screen)

***BLESSING** (responsively)

Take the Good News with you. Share and speak of God's love. Care for the needy, teach the ways of peace, work for justice, and bring joy and hope to all you know and meet.

May the risen Christ lead us and give us true and everlasting peace.

Amen.

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

* **POSTLUDE**

ST. JOHN'S UCC STAFF and VOLUNTEERS

Pastor	Rev. Debbie Jo Atkins
Liturgist	Janet Goodman
Head Usher	Sandra Lange
Organist	DeEtta Welte
Music Director, Pianist	Becky Brockman
Children /Family Ministry Coordinator	Will Meyer
Nursery Attendant	Darcie Bahr
Projection	Jana Vieck
Sound	Brian Fillingim
Church Secretary	Angie Robinson
Church Board President	Ed Cummings
Greeters	John & Ellen Riggs



Starting in February, our St. John's United Church of Christ newsletter will be emailed in digital copies. We don't want you to miss it! Please make sure the office has your correct email on file. Several hard copies of the newsletter will be available on the first Sunday of the month in the sanctuary. If you would still like a copy mailed to you, please let Angie, the office secretary, know, and we will send one to you.
stjohnsuccoffice@gmail.com, text 812-887-2002, office 812-882-2720.



2025 Offering envelopes are available to pick up in the front lobby. Make sure and get yours. If you want to sign up for auto withdrawals, there are forms at the back of the sanctuary. Fill one out, include a voided check, and put it in the offering plate. We will get your transaction set up. You may also go online to donate myucc.org; scroll down on the left side of the page, and you will see "Click HERE to contribute to the ministries of St. John's"



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



THIS WEEK in the Life of St. John's

SUNDAY, January 26
Adult Sunday School 9:15 am
Worship 10:30 am
Children's Church
MONDAY, January 27
BABE Store 12-5:30 pm
TUESDAY, January 28
Bible Study 10:30 am & 6:30 pm
WEDNESDAY, January 29
Choir 4:30 pm
Laundry Love 6-8 pm
THURSDAY, January 30
Dinner at Ponderosa 6 pm

LOOKING AHEAD

SUNDAY, February 2
Adult Sunday School 9:15 am
Worship 10:30 am
Children's Church
MONDAY, February 3
BABE Store 12-5:30 pm
Evangelism & Membership 6:30 pm
TUESDAY, February 4
Bible Study 10:30 am & 6:30 pm
SANDY'S Pantry 11-12:30 pm
WEDNESDAY, February 5
Choir 4:30 pm
Messy Church 5:30-7 pm
THURSDAY, February 6
SANDY'S Pantry 11-12:30 pm
Girl Scouts 4:30 pm
Dinner at Luigi's Italian Restaurant, 1626 Willow St., 6 pm
FRIDAY, February 7
Phoebe's Mission 4:30—6 pm



ANNOUNCEMENTS, JOYS AND CONCERNS

Continuing Prayer Requests: Laura Sanders, Bruce Deckard, Gary Meyer, Don Osborne, Jr., Norma Meyer.

- **Good luck to Vern Houchins** as he undergoes surgery tomorrow, January 27. Please continue prayers for Vern and Marilyn as they navigate recovery and rehab.
- **Cindi Gilmore** is feeling better with a change in medications. Her procedure is scheduled for late February. Continued prayers are appreciated
- Welcome, **Crew Alan Goodman**, born January 10, to Paul and Allison Goodman! Proud grandparents include Terry and Janet Goodman.

Addresses for Shut-ins and Others

Norma Meyer, Gentle Care, - Room 8, 1202 S 16th, Vincennes, IN 47591

Susie Milligan, Colonial Assisted Living, - Room 118, 1622 S Hart Street Road, Vincennes, IN 47591

Leona Conway, Aperion Care, - C Wing Room 3, 3801 Old Bruceville Rd, Vincennes, IN 47591

Marge Beamon, The Villages at Oak Ridge, - Room 303, 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 will be held on February 5th from 5:30-7:00 p.m. The theme is There's Snowbody Like You. There will be lots of activities, Boomwhackers, a Taco Bar, and Nachos for dinner. Join us!

ADULT BIBLE STUDY on *The Gnostic Gospels* will be held at 10:30 and 6:30 on Tuesdays, January 21, 28, and February 4, 11. The Gnostic Gospels are 52 texts discovered in 1945 in Nag Hammadi, Egypt. They include 'secret' gospel poems and myths attributing to Jesus's sayings and beliefs that differ greatly from the New Testament. We will focus on the *Gospel of Thomas* and the *Gospel of Phillip*.

SOUPER-BOWL SUNDAY The NFL Super Bowl is February 9th, and everyone is invited to bring in cans of soup for the Blessings Box for Soup-er Bowl Sunday. All kinds of canned soups are welcome, but those that are heat-and-serve with a *pop-top lid* are especially needed, as many using our little pantry do not have can openers or even a safe water supply. Wear a jersey or shirt from your favorite team!



Jay and Karen would like to share a praise with our church family. Their daughter, Jennifer is engaged to be married to Will Bicket of Raleigh, NC. They plan to be married on May 10, 2025, in Louisburg, NC. Best wishes and blessings to Jennifer and Will!