

SIXTH SUNDAY AFTER EPIPHANY

February 16, 2025

Luke 6:17-26

Surprising Teaching

All Johanna ever wanted was a home in the woods with a pond where she could sit and watch the sun glisten on the water as she wrote poetry.

She got the home — and the pond. And poetry of praises for God's blessings in her life flowed from her heart onto paper. Praises for God binding her broken heart after losing her fiancé to cancer. Thanks for God giving her courage in her own cancer diagnosis. Gratitude for God making a way for her, after many starts and stops, to finally finish seminary and be ordained in the Episcopal Church — at the age of 60.

So much in awe of God's blessings in the storms of life, that Johanna lovingly named her pond "Beatitude Pond," after the "beatitudes" Jesus spoke about in what is his longest and most surprising teaching that we know as the Sermon on the Mount.

It is in this sermon that we are not only introduced to the Lord's Prayer, but we hear the teaching of the Beatitudes, which comes from the Latin word *beatus*, meaning "blessed" or "fortunate."

But Jesus' illustrations of what being blessed looked like was not what the crowd gathered that day on the mountainside expected to hear. Rather his disciples, curious onlookers — as well as many downtrodden and beleaguered families and individuals who knew intimately about hardships and struggles — were stunned to hear that those who were hungry, hated, poor and weeping, were among the blessed ones.

Blessed are you because God sees and hears and understands. Blessed are you because God is holding and redeeming you. Blessed are you who know that God is still with you amid life's trials because that very knowledge is what keeps a heart beating with hope.

To this day, the Sermon on the Mountain is considered one of the most important teachings of Jesus because of its emphasis on love, forgiveness and a hope beyond hope.

How are we defining blessedness in our lives? When counting our blessings, do we still find ourselves citing material things or achievements?

Johanna didn't. She knew blessings were not found in rainbows after a storm, but in the storm clouds themselves. And on a February day, with the strengthening sun melting the ice on her beloved Beatitude Pond, Johanna's blessedness was made complete.

Her ashes were sprinkled in the very spot where she wrote her poetry of praise to a God who always whispered to her amid the trials in her life, "Blessed are you."

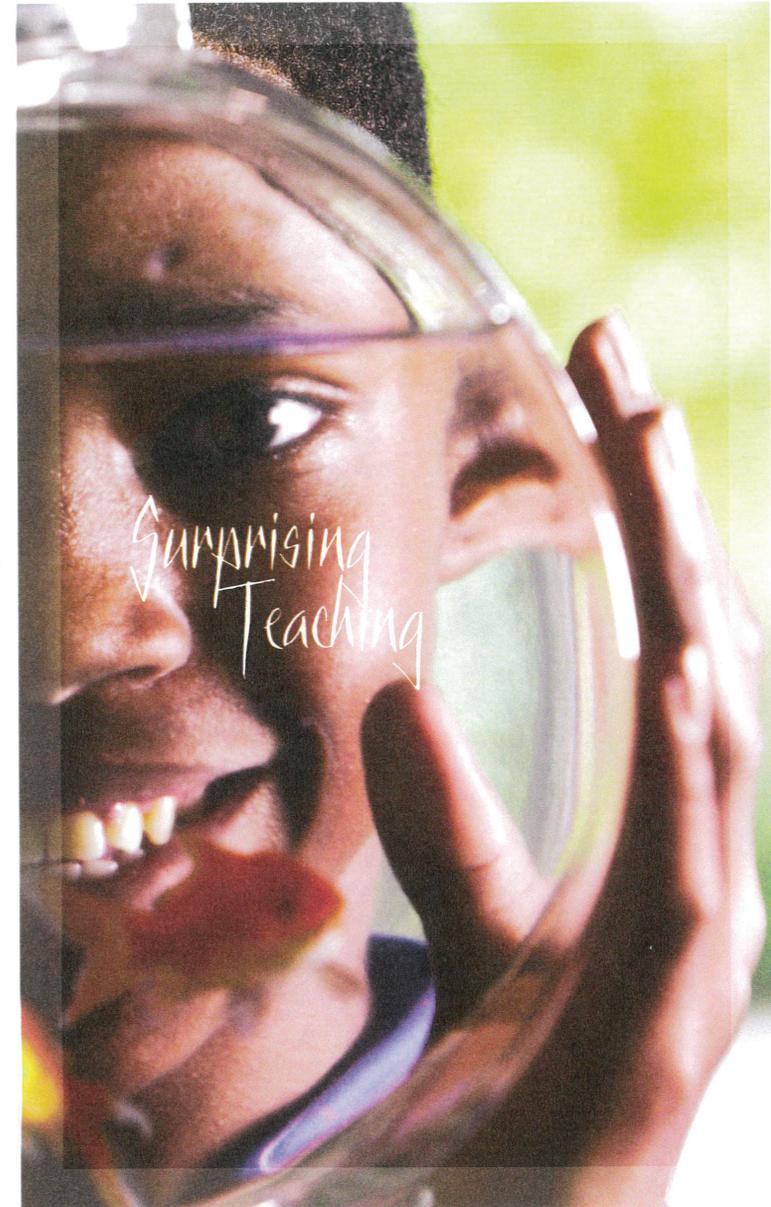
Compassionate God, we praise You for always guiding, strengthening and protecting us. Help us to redefine what blessedness means in our lives. May the blessings we count be the very ones in which we finally recognize Your love and grace among us. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen.



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

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BUL0212





St. John's United Church of Christ
Sixth Sunday after Epiphany
 February 16, 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)

Everyone come, come and refresh without money and without price.

Our hunger is not slight. We thirst for harmony and hunger for integrity.

Listen together for we have words of life. Your yearning shall be filled, our longing shall be touched.

For there is a promise: "My love for you shall be as for David. Listening, you shall have good food and abundance."

***OPENING HYMN** *There is a Balm in Gilead* #501

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

Faithful God, always ready to welcome, always ready to hear, we come before you open to new faith. Disturb us, so that we shed the old and grow into new creations in Christ. Move us to deepen our discipleship as you reveal fresh challenges and call us into new identities. Strengthen us to share in Christ's suffering, that we might also know the power of his resurrection. In the name of Jesus the Christ, who claims us as his own. Amen.

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

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

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)

We bring these gifts and our lives to you, O God. Consecrate us to daily faithful living with grateful thanks. Amen.

WE GATHER IN PRAYER

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

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

SCRIPTURE: Old Testament: Jeremiah 17:5-10

New Testament: Luke 6:17-26

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

MESSAGE *Betcha You Can't Eat Just One*

***CLOSING HYMN** *O Word of God Incarnate* #322

***BLESSING** (responsively)

Let us rejoice at being servants of God — summoned by the Spirit, called into community, led by faith, inspired for service,

And in all things, consumed by joy. Go in peace to love and serve the Lord. Amen.

CONGREGATIONAL RESPONSE *Go In Peace* #445

* **POSTLUDE**

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

ST. JOHN'S UCC STAFF and VOLUNTEERS

Pastor	Rev. Debbie Jo Atkins
Liturgist	John Riggs
Head Usher	Ren Simmons
Organist	DeEtta Welte
Music Director, Pianist	Becky Brockman
Children /Family Ministry Coordinator	Will Meyer
Nursery Attendant	Darcie Bahr
Projection	Saundra Lange
Sound	Lonny Vieck
Church Secretary	Angie Robinson
Church Board President	Ed Cummings
Greeters	Kim Godare Family

To maintain a healthy relationship between the congregation and the pastor, St. John's has formed a Pastoral Relations Committee (PRC).

Ideas or issues for the PRC may be directed to any of the following members of the committee: Hope Clausman, Brenda Cummings, Eric Meyer, Sheri Stodghill, and Jana Vieck.



Help is needed to put up the cross for Lent and Easter on March 2 following church.



No matter who you are or where you are on life's journey, you are welcome here!



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, February 16

Adult Sunday School 9:15 am
Worship 10:30 am
Children's Church

MONDAY, February 17

Friends 5-6:15 pm VU Bowling Center
Presidents Day
Office Closed
BABE Store 12-5:30 pm
Worship 6 pm
Church Board 7 pm

WEDNESDAY, February 19

Choir 4:30 pm

THURSDAY, February 20

Girl Scouts 4:30 pm
Dinner at Old Chicago 6 pm
LAM Banquet 6:30 pm Doors Open at 6 pm

LOOKING AHEAD

SUNDAY, February 23

Adult Sunday School 9:15 am
Worship 10:30 am
Children's Church

MONDAY, February 24

BABE Store 12-5:30 pm
Friends 5-6:15 pm

WEDNESDAY, February 26

Choir 4:30 pm

Laundry Love 6-8 pm

THURSDAY, February 27

Dinner at Café Moonlight 6 pm



ANNOUNCEMENTS, JOYS AND CONCERNS

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

- Please pray for Andy Jennings. He is dealing with some concerning health issues.
- Vern's pain is slowly subsiding. Prayers remain appreciated!
- Please keep Pat Hutchison in your prayers, along with his wife, Theresa. He has been diagnosed with T-cell Lymphoma, and he will have 6 cycles of chemo every 3 weeks, s
- Gayle Huffer is continuing chemotherapy and kidney dialysis. She will have cataract surgery March 8th. Continued prayers for her please. Her address is: 5372 E. Wheatland Rd. if you would like to send a card.
- Please keep Brian Fillingim in your prayers; hoping that doctors will find the cause of the pain in his right leg. They have ruled out blood clots and pinched sciatic nerve. There is no break or sprain. All are good things, but answers to his pain are what they are looking for.

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.

LENT BEGINS with Ash Wednesday on March 5th with a Service of Communion and the Imposition of Ashes at 7 p.m.

MESSY CHURCH will take place on Wednesday, March 5th, from 5:30-7. The theme is Live, Love, Lent and will include a number of activities to experience about the Lenten season. Dinner will be hot dogs, mac & cheese & chips. Everyone is invited to join us afterward for the Ash Wednesday service.

LENTEN MOVIE & DISCUSSION nights will take place on several Sunday evenings during the Lenten season. The first movie will be Conclave, starring Ralph Fiennes, Stanley Tucci, John Lithgow, and Isabella Rossellini, on March 16th at 5:30 p.m. in Memorial Hall.



LAM Banquet: St John's UCC is again sponsoring a table at the LAM (Life After Meth) banquet which will be held on February 20th at Highland Woods Community Center. This is an opportunity to learn about an important local ministry that we support and includes a meal. We encourage members who have never attended to consider attending. **Doors open at 6:00 PM, dinner at 6:30.** Please place your name on the sign-up sheet in the back hallway no later than Sunday February 16th if interested in attending. Any seats not used by church members will be donated for LAM program participants. Contact Larry Marchino or the church office with any questions.