

## FOURTH SUNDAY AFTER EPIPHANY

February 2, 2025

Luke 4:21-30

### Prophet on the Edge

Jesus just couldn't stop with a feel-good message for the friends and relatives gathered to hear him teach in his hometown synagogue.

That day, among those who had watched him grow up, Jesus pushed the God envelope, informing the congregation that the miracles they heard him perform in Capernaum were not happening anytime soon in Nazareth.

What? Why not? Explain to us Jesus why you view the rejected, the afflicted and the outsider more worthy of healing than your own people? The mood quickly changes. The crowd goes from being impressed to being enraged.

It was one thing to hear about the blind receiving sight and the prisoners being set free, as Jesus' read them from the scroll. Those words had been spoken before by other teachers. But those teachers let the words remain safely on the parchment. Jesus, though, expounds on the power and impact of God's word, making them leap with new life off the scroll and into the crowd.

Those in the synagogue should have seen it coming. Jesus did begin his teaching telling them that the Spirit of the Lord was upon him — and that Spirit does not sugarcoat anything.

Jesus knew that there was no such thing of a hometown advantage when it came to preaching God's truth. He wasn't surprised by the scoffer whispering loudly from the back of the room the derogatory comment, "Isn't this Joseph's son?"

He wasn't surprised either when the crowd got violent, kicking him out of the synagogue and chasing him to a cliff on the edge of town.

He wasn't surprised, and neither should we be.

The adage that truth is hard to hear is true because truth never travels alone. Truth is always accompanied with change, and change is always greeted by yet another companion — resistance.

Jesus, our prophet on the edge — literally on the edge of a cliff and figuratively on the edge of making us all a bit uncomfortable — knew that while it was easier to tell people what they wanted to hear, half-truths and blatant lies wouldn't further God's vision of a peaceable kingdom. What would create a beloved community, where insiders and outsiders were one, was truth, which always asks for much-needed change.

Jesus is in our hometown this day. Will we listen with open ears and hearts to him? Or will we chase him away because we just aren't ready for the changes that the truth will ask of us?

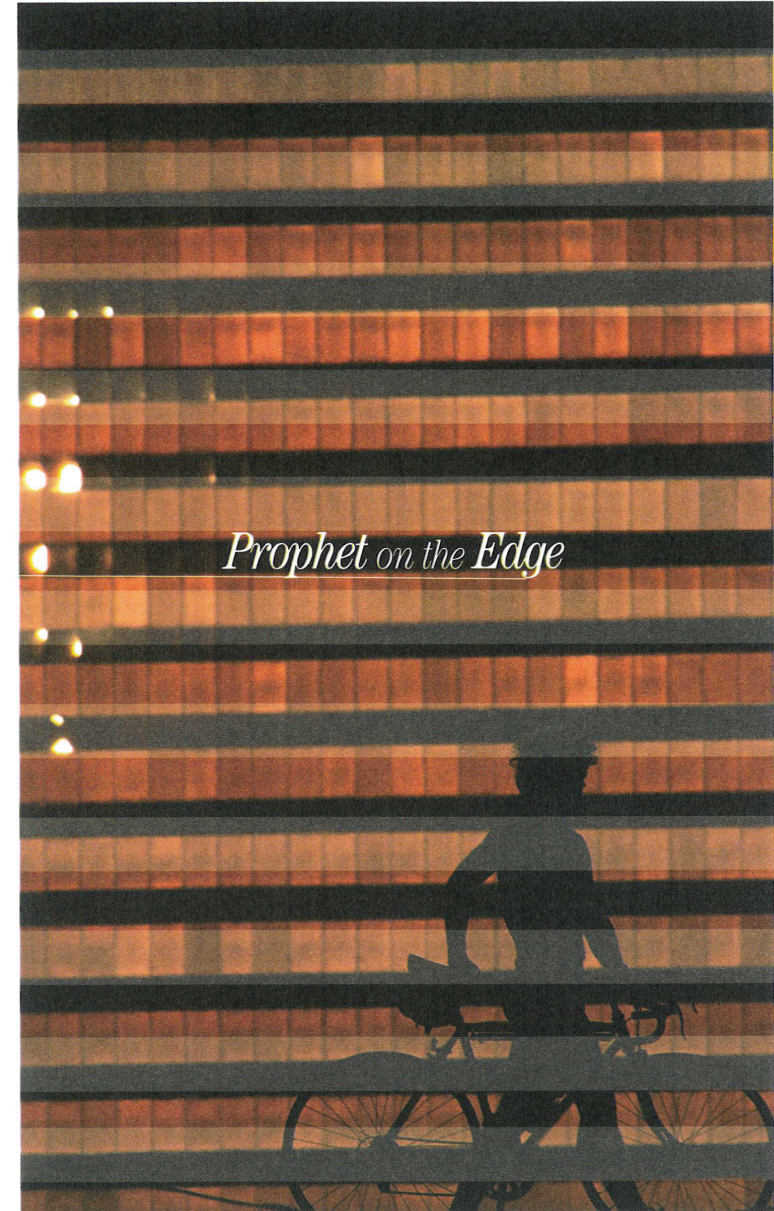
*Patience and Loving God, every time we pray "thy kingdom come" we realize that we do not fully grasp what that kingdom is. Your ways differ from ours. Help us to listen to your Holy Voice and, in the listening may we find the courage to hear truths that will lead to changing this world for the better. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen.*



8.5" x 14" UCC SUNDAY BULLETIN SERVICE

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BUL0210







St. John's United Church of Christ  
**Fourth Sunday after Epiphany**  
 February 2, 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)

O God, be not far from us,

**For we are your children.**

O God, help us to believe,

**For in Christ we would live abundantly.**

O God, we search for you and would worship you,

**For in you we live and move and have our being.**

\* **OPENING HYMN** *Jesus Calls Us O'er the Tumult* (vs. 1, 3, 5) #337

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

**Lord, we hear your call, and we falter and faint and fail. We question whether or not we heard you. We question whether or not we're able to do what you ask. We question whether you are even real. Guide us, Holy Spirit, to hear clearly and obey fully. Join us in our time of worship. Amen.**

\* **RESPONSE** *I Am the Light of the World* (chorus)

**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)

**In the stillness of this holy place, let us listen to what God would have us do. Let us be attentive to the nudges of the Holy Spirit as we take note of all our church is doing to make the kingdom of God come. Let us offer our gifts in gratitude that we can be a part of something far greater than**

**ourselves. Let us offer our gifts that we, too, can say that the kingdom of God comes not only through us, but because of us. We give our gifts with gratitude. Thanks be to you, O God. Amen.**

**WE GATHER IN PRAYER**

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

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

**ANTHEM** *See the Bread, See the Wine* Althouse

**SCRIPTURE:** Old Testament: Jeremiah 1:4-10

New Testament: Luke 4:21-30

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

**MESSAGE** *My Dog Ate My Homework!*

**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** *Here I Am, Lord* #452

\* **BLESSING** (responsively)

May we go in grace and peace to be the hands and feet of Jesus, to touch a broken world. May we go in grace and peace to love the world on behalf of Jesus, to represent him to a broken world.

**May we go in grace and peace to discover the joy of joining the work of Jesus, finding Christ among the broken of this world. Amen.**

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

\* **POSTLUDE**

## ST. JOHN'S UCC STAFF and VOLUNTEERS

<b>Pastor</b>	Rev. Debbie Jo Atkins
<b>Liturgist</b>	Kyle Doggett
<b>Head Usher</b>	Ren Simmons
<b>Organist</b>	DeEtta Welte
<b>Music Director, Pianist</b>	Becky Brockman
<b>Children /Family Ministry Coordinator</b>	Will Meyer
<b>Nursery Attendant</b>	Darcie Bahr
<b>Projection</b>	Jill Doggett
<b>Sound</b>	Jonathan Lange
<b>Church Secretary</b>	Angie Robinson
<b>Church Board President</b>	Ed Cummings
<b>Greeters</b>	Betsy Emmons

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](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 2**

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

Confirmation Class 5 pm

#### **MONDAY, February 3**

BABE Store 12-5:30 pm

Evangelism & Membership 6:30 pm

#### **TUESDAY, February 4**

Sandy's Pantry 11-12:30pm

Bible Study 10:30 am & 6:30 pm

#### **WEDNESDAY, February 5**

Choir 4:30 pm

Messy Church 5:30-7 pm

#### **THURSDAY, February 6**

Pastor Out of Office

Sandy's Pantry 11-12:30pm

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

### **LOOKING AHEAD**

#### **SUNDAY, February 9**

Adult Sunday School 9:15 am

Fellowship 10 am

Worship 10:30 am

Children's Church

#### **MONDAY, February 10**

BABE Store 12-5:30 pm

Outreach & Missions 6:30 pm

#### **TUESDAY, February 11**

Bible Study 10:30 am & 6:30 pm

#### **WEDNESDAY, February 12**

Choir 4:30 pm

Christian Ed 6:30 pm

#### **THURSDAY, February 13**

Technology 10 am

Dinner at McAlister's 6 pm



## ANNOUNCEMENTS, JOYS AND CONCERNS

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

- Vern Houchins is home and recuperating. He still has quite a bit of pain. Prayers are appreciated!

### 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 Meye

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 clicking 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 5<sup>th</sup> 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 & 6:30 on Tuesdays, 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* and the *Gospel of Phillip*.

**SOUPER-BOWL SUNDAY** The NFL Super Bowl is February 9<sup>th</sup> and everyone is invited to bring in cans of soup for the Blessings Box for *Souper 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!



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 16<sup>th</sup> 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.