

Pick Up the Mantle

Before becoming a pastor, I was a news writer often tasked with writing obituaries. I remember one such tribute for an elderly pillar in a community who wanted the next generation to hear his wish of carrying on his volunteer work.

And so, I wrote about his desire, inviting readers to “pick up the mantle.” I found myself explaining to my editor, who never heard of the phrase, that “pick up the mantle” was a biblical idiom rooted in the story of Elijah and his apprentice, Elisha. Elisha picks up his beloved teacher’s mantle after he is taken up to heaven and puts it on, symbolically continuing Elijah’s mission. My editor then asked another writer about the phrase. They had heard of it. It stayed in the obit and was published.

I went home that day realizing how these biblical stories are being lost over time and, thus, idioms like “pick up the mantle” are strange. I also wondered that in that strangeness now many mantles have remained on the ground.

I worked with a pastor who was retiring after 40 years serving the same congregation. During his last weeks in the church office, he would give me pastoral advice and bits of wisdom. He also gave me his black wool clergy cloak that was reserved for cold Christmas Eve nights where, after the service, he would wear it while greeting worshippers amid the glow of the sidewalk luminaries.

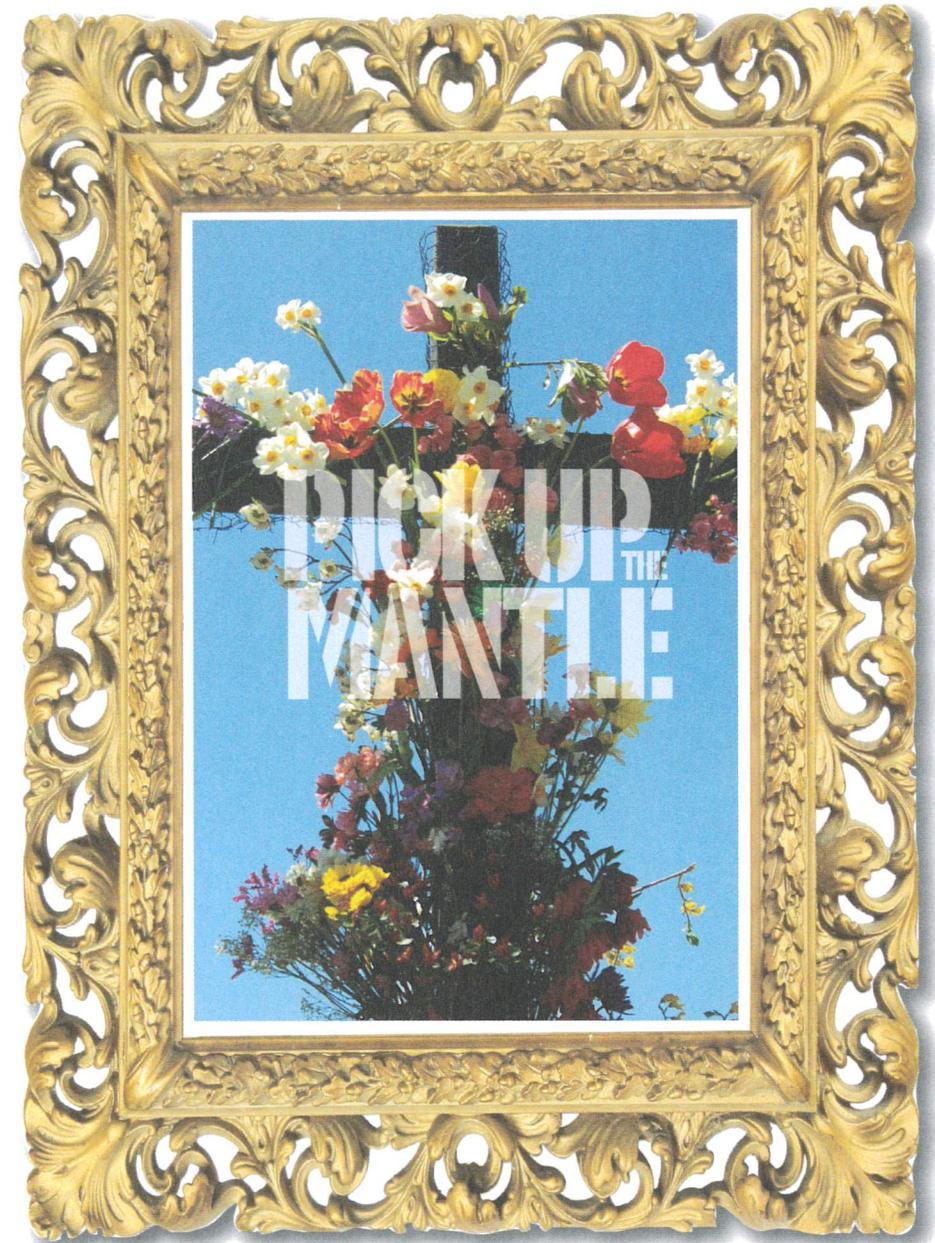
I put the cloak on and the weight of it surprised me. What also surprised me was the tears filling the retiring pastor’s eyes. With a nod of approval, he said, “It’s like Elisha picking up Elijah’s mantle.”

After years in ministry, I have come to realize that picking up the mantle doesn’t necessarily have to be the putting on of an actual cloak. There was a faded calico apron giving to a friend of mine by her grandmother encouraging her to continue cooking those amazing Sunday dinners long after “nana” was gone. There was a toolbox left to a young son after his dad’s passing, encouragement to pick up the mantle of helping the elderly with household repairs.

What is the mantle waiting for you to pick up? For the work in this world is never done — it simply gets entrusted to others to carry on, be it ministry, Sunday dinners or household repairs. But the mantle we are all asked to pick up is that of continuing to love one another just as Christ loved us.

Loving God, there is always work that needs to be done. May today our hands eagerly pick up the mantle that You are calling us to wear. In Jesus’ name, we pray. Amen.

(Rev. Donna Frischknecht Jackson is a communications specialist for the United Church of Christ and author of today’s Sunday Bulletin.)





St. John's United Church of Christ

Third Sunday after Pentecost

June 29, 2025

Celebrating Independence Day



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

WELCOME, ANNOUNCEMENTS, GREET ONE ANOTHER (be seated)

PRELUDE

CHURCH BELL (the bell invites us to worship)

GOD CALLS US TO WORSHIP (responsively)

With glad and grateful hearts; with thanksgiving
Flowing from sea to shining sea, we gather this day
To sing a song of praise to God
For our country, for our world, for peace.

***OPENING HYMN** *O Beautiful for Spacious Skies* #720

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

Some of us come to worship with hearts full of joy, and others come with holes in our hearts. Some of us come weighed down with worry, and others come with peace and calm. Some of us come assailed by doubts, and others come with unwavering certainty. However we come, O God, here we are, with gratitude for the freedom to worship as we choose. Amen.

***RESPONSE** *Spirit of the Living God* #259

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

OFFERING INVITATION**

God is so good and we are richly blessed. Let us give back to God with gratitude and thanksgiving.

***DOXOLOGY**

#46

***PRAYER OF DEDICATION** (unison)

Gracious God, we offer ourselves to you, that we might be a sign of your power among us. Use our money, our time and our talents all to your will. In the name of the Christ. Amen.

WE GATHER IN PRAYER

Silent Prayers – Pastoral Prayer-The Lord's Prayer (debts/debtors)
Congregational Response: *Spirit of God, Unseen as the Wind*

SCRIPTURE:

Old Testament: Psalm 77: 1-2, 11-20

New Testament: Galatians 5: 1, 13-15

The Word of God for the People of God **Thanks be to God**

MESSAGE *Seeing Stars!*

***CLOSING HYMN** *Mine Eyes Have Seen the Glory* (vs. 1-2) #705

***BLESSING** (responsively)

Friends, as we prepare to celebrate our national freedom, remember that we belong to our Lord -- who makes us truly free.

We "were called to freedom, brothers and sisters; only do not use your freedom as an opportunity for self-indulgence, but through love become slaves to one another." Amen. (Gal 5:13)

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

***POSTLUDE**

Announcements

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.

DINNER & CONVERSATION will not be happening this week due to the July 4th holiday.

No Summer Sunday School for children/youth during the summer months of June and July.

There is still time to sign up to share special music during the worship service. Dates are available in July and August. The sign up sheet is located on the hallway bulletin board outside the nursery.

Alan Pancake will be in concert during worship on July 13th.

While we don't have a **permanent church secretary**, volunteers will be manning the office Monday through Friday from 9 am to 12:30 pm.

The bouquet near the pulpit recognizes the **28th Anniversary** of Pastor Debbie Jo's ordination at St. John's UCC, Southport.

Happy 90th Birthday, Bill Lathrop! You may offer birthday wishes to Bill in Memorial Hall after worship, and enjoy cupcakes and cold beverages!

Directory Update and Reminder. Per Jerri Johanningsmeier

For those of you who were unable to have a picture taken for the new directory:

- 1) Photos can be dropped off to the office, please fill out the picture information to accompany photos. Photo will be returned.
- 2) Email to church email:
- 3) Choose to not have a photo, send us an information update for entry.

We sincerely hope to obtain a picture of our members/families. We are looking at June 30 for a probable deadline. We hope to start assembling in July.

Call the church office if you need more assistance.

LAST CALL FOR DIRECTORY INFORMATION

Prayers and Posts

We ask for continuing prayer requests for: Bruce Deckard, Gary Meyer, Don Osborne, Jr. Pat Hutchinson and Family, Gayle Huffer, Carol Graham, Jake Alexander, Ray Pieper, Caden Utley, Mark Schutter, Lynne Simmons, Katrina Memering and the Porter Family.

Shut-in Addresses:

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

Leona Conway - Aperia Care, C Wing Room C-35, 3801 Old Bruceville Road, Vincennes, IN 47591

Marge Beamon - The Villages at Oak Ridge, Room 303, 1694 Troy Road, Washington, IN 47501

Carol Graham - BridgePoint Health Campus, Room 310, 1900 College Avenue, Vincennes, IN 47591

At Home:

Bruce Deckard

Gayle Huffer

Gary Meyer

Mike Lankford

Caden Utley

SPECIAL NOTICE...

Terry and I will be visiting Matthew and his family from July 10-23rd. If you have a prayer request during this time please contact Brenda Roark at or bjr72@hotmail.com.

Please make sure you have been given permission to put on the request and have the correct information. It is much easier to transfer the request to the prayer chain if you email the request.

Thank you. Janet Goodman

Until further notice, all prayer requests or updates should be relayed to Janet Goodman instead of the church office. Email: terrybaseball@gmail.com.

This Week in the Life of St. John's

Sunday, Jun 29th

Adult Sunday School 9:15 am
Worship 10:30 am

Thursday, July 3rd

No Dinner & Conversation tonight

Sunday, July 6th

Adult Sunday School 9:15 am
Worship 10:30 am
Communion

Wednesday, July 9th

Christian Education Mtg. 6 pm

Mon. June 30 - Thurs. July 3

Youth In Town Mission Week

Friday, July 4th

Office Closed for Holiday

Monday, July 7th

Babe Store Open 12 - 5:30 pm
Friends 5 - 6:15 pm
Evangelism & Membership Mtg. 6 pm

Thursday, July 10th

Tech Mtg. 10 am
Dinner & Conversation at Monical's
Pizza, 6 pm



Staff and Volunteers

Pastor:	Rev. Debbie Jo Atkins
Liturgist:	Cindy Deckard
Head Usher:	Brad Summers
Organist:	DeEtta Welte
Music Director, Pianist:	Becky Brockman
Children & Family Ministry Coordinator:	Will Meyer
Nursery Attendant:	Darcie Bahr
Projection:	Jill Doggett
Sound:	Lonny Vieck
Church Board President:	Ed Cummings

Looking Ahead In July

Friday, July 11th

Phoebe's Mission 4:30 - 6 pm
Pastor Debbie at UCC General Synod

Monday, July 14th

BABE Store 12 - 5:30 pm
Friends 5-6:16 pm
Outreach & Benevolence Mtg. 6:30 pm
Pastor Debbie at UCC General Synod

Sunday, July 13th

Adult SS Classes 9:15 am
Worship 10:30 am with Alan Pancake
Pastor Debbie at UCC General Synod

Tuesday, July 15th

Pastor Debbie at UCC General Synod

Did You Know?

St. John's Sunday Morning Worship Services are streamed **LIVE** on our church's Facebook page, "**St. John's United Church of Christ Vincennes.**"

Or, you can watch the Worship Service at your convenience by going on the church website, "**myucc.org**" and clicking on "Worship Service" for a particular date.

You can also download a copy of each monthly **church newsletter** from our church website to keep up with all the activities.