

Caring Neighbors

“Who is my neighbor?” It’s a question asked of Jesus so long ago, and one that still begs for an answer today.

For Jesus, his reply was to tell the beloved parable we know as “The Good Samaritan,” highlighting for his hearers how the most unlikely person — a Samaritan — who was despised by the Jews, was the very person to care for the nearly beaten to death man found in a ditch alongside the notoriously dangerous Jericho Road.

So often, when we hear Jesus’ words, we all too quickly step into the sandals of the Samaritan. We see ourselves in the role of benevolent savior with a charitable heart — and matching wallet — to help our unfortunate neighbors.

But do we ever dare to switch characters and put ourselves in the ditch, beaten and left to die, praying that someone will see and help us? Not as often as we should.

The question “Who is my neighbor?” is complex for the answer lies in the much-needed realization that sometimes we are the helper and sometimes we are the helpless, but all the time we are travelers on the same precarious road of life and, as such, need to see one another as neighbors in Christ.

There’s a quote from Martin Niemöller, a German Lutheran pastor who went from Nazi sympathizer to outspoken critic of Hitler, that is part of the permanent exhibition at the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, which opened in 1993.

His quote is a powerful illustration of the fluidity of defining who are neighbor is. He wrote:

- First they came for the socialists, and I did not speak out — because I was not a socialist.*
- Then they came for the trade unionists, and I did not speak out — because I was not a trade unionist.*
- Then they came for the Jews, and I did not speak out — because I was not a Jew.*
- Then they came for me — and there was no one left to speak for me.*

Catholic priest and author, Henri Nouwen, once said of the parable of The Good Samaritan that “my neighbor is the one who crosses the road for me.”

May today we become road crossing neighbors, knowing that one day we, too, will find ourselves in need of another road crossing neighbor who dares to reach their hand out to us.

Loving God, may Your world be filled with caring neighbors who recognize one another as Your precious beloved children. 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
Fifth Sunday after Pentecost
July 13, 2025

* 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) by Saint Anthony of Padua

Lord Jesus, bind us to you and to our brothers and sisters with love.

May our hearts not be turned away from you and your Word. May our souls not be deceived nor our talents or minds enticed by allurements or error, so that we may never distance ourselves from your love.

May we learn this morning to love our neighbor as ourselves with strength, wisdom and gentleness.

With your help, you who are blessed throughout all ages.

***OPENING HYMN** *The Voice of God is Calling* (vs. 1 & 4) #666

Sung to tune of *O Sacred Head Now Wounded* #202)

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

As we enter into worship, we want every word that is spoken or sung to lift you up and make your name great. We desire to proclaim your truth, to hear from your Word, and to respond to you with worship. We have made plans for this time together, but we ask that it would truly be your Spirit who guides us. Let us be willing to set aside our own agendas when we sense you leading us. We are so grateful to be able to gather and we look forward with expectancy for what you will do in and through us today. Amen.

***RESPONSE** *When in Awe of God's Creation* (v. 1) #688

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)

These gifts we bring are for you, Loving God, and the work you're doing in and around us. We give back to you because you have blessed us so abundantly. May these offerings bring glory to your name. Amen.

WE GATHER IN PRAYER

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

Congregational Response: *How Great Thou Art* (chorus only)

#33

SCRIPTURE:

Old Testament: Psalm 82

New Testament: Luke 10:25-37

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

MESSAGE in MUSIC

Alan Pancake

***CLOSING HYMN** *They'll Know We Are Christians by our Love* #494

***BLESSING** (responsively)

May God's faithfulness, kindness and mercy spill out from our lives to each person that we encounter this week.

May lives be changed as the gospel is lived out of our words and actions, full of kindness and mercy for others. Amen.

***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.

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.

A special THANK YOU to Alan Pancake for his wonderful music this morning.

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.

General Synod: *Into the Deep* takes place July 11-15, 2025, in Kansas City, Missouri, and offers the opportunity for thousands of folks within the United Church of Christ to gather for worship, fellowship, attending to business, offering public witness, and setting the denomination's priorities for ministry. The theme is based on Luke 5:4: *When he had finished speaking, he said to Simon, "Put out into the deep water and let down your nets for a catch.* Pastor Debbie Jo will be attending and the plenary sessions/worship will be livestreamed.

Family Move Nights Return: On Sunday, July 27th we will gather in Memorial Hall at 5:00 pm to watch the Disney movie, *Miracle in Lane 2* starring Freddie Muniz, a story of competitive soapbox racing based on a true story. On August 3rd we will present *Angels in the Outfield* starring Joseph Gordon-Levitt, Danny Glover, Tony Danza and Christopher Lloyd. Both are family-friendly and everyone is invited.

The **Church Picnic** will take place on September 28th at Gregg Park. More details later.

Preschool Open House will be held on Sunday, July 20th from 3:00-4:30 for anyone wishing to learn more about our preschool, tour the facilities and meet our new director, Laura Arial.

We offer our Christian sympathy and prayers to the family of Gayle Huffer who entered into eternal life on July 4th, 2025. A memorial moment will be held in worship next Sunday.

Prayers and Posts

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

Huffer Family

Gary Meyer

Mike Lankford

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 812-890-1221 or bjsr72@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
Text or phone call: 812-887-2797.**

This Week in the Life of St. John's

Sunday, July 13th

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

Wednesday, July 16th

Pastor Debbie returns home

Saturday, July 19th

Youth Lemonade Stand 10 am - 2 pm
Private Party 1 - 5 pm

Monday, July 14th

BABE Store 12 - 5:30 pm
Friends 5 - 6:15 pm
Outreach & Benevolence Mtg. 6:30 pm
Pastor Debbie at UCC General Synod

Thursday, July 17th

Dinner & Conversation at Senor
Tequila's 6 pm

Sunday, July 20th

Adult Sunday School 9:15 am
Worship 10:30 am
Preschool Open House 3 - 4:30 pm

Looking Ahead In July

Monday, July 21st

BABE Store 12 - 5:30 pm
Friends 5-6:16 pm
Music & Worship Mtg. 6 pm
Church Board Mtg. 7 pm

Sunday, July 27th

Adult Sunday School 9:15 am
Worship 10:30 am
Movie Night 5 pm

Wednesday, July 30th

Laundry Love 6 - 8 pm

Wednesday, July 23rd

August Newsletter Items Due Today

Thursday, July 24th

Dinner & Conversation at Café
Moonlight 6 pm

Monday, July 26th

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

Thursday, July 31st

Dinner & Conversation - Culvers 6 pm



Staff and Volunteers

Pastor:	Rev. Debbie Jo Atkins
Liturgist:	Brenda Roark
Head Usher:	Ed Cummings
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 Board President:	Ed Cummings

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.