

NINTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

August 10, 2025

Hebrews 11:1-3, 8-16

Living into the Promise

There was a woman in my rural congregation who every year would win a handful of blue ribbons for the flower arrangements entered at the county fair. I was told that every flower used came from her garden, which everyone described as “magical.” I had to see this for myself.

One day I stopped by and there she was watering lush pink peonies. I was in awe by the beauty all around and admitted to her that nothing ever grew for me. I even confessed my lack of faith, doubting that a seed would grow each time I covered it with dirt.

She looked at me with shocked eyes, scolding me that my lack of faith was the very thing preventing me from a beautiful garden.

“Remember, pastor, faith is in things hoped for and in things unseen,” she said, citing scripture from Hebrews.

As she filled her rusty watering can from the just as rusty hand pump, she shared with me her secret to gardening.

“I put every seed, sapling and bulb into the ground, trusting that the beauty I cannot see will burst forth,” she said.

Could it be that faith was all I needed to turn my pitiful flowerbeds into a scene worthy of Monet to paint.

When this master gardener quoted Hebrews to me, I was reminded of all God’s children who “by faith” stepped forward to do things that seemed impossible. By faith, Noah built an ark. By faith, Abraham left his home for a new one. By faith, Sarah, his wife, bore a son even though her childbearing days were far behind her. By faith is how they lived, trusting God with a beautiful future even when that future could not be seen.

Today, that magical garden is gone, as are all the artistic flower arrangements that came from it. The hands of the one who planted each seed “by faith” is now tending to heavenly gardens. As for me, I am trying my best to have faith in the seeds I now plant.

For without faith, where would all the great gardens be? Without faith, where would all the great testimonies of ordinary people doing extraordinary things be?

And who knows? Maybe someday the roll call of faith will read, “By faith, a pastor finally grew a beautiful flower.”

God of beauty and grace, help us live more “by faith” this day, holding on always to hope and trusting in all things unseen. In Jesus’ name, we pray. Amen.

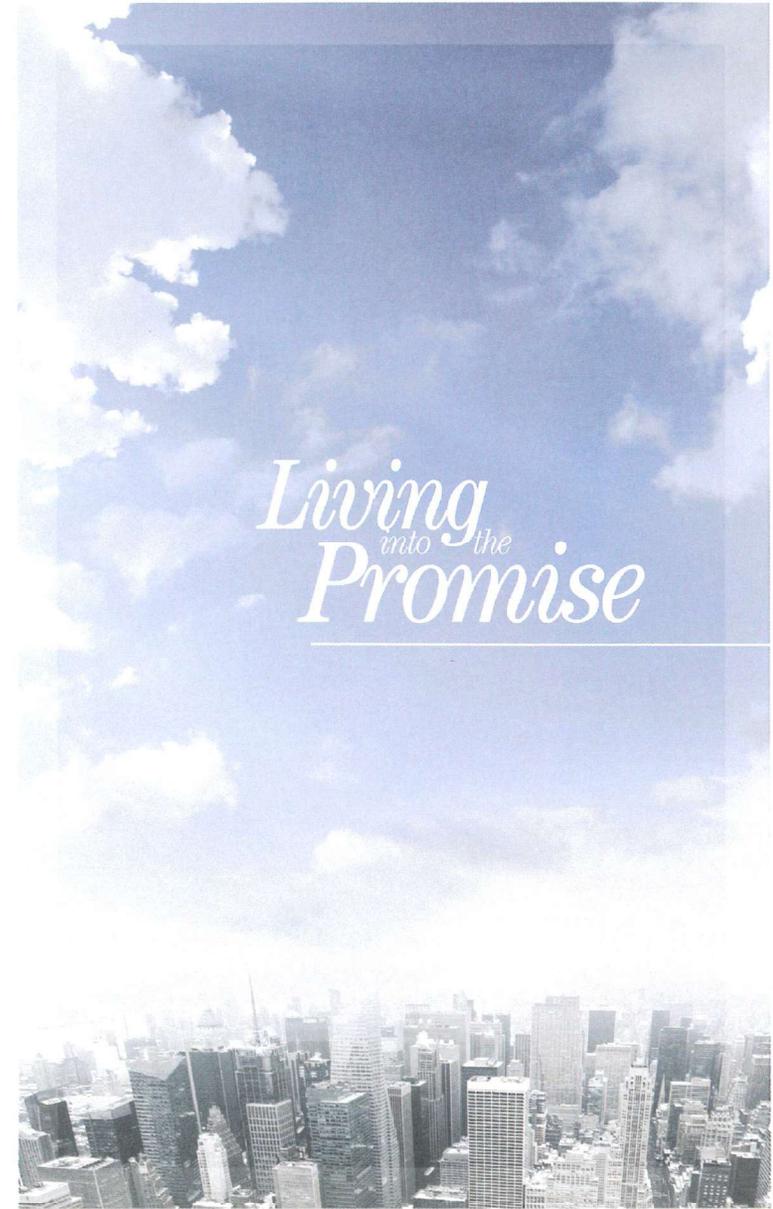
(Rev. Donna Frischknecht Jackson is a communications specialist for the United Church of Christ and author of today’s Sunday Bulletin.)



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

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St. John's United Church of Christ
Ninth Sunday after Pentecost
 August 10, 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)

People of God, look about and see the faces of those we know and love, a community of kindred hearts.

People of God, look about and see the face of those we hardly know, Strangers, sojourners, forgotten friends, ones needing an outstretched hand.

People of God, look about and see all the images of God in me, in you, in each of us and in all the world God so loves.

God's spirit shines for all to see. May our eyes, our hearts and our souls be open this day.

* **OPENING HYMN** *Guide Me, O Thou Great Jehovah* #622

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

O Lord my God, here I am before you with my firmness and my infirmity. Preserve the first and heal the second. Here I am before you with my strength and my ignorance. Where you have opened the door to me, welcome me at the entrance; where you have closed the door to me, open to my cry; enable me to remember you, to understand you, and to love you. Amen.

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

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

OFFERING INVITATION**

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

* **DOXOLOGY** #46

* **PRAYER OF DEDICATION** (unison)

Holy One, like Abraham and Sarah, we have heard your call. We respond with fledgling faith, offering what we have as we step into the unknown future with you. Bless and multiply these gifts of faith, we pray, to accomplish more than we dare think or ask. 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: Isaiah 1:16-19a

New Testament: Hebrews 11:1-3, 8-16

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

MESSAGE *Status Quo or Status Go*

* **CLOSING HYMN** *The God of Abraham Praise* (vs. 1 & 2) #24

* **BLESSING** (responsively)

You have been called and now you are sent — sent into a future that is sure because it is God's future, even though you do not know where you are going. Go with courage and faith.

There is nothing to fear, for God walks with us, ahead of us, behind us, above and below us. We belong to God. Amen.

* **CONGREGATIONAL RESPONSE** *God Be With You* (v.1-no chorus) #434

* **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.

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.

Our Vacation Bible School offering this year will go to The Knox County Humane Society, which is literally located on Main Street (just like our VBS)! In the rear of the sanctuary you will find a "parking meter". Please contribute your loose change, (bills are accepted, of course) each week of VBS and let's watch our giving grow to support this worthwhile cause.

Thank you!

The Blessings Box needs donations. Suggestions are: cereal, peanut butter, jelly, Velveeta mac & cheese (doesn't require milk or butter), canned pastas, soups, crackers. Cans with pop top lids are best.

Messy Church Returns on September 3rd from 5:30-7:00 pm featuring the theme of *Bee-Attitudes*. Our Scripture will be the *Beatitudes* from Matthew 5:1-12 and we will have lots of "Bee" related games, crafts and activities. Dinner will be mini corn dogs, mac & cheese and veggies. Plan now to participate and join us for a great evening of Food, Fun and Fellowship. Invite your friends!



Prayers and Posts

We ask for continuing prayer requests for: Bruce Deckard, Gary Meyer, Don Osborne, Jr. Pat Hutchinson, The Family of Laura Sanders, The Family of Carol Graham, John Spanger, Mark Schutter, Wayne Baker, Lynne Simmons, Katrina Memering, and Jasime Zeller.

To the family of Terry and Janet Goodman, we offer our sympathy and prayers. Terry's brother, Sam, of Martinsville (who was known as Dick by his family), passed away on August 1st, 2025. Visitation and the funeral mass were held Thursday.

A memorial service will be held on August 16th at 10 am with a Celebration of Life gathering in Memorial Hall for Carol Graham from 11 - 12:30.

We extend our prayers and sincere condolences to Arlene Wilson and family. Her brother, Ron Buescher, passed away on August 2, 2025.

We would like to put our son, Kelvin, on the prayer list. He is having surgery on his ankle on August 13 and is expected to be off work for 3 months for recovery. Thanks so much.

Janice & Mark Strange

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

At Home:

Bruce Deckard

Gary Meyer

Mike Lankford



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, August 10th

Adult SS Classes 9:15 am
Vacation Bible School 9:15 am
Worship 10:30 am

Wednesday, August 13th

Christian Education Mtg 6 pm

Monday, August 11th

BABE Store 12 - 5:30 pm
Friends 5 - 6:30pm @ LHS Ader Auditorium

Thursday, August 14th

Tech Mtg. 10 am
Dinner & Conversation - Coco's 6 pm

Looking Ahead In August

Sunday, August 17th

Adult SS Classes 9:15 am
Vacation Bible School 9:15 am
Worship 10:30 am

Wednesday, August 20th

September Newsletter Items Due

Friday, August 22nd

Indiana Kentucky Conference

Sunday, August 24th

Adult SS Classes 9:15 am
Vacation Bible School 9:15 am
Worship 10:30 am
VBS Presentation During Worship
Fellowship

Monday, August 18th

BABE Store 12 - 5:30 pm
Friends 5 - 6:30pm @ Ader Auditorium
Outreach & Benevolence Mtg. 5:00 pm
Music & Worship Mtg. 6 pm
Church Board 7 pm

Thursday, August 21st

Dinner & Conversation - Dragon 2000 6 pm

Saturday, August 23rd

Indiana Kentucky Conference

Monday, August 25th

BABE Store 12 - 5:30 pm
Friends 5 - 6:30pm @ Ader Auditorium



Staff and Volunteers

Pastor:	Rev. Debbie Jo Atkins
Liturgist:	Kelly Alexander
Head Usher:	Mark Schutz
Organist:	DeEtta Welte
Music Director, Pianist:	Becky Brockman
Children & Family Ministry Coordinator:	Will Meyer
Nursery Attendant:	Darcie Bahr
Projection:	Sandra Lange
Sound:	Jonathan Lange
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.

