

St. John's United Church of Christ

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September 2025 Newsletter

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A Note From Pastor Debbie Jo...

Dear Friends:

Lately it seems as though my life is *another month another conference* meeting with lots of smaller meetings in-between. The most recent being the Annual Meeting of the Indiana-Kentucky Conference held in Ft. Wayne, Indiana. For the first time, I took 1-69 and had a rather enjoyable drive until I hit the northside of Indy and headed towards Anderson, IN. Having driven that section of road for many years, visiting my eldest daughter and her family, I know how boring it can be. The stretch from Anderson to Ft. Wayne wasn't any better. You begin to feel like your driving and getting nowhere.

Plymouth UCC hosted the meeting, and they did a wonderful job making us all feel welcome. They were the first church I've ever visited who compost all food items left on diners plates after dinner and lunch. The panel discussion on the Courageous and Curious Church was inspiring and opening worship was so uplifting with the music and leadership provided by The Many. Their publicity states: *Drawing on indie pop and gospel influences, The Many makes music to help give voice to faith and doubt, questions and fears, laments and longings, music that speaks to a non-violent God, a Jesus who is with us and for us, and to a Spirit that can't be easily defined or controlled.* They were awesome and had us all singing along.

I attended a workshop on Church Growth and Evangelism. It was very informative, and I will be sharing more information with our Membership and Evangelism committee. One of the speakers (*from Indianapolis*) would be a good resource person to invite as a guest speaker for our congregation.

I left the meeting early due to the death of my daughter-in-law's beloved grandfather, Max. Addison's family all live in Ft. Wayne so in a way it was a blessing to be on hand as needed. I had the opportunity to spend some time with them and hold Colsen, who fell asleep on my shoulder (Boom! Mic drop!) He is not an easy sleeper, so I took it as a victory. I will be baptizing him next week at my home church in Southport.

The drive home was a nightmare. I spent an hour in bumper to bumper traffic going south on 465 around Indy. It was very frustrating, but I finally made it home, much later than I had planned. Scarlett was happy to see me and THANKS to Nancy Stultz for letting her spend the night with Cooper and Finn. This will be a busy week but then again, what week isn't. As we move back into our fall schedule, may we continue to discern God's will and follow wherever the path leads.

Peace,
Debbie Jo



SCARLETT SPEAKS: Woof! Woof! I have a confession: I am frightened of thunderstorms and we have had some doozies this summer. When that clap of thunder or flash of lightning hits, the only place I want to be is in my mom's lap and sometimes that's not enough to keep me from trembling. The same is true for fireworks and we have folks nearby who set them off A LOT-not just on New Years or the 4th of July. I do not like those loud noises at all and can't understand what's happening. I am thankful that when mom has a church meeting and it's storming, she takes me to church with her. I really like it when committee members let me jump in their laps for attention, although my mom isn't thrilled with my behavior. Thanks to Steve and Allison for sharing your laps with me on a recent occasion. It's great having such support when fear is making you spin out of control. I am blessed to have so many great church folks who love me. Looking forward to seeing the preschool kids soon and spending the night with Nancy Stultz (and Fin and Cooper) while my mom goes to the Conference meeting. **Woof! Woof!**



Mission Spotlight...

Thank You Letters received for Our Benevolent Help

St. John's continues to support several benevolent causes in Vincennes and Knox County as well as continuing to support our Indiana Kentucky UCC Conference and responding to emergencies and other ministries. Recently we have received several thank you letters and notes. **The Outreach and Benevolence Committee** wanted to share some of these with the congregation.



Backpacks of Love is a local organization that provides backpacks of food and refills them weekly to send home from school with kids that have been identified as food insecure. This program was started here at St. John's several years ago but has expanded and is now supported by several local churches. St. John's has supported this ministry since its inception and recently contributed \$500. The thank you said in part: "Your continued support is greatly appreciated. "We were serving over 200 children per week as of the end of the school year in May".

LAM is an acronym for Life After Meth. LAM was initially started in 2005 to help combat the terrible methamphetamine problem and other addictions in the Knox County area. St. John's has supported LAM since its beginning and provides regular ongoing support to LAM. The thank you said: "Thank you for your donation of \$500 on June 20th. It is such a blessing from you all." Also, LAM has just recently organized grief support groups. "The Grief Recovery Method" is for anyone experiencing any kind of grief, "because 100% of people suffer from over 40 kinds of grief". For more information call Marsha Bishop at 812-830-8238.

The Salvation Army, provides various types of assistance to families in need. The letter says "Thank you for responding to the need of others...." We had sent a check for \$500.

Back Bay Mission in Biloxi, Mississippi had contacted us regarding their needs due to other funding cuts. Our pastors and youth have gone there on work trips in the past and have found their ministry to be worthwhile and much needed. We gave \$500. Their note is addressed "To our friends at St Johns UCC": "We are so thankful for the donation. Because of donors like you we are able to support the underserved or our community."

These are just some examples of how your benevolent dollars are being used to help others.

The Outreach and Missions Committee

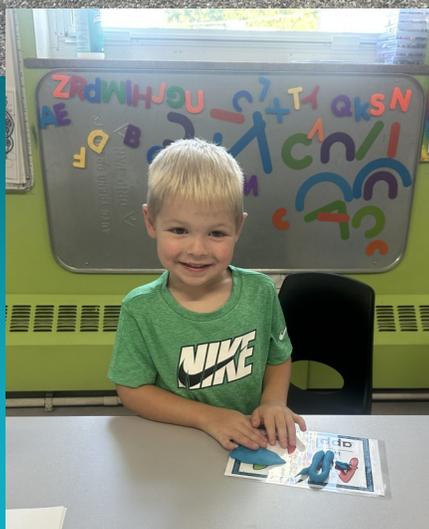


Did you know that the Outreach and Missions Committee has given over \$1,700,000 from St. John's in the last 30 years!

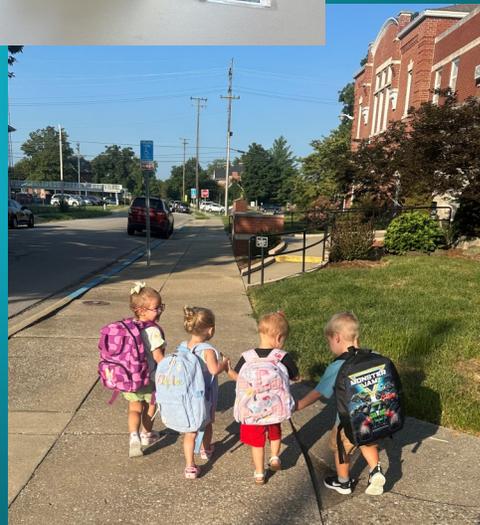
Preschool News

This month in preschool we have been busy learning and growing together! We started the year by practicing our school rules and routines so that everyone feels safe and ready to learn. We also began our letter study—kicking things off with the letter A, and now exploring the letter T this week. The children are already recognizing letters in their names, books, and classroom activities, and we are excited to keep building on these skills throughout the year!

With joy,
Laura Arial
Preschool Director



Preschool Pictures



New Faith Formation Information

Our children and youth Sunday School is evolving! "Sunday School" will no longer occur before worship service for children and youth. Instead, beginning on **September 7, FAITH VENTURES** for our elementary children **grades K - 6** will be provided in place of what has been known as Children's Church. Children (grades K-6 only) will attend 10:30 worship service with their families and may leave the sanctuary immediately after the Children's Message. **FAITH VENTURES** will include a bible lesson and also related activities. This will be under the leadership of Sarah Lowe and Will Meyer.

- Darcie Bahr will continue to be available in the nursery before worship for young ones belonging to those attending adult Faith Formation or choir practice. She is also available to care for **babies, toddlers and preschoolers** during worship service.
- Youth, **Middle School and High School age**, will have opportunities for Faith Formation at least twice a month during times to be announced at a future date. Of course, youth are always welcome in the adult Faith Formation class.
- The **Adult Faith Formation class** will continue to meet each Sunday beginning at 9:30 before worship service. All are invited to join in this discussion format each and every Sunday. Let Jill Lopez know your email address if you would like the lesson emailed to you each week in advance of Sunday morning.

Children & Family Ministries

With September here, the 2025-26 Children and Family Ministry program year is officially getting started! This year brings a mix of exciting new activities along with the return of family and youth favorites. Here's a sneak peek at what's coming this Fall and Winter:

Trips

Mission Projects

Family Holiday Dinner

Age-Specific Activities

Youth Group Gatherings

Final planning for future activities is being finished up and will be announced soon!

Stay Connected:

Be sure to check the church bulletin, our CFM Facebook page, and the Children and Family Ministry mailboxes for upcoming announcements and schedules.



Children & Family Ministries

(continued)

The new program year will be kicked off with a youth and family meeting on **Sunday, September 14th**, from 5:00pm-6:00pm. This meeting is for all 7th-12th grade youth and their families. We'll be discussing plans for upcoming youth meetings, events, and activities for the 2025-26 program year.

Hear about plans for the year.

Share your thoughts and feedback.

Help shape a fun and meaningful youth program.

Enjoy some light snacks while we chat!

On **Sunday, October 12**, the Children and Family Ministry will have a Wabash Trails Fun Day in the Houchins Shelter house from 5:00pm-7:30pm. The meat, drinks and table settings (cups, plates and silverware), will be provided! Families are asked to bring a side dish/dessert to share with the other families! There will be extra side dishes/desserts provided in case your is family running from one activity to this one. There will be many games and activities for the families at the activity. This activity would be a great opportunity for the families to invite friends.



On **Saturday, October 18**, the KFC and Youth will travel to Holiday World for Happy Halloween Weekends. This family-friendly special event includes the rides you love at Holiday World, plus 12 acres of corn mazes and hayrides! St. John's children will need to pay \$25 and friends/family are welcome to come but will need to pay \$35 for tickets. We will leave St. John's at 10:15am and return around 9:30pm. Please provide each child \$20-\$25 for food at the park and for a stop on the way back for supper. Please sign up on

the bulletin board by the nursery or text Will (812-887-5303) by Thursday, October 16, so the tickets can be purchased. A medical information form will need to be filled out for St. John's KFC/Youth and their friends. The medical information forms are located on the bulletin board by the nurse and outside of the CE office upstairs.

Will Meyer

Children and Family Ministry Coordinator

Children & Family Ministry Age Groups

M & M (Mini-Marvels) Age 4-2nd Grade

KFC (Kids For Christ) 3rd - 6th Grade

Youth 7th Grade - High School



Prayer & Post

We ask for continuing prayer requests for:

| | | | | |
|-----------------------------|------------------|----------------------------------|------------------|----------------|
| Bruce Deckard | Katrina Memering | Gary Meyer | Don Osborne, Jr. | Mark Schutter |
| Lynne Simmons | Ted Lowe | Wayne Baker | Jasime Zeller | Kelvin Strange |
| The Family of Laura Sanders | | The Family of Sam (Dick) Goodman | | Vern Houchins |

Shut-in Addresses:

Susie Milligan - Colonial Assisted Living, Room 118, 1622 S Hart Street Road, Vincennes, IN 47591
Leona Conway - Aperion 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
Vern Houchins



We would like to thank everyone for their visits, cards, texts, emails, prayers and words of sympathy on the passing of Terry's brother, Dick. It is very comforting at a time when you feel sad to know that others care so much. Terry is now the only sibling left and that seems very strange and lonely. Thank you so much for your kindness and thoughtfulness.

Terry and Janet Goodman



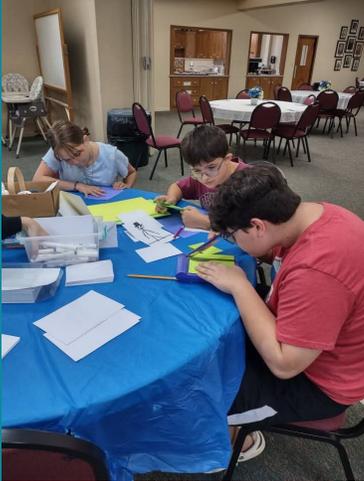
Prayer Requests

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.

Vacation Bible School



Our Vacation Bible School, 'Upside Down & Inside Out on Main Street', completed its last session on Sunday, August 24th, with the children and youth sharing their songs in worship service. Many thanks to all of our children and youth for their participation.

We are also **immensely grateful** to the following people:

Our youth - who assisted with the children, participated in service projects and acted out the parables.

Betsy Marchino - assisted with elementary crafts.

Brenda Cummings - provided meaningful snacks every Sunday and loaned her garden bench for our decorations.

Jerri Johanningsmeier - created the decorations and set them up in the sanctuary.

Pastor Debbie - assisted by reading the Parables during worship service.

Will Meyer - provided the games and fun interaction for all ages.

Sarah Lowe - assisted with the elementary children throughout each Sunday.

Jill Lopez - coordinated the event.



VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL HIGHLIGHTS

The Blessing Box needs donations. Here are suggestions: cereal, peanut butter, jelly, Velveeta mac & cheese (doesn't require milk or butter), canned pasta, 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 *Be-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!

All Church Picnic will take place on September 28th under the pavilion at Gregg Park at 10:30 am. The Church Board will be providing pulled pork (by Brayton Cummins) and everyone is asked to bring a side dish to serve 10-12 people.

Family Movie Night will be September 21st at 5:00 pm. We will gather to watch *Leap of Faith* (rated PG-13) starring Steve Martin, Liam Neeson, Debra Winger, Phillip Seymour Hoffman and Meatloaf. Synopsis: *Fake faith healer Jonas Nightingale is stranded in a small town where he finds he can't fool all of the people all of the time.* Everyone is invited.

On Sunday, September 7th, a special breakfast will be provided for ALL ages. Serving will begin at 9:30 am. Please mark your calendar and plan to attend this fall kick-off event!

The **Tech Committee** needs additional volunteers to assist with Sunday Worship. Let Sandra Lange know of your interest at 812-887-1628.

Friends on Stage Live Performance, Monday, September 15th. Doors open at 5:50 for a performance at 6:00 pm. "*Rock and Roll Forever*", Lincoln High School Ader Auditorium. Free will donations will be appreciated.

On October 26th we will host the Conference Minister on the **Covenant Tour** and a fellowship meal will follow.

If you would like to **reserve Memorial Hall** for any activity, please contact the Church office.

October 19th our congregation will celebrate Harvest Home, with emphasis on the congregation bringing donations for the Blessing Box.



Visioning For The Future Of St. John's UCC

At St. John's UCC, we believe God is always calling us forward. Our church has been blessed with a strong foundation of faith, service, and fellowship—now it is time to prayerfully consider where God is leading us next.

Over the coming months, we will begin a *visioning process* to shape the future of our congregation. This is an exciting opportunity to dream together about how St. John's can continue to grow as a vibrant church family, meeting the spiritual needs of **youth, families, singles, and older adults**, while also deepening our **outreach to the wider community**. We want to explore how we can expand our **mission work, nurture faith across all generations, and continue to be a place of welcome, support, and belonging**.

This important work cannot be done without you! Every voice matters, and we want to hear from each member and friend of St. John's. Your insights, hopes, and ideas will help guide our priorities and ensure our future reflects the shared faith and vision of our whole church family.

We invite you to take part in the upcoming **strategic visioning meetings**, where together we will listen, share, and imagine what God has in store for St. John's. With prayer, courage, and unity, we believe we can build a future that honors our traditions while embracing new opportunities for ministry.

Let us move forward in faith—together.

Vision Committee: Eric Meyer, Kelly Alexander, Betsy Marchino, Allison Cummins, Pastor Debbie, and Sheri Stodghill.

We ask that you sign up for one session on the signup sheets in Memorial Hall entryway. If you are unable to sign up in person, please contact the church office to have them sign up for you.

Visioning Sessions - approx. 90 minutes with light meal being served:

Sunday, September 14th, following worship - All ages welcome.

Tuesday, September 23rd, 5:30 pm - All ages welcome.

Tuesday, September 30th, 5:30 pm - All ages welcome.

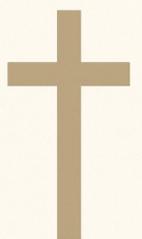
Tuesday, October 7th, 5:30 pm - This evening is especially for families with young/college age members.

Sunday, October 12th, following worship - All ages welcome.

Tuesday, October 21st, 5:30 pm - All ages welcome.



**Shaping
Tomorrow,
Together
in Faith.**





September Birthdays

Mark Cummings
Hannah Shields
Ray Pieper
Ryan Cummings
Lauren Cummings
Elaine Workman
DeEtta Welte
Daniel Vieck
Adam Schotter
Owen Schotter

Anniversaries

Nyal & Hannah Shields
Luke & Mackenzie Jones
Chris & Kim Vieke
Shawn & Christina Schlag

Dinner & Conversation



Everyone is invited to join us on Thursday evenings at 6:00 pm. Each week we visit a different restaurant and enjoy an evening of food and conversation. It's a great way to get to know our fellow church members better. A reservation sheet is in the back of the sanctuary weekly or you can call the church office to add your name. The September/October schedule is as follows:

September 4th - American Table

September 11th - Log Inn (**Warrenton-cash only**)

September 18th - Procopio's

September 25th - Coco's

October 2nd - Kelso's

October 9th - Café Moonlight

October 16th - Luigi's

October 23rd - Ponderosa

October 30th - Coco's



Church Board Highlights August 18, 2025

The Board met on August 18, 2025. The Board discussed upcoming church events including Messy Church resuming September 3rd and the Church Picnic to be held September 28th. The Board learned the pre-school session is off to a positive start, with many parents contacting the Church to be placed on the waitlist for future sessions. The search for a new church secretary continues and all church members are encouraged to spread the word. Help is needed on all committees, but especially technology, (including sound and projection), and membership and evangelism. The Board also discussed church finances and additional work being done by the church accountant to make sure all finances and records are in order.

Jill Doggett, Secretary

| Sunday | Monday | Tuesday | Wednesday | Thursday | Friday | Saturday |
|---|--|---|--|---|---|--|
| | 1 Labor Day Holiday Church Office Closed BABE Store Closed No Friends Mtg | 2 | 3 Messy Church 5:30 - 7 pm Choir Practice 7 pm | 4 Dinner & Conversation - American Table 6 pm | 5 Phoebe's Mission 4:30 - 6 pm | 6 |
| 7 All Ages Breakfast 9:30 am Adult FF Class 9:30 am Worship 10:30 am Communion Faith Ventures (K- grade 6) During Worship | 8 BABE Store 12 - 5:30 pm Friends 5 - 6:15 pm Evangelism & Membership Mtg 6 pm | 9 Sandy's Pantry 11 am - 12:30 pm Vision Committee Mtg 5:30 pm | 10 Christian Education Mtg. 6 pm Choir Practice 7 pm | 11 Tech Mtg. 10 am Sandy's Pantry 11 am - 12:30 pm Dinner & Conversation - Log Inn 6 pm (cash only) | 12 | 13 |
| 14 Adult FF Class 9:30 am Worship 10:30 am Faith Ventures (K- grade 6) During Worship Visioning Session with Lunch 11:45 - 1:30 pm | 15 BABE Store 12 - 5:30 pm Friends Performance 6 pm at Ader Auditorium Music & Worship Mtg 6 pm Church Board Mtg 7 pm | 16 | 17 Choir Practice 7 pm | 18 Dinner & Conversation - Procopio's 6 pm | 19 | 20 Grube Private Party in Memorial Hall 12 noon - 5 pm |
| 21 Adult FF Class 9:30 am Worship 10:30 am Faith Ventures (K-grade 6) During Worship Movie Night 5 pm | 22 BABE Store 12 - 5:30 pm Friends 5 - 6:15 pm | 23 Visioning Session with Supper 5:30 - 7 pm | 24 Choir Practice 7 pm Laundry Love 6 - 8 pm | 25 Dinner & Conversation - Coco's 6 pm | 26 | 27 |
| 28 Church Picnic & Worship 10:30 am | 29 BABE Store 12 - 5:30 pm Friends 5 - 6:15 pm | 30 Visioning Session with Supper 5:30 - 7 pm | September 2025 | | | |