

FOURTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER
PENTECOST

September 14, 2025

1 Timothy 1:12-17

Growing in God's Love

In all my years in ministry, I only once lived in a parsonage. The church-provided house was one of those Sears Roebuck mail-order homes that were popular from 1908 through the 1940s.

The house had pocket doors, a sunroom, and a cozy living room with a large stone fireplace. It also had a kitchen doorway that was marked with lines and dates, documenting the growth of a former pastor's child. Judging by the years etched into the wood, it seemed no one had the heart to ever sand the frame and give it a coat of fresh paint.

The markings always intrigued me, making me pause each time I walked into the kitchen. I would gently touch the grooves and marvel at the miracle of growing up, not just physically, but spiritually as well.

I thought about how the growth lines on a doorframe are ultimately so finite. There comes the day when we reach our God-intended height. Our spiritual growth lines, though, are infinite. There's no stopping point. God wants us to keep growing in knowledge of God's love. The Spirit wants us all to reach new and glorious heights.

The Apostle Paul, our ancient, prolific letter writer is once again penning a note of wisdom and grace. This time to his young disciple Timothy. Paul wants to impart his honed leadership skills to Timothy, but before he does, he reflects on his own spiritual growth. He shares with Timothy how no one is beyond the reach of God's forgiveness and, once received, that forgiveness leads to a spiritual growth spurt that Paul himself experienced. Once a persecutor of Jews, God's grace led Paul to become a towering proponent of Christ's love.

Paul's letter to Timothy is one we all need to read this day because no matter how old we are, we need to remember that we should never stop growing spiritually. There is a divine doorframe with markings on it for each one of us, recording just how much we have matured in the knowledge of a great and redeeming God.

Wondering just how much you have grown? Here's a spiritual exercise for you. Think back to who you were 5 years ago. Now 10 years. How about 20 years ago? What did you believe? What were the prejudices you clung to? What were the awakenings your soul experienced?

Now mind you, spiritual growth does not always mean a notch higher up on the heavenly doorframe year after year. There might be years of no growth. There might even be years of backsliding. And that's okay, because the wonderful truth is this: God always gives us another chance. There are limitless opportunities to keep growing in the Spirit.

God of wisdom, may we never stop growing in the Spirit. May we continue to master the lessons you have for us — lessons on how to love one another, how to trust your guidance, and how to forgive and show grace to others. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen.

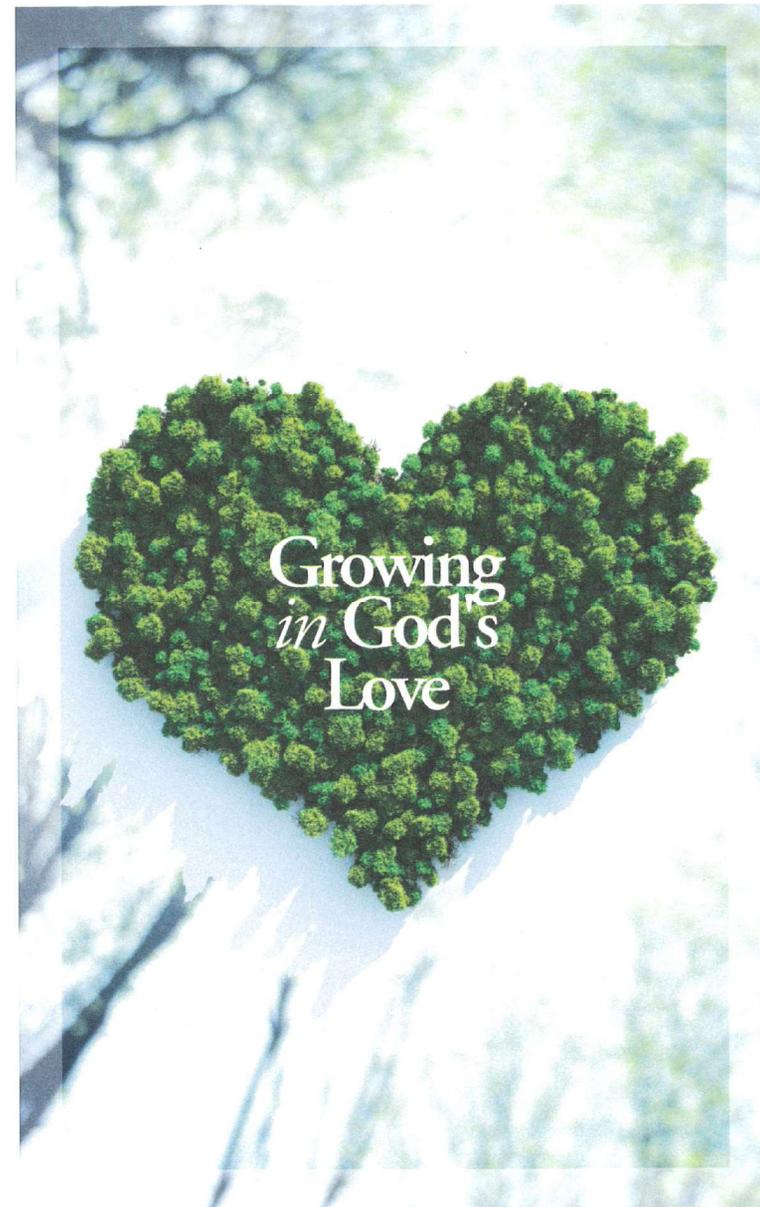
(Rev. Donna Frischknecht Jackson is a communications specialist for the United Church of Christ and author of today's Sunday Bulletin.)



8.5" x 14" UCC SUNDAY BULLETIN SERVICE

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St. John's United Church of Christ
Fourteenth Sunday after Pentecost
 September 14, 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)

In our worship together, we yearn for hope and comfort.

Let us reach to the heart of Jesus, who is our life.

We encounter our Lord, who makes us whole.

Here we are welcome and loved and cherished.

Here we are the people of God.

Let us rejoice and give God praise.

* **OPENING HYMN** *Savior, Like a Shepherd Lead Us* #558

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

Great Healer, send your Spirit here to us now. Touch and heal our brokenness, and lift us out of despair and doubt. Dry the tears of pain and sorrow. Comfort and nourish us with the many blessings of your great love, O God. May we flourish and blossom into the warmth and compassion of your healing love and grace. Amen.

* **RESPONSE** *Seek Ye First* (v. 1) #354

ANTHEM *I Thank You, Lord* Chancel Choir

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.

* **RESPONSE** *Accept. O God, the Gifts We Bring* #379

* **PRAYER OF DEDICATION** (unison)

Source of life, may the works of our hands bring you honor. May the life we live reflect the risen Word of life. May the service we offer be inspired by the Breath of life. Amen.

WE GATHER IN PRAYER

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

Congregational Response: *Seek Ye First* (v. 2) #354

SCRIPTURE:

Old Testament: Psalm 14: 1-7

New Testament: Luke 15:1-10

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

MESSAGE *Only in the Gospel*

* **CLOSING HYMN** *Come Thou Fount of Every Blessing* #16

* **BLESSING** (responsively)

Go out with a song in your heart, with confidence and hope.

We go with God's dream in our soul, with peace and assurance. Amen.

* **CONGREGATIONAL RESPONSE** *Blest Be the Tie That Binds* (v. 1) #433

* **POSTLUDE**

**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.

BLESSINGS BOX needs donations. Suggestions are: cereal, peanut butter, jelly, Velveta mac & cheese (doesn't require milk or butter), canned pasta, soups, crackers. Cans with pop top lids are best.

This Week in the Life of St. John's

Sunday, September 14th

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

Wednesday, September 17th

Choir Practice 7 pm

Saturday, September 20th

Grube Private Party in Memorial Hall
12 noon - 5 pm

Monday, September 15th

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

Thursday, September 18th

Dinner & Conversation @ Procopio's 6 pm

Looking Ahead In September

Sunday, September 21st

Movie Night 5 pm
Adult FF Class 9:30 am
Worship 10:30 am
Faith Ventures (K - grade 6) During Worship

Tuesday, September 23rd

Vision Session with Supper 5:30 - 7 pm

Thursday, September 25th

Dinner & Conversation - Coco's @ 6 pm

Monday, September 22nd

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

Wednesday, September 24th

Choir Practice 7 pm
Laundry Love 6-8 pm



Staff and Volunteers

Pastor:	Rev. Debbie Jo Atkins
Liturgist:	John Riggs
Head Usher:	Krisi Mattingly
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.

Announcements

Introducing Faith Ventures! This fall begins some new changes in our Sunday morning Children's Ministry. Following the Children's Moment, those in **Kindergarten through 6th Grade only** are invited to participate in Faith Ventures, our reimagined Sunday School. Preschoolers are welcome in the church nursery or to quietly play in the pray ground in the back of the sanctuary. **Middle and High Schoolers** are welcome to remain in worship and will receive their faith lessons with Will during Youth Fellowship on Sunday evenings.

Messy Church on October 1st from 5:30-7:00 pm features the theme of *Prayer*. Our Scripture will be Romans 12:12 and we will have lots of prayer related games, crafts and activities. Dinner will be sloppy Joes, chips & raw veggies. Plan now to participate and join us for a great evening of Food, Fun and Fellowship. Invite your friends!

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. top continue our outreach into the community.

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.

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.

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: On 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 Meat-loaf. 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.

Prayers and Posts

We ask for continuing prayer requests for: Bruce Deckard, Gary Meyer, Don Osborne, Jr., The Family of Laura Sanders, Mark Schutter, Kelvin Strange, Lynne Simmons, Katrina Memering, Jasmine Zeller, The Family of Sam (Dick) Goodman, Ted Lowe and Vern Houchins.



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

Vern Houchins



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.

Visioning for St. John's UCC

God is calling us forward! St. John's is beginning a visioning process to shape our future together—strengthening ministry for youth, families, singles, older adults, and expanding our mission in the community. Your voice matters! Please join us at the upcoming strategic visioning sessions as we share ideas, listen to one another, and dream about where God is leading us next.

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.

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