

EIGHTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER  
PENTECOST

October 12, 2025

Jeremiah 29:1,4-7

Planting Life

If you knew the world would end tomorrow, what would you do today?

When Martin Luther, the 16th-century German scholar and theologian, was asked this question, he replied, "I would plant an apple tree."

Now it's debatable whether Luther said this or not. He did adore nature, and he did give us the tradition of bringing an evergreen into our homes at Christmastime. But regardless of him planting an actual apple tree, what really matters is how we would answer such a question today.

What would we do to show hope in the future even when that future didn't seem very promising? Would we dare to plant a tree?

Jeremiah would. The prophet even invites those he is writing to who are now living in exile in Babylon to join him. Lay down roots even in a strange land.

The children of God, though, don't want any part of the Babylonian way of life. They want to return to Jerusalem. Their homesickness is spiraling into a deep, gloomy pit that is robbing them of the joy God still has for them.

Isn't it true for all of us that when life doesn't go our way, our disappointments often cloud our eyes from seeing the still-in-front-of-us God possibilities.

Jeremiah, though, isn't buying their pity party. He instructs them on how to carry on with hope and faith. Take wives. Have children. Multiply there in the land of your exile. Build homes. Plant gardens. Don't wait for when you return to Jerusalem. Live in the now and make beautiful plans for tomorrow — despite your current situation.

Lay down roots even in the very soil you wish your feet never stepped upon, for in that very soil a seed will still grow into something beautiful.

We are all being called to plant life this day — to bring forth hope amid despair, beauty amid ugliness, and calm amid chaos.

If you knew the world would end tomorrow, what would you do?

May today we take our shovels and begin planting Luther's fabled apple trees.

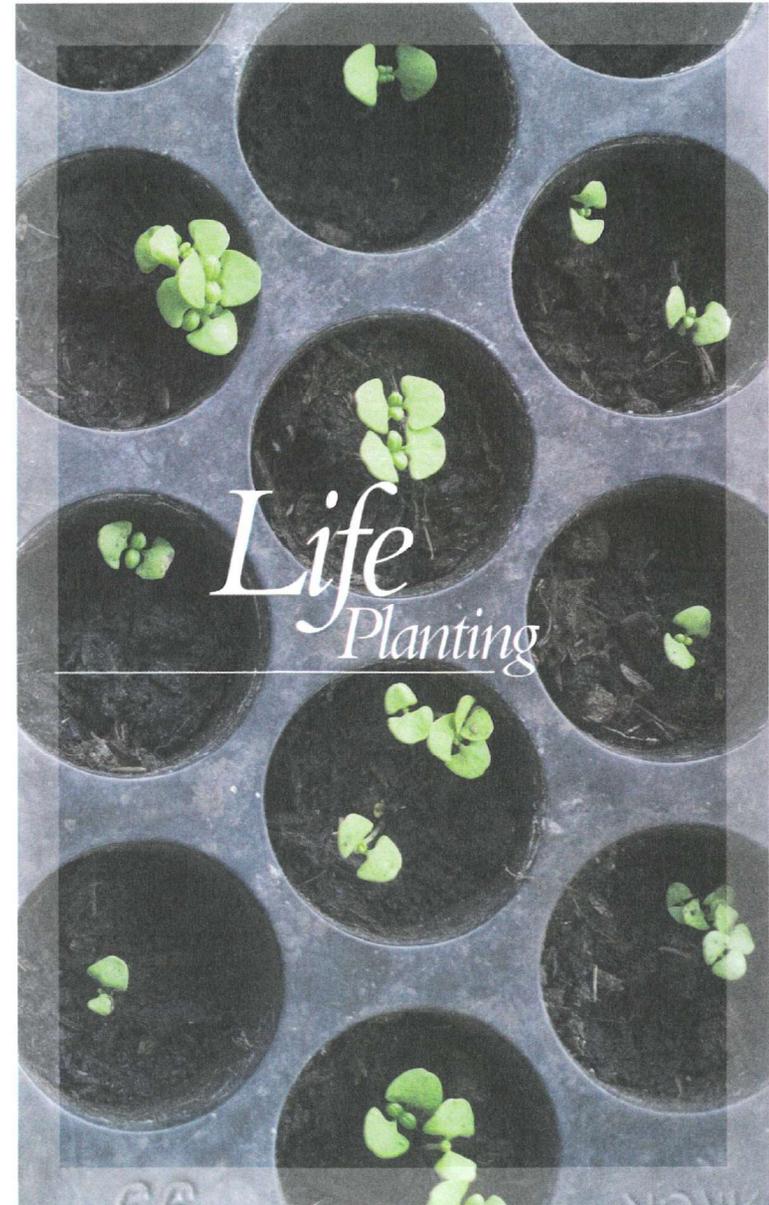
*God of promises, help us to accept where we are this day in our lives. Rather than focusing on what we don't have or what we long for, open our eyes to the beautiful gifts and the precious people who are right in front of us. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen.*

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



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St. John's United Church of Christ  
**Eighteenth Sunday after Pentecost**  
 October 12, 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)*

Let us hear the Word of the Lord. Let us be warmed by its fire burning in our hearts.

**God's Word is a lamp to our feet, a light along the pathway.**

In the presence of the Word, revealed in Jesus Christ, written in Scripture, praised in hymns, proclaimed in preaching, expressed in prayer,

**Now here in this time together, let us praise God as we join in song.**

\***OPENING HYMN** *Praise, My Soul, the God of Heaven* (vs. 1 & 2) #23

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

Holy God, we receive your invitation to worship you with joy and thanks. We enter your presence to acknowledge you as our creator, redeemer, rock and guide. You alone are holy and worthy of the devotion and adoration of our hearts. We thank you for your presence which is constant, your grace which is limitless, your love which is unending. We praise you for your mighty acts, your faithful word and your ageless wisdom. Prepare our hearts that in this hour all that we do may honor you as Lord. Amen.

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

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

**ANTHEM** *Make Us One With You* McDonald

**OFFERING INVITATION\*\***

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

\***RESPONSE** *Now Thank We All Our God* (v.1) #715

\***PRAYER OF DEDICATION** *(unison)*

**You have poured out your unsearchable love upon us, gracious God. Accept these gifts, we pray, as our free and grateful response to your love, and may you use them — and us — to spread the Good News of Jesus' love for all the world. 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 66:1-12

New Testament: 2 Timothy 2:8-15

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

**MESSAGE** *Do Your Best*

\***CLOSING HYMN** *God, Whose Giving Knows No Ending* #606

\***BLESSING** *(responsively)*

Go now in the power of the Holy Spirit to live as siblings of Christ, reflecting Christ's glory, loving as he loved, choosing to serve God above self. Amen.

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

\***POSTLUDE**

\*\*You may place your offering in the designated basket 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.

## Announcements

**THIS WEEK** both Pastor Debbie and our secretary, Kim Butler, will be on vacation. The office will be closed on Monday with volunteers staffing Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday. Kim will return to the office on Friday.

### **October is Pastor Appreciation Month!**

Let's show our love and gratitude to Debbie for all she does. One of her bucket list dreams is a trip to Scotland — and we'd love to help make that dream come true. If you feel led, please consider donating toward this special gift. The office secretary, Kim, can take the donation for you.

**NEXT SUNDAY** is Harvest Homecoming. Please bring in canned goods for the Blessings Box.

**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.

**SIGN THE LIST IN THE BACK OF SANCTUARY** to make reservations for Dinner & Conversation on Thursday at 6:00pm. This week we are at Luigi's.

**Family Movie Night:** On October 21st at 5:00 pm we will gather to watch *Clue* (rated PG) starring Tim Curry, Madeline Kahn, Leslie Warren, Christopher Lloyd, Eileen Brennan, Michael McKeon and Martin Mull. Synopsis: *Six blackmail victims are invited to an isolated mansion by a man who knows a dark secret from each of their pasts. On arrival, each is given a pseudonym drawn from the board game., Clue before being introduced to the blackmailer. Each is handed a weapon, at which point the lights are switched off and the blackmailer is killed. Can the guests uncover the murderer before they all become victims?* The movie has three endings and we will see who can decide the murderer in advance. Everyone is invited but PLEASE SIGN THE RESERVA-

**MESSY CHURCH** on November 5th from 5:30-7:00 pm features the theme of *Gratitude: The Bounty of the Earth and with lots of thankful* related games, crafts and activities. Dinner will be baked pasta, salad and garlic bread. Plan now to participate and join us for a great evening

**Conference Youth Retreat** for Grades 6-12 will take place on on November 14-16, beginning at 7 pm Friday and ending at 11 am Sunday morning at Camp Cedar Ridge in Louisville, KY. The church will pay the \$125 fee for any young person from our church family who wishes to attend. You may register online at by going to the IKC website weekly newsletter, *Roots and Shoots* at [ikc@ikcucc.org](mailto:ikc@ikcucc.org). The church will send one check to cover everyone attending. Contact Will or Pastor Debbie for more details.

## 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, Cindy Utley, Jessica Conner, and Marilyn and Vern Houchins.



We offer our sympathy and prayers to Sarah Lowe and family in the death of her brother, Theodore Dee Lowe on October 7<sup>th</sup>. He was confirmed here at St. John's in 1976.

### **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 and Marilyn Houchins

**Until further notice, all prayer requests or updates should be relayed to Janet Goodman instead of the church office. Email: [terrybaseball@gmail.com](mailto:terrybaseball@gmail.com)  
Text or phone call: 812-887-2797.**

### This Week in the Life of St. John's

#### Sunday, October 12

Adult FF Class 9:30 am  
Worship 10:30am  
Visioning Session 11:45-1pm  
Wasbash Trails Cookout 5-7:30pm (CFM)

#### Tuesday, October 14

Sandy's Pantry 11-12:30pm

#### Thursday, October 16

Dinner & Conversation - Luigi's @ 6 pm

#### Monday, October 13

HOLIDAY OFFICE CLOSED  
Friends 5:30-6:15 pm  
Benevolence Meeting 6:30 pm

#### Wednesday, October 15

Choir Practice 7 pm

#### Saturday, October 17th

Holiday World, 10:15-9:30pm  
(KFC/Youth)

### Looking Ahead In October

#### Sunday, October 19

Adult FF Class 9:30am  
Worship 10:30 am  
Harvest Home  
Canned Goods Collection  
Youth Group 11:30-1pm  
Movie Night -Clue 5pm

#### Wednesday, October 22

Choir Practice 7 pm  
November Newsletter items Due in Office Today

#### Monday, October 20

Church Board 7pm  
Friends 5:30-6:15 pm

#### Tuesday, October 21

Vision Session with Supper 5:30 - 7 pm  
Girl Scouts 4:30-6pm

#### Thursday, October 23

Dinner & Conversation  
Ponderosa 6pm



### Staff and Volunteers

<b>Pastor:</b>	Rev. Debbie Jo Atkins
<b>Secretary</b>	Kim Butler
<b>Liturgist:</b>	Eric Meyer
<b>Head Usher:</b>	Sandra Lange
<b>Organist:</b>	DeEtta Welte
<b>Music Director, Pianist:</b>	Becky Brockman
<b>Children &amp; Family Ministry Coordinator:</b>	Will Meyer
<b>Nursery Attendant:</b>	Darcie Bahr
<b>Projection:</b>	Saudra Lange
<b>Sound:</b>	Jonathon Lange
<b>Church Board President:</b>	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.