

SEVENTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER
PENTECOST

October 5, 2025

Psalm 137

Free to Grieve

A seminary professor once told his class of future pastors that there should always be a box of tissues in the pews of the churches they will serve.

"If a person can't cry in the sanctuary, then where?" he asked.

I took this advice to heart. Every church I shepherded I made the case to the frugal finance committee for why we needed to order boxes of tissues for the pews.

It was an added cost worth every penny because there was always one person who came through the church doors as a stranger seeking solace who stayed as a sibling who had found healing. And the comment from these solace seekers was always the same: "Pastor, I was grateful for those tissues. I never felt like I could cry like that in church." To which I replied, "If not here, then where?"

For the exiled Israelites it was by the rivers of Babylon where we are told they hung their harps on the willows and proceeded to lament — sobbing a great and heavy collective sob over all that they had lost. They were captives of Babylon. They had lost not just their physical homes, but their spiritual havens as well. They were stripped of their identities and their freedoms.

There are many today in our world in need of a willow to hang their harp on. They need a safe place to crumble to the ground and sob over all that they have lost, be it an actual place of belonging or a sense of purpose.

Perhaps we, ourselves, are finding the Israelites' grief hitting too close to home. Losses are piling on top of losses without anytime to properly grieve or adjust to realities that are strange and unwelcomed.

We are living in a time where we all need to give ourselves — and others — the permission to freely grieve. We need to open wide those floodgates that have been holding back our tears. We need to cry to God in our distress. We need to wail and flail over all the injustices happening to and around us. We are in a place of exile from what we have treasured, and thought would never be taken away from us.

We all need a riverbank where we can sit and grieve. We need a place of refuge where we can let it all out. We need a pew with a box of tissues in it, lovingly placed by a pastor who is ready to shed a tear with us.

Compassionate God who not only hears our cries, but weeps with us, we bring you our tears, asking you to wipe them away and restore to us a sense of renewal and wholeness. 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

Bulletin artwork and backpage stories copyright © 2025 United Church of Christ

BUL0105





St. John's United Church of Christ
Seventeenth Sunday after Pentecost
 October 5, 2025



* Please stand if it is comfortable to do so. **Bold print** is everyone in unison
World Communion

WELCOME, ANNOUNCEMENTS, GREET ONE ANOTHER (be seated)

CHURCH BELL (the bell invites us to worship) **PRELUDE**

GOD CALLS US TO WORSHIP (responsively)

Feel the living presence of Christ:

Dwell in the silence, rise in the song,

Live in the Word, be in the prayer.

Feed at the table, for this is worship.

Let us come together and praise our living God.

AMEN and AMEN!

* **OPENING HYMN** *I Come with Joy* (v.1 & 2) #420

* **WE CONFESS OUR SIN TO GOD** (unison)

God above all and within all, you desire a harmony of heart and mind, of humanity and creation that flows as steadily as a mountain stream. Yet how often we block the flow. We prefer to notice differences, point out flaws, look for contradictions. The inner connections with all creation, the shared breath of the universe, get lost in a sea of distinctions. We let divisive words pass without challenge and let skin color and dress and language push us apart. Healing God, weave us together. Break down the walls that divide us and let your unity flow within us. In the name of Jesus. Amen.

GOD FORGIVES US

God hears our cry and sends the Spirit to change us and empower our lives in the world. Our sins are forgiven.

God's love is unconditional, and we are raised up as God's people, who will always be made new in the name of Jesus Christ.

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

CHILDREN'S MESSAGE (children please come forward)

Jesus Loves Me

ANTHEM

Let Us Break Bread Together

Althouse

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)

Thanks be to you, O God, for all good gifts, and especially for your inexpressible gift of the Lord Jesus. Help us, O Lord, to see wherein we have been blessed, and to be a blessing to others. Amen.

WE GATHER IN PRAYER

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

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

SCRIPTURE: Old Testament: Psalm 137

New Testament: 2 Timothy 1:1-14

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

MESSAGE *What is This Really?*

SACRAMENT OF HOLY COMMUNION

* **CLOSING HYMN** *Let Us Talents and Tongues Employ* #422

* **BLESSING** (responsively)

Let us go forth as workers together with God proclaiming the Good News, performing deeds of mercy and kindness, and giving evidence of Christ's love in all that we do.

And may the grace of God be with us all. Amen.

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

* **POSTLUDE**

Announcements

Communion at St. John's is open to **EVERYONE**, no matter their age, church affiliation or non-affiliation, Confirmed or not. If you belong to Christ you are welcome at the table. It is God's table, not ours. No one should be denied God's grace through the sacrament.

Please correct your **October Newsletter**. Monday, October 13th is a holiday and the office will be closed, not Tuesday as listed. We apologize for any inconvenience.

Reformation Sunday/Covenant Tour will take place on Sunday October 26th with our Conference Minister, Rev. Dr. Monica Ouelette, will be in the pulpit. A pulled pork (courtesy of Brayton Cummins) fellowship meal will follow. This is part of the Covenant Tour where the Conference Ministers are visiting all the churches in the Indiana-Kentucky Conference.

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.

Harvest Home worship will take place on October 19th and everyone is invited to bring in canned goods for the Blessings Box.

Conference Youth Retreat for Grades 6-12 will take place 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. The church will send one check to cover everyone attending. Contact Will or Pastor Debbie for more details.

Blessing of the Costumes will take place during the Children's Moment on Oct. 26th and all children are asked to wear their Halloween costumes to worship.



Family Movie Night: On October 19th 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 Clue game 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.

Prayers and Posts

We ask for continuing prayer requests for friends and family: Bruce Deckard, Gary Meyer, Don Osborne, Jr., Mark Schutter, Kelvin Strange, Lynne Simmons, Katrina Memering, Jasmine Zeller, Ted Lowe, Cindy Utley, Jessica Conner, and Vern and Marilyn 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



Prayer requests or updates can now be relayed to the church office during regular office hours and Janet Goodman during the evening/weekend.

Email: st.johnsuccoffice@gmail.com or call 812-882-2720 M-F, 9 am - 1 pm

For Janet: terrybaseball@gmail.com Text or phone call: 812-887-2797.

This Week in the Life of St. John's

Sunday, October 5th

Adult FF Class 9:30 am
Worship 10:30 am
Neighbors In Need Offering
World Communion Sunday
Faith Ventures 10:30 am (K-6 grade)

Tuesday, October 7th

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

Thursday, October 9th

Tech Mtg. 10:00 am
Dinner & Conversation - Cafe Moonlight @ 6 pm

Monday, October 6th

BABE Store 12 - 5:30 pm
Friends 5-6:15 pm
Evangelism & Membership 6 pm

Wednesday, October 8th

Choir Practice 7 pm
Christian Ed Mtg. 6 pm
Messy Church Core Team Mtg. 5:30 pm

Saturday, October 11th

Fall Afternoon Fun 3-5 pm (M&M's)

Looking Ahead In October

Sunday, October 12th

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

Tuesday, October 14th

Vision Session with Supper 5:30 - 7 pm
Sandy's Pantry 11 am - 12:30 pm

Thursday, October 16th

Dinner & Conversation - Luigi's @ 6 pm
Sandy's Pantry 11 am - 12:30 pm

Monday, October 13th

Holiday - Office Closed
Friends 5-6:15 pm

Wednesday, October 15th

Choir Practice 7 pm

Saturday, October 18th

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



Staff and Volunteers

Pastor:	Rev. Debbie Jo Atkins
Church Secretary:	Kim Butler
Liturgist:	
Head Usher:	Sandra Lange
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.