

TWENTIETH SUNDAY AFTER
PENTECOST

October 26, 2025

Luke 18:9-14

Just Worship

I had a childhood friend who always wanted attention. Be it on the playground or in the classroom, her favorite words were, “Look at me!” She needed affirmation. She desired recognition.

I, on the hand, was quite shy. So, whenever my friend went into spotlight seeking mode, I would inch away from her. I didn’t want attention by association.

While I never would stop being her friend, at times it bothered me. So much so that I would take my frustration to the one person I knew would listen and understand. No, not God. Although that should have been my first choice. Rather, I took my woes to my mom.

The wisdom she spoke to me, I can still hear today. Those who cry “look at me” are often lacking something deep inside, she said. When you know who you are — more importantly, when you know it is God you belong to — then there is no need to be loud in your search for validation.

Luke’s Gospel illustrates this perfectly for us, presenting a picture of two people praying in the public square. One, a Pharisee, bellowing his “look at me” prayer for all to hear.

“Thank you, God, that I am not like the tax collector,” he shouts in misguided praise and thanksgiving.

The other person is in fact that tax collector, who also comes before God in a time of much-need prayer. But rather than stepping into the spotlight, he hides himself in the shadows. He doesn’t want anyone looking at him. He doesn’t even want God’s eyes on him. He is sorrowful and truly repentant.

God, though, sees the man in the shadows. God also sees the attention-seeking Pharisee. And God sees right into their hearts. So, when Jesus tells his friends which man went home justified, they might have been surprised to have heard it was the man in the shadows.

“Look at me! Look at me!” is not something that should be coming out of the mouths of those following Christ. For Jesus, himself, reminded his friends often that he had come to serve and not be served. Jesus taught there was greatness in weakness and that the first shall be last and the last shall be first.

We don’t have to shout to God this day, “Look at me!” Rather, we should be whispering, “Have mercy on me.” For God already sees us. God knows the desires, fears, joys, and secrets that are in our hearts. We don’t need to validate our goodness or our worth with God. And for that, let the people shout, “Amen!”

All-knowing God, you who sees into our hearts know already what we need. We do not need to justify our goodness or seek validation. We are your beloved children, and you care for us deeply. Help us this day to remember how worthy we are in your sight. In Jesus’ name, we pray. Amen.

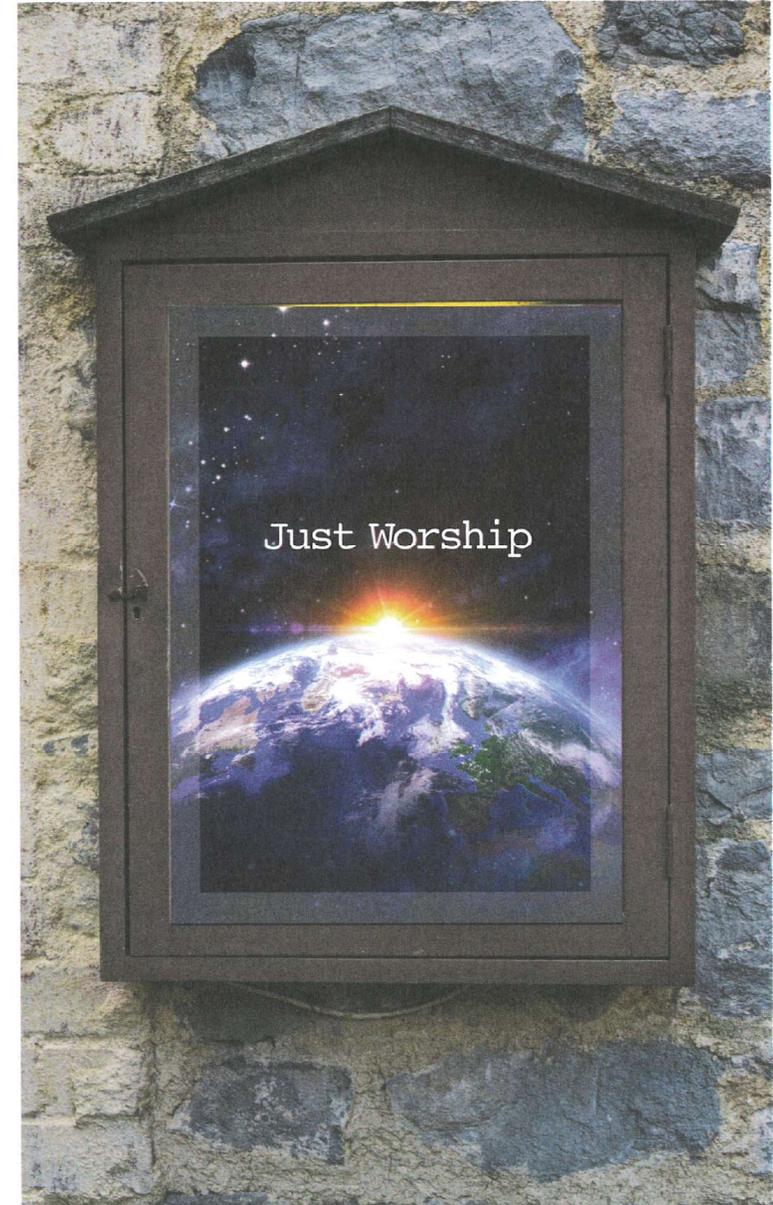
(Rev. Donna Frischknecht Jackson is a communications specialist for the United Church of Christ and author of today’s Sunday Bulletin.)



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

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St. John's United Church of Christ
 Twentieth Sunday after Pentecost
 October 26, 2025
Reformation Sunday



* 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)

Martin Luther

Behold, Lord, an empty vessel that needs to be filled.

My Lord, fill it.

I am weak in the faith; strengthen me.

I am cold in love; warm me and make me fervent, that my love may go out to my neighbor.

I do not have a strong and firm faith; at times I doubt and am unable to trust you altogether.

O Lord, help me. Strengthen my faith and trust in you.

In you I have sealed the treasure of all I have.

I am poor; you are rich and came to be merciful to the poor.

I am a sinner; you are upright.

With me, there is an abundance of sin; in you is the fullness of righteousness.

***OPENING HYMN** *A Mighty Fortress is Our God* (vs. 1 & 2) #65

***WE INVITE GOD TO WORSHIP** (unison) adapted from prayers of Martin Luther

Waken our hearts, O Lord, our God; make them ever watchful to serve you and your purposes. Trouble us with the smallness of our vision and work. Rekindle in us a renewed desire for the coming of your glorious kingdom when all wrongs will be made right, when everything that is broken will be made whole, and when we will trade a cross for a crown. Amen.

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

ANTHEM *Empty Hands, Open Heart* Larsen

CHILDREN'S MESSAGE & COSTUME BLESSING *Jesus Loves Me*

MEMORIAL MOMENT Bruce Deckard

STEWARDSHIP MOMENT John Riggs

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)

Generous God, accept our gifts and transform them to do your will. May we continue to be your hands and feet as we minister to those around us. 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: Jeremiah 31: 33-34

New Testament: 1 Corinthians 11: 23-26

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

MESSAGE *Together We are the Conference*

***CLOSING HYMN** *A Mighty Fortress is Our God* (vs. 3 & 4) #65

***BLESSING** (responsively)

My friends, go forth from this place nourished by the gifts of God's love through Christ our Lord.

So loved and so nourished, may we love and nurture others so that the kingdom of God may come. Amen.

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

* **POSTLUDE**

Announcements

** You may place your offerings in the designated basket or online at myucc.org and clicking on the *contribution* button. Please prayerfully consider setting up regular online donations to continue our outreach into the community.

WE WELCOME OUR CONFERENCE MINISTER, The Rev. Dr. Monica Ouehlette to our pulpit this morning as part of the Conference Tour wherein the Conference Ministers will visit each of the congregations that make up the Indiana-Kentucky Conference. Please join us for lunch in Memorial Hall after the service for an opportunity to speak with Rev. Ouehlette and tell her about all the wonderful ministries in which we are involved. We will be sharing in more of Brayton Cummins delicious pulled pork!

NEXT SUNDAY is Totenfest Memorial Sunday. We will remember those of our church who have entered into eternal life during the past year. A candle will be lit, the bell rung, and yellow roses will be in honor of each person recognized.

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

November Youth Dates

- 11/05 (Wednesday) 7pm-8pm **After Messy Church**
- 11/14 (Friday) 6pm-10pm **KFC & Youth "An Evening at Church"**
- 11/16 (Sunday) 4pm-5:30pm
- 11/23 (Sunday) 5pm-7:30pm **CFM Holiday Fundraiser Prep**
- 11/30 (Sunday) 11:30am-1pm **Lunch Provided**

Church Visioning Survey needs to be turned in by October 30th. If you didn't pick up a survey, there are some available in the back of the church. Surveys can be turned in also at the back of the church in the basket.

DREAMING GOD'S DREAM: *No Gift Too Small, No Dream Too Big* is the theme of this year's Stewardship campaign. For the next few weeks, we will be sharing our dreams for our congregation as we approach our Stewardship Sunday on November 9th. During our recent Visioning gatherings, we have heard a lot of the dreams church members have for our congregation. Let's work together to make those dreams into reality.

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

FALL BACK - Don't forget time change on November 2nd.

MOVIE NIGHT: Join us on Sunday, November 16th at 5:00pm for a light supper and the comedy, *The Money Pit*, starring Tom Hanks and Shelley Long. A couple buys their dream home only to discover it's a real "fixer-upper." Please sign up on the sheet in the back of sanctuary so we can better plan for the meal.

ACOLYTES: Calling all interested young people in Grades 4-12 who would like to serve as acolytes for Sunday morning worship. Acolytes serve as "light bearers." They carry the light of Christ into the sanctuary during the Prelude and light the candles on the altar. At the close of the service, they carry the light of Christ out into the world during the Postlude. Pastor Debbie Jo will have a training for those interested in serving on Sunday morning, November 9th. At 9:30a.m.

WE EXTEND OUR HEARTFELT CHRISTIAN SYMPATHY AND PRAYERS to the family of Bruce Deckard who entered into eternal life on October 13, 2025. Bruce was a long-time, faithful member of this congregation and a Celebration of Life service was held yesterday in our sanctuary. Prayers especially for his wife, Cindy their children, Chad & Krisi and his entire family.

Prayers and Posts

We ask for continuing prayer requests for: Gary Meyer, Don Osborne, Jr., Conway Wilson and Davissyn Brown, brother of Daxton Brown (preschooler). 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. Jo Tarrh, sister of Jill Lopez, Jerri Johanningsmeier and Terry Goodman.

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:

- 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
Text or phone call: 812-887-2797.

This Week in the Life of St. John's

Sunday, October 26

Adult FF Class 9:30am
Worship 10:30 am
Conference Covenant
Tour 10:30am

Monday, October 27

Friends 5:30-6:15 pm
Babe Store noon-5:30pm

Tuesday, October 28

Cadet Girl Scouts 4:30-6pm

Wednesday, October 29

Choir Practice 7 pm
Laundry Love 6-8pm

Thursday, October 30

Dinner & Conversation
CoCo's 6pm

Looking Ahead In November

Sunday, November 2

Adult FF Class 9:30am
Worship 10:30 am
Totenfest/Memorial Sunday
10:30 Communion

Wednesday, November 5

Choir Practice 7pm
Messy Church/Advant Festival 5:30-7pm

Friday, November 7

Phoebe's Mission

Monday, November 3

Friends 5:30-6:15 pm
Membership & Evangelism 6:30pm

Tuesday, November 4

Cadet Girl Scouts 4:30-6pm
Election Day

Thursday, November 6

Dinner & Conversation
@ 6pm – El Charro



Staff and Volunteers

Pastor:	Rev. Debbie Jo Atkins
Secretary	Kim Butler
Liturgist:	John Riggs
Head Usher:	Saundra 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.

