

TWENTY-THIRD SUNDAY AFTER
PENTECOST

November 16, 2025

Isaiah 65:17-25

Infinite Possibilities

Imagine a world where everyone gets along. A place where the Lord says nothing shall be hurt or destroyed, where even the wolf and the lamb eat together peacefully.

This is the vision of a peaceable kingdom that the prophet Isaiah brings to us today. It is a world where only happiness and rejoicing exists. There is no pain nor sorrow.

My friends, such a world is possible because our God is one who holds infinite possibilities. It is only our own limited capacities for love and redemption that keep us captive to finite probabilities.

What if this day, though, we could lay aside our disbelief and enter the God possibilities? What if we could finally believe the world can change for the better, starting with our own hearts realizing that nothing is ever hopeless.

Take for instance the miraculous story of the wolf of Gubbio, which is found in the 14th-century short story collection, *The Little Flowers of St. Francis*. The story tells of saint's encounter with the good people of Gubbio, Italy, who are being terrorized by a heartless and vicious wolf. The wolf not only steals their food but also their children.

Francis finds the wolf, but before the animal can attack, the saint makes the sign of the cross over its head. The wolf bows down and leans into Francis, who then asks the wolf why the residents of Gubbio are angry with him. The wolf says he is simply hungry.

Francis then makes a deal with the townsfolk to feed the wolf, who he has now named "Brother Wolf."

In return, Brother Wolf promises not to do any harm. For years, wolf and people live in peace, with Brother Wolf roaming the village streets and entering homes without incident. When Brother Wolf dies, Gubbio grieves deeply. The feared enemy had become a dear friend, and all it took was for someone to listen to the one who was misunderstood. All it took was for someone to take note of the struggle beneath the façade of strength to make peace in Gubbio possible.

While just a legend, the story is a moving tale that not only tugs at our heartstrings but invokes a vision of God's hope for us all — to live in harmony with one another.

What if we stopped fearing the wolves in our lives and seek to understand the "enemy" we tend to mistrust and hate all too quickly? Perhaps if we did, we would come to tame not only the wolf roaming about, but the wolf within.

Limitless God, your love knows no boundaries. It is far-reaching and healing. Help us to see beyond the limitations that our fears and disbelief nurture. Fill our minds with wisdom from above and help us to take a step towards a more peaceable world. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen.

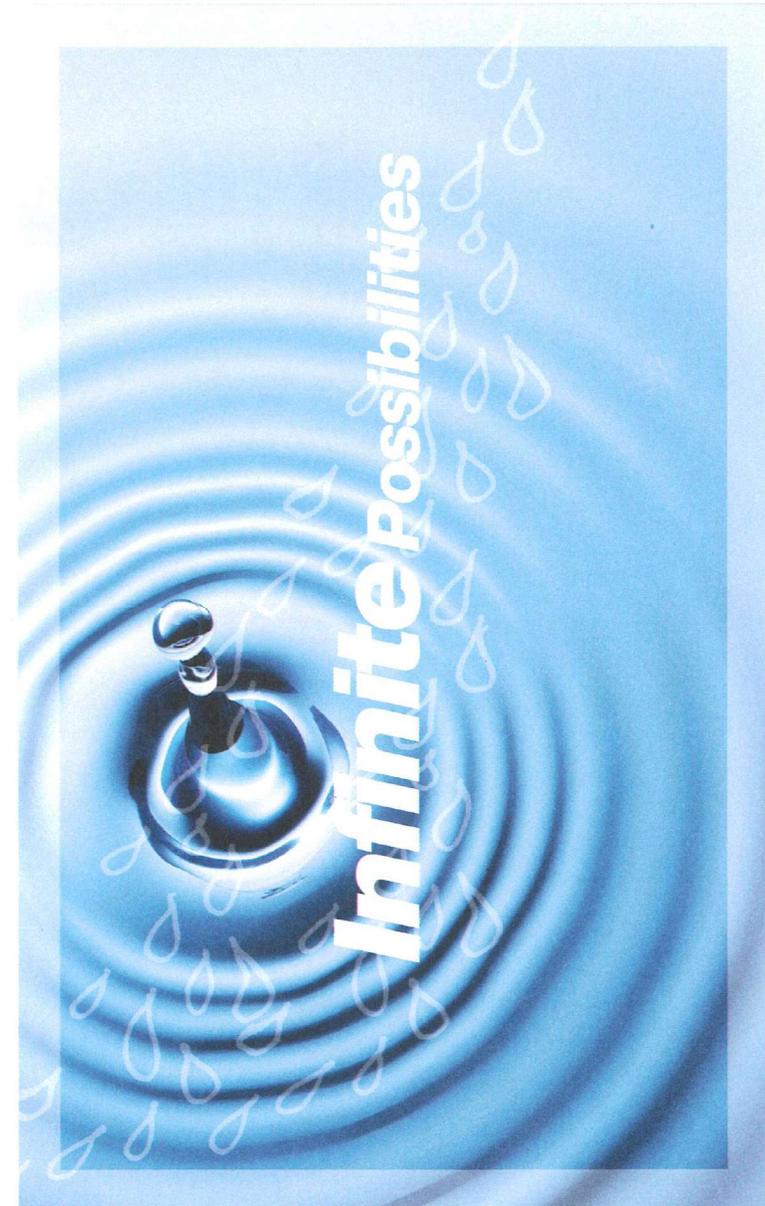
(Rev. Donna Frischknecht Jackson is a communications specialist for the United Church of Christ and author of today's Sunday Bulletin.)



8.5" x 14" UCC SUNDAY BULLETIN SERVICE

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St. John's United Church of Christ
 Twenty-Third Sunday after Pentecost
 November 16, 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)

I will give thanks to God;

I will trust and will not be afraid.

The Lord God is my strength and my might;

God has become my salvation.

Shout aloud and sing for joy,

For great in our midst is the Holy One.

* **OPENING HYMN** *For the Healing of the Nations* (vs. 1 & 2) #668

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

Ready us, O God, for rebirth. Put us in touch with our need for another chance and help us to embrace it. And then send us someone to whom we can offer a drink at your well, just as you gave us to drink. Save us, O God, with the promise and reality of living water for our thirst. Amen.

* **RESPONSE** *O For a World* (v.1) #683

ANTHEM *Lord, I Stretch My Hands to You* Athouse

CHILDREN'S MESSAGE *Jesus Loves Me*

OFFERING INVITATION**

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

* **RESPONSE** *We Give Thee but Thine Own* #382

* **PRAYER OF DEDICATION** (unison)

Gracious God, we offer ourselves to you, that we might be a sign of your power among us. Use our money, our time and our talents all to your will. In the name of the Christ. Amen.

WE GATHER IN PRAYER

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

Congregational Response *O For a World* (v.2) #683

SCRIPTURE: Old Testament: Isaiah 12
 New Testament: Luke 21:13

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

MESSAGE *How Deep is Your Well?*

* **CLOSING HYMN** *For the Healing of the Nations* (vs. 3 & 4) #668

* **BLESSING** (responsively)

May the blessing of God the Creator, Jesus our Redeemer, and the Holy Spirit, our Guide, go with us.

May we go forth, rejoicing that our God is always with us in all times and places, and in all the seasons of our lives. Amen.

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

* **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.

Announcements

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

COMMUNION AT ST. JOHN'S UCC 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.

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

November Youth Dates

11/16 (Sunday) 4pm-5:30pm

11/23 (Sunday) 5pm-7:30pm **CFM Holiday Fundraiser Prep**

11/30 (Sunday) 11:30am-1pm **Lunch Provided**

MESSY CHURCH/ADVENT EVENT will take place on Wednesday, December 3rd from 5:30-7:00 pm. This year the Messy Church Core Team, Christian Education Committee and the Membership & Evangelism Committee have united to combine these two events. Our theme is *Jump for Joy: It's Christmas!* We will have a bounce house in addition to our regular activities which include: Worship, Dinner (soup & sandwiches and a fruit plate), a mini-cake walk, tree decorating, a cookie bar & punch, foam Advent wreaths, Joy necklace, candy making with Elaine, melted crayon ornaments, painting and MORE! Advent coloring/activity books & crayons will be sent home with each child. Join us for an exciting evening of food, faith, fun and fellowship!

NEXT SUNDAY is Thanksgiving Sunday. Join us as we share God's many blessings and gratitude for the many gifts we have received. Take part in Fellowship Time in Memorial Hall at 10:00 a.m.

ADVENT BEGINS on November 30th. Join us as we begin this holy season of preparation for the coming of Christ into the world.

MOVIE NIGHT: Join us on Sunday, November 16th at 5:00 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 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.

Prayers and Posts

We ask for continuing prayer requests for: Gary Meyer, Don Osborne, Jr. and Conway Wilson. The Family of Mark Schutter, Kelvin Strange, Jasmine Zeller, Cindy Utley, Jessica Conner, and Marilyn and Vern Houchins. Jo Tarrh, sister of Jill Lopez and Jerri Johanningsmeier, Mollie Joice, cousin of Darcie Bahr and prayers for Bobby Bahr. A kidney donor has been found for Katrina Memering. Her surgery is scheduled for December 11. Please continue to keep her and the donor in your prayers.

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:

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, November 16

Adult FF Class 9:30am
Worship 10:30am
Youth Group 11:30-1pm
Movie Night (The Money Pit) @ 5pm

Tuesday, November 18

Girl Scouts 4:30-6pm
Preschool Meeting 6pm

Thursday, November 20

Dinner & Conversation 6pm @ Café Moonlight

Monday, November 17

BABE Store 12-5:30pm
Friends 5:30-6:15pm
Music & Worship 6pm
Board Mtg with Association @ 6pm
Church Board 7pm

Wednesday, November 19

Choir Practice 7pm
December Newsletter Due in Office Today

Friday, November 21

Looking Ahead In November

Sunday, November 23

Adult FF Class 9:30am
Worship 10:30am
Fellowship Time @ 10am

Tuesday, November 25

Cadette Girl Scouts 4:30-6pm

Thursday, November 27

Thanksgiving

Monday, November 24

BABE Store 12-5:30pm
Friends 5:30-6:15 pm

Wednesday, November 26

Laundry Love 6-8pm
Choir Practice 7pm

Friday, November 28

Office Closed



Staff and Volunteers

Pastor:	Rev. Debbie Jo Atkins
Secretary	Kim Butler
Liturgist:	John Riggs
Head Usher:	Sandra Lange
Organist:	DeEtta Welte
Music Director, Pianist:	Becky Brockman
Children & Family Ministry Coordinator:	Will Meyer
Nursery Attendant:	Darcie Bahr
Projection:	Jill Lopez
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.