

FIRST SUNDAY AFTER
CHRISTMAS DAY

December 28, 2025

Psalm 148

Cosmic Praise

How many forlorn Christmas trees, kicked to the curb and stripped of all their tinsel glory, did you see on your way to church today? One? Two? Perhaps even three?

Once again, the world has rushed the seasons, ushering in the bleak midwinter before its time. I have always wondered why we are quick to start our holiday celebrations earlier each year, and then seem to be in a rush to pack it all away? We are still in Christmastide until Epiphany, Jan. 6 which, before St. Nick came with a sack full of toys, was traditionally the time to exchange gifts, recalling the gold, frankincense and myrrh that the Magi presented to the Christ Child.

But rather than lingering to listen to the angels sing, we stop too soon, leaving many to come down with a severe case of post-holiday letdown. You might recognize the symptoms: sadness, lethargy, and trouble getting back into the swing of mundane routines.

While my Christmas tree stays lit until Jan. 6, I am still susceptible to post-holiday letdown. But when I find myself struggling to get out of bed and stare with dread at the computer, not wanting to check work emails, I reach for the best cure I know of. I reach for God's enduring Word.

It is in the Good Book that we find the psalmist's prescription for let downs and blues of all kinds (not just holiday!): A huge dose of praise, administered every hour on the hour.

Praise him, all his angels! Praise him, all his host! Praise him you highest heavens! Praise him!

When we turn our attention to lifting our praises rather than cursing the darkness, our hearts start soaring with an indestructible hope. We begin believing that with God all things are possible. Frowns become smiles. Mountains become molehills. Strength, courage and energy return.

Praise is a transformative spiritual discipline that I urge us to add to our New Year's resolutions, that is, if you make resolutions. I remember reading years ago that Satan is more afraid of praise coming from our lips than praise. Yes, praise is that powerful. So my friends, practice praise — this day and always.

God of light and love, the Christmas decorations that filled our hearts with joy are being taken down. The corners of our lives that were illuminated with the glow of warm hope are now bleak and cold. Yet still we are being reminded to praise You — now and always. And so, hear our praises this day. And may our praise to You be the very thing that chases away the gloomy shadows all around. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen.

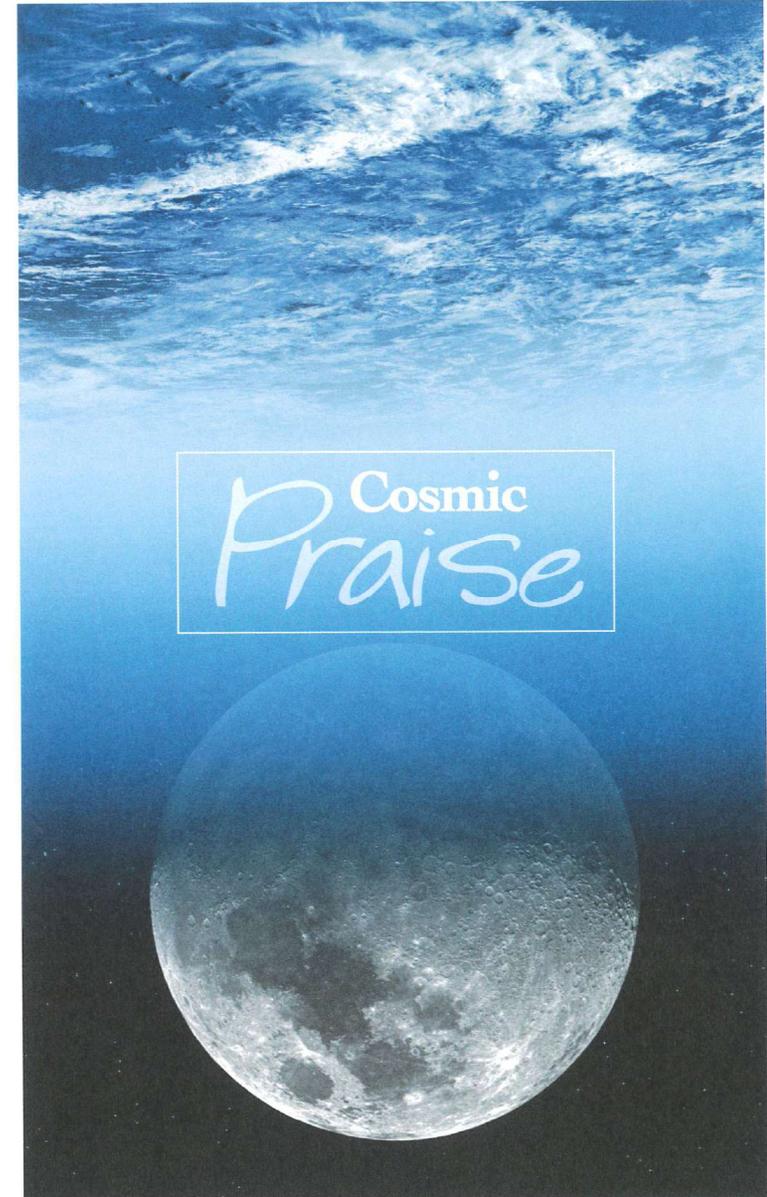
(Rev. Donna Frischknecht Jackson is a communications specialist for the United Church of Christ and author of today's Sunday Bulletin.)



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

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St. John's United Church of Christ
First Sunday after Christmas
December 28, 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)

Behold, the Morning Star of heaven;

Among beasts of the earth he is stabled.

The all-seeing eyes have closed in sleep.

The fullness of eternity is sealed in skin.

He who cradled all worlds is himself cradled in a mother's arms.

Behold, God, is one of us.

***OPENING HYMN** *O Come, All Ye Faithful* (vs. 1,2,4) #148

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

Come, O Long Expected Jesus, born to set your people free. We have sung through our Advent-waiting and have arrived at the Christmas season when we remember your birth, your incarnation, the Word becoming Emmanuel, God with Us, remind us of your presence throughout the year and be present with us in our worship today. Amen.

***RESPONSE** *Away in a Manger* #147

SOLO *My God Can* Vera Mattingly

CHILDREN'S MOMENT *Jesus Loves Me*

OFFERING INVITATION

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

***RESPONSE** *In the Bleak Midwinter* (v.4)

***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 (debts/debtors)

Congregational Response: *Angels We Have Heard on High* (v.1) #155

LESSONS AND CAROLS

Scripture	Isaiah 9: 2-7	
Carol	Lo, How a Rose E're Blooming	#160
Scripture	Luke 2:1-7	
Carol	<i>Infant Holy, Infant Lowly</i>	#163
Scripture	Luke 2: 8-20	
Carol	<i>I Saw Three Ships</i> (vs. 1-3, 5-6)	(on screen)
Scripture	Matthew 2: 1-2, 9b-12	
Carol	<i>As With Gladness</i>	#173

***CLOSING HYMN** *Go, Tell it On the Mountain* #167

***BLESSING** (responsively)

Cradle Christ in your hearts, bow in the presence of the Holy, and return to your homes with praise on your lips and joy in your soul.

Hallelujah! The Lord is Come!

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

* **POSTLUDE**

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.

EPIPHANY will be celebrated during worship on January 4th. Epiphany celebrates the arrival of the Magi bringing gifts to the infant Jesus. We will distribute "Star Words" of affirmation during the service.

DINNER & CONVERSATION: This week's dinner will be at Dogwood at 6:00 pm Thursday night. Please sign the list in the back of the sanctuary so we can reserve a large enough table.

RETIRING OF THE GREENS will take place immediately following worship on January 25th. Please stay if you are able to help put away Christmas decorations. Many hands make the work easier and faster.

MESSY CHURCH will be held on January 7th from 5:30-7:00 pm. The theme is *Follow the Star: The Three Kings*. Lots of activities, crafts, dinner and fun! We will receive "Star words," play "Pin the tail on the camel, decorate crowns and share a King Cake to see who will be "King/Queen" for the evening. Bring the family and join us.

PASTOR DEBBIE will be on vacation December 26-January 3rd. She will return to the pulpit on January 4th and to the office on January 5th.

THANK YOU to everyone who helped make our Advent season so special: readers, liturgists, acolytes, Advent candle lighters, musicians, teachers, multi-media, church staff, EVERYONE! We are a blessed church family of faith.

Our annual updates from the October 2025 Church Directory is now taking place through January 2026. If you would like to make a change in your personal entry, do so by calling the Church Office and leaving the corrections with Kim. 812-882-2720 or email stjohnsuccoffice@gmail.com. Items to change, add or delete are of the following: Photos, Resident Address, Email Address, Family Members, Phone numbers/work or home, Add new entries or delete entries and Errors in Spelling.

Prayers and Posts

We ask for continuing prayer requests for: Gary Meyer, Marilyn Houchins, Tony Riley and Ellen Riggs. Mollie Joice, cousin of Darcie Bahr and prayers for Bobby Bahr.

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

Ellen Riggs - Bridgepointe, 1900 College Avenue, Vincennes, IN 47591

At Home:

Gary Meyer

Mike Lankford

Prayer request or updates can now be relayed to the Church Office during regular office hours: Monday-Friday from 9am-1pm. Email: stjohnsuccoffice@gmail.com. Text or call at 812-882-2720.

Prayer request or updates are to be sent to Janet Goodman during the evening and weekends.

Email: terrybaseball@gmail.com. or you can text or call at 812-887-2797

This Week in the Life of St. John's

Sunday, December 28

Adult FF Class 9:30am
Worship 10:30am

Tuesday, December 30

Cadette Girl Scouts 4:30-6pm

Thursday, January 01

Happy New Year /Office Closed

Monday, December 29

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

Wednesday, December 31

Friday, January 02

Pastor Debbie is Off

Looking Ahead In January 2026

Sunday, January 04

Adult FF Class 9:30am
Worship 10:30am
Epiphany Sunday

Tuesday, January 06

Thursday, January 08

Dinner & Conversation -
Dogwood @ 6pm

Monday, January 05

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

Wednesday, January 07

Messy Church 5:30-7pm
Choir @ 7pm

Friday, January 09

Pastor Debbie is Off



Staff and Volunteers

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