

FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT

March 15, 2026

John 9:1-41

Restored

One of the most haunting questions in John comes when after Jesus restores the sight of a man born blind and the Pharisees begin asking, "Surely, we are not blind?"

From the very beginning of this healing story, there's much debate and misinformed assumptions from the community, including Jesus' disciples, as all wonder whose sin was responsible for the man's affliction: His own or his parents? Curses and blessings pave much of the Old Testament theological road, so it was popular belief that when bad things happened it was because of something you or a family member did or didn't do.

Jesus announces, though, the blindness was no one's sin, and with a little divine spit rubbed onto the man's eyes, Jesus heals him. The man returns from washing his eyes in the Pool of Siloam, which means "sent," as Jesus instructed him to do. He returns with eyes that see everything vividly, even the truth of who Jesus is — the Holy One of God.

Skepticism prevails, though, and the Pharisees relentlessly question the man. It is then that Jesus makes the comment that he came into the world so that those who do not see may see, and those who do may become blind. He said it loud enough for the educated religious elite to hear. And when they do, they wonder, "Surely, we are not blind?"

Surely, I am not blind. Surely, you are not blind. We can see clearly what is right and what is wrong in the world, correct? Surely, we can see with the restored eyes of the blind man not only the beautiful blues in the sky and the lush greens in the meadows but the power and majesty of Christ among us.

The question of blindness is a haunting one because it reminds us that often we see only what we want to see, and we believe only what we want to believe. Like the Pharisees, none of us are free from misinformed assumptions and inherited prejudices and stymying skepticism.

How then do we gain our spiritual sight? I suppose it starts by allowing this question to haunt us. For only when we begin to ask if we ourselves are blind will we begin to admit that we need corrective spiritual lenses.

All-knowing and all-seeing God, heal us from our own blindness that keeps us from seeing the world with the eyes of Jesus. May this day we regain our spiritual sight to see those who are hungry, who hurt, and who are lonely. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen.

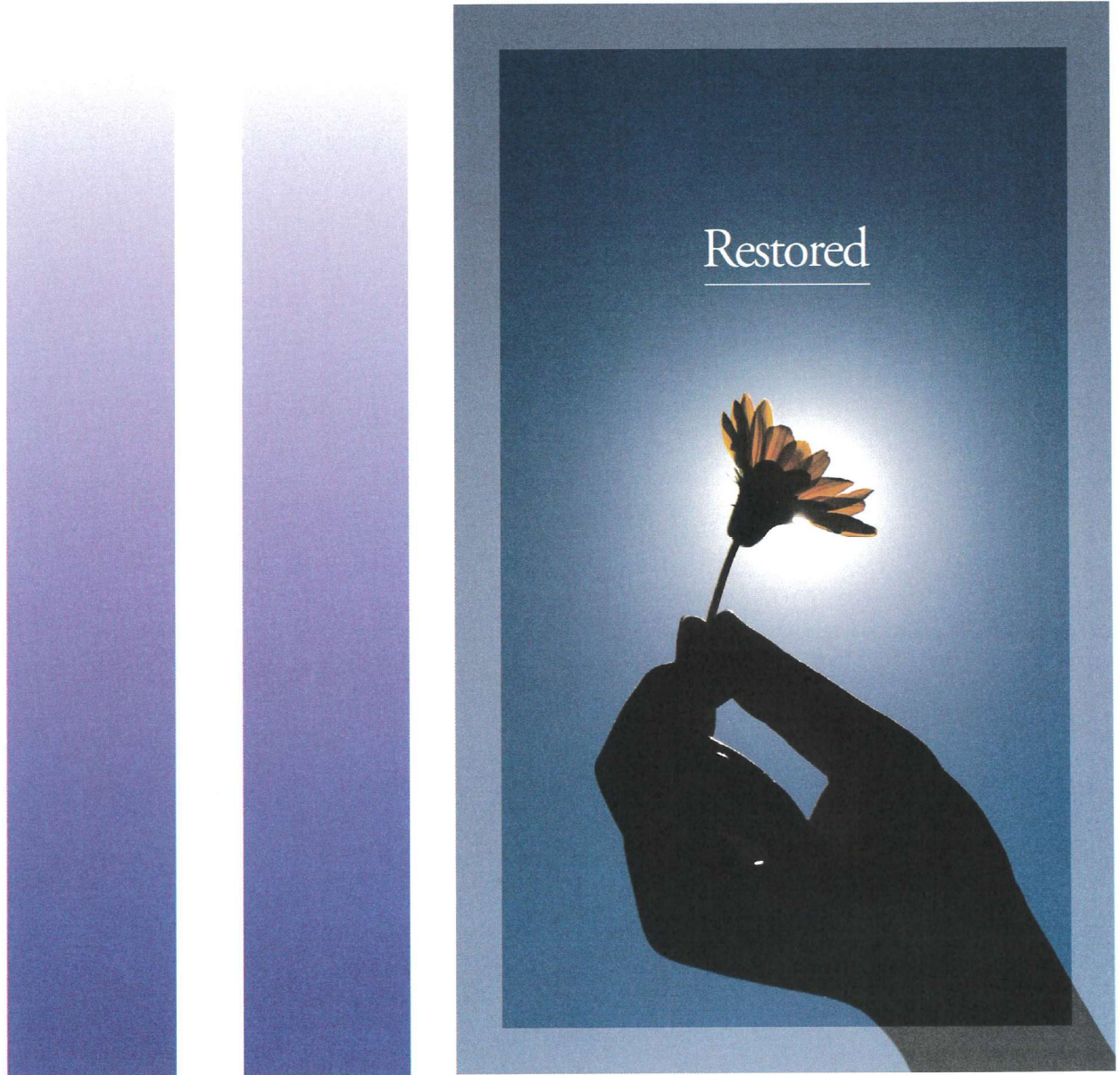
(Rev. Donna Frischknecht Jackson is a communications specialist for the United Church of Christ and author of today's Sunday Bulletin.)



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

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BUL0303





St. John's United Church of Christ
Fourth Sunday of Lent
 March 15, 2026



WELCOME, ANNOUNCEMENTS, GREET ONE ANOTHER (be seated)

PRELUDE

CHURCH BELL (the bell invites us to worship)

***GOD CALLS US TO WORSHIP** (responsively)

Beloved in Christ, why have you come to worship this morning?

We come to celebrate the love of God in the form of Jesus Christ.

This love reaches through the shadows of our lives to embrace us. Our challenge is to trust the light of God's love in the midst of our struggles.

We come to celebrate the light of God in Jesus who offers love and acceptance, not judgment and rejection.

If only we will trust, Jesus leads us in the way of light and love.

We come to celebrate our God who loved and loves us so much!

***OPENING HYMN**

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

Holy and redeeming God, we thank you for this season of Lent during which we remember anew your loving and redeeming acts toward us. We thank you for your ongoing creative energy in the world; for bestowing upon us gifts through which we may participate in your life and work; for enabling us through the power of the Holy Spirit to carry on the message and ministry of your Son, Jesus Christ. We ask that in these moments of worship, you will speak to us and impart again the word which we most need to hear, so that we may respond to you with love and faithfulness. Amen.

***RESPONSE** *How Great Thou Art* (chorus only) #33

ANTHEM *Hos Great is Our God*

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

OFFERING INVITATION

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

***RESPONSE** *Lord, Jesus, Who through Forty Days* (v. 3) #180

***PRAYER OF DEDICATION** (unison)

Wonder-working God, use all of who we are, and all of what we have, to uproot what is unjust, and plant what is loving. Through our gifts, speak your gospel to people we may never meet. May all come to hear your call to prophetic living. Amen.

WE GATHER IN PRAYER

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

Congregational Response tune: *Go to Dark Gethsemane* #196

SCRIPTURE: Old Testament: 1 Samuel 16:1-13
 New Testament: Ephesians 5:8-14

SERMON *March Madness*

***CLOSING HYMN** *O Sacred Head, Now Wounded* (vs. 2 & 3) #202

***BLESSING** (responsively)

Created in the image of God, redeemed by the cross of Christ, empowered by God's Spirit, we are sent:

Sent to live as faithful, loving stewards of God's gracious gifts of life, hope and joy. Amen.

* **CONGREGATIONAL RESPONSE** *God, Dismiss Us* (v.1) #439

* **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

Never put a period where God has put a comma, God is still speaking!

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.

LENTEN BIBLE STUDY on Tuesdays beginning February 24th at 11:00 a.m. and 6:30 p.m. each week. *The Room Where It Happens* is an exciting Lenten course written by Bishop Rose Hudson-Wilkin, inspired by the filmed version of the award-winning stage musical *Hamilton*. The course has been written in the hope that all ages can be involved in the room where it happens for discussions about what the Bible and the experience of Christian faith teach us about some of the big issues faced in the musical by Alexander Hamilton: his responses to injustice, adversity, and temptation, his search for identity, and his realization that he (and all of us) can make a difference in the world. Our remaining sessions are: *Love and Sacrifice & Hope and Courage through Adversity* Invite your friends and join us.

MESSY CHURCH on April 1st from 5:30-7:00 will celebrate *Easter Joy!* Activities include an egg strength demonstration; a "Will it rise" experiment, painted rocks, Easter scavenger hunt, crafts, making a doughnut tomb and more. Families welcome. Bring your friends and join us.

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

ONE GREAT HOUR OF SHARING is one of the four denominational offerings we collect each year. This offering supports relief efforts for hunger, poverty, natural disasters, climate change, immigration/migration and refugees. It serves individuals and communities in need providing people with safety, sustenance and hope.

If you would like to donate a Easter Flower in honor of, or in memory of a loved one, please leave them in Memorial Hall by 12:00 noon on Friday, April 3. Don't forget to complete the donor form including the label to attach to your Easter Flower. A list of donors will be included in the May newsletter.

March Youth Dates: 03/18 (Friday) Lock-In 7pm-9am next day
03/29 (Sunday) Youth Group 11:30 am-1pm Lunch Provided

A BIG THANK YOU TO First Christian Church at 319 Broadway for the donations to the Blessing Box.

PRESCHOOL OPEN HOUSE is TODAY from 2:00-3:30 pm. Please share with any families with preschoolers. The Caterpillar Class (3 yrs. old) meets Tuesday & Thursday from 9:00-11:30 am with tuition of \$135 monthly for the 2026-27 school year. The Butterfly Class (4 yrs. old) meets from 9:00-3:00 on Monday, Wednesday and Fridays with tuition of \$215 monthly. Flyers are available to put up around town.

MARCH MOVIE TODAY is *Hamilton* at 4:00 p.m. A light dinner will be served during the intermission. *Hamilton* is a revolutionary Broadway musical by Lin-Manuel Miranda that tells the story of American Founding Father Alexander Hamilton, blending hip-hop, R&B, pop, and traditional show tunes with a diverse cast to reimagine U.S. history. It follows Hamilton's rise from an immigrant to the first Secretary of the Treasury, exploring his political and personal life through his relationships with figures like Aaron Burr, George Washington, and Eliza Hamilton. The show won numerous awards, including 11 Tony Awards, a Grammy, and the Pulitzer Prize for Drama. Some adult language and content but recommended for high school students and up.

Prayers Posts

We ask for continuing prayer requests for: Tom Nowaskie, Marilyn Houchins, Tony Riley and Ellen Riggs, Bobby Bahr and Mark Schutter. Prayers for Rhonda Webber (Brenda Fillingim Niece), Ryan Viecke, John Mineo, Brenda Fillingim and Davissyn Brown, brother of Daxton Brown (preschooler).

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

**Prayer requests or updates can now be relayed to the church office during regular office hours and Pastor Debbie during the evening/weekend.
Email: st.johnsuccoffice@gmail.com or call 812-882-2720 M-F, 9 am - 1**

This Week in the Life of St. John's

Sunday, March 15

Adult SS Class 9:30am
Fellowship @ 9:45am
Worship 10:30am
One Great Hour of Sharing
Hamilton @ 4pm

Tuesday, March 17

St. Patrick's Day

Hamilton Bible Study @ 11 & 6:30p
Girl Scouts 4:30-6:30pm

Thursday, March 19

Dinner & Conversation
Kelso's @ 6pm

Monday, March 16

BABE Store 12-5:30pm
Music/Worship @ 5pm
Board Meeting @ 6pm

Wednesday, March 18

Choir @ 7pm

Friday, March 20

Pastor Debbie is Off

Looking Ahead In March 2026

Sunday, March 22

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

Tuesday, March 24

Final Hamilton Bible Study @ 11 & 6:30p
Girl Scouts 4:30-6:30pm

Thursday, March 26

Dinner & Conversation
El Corral @ 6pm
Ministerial Alliance @ noon

Monday, March 23

BABE Store 12-5:30pm

Wednesday, March 25

April Newsletter Items Due
Laundry Love 6-8pm
Choir @ 7pm

Friday, March 27

Pastor Debbie is Off



Staff and Volunteers

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

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.