

PALM / PASSION SUNDAY
(SIXTH SUNDAY IN LENT)

March 29, 2026

Matthew 26:14-27:66

Palm Sunday

Truly I tell you, one of you will betray me.

Not the best dinnertime conversation to initiate but leave it to Jesus to bring it up just as everyone is enjoying a meal. We are there as well, at the table gathered for what will become known as The Last Supper. It is a night to wash feet, break bread and drink from the common cup. It is also the time for Judas, one of Jesus' 12 followers, to excuse himself from the festivities to sell Jesus out to the chief priests for 30 pieces of silver.

We already know what comes next as the Holy Week drama unfolds. Jesus is arrested, tried and crucified. We also know that Judas, so overcome with shame and guilt, will kill himself.

What we don't know is that there is more to Judas' story. Often seen as the scapegoat in the story of salvation, Judas' real failing goes deeper than greed.

The ultimate betrayal was that Judas failed to believe in the depths of God's love for him — a love that forgives the deepest of betrayals. Rather than remember the grace Jesus spoke of, Judas allowed his guilt to consume him.

When I think of Judas' betrayal as one not trusting God's redemptive love, I begin hearing Jesus' dinner conversation differently. When he declares one of us will betray him, I squirm in my seat as others protest "Surely not I, Rabbi?" I know that many times I have run from God all because I couldn't trust the extent of love waiting to absolve me of my guilt and give me a new lease on life.

My friends, don't be like Judas — or me. Run to the loving arms of God, unafraid of the confessions that will come from your lips. Run, confess, repent — let it all out. Not only can God handle it, God will forgive.

Forgiving God, as much as we would like to say that we would not betray You, we know better. We are human and we are flawed. In this life, we will stray from Your ways. When we do, give us the courage to return to You, seeking the forgiveness You will not withhold from us. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen.

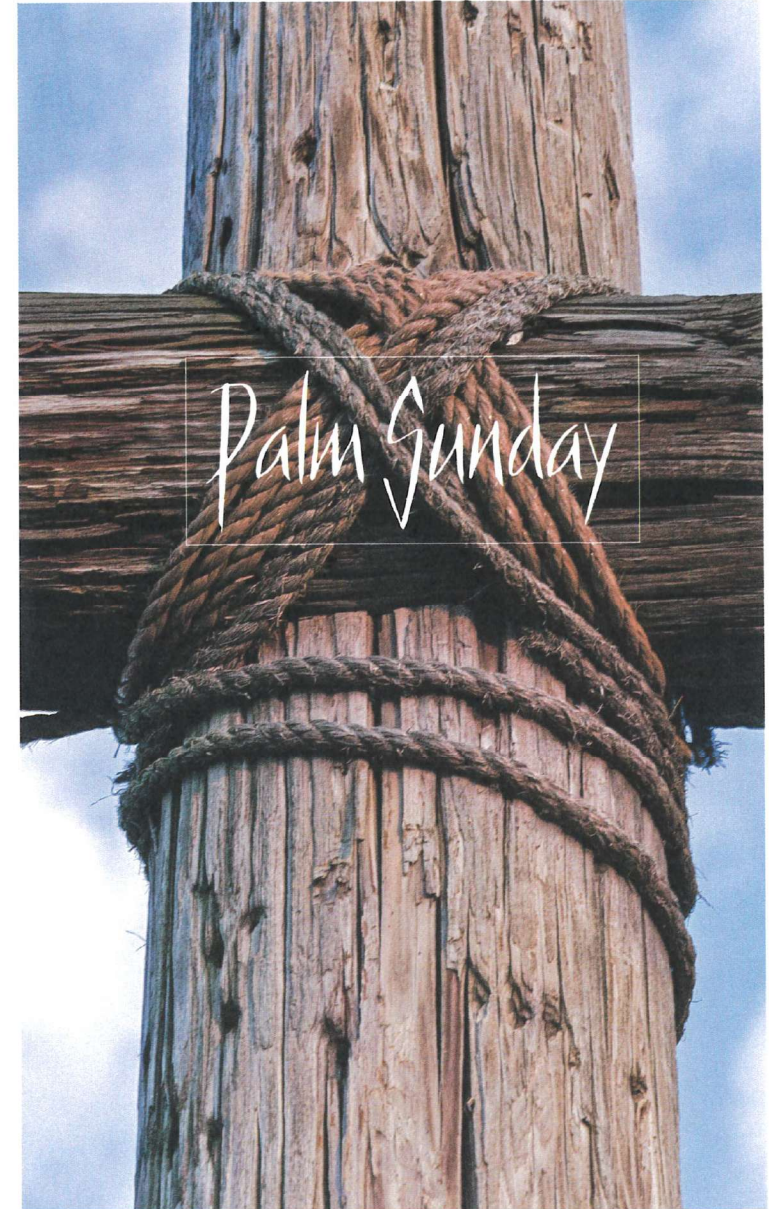
(Rev. Donna Frischknecht Jackson is a communications specialist for the United Church of Christ and author of today's Sunday Bulletin.)



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

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BUL0305





St. John's United Church of Christ
Palm Sunday
 March 29, 2026



* Please stand if it is comfortable to do so. **Bold Print=Everyone**

WELCOME, ANNOUNCEMENTS, GREET ONE ANOTHER (be seated)

PRELUDE

CHURCH BELL (the bell invites us to worship)

GOD CALLS US TO WORSHIP (responsively) adapted from Psalm 118

This is the day that the Lord has made.

We will rejoice and be glad in it!

Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord.

This house of worship blesses you, holy God.

God has sent the Light of the World to us.

Let us celebrate with a procession of palms and shouts of Hosanna!

O give thanks to the Lord. God is good to us!

God's steadfast love endures forever!

* **OPENING HYMN** *All Glory, Laud and Honor* #192
 (children process through sanctuary waving palm branches)

* **WE INVITE GOD TO WORSHIP** (unison)
 Merciful Savior, it is our privilege and delight to be in your presence and to bring our praises and worship to you. You are our teacher and our friend, our rock and our hope and our strength and our light. We celebrate your arrival in Jerusalem; we anticipate the agony that is before you; we await your victory over death. Grant that we might walk this journey alongside you as faithful disciples, rather than as participants of the fickle crowd. Amen.

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

ANTHEM *And the People Cried, "Hosanna!"*

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

** **OFFERING INVITATION** God is so good and we are richly blessed. Let us give back to God with gratitude and thanksgiving.

Congregational Response: *Lord, Jesus, Who through Forty Days* (v.3) 180

* **PRAYER OF DEDICATION** (unison)

Gracious God, we bring our tithes and offerings to you as cheerful and grateful givers. You are the giver of every good and perfect gift — of life and of eternal life, of your redeeming grace and mercy, of your love which overcomes our fears and weaknesses. Thank you for blessing us with the gift of yourself, incarnate in Jesus Christ our Savior and Friend, and for counting us worthy to share in his life and ministry. Use these gifts, we pray, for your purposes and glory. Amen.

WE GATHER IN PRAYER

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

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

HYMN

Hosanna, Loud, Hosanna

SCRIPTURE:

Old Testament: Psalm 118: 1-2, 19-29

New Testament: Matthew 21:1-11

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

SERMON

Open the Gates of the Lord!

* **CLOSING HYMN** *Lift Up Your Heads, O Mighty Gates*

* **BLESSING** (responsively)

We have followed Christ on his triumphant ride into Jerusalem. Let us remain faithful and not turn back as we face his suffering and death;

For in his suffering — and in our own — lies the promise and the hope of new life. Amen.

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

* **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.

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

EGG HUNT: Please pick up some empty Easter Eggs, fill and return by April 3rd. for the annual Easter Egg Hunt on April 4th. From 4:00-5:30 PM.

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.

HOLY WEEK & EASTER SCHEDULE:

Palm Sunday (3/29): Children's Palm Processional 10:30 am.

Maundy Thursday (4/2): Service of Holy Communion in Chapel at Noon.

Good Friday (4/3): Tennebrae Service of Darkness & Shadows at 7 pm.

Holy Saturday (4/4): Easter Egg Hunt 4-5:30 pm.

Easter (4/5): Butterfly Processional, Unlocking the "A" word.

Celebrate!

Church Office will be closed on Monday, April 6th. For the staff to recover from Holy Week and Easter.

NUREMBERG is our next movie on April 12th at 4:00 p.m. Based on the 2013 book *The Nazi and the Psychiatrist* by Jack El-Hai, the film follows U.S. Army psychiatrist Douglas Kelley (Rami Malek) seeking to carry out an assignment to investigate the personalities and monitor the mental status of Hermann Göring (Russell Crowe) and other high-ranking Nazis in preparation for and during the Nuremberg trials. Colin Hanks (son of Tom) is also featured. We are beginning early due to the run time and dinner will NOT be provided. Bring your snacks and join us for a very gripping historical drama.



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

LENTEN SELF-DENIAL OFFERINGS may be included in your Easter offerings. Don't forget to finish your 40 days of Giving and bring in the results. Converting it all to cash or check would be appreciated but we'll take all the change as well. Thank you for participating in this Lenten discipline

KEY INVENTORY: If you have a key to the outside church doors, please call, text or email Kim in the office so she can compile a list. Thank you for your cooperation.

DINNER & CONVERSATION: This week's dinner will be at Gasthof 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.

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: 03/29 (Sunday) Youth Group 11:30 am-1pm Lunch Provided

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, Davissyn Brown, brother of Daxton Brown (preschooler), Lynne Simmons and Bonnie Shelton.

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

This Week in the Life of St. John's

Sunday, March 29 (Palm Sunday)

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

Tuesday, March 31

Girl Scouts 4:30-6:30pm
Sandy's Pantry 11-12:30

Thursday, April 02

Maundy Thursday Communion
@ noon in the Chapel
Dinner & Conversation
Gasthoff @ 6pm
Sandy's Pantry 11-12:30

Monday, March 30

BABE Store 12-5:30pm

Wednesday, April 01

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

Friday, April 03

Phoebe's Mission 4:30-6:30pm
Good Friday Tenebrae @7pm

Saturday, April 04

Easter Egg Hunt 4-5:30pm

Looking Ahead In April 2026

Sunday, April 05

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

Tuesday, April 07

Girl Scouts 4:30-6:00pm

Thursday, April 09

Tech Meeting @ 10am
Dinner & Conversation
6pm @ Dragon 2000

Monday, April 06

BABE Store 12-5:30pm
Friends 5:30-6:15pm
Evang/Mem. @ 6:30pm
Office Closed

Wednesday, April 08

Christian Education 6pm
Choir @ 7pm

Friday, April 10



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:

Jill Doggett

Sound:

Andrew Anson

Liturgist:

Eric Meyer

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.