

St. John's United Church of Christ

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47591

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APRIL 2026 Newsletter

**St. John's United Church of Christ
606 North Fifth Street
Vincennes, IN 47591**

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A Note From Pastor Debbie Jo...

Dear Friends:

Thank you so much for all your support regarding my message in last month's newsletter wherein I expressed the anxiety and frustration many pastors are experiencing during this extremely difficult political climate. Your calls, cards and prayers meant so much to me. I received a call from Rev. Al Willhouse that greatly uplifted my spirits. He extends his love to you all.

By the time you read this, we will be in the midst of Holy Week and about to celebrate the resurrection on Easter Sunday. I would just like to point out a few things to remember. Easter is not simply one day. It is a season, lasting for fifty days until Pentecost on May 24th (you thought the 12 days of Christmas were bad. Haha). Eastertide is a time for reflecting on the resurrection, exploring the "new life" given through Christ's sacrifice, and reading from the Acts of the Apostles. After the reflective, somber, 40-day preparation period of Lent, Eastertide is cause for celebration, feasting, and focusing on the hope of eternal life, The Ascension is celebrated of the 40th Day and Pentecost is the birth of the Christian church. So, keep those Easter decorations up and enjoy the season!

I love learning new things! Special thanks to Kelly and Korbin Alexander for bringing the *Gen Z Bible* to my attention. After the hearing the story of the raising of Lazarus in church, Korbin went home and read it from the *Gen Z version*. In the vernacular of my generation, it was **far out!** They shared with me and I quickly ordered a copy and downloaded the app. In addition to the traditional Easter story we will hear on Easter Sunday, we will also hear the *Gen Z version*.

After asking for prayers for my granddaughter Sunday, I've received a few questions about my family so I will take this opportunity to explain who we are. My husband, John Harris was almost eight years old than I, had been previously married and had a daughter, Hedy, who was thirteen when we married. She came to live with us a year later and I legally adopted her. She was almost 18 when we adopted Nick, fresh from the hospital so our family came in "two sections, so to speak," Hedy married (the less said the better) and had a son, Keith. A year later, she was divorced and we adopted my daughter, Noah (I got to be in the delivery room for her birth and they placed her in my arms). So, I have a grandson a year and four days older than my youngest daughter. Four years later, Hedy married Corey and gave birth to my granddaughter, Kristina Jo ("Nina"). My husband passed just a month shy of Nina's first birthday. Nina is now married to Adam and they all live in Anderson, IN. Hedy will probably never visit since her anxiety prevents her from driving. In many ways it was like having two families. Hedy left home at the time I was beginning with Nick & Noah and my grandkids were born while I was busy raising young children of my own. Then we moved to Illinois so we only got to see one another on holidays although Nina would often spend parts of summer vacation with us. She was born with a congenital heart defect that cannot be repaired with surgery and is undergoing testing for an autoimmune deficiency—perhaps Lupus or rheumatoid arthritis. We are awaiting results. Thank you for your prayers. Hope this clears up my two-part family without sounding too Jerry Springery.

Peace,

Pastor Debbie Jo



Scarlett Speaks!

SCARLETT SPEAKS! Woof! Woof! I am so enjoying the warmer and dryer weather. I have chased a few squirrels up the tree, barked at a plastic bag floating on the wind in the neighbor's yard, and sounded the alarm for invisible threats to Mom that only I can hear. I've been sunning myself on the deck and sniffing every inch possible of the backyard. Thank you for all the birthday wishes and treats. Miss Leona even sent me a card in the mail. I will be accompanying Mom during Holy Week as she takes to communion around to our shut-ins. I had a ball playing with the preschool kids while Mom read, *There Was an Old Lady Who Swallowed a Clover* to them. Had a few bites of corned beef and Irish soda bread on St. Patrick's Day and looking forward to ham on Easter. Yum! Looking forward to being in worship and sharing my Easter outfit with you all. Woof! Woof!



Visioning

Vision Implementation Committee Report 2026

Over the course of the past year, the Visioning Committee has engaged in discussions with church members, staff, and pastoral leadership to try and start the implementation process from the 2026 Visioning Committee's 5-year planned goals for St. John's United Church of Christ.

The Visioning Committee recommends that the church move forward by focusing on clear communication, warm hospitality, stronger discipleship, increased youth engagement, active mission work, enriched worship, and simplified leadership. By organizing ministry in a more intentional and accountable way, the church can become more welcoming, more connected, and more effective in living out its mission. We believe that St. John's United Church of Christ is built on a strong foundation and is prepared to move forward and continue its heritage of service and fellowship.

• Social Media, Visitors, & Communication Needs

- Provide a "class" on how to use Face Book, & Instagram.
 - How to "view" On-Line Church Services, "find" the Church Website, and how to donate/pledge to the church via our online donor service, "Vanco."
 - Learn how to "download" the Church Newsletter.
 - Become familiar with text and email so that you can receive important information from the church (i.e. emergency cancellations, committee mtg changes, prayer information requests.
- Internet needs to be professionally upgraded. It is too slow for today's world. Office computers have too much "lag" time. Need more memory or upgrade.

- Provide new professional signage church wide. Get rid of all paper signage.
 - Develop new (MAIN ENTRANCE & ARROW) professional signage for the rear entrance parking lot entrance.
 - Professional welcome signage at rear entrance & front entrance doors for office hours, phone number to call, where to ring bell, etc.
 - Change the old sign located on the corner of 5 th and Hart Streets into a 2-sided LED sign. Keeping with the traditional look of the church, this signage would advertise what is going on at St. John's. This would eliminate the need for cluttered yard signage.
 - Provide an updated professional map (and small printed maps available to be picked up) that show the church building layout where groups meet and how to get to the Sanctuary for visitors to come in, as well as familiarizing everyone with rooms such as the parlor, mission rooms and Sunday school rooms.
- Provide a more welcoming entryway in the rear glass entrance.
- Redesign the front entrance/hallway/ramp to sanctuary. This area is underutilized and yet it is the one area that everyone walks through. This is a "catch all" area that needs to be redefined for visitors and members.

Visioning

- New and updated visitor literature for visitors with more UCC information.
- Give the bulletin board on the right side in rear entrance hallway to Pre-School so people can see their activities.
- Put together a “who does that?” list that can be given out to the committees, placed on bulletin board, and updated by office secretary.
- Use the newsletter to better highlight groups, events and committee work, and request every committee to send their report to the secretary monthly.
- Prominently display information about church programs within the church facility.
- Publicize our church’s activities on various media outlets when able.
- Use bulletin inserts once a month as well as the newsletter to remind the congregation what topics are being taught in adult Sunday school classes, basic UCC information and Church Wider Mission information.

• Fellowship Needs

- Survey says...more meals!!!
- Congregation would like more breakfasts and lunches, both free and bring your own dish.
- Work to schedule meals throughout the calendar year.
- Mission trip for all ages away from Knox County.
- Bible study and book club (not necessarily Bible related).
- Better Half Bunch, a men’s group that would meet monthly for fellowship, food/coffee and sharing.
- Request that the Pickleball court construction move forward upstairs in gym and offer lessons/play times to members.
- Adults should share a social event at least once every 12 weeks
- Women’s Night Out – quarterly fellowship type group in the evening for working women
- Good Neighbors Group: Volunteers who make simple repairs to members and friend homes for those who can’t (i.e. cleaning out gutters, raking leaves, fixing a faucet, putting in window screens, etc.)
- Sell the van. It is too old and it is not conducive for older adults to get into, and not safe for our youth. Obtain quotes on a 16-person ADA minibus. This would be ideal to be able to take members/friends to social events, work missions, and future fellowship groups.

• Music & Worship Needs

- More youth participation in worship/liturgist.
- Start a youth choir.
- Preschool kids singing during worship.
- Restart the bell choir for special music.
- Play contemporary music/songs for worship occasionally.
- Have greeters, weekly, or at least on special worship occasions, i.e. Easter, Mother’s Day, Christmas Eve, Thanksgiving weekend.
- Improve outreach to visitors drawn by special music and arts by having non-traditional service several times a year.
- Put together a “what to do/how to do that” form for working the screen/worship slides/sound so other people could feel comfortable enough to assist with the worship service.
- When choir is out, secure outside “special music” for the summer services.

Visioning

• Mission Needs

- Update various organization's "deposit boxes" and keep them in their organization's rooms. Move them out to Memorial Hall or front hallway only for Sundays and then move back.
- Have one mission information in newsletter monthly and how to join/donate if interested.
- Expand the B.A.B.E. Store. It has outgrown its space. Divide the old Paul classroom in half and take the back half (being used for storage right now) for additional space.
- Take the room that was used by the Frische-Mouri's as an additional office space and put the Blessing Box items in for storage until needed. Put up more shelving and use it for additional storage.

• Youth Needs

- More information and activity pictures on social media of youth to help advertise our youth activities and presence.
- Recommend that when the youth go do activities, that the church pays for youth members. Currently, it is not a recommendation to look for a full-time youth minister.

• Faith Formation Needs

- Add another adult Sunday class
- Add a youth class (grades 7-12)
- More information about the current adult class (would like to know topics in advance, don't know you have to be on email list, who teaches, do you have to come all the time, is this a video class or question answer?)

• Building Needs

Years ago, this congregation made the decision to stay in our current buildings/location instead of purchasing land and building a new church for our growing needs. We decided to embrace our historical buildings and made the decision to keep them maintained, upgrading them as needed. Unfortunately, we have allowed the buildings to fall into disrepair, citing money issues as a major factor in pushing repairs into the future, and as we all know, creating more issues. As part of our vision for the future, the committee believes that these repairs need to be addressed immediately. Visitors love our historical buildings, but we must maintain the exterior and upgrade the interior into a warm, inviting place to worship and fellowship to compete with newer churches.

- Replacement of several exterior church doors. These doors have been problematic for years and have not been fixed. Besides being a security issue, this is also a problem for people trying to lock/unlock daily.
 - Bell Tower Doors need new updated locks.
 - Front Entryway Glass Doors need replaced. There is no reason the only way to lock/unlock these glass doors is with a screwdriver.
 - Front Entryway Wooden Door with mailbox opening needs fixed/replaced. This door is warped/broken? Since it is where the mailbox is located per the Post Office, there is no reason to have to exit from another door and walk over to pick up the mail daily. Also, many outside people try to enter through this door. Take out the mail drop box in the door.

Visioning

• Building Needs Continuee

- Fix the exterior door that is located behind the choir. Again, this door needs to be secure.
 - The Rear Entryway Glass Doors need to be fixed because they are too hard to open and they need to have new locks installed in them as well.
 - Make sure the automatic door systems in front and rear of the church work.
-
- Purchase a new, larger, stand-alone mailbox with secure package drop box. Since the office is only open until 1 pm, deliveries have been lost as they are delivered many times after hours to the front of the church building.
 - Look into adding rain canopies/awning's at the front entrance glass doors and the rear entrance door ramps. This would enhance the church building and keep rain off people when they are opening the doors.
-
- Create a space for the church's historical pieces/archives other than the basement.
 - Build a wall to divide the old Paul classroom into 2 rooms allowing the B.A.B.E. store to expand.
 - Take out the carpet in the new area for the BABE Store.
 - Get quotes for an inside one-person elevator or stairwell chair. We are not ADA compliant.
 - Make sure when repairing/replacing old carpet/flooring that it enhances, not detracts from the area.
-
- Repairs to the actual building structures that have not been fixed for years. These problems need to be addressed immediately before more structural damage occurs that will cost even more.
 - The fascia (?) is coming off the outside of the building. This needs to be looked at and quotes received on how to fix this problem before it gets out of hand.
 - Stairwell walls are separating from the building. Get someone to review and quotes on what needs to be done to fix this problem.
 - Repair the cracks in the walls, ceilings of several buildings that continue to spread.
 - Unfortunately, the committee speculates there are more building repairs that need to be added to this list we are currently unaware of.
-
- Hire a custodian. The upkeep of the church buildings is more than volunteer members can handle in their spare time. The current housekeeping company is not adequate, failing to meet the minimal requirements.
Duties should include (they are not being done at this time):
- Floors and stairwells cleaned, carpets swept.
 - Bathrooms cleaned and made sure toilet paper, hand towels and soap were always supplied.
 - Church and common areas dusted.
 - Windows cleaned and doors with glass cleaned.
 - Trash picked up from common rooms and kitchen and taken to dumpster.
 - Sidewalks and ramps are being cleaned and salted during the winter snow season.
 - Grass mowed and leaves picked up.
 - Other duties as needed

Visioning

- **Committees & Leadership Needs**

St. John's Church has been blessed by decades of faithful committee service. Many of the ministries we cherish today exist because members answered God's call to serve generously.

As our congregation has changed in size and energy, the Vision Committee has prayerfully recognized that our current committee structure no longer fits who we are today. Maintaining many standing committees requires more people, meetings, and time than we realistically have. Our current structure was in place when we were a 250 member congregation. Today, we have approximately 60-70 active church members trying to maintain this committee structure.

This change is not about doing less ministry—it is about freeing us to do ministry more faithfully, joyfully, and sustainably.

We are deeply grateful for all who have served on committees in the past and invite everyone to continue sharing their gifts in ways that fit their availability and passion.

The Committees are in the process of being restructured. Once completed, the new committee structure will be posted in the newsletter and shared with the board.

- Simplify committee structures, times, and term limits
- All committees meet on same day per month
- Clear roles and responsibilities
- Accountability
- Committees should send in reports for the monthly newsletter
- Institute term limits for all committees to prevent burn-out and cultivate new member vision

If you have questions, please feel free to talk to any of the Visioning Committee members.

Kelly Alexander, Eric Meyer, Allison Cummins, Betsy Marchino, Pastor Debbie and Sheri Stodghill.

Mission Spotlight...

SANDY'S PANTRY is an important outreach ministry we provide for Vincennes University students who are food insecure. They may visit the pantry (open two days monthly from 11-12:30) and select needed food and toiletry items.

For years, Brian & Brenda Fillingim have directed and maintained this vital program. They are needing assistance with maintaining inventory, procurement and stocking of supplies to prepare for each months' student visits. If you would like to help continue this outreach or learn more about what needs to be done, please contact Pastor Debbie Jo. We are praying for God to speak to someone's heart so this necessary program can continue. Won't you prayerfully consider?

Children & Family Ministries

The Children and Family Ministry had an active month of March. Mini-Marvels (age 4-2 grade) had an opportunity to enjoy a spring afternoon at church on Saturday, March 21. There were crafts, games and light snacks to enjoy too! This past month the youth group for grades 7-12 had four meetings upstairs in the youth space. During the meeting times the youth had a lesson, an activity and a community outreach project. For the month of April, the youth will have 3 meetings.

April will be a busy month for the life of the church. In addition to all of the Children and Family Ministry (CFM) activities there is Messy Church (Wednesday April 1, 5:30pm-7pm), Egg Hunt (Saturday, April 4, 4pm-5:30pm) and Easter (April 5) and St. John's Block Party (Sunday, April 26). Check out the upcoming CFM activities in April.



The Unbeatable Egg Hunt is Back! On Saturday, April 4, starting at 4pm to 5:30pm the Children/Family Ministry and Christian Education will be having an Unbeatable Egg Hunt at church. There will be 3 egg hunts for preschool age thru 6th grade with special eggs mixed in with opportunities of prizes. Weather permitting, the younger groups will have the hunt outside. For the 3rd -6th graders the Easter egg hunting will be upstairs with flashlights since the windows will be darkened with new features this year and new prizes. Snacks and games will also be at the activity. Please bring your baskets or bags to get the eggs and flashlights for the older children.

Saturday, April 18- Children and Family Earth Day Activity



The Children and Family Ministry April activity is at the Foxridge Nature Park in the shelter house on Saturday, April 18th from 4-6pm for an Earth Day activity. The group will be planting some flowers to take home to enjoy this summer. There will be light snacks and nature games to enjoy too! Please wear some clothes that you can get a little dirty. Parents, friends and other family members are invited to join their children for the fun too!

Children & Family Ministry Age Groups

M & M (Mini-Marvels) Age 4-2nd Grade

KFC (Kids For Christ) 3rd - 6th Grade

Youth 7th Grade - High School

Children & Family Ministries



Vincennes City Cleanup – Volunteers Needed!

On Saturday, May 2, the Children and Family Ministry invites all church members to participate in the Vincennes City Cleanup. Volunteers will help clean up the area surrounding the church from **9:00am to 11:30am**. Participants are encouraged to bring their own gloves, though some will be available if needed. All funds raised from this event will support future activities for the Children and Family Ministry. This is also a great opportunity for students to earn service hours for school clubs and organizations!



The Children and Family Ministry Mission Week is returning for its 9th year! The CFM will host an in-town mission week from June 29 through July 3, featuring a new format. This year will include a mix of exciting new opportunities along with some favorite “classic” activities.

The week is designed for all ages to come together, serve the community, and participate as they are able with other summer activities. Stay tuned for more details and upcoming announcements about Mission Week!

The St. John’s Youth (7th- 12th Grade) meets at least twice a month upstairs in the youth space. During meetings the youth have a lesson, an activity and do mission work/community outreach. If there are any questions, please let Will Meyer know!

April Youth Dates

4/1 (Wednesday): **7pm-8pm After Messy Church**

4/12 (Sunday): 4pm-5:30pm

4/19 (Sunday): Youth Group **11:30am-1pm Lunch Provided**

Children and Family Ministry Age Groups

M&M (Mini-Marvels)-Age 4-2nd Grade

KFC (Kids for Christ)-3rd-6th Grade

Youth-7th - High School

Children & Family Ministry Age Groups

M & M (Mini-Marvels) Age 4-2nd Grade

KFC (Kids For Christ) 3rd - 6th Grade

Youth 7th Grade - High School



Prayer & Post

We ask for continuing prayer requests for friends and family:

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 - Aperion Care, C Wing Room C-35, 3801 Old Bruceville Road, Vincennes, IN 4759

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 pm.

Email Pastor Debbie: revdjatkins@gmail.com

Text or phone call: 812-760-2226

Preschool Activities

We had a wonderful turnout at our recent Open House and are excited to share that we welcomed 8 new families to our preschool for the upcoming school year! Our classrooms are beginning to fill, and we are currently about one-third full, so we encourage our church family and community to continue spreading the word about our program.

As we move through the spring, our students are enjoying our Alphabet Countdown, a fun and engaging way to celebrate all they've learned this year. It's hard to believe the school year is already beginning to wind down, and we are soaking up these final weeks of learning, growth, and special memories together.

Thank you for your continued support of our preschool!

Free Medical and Dental Clinic

Saturday April 11, 2026

8:00am-4:00pm

At Sandborn First Christian Church

118 N Anderson St Sandborn, IN 47578

Medical attention for:

- Sports Physicals
- Acute Care
- Skin Conditions

Dental Services

Cleanings
Fillings
Extractions

Resources available for:

Mental Health Resources

Patient Navigators

Medical Providers

Dental Providers

Free transportation will be available in the
Sandborn, Linton, and Odon areas

Call 812-798-4231 for information or to schedule a ride.

Food will be provided

No Narcotics will be available on site

EASTER EGG HUNT

Saturday, April 4, 2026

St. John's United Church of Christ

606 N Fifth Street

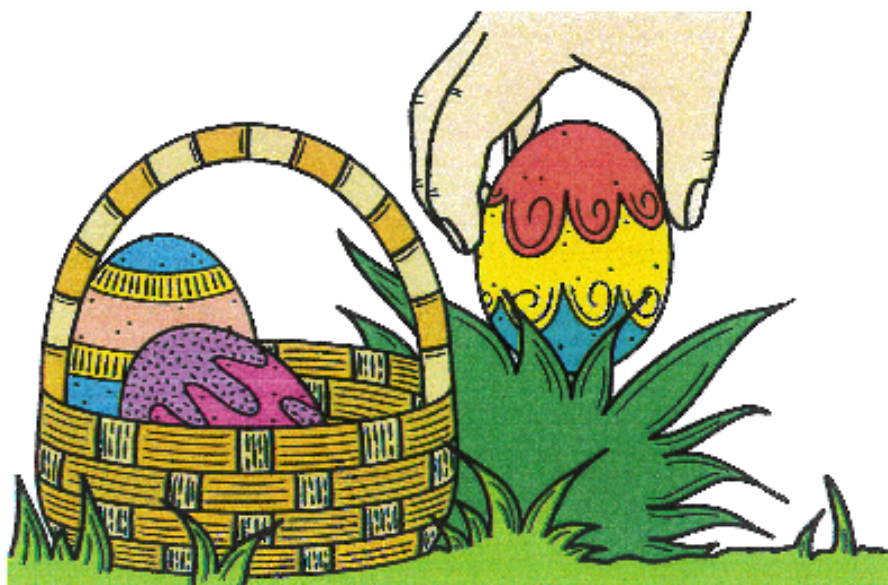
4:00 – 5:30 pm

For age groups: Preschool - K; 1st - 3rd; and 4th - 6th

Egg Hunt first, followed by refreshments, crafts, and games

Bring baskets or bags for eggs.

Also bring flashlights for the 4th - 6th grade hunt in the dark!



Dear Indiana Kentucky Conference,

It has been many years since we have shared news or updates regarding the programming of summer camps and faith formation in our Conference. As your Board of Directors, we seek to ensure not only that you as our congregations are well informed, but also have plenty of opportunities to support your young people in faith through camps, retreats, and wider faith formation gatherings. Our Board has been engaged in some very intentional conversations with churches, clergy, camp directors, and one another regarding the current state of camping at Merom, as well as looking ahead to a renewed future of this ministry in our midst. In this light, we are writing to share some updates and highlights as to where things are headed next.

Outdoor ministries, including camps and retreats have been a long standing and important ministry in the Indiana-Kentucky Conference and the predecessor entities of the Evangelical and Reformed and Congregational Christian Churches for close to a century. Summer camps at Merom have been a part of this ministry for most, if not all, of that time. Through the early 1980s, camps were held at multiple locations across the Conference in addition to Merom, including Barbee, Cedar Ridge, Eagle Lake, plus state parks in Indiana and Kentucky, with Merom becoming the only camping site for IKC camps.

The Indiana-Kentucky Conference organized and hosted camps at Merom Institute/Merom Conference Center for over 70 years. One important change came when Merom Camp and Retreat Center Inc. (MCRC) was formed as a separate 501c3 organization from the IKC following an 18-month discernment process during 2015-2016, involving the leadership of the Merom Board, the IKC Outdoor Ministries Committee, and the IKC Board of Directors. The MCRC nonprofit corporation was created with the primary purpose of “operating a year-round camp and retreat facility committed to helping individuals and groups experience, understand, and practice their Christian faith at every stage of their development, while providing a safe place, facility, staff and program for congregations, families and non-profit organizations who seek such a setting and accommodations and to conduct such other activities as are consistent with its exempt purposes.”

As part of this transition, the IKC gave the Merom property and the Merom Endowment funds to MCRC officially to run on its own with its own governing board and 501c3 status. The MCRC board was populated by people involved in and supporting the camping and retreat programs of the Indiana-Kentucky Conference. Membership was comprised nearly entirely of UCC church members and camps were led by IKC leaders and the programming of the camps were still run as a ministry of the IKC. However, in 2018, the IKC Board handed over the programming of camps to MCRC and all of the liability that goes along with it, while also remaining connected and supportive of camps by advertising them to our churches and encouraging leadership to remain involved. Over the past couple of years, however, the membership of the board of directors for MCRC experienced a major shift to more local residents of the Merom community. The focus of MCRC activities, thus, began turning towards more local events and resident participation than focusing on camps. Most recently, the Merom board had only 2 UCC members.

Furthering this shift, in mid-November 2025, MCRC noted publicly that they are “...no longer affiliated with any religious entity.” It was also learned that MCRC filed an amended Articles of Incorporation with the Indiana Secretary of State Office in April 2025. It amended the purpose of the MCRC nonprofit corporation, as being centered on historical preservation of College Hall and no longer referenced any religious purpose or programming.

In December, members of the IKC Board of Directors Executive Committee met with part of MCRC’s board to clarify these new changes and how they view their relationship to the camps and the IKC. The MCRC board leadership clearly indicated that they neither wish to be affiliated with the IKC, nor do they have

any ownership or administration of summer camps and that the camps are essentially “tenants” of MCRC. This places the leadership of the camps held at Merom in peril of having no liability insurance for the camps.

As a result of the change in the purpose of the Merom organization and the disclaiming of the camping program by Merom, a letter was sent by the Indiana-Kentucky Conference Board of Directors to confirm that the relationship between the Conference and the Merom Camp and Retreat Center Inc. had dissolved, and the Conference would not be advertising MCRC’s summer camps. Merom’s leadership responded by notifying the directors of the camps that have been held at Merom that they could not have any camps at Merom in 2026 and must remove all property from the campsite immediately.

It is, thus, with a heavy heart that we must report that there will be no church camps held at Merom in 2026. Our ecumenical partners at the Christian Church in Indiana (Disciples of Christ) will welcome our Indiana-Kentucky youth at their camps at Camp Bedford. The Board of Directors for the IKC supports and encourages your congregation in sending your youth to Camp Bedford this summer and we are doing all we can as a Board to ensure that we will have some sort of gathering that can honor a truly remarkable legacy of faith that has taken place at Merom over the decades that have led to this point. Additionally, should one of our historic camps find an alternative way to offer a camp this coming summer, we will be sure that you are made aware as soon as possible. You can find Camp Bedford’s camp schedule at <https://indianadisciples.org/camp/>. Their registration page will be opening soon, and we will be sure to share that link with you when it has gone live.

Finally, inspired by the broad outdoor ministries program that has been present in our Indiana-Kentucky Conference since our inception and recognizing the importance of faith formation for all ages and that outdoor ministries beyond the local church has played a vital role in calling so many into ministry over the years, on January 16, 2026, the IKC Board of Directors approved the creation of a working group to build a new and wider program for faith formation for all ages. Building on the foundations of Merom camps, youth retreats and more, we intend to re-birth outdoor ministries throughout our Conference with the hopes of building a new vision that will expand our approach to be ecumenically minded and possibly even in collaboration with other Conferences. The Board of Directors for the IKC will begin to give shape to next steps at our meeting in March and are just beginning to explore inviting leaders to join us in this working group to discern what faith formation throughout the IKC should look like in the future. It will likely take until 2027 or 2028 for initial events to come to fruition, but we are excited and filled with hope to see what the Holy Spirit is up to with this new vision. While it will look vastly different from where we have been, we hold onto the belief that God is not done with us yet. If interested in being a part of this working group, please look for opportunities to contribute in the near future.

At this time, we as a Board express our gratitude for all of the camp directors, camp counselors, cooking and janitorial staffs, and volunteers that made the Merom Spirit the special experience that it was over all the decades. We acknowledge there will likely be grief for so many of us in saying farewell to such a special place and we are committed to finding a way to experience a meaningful ritual in the near future to offer closure and comfort from our God. We encourage you to pray for our camp directors as they navigate these difficult days ahead and we ask that you pray for us as a Board as we seek to lead into a new era of faith formation in our midst. Should you have any questions or need guidance about summer camp plans at Camp Bedford, please do not hesitate to reach out to our Conference Minister, Rev. Dr. Chad Abbott, who will offer his pastoral listening ear. May the God we know and love in Jesus Christ be our comfort and our guide as we walk the path God is paving for us next.

In Christ and Covenant,

Beth Walker

Beth Walker

Board Chair, IKC Board of Directors

Rev. Dr. Chad Abbott

Chad Abbott

Conference Minister

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. Dinner will be Spring-shaped chicken nuggets, fries and slaw. 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.

RESIGNATION: It is with sadness that we accept the resignation of Darcie Bahr, our Nursery Attendant. Darcie has faithfully served in this position for nine years. Her last Sunday is March 29th. Thank you, Darcie, for your dedicated service with the children and families of our congregation.

FELLOWSHIP TIME on Easter Sunday will be in honor of Darcie and her years of devotion to our church nursery. Please stop by, enjoy some refreshments and thank Darcie for her service.

MANY THANKS to everyone who helped make our Lenten Season and Easter so memorable: Liturgists, Becky Brockman, DeEtta Welte, the Choir, Acolytes, Readers, Decorators, Fellowship Time Organizers, Will Meyer, Christian Education Committee, Kim Butler, Media Volunteers, Ushers, Servers, Participants, Palm Branch wavers and Butterfly Floaters—thank you for your part! We are blessed to have so many volunteers who serve so faithfully.

NUREMBERG movie on April 12th at 4:00 p.m. Based on the 2013 book *The Nazi and the Psychiatrist* by Jack El-Haj, 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.

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.

\$5 for students & VCSC employees and available online. The show running time is 75 minutes. Let’s support our young people.

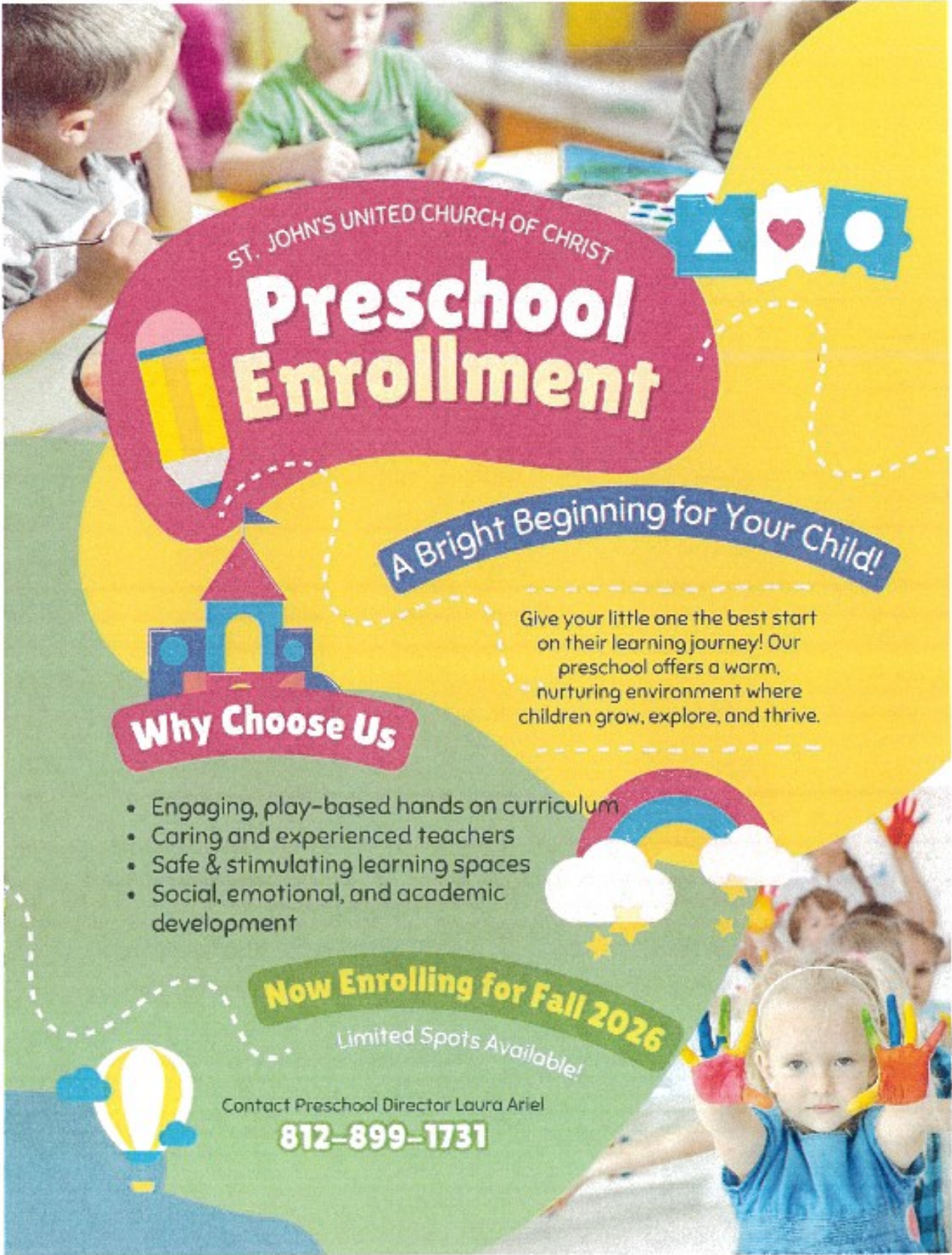
SPONGEBOB SQUAREPANTS The Musical will be presented at Lincoln High School on April 24th & 25th at 7:00 pm and on April 26th at 3:00 p.m. Several young people from our church family are involved. Lucas Doggett is Squidward, Vera Mattingly is Perch Perkins (and two other roles) and Adelynn Lange is on the stage crew. Tickets are \$10 for adults

CONGRATULATIONS to Korbin Alexander, Harper Coomes and Rylan Coomes for their induction into the Junior National Honor Society.

BLOCK PARTY will be held on Sunday, April 26th from 4:00-6:00 p.m. Join us as we Rock the Block with music by Wood & Wire (Larry Marchino's group), FREE hamburgers, hot dogs and beverages, a bounce house, pig races, Corn Hole, games, "tattoo" parlor, raffle baskets and **MORE!** Invite your friends and join us!

HELP NEEDED: Looking for face painters for the Block Party. If you can help, please let Pastor Debbie Jo know. Thanks!

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.



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APRIL 2026 Birthdays

Chris Sanders
Carson Sanders
Cindy Deckard
Mitchell Cooper
Vera Mattingly
Reid Schotter
Michael Lankford
Marcy Meyer
Lynne Simmons

Anniversaries

Conway & Arlene Wilson

Dinner & Conversation



Everyone is invited to join us on Thursday evenings at 6:00 pm. Each week we visit a different restaurant and enjoy an evening of food and conversation. It's a great way to get to know our fellow church members better. A reservation sheet is in the back of the sanctuary weekly or you can call the church office to add your name. The schedule is as follows:

April 2nd.—Gasthof
April 9th.—Dragon 2000
April 16th.—CoCo's
April 23rd.—Senor Tequill
April 30th.—Log Inn

Church Board Highlights

The March Church Board meeting was held March 16, 2026. With many thanks for her years of dedicated service, the Board accepted the resignation of nursery attendant, Darcie. Plans are also underway to celebrate Becky and DeEtta, as they prepare to retire from years of serving the Church's music ministry. Upcoming activities and plans for services for Holy Week were also discussed. The Spring block party is set for April 26th from 4 p.m. to 6 p.m. The pre-school held a successful open house for potential new students. The Board discussed the status of the search for new hires for the open music positions. The Board also approved the use of space for pickleball instruction, with insurance approval. The meeting was adjourned, and next Church Board meeting will be held April 20, 2026 at 6 p.m.

APRIL



Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
			1 Messy Church/ Advent Festival 5:30-7pm Choir Practice 7 pm	2 Sandy's Pantry 11-12:30 Dinner & Conversation - 6 pm @ Gasthof Maundy Thursday with Communion @ noon	3 Phoebe's Mission @ 4:30 –6:00pm Good Friday Tenebrae @ 7pm	4 Easter Egg Hunt from 4-5:30pm
5 Adult SS Class 9:30 am Easter Celebration Worship @ 10:30 m Easter Sunday	6 BABE Store 12-5:30pm Friends 5:30 - 6:15 pm Evang/Mem. @ 6:30pm Office Closed	7 Girl Scouts 4:30 - 6 pm	8 Christian Education 6pm Choir Practice 7 pm	9 Tech Mtg @ 10:00 am Dinner & Conversation - 6 pm @ Dragon 2000	10	11
12 Adult SS Class 9:30 am Worship 10:30 am Holy Humor Nuremberg @ 4pm	13 BABE Store 12-5:30pm	14 5:15 pm Visioning Committee Mtg	15 Choir Practice 7 pm	16 Dinner & Conversation - 6 pm @ CoCo's Outreach/Benevolence @ 11am	17	18
19 Adult SS Class 9:30 am Worship 10:30 am	20 BABE Store 12-5:30pm Music/Worship Committee @ 6p Board Mtg. @ 6pm	21 Girl Scouts 4:30 - 6 pm	22 Choir Practice 7 pm May Newsletter Items Due In Office Today	23 Ministerial Alliance @ noon Dinner & Conversation - 6 pm @ Senor Tequilla	24 Sponge Bob Square Pants Musical at Lincoln High School @ 7pm	25 Sponge Bob Square Pants Musical at Lincoln High School @ 7pm
26 Adult SS Class 9:30am Worship 10:30 am Block Party 4-6 pm Sponge Bob Square Pants Last Night of Musical	27 BABE Store 12-5:30pm	28 Girl Scouts 4:30 - 6 pm Sandy's Pantry @ 11-12:30	29 Laundry Love 6 - 8 pm Choir Practice 7 pm	30 Sandy's Pantry @ 11-12:30 Dinner & Conversation - 6 pm @ Log Inn		