

FOURTH SUNDAY OF EASTER

April 26, 2026

Psalm 23

Powerful Witness

The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want.

With that opening verse, Psalm 23 soars to the top of the greatest psalms of all time chart, becoming words whispered when lonely shadows are our only friends or when a sea of mourners need a blessed balm for broken hearts.

Psalm 23 is our perennial witness of the powerful truth that with the Lord we do not need anything else. But as popular as the psalm is, have you ever stopped to truly understand what the psalmist was saying about this incredible provision of love? For example, what does it mean to have a table prepared for us in the presence of our enemies?

Personally, I would not welcome such a dinner party in my life. But understanding ancient Middle Eastern culture helps us see better what God is up to for the host of a meal was not just offering a delectable leg of lamb. The host, through the meal, was offering protection for the guest that was invited. Once a seat was taken at the host's table, no enemy was allowed access to the guest. So that table prepared for us among all our enemies is God saying, "I got you. In the presence of danger, no harm will come to you because you are at my table."

While we are here unpacking familiar verses, let's take a closer look at the Lord anointing our head with oil. Yes, anointing one's head is a symbolic act of consecrating a person chosen by God, and we are all chosen — called — by God to care for one another. But anointing with oil was also a common practice among shepherds for their sheep. The oil would be poured on the sheep's head to act as a barrier against pesky flies. The oil would also act as a soothing balm, helping to heal scratches on the sheep's head from either branches, thorny brush or the occasional head-butting from another sheep.

So, when we hear the Lord anoints our heads, he is not just setting us aside for the holy work of loving our neighbors. He is providing us with a barrier against those proverbial buzzing insects and confrontational head-butts in life, because such annoyances just don't happen to sheep, do they?

Yes, the Lord is our shepherd. With him, we lack nothing. His protection of us is abundant.

Shepherding God, it is a joy and a privilege to be part of your Son's flock. We thank You for the constant care You give us each day. May we never take such love for granted. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen.

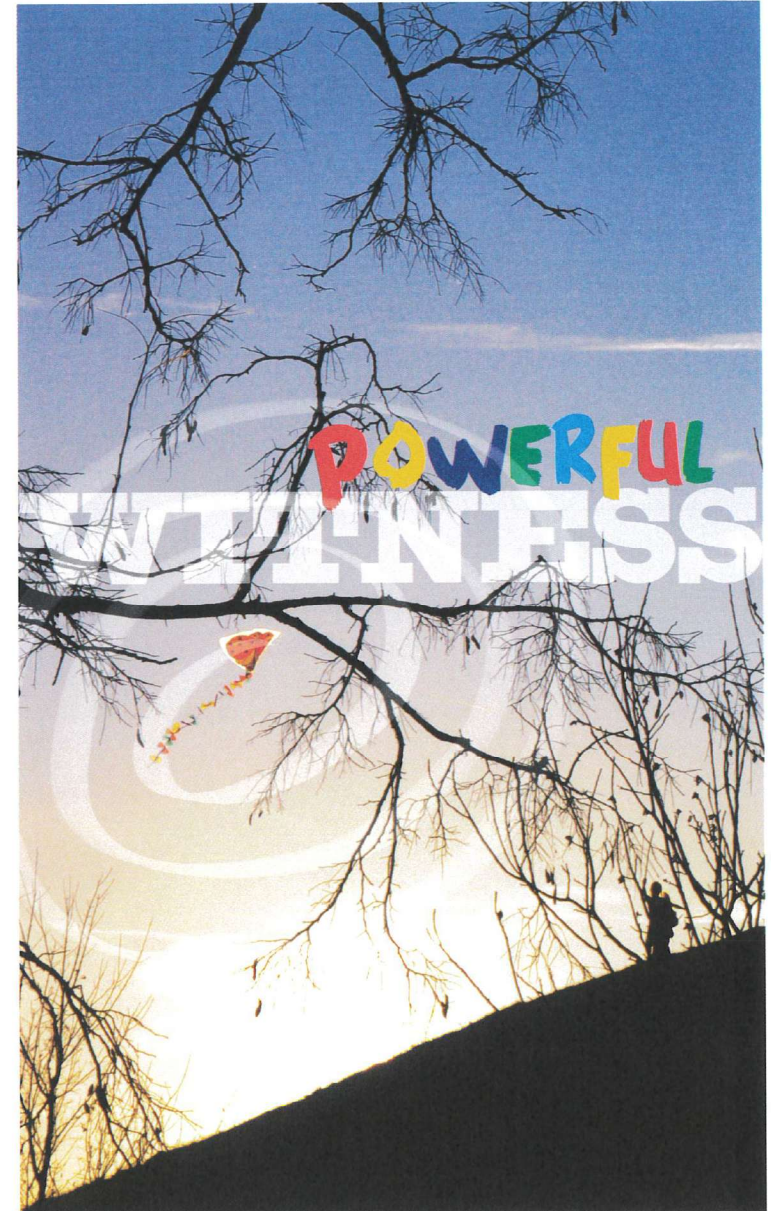
(Rev. Donna Frischknecht Jackson is a communications specialist for the United Church of Christ and author of today's Sunday Bulletin.)



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

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BUL0309





St. John's United Church of Christ
Fourth Sunday of Easter
 April 26, 2026



* Please stand if it is comfortable to do so. **Bold Print is for all People**

WELCOME, ANNOUNCEMENTS, GREET ONE ANOTHER (be seated)

PRELUDE

CHURCH BELL (the bell invites us to worship)

* **GOD CALLS US TO WORSHIP** (responsively) Psalm 23 GenZ Bible

The Lord is my personal hype man, I won't need anything else.

He;s got me chilling in the best spots, leading me to the calmest waters.

He's got my back, guiding me along the right paths for his own rep.

Even if I'm walking through the scariest places, I won't be scared.

Cause he's right there with me, comforting me with his strength and support.

He's setting up a feast for me right in front of my enemies, blessing me like crazy, overflowing my cup.

Goodness and mercy are gonna stick with me all my days,

And I'm gonna kick it in God's house forever.

* **OPENING HYMN** *God is My Shepherd* (vs. 1 & 5) #79

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

Gracious God, like sheep we are prone to wander from our Good Shepherd. We know that you alone can lead us to right paths, streams of living water and pastures that feed us, but we are easily distracted, frequently frightened and stubbornly bent on making our own way. Still, you call us. Still, you whisper words of life and peace. Thank you for your relentless pursuit of us. Come into our presence and guide our worship and praise. Amen.

* **RESPONSE** *Christ Arose* (chorus) #224

ANTHEM *Just As I Am*

CHILDREN'S MESSAGE (children 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.

* **RESPONSE** *In the Garden* (v.1) #227

* **PRAYER OF DEDICATION** (unison)

Generous God, accept these offerings, the fruit of our labor and lives, in obedience of our faith, through Jesus Christ, to whom be the glory forever! Amen.

WE GATHER IN PRAYER

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

Congregational Response: *He Lives* (chorus) #226

SCRIPTURE: Old Testament: Psalm 23
 New Testament: John 10:1-10

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

SERMON *Follow the Shepherd's Voice*

* **CLOSING HYMN** *My Shepherd You Supply My Need* #80

* **BLESSING** (responsively)

Go from this place as sheep who know the voice of the Good Shepherd. **May we always heed that voice in all we do and say. Amen.**

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

* **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!

MESSY CHURCH on May 6th from 5:30-7:00 pm will be *May the Force be With You: From Padawan to Master*. Our Scripture will be various verses from throughout the Old & New Testaments. We will have lots of *Star Wars* related games, crafts and activities. Dinner will include Jabba the Hutt Dogs, Vader tots, Obi-Wan Kababis (fruit & cheese kababs), with Wookie Cookies for dessert. All Younglings and Padawans will receive an inflatable light saber. Please feel free to wear any *Star Wars* shirts or costumes you have. Plan now to participate and join us for a great evening of Food, Fun and Fellowship. This is our last **Messy Church** until September.

LILACS WANTED: Pastor Debbie is looking for a gallon Ziploc bag of Lilac blossoms for jelly making. When your lilac blooms, could you please share the harvest? Also looking for anyone with **mint** for the same purpose.

LAUNDRY LOVE needs a volunteer leader for Wednesday June 24, while Jana is out of town. Please contact the church office if you can help.

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! Bring a lawn chair if you wish. This event is for church as well as community. Come meet Dirt Track Racer, Delaynee Coomes and have your picture taken with her racecar.

UNITED STATES OF KINDNESS is a movement to complete 250 acts of kindness in celebration of the 250th birthday of the United States (it launched on April 24th) when there were 250 days remaining in 2026. The UCC has partnered with Values in Action for this special initiative and we encourage everyone to take part. One act of kindness per day for the rest of the year. Sounds like an achievable goal so join us in sharing kindness.

RECEPTION will follow the worship service on May 3 to honor our graduates. All are invited.

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.

TAX-WISE WAY TO SUPPORT OUR CHURCH from Mackenzie B. Jones, CPA: If you are age 70.5 years or older, you can give directly from your IRA to our church through a Qualified Charitable Distribution (QCD). This type of gift can count toward your required minimum distribution (RMD) and may help reduce your taxable income. It's a simple and tax-efficient way to support the ministry you care about. Please consult your financial advisor or IRA custodian to learn how to make a QCD.

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

NURSERY SERVICES: Currently we do not have a nursery attendant but small children are welcome (under parental supervision) to quietly utilize the *playground* at the back of the sanctuary. The nursery is available if needed and an usher can take you there and turn on the speakers so you can hear the service

Prayers Posts

We ask for continuing prayer requests for: Tom Nowaskie, Marilyn Houchins, Rhonda Webber (Brenda Fillingim Niece), John Mineo, Cindi Gilmore, Kim Godare's daughter Mallory, Jeremy Carpenter, Dale Linneweber, and Chris Sanders.

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, April 26

Adult SS Class 9:30am
Worship 10:30am
Block Party @ 4-6pm
Sponge Bob @ 3pm

Monday, April 27

BABE Store 12-5:30pm

Tuesday, April 28

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

Wednesday, April 29

Choir Practice @ 7pm
May Newsletter Items Due
Laundry Love 6pm

Thursday, April 30

Sandy's Pantry @11-12:30
Dinner & Conversation
6pm @ Log Inn

Friday, May 01

Phoebe's Mission @ 4:40-6pm

Looking Ahead In May 2026

Sunday, May 03

Adult SS Class 9:30am
Worship 10:30am
Graduation Recognition & Reception
Wabash Valley Assoc. Mtg. @ 3pm

Monday, May 04

BABE Store 12-5:30pm
Evang/Membership @ 6pm

Tuesday, May 05

Girl Scouts 4:30-6pm

Wednesday, May 06

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

Thursday, May 07

Dinner & Conversation
American Table—6pm

Friday, May 08



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

Head Usher:

Sandra Lange

Projection:

Jana Vieck

Sound:

Andrew Anson

Liturgist:

Addison 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.