

SECOND SUNDAY OF EASTER

April 12, 2026

John 20:19-31

Holy Language

The season of Easter is underway. It's a time where we are being invited to experience the full 50 days of Eastertide, embracing the resurrection promise that breathes newness and vitality into our ordinary days.

Chances are, though, there are many — perhaps even you, dear reader — who are feeling anything but hopeful. Perhaps your faith in a great God is as stale as the leftover jellybeans that filled last week's Easter baskets.

Take heart, for you are not alone. Doubts plague everyone, even the saintliest of saints among us. After her death, it was revealed how Mother Teresa battled many dark nights of the soul, questioning God's presence in her life.

And long before Mother Teresa's doubting, there was Thomas. Known as "the twin," Thomas was absent that first Easter evening when Jesus came into the room speaking words of comfort and assurance: "Peace be with you."

Still reeling from Jesus' death, Thomas couldn't believe his friends who told him the great news of Jesus being alive. He didn't dare to believe for the pain of losing Jesus once before was enough. Why dare to hope again?

To protect his heart from breaking with false hope, Thomas said that he had to see Jesus in the flesh for himself. He had to be able to put his fingers in Jesus' pierced side to believe the impossible news that he was walking among the living.

Thomas got what he asked for. Jesus returns and stands before the doubter and shows him the scars. It's then Thomas utters the first public confession of faith, "My Lord and my God!"

Doubt. It haunts us all. It makes us insist on proof today for evidence of a better tomorrow. Why do we need to see before we believe? It is not an intellectual quest as some might think, but a protective reflex born out of too many shattering-heart let downs.

Like Thomas, we can relate to the scary vulnerability of risking our hearts to believe in hopeful possibilities, especially when there's no guarantee we won't be let down yet again.

But as Eastertide gets underway, we are given the good news that with God we can risk our hearts. We can believe boldly in God's care for us, even without hard proof. Even on those days when we think God has forgotten us. God has not. God shows up at the right time. The Easter promise is that our hopes will never be crushed, because God who raised Jesus from the dead is raising us from our own tomb of doubts.

God of new beginnings and bright promises, transform our doubts into beautiful truths this Eastertide. Open our guarded hearts to the amazing possibilities that You have waiting for us. And help us, O God, to always believe without the proof we often insist on. 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.)





St. John's United Church of Christ
Holy Humor Sunday
 April 12, 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)

O praise to the God of laughter whose humor sends ripples through even the river of death, who turns a mustard seed into a tree.

Like a trickster, you turn my world topsy-turvy.

Here in the Fun House the popular routes lead me in circles but the dead-ends have doors.

O for a thousand tongues to sing the praise of One who is All, who is as invisible as the wind, yet as firm as a rock.

***OPENING HYMN** *Alleluia!* (2nd time through with kazoo) #106

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

God of joy, we know that you have blessed us richly. Yet so often, we are down in the dumps over silly little disappointments. You have given us Jesus Christ, raised him from the dead and promised us eternal life. But we act as though we don't know it! Forgive us, God! Keep us mindful that you always have the last laugh, and that your promise is for true joy in every circumstance, and life forever. Amen.

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

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

ANTHEM *Shepherd Psalm*

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)

We dedicate these gifts in response to Christ's call, and offer ourselves in full commitment. Take us and mold us according to his will. We pray that who we are may be acceptable, what we do may find favor and that which we give will reflect your love.

WE GATHER IN PRAYER

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

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

SCRIPTURE: [Psalm 126: 1-3](#) [1 Corinthians 4: 10a](#)

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

SERMON *Make 'em Laugh!*

***CLOSING HYMN** *God Rest You Merry Sinner*
 Melody: *God Rest You Merry Gentlemen*
Sing vs. 1 & 3; kazoo on v. 2)

***BLESSING** (responsively)

Christ is raised from the dead! Love wins! Hallelujah! Christ lives and reigns for us! Hallelujah!

In Jesus Christ, we have been given new life in Christ. Thanks be to God!

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

* **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.

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!

NUREMBERG is our next movie on April 12th at 4:00 p.m. Dinner will NOT be provided. Bring your snacks and join us for a very gripping historical drama. Tomorrow is Holocaust Remembrance Day.

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 New Testament. We will have lots of *Star Wars* related games, crafts and activities. Dinner will include special *Star Wars* based foods with pretzel light sabers and Wookiee Cookies for dessert. 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.

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

GRADUATION RECOGNITION will take place during worship on May 3rd. If you have a graduate from middle school, high school or college, please let the church office know the details by May 1st.



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

Received a call from Pastor Wilhouse thanking everyone for the Easter Card they received from St. John's UCC.

LAUNDRY LOVE needs a volunteer leader for Wednesday May 27, June 24, and July 29 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!

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

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

Prayers Posts

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

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 12

Adult SS Class 9:30am
Worship 10:30am
Holy Humor
Nuremberg @ 4pm

Tuesday, April 14

Thursday, April 16

Outreach & Benevolence @ 11am
Dinner & Conversation
6pm @ CoCo's

Monday, April 13

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

Wednesday, April 15

Choir @ 7pm

Friday, April 17

Looking Ahead In April 2026

Sunday, April 19

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

Tuesday, April 21

Girl Scouts

Thursday, April 23

Ministerial Alliance @ noon
Dinner & Conversation
6 pm@ Senor Tequilla

Monday, April 20

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

Wednesday, April 22

Choir Practice @ 7pm
May Newsletter Items Due

Friday, April 24

Sponge Bob Square Pants 6pm
Musical at Lincoln High



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:	Lonny Vieck
Liturgist:	Brenda Fillingim

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.

God Bless You Merry Sinner
(Tune: God Bless Ye Merry Gentlemen)

God bless you merry sinner,
you're forgiven it is true;
Remember Christ your Savior
has lived and died for you,
and lives again as King of Kings,
of saint and sinner, too.
*Oh, tidings of Easter peace and joy,
peace and joy.*
Oh, tidings of Easter peace and joy.

In Jerusalem at Calvary
that dismal Friday morn,
amid the pain and suffering
eternal life was born.
It came with arms outstretched to us,
right through the curtain torn.
*Oh, tidings of Easter peace and joy,
peace and joy.*
Oh, tidings of Easter peace and joy.

So sing an alleluia,
for our Savior's victory,
and shout to all "Hosanna!"
that we have been set free
from sin and death and devil's grip
throughout eternity.
*We'll have tidings of Easter peace and joy,
peace and joy.*
Glad tidings of Easter peace and joy.

Graduate Recognition Sunday will be on Sunday, May 3 during 10:30 am worship service. A reception will follow after the service.

If you or anyone in your family will be graduating from high school, college, or completing any other notable educational achievement, please contact the church office with the following information as soon as possible:

Name:

School:

Degree or special honors:

Future plans:

Other info: (i.e. parents' names, connection to our congregation, etc.)

Thank you!

Jill