

SEVENTH SUNDAY OF EASTER

May 17, 2026

John 17:1-11

Spirit of Witness

Eastertide is coming to an end. But before we usher in the power of the Holy Spirit at the celebration of Pentecost next week, I pause to pray. For you. Yes, you.

I have even stepped away from writing this to light a candle, thanking God for the hearts that would be touched by words that often seem a feeble attempt in capturing how amazing, awesome, and perplexingly mysterious our God is.

I thanked God for you, dear readers. I thanked God for each soul awakening to the Easter promise of new life. I thanked God that while we never have or never will see one another in person, we can still call each other siblings in Christ, connected by our thirst for not only knowing God, but for understanding God if only a little bit better.

Eastertide's 50 days are wrapping up and that means Jesus is about to leave his friends for good this time to ascend into Heaven. But before he goes, he talks to them, and he prays.

John 17 is known by scholars as the "high priestly prayer," where Jesus first prays for himself, thanking God for all that God has done through him, and then prays for others. I love that Jesus begins with himself in mind. It is a reminder that it is not selfish to pray for ourselves.

As a pastor, I have heard many people brush aside their worries, uttering something like "enough about me, my problems a nothing compared to others." That is so not true. Your worries, your fears and your problems matter to God. As the old hymn attests, many times "it's me, it's me, O Lord, standing in the need of prayer."

After praying for himself, Jesus then prays for his friends, thanking God for them and asking for continued strength and protection for their days ahead.

I wonder how many times after Jesus finally left his earthly life that his friends remembered how, through the power of prayer, Jesus continues to be right there by their sides? How many times do we remember that when feeling lonely and needing our Friend and Savior in our life, that all we have to do is pray?

And what is prayer? It is simply talking to the one you love. Prayer is also sitting silently with the one you love the most as God doesn't need our words. All God wants is our hearts.

And so, I find myself on this Sunday as Eastertide comes to an end, sitting here saying a prayer of thanks for each one of you reading these words right now. And I pray you feel those prayers.

Heavenly God, we know that You are not far off, but very close to us. You are always surrounding us with love and protection. We thank Jesus for his example of prayer, too. May this day we find ourselves praying more frequently and praying more boldly, remembering that prayer does change all things. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen.

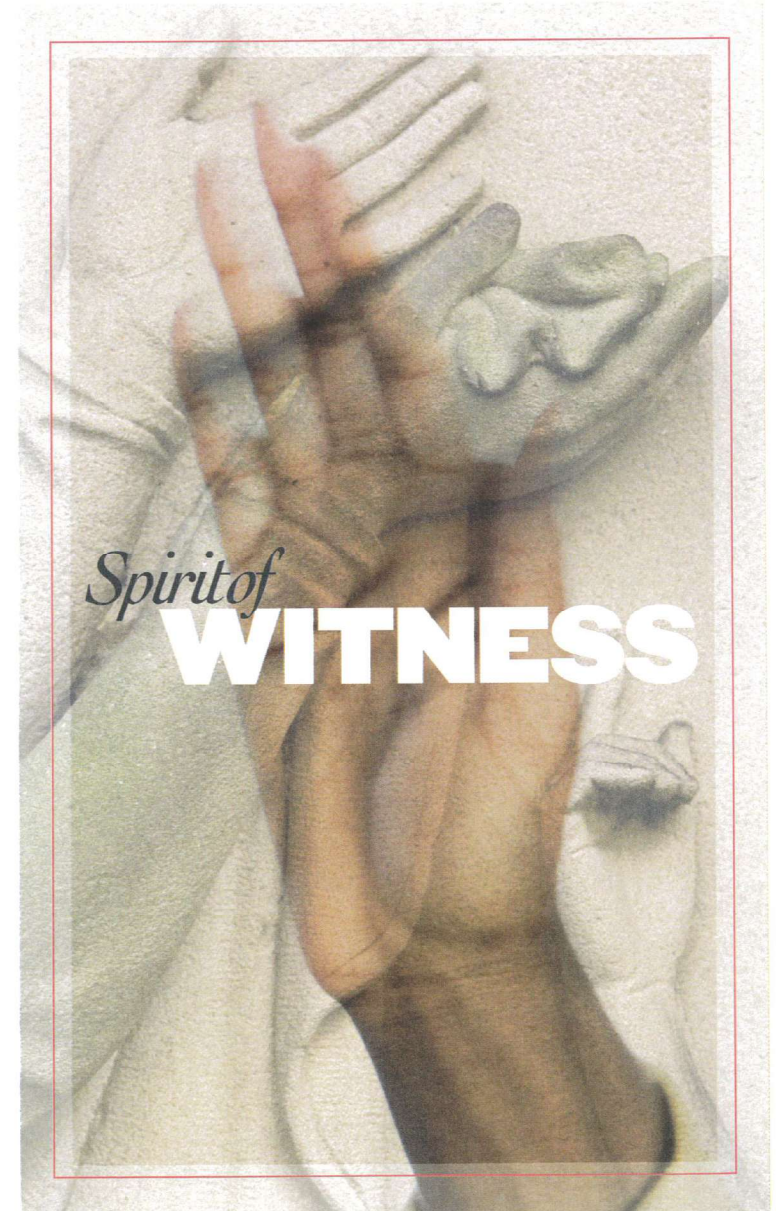
(Rev. Donna Frischknecht Jackson is a communications specialist for the United Church of Christ and author of today's Sunday Bulletin.)



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

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St. John's United Church of Christ
Music Celebration Sunday
 May 17, 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)

CHORAL INTROIT *Come, Now is the Time to Worship*

GOD CALLS US TO WORSHIP (responsively) Psalm 100

Make a joyful noise to the LORD, all the earth.

Serve the LORD with gladness; come into his presence with singing.

Know that the LORD is God. It is he who made us, and we are his;

We are his people and the sheep of his pasture.

Enter his gates with thanksgiving, and his courts with praise.

Give thanks to him; bless his name.

For the LORD is good; his steadfast love endures forever

And his faithfulness to all generations.

***OPENING HYMN** *Come, Christians Join to Sing* #90

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

Wondrous God, let the music of this day lift our spirits, wing us heavenward and give us new perspectives. Let our music renew our desire to praise you, and renew our commitment to work for justice and peace for all people. This day, let praise and joy weave hope into us and into our world. Amen.

***RESPONSE** *Praise God from Whom All Blessings Flow* #46

ANTHEM *By Our Love* Colossians 3:1-4 Ephesians 4:32

RECOGNITION OF BECKY BROCKMAN & DeETTA WELTE

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** *We Give Thee But Thine Own* (vs. 1 & 5) #382

***PRAYER OF DEDICATION** (unison)

Gracious Spirit, you have showered us with your gifts, and we embrace you with thanksgiving. Use our spiritual gifts that we may live the spiritual life, moving according to the Spirit's heated touch, bending in the direction of God's holy will, dancing to Christ's joyful music. Amen.

ANTHEM *It's All About the Cross* Romans 9:15-19

WE GATHER IN PRAYER

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

Congregational Response: *Gloria Patri* #35

***HYMN** *When in Our Music God is Glorified* (vs. 1 & 5) #7

SERMON *A Joyful Noise* based on Psalm 98

CLOSING ANTHEM *A Living Sacrifice* Mark 10:35-45

BLESSING & MEAL PRAYER

* **POSTLUDE**

Announcements

**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.

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.

UNITED STATES OF KINDNESS is a movement to complete 250 acts of kindness in celebration of the 250th birthday of the United States. We encourage everyone to perform one act of kindness per day for the rest of the year.

MAY FAMILY MOVIE NIGHT is May 31st featuring **Babe** at 5:00 p.m. A light supper will be served. *Babe is a little pig who doesn't quite know his place in the world. With a bunch of odd friends, like Ferdinand the duck who thinks he is a rooster and Fly, the sheep dog he calls Mom, he realizes that he has the makings to become the greatest sheep pig of all time, and Farmer Hoggett knows it. With Fly's help he learns that a pig can be anything that he wants to be.*

PRESCHOOL GRADUATION will take place on Thursday, May 21st at 6:00 pm in our sanctuary. Everyone is invited to attend and hear our preschool classes sing and exhibit some of the things they have learned. We have doubled our enrollment for next year as we rebuild our program and the staff is working hard to increase the number of students.

CALLING ALL CONFIRMANDS: If you have a young person entering 7th or 8th grade (or above) who is ready for Confirmation, please contact Pastor Debbie Jo ASAP. We would like to get the class organized and some of the requirements completed over the summer. Regular classes will begin in the fall with Confirmation taking place on May 2, 2027.

CATCH THE FEVER in action on Thursday, June 4th in Indianapolis. Join us for a bus trip to see the Indianapolis Fever play. Trip includes game ticket & motor coach transportation for \$110 per person. All food and souvenirs are on your own. Bus departs J.C. Penney's parking lot at 2:30 and will return at approximately 1:30 am. Reservations are due by May 20th. See Sheri Stodghill for more information or to make a reservation.

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

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 Dogwood 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.

CHURCH OFFICE will be closed on May 25th for Memorial Day.

PENTECOST is May 24th and everyone is encouraged to wear **red**.

Be sure to get a tax exempt form from the office when making a purchase for the church.

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

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, May 17

Adult SS Class 9:30am
Worship 10:30am
Celebration for Becky & De Etta

Monday, May 18

BABE Store 12-5:30pm
CCOP Mtg. 2-4pm
Music Worship @ 5pm
Board Mtg. @ 6pm

Tuesday, May 19

Wednesday, May 20

Thursday, May 21

Dinner & Conversation
Dogwood—6pm
Preschool Grad. @ 6pm

Friday, May 22

Pastors Day Off

Looking Ahead In May 2026

Sunday, May 24

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

Monday, May 25

BABE Store 12-5:30pm

Office Closed

Tuesday, May 26

Wednesday, May 27

Laundry Love 6-8pm

Thursday, May 28

Dinner & Conversation
Procopio's—6pm

Friday, May 29

Pastors Day 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

Head Usher:

Marvin Covey

Projection:

Jill Doggett

Sound:

Andrew Anson

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.