

FIFTH SUNDAY OF EASTER

May 3, 2026

John 14:1-14

Enduring Witness

Stories of the enduring witness of the Celtic saints have always captured my imagination. What adventures they had, and what trust in God that they displayed! We all heard of St. Patrick overcoming being kidnapped, enslaved and using all of life's travails to glorify God — and chase a snake or two out of the Emerald Isle!

Today I want to introduce you to Gobnait. Believed to have been born in the sixth century, Gobnait was told by an angel to leave her home and keep wandering until nine white deer appeared. When they did, that then would be her place of resurrection — the place where life would be full of meaning.

So Gobnait went off in search of her place of resurrection, wandering for miles until one day the white deer appeared in what is now County Cork, Ireland. There she settled and built a monastery, living her resurrected life of prayer and praise — and beekeeping. (Gobnait is the patron saint of beekeepers.)

When I heard Gobnait's story, she instantly became my kindred saint. I resonated with the call to find one's place of resurrection, where all our longings are met and life's purpose becomes a divine one.

I guess it's safe to say that I'm always on the lookout for my own nine white deer. The moment I know I'm where I'm meant to be. But for all my yearning and searching, I realize that sometimes I must ask, "Have I already arrived?"

Before ascending to heaven, Jesus told his followers, "Do not let your hearts be troubled." It is a message we need to hear for our hearts seem to be in a perpetual state of troubling. We feel lonely even though we are not alone. We worry about daily bread for our tables, while others wonder if they will have a roof over their heads as the world-wide housing crisis continues. And we worry about the direction of our lives: Is there more to do? New places to go? Unrealized dreams? Wasted time to redeem?

It would be so wonderful to have white deer appear, for then we would know we have found our divine bliss.

But we all must find our own place of resurrection and that means each journey will be different. What remains the same is that Jesus assures our troubled hearts that there is no need to worry. He goes before us, preparing the way forward. There will always be a place in God's loving home. Perhaps that message is our white deer this day, making us see that wherever we go, we have already arrived.

Loving God, as we seek our place of resurrection, ease our troubled hearts on this journey by making us alert that we are not alone. You are with us. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen.

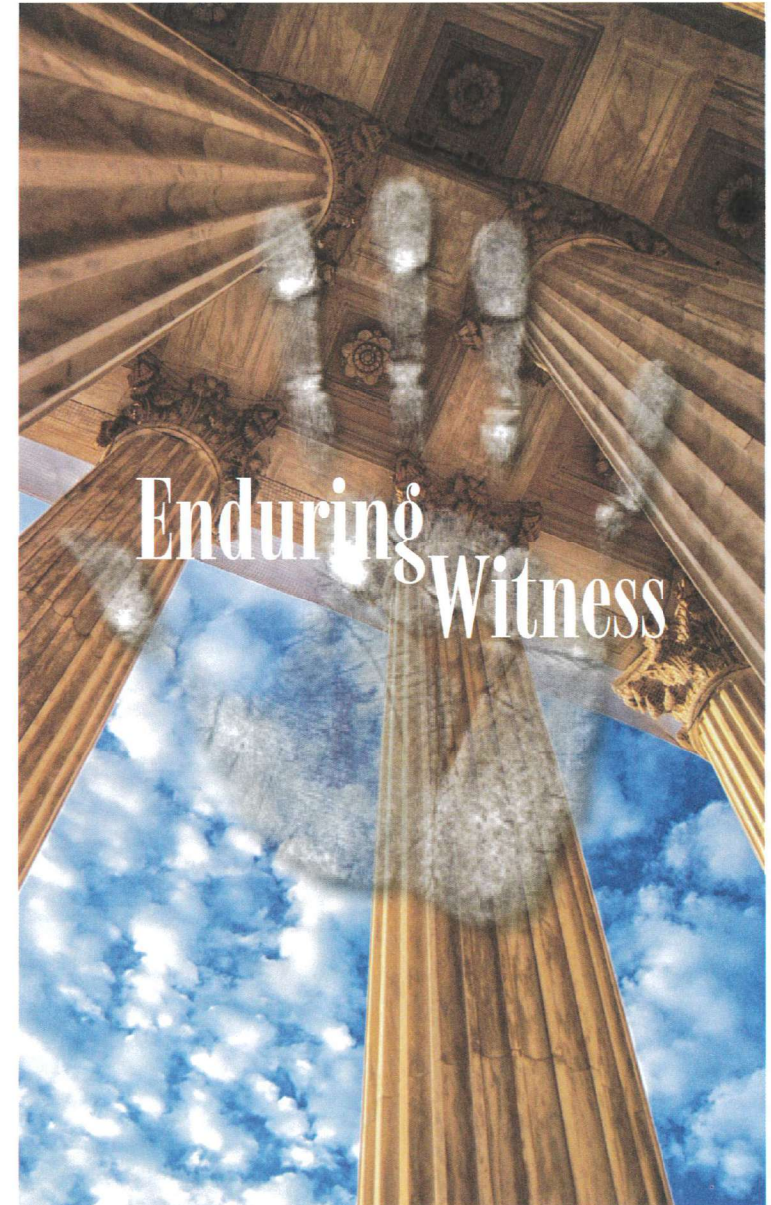
(Rev. Donna Frischknecht Jackson is a communications specialist for the United Church of Christ and author of today's Sunday Bulletin.)



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

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BUI 0210





St. John's United Church of Christ
Fifth Sunday of Easter
 May 3, 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)

In turbulent times, when the knot of fear tightens,

Take heart, trust God and step out.

When doubt needles us and despair encircles us,

Take heart, trust God, follow Jesus and walk on.

As depression threatens to sink us and grief tries to bury us,

Take heart, trust God, follow Jesus and sing your song.

***OPENING HYMN**

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

We are called to belong, not just to believe. We are called to be joined together, Bound together, Held together, Fitted together, Members together, One with each other, One together in Christ, Together, united in Christ's love. Amen.

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

GRADUATION RECOGNITION

ANTHEM *Remember Me*

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)

May we be empowered to share our resources in a most generous way. May we learn the joys of giving as well as receiving. 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 31:1-5, 15-16

New Testament: 1 Peter 1:2-10

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

SERMON *Be Cool*

SACRAMENT OF HOLY COMMUNION

***CLOSING HYMN**

***BLESSING** (responsively)

Go now, and follow the words of the great prophet Micah: "do justice, love mercy, and walk humbly with your God."

As we bear witness to the life of faith lived wholly for God, others, too, will come to know, love and serve God. Amen.

* **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

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.

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.

A RECOGNITION AND CELEBRATION lunch honoring music retirees DeEtta Welte and Becky Brockman will be served after worship Sunday, May 17th, 12 noon! The menu includes a sampler plate of Procopio's lasagna, pasta rosa, and spinach ravioli in alfredo sauce, Italian bread, salad, plus cheesecake from Peafections. A signup sheet is in the back of the sanctuary with a deadline of May 8th. You may also call the church office with your reservation.

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 month's 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?

GRADUATION RECOGNITION will take place during worship on May 3rd with a reception following in Memorial Hall. We will be recognizing all high school and college graduates.

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.

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

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

MOTHER'S DAY will be celebrated in worship on May 10th. Bring your mother, grandmother, aunt, or anyone who has been like a mother to you for this special service.

THANKS TO EVERYONE who made the Block Party such a great success: those who set up & cleaned up; Larry & his band; basket donors; raffle & event organizers; game & activity leaders; Delaynee and her racecar; grillers; servers; Jerri Johanningsmeier; food, tent, coolers, water donors; Will for the games; promoters; participants; Ms. Ariel for the Pre-School Open House; **EVERYONE** who came together to make the day special.

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 American Table 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.

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.

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.

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.

NURSERY SERVICES: Currently we do not have a nursery attendant, but small children are welcome (under parental supervision) to quietly utilize the *prayground* 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.

This Week in the Life of St. John's

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 @ 5:30pm

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

Looking Ahead In May 2026

Sunday, May 10

Adult SS Class 9:30am
Worship 10:30am
Mother's Day Recognition

Monday, May 11

BABE Store 12-5:30pm

Tuesday, May 12

Visioning Mtg. @ 5:30pm

Wednesday, May 13

Choir Practice @ 7pm
Christian Ed. @ 6pm

Thursday, May 14

Dinner & Conversation
Café Moonlight—6pm

Friday, May 15



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:	Ren Simmons
Projection:	Jana Vieck
Sound:	Lonny Vieck
Liturgist:	Kyle Doggett

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.

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, Chris Sanders, Jim Utley and Caden Utley (son of Cindy & Jim Utley)

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 47591

Marge Beamon - The Villages at Oak Ridge, Room 303, 1694 Troy Road, Washington, IN 47501

Ellen Riggs—Gentlecare Nursing Home, 1202 S. 16th. Street, Room 29, Vincennes, IN 47591

At Home:

Gary Meyer

Mike Lankford

MEET OUR GRADUATES

High School

Lucas Doggett - Son of Jill and Kyle Doggett. Lucas is graduating from Lincoln High School ranked first in his class with a 4.0 GPA, along with earning an Associate's Degree from VU, summa cum laude. He helped to found the robotics club, was selected to study abroad in Spain and graduated from that program with honors. He participated in varsity cross country, soccer, track, and swimming and has participated in musicals for the past 10 years. He has spent his summers as head lifeguard at Rainbow Beach. He will attend Purdue University this fall to major in engineering, with a concentration in aerospace/astronautical engineering and also with a minor in Spanish. He dreams of being an aerospace engineer.

Adelynn Lange - Daughter of Chrissy and Jonathan Lange. Granddaughter of Sandra Lange. Adelynn is graduating from Lincoln High School with an honor's diploma as well as an associate's degree in Vincennes University. She is a member of the National Honor Society, Interact Club, Champions Together, Competitive Robotics Team, stage crew for the high school musicals, Swim and Dive team where she was named the 2026 Kiwana's Athlete of the Year, MVP in School Cheerleading, and Competitive Cheer. Her future plans are to attend Indiana University with a biochemistry major in hopes of becoming a dermatologist.

Jack Gilley - Grandson of Lonny and Jana Vieck. Graduates from Washington High School with honors. Plans to attend USI with a major in radiology.

Sidney Marchino - Granddaughter of Larry and Betsy Marchino is graduating from Hazelwood Central High School in Florissant, Missouri where she is a member of the Thespian Society and National Honor Society. She plans to attend the University of Evansville majoring in Art. Her parents are Scott & Laura Marchino and grandparents are Larry & Betsy Marchino.

College

Madalynn Grube is graduating from Vincennes University with a Bachelor's Degree in IT. Her parents are David & Michelle Grube.

Ethan Jones - Grandson of Nancy Stultz. Graduates from Purdue in Construction Engineering and is already employed in that field.

Abby Riley - Daughter-in-law of Tony and Ann Riley. Graduates from Vincennes University with a nursing degree.