

FOURTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

June 21, 2026

Matthew 10:24-39

Daring Discipleship

What comes to mind when you hear the phrase “daring discipleship”? Do images of protesting, community organizing or letter writing campaigns to elected officials emerge?

While these qualify as daring acts of discipleship for the times we are living in, I feel I need to speak of a truth that doesn't get received warmly today. That is, not everyone is called to such acts of discipleship. And that's okay.

It's time for the children of God to stop judging other children of God for what they do and don't do. Remember what Paul said, the body has many parts. We all have different roles to play in the building of God's kingdom.

When Jesus asked his followers to take up the cross, what he was inviting us to do was to surrender completely our wants and wills, our desires and delights, our love of self and need for personal satisfaction, and replace it instead with a selfless love. This love is risky, costly and demanding for it will lead us to places we never thought we would go and introduce us to people we never thought we would ever associate with.

This path will look differently for each one of us. That friend who went quiet on social media is not condoning any wrongs. They are choosing to make this world better by retreating in prayer. How often do we forget in moments of crisis to first calmly give it over to the Lord?

How about that friend who refuses to attend a march? They have decided that for them showing the love of Christ means spending time in a home for disabled adults.

My friends, the cross that we are asked to pick up is the same, but we all have different ways of grabbing hold of it, and we all carry it at different paces and to different places.

In his reflection, “Risky Obedience,” Walter Brueggemann reminds us that when we follow Jesus into a “world of fear and threat and anger,” that sometimes we go as “willing followers” and other times as “reluctant followers, slow to get under way.”

But either way, we are all called to be “practitioners of Jesus' goodness, generosity and hospitality.”

May today we find ourselves being revived once again to be the daring disciples the world needs — and may we respect the many ways that discipleship is lived out.

God of justice and peace, we know this world is broken and needs our love. Help us to become those daring disciples who follow Jesus on a path of forgiveness and inclusion. As we do, keep us from judging others. May our eyes be fixed on You alone. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen.

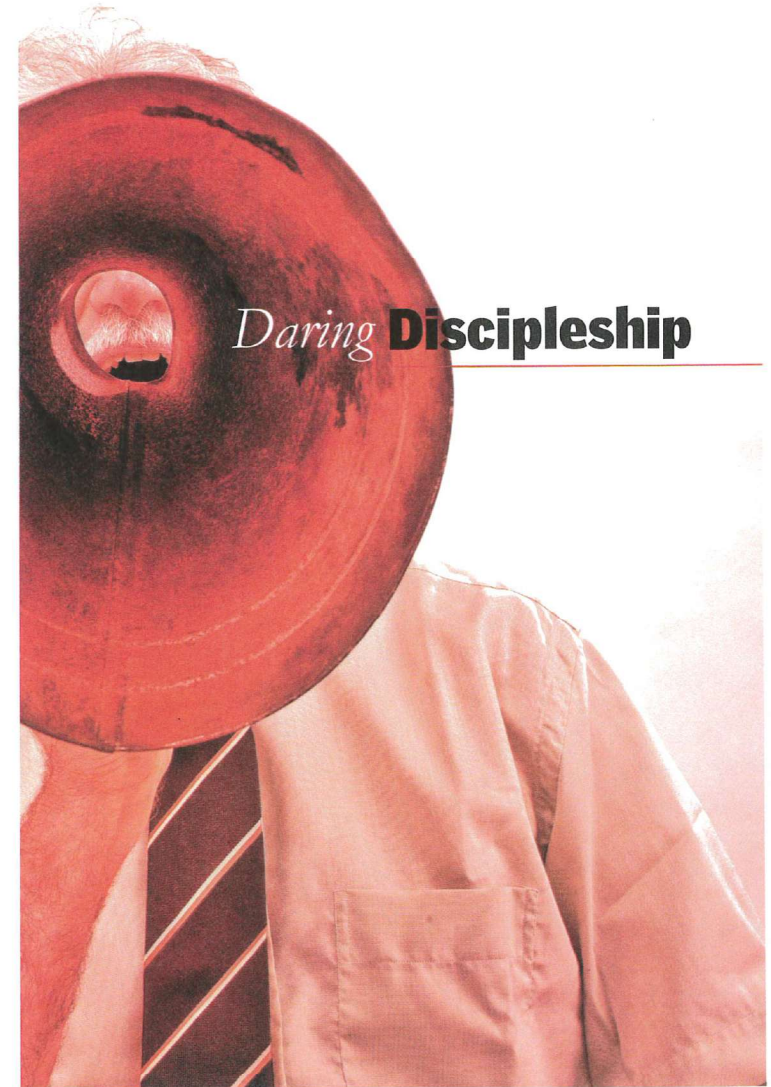
(Rev. Donna Frischknecht Jackson is a communications specialist for the United Church of Christ and author of today's Sunday Bulletin.)



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St. John's United Church of Christ
Fourth Sunday after Pentecost
 June 21, 2026



* Please stand if it is comfortable to do so. **Bold print** is everyone in unison

WELCOME, ANNOUNCEMENTS, GREET ONE ANOTHER (be seated)

PRELUDE

CHURCH BELL (the bell invites us to worship)

GOD CALLS US TO WORSHIP (responsively)

Welcome home. God bids us to come.

Find rest for our weariness, Find peace deeper than our worry.

Welcome home, all you lost, wandering or stuck in despair.

Welcome, to God's arms, embracing us all.

* **OPENING HYMN** *All Hail the Power of Jesus' Name* (vs. 1-2) #91

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

Almighty God, you have set us as individuals in families. May our families be strengthened by your Spirit. Keep us close together so that no challenge can unravel the bindings of love that unite us. Turn our hearts in tenderness toward one another. Come, join us in worship. Amen.

* **RESPONSE** *Spirit of the Living God* #259

FATHERS' DAY RECOGNITION

SPECIAL MUSIC *Glorious Day* Jonathan Clark

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

MEMORIAL MOMENT FOR MARGE BEAMON

OFFERING INVITATION**

God is so good and we are richly blessed. Let us give back to God with gratitude and thanksgiving.

* **DOXOLOGY** #46

* **PRAYER OF DEDICATION** (unison)

You have poured out your unsearchable love upon us, gracious God. Accept these gifts, we pray, as our free and grateful response to your love, and may you use them — and us — to spread the Good News of Jesus' love for all the world. Amen.

WE GATHER IN PRAYER

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

Congregational Response: *Spirit of God, Unseen as the Wind*

SCRIPTURE:

Old Testament: Proverbs 3:1-12

New Testament: Romans 6:1b-11

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

MESSAGE *Manliness vs. Godliness*

* **CLOSING HYMN** *When Morning Gilds the Skies* #100

* **BLESSING** (responsively)

God, whose love for us is greater than that of any parent, longs to share love through all who would serve as human parents of faith.

As we go, may God's love live in us, may the grace of Christ surround us, and may the Spirit nurture us to nurture others. Amen.

* **CONGREGATIONAL RESPONSE** *Go In Peace* #445

* **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.

CALLING ALL CONFIRMANDS: A brief Confirmation meeting will be held following worship on June 28th in the Chapel. All young people entering 7th & 8th Grade and above, along with their parents are invited and encouraged to attend.

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.

JUNE MOVIE NIGHT is June 28th at 5:00 pm, featuring *Remarkable Bright Creatures* starring Sally Field and Alfred Molina. *Each night at the Sowell Bay Aquarium, 70-year-old custodian Tova Sullivan quietly tends to her routine work. She's recently bonded with the giant Pacific octopus, Marcellus, despite the language (and species) barriers between them.* A light supper will be served and everyone is invited.

GALAXY: Launching Kids on a Mission of God's Love VBS will take place on June 29-July 2 from 5:30-7:30 each night. Children entering Kindergarten through 6th Grade are invited to register. A light supper will be served before breaking into galactic activities including storytelling, crafts, science demos, and games. Please register today! Bring your friends and families! Registration forms on the table in the narthex

CHURCH PARADE FLOAT: Will and the youth will be developing a float for the July 4th city parade promoting our various missions to the community. It will be built on July 2nd & 3rd if you would like to help. Please see Will for details.

NEW MEMBERS who would like to unite with our congregation are invited to a meeting at 9:00 a.m. next Sunday in the chapel for more information.

CATCH THE MEROM SPIRIT: All Ages Church Camp July 12-18. This non-deominational camp is being led by retired UCC minister, Rev. Bev Kahle and

provides an excellent opportunity for your kids to have the Merom Experience. Last year, the Board voted to cover the expenses of any church young person who wished to attend a session at Merom. Registration is online and Pastor can give you the link.

NEXT SUNDAY Isabella Lange will be presenting a liturgical dance during worship.

PRESCHOOL FUNDRAISER: Come dine at Procopio's on Tuesday, July 21st for either lunch (11-1:30) or dinner (4:00-9:00) or BOTH and help raise funds for our preschool. Procopio's will donate 20% of their sales that day (dine-in or carryout and even gift cards) to our preschool. This is a great way to help support this vital community mission so plan now to participate!