

THIRD SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

June 14, 2026

Gen 18:1-15, (21:1-7)

Sarah Laughed

In a sea of youthful faces, Sarah's wrinkled skin stood out in the lecture hall. The 75-year-old was there to earn her Master of Divinity degree. Her classmates wondered why. Did she think she would serve a church late in life?

Many succeeded in suppressing their laughter. Others did not. Sarah didn't mind. She laughed, too, when the dream of being a minister emerged. Even her denomination didn't support her she confided to me one day before class.

"They laughed, too," she said with a smile that soon melted from her face when she continued. "It's sad that all who laugh are the ones who claim they know God. What God are they learning about here in these hallowed halls?"

There was once another Sarah who laughed at God's startling, unbelievable plans — Abraham's wife. She overheard angels talking to her elderly husband that she, who was barren, would conceive a child. Their son, Isaac, would come into the world when Sarah was 90 and Abraham 100.

When she heard the news, she couldn't help but laugh. Perhaps it was an incredulous laugh. After all, prayers for a child have gone unanswered for years. And let's not forget, the old couple was kept waiting another 25 years after God first made the promise to Abraham that he would be the father of a great nation.

When God asked why she laughed, Sarah tried to deny it. God wasn't mad with her. I think God was probably suppressing a chuckle, getting a kick out of how once again those who follow God still get so surprised at the impossible becoming possible.

"Is anything too wonderful for the Lord?" asked seminarian Sarah that day in the lecture hall, repeating God's words spoken to our biblical Sarah so long ago.

I have found myself repeating these words many times to churches that were struggling, even dying. "Is anything too wonderful for the Lord?" Other translations replace "wonderful" with "hard."

I ask because we all forget that the Almighty can bring life to that which is barren — even dead. Nothing is impossible with God. Sarah's story is one all churches this day need to hear, for the laughter of hope is still possible amid empty pews.

Just ask seminarian Sarah. She was ordained at 78 and called to serve a struggling rural congregation, where for five beautiful years they laughed together, cried together and grew together.

Is anything too wonderful for the Lord? No, it is not. Just remember the Sarahs.

God of laughter and beautiful promises, many of us are feeling like life has passed us by and that it is too late to start over, try again — even dare to believe dreams can still come true. But nothing is too wonderful for You. Strengthen our faith to believe that all things are possible and give us the patience to trust Your perfect timing. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen.

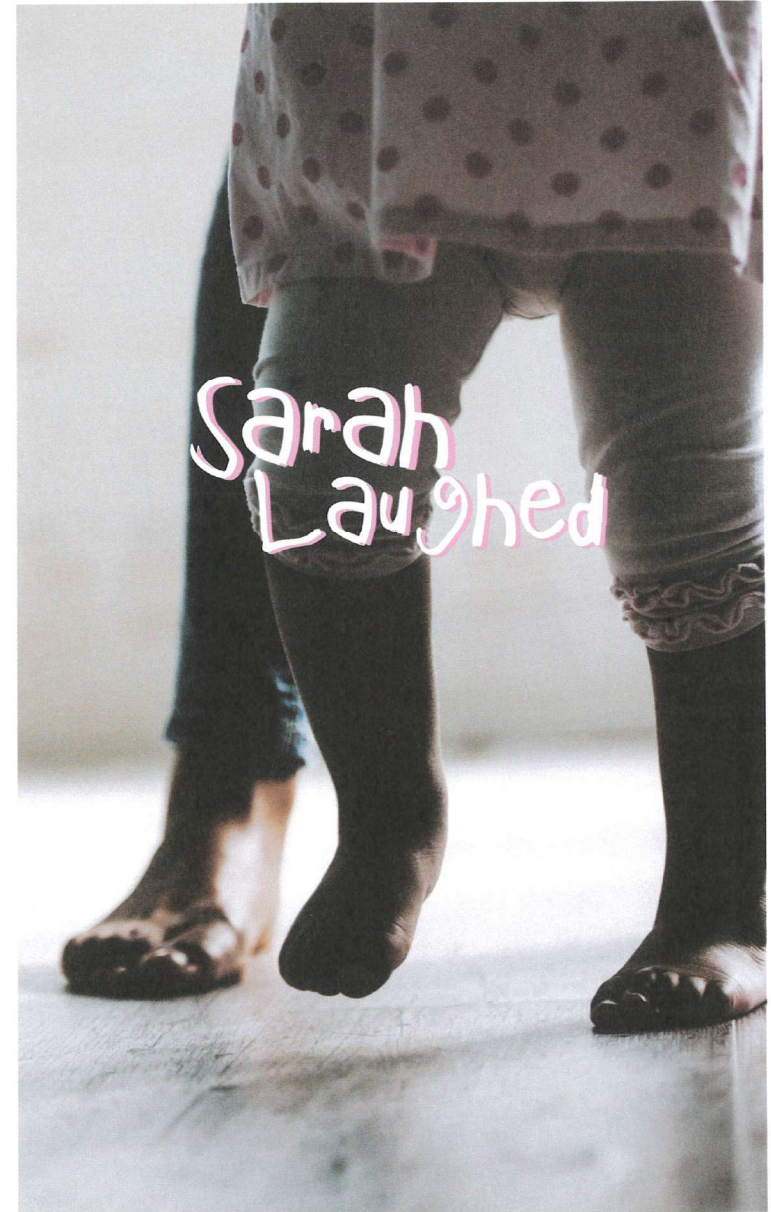
(Rev. Donna Frischknecht Jackson is a communications specialist for the United Church of Christ and author of today's Sunday Bulletin.)



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

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St. John's United Church of Christ
Third Sunday after Pentecost
 June 14, 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)

Come, everyone is welcome here.

God's people are of every land and race, of every age and every condition.

We gather to celebrate God's mercy and revelation to us in Jesus Christ.

Through God, we are one big family. Let us praise and worship our God!

***OPENING HYMN** *Praise My Soul, the God of Heaven* (vs. 1 & 2) #23

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

We come to worship because for us to live is Christ. We live for Christ, we live by Christ, we live with Christ, we live through Christ, we live in Christ. God of grace, let Christ be praised in all we say and do, in all we think and speak, in this hour of worship and in every moment of our lives. Amen.

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

SPECIAL MUSIC Larry Marchino

CHILDREN'S MESSAGE (children please 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.

***DOXOLOGY** #46

***PRAYER OF DEDICATION** (unison)

God of grace, it is our delight and our devotion to give these gifts to you. All we are and all we have are yours alone. Accept this joyful offering as a token of our abiding love: use it to bring peace, justice and comfort to 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: Genesis 18:1-15, (21:1-7)

New Testament: Romans 5:1-8

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

MESSAGE *The Last Laugh*

***CLOSING HYMN** *The God of Abraham Praise* #24

***BLESSING** (responsively)

Now go into the world always remembering that God is the source of blessing.
God's presence is our shield. God's promise is our hope. Amen.

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

CONGREGATIONAL MEETING

* **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 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.

NEW MEMBERS will be welcomed into full church membership in late June or early July. If you would like to formally unite with the congregation, please see Pastor Debbie Jo.

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. Confirmation will not be offered again until the 2028-2029 school year.

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.

FATHER'S DAY will be celebrated in worship on June 21st. Invite your fathers, grand-father's, uncles, and anyone who has been like a father to you so they may be recognized.

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!

JUNE MOVIE NIGHT is June 28th (NOTE DATE CHANGE) 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.

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.

CATCH THE MEROM SPIRIT: All Ages Church Camp July 12-18. This non-denominational 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.

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

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, Caden Utley and Kelsey Pepmeier Oladubu (Janet Daniels' niece), Lynn Simmons, Nina (Pastor Debbie's granddaughter), Ruth (Pastor Debbie's sister) in the death of her husband, Luis, Ray Pieper, Suzi Evans (friend of Brian Fillingim) and Lee (12 year old grandson of Brian Fillingim friend).

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 pm

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

This Week in the Life of St. John's

Sunday, June 14

Adult SS Class 9:30am
Worship 10:30am
Congregational Mtg.

Monday, June 15

BABE Store 12-5:30pm
Worship Comm. @ 5pm
Board Meeting @ 6pm

Tuesday, June 16

Wednesday, June 17

Thursday, June 18

Dinner & Conversation
Carriage Inn —6pm

Friday, June 19

Pastor's Day Off
Office Closed for Juneteenth Day

Looking Ahead In May 2026

Sunday, June 21

Adult SS Class 9:30am
Fellowship 10am
Worship 10:30am
Father's Day

Monday, June 22

BABE Store 12-5:30pm

Tuesday, June 23

Wednesday, June 24

Laundry Love 6-8pm

Thursday, June 25

Dinner & Conversation
Bobe's in Washington —6pm

Friday, June 26

Pastor's Day Off



Staff and Volunteers

Pastor:	Rev. Debbie Jo Atkins
Secretary	Kim Butler
Church Board President:	Sandra Lange
Pianist:	Pat Sparks
Children & Family Ministry Coordinator:	Will Meyer
Head Usher:	Marvin Covey
Projection:	Jill Doggett
Sound:	Lonny Vieck
Liturgist:	David Culp

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.