

EIGHTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

July 19, 2026

Matthew 13:24-30, 36-43

Wheat and Weeds Together

Wheat and weeds growing together! Yikes! This is a disaster! What are we to do?

So would have been the reaction of farmers when discovering weeds swaying in the wind alongside their cash crop of wheat.

Jesus knew the two together was not a good thing. He also knew that this was a perfect illustration to pose a more pressing question: How to deal with the good and evil mingling in the world?

And so, our Savior and Friend tells the parable about the wheat and weeds, pointing out that there's no way to prevent the "weeds" in life from coming into our fields. But be of good cheer. In God's time, the weeds will be separated and burned. Of course, Jesus is speaking of the time of judgement.

As it was with the actual weeds in the field, we must wait and let them grow, for if they are ripped out too early, precious wheat stalks might be taken as well. How many innocents have been hurt by our own exuberant weeding?

Jesus' parable makes better sense when we turn to the earlier use of the word "tares" rather the contemporary use of "weeds." Tares are referring to darnel which is a poisonous weed that looks just like wheat.

This agricultural insight gave me pause, and the more I thought on it, the more I kept coming back to how quick we are to judge others before discerning their true motives or seeing deeply into their hearts. It seems increasingly that we label others as evil, wicked, no good, etc. Yet could it be that those we are labeling too quickly really are the wheat in the field?

I'm not saying that there isn't evil mingling with good in our world. Evil does a good job mimicking good. We need to be able to call it out when identified. But in a world so raw with distrust, we also need to stop before we speak and think before we label.

We also need to be aware of the wheat and tares in our own spiritual fields. St. Catherine of Siena, for example, heard this parable as one pointing to the presence of virtue and vice in her own heart.

There is a field of wheat and weeds in all our lives. And while we try our best to nurture the good and weed out the bad, it is not always easy to discern which is which. But God knows and God will step in and sort it out. Not sure how I wanted that to sound — hopeful or ominous? I guess it all depends how you, my dear reader, heard it.

All-knowing God, You are aware of the good grain we are growing as well as the weeds of division and contempt that are thriving. We want only our best selves to flourish, so be merciful to us when You sort out our own fields. May Your grace be abundant as it is amazing. 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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BUL0407





St. John's United Church of Christ
Eighth Sunday after Pentecost
 July 19, 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) based on Psalm 139

O Lord, you have searched me and known me.

You know when I sit down and when I rise up; you discern my thoughts

You search my path and my lying down and are acquainted with all my ways.

Search me, O God, and know my heart; test me and know my thoughts.

See if there is any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.

There is nowhere we can go to escape your spirit as we gather to worship.

***OPENING HYMN** *Immortal, Invisible, God Only Wise* #66

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

We are welcomed into your presence this day by your gracious hospitality, O God. Grant that we will lay aside our cares and anxieties to concentrate our thoughts on you alone. Open us to the teaching and guidance for living which we receive, that we will be strengthened to walk with you and follow wherever you lead us. Come, Divine Presence, and be with us in worship. Amen.

***RESPONSE** *Gloria Patri* #35

SPECIAL MUSIC Vera Mattingly

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.

***RESPONSE** *We Give Thee but Thine Own* (v. 1) #382

***PRAYER OF DEDICATION** (unison)

God only Wise, accept our offerings, the fruit of our labor and lives, in obedience of our faith, through Jesus Christ, to whom be the glory forever! Amen.

WE GATHER IN PRAYER

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

Congregational Response: *Hear Our Prayer, O God* #306

SCRIPTURE:

Old Testament: Psalm 139:1-12, 23-24

New Testament: Genesis 28:10-19a

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

MESSAGE *Blessings, Bethel, and Benchmarks*

***CLOSING HYMN** *We Are Climbing Jacob's Ladder*

***BLESSING** (responsively)

Let us rejoice at being servants of God — summoned by the Spirit, called into community, led by faith, inspired for service,

And in all things, consumed by joy. We go in peace to love and serve the Lord.

***CONGREGATIONAL RESPONSE** *Let There Be Peace on Earth* #677

***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 myuc.org and clicking on the contribute button. Please prayerfully consider setting up regular online donations to continue our outreach into the community.*

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.

JULY MOVIE NIGHT is July 19th at 5:00 pm, featuring *Sheep Detectives* starring Hugh Jackman. George Hardy is a shepherd who loves to read murder mysteries to his sheep, never suspecting that they can understand him. When George is found dead under mysterious circumstances, the sheep decide to solve the crime themselves, even if it means leaving their meadow for the first time and facing the fact that the human world isn't as simple as it appears in books. A light supper will be served and everyone is invited.

CHRISTMAS IN JULY: Join us in worship on July 26th for *Christmas in July*. We will sing Christmas carols and celebrate that its only five months till Christmas! Jonathan Clark will be our special music.

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!

SAVE THE DATE: The Membership & Evangelism Committee is hosting a Fall Festival (like the Spring Block Party) on Sunday, October 4th from 3:00-5:00 p.m. featuring: Lincoln Trail Mobile Farm (petting zoo), Vincennes Firetruck and firefighters, Bounce House, free food, marshmallow toasting for s'mores, gift card raffle, carnival games, and MORE!

CHURCH PICNIC DATE is September 27th at the shelter house in Gregg Park. Mark your calendars!

DINNER & CONVERSATION: This week's dinner will be at Off The Square 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.

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

Prayers Posts

We ask for continuing prayer requests for: Marilyn Houchins, Rhonda Webber (Brenda Fillingim Niece), John Mineo, Cindi Gilmore, Kim Godare's daughter Mallory, Jeremy Carpenter, Kelsey Pepmeier Oladubu (Janet Daniels' niece), DeEtta Welte, Phyllis King, mother of Melissa Pancake, Marvin Covey, Colten Kirchoff and Marty's daughter-in-law and son Morris and Jane Ann Marchino.

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

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

This Week in the Life of St. John's

Sunday, July 19

Adult SS Class 9:30am
Worship 10:30am
Vera Mattingly—Special Music
Movie: Sheep Detectives @ 5pm

Monday, July 20

BABE Store 12-5:30pm
Music & Worship @ 5pm
Board Meeting @ 6pm

Tuesday, July 21

Procopio's Fund Raiser for
Preschool

Wednesday, July 22

August Newsletter Info Due
Visioning Mtg. @ 5:15pm

Thursday, July 23

Dinner & Conversation
Off the Square @ 6pm

Friday, July 24

Pastor's Day Off



Staff and Volunteers

Pastor:	Rev. Debbie Jo Atkins
Secretary	Kim Butler
Church Board President:	Saundra Lange
Pianist:	Pat Sparks
Children & Family Ministry Coordinator:	Will Meyer
Head Usher:	John Riggs
Projection:	Saundra Lange
Sound:	Andrew Anson
Liturgist:	Hope Clausman

Looking Ahead In July 2026

Sunday, July 26

Adult SS Class 9:30am
Worship 10:30am
Fellowship Time @ 10am
Jonathan Clark —Special Music
Christmas in July

Monday, July 27

BABE Store 12-5:30pm

Tuesday, July 28

Wednesday, July 29

Laundry Love 6-8pm

Thursday, July 30

Dinner & Conversation
Café Moonlight @ 6pm

Friday, July 31

Pastor's Day Off

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.