

NINTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

July 26, 2026

Matthew 13:31-33, 44-52

Weaving the Future

I have been on a quest to understand better the days of old by learning how to master 18th-century living skills long forgotten. My most recent adventure was a class on how to grow flax, spin it into thread, and then weave it into cloth.

It was there at the loom that I found my weaving became a prayerful act, and with each pass of the shuttle, I thought of the series of "The Kingdom of God is like" parables that Jesus shared so long ago.

The Kingdom of God is like a mustard seed — the smallest of seeds that grows so great it becomes a haven where birds make their nests among the branches. The Kingdom of God is like yeast that rises into a pillowy loaf of warm bread.

The Kingdom of God is like ...

I mused that if Jesus was at the loom with me, he would begin teaching how the Kingdom of God is like a weaver creating a tapestry with various colors of threads.

The effectiveness of Jesus' many teachings have always been that he was able to take what was right in front of him and make it a teachable God moment. It was a gift that made God's Kingdom more accessible to others. There was no secret handshake or password to gain entry. Rather, the Kingdom was and is all around in ways we are often blind to.

Take a look where you are right now. What is a Kingdom of God parable Jesus would speak of?

Chances are you are sitting in a pew, and you think there is no sign of the Kingdom. Look again.

Could it be that the Kingdom of God is like the threadbare cushion you might sit on? Its patted down stuffing testifying to the generational stories of faith that need to be heard and the ones that still need to be told. Or perhaps the Kingdom of God is like a cracked vase that is holding the flowers on the chancel. Once shattered but not discarded. Rather, lovingly restored by hands who still saw its beauty and worth.

The Kingdom of God is like ...

It's now your turn to see with eyes of faith and make a new parable for today.

Story-telling God, may our voice speak of the parables still needing to be told. May everything we see and savor, touch and taste, remind us of the goodness of Your kingdom that is here on Earth all around us. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen.

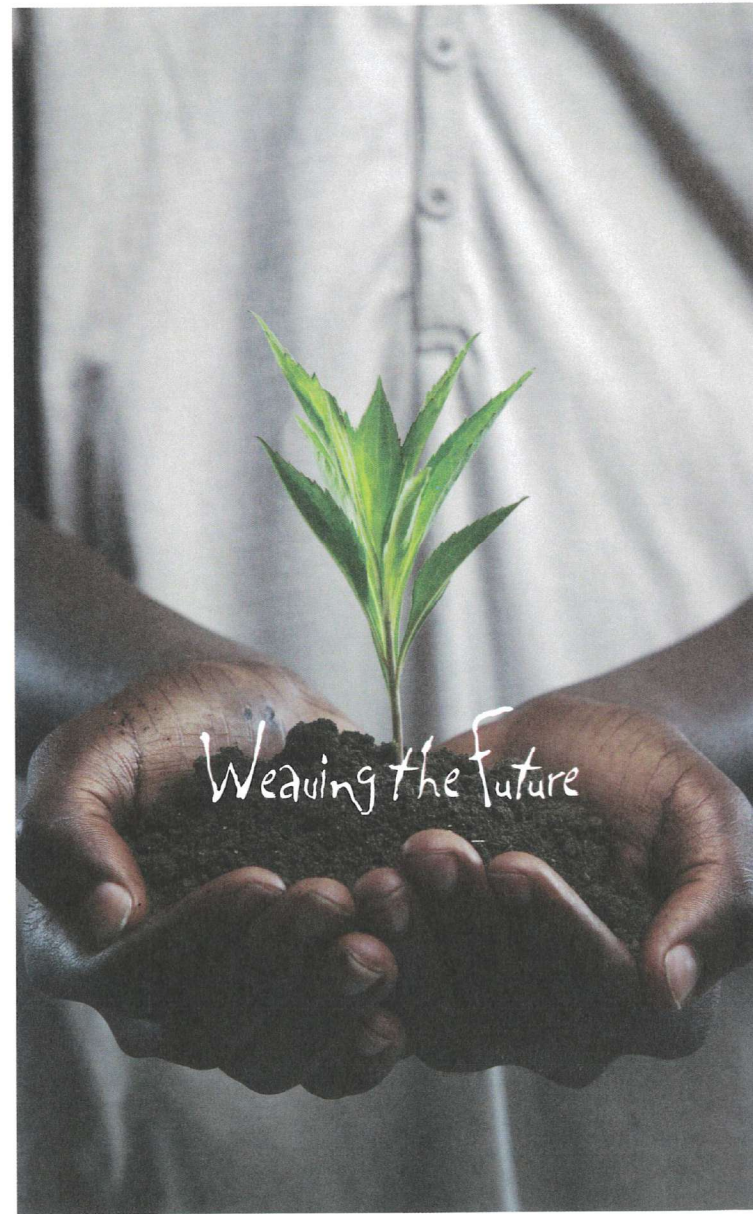
(Rev. Donna Frischknecht Jackson is a communications specialist for the United Church of Christ and author of today's Sunday Bulletin.)



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

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BUL0408





St. John's United Church of Christ
Ninth Sunday after Pentecost
 July 26, 2026
Christmas in July



* 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, O Come, Emmanuel, Come and be with us again.

In the heat of July, we celebrate Divine love coming to us through a baby.

Come, O Come, into our lives in a new way.

The peace and joy of Christmas should be celebrated throughout the year.

Come, O Come, Lord Jesus, Come.

Come into our hearts to stay each and every day.

* **OPENING HYMN** *O Come, All Ye Faithful* #148

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

Loving Jesus, remind us this day that you became one of us. You were born like us, you walked this earth like us and you have risen from the dead as we will one day rise. Remind us of your presence throughout the year, as sometimes we lose sight, we forget, and we feel alone, lost and forsaken. Remind us of your birth, your life, your death and your resurrection, as we walk the journey of our own lives. We are not alone. Amen

* **RESPONSE** *Infant Holy, Infant Lowly* (v. 2) #163

SPECIAL MUSIC Jonathan Clark

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** *Let All Mortal Flesh Keep Silence* (v. 1) #124

* **PRAYER OF DEDICATION** (unison)

O God, you have given us the greatest gift, your Son. We respond to you by giving to you what is precious to us. Grant that we might learn to give even more freely, and teach us how giving changes us. Amen.

SOLO *I Wonder as I Wander* Pastor Debbie

WE GATHER IN PRAYER

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

Congregational Response: *It Came Upon a Midnight Clear* (v.1) #153

MEDITATIONS & MUSIC

Meditation: Why Christmas in July?

Carol: *O Thou Joyful* #169

Meditation: New Carol but Familiar Tune

Carol: *Who Would Think That What Was Needed* (from UCC New Century Hymnal)

Meditation: Different Cultures Different Carols

Carol: *'Twas in the Moon of Wintertime* #166

* **CLOSING HYMN** *Joy to the World* #143

* **BLESSING** (responsively)

Love came down at Christmas, Love all lovely, love divine; Love was born at Christmas, Stars and angels gave the sign.

* **CONGREGATIONAL RESPONSE** *Hark, the Herald Angels Sing* #150

* **POSTLUDE**

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.*

BACKPACK BLESSING will take place during worship on August 2nd. Students of all ages should bring their backpacks with them for a special blessing for the new school year during the Children's Moment.

3-2-1 Blast Off! Launching our fall programming on Sunday, August 16, at 9:45 am with an expanded Fellowship Time. Faith Ventures begins, our ministry for children in kindergarten through 6th grade. Children attend the 10:30 a.m. worship service with their families and will be dismissed immediately following the Children's Message. Faith Ventures will include a Bible lesson along with fun, hands-on activities that reinforce the day's lesson.

AUGUST MOVIE NIGHT will be held on August 16th at 5:00 pm featuring *Keeping the Faith* starring Ben Stiller, Edward Norton, and Jenna Elfman, with Anne Bancroft in a supporting role. Best friends since they were kids, Rabbi Jacob Schram and Father Brian Finn are dynamic and popular young men living and working on New York's Upper West Side. When Anna Reilly, once their childhood friend and now grown into a beautiful corporate executive, suddenly returns to the city, she reenters Jake and Brian's lives and hearts with a vengeance. Sparks fly and an unusual and complicated love triangle ensues. A light supper will be provided. Everyone invited.

CONFIRMATION CLASS will have its first gathering on Sunday, August 23rd at 5:00-6:00 p.m. All students in Grades 6 & up are invited to participate. Even if you are not yet sure if you are ready to make a commitment to Christ and church membership, we encourage you to attend as an opportunity to explore your faith, ask questions, and hear the opinions of others in the class as together we continue our faith journey. This first class will be a time of getting to know one another, gain an understanding of Confirmation, and order our books and Bibles. PLEASE give it a chance and join us for this important exploration of our faith, history, mission and how we all belong together in God's family.

MESSY CHURCH UPDATE: On Wednesday, August 5th at 10:00 am, the Core Team and any willing volunteers will be organizing and inventorying the Messy Church room as we prepare for a new program year beginning on September 2nd. Please let Pastor know if you can help.

WANTED: FAITHFUL KIDS FOR GOD'S POSSE is the theme for our **MESSY CHURCH** rootin'-tootin' round-up on September 2nd from 5:30-7:00 pm. Grab your cowboy gear and giddy-up to our western theme night of fun for the whole family. Eat at the chuck wagon, interactive worship and lots of activities, crafts and games. Invite your friends and families and join us. YEE-HAW!

CHURCH PICNIC DATE is September 27th at the Open Air Pavillion in Gregg Park. Mark your calendars!

THANKS TO EVERYONE who participated in the Procopio's Preschool Fundraiser. We appreciate your support. We earned \$1003 from Procopio's and \$800 from donations in the box for a total of \$1803. School begins on August 6th & 7th and we currently have 23 students enrolled with room for more. Thanks to Procopio's for hosting this fundraiser. It is greatly appreciated.

NEW MEMBERS TO BE RECEIVED: On August 9th we will be welcoming six new members into our church family. If you would like to unite with the congregation, please speak with Pastor.

FALL FESTIVAL sponsored by The Membership & Evangelism Committee will take place on Sunday, October 4th from 3:00-5:00 p.m. at the Open Air Pavillion in Gregg Park, featuring: Lincoln Trail Mobile Farm (petting zoo), Vincennes Firetruck and firefighters, Bounce House, free food, marshmallow roasting for s'mores, gift card raffle, carnival games, and MORE! Plan now to participate and volunteer to help! Invite your friends and families.

A big thank you to the youth who helped prepare the trailer on Friday, July 3, to everyone who helped with the final touches on the morning of July 4, and to all who participated in the parade. Their time, energy, and willingness to help made this a great opportunity to represent St. John's and connect with our community was appreciated!

Thank You for Supporting the Lemonade Stand!

A big thank you to the families, church members, and the Vincennes community that supported the CFM lemonade stand on Friday, July 17, Saturday, July 18 and at church on Sunday, July 19. The St. John's stand proceeds were one of the highest for the weekend. Your support means so much! All proceeds from the stand go to benefit the Isaiah 117 House, an organization that provides physical and emotional support in a safe, loving home for children awaiting foster care placement.

Exciting Things Ahead For 2026–2027 Program Year!

With August here, the 2026–2027 Children and Family Ministry program year is right around the corner! The new year will be filled with new fun activities, meaningful lessons, and some returning favorites. Final planning is currently underway, and details about upcoming events and programs will be shared soon. Be sure to watch for announcements in the church bulletin, on Facebook, and in the CFM mailboxes.

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.

This Week in the Life of St. John's

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



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:	Jill Lopez
Sound:	Jonathan Lange
Liturgist:	Hope Clausman

Looking Ahead In August 2026

Sunday, August 02

Adult SS Class 9:30am
Fellowship Time @ 10am
Men's Group —Special Music
Backpack Blessing

Monday, August 03

BABE Store 12-5:30pm

Tuesday, August 04

Wednesday, August 05

Thursday, August 06

Dinner & Conversation
Haub House @ 6pm
Preschool Begins

Friday, August 07

Pastor's Day Off
Phoebe's Mission 4:30—6:00pm

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.