

Bold Moves

I recently heard a saying that if you hold tightly to grudges your hands are not free to catch the blessings.

Joseph, the dreamer in the Bible, had every right to hold a grudge. He was betrayed by his brothers and sold to a group of Ishmaelites who then brought him to Egypt.

The young boy could have allowed his circumstances to sour his spirit. But he didn't. Instead, Joseph grew up, rising to the position of prime minister to the Pharaoh. He was second-in-command of all of Egypt.

So, when a seven-year famine, in which Joseph had seen in one of his dreams, devastated his family's land of Caanan, he was now able to help his brothers who came seeking relief. At first, though, they didn't recognize Joseph as the brother they had sold. But as the story unfolds, the tears of realization and redemption flow freely among the broken siblings.

Joseph's story is not an easy one for us to embrace, especially when we prefer the heaviness of grudges to the lightness of forgiveness. But it is a story that reminds us that wrongs can be righted on the God path. In those times of feeling lost and wondering where in heaven's name is God, we must not let despair or even anger take hold.

I know this is easier said than done. Even as I write, I hesitate with each click of the keyboard because while my heart knows how gracious God is, my head is reciting a monologue of doubt. If my hands weren't typing, I am sure they would be found curled into a tight ball of frustration, hurt and anger.

It is not easy to believe that good can come out of something painful. But it can. Because God is our God of bold moves, and the boldest of moves was showing us that new life does emerge from the tomb.

Hope never dies. But holding on to that grudge is slowly doing its best to suffocate it. So put down this bulletin right now, unclench your hands, and catch that blessing.

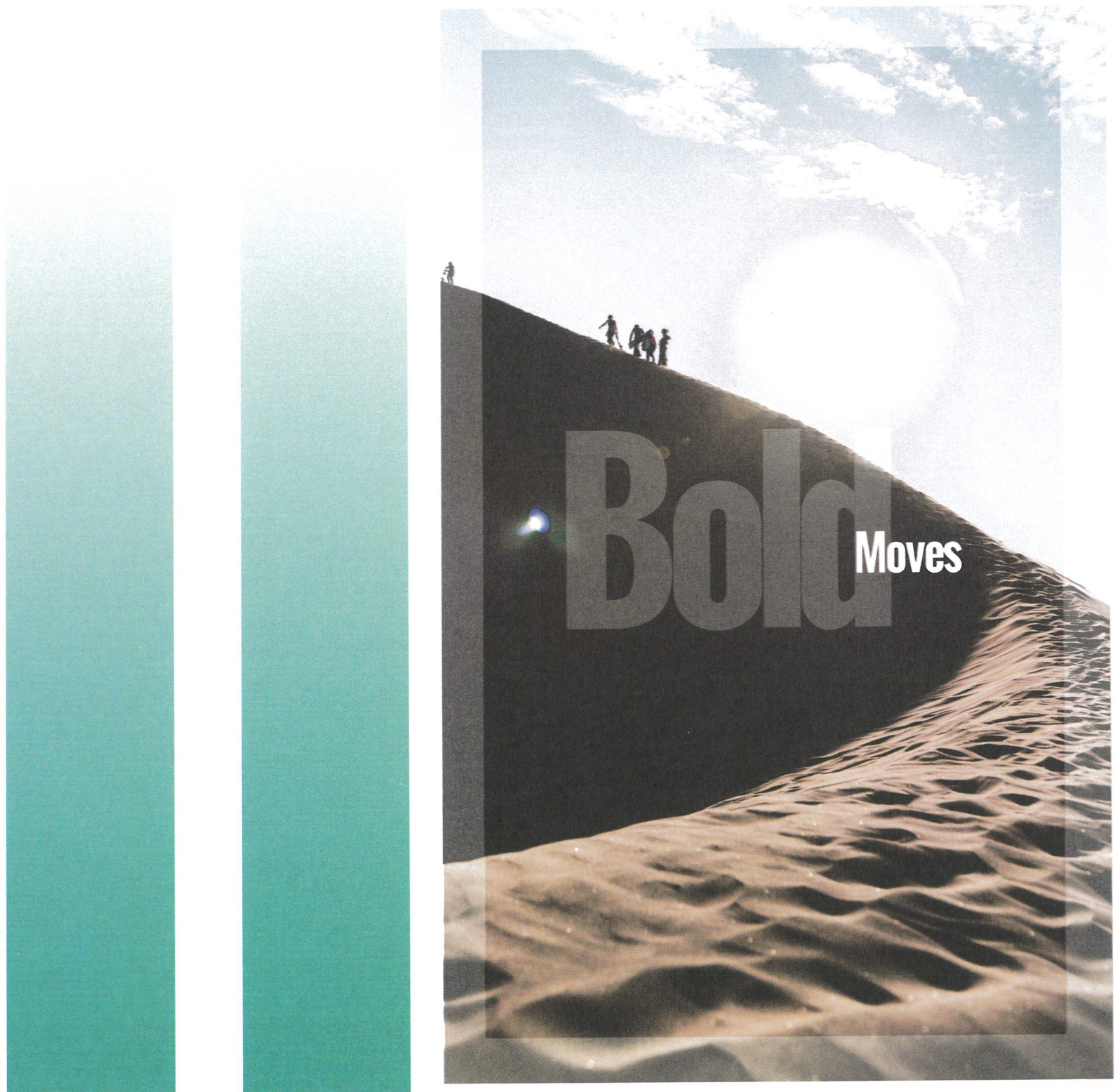
Redemptive God, help us to let go of the grudges that we have been holding on to for far too long. May we realize they are serving no purpose in our lives. They are, in fact, robbing us of the life You want for us. With Your help, pry our clenched fists open now. We surrender all the hurt to you and wait patiently for the blessings. 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
Twelfth Sunday after Pentecost
August 16, 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) from the Iona Community

How good it is, how pleasant, for God's people to live in unity.

It is like the precious oil running down from Aaron's head and beard, down to the collar of his robes.

It is like the dew on Mount Hermon falling on the hills of Zion.

For there Yahweh has promised a blessing, life that never ends.

* **OPENING HYMN** *In Christ There is No East or West* #687

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

God, you created us with mouths to speak. You made us able to say kind words, to talk about important ideas, to laugh together at shared jokes, and to tell stories of your love. We confess that we often misuse your gift. We are quicker to use angry, hurting words than kind ones. We are easily drawn to mean gossip, rumors and even lies, and we easily forget to tell about the good that others do. We too often hear ourselves laugh at people instead of with them. We are truly surprised, embarrassed, and ashamed of some of the things that come out of our mouths. Forgive us. Work within us until our words are the words you would speak, for we pray in Jesus' name. Amen.

* **RESPONSE** *Just a Closer Walk with Thee* (refrain) #557

SPECIAL MUSIC

Lauren Story accompanied by Grant Story

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** *For the Beauty of the Earth* (v. 1) #56

* **PRAYER OF DEDICATION** (unison)

God of all creation, we present these monetary gifts, as well as our very selves, to you. It is our prayer that all our gifts would be used to your glory. Amen.

WE GATHER IN PRAYER

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

Congregational Response: *Great is Thy Faithfulness* (refrain) #86

SCRIPTURE:

Old Testament: Psalm 133

New Testament: Matthew 15: 21-28

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

MESSAGE *What Ever Happened to Small Talk?*

* **CLOSING HYMN** *Help Us Accept Each Other* #487
(sung to melody *The Church's One Foundation* #272)

* **BLESSING** (responsively)

May the Lord be with us in our relationships with those that we know and meet. May the Lord help us see what God sees in us all: goodness, beauty, innocence. **May God grant us tolerance as we go out into this world. In the name of the Creator, Redeemer, and the Holy Spirit. Amen.**

* **CONGREGATIONAL RESPONSE** *Go in Peace* #445

* **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.*

3-2-1 Blast Off! Today we launch *Faith Ventures*, 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 is today at 5:00 pm featuring *Keeping the Faith* starring Ben Stiller, Edward Norton, and Jenna Elfman, with Anne Bancroft in a supporting role. Please sign up in the back so we can plan food for the light supper provided. Everyone invited.

CHOIR & HANDBELLS TO BEGIN rehearsals with Jonathan Clark on Wednesday, August 19th with handbells at 3:00 pm and choir at 4:00 pm. All ringers and singers are invited to attend.

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.

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!

FALL FESTIVAL sponsored by The Membership & Evangelism Committee will take place on Sunday, October 4th from 3:00-5:00 p.m. in the church parking lot, featuring: Pet Blessing, 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! Plan now to participate and volunteer to help! Invite your friends and families. **WE NEED THE LOAN OF SEVERAL POP-UP TENTS. PLEASE LET THE OFFICE KNOW IF YOU HAVE ONE WE CAN USE.**

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

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.

FRIENDS will be meeting on August 17th. @ 5pm at the church.

OUR KIDS HOPE USA program in partnership with Riley Elementary School is entering its **25th year** of service this fall 2026. New mentors are continually needed to mentor children at Riley School. A mentor's role includes: one day a week contact, available 11:00 -12:00 OR. 12:00-1:00, and a passion to be a significant person in the life of a child. Training is available. Contact the church office for referral information. 812-882-2720.

AUGUST is **National Make-a-Will Month**: Create a free and legal will with Freewill for National Make-a-Will Month. The Pension Boards and Rev. Dr. Paul Leon Ramsey, Director Church Relations and Philanthropy, is pleased to partner with the United Church of Christ in its Together for Tomorrow shared legacy campaign, which offers FreeWill, an estate planning tool to create your, free and legal will. Observe National Make-A-Will Month and secure your legacy today at FreeWill. Visit <https://freewill.com/pbucc>

Prayers Posts

We ask for continuing prayer requests for: Marilyn Houchins, John Mineo, Cindi Gilmore, Kim Godare's daughter Mallory, Marvin Covey, Colten Kirchoff and Jane Ann Marchino.

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

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, August 16

Adult SS Class 9:30am
3-2-1 Blast Off @ 9:45am
Fellowship Time @ 10am
Worship @ 10:30am
Lauren & Grant Story —Special Music
Movie @ 5pm

Monday, August 17

BABE Store 12-5:30pm
Music/Worship @ 5pm
Board Mtg. @ 6pm

Tuesday, August 18

Visioning Mtg. @ 5:15pm

Wednesday, August 19

September Newsletter Items
Due in Office
Handbells @ 3:00pm
Choir @ 4:00 pm

Thursday, August 20

Dinner & Conversation
Log Inn @ 6pm

Friday, August 21

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:	Michelle Grube
Projection:	Jill Lopez
Sound:	Andrew Anson
Liturgist:	John Riggs

Looking Ahead In August 2026

Sunday, August 23

Adult SS Class 9:30am
Fellowship @ 10am
Worship @ 10:30am
Jonathan Clark —Special Music
Confirmation from 5-6pm

Monday, August 24

BABE Store 12-5:30pm

Tuesday, August 25

Wednesday, August 26

Handbells @ 3pm
Choir @ 4pm
Laundry Love 6-8pm

Thursday, August 27

Dinner & Conversation
El Corral@ 6pm

Friday, August 28

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.