

Worship with

St. John's

United Church of Christ



July 19th, 2026

St. John's United Church of Christ

P.O. Box 794, 401 N Main Street, Belvidere, IL 61008
stjohns401.org stjohsucc401@gmail.com

Pastor:	Rev. Muriel Morley Jahn	815-544-2977
	<u>murielmorley@gmail.com</u>	
Pastoral Associate:	Beth Carson	815-979-0473
Minister of Music:	Mary Albrecht	224-234-7749
Choir Director:	Jeanne Anderson	815-985-2652
Nursery Attendant:	Hanna Jarvis	815-914-4718

WELCOME VISITORS! Thank you for coming! Please sign a pew card to place in the offering plate.

WORSHIP: When reading this bulletin Leader Speaks Plain Font,
Everyone Speaks Bold Font

ANNOUNCEMENTS

- We need people to sign up to be on the Anniversary Committee!
- **Community Garden** is ongoing, feel free to stop by to water, weed or harvest.
- **The Belvidere Group (AA)** meets every day at 7:00 pm
- **Chair and Mat Yoga** with Katherine Ray is going weekly! Chair yoga at 10:00 am and mat yoga at 11:30 am No RSVP required and classes are \$5.00.
- **Community Meal:** 3rd Wednesday of each month.
- **Nursery:** Children are welcome in all aspects of worship. The nursery provides an alternative space so kids and parents can both get what they need from worship. Children are encouraged to check in with their adult before going downstairs with the nursery attendant.

PRELUDE

ANNOUNCEMENTS

CHORAL INTROIT "SEEK YE FIRST"

**Seek ye first the kingdom of God And His righteousness;
And all these things shall be added unto you.
Allelu, alleluia.**

**Ask, and it shall be given unto you;
Seek, and you shall find. Knock, and it shall be opened
unto you.
Allelu, alleluia.**

RESPONSIVE WELCOME STATEMENT

At St. John's United Church of Christ, we are Living
Outwardly & Valuing Everyone!

We live and work amid God's love!

In that spirit, we extend love to all who come into our midst,
regardless of sexual orientation, gender identity, race,
nationality, skin color, culture, differing abilities, age or
political affiliations, to participate fully in all aspects of
church.

**Our ministry is to bring the Good News of Christ's love
to all.**

We work in God's name to tear down walls and build
community.

**To walk with each other through all of life's
circumstances,**

To provide for those in need,

To offer comfort to the hurting and the sick, and to uplift
the broken hearted.

Where we fail, we ask for God's forgiveness.

May the Holy Spirit and our siblings continue to challenge us
to do better.

**No matter who you are or where you are on life's
journey, you are welcome here!**

CALL TO WORSHIP (inspired by Genesis. 28, Psalms 139 & Romans 8)

The Holy One is in this place! Do we know it?

The Holy One has searched and known us, our path, and all our ways.

The Holy One is in this place! Such knowledge is too wonderful!

Wherever we go, Spirit goes with us! We cannot flee for God is there!

The Holy One is in this place! Spirit bears witness with our spirit, and we gather and wait in hope.

The Holy One is with us. Praise God!

INVOCATION

Holy Love, God of Sarah and Rebekah, we come before you knowing you go before us and you keep us in safety. We come to this place in space and time across distance and difference as your offspring to receive an inheritance of your promise and to renew our lives in your covenant. Let our spirits receive your word and our hearts ignite with your compassion, mercy, and righteousness. Let your kingdom spread in us and through us as we worship and follow you. Amen.

HYMN #22 "SING PRAISE TO GOD"

Affirmation of Faith #886

CHILDREN'S TIME

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

LORD'S PRAYER

HYMN "YOU HAVE SEARCH ME"

(Carolyn hymn on Psalm 139. Tune: Come, Thou Fount)

You have searched me, Lord, and known me!

All my life is in your care.

When I lie awake in evening,

You are always with me there.

**When I rise to greet the morning
In an attitude of praise,
What I learn from you is humbling:
You already know my ways.**

**Lord, you know the song I'm singing
and my words before I pray.
You're behind me and before me
As I travel through each day.
You once knit me all together;
You created me by grace.
In your eyes, you see and love me
As you treasure all my days.**

**Lord, I try to learn your wisdom,
But I cannot understand.
Yet your love is all around me;
I am part of all you've planned.
Let me sing your praise each morning,
Let me serve you all day through,
And in evening, make me peaceful,
Knowing this: I'm loved by you!**

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PRAYER FOR TRANSFORMATION & NEW LIFE

Righteous God, test us and stretch us, strengthen us in your truth and justice, fortify us with resolve and power so that we might be the people you have called us to be. Holy One, even beyond forgiveness, we seek transformation. Renew our minds, open our hearts, and release our hands to repair, reconcile, and restore in your name. Keep us from being the cause of suffering. Equip us to be agents of healing. Make us attentive to your presence. Attune us to your will. Lead us on the path you have paved before us so that the grace we receive will sow seeds of redemption and healing in the world. Amen.

MOMENT OF SILENCE

WORDS OF GRACE

Offspring of the Divine, live in your power and purpose as beneficiaries of the new covenant and conspirators of God's liberating work and impact in the world. Receive God's forgiveness and move beyond shame and judgment to new life and right relationships with the Holy One and neighbor.

GLORIA PATRI

**Glory be to the Father, and to the Son
And to the Holy Ghost,
As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be,
world without end. Amen.**

SCRIPTURE Genesis 28:10-19a

SERMON *"Who's Looking"*

MOMENT FOR MISSION – CARPENTER'S PLACE

INVITATION TO GENEROSITY

DOXOLOGY

**Praise God, through whom all blessings flow,
Praise God, all creatures here below,
Praise God, above ye heavenly host.
Praise Father, Son and Holy Ghost. Amen.**



PRAYER OF DEDICATION & THANKSGIVING

**Holy One, may these gifts reflect our trust in
you and your provision. Magnify them for your purpose
and grant us discernment to be caretakers of the
resources entrusted to us. Amen.**

HYMN #25 "O God, Our Help in Ages Past" (Verses 1-3,6)

Benediction

You Shall Spread: Service Prayers for the Eighth Sunday after Pentecost Year A was written by the Rev. Dr. Cheryl A. Lindsay, Minister for Worship and Theology for the United Church of Christ.

How to use a QR code: open the camera on your cellphone. Pretend you are going to take a picture of one of the 4 boxes on this page. The camera will focus on the box. Words will appear on the bottom of the screen. Tap on the words.

Free digital donations can now be made on our website stjohns401.org. Follow the QR code and check out all the possibilities! This means no more buying checks and added security! >>>>>>



General Giving



Amazon List

<<<<<<We use an Amazon List to let people know what St. John's needs for our office and different ministries like the Paper Angel Closet and Community Meals. It is always changing. Check it out.



Tea & Coffee

St. John's also has two on-going fundraisers where you can order items and have them delivered right to your door with a portion of the proceeds supporting our ministries.



T-Shirts

Wheat and Weeds Together**Matthew 13:24-30, 36-43**

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*.)