

Worship with

St. John's

United Church of Christ



July 12th, 2026

St. John's United Church of Christ

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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

- **Fellowship Meal today after Worship.**
- **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

Karsin Bader, bassoon

ANNOUNCEMENTS

CHORAL INTROIT #775 "On Eagle's Wings" (Refrain Only)

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 Psalms 119 and 65)

Praise is due to the Holy One, whose ways are the joy of our hearts.

**The Faithful One holds our lives and our hands. Happy are we who
praise the Holy One!**

Worship is due to the Holy One, whose revelation illuminates our path.

The Just God is righteous. Happy are we who follow the Holy One!

Love is due to the Holy One, whose compassion, peace, and strength
satisfies the prayers spoken and unspoken.

The Sovereign God answers prayer. Happy are we who love the Holy One!

INVOCATION

God who gathers us together, we delight to be in community with you and one another. Let your word be proclaimed in truth. Let us burst into songs that reflect the depths of our spirits. May our prayers be formed in your name and granted by your wisdom. May we know you, Divine Mystery, and ourselves better and deeper because we have entered your presence as a community of faithful, questioning, and hope-seeking participants in your kingdom. Amen.

HYMN #23 "THERE'S A WILDNESS IN GOD'S MERCY"

UCC Statement of Faith #885

CHILDREN'S TIME

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

LORD'S PRAYER

HYMN #517 "I Need You Every Hour"

PRAYER OF TRANSFORMATION & NEW LIFE

Holy One, we incline our hearts toward you, but the concerns of the world and challenges of daily living pull us away. Keep us grounded in your promises, your purposes, your power, and your presence. Reorient us on the road of liberation, belonging, and communal care so that not only do we receive the gift of transformation, we companion with siblings, neighbors, and even enemies in your work of making all things new. Remove the misleading veil that disguises sufficiency with scarcity. Sustain us with being satisfied with enough and abundance materially while continuing to thirst for

righteousness so that all may be well. In you, we hope and believe. Amen.

MOMENT OF SILENCE

WORDS OF GRACE

Beloved, rest in the assurance of Psalm 65:5, "By awesome deeds you answer us with deliverance, O God of our salvation; you are the hope of all the ends of the earth and of the farthest seas." The Holy One receives and responds to our prayers and offers the promise of renewed life and the power of community in the kingdom of God. Through Christ, we participate as witnesses, agents, and recipients of transformation for the glory of God and by the grace of God.

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 25:19-34

PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION

SERMON "Granted Prayer"

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 FOR THE OFFERING

Generous God, receive these gifts and magnify them to bless our community and world. May these offerings reflect our gratitude for your beloved community and trust in your kingdom. Amen.

HYMN #451 "BE NOW MY VISION"

BENEDICTION

Drink: Service Prayers for the Seventh 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



<<<<<<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.

Amazon List



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

A House Divided**Matthew 13:1-9, 18-23**

I can't seem to master the art of growing bountiful rows of vegetables and meadows of bee-friendly wildflowers.

My farmer neighbors tell me that my problem is I can't throw seeds down and expect success. Growing something beautiful takes some elbow grease — and education. Starting with understanding what type of soil I have. Is it clay, sand, silt or peat?

Truthfully, I have no idea what language they are speaking. I've tried studying up on soil. I even purchased testers to see what I need to amend my soil with. Still, I can't seem to understand the science of the nutrients needed to help various plants grow.

This I do know: My soil is extremely rocky, so any hopes of growing blue-ribbon winning straight carrots are dashed. Rather than deal with the soil I have, I opted for raised beds. But they aren't the carefree option I thought them to be. Even the "good" soil I put into the beds needs care.

My challenges with soil have made me better understand Jesus' Parable of the Sower.

When Jesus wanted to make his point about what it meant to grow in God's Word and till the Kingdom here on Earth, he used soil as a metaphor for the conditions of our heart — where the seeds of justice and love grow.

First, there was soil on a path that the Sower threw the seeds on. Being it was a path; the birds easily saw the seeds, swooped in and gobbled them up. The seeds had no chance of taking root.

Next, there was the rocky soil. The seeds did begin to grow, but the roots could only go so deep, making the plants easily uprooted. And may I add, making carrots wonky.

Then the Sower threw seeds amid the thorns, where they were soon choked by the overgrowth. Finally, the Sower's seeds fell upon good soil where they produced a bountiful yield.

We are all being asked today by Jesus to assess the soil of our hearts. Where are the seeds of faithfulness falling? Are they scattering on safe, well-worn paths that will not lead to deep growth? Are they falling in rocky ground where the roots will not reach deep enough to withstand droughts or even deluges? What about those thorns of distractions and busyness in our overgrown gardens of life? Are they choking our commitment to following in the ways of Christ?

Be honest with your assessment because, as I have learned the hard way, ignoring what needs to be amended doesn't get you the beautiful abundant life God wants for you. *God of green pastures, rich soil and abundant crops, help us to be honest with You about the condition of our heart soil. May we admit where we are failing in the growth of Your Word here in our own lives and communities. And then, may we be willing to amend our ways so that truly a garden of hope and peace will flourish. 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*.)