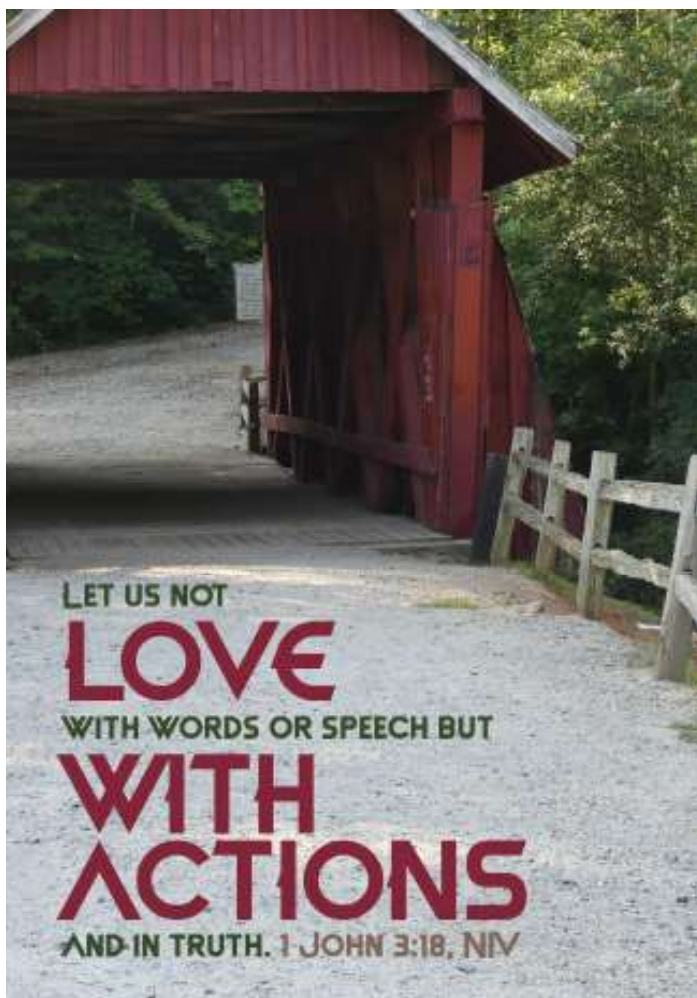


*St. John United Church of Christ  
301 S. Market Street  
New Athens, Illinois 62264*



The First Letter of John went out to a Church fraying around the edges. It showed in the way Christians treated each other as well as in the way they served the world. "Little children," the writer said, "let's not love with words, but with actions and truth." That call still challenges us today.

*The Fourth Sunday  
of Easter*

*April 25, 2021*

*Worship and Grow Today*

*Traditional Worship  
8 am*

*Contemporary Worship  
9:15 am*

*Sunday School Classes, 9 am*

*Learn More About Us*  
*stjohnuccnewathens.com*

*Contact Our Staff*

*Bob Koch, Pastor  
stjohnucc@att.net*

*Beth Buettner, Office Staff  
stjucdeskmail@att.net*

*Susan Juenger,  
Director Christian Education  
dcesusan@att.net*

*Melinda Milligan, Director  
New Beginnings Daycare  
new-beginnings@att.net  
475-2969*

*Church Office Phone  
(618) 475-2947*

***Please fill out and tear off*** your Attendance/Prayer Concern slip before worship begins. Pass it to the center aisle while the church calendar is being discussed. Our ushers will collect it there.

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***Please note that large print bulletins and hearing assistance devices*** are available from our ushers.

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***New members are welcome and received regularly*** at St. John's. If you or someone you know is interested in joining our worshiping family, speak to Pastor Koch as you leave today, or check the appropriate box on your attendance card.

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***If this is a Communion Sunday*** (generally the first Sunday of each month) we invite all Christians welcome at Christ's table in their own family of faith to join us here. The inner circle in each tray of glasses contains grape juice.

***Children are always welcome*** in worship at St. John's. Live closed circuit TV broadcasts of our services are available in the foyer fellowship room, though, for parents who may decide that their child needs a break from worship temporarily.

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***Pastor Koch*** is always available to help those seeking answers, comfort, or guidance. He is usually in his office all day Monday, and at various other times throughout the week. If you'd like to see him, feel free to stop by, or call the church office at 475-2947 to make an appointment.

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***We cordially invite all members and guests*** to participate in the on-going ministries of St. John church. If you have any questions, feel free to contact our church office, which is open Monday through Friday, from 9 a.m. till Noon and 1 p.m. till 3 p.m. It is staffed through the week by Beth Buettner.



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## *Gathering Together*

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### PRE-SERVICE MUSIC

"Little Brown Church In the Vale" (Vs. 1)

*Beginning five minutes prior to worship*

Pew Booklet, p. 26

### THE CHURCH CALENDAR

*(Please pass your Attendance/Prayer Concern slips to the center aisle.)*

### THE MORNING PRELUDE, CALL OF THE BELL

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## *Seeking God's Presence*

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### CALL TO WORSHIP *(From Psalm 23)*

You're my shepherd, LORD, always caring for me.

**You lead me to places of rest - in rich, green fields  
beside streams of refreshing water.**

You soothe my fears, making me whole again.

**You steer me off worn, hard paths  
to roads where truth and righteousness echo Your name.**

Fear doesn't overwhelm me, even in death's unending shadows.

**You're with me in those dark moments,  
near with Your protection and guidance. You comfort me.**

You spread a table before me in the very presence of my enemies.

**You anoint my head with soothing, fragrant oil,  
filling my cup time and again with Your grace.**

Your faithful protection and loving provision will lead me, always and everywhere.

**I'll always be with You, Lord, abiding in Your house forever.**

### PRAYER OF INVOCATION

"You want to know what love is?" John asked.

"Then look to Jesus, and look to the cross."

That kind of self-giving, self-denying love is hard for us, holy God.

The world grieves, yet and again, as we make that all too clear.

**We gather for worship today seeking the faith, the courage,  
and the strength we need to put the plight of others before our own grasping greed.  
Inspire us to move even a few spiritual steps in that direction, we pray. Amen.**

### \*OPENING HYMN

"Love Divine, All Loves Excelling"

Hymnal, No. 272

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## *Asking God's Forgiveness*

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### CALL TO CONFESSION

Time of Silent Confession

### PRAYER OF CONFESSION

*Together*

**"We ought to lay down our lives for one another," John said.  
Really, Lord? Is that what you expect of us? You must be disappointed—a lot.  
It's not that we're selfish. We're just...careful. That's it; we're careful.  
After all, we've got to plan for the future, to take care of our own,  
to build a nest egg, and maybe even a new nest to put it in.  
You understand, don't you? No, you don't.  
Our shallow excuses, our self-centered lifestyle,  
our heedless disregard of the wellbeing not just of others,  
but of the very planet we live on—  
you see them for what they are in light of the cross.  
We pray for forgiveness. We ask for a change of attitude and outlook.  
Help us to love, as you did, not in word or speech, but in truth and action. Amen.**

Assurance of Pardon  
Gloria Patri  
Passing the Peace

Hymnal, No. 493

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## *Hearing God's Word*

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### THE MORNING COLLECT

**The congregations John wrote to had lost their way, holy God.  
He tried to call them back to what was most important,  
faith in your Son and love for one another.  
May your Word speak to us through John's words,  
and help us see how best we can make that spiritual bottom line  
the foundation of our congregation and of our lives. Amen.**

### SCRIPTURE LESSON

1 John 3:16-24

### CHILDREN'S TIME

### THE SERMON

"Truth and Action"

### OUR UCC STATEMENT OF FAITH

### HYMN

"Before the Cross of Jesus"

Hymnal, No. 261

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***Responding With Our Prayers***

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**JOYS AND CONCERNS OF OUR WORSHIPING FAMILY**

**PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE**

The Lord be with you.

**And with you also.**

Let us pray....

Pastoral Prayer, Silent Prayer

Our Lord's Prayer

*Together, Words on Screen*

**RESPONSE**

"Hear Our Prayer"

Hymnal, No. 501

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***Responding With Our Gifts***

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**MORNING MISSION MOMENT, OFFERTORY**

\*DOXOLOGY (Hymnal, No. 551)

**PRAYER OF DEDICATION**

Generous God, John asked how your love could abide in anyone who has the world's goods, sees a brother or sister in need, and refuses to help. The unspoken answer, of course, is that it doesn't.

May we prove good stewards not just of the world's goods,

but of your ever-seeking, self-giving love.

We pray in the name of Jesus, the One who laid down his life for us and calls us to ever-greater acts of generosity and service. Amen.

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***Responding With Faithful Service in the World***

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**BENEDICTION**

**HYMN**

"My Hope Is Built On Nothing Less"

Pew Booklet, p. 34

**POSTLUDE**



**Sunday School is back!** We still need helpers and teachers, especially in the Pre-K class. Contact DCE Susan Juenger at dcesusan@att.net for more info or to volunteer.

**The SAKS for CESNA Shop is open.** Volunteers are needed to help St. John's run the shop on May 1. Sign up in the foyer or contact the church office if you'd like to help (475-2947, stjucckdesknaill@att.net).

**We need runners for the Chicken Dinner!** We need 6-8 volunteers with good knees and willing hearts to go up and down the kitchen steps taking meals out to waiting cars. Contact Becky Stolte or the church office and volunteer.

**Our annual Chicken Dinner is next Sunday, May 2,** carry out and drive through only. Serving hours are 11 AM until 2 PM (or until we run out of chicken). Sign up sheets are now out at church; volunteers can call the church office at 475-2947 for more information.

**We're still running short of Chicken Dinner desserts.** If you can donate a pie, cake, or other goodie, please stop by the church office to pick up your containers.

**The church kitchen recently received a good cleaning and reorganizing.** There are several unclaimed personal items left behind. Check the shelves above the east counter to pick up anything that might be yours. Anything left will find a new home at the SAKS Shop after the chicken dinner.

**New Beginnings has openings for teachers as well as summer help.** Those applying for teaching positions must have 60 college hours, with 6 of those hours in early childhood classes. Call the daycare at 475-2969 for more information.

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Please pray for all battling COVID and for the healthcare professionals fighting the virus on the frontlines. Please also hold in prayer all mourning the deaths of loved ones.

Please pray for the residents, staff, and administrators at all nursing homes, as well as for the safety of teachers, administrators, and students at area schools, as well as at our own New Beginnings Daycare.



***Enfolded by Love***  
***John 10:11-18***

***Fourth Sunday of Easter***  
***Pacific Islander and Asian American Ministries Sunday / Break the Silence Sunday***

Break the Silence Sunday (BTSS) is an opportunity for survivors of sexual assault to share their stories in a safe and supportive environment. By Breaking the Silence about such assaults, survivors are granted courage and hope.

One of the ways that survivors can be supported in telling their stories is through Strings of Strength. The website: <https://breakthesilencesunday.org/strings-of-strength/>, says:

“Strings of Strength is a project to provide comfort items to survivors who share their stories with the Break The Silence Sunday team. More than 800 stories have been shared since BTSS began in 2015, and we wanted to find a way to tangibly honor those stories, to help survivors remember that they are believed, that they are strong, and that they are not alone. By creating shawls, scarves, and other items we hope to be able to provide those who share their story with something soft that will remind them of our common strength as survivors of sexual violence.

**HOW IT WORKS**

1. You (and maybe your group) create items of support like a quilt or prayer shawl.
2. You record the initials of the creator, and the fiber content on each item.
3. You post them to BTSS (see below).
4. We add a nifty little tag with your initials, fiber and care information, and a phrase of love and support (currently it will have the BTSS logo and say something like “your story is heard, believed, and held in love and grace”).
5. We distribute them to survivors who share their stories at events like church conference meetings.
6. You enjoy the connection you’ve made to a survivor who now feels less alone in the world.
7. You create more objects and we repeat this process until rape and sexual violence are no more.”

\*(<https://breakthesilencesunday.org/strings-of-strength>)

*Please fill out this slip, noting prayer concerns on the back.  
Legible handwriting or printing is much appreciated!  
If you're a visitor with us today, we hope you'll come again!*

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Your Name \_\_\_\_\_

- Member  Visitor  Child/Youth  Looking for a Church Home  
 Desire a Call

*Visitors--If you're comfortable doing so, please give us your address and phone.*

Street Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_

State \_\_\_\_\_

Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_

We want to know  
what you think!  
Please include  
comments, suggestions,  
or other feedback below:



*Welcome to Worship!*



**Pastor**

Dr. Robert Koch

**Organist**

Paul Bickel

**Ushers**

Carroll Barlow, Tom Germann

***Please pray for these churches, pastors, and friends:***

From the Illinois South Conference:

Darmstadt, Holy Ghost UCC

DuBois, St. Mark's UCC  
*Pastor Tom (Marcia) Ellison*

Retired Pastor  
*Rev. David and Kathryn Riebeling,  
Fults, IL*

Members and friends of St. John's:

Corine Albert, Helen Albert, Evonne and Mark Albert, Wyatt Albert, Sadie McDonald, Karen Al-Bori, Anisa Al-Bori, Jill and Jim Alfeldt, Jonathon, Jenna, Jack and Jolie, Bonnie Archer, Whitney Aubrecht, Stephanie and Andrew Bachmann, Avery Reuss and Darby, Margaret and Carroll Barlow, Michelle Barlow, Ruth Becker, and Jane and Joe Behnken.

***Low-cost, Christian counseling is available through Family Care Ministries.***

Contact Pastor Koch or the church office to schedule an appointment.



*Prayer Joys and Concerns*

Please pray for:

- Mention this joy/concern during morning prayers.
- Please pray for this joy/concern silently.



Sign me up for the following:

I'm interested in these opportunities to serve and grow:

- Prayer Partners
- "Doughnut time" helper
- Usher
- Teach Sunday School
- Youth group volunteer
- Attend Bible study
- Serve on a committee
- Join "Prayer Partners"