

Whose Are You?

The Holiness of Belonging

OCTOBER'S GOVERNING QUERY • **Whose are you?**



Pause with the image. What draws your attention? Where might Christ be meeting you?

Mercy received becomes holiness embodied.

ENTRUSTED

What I have is received.

WAITING

What I reach for reveals trust.

BELONGING

My life bears God's image.

LOVING

Devotion becomes visible.

BETWEEN SUNDAYS

When the Seed Comes Back

A few weeks ago, I heard from a former student. Years ago, before pastoral ministry became the work most people know me for, I taught technology. He reminded me that he had come to Mt. Vernon for a semester to take a networking course.

To me, it was one class in one season of life. For him, it became part of a road. After high school he moved into the broadcast industry, where computer networks now carry much of the work.

Reading his note, I remembered ordinary classroom days: cables, routers, troubleshooting, students trying to make something work. I certainly was not standing there wondering what any of it might become twenty years later. Most of the time, we do not get to know.

We do not always get to see what grows from the seeds we plant. Every once in a while, God lets one of them come back and introduce himself.

That has stayed with me as we enter October. In Matthew 21, Jesus tells of tenants who begin living as though someone else's vineyard belongs to them. But it does not. And neither does the vineyard entrusted to us.

Our time. Our gifts. Our work. Our homes. Our ministries. The people whose lives cross ours. Even ordinary opportunities are gifts placed into our hands for a season.

I did not own what would happen with that student. I was simply given a little patch of ground and asked to be faithful there. Sometimes holiness is offering Christ our ordinary faithfulness and trusting him with fruit we may never see.

Query: What has God placed in my hands for this season—and what would faithfulness look like there?

Marion First Friends Church • 2211 N. Wabash Rd., Marion, IN 46952 • marionfirstfriends.org

Entrusted • Waiting • Belonging • Loving

Each Sunday asks how belonging to Christ reshapes what we hold, how we wait, how we live, and how we love.

OCTOBER 4

Entrusted, Not Owned

Matthew 21:33–46 • Exodus 20 • Philippians 3:4b–14

The tenants forget whose vineyard they are tending. Jesus presses the question beneath our money, time, homes, gifts, ministries, and plans: Whose vineyard is it?

What have I begun to call mine that God has only entrusted to me?

Generosity practice: Name one thing you often call “mine.” Thank God for entrusting it to you, and ask how it can serve God’s purposes.

OCTOBER 11

What We Make While We Wait

Exodus 32:1–14 • Philippians 4:1–9 • Matthew 22:1–14

Moses is taking too long. Anxiety grows, and Israel makes something visible and manageable. When we cannot control God, we are tempted to manufacture something we can control.

Guest preacher: Martin Wells, Indiana Yearly Meeting Co-Superintendent.

What do I reach for when God does not move on my timetable?

Generosity practice: Notice what anxiety makes you want to clutch. Before grasping tighter, pray, give thanks, and practice one act of trust.

OCTOBER 18

Whose Image Do You Bear?

Matthew 22:15–22 • Exodus 33:12–23 • 1 Thessalonians 1:1–10

A coin bears Caesar’s image. You bear God’s. Jesus moves the question from what belongs to Caesar toward the larger claim of God upon a human life. Belonging becomes visible in the family resemblance our lives carry.

What in the way I live would tell someone that I belong to God?

Generosity practice: Review one spending or giving choice this week. What story does it tell about whom you trust and to whom you belong?

OCTOBER 25

Holiness Has a Neighbor

Leviticus 19:1–2, 15–18 • Matthew 22:34–46 • 1 Thessalonians 2:1–8

“Be holy” quickly becomes justice, truthfulness, mercy, refusal of revenge, and love for the neighbor. Holiness does not remove us from ordinary relationships; holiness changes what flows through us into them.

If my love for God became visible this week, who would feel it?

Generosity practice: Choose one concrete act of generosity toward a neighbor—time, attention, hospitality, practical help, or financial care.

OCTOBER REFRAIN: WHOSE ARE YOU?

Giving is not a fee for belonging to church. It is one ordinary practice by which grace reshapes our trust, our possessions, and our love.

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Belonging Takes Shape Here

Busy Hands

Busy Hands is a small group of First Friends crafters who bring different gifts to the table—making, creating, learning, and enjoying one another's company. Their fall craft sale is Saturday, October 17, from 9:00 a.m.–3:00 p.m. at First Friends. Setup is Friday, October 16, 5:30–6:30 p.m.

Holiness has hands.

[Busy Hands team page](#)

Serving Beyond Our Walls

On Friday, October 16, Pastor Paul will preach at the Marion Rescue Mission, 423 S. Gallatin St., from 9:00 a.m.–noon. Please pray for those who gather and for the ministry of the Mission.

Friends Working Together

First Friends and Westminster Friends will welcome neighborhood families for Trunk or Treat on Tuesday, October 27. Setup begins at 5:30 p.m.; the event runs 6:00–7:00 p.m. We need Friends willing to bring decorated vehicles and others who can help with hospitality and the evening's activities.

Heaven Study

Wednesday evenings continue with dinner at 5:15 p.m. and study at 5:30 p.m. While Pastor Paul is away October 6–12, Rev. Dr. Jeff Jahn will lead the October 7 gathering. The study continues through November 18.

[Heaven Study details](#)

Gathering at First Friends

Wednesdays, 10:30 a.m.–12:30 p.m. — Bible Study
Wednesdays, 5:15 / 5:30 p.m. — Dinner & Heaven Study

Thursdays, 5:30 p.m. — Worship Group

Oct. 6, 3:00 p.m. — Ministry & Oversight

Oct. 15, 6:00 p.m. — Finance & Trustees

Oct. 17, 9:00 a.m.–3:00 p.m. — Busy Hands Craft Sale

Oct. 18, after worship — Carry-In & Game Day

Oct. 25, after worship — Monthly Meeting

Oct. 27, 6:00–7:00 p.m. — Trunk or Treat • setup 5:30

Oct. 29, 6:00–7:00 p.m. — Westminster Staff Meeting

• Fellowship Hall

Oct. 31 — Fall for Marriage

[Fall for Marriage details & registration](#)



THE OLD FARMER'S ALMANAC • Before You Throw Away the Ashes...

The Almanac notes that fully cooled wood ash can still be useful in the right soil, supplying minerals and helping raise soil pH. The key is knowing the ground first: ash can help some soil and harm another, so testing is wise.

Know what you have. Know where you are placing it. Do not waste what may still have a purpose.

Source: The Old Farmer's Almanac, Household Tips & Tricks, pp. 16–17.

Notice • Enjoy • Serve

OCTOBER 2–4

Mississinewa 1812

Living history returns to Ahsenionki, 1812 E. Tulip Dr., Marion, with period encampments, artisans, demonstrations, music, stories, and opportunities to encounter the complicated history of the place we call home.

[Event information](#)

OCTOBER 21 • 5:30 P.M.

Marion Home-Repair Public Hearing

The City of Marion and Affordable Housing Corporation are pursuing funding for critical repairs for qualifying low- and moderate-income homeowners. If awarded, the proposed program could provide up to \$25,000 per eligible household. The hearing is at Marion City Hall.

[City of Marion information](#)

OCTOBER 10 • 7:00 P.M.

Indianapolis Ballet

The Gas City Performing Arts Center welcomes Indianapolis Ballet for an evening of professional dance, music, athleticism, and storytelling through movement.

[Gas City PAC event page](#)

OCTOBER 30 • 6:00–8:00 P.M.

Warren Scarecrow Festival

Downtown Warren welcomes families for creative scarecrows, costumes, games, treats, food, and small-town fall fun.

[Festival Facebook page](#)

Neighbor Query: Where might Christ be inviting me to notice, enjoy, or serve the community beyond our church walls this month?

LOOKING AHEAD

November 8 — Marion Gospel Choir Returns

We are delighted to welcome the Marion Gospel Choir from McCulloch Junior High School back to First Friends for worship. Their previous visit brought joy to our congregation, and this continuing relationship gives us another opportunity to encourage these students and receive the gift they bring through music.

November 24 — Grant County Jail Chapel 6:30–8:15 p.m. • Advent of Joy

Isaiah 61:1–4, 8–11; John 1:6–8, 19–28. Please pray that the good news of Jesus becomes light, hope, restoration, and holy joy for every person gathered.

PRAYER FOR OCTOBER

Lord Jesus, teach us to receive without possessing, to wait without manufacturing substitutes, to remember whose image we bear, and to love the neighbor before us. Make us faithful with what you place into our hands. Form in us lives that make our belonging visible. We are yours. Teach us to live like it. Amen.

Final Query: If I really belong to Christ, what might look different in the way I live this week?

Blessings and Peace,

Pastor Paul