

June 7, 2021

A Regular Sharing of our Mission and Ministry

WORSHIP TOGETHER
In-PERSON & ONLINE
Beginning 7/4/2021

We are just a few weeks away from in-person worship in the sanctuary and online worship on Facebook Live.

Look for more Building BACK updates in the Weekly Email Blast and on Facebook.



MULCH DAY

June 12, 8:00 am—12:00 pm

Bring your rakes, wheelbarrows, shovels, and join in the fun! Volunteer for the whole morning, or just an hour or two as you have time. There's something for everyone to help out with as we prepare the church flower beds for summer's abundant blossoms.

COMMUNION TEAMS & USHERS GATHERING
June 16, 6:30 pm

This will be a brief training and Q&A session on Sunday leadership roles and duties. We look forward to welcoming our congregation back to in person worship. Please contact Pam to confirm your attendance.

building BACK

Church Council: Making All Things Ready

The Church Council, Leadership Teams, and Ministry Team are taking great care as they set the table for our gathering for in-person and streaming worship on July 4. We are taking the necessary time to discern the safer practices for large-group gatherings informed by the wisdom from the CDC and Illinois Department of Public Health.

This week, we wanted to update you on the “basics” that we expect to remain in place for the next few months:

- ***Masks will remain required in all public spaces.*** Our building is in use by many outside and church groups, with populations from all age groups. Our congregation remains committed to the health of our whole community. This small step is an easy way to ensure our extravagant welcome for all.
- ***Reservations for in-person worship will start soon!*** We want to know that you're coming to church! Preparing our sanctuary to seat everyone who feels comfortable to attend is a response to our call for radical hospitality. Beginning for the 7/4 service, a link to register online will be available (or a phone call to the church office) to reserve a space for each Sunday worship service.

In the next edition of *TIDINGS*, we will share the latest “rules” for COVID mitigation and healthier practices that we will be observing.

- ***Get vaccinated now (and help your neighbors do the same!).*** At the time of printing, IDPH reports that just over one-third of eligible Stephenson County residents have received their vaccines.
- ***Stay informed.*** There's a lot of opinions and misinformation about the COVID pandemic continuing to circulate. Check your facts before sharing the latest social media meme.

We've been in this together for over a year! We will make it to the end together!



**Find Our
Extravagant
Welcome**

Come together and share in our streaming
Online Worship every Sunday, 10:00 am:
facebook.com/stjohnuccfreeport/live

OUR CHURCH COMMUNITY



WHAT WILL IT FEEL LIKE?

Gathering to Worship and Tend our Spirits

Have you ever gone back to visit your elementary school? I did several years ago. The huge rooms looked oddly small. And the chairs? We were never that small, were we?!? But the rules of physics don't change—neither did the size of the lunch room!

How about your childhood church? That place that nourished you spiritually, where you came to accept the cost and joy of discipleship? Can you feel the curve of the pews, where you sat with parents and elders? Was there a scent to the classrooms or the fellowship hall? Was your body comforted by that same curve in your adult years, and your spirit fed by the familiar aromas in the same way?

Our sixteen month long Coronavirus-caused worship-at-home period is transitioning to something new. In just a few weeks, we will have the option to join in-person for worship. And while the Rainbow Window is waiting to greet your return, I would counsel

you to prepare your minds, hearts, souls, and spirits for that moment of return. It might raise some thoughts and emotions that you didn't expect when you walk through the doors on July 4.

In a recent blog post, church strategist Carey Nieuwhof wrote:

As [we] have begun to open again for in-person services, many churches and organizations keep falling into a trap... The biggest mistake made comes from the emotional rush to get back into a facility, see everyone again, and assemble their teams and get back to 'normal'.

Trust me, I miss it, too. I told our church leaders the other day, "We're gathering to worship; but it's not going to be the church that departed a year ago March."

It was often said a year ago: "We're building a new 'normal'." In this time apart, we have experienced births and deaths; marriages and divorces; moving for work and moving for necessary care. We have felt the stress, the anger, and the loneliness of the safer practices and social distancing.

Now, we are challenged again to be the church God calls us to be in Freeport and beyond. Over this past year, we have welcomed new friends into the congregation through streaming our worship services. As we gather in worship, those families with babies born in 2020 will ask us to share in their baptisms. Youth seeking to affirm their baptism will come together for Confirmation. It's Church—with a capital "C." And, with God's grace guiding us, we will be up to the challenge. Again. For such a time as it is.

It's that comforting presence that greets us when we walk up the ramp, and are greeted by familiar voices and familiar sights. It's that welcoming spirit that draws us into the Sanctuary and Chapel Hearth Room as we settle into worship. It's the shake of the floor when the organ hits those big notes with all the stops. And it's waiting for you, and for me, and for all of God's people. Take time. Prepare your hearts.

We'll see you in Church! Real soon!

Pastor Hank

**The deadline for submitting articles
for the June 22nd *TIDINGS*
is Tuesday, June 15th.**

OUR CHURCH'S WIDER MISSION

OPEN AND AFFIRMING OFFERING Collected every June

Since April 29, 2012, our congregation has lived its faith out loud as an Open and Affirming (ONA) congregation. Each year, we honor this commitment with a special offering supporting our continuing mission of LGBTQ+ acceptance and equality. This year's offering will be collected throughout June.

COLLEGE SCHOLARSHIPS Deadline for Applications is August 1

St John UCC is blessed with the generosity of many of our members and friends who have given toward a college scholarship fund through memorials and gifts. The Kampmeier Endowment Fund has been designated for college scholarships, using the interest earned each year. Persons who are active members (as defined by the church constitution) are invited to apply. Completed applications (with acceptance letter or fall schedule) should be returned to the church office in an envelope marked "College Scholarship." Questions? Call Pam in the church office.



CHICAGO AVENUE MISSION & FACC FOOD PANTRY

Our culinary master team continues to prepare weekly dinners for the guests at the Chicago Avenue Mission. The Mission is open throughout the year, and our team serves a home-style meal every Wednesday evening. Your generous gift of time and love fills hungry people with food and friendship! Interested in helping? Contact Pam Wessel or Dan King!

In supporting the Food Pantry: throughout June, we will be collecting **Personal Items**.



The Atrium is open Monday through Friday, 9:00 am-2:00 pm for your convenience. Thank you for your generosity!

APRIL FINANCIAL SUMMARY			
Income	Actual	Budget	Difference
Pledges/Gifts	\$16,962	\$21,250	(-\$4,288)
Other Income	\$12,915	\$13,200	(-\$285)
Total Income	\$29,877	\$34,450	(-\$4,573)
Total Expenses	\$34,145	\$35,438	(-\$1,293)
Month Total	(-\$4,268)	(-\$988)	(-\$3,280)
YTD Income	\$104,014	\$137,802	(-\$33,788)
YTD Expenses	\$148,322	\$141,753	\$6,569
YTD Total	(-\$44,308)	(-\$3,951)	(-\$40,357)

Please note: Payroll Protection Program (PPP) funds will not appear in this report until forgiven. In 2021, this amount will be \$48,205.

CHURCH STAFF

Senior Pastor:

Rev. Henry E. "Hank" Fairman
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Pastor for Community & Mission:

Rachel Kirk
Rachel@stjohnuccfreeport.org 352-215-7135

Director of Congregational Life

Pam Wessel
Pam@stjohnuccfreeport.org 815-275-7202

Administrative & Creative Assistant

Lisa Elsner
Lisa@stjohnuccfreeport.org 815-520-8701

Youth Ministry Assistant: Madison Riddell

Choir Director: Gina Bertram

Church Musicians: Randy Cook

Pastor Emeritus: Rev. Dr. Donnley Dutcher

Email the church office at: Office@stjohnuccfreeport.org



1010 South Park Boulevard

Freeport, IL 61032

Place Stamp Here

Change Service Requested



ONE MORE THOUGHT: SUMMER FAITH FORMATION FOR CHILDREN AND YOUTH

During this unusual summer, the Worship and Education Leadership Team has opted to offer some creative and new resources for our kids and youth instead of typical Sunday School classes.

First, youth ages 4-14 will receive weekly Bible stories and activities in the mail. If you have questions about those materials, or do not receive them and would like to, please reach out to Rachel.

Second, children and youth of all ages are invited to monthly events focused on fellowship and fun! Each event will have activities for multiple age groups, from toddlers to high schoolers. They will give kids opportunities to bond, have fun together, and know that they are an integral part of our church community. These will be great events to invite friends to, or to attend with grandparents or other family members.

Please save these dates:

Saturday, 6/19, 1:00pm – 3:00pm – Picnic in Krape Park

Friday, 7/23, 4:00pm - 6:00pm – Scavenger Hunt and Games in the Church Building

Sunday, 8/22, 2:00 pm – 4:00pm – Ice Cream on the Church Lawn

Be on the lookout for more details on these events as each date approaches. We hope to see you there!

