

# TIDINGS



October 2025

*A Regular Sharing of our Mission and Ministry*



## Dreaming God's Dream

NO GIFT TOO SMALL, NO DREAM TOO BIG.

### 2025 ANNUAL CAMPAIGN

God has done and continues to do remarkable things through us and with us – things that matter in our community! It's what we dream with God!

The gifts to our congregation grow from the appreciation of the lives we touch. Generosity in all its forms is an expression of gratitude for our church, It's how we respond that matters: *being the church God calls us to be in Freeport and beyond.*

The work of our church can happen because of the generous financial and volunteer support of the whole St. John community. And this support starts with our Annual Campaign.

*Find out more about our Annual Campaign on pp. 5-6*



### BUDGET GOALS MEETING SUNDAY 10/19, 11:30 AM

The Church Council welcomes our community to gather and learn about "the bottom line" of our congregation's finances, mission, and vision for ministry.



### CHAIR YOGA EVERY MONDAY, 6:30 PM

Join yoga instructor Katherine Ray of Hippy Yoga for chair yoga classes every Monday night starting in October.

*See p. 3 for more information*



### SUNDAY, 10/5

Since 1933, Christian faith communities across the world, across the lines of denomination and theological interpretations of bread and cup, have come together on this day every year to be:

*"One in Christ, and One in Mission."*



**Find Our  
Extravagant  
Welcome**

Come together in the Sanctuary or share in our streaming Online Worship every Sunday, 10:00 am:  
**[facebook.com/stjohnuccfreeport/live](https://facebook.com/stjohnuccfreeport/live)**

*Wherever you are on life's journey, worship as one community every Sunday*

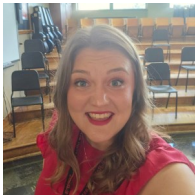
# OUR MINISTRY TOGETHER



## TOTENFEST November 2 during worship

*Totenfest*, the “Festival of the Departed,” will take place on Sunday, November 2 during morning worship. We will remember our members and friends who have died during this past year.

If you would like to have your loved one’s name read as part of the celebration, please email the church office with their name, photograph, birthday, and date of death by Sunday, October 26.



## MUSIC MINISTRY NEWS: Welcome to our Music Director!

St. John UCC welcomes Britney Kieselhorst to our community as our Music Director. Britney joined the Music Ministry team at the beginning of September (and beat us to the announcement!).

Britney is a dedicated and enthusiastic music educator, sharing her gifts at Rockford East High School. She is passionate about the power of music to inspire, uplift, and bring people together, both for those who perform and for those who listen.

Britney holds music degrees from Highland Community College, Northern Illinois University, and Western Illinois University. She is also pursuing a Doctor of Musical Arts degree at Boston University.


We all await with grace the wonders of song and praise her leadership will bring! *Soli Deo Gloria!*



## CHURCH CLEAN UP DAY: 10/4, 8:00 am

Ready or not, winter is coming! It’s time for some outdoor church maintenance in preparation for winter. Join us on Saturday, 10/4 at 8:00 am and help with leaning around the church campus.

*Dress appropriately for the weather and be prepared to get a little dirty too!*

 JULY & YTD FINANCIAL SUMMARY			
Income	Actual	Budget	Difference
Pledges/Gifts	\$16,406	\$27,083	\$ -10,677
Monthly Income	\$29,164	\$38,267	\$ -9,103
Monthly Expenses	\$39,883	\$38,956	\$ 9,267
YTD Pledges/Gifts	\$143,444	\$216,667	\$ -73,223
YTD Income	\$241,496	\$306,133	\$ -64,637
YTD Expenses	\$313,882	\$315,408	\$ -1,526
YTD Total	\$ -72,386	\$ -9,276	\$ -63,110

**Stewardship Note:** Overall summer stewardship was within expectations compared to the past three years. Pledged gifts remain behind, while special offerings & collections surpassed expectations.

As we look to 2026, the Finance & Resource Development Team will be reviewing our trend analysis and fiscal forecasts based on this data. How we budget our benevolences, and where we focus our stewardship in mission, will guide us in crafting the 2026 budget.

Thank you for your continued generous support of St. John UCC!

# OUR LIFE TOGETHER



## YOGA AT ST. JOHN UCC MONDAYS, STARTING 10/6 AT 6:30 PM

Bless your spiritual and physical self with yoga at St. John UCC. Join yoga instructor Katherine Ray of *Hippy Yoga* for chair yoga classes every Monday night starting in October. Classes are one hour in length, and held in Fellowship Hall, an accessible space.

**Chairs are provided.**

**Bring cushions or a blanket for your comfort.  
Wear loose, comfortable clothing.**

**Price is \$5 a person, per class.**

Cash, PayPal, Venmo, and Cash App accepted

Visit *Hippy Yoga* on Facebook for more class information, or contact the office for more details.



## CANDY DONATIONS NEEDED FOR TRICK OR TREAT TRAIL AT KRAPE PARK

We need your help! A group from St. John is participating in the annual *Trick or Treat Trail* at Krape Park on Saturday, 10/25, 3:00-5:00 pm. A Costumed Contingent of Church-folks will be handing out candy to the hundreds of children and families who participate. Please donate a bag of candy to add to our extravagant “sweet” welcome!

***Please drop off your donations  
to the church office by Wednesday, 10/22.***

## Oktoberfest

Tickets will be available at the door:

**\$20 for pork chop, brat, spaetzle, sides,  
and root beer**

**\$10 for children 10 years & under**

**\$10 for a commemorative stein  
with unlimited root beer refills**

We hope this event will be a fun-filled event for St. John UCC and the whole Freeport community.

***Come early and stay until the root beer ends!  
Prost!***



**Scan this code for more  
Oktoberfest information.**



## OKTOBERFEST SILENT AUCTION

We are planning a great FUNraising event — our first Oktoberfest! Along with delicious food, we will have some fun activities, including a silent auction. Consider donating a basket for the auction. Possible ideas are gift baskets with various themes, artwork, baked goods, jewelry, gift cards for restaurants or stores, books - the possibilities are endless! Please have your items in the church office no later than 10/13.

***Please contact Jan Kunkle  
for more information***

# OUR COMMITMENT TO JUSTICE



## HEADS UP!

### HEADSTART NEEDS OUR HELP!

NICAA (Northwestern Illinois Community Action Agency) hosts our area’s Head Start programs. They provide comprehensive developmental, educational, and nutritional services to our children as well as providing support to the parents. Through classrooms located in Freeport they serve 190 children and families. We are collecting classroom materials for their 3-5 year-old class:

age-appropriate toys   towels

washcloths   books   cars   Barbies   Duplo blocks

baby clothes   baby blankets   puzzles

Visit *NICAA Head Start* for more information on their programs: [nicaa.org/service/head-start/](http://nicaa.org/service/head-start/)

*Donations can be placed in the collection cart in the Atrium entryway*



### EMPTY BOWLS PROJECT: AN UPDATE AND A THANK YOU!

We did it! All 92 bowls are decorated, and sent out for food-safe glaze and firing. We had a great turnout on Sunday and Wednesday. Thank you for sharing your creative art and your fun attitude. And a big thanks to *HELIX Youth* for finishing the last ones!

*Bowls will be ready for pickup around 11/2  
Watch for more information!*



## FACC FOOD PANTRY

Our congregation’s generous support of the FACC Food Pantry and its clients offers us a way to spread care and compassion throughout the year.

In October we are asked to collect:



### Canned Fruit

*Donations can be placed in the collection cart in the Atrium entryway.*

## CHICAGO AVENUE MISSION DINNER PROGRAM

Our Mission Ministry continues to prepare weekly dinners for the guests at the Chicago Avenue Mission every Wednesday evening.

We need your help as a congregation to step up and help to keep this mission going. Please sign up on the bulletin board if you can help with a meal. More info? Contact Marla Kreeger or Pam Wessel!

## GREEN ENERGY REPORT



Month	Generated	Used	Difference
June	5,307 kWh	3,131 kWh	-2,176 kWh
July	4,561 kWh	2,784 kWh	-1,777 kWh
August	5,035 kWh	2,317 kWh	-2,718 kWh

**Green Team Note:** Our current Net Metering Credit “Bank” sits at 9.33 MWh—that’s “Mega Watt Hours” of stored energy. That is equivalent to TWO average mid-winter month’s electricity usage. We’ve still got two more months of peak generation to add in 2025!



# DREAMING TOGETHER: 2026 ANNUAL GIVING CAMPAIGN

## A STEWARDSHIP MOMENT

Stories are the heartbeat of our faith, friends.

The sacred stories of scripture expand our understanding of who God is and how God shows up in the world. The stories of our own lives are powerful reminders of how we have been shaped by the God of all creation and Christ's church.

I want to invite you into the story of St. John UCC, and into the vision to be the church God is calling us to be in our community and world, in Freeport and beyond, for today's healing and tomorrow's hope.

The inspiration for this year's campaign comes from the writing of the prophet Joel::

*After that, I will pour out my spirit on all humankind.  
Your daughters and sons will prophesy,  
your elders will have prophetic dreams,  
and your young people will see visions.*

Joel 2:24 (Inclusive Bible)

The stories we hear in worship bear witness to the ways we are *Dreaming God's Dream* together. The ministry we share here happens because of the ways you give—of your time and talents and of your financial resources.

Pastor and songwriter Rev. Bryan Sirchio wrote these words for a youth event back in 1991:

*"Dream God's dream, Holy Spirit, help us dream  
Of a world where there is justice and where everyone is free  
To build and grow and love and to simply have enough  
The world will change when we dream God's dream."*

I can't tell you how many times I've sung this song, or lead groups in singing it. I can tell you: every time I hear it, I re-remember the joy that comes when we dream with God and each other how to be a more loving, just and caring world.

# Dreaming God's Dream

NO GIFT TOO SMALL, NO DREAM TOO BIG.



"I believe that our young ones begin life with innocent hearts...We artists were asked to imagine what a city of compassion would look like and how the people there could cooperate so that everyone would have enough food. *The Process of Life* shows that there is pride and hope in carrying out positive ways of thinking about things like this." *Adrian Sanchez, Artist*

For people of faith, what we give to God through the church is a reflection of our values. Likewise, how our church stewards its money is a reflection of who we believe God is calling us to be. Over the next couple of weeks, I invite your dreams and visions into our common space, our congregation. Our Stewardship and Development Team will ask each one of us to prayerfully and carefully discern their passions and priorities and decide how to align their resources of self, time, and money with those of our congregation.

This simple request bears our weighty prayers and an equally thoughtful response, as we each determine our investment in the ministry and mission of St. John UCC. The work of our church happens every year because of the generous financial and volunteer support of people like you and me. And this year, we trust that also will happen because of neighbors we have yet to meet. We're "That Church!" And our community knows and trusts that we will rise to each moment to which God calls our attention.

Thank you, friends, for being God's generous people in a time when other choices are out there!

I'll see you in Church,

*Pastor Hank*

# DREAMING TOGETHER: 2026 ANNUAL GIVING CAMPAIGN

## LIVING OUR STEWARDSHIP OUT LOUD

Our faithful financial stewardship is one way we are invited to respond to Christ's invitation. Our generosity funds the mission and ministry that we are deploying as a sign that God's realm is among us.

On 10/19, we will gather after worship for our annual Budget and Goals Meeting. A Moment of Witness will be shared each Sunday after, telling stories about our gifts and our dreams:

- 10/19 Budget and Goals Meeting (after church)
- 10/26 Reforming Sunday
- 11/2 All of our Saints' Sunday,
- 11/9 Valuing our Veterans
- 11/16 Hunger & Homelessness Awareness Week
- 11/23 Commitment & Thanksgiving Sunday

Our Annual Campaign will conclude on Commitment Sunday, 11/23 in prayerful worship. The members of our Stewardship and Development Team hope you will be intentional about responding to this important invitation, not simply to offer your estimate of giving card, but to join in a celebration of fellowship and thanksgiving

*"My pledge is an expression of love. In my heart, I feel my commitment to the congregation when I name what I intend to give. In my mind, I know the congregation needs to plan and budget for the future. In my soul, I experience the hope that comes from making a commitment to the future. And with my strength, I do what I can to help support my community. All of which connects me to the mission and ministry of the congregation – its work to engage me in loving neighbors."*

Rev. Andrew Warner, UCC Generosity Team



St. John UCC  
Annual Giving Campaign 2026

### Your Faith Promise Record

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Address \_\_\_\_\_  
City \_\_\_\_\_  
State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_  
Home Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Mobile Phone \_\_\_\_\_  
E-mail \_\_\_\_\_

With faith in God to provide and trusting in God's enabling power, I/We make the following faith promise of giving for this year:

\$ \_\_\_\_\_ each ☐ week ☐ month

for an annual total of \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Please see reverse for Automatic Giving and Electronic Statements

Date \_\_\_\_\_

With others in my congregation, I commit myself to give in proportion to what I have for the ministries of the church and the proclamation of the good news of Jesus Christ.

\$ \_\_\_\_\_ each ☐ week ☐ month

for an annual total of \$ \_\_\_\_\_

beginning in January.



## WHAT IS A FAITH PROMISE?

There are many ways to support the work of a congregation. In the 1800s, many churches supported themselves by renting out pews (people paid for a seat as they might in a stadium, renting it out for the year). While that doesn't happen a lot today, congregations like ours engage our gifts and skills to raise financial support for our mission and ministry.

A *Faith Promise* is one means for supporting St. John UCC. Yes, it is the way we offer our giving pledges for the coming year. But it is also a tool to help think about the reasons why we make a financial commitment to our church. Our Faith Promise cards will arrive in the middle of November. Before then, take time as a leadership team to reflect on these questions:

*Why do you make a Faith Promise financial commitment to your congregation?*

*What motivates you to make this commitment every year?*

*How does this commitment change your relationship with your local congregation?*

Your prayers and your participation are keys to helping us advance further on the pathway of discipleship. God has done, and continues to do, remarkable things through us and with us – ***dream with us what God has yet for us to share with our community!***

Thank you for sharing yourself, your gifts and your ministry with every person who is a guest to the extravagant welcome at St. John UCC.



**Dreaming God's Dream**  
NO GIFT TOO SMALL, NO DREAM TOO BIG.

# YOUTH FAITH FORMATION



## GODLY PLAY—PRE-K-3<sup>RD</sup> GRADES

*Godly Play* is a Montessori-style learning environment focused on the needs of children at this place on life's journey. This year, we're launching a new series of stories that focus on sharing our Bible from different and diverse places within the stories:

### ***10/5 Everyone in Church Sunday***

10/12 6.5 The Story of Joseph

10/19 6.7 The Story of Ruth

10/26 6.8 The Story of Samuel

This set of stories shares more inclusive and expansive witness of the Bible's many people. Ask a youth what the most important part of this week's story was in their hearing and understanding!



*Whirl* is a multi-age approach older elementary and middle school youth begin to connect the dots between Biblical stories and their own experiences of God, using the Whirl characters and curriculum.

### ***10/5 Everyone in Church Sunday***

10/12 *Included:* Jesus Heals Ten

10/19 *Persistence:* The Widow and the Judge

10/26 6.8 *Exalt:* The Pharisee and Tax Collector

*Whirl* encourages children to ask questions, interpret Scripture in community, and connect with God and one another.



## EVERYONE IN CHURCH SUNDAYS

### ***Worshipping together to Grow in Faith***

We learned a lot last year about the importance of worshipping together - all ages in a common celebration of God's love and presence. With Sunday School for youth taking place during worship, we are introducing ***Everyone in Church Sundays!***

Starting in October, all ages and generations will worship together for the whole hour of celebration on the first Sunday of each month. On these Sundays, our worship words, songs, and sacraments will be crafted to meet the diverse needs of our whole community.

***Come ready to sing, and pray,  
and worship together!***



## YOUTH-LED WORSHIP, 11/2

Youth of all ages, let your light shine! On All Saints' Sunday, 11/2 youth of all ages will be leading Sunday morning worship.

There will be plenty of opportunities for all ages. You can hand out name tags, greet, acolyte, usher, take offerings, read scripture or do the welcome message.

Kelly Priewe and Pastor Hank are organizing the worship leaders. Look for an email from them with a list of ways to share your gifts in the service!

# COMMUNITY FELLOWSHIP



## ADULT FAITH FORMATION

**Sundays, 9:00-9:45**

Get into the All-Hallows Spirit with some spiritual reflection! Come and see a Halloween film that influences modern movies and to discuss what goes bump in the night. Join Pastor Ted in a crossroads of the *Universal Monsters* and the Gospel's stories.

10/5 Bela Lugosi's *Dracula*  
and 1 Corinthians 10:23-24

10/12 Claude Rains' *Invisible Man*  
and Ephesians 5:8-13

10/19 Lon Chaney, Jr's *Wolf Man*  
and Mark 5:1-20

10/26 Boris Karloff and Colin Clive's  
*Frankenstein* and Proverbs 8:22-31

Excerpts from the films, folk lore and history, and of course your Bible will be used to carry class dialogue about monsters that go bump in the night.



## SUBVERSIVE BOOK GROUP

**10/21, 6:30 pm**

Our next meeting is Tuesday, 10/21, beginning at 6:30 pm. Information about the chosen book can be found in the Book Group mail slot outside the church office or by contacting [sbgfpt@gmail.com](mailto:sbgfpt@gmail.com).

*Happy Reading!*



**HELIX—5<sup>TH</sup>-8<sup>TH</sup> GRADES**

HELIX is an after school program sponsored and hosted by St. John UCC that focuses on community-building and social-emotional learning. HELIX meets each Wednesday from 3:00 to 5:00 pm.

Our veteran HELIX Team gathers each week to share their creativity. They live out their commitment to connect with all kinds of youth, wherever they are on life's journey. Matt, Tay, and Kendra are excited to greet our youth with an inclusive, caring, and ever-listening spirit.

### October Schedule

10/1 Being a Team

10/8 Control

10/15 Planning an Event

10/22 Working Together

10/29 Halloween Party!

[helix@stjohnuccfreeport.org](mailto:helix@stjohnuccfreeport.org)

[www.stjohnuccfreeport.org/helix](http://www.stjohnuccfreeport.org/helix)

[www.facebook.com/helixyouthoutreach](https://www.facebook.com/helixyouthoutreach)

[www.instagram.com/helixyouthoutreach](https://www.instagram.com/helixyouthoutreach)

### SAVE THE DATES:

#### Getting into the Holiday Spirit

**11/2 Holiday Pie Sale** - Order through 11/16

**11/26 Holiday Pie Pickup Day**

**11/30 Hanging of the Greens**

**12/6 Peanut Brittle Make & Take**

**12/7 Holiday Bake Sale**

**12/14 12 Songs of Christmas Music Celebration**



# OUR CHURCH COMMUNITY

## OCTOBER BIRTHDAYS

10/02 Sarah Prieue	10/15 Blake Musser
Wayne Weier	10/16 Connie Orde
10/04 Donnley Dutcher	Donna Ruthe
Jacob Prieue	10/18 Tim Campbell-
10/07 Michelle	Outcault
Queckboerner	10/22 Barb Copus
10/08 Dylan Piefer	10/24 Marla Kreeger
10/09 Dennis Jochum	10/26 Jennifer Young
10/11 Michele Piefer	10/27 Letty Bertram
10/12 Mary Beach	Vanessa Gustofson
10/14 Glenn Underwood	10/28 Julie Dreibelbis
10/15 Andrea Hathaway	10/29 Phil Copus

## OCTOBER ANNIVERSARIES

10/04 Randy & Sue Cook	10/20 Colin & Kathryn
10/07 Michael Stingley &	Ebbers
Kevin Sounders	10/21 Glenn & Marilyn
10/08 Dale & Kelly	Underwood
Prieue	10/29 Dylan & Abby
10/10 Gwen & Tara	Holbert
Boddie	10/30 Alex & Olivia
10/19 Tanner & Rachel	Bertram
Wilkenson	



## A CUP OF FELLOWSHIP

Thank you to those who have volunteered to bring weekly treats and host a Sunday. We really do appreciate you. Hosts are needed to prepare treats and share in our extravagant welcome. Also, please plan to help share in setting up, serving, and clearing the hospitality station at the end of the hour.

*Please sign up on the bulletin board in the narthex or call the church office to reserve your week.*

## SHARING OUR GIFTS:

### Online Giving and Automatic Donations

To honor our Faith Commitment to St. John UCC, you can donate electronically:



[www.bit.ly/GiveToStJohnUCC](http://www.bit.ly/GiveToStJohnUCC)

Check the box in the lower left-hand corner to cover the fees for this transaction. The fee will be credited to your giving. And as always, you can send your check to the church office.

You can also sign up for ACH transactions, automatic deductions from your checking or savings accounts. See Pam in the church office with any questions.

*Thank you for your continued generous support of St. John UCC!*

## ST. JOHN UCC MINISTRY TEAM

### Senior Pastor

Rev. Henry E. "Hank" Fairman 703-473-3534  
Hank@stjohnuccfreeport.org

### Visitation Pastor

Rev. Ted Michalsen 440-536-1044  
Ted@stjohnuccfreeport.org

### Director of Congregational Life

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

### Creative & Administrative Assistant

Karla Hardersen  
karla@stjohnuccfreeport.org

### Digital Media Assistant

Max Gibson

### Music Director

Britney Kieselhorst  
britney@stjohnuccfreeport.org

### Church Musician

Randy Cook

### Pastor Emeritus

Rev. Dr. Donnley Dutcher

### Contact the church office at:

815-235-2824 office@stjohnuccfreeport.org



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[www.stjohnuccfreeport.org](http://www.stjohnuccfreeport.org)

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## TWO MORE THOUGHTS: NEIGHBORS IN NEED OFFERING & CWS CROP WALK 2025

### Neighbors in Need

*Carry each other's burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ.*  
-Galatians 6:2

#### **SPECIAL MISSION OFFERING, 10/5**

Neighbors in Need (NIN) is a special mission offering of the United Church of Christ that supports ministries of justice and compassion in the United States, with one-third of the offering given to the Council for American Indian Ministries and the remaining two-thirds supporting UCC justice ministries.

The funds collected supports the work of the UCC's Washington D.C. Office for Public Policy and Advocacy, in partnership with congregations and church members across the nation. The work is shared through collective advocacy, with and for one another.



**10/5, Register: 1:00 / Walk: 1:30**

The CROP Hunger Walk is a national effort sponsored by Church World Service. Local churches and individuals walk to raise money to help end hunger. Twenty-five percent of the funds raised stay local, supporting community services in Freeport and Stephenson County. Please meet in Debate Square if you wish to walk with us!