WELCOME TO WORSHIP TODAY!

We are delighted that you are here in celebration and worship at St. John UCC. The members and friends of our faith community hope that you will encounter God in a meaningful and profound way, and that God's Spirit will inspire you today to live your faith out loud.

We hope that you want to discover more about the congregation and its ministry in the community of Freeport, across our state and nation, and around the world. Please ask one of our ushers or visit us:

on the Web: www.stjohnuccfreeport.org on Facebook: www.facebook.com/stjohnuccfreeport

For our younger guests, Worship Enrichment "Busy Bags" are available in the Narthex. These are located at the counter outside of the Chapel Hearth Room. Check in with an usher to organize a bag!

Parents and guardians are also welcome to use Room S3, the Infant Room, to care for their families as needed. There is a television in the room to view the worship service in real time.

Assisted Listening Devices are located at the Sound Board in the back of the Sanctuary. Earpiece and "Induction Loops" for hearing aids are both available. Please ask an usher for assistance in their use.

Please remember to return your name tag on your way home. We will have them waiting for your return next week!

If you cannot join us in person, you will always have a front row seat on our live stream at *facebook.com/stjohnuccfreeport/live*.

Scan this code to access our Online Giving Portal:



We thank you for your continued generous support of St. John UCC.

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Faith Formation for All Ages

Our regular faith formation classes for youth take place during the worship hour at 10:00, following the For the Child in All of Us.

The Infant and Toddler Room is provided for ages birth to 3 years with age-appropriate activities and equipment in Room S3.

Godly Play welcomes youth Preschool to 3rd Grade for a play-based faith formation in **Room S4**.

Whirl welcomes youth 4th Grade to 8th Grade to learn Bible stories, ask questions, and explore their faith together in **Room S8**.

Adult Faith Formation welcomes high school youth and adults of all ages to gather in the Chapel Hearth Room from 9:00-9:45, exploring different topics and formats weekly.

ST. JOHN UCC STAFF

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REALM OF CHRIST THANKSGIVING & COMMITMENT SUNDAY

November 23, 2025 • 10:00 am

WELCOMING MUSIC AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

PRELUDE We Gather Together arr. Matthew H. Corl

*CALL TO WORSHIP

Shawn Killingbeck

One: As honeybees and ant colonies

make visible a unified spirit for a common purpose,

All: may we reflect our oneness in God.

One: As the trees and flowers

make visible the mysterious way of dying and rising,

All: may we yield to a Divine Wisdom.

One: As the music of frogs and birds

make visible the pulsing of Creation's praise,

All: may we worship with our every breath.

One: Gathered as one in the wisdom of God,

we gather as one.

All: Let us worship the Spirit of Christ

that calls us to be God's joyful and thankful people.

*HYMN

Come, Ye Thankful People, Come

WAR #721, vv. 1, 2, 4

ST. GEORGE'S, WINDSOR

*SHARING THE PEACE OF CHRIST

* An asterisk is an invitation to rise as one is able (in body or spirit).

Please silence your mobile devices before the beginning of worship.

GATHERING PRAYER

Silent Centering

Congregational Prayer (speaking together)

O God, with the glory of autumn exploding around us, we think of something even more glorious: your love surrounding us each and every day.

We are moved to say "Thank you," and to embrace the possibilities that you bring for transforming ourselves and our world.

Through this hour of worship, we feel your presence near us through the gathered community.

Help us see more clearly what we can do to join your movement towards new hearts for us, more vital life for this congregation, and a renewed mission to our community and the world.

Help us to live our calling as followers of Christ, to be the church you need us to be in Freeport and beyond.

Challenge us to be the Body of Christ, in our place and our space, for such a time as this. For it is in Christ's name we serve: and in Christ's name we pray. Amen

GOD'S WORD IN SCRIPTURE

Philippians 4:4-9

NRSV, Updated Edition

FOR THE CHILD IN ALL OF US

Anita Bicksler

The Prayer of our Savior

Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be your name.

Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as in heaven.

Give us today our daily bread,

and forgive us our sins, as we forgive those who sin against us. Lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil.

For yours is the kingdom, and the power and the glory forever. Amen.

ANTHEM

Find Us Faithful The Chancel Choir

Jay Mohr arr. Tom Fettke

GOD'S WORD IN SCRIPTURE

Deuteronomy 26:1-11

NRSV, Updated Edition

MESSAGE

In One Voice

Rev. Hank Fairman

*HYMN

For the Fruit of All Creation

AR HYD Y NOS

NCH #425, on screen

PRESENTING OUR HEARTS AND GIFTS TO GOD

Moment for Mission

Annual Campaign 2025

Gathering the Gifts with Praise

Offering Song

Shall We Gather at the River

R. Lowrey

Doxology (CH #48 lyrics, on screen)

OLD 100TH

KREMSER

SHARING CELEBRATIONS AND CONCERNS

Prayers of the People

Sharing our Commitments

When invited, please come forward, and place your Faith Promise Card in the Cornucopia at the front of the church.

Responding in Generosity We Gather Together (WAR #81, v. 2)

Litany for Thanksgiving and Dedication

One: Let us give thanks to God, creator of all that can ever be, for all the good gifts so freely bestowed on us.

We come to praise God joyfully. Let us sing praise to God with thanksgiving.

After each prayerful moment, please respond:

We thank you, God!

And concluding:

One: May we all give thanks to the Lord who is good. God's love is everlasting.

St. John United Church of Christ - Freeport, IL

an Open and Affirming, Racial Justice Congregation, where God is Still Speaking

God, whose giving knows no ending, we offer up the treasure that you have entrusted to us; we offer up the skills and time that you have graciously given to us; we offer up ourselves in service and praise.

> Receive these gifts by your grace. Multiply and use them through the power of the Holy Spirit to accomplish Christ's work of love in the world. Committed in service, we pray. Amen.

*HYMN Rejoice, Give Thanks and Sing DARWALL'S 148TH **NCH #303**

*BENEDICTION

*RESPONSE With Grateful Heart I Thank You, Lord **GRATUS** WAR #720, v. I

*POSTLUDE Now Thank We All Our God arr. Michael Burkhardt

ANNOUNCEMENTS



ANNUAL CAMPAIGN 2026 COMMITMENT SUNDAY

For over 175 years, our church has changed lives. Marking our anniversary year with pride and purpose, we take on that commitment anew to be the church God calls us to be in Freeport and beyond. With thanksgiving, we make a connection between our discipleship and our sharing of resources, offering our Faith Promise Cards for 2026.

Faith Promise Cards are available on the Giving Table in the Narthex if you need one for today's dedication.

> Dream with us what God has yet for us to share with our community!



Musical Celebration, 12/7, 2:00pm

Does holiday music strike a chord with you? Come share in a gathering of instruments, choirs, and much more at the Third Annual "Twelve Songs of Christmas" Music Celebration! Our annual free-will offering for the FSD 145 Shoe Fund will be taken, providing winter-safe shoes to our community youth.



Wellness Ministry: Christmas Stockings

The Wellness Ministry Team will be assembling Christmas Stockings for our aging in place, senior living, and rehabilitation care community members.

If you would like to donate a few items, please place them into the basket in the narthex and drop them off no later than Sunday, 12/7. Thank you for spreading some Christmas spirit and brightening someone's day!



Mitten Tree for Amity

From November to December, our congregation works with Amity's Daycare, collecting mittens, hats, and gloves. Additionally, sweatshirts, sweatpants, sweaters, heavy socks, and boots are appreciated. Please place your donations on the Christmas tree in the entry way or in the baskets surrounding it.



ADVENT BEGINS SUNDAY, 11/30

Advent's light begins shining soon, showing us the way to hope, peace, love, and joy. It all begins on Sunday, 11/30 with the *Hanging of the Greens*.

"What do you fear?" Adult Faith Formation Series

Come join the Sunday morning Adult Faith Formation group as we walk through Advent together. Christina Ables Fairman and Lisa Shcubert will facilitate the journey with A Sanctified Art's *What do fou fear? Insisting on Hope this Advent* companion study as our guide.

11/30 – "In the time of Herod, we long for God to break in"

12/7 – "When we're running out of hope, God is at work"

12/14 – "Even in our fear, we are called forward"

12/21 – "When you're afraid, give me your hand"

Please join us for one, two, three, or all four weeks of this conversation. And when you can't be there, or if you'd like to engage in additional Advent devotional time on your own, you can also explore *What Do You Fear?* personal devotional, available to pick up in the Narthex.

We can't wait to see you on Sunday mornings at 9:00 AM in the Chapel Hearth Room!

Soon and Very Soon UCC Advent Devotional



The UCC Stillspeaking Writers' Group invite you to plan your Advent observances around the theme, Soon and Very Soon. The theme acknowledges our need for radical hope, and encourages us to prepare for God's best. Find your copy on the Narthex Table.

'TIS THE SEASON ANNOUNCEMENTS



HANGING OF THE GREENS and FAMILY TREES 11/30, Following Worship

Advent's light begins shining on 11/30 with our annual Hanging of the Greens and decorating family Christmas trees! One of the great traditions of sharing our faith across the generations is our preparation for Advent and Christmas.

We will gather for a Soup and Salad luncheon and decorate the church for the season. All ages are warmly invited, with focused activities for our youngest friends.

You can also bring decorations from your home and share your family's style with the congregation by decorating a Christmas tree here at St. John UCC! If you are unable to decorate the tree yourself, volunteers will purchase and decorate for you for \$15. Every family who wants to decorate will have a tree waiting for them on 11/30! Please contact the church office by 11/23 to claim your tree!

Trees can be decorated at the Hanging of the Greens on 11/30, or can be scheduled at your family's convenience before 12/7.



CHRISTMAS POINSETTIAS

You are invited to "remember a loved one or honor a family member" by placing a poinsettia in our sanctuary at Christmas. We are offering 6" potted plants at \$20 each. Order forms are available in the Narthex or in the Office. Please return your form to the church office by 12/7.



ANNUAL HOLIDAY PICK UP REMINDER

Remember to pick up your holiday pies on Wednesday, 11/26, at 12:00 pm.



CHRISTMAS BAKE SALE – BAKERS NEEDED!

Holiday sweets and treats will be available on Sunday, 12/7 after church, with proceeds supporting our congregation's mission and ministry. You can help make our Bake Sale a success! Bring cookies, muffins, breads, bars, pies, cupcakes, snack mix, or a sharing portion of your favorite holiday treats! Items can be delivered to church on 12/5 before 2:00 pm or 12/6 before 12:00 pm.

PEANUT BRITTLE MAKE-AND-TAKE PARTY 12/6, 8:30-12:00ISH

If you've always loved eating or gifting our "almost" world-famous peanut brittle and are curious how it's made, we have just the deal for you! Help make a bunch of batches on Saturday, 12/6, 8:30-12:00ish, ahead of the bake sale on 12/7. Absolutely no prior experience is required – it's easy! Measure ingredients, stir a pot! You will do great!

We will make as many batches as time allows.

Please let Lisa Ebbers know you'll be there!

303

For the Fruit of All Creation



This text was written in response to a request for a new harvest hymn for an existing tune. After its publication in England in 1970, it became popular in many countries and can be found set to various tunes.

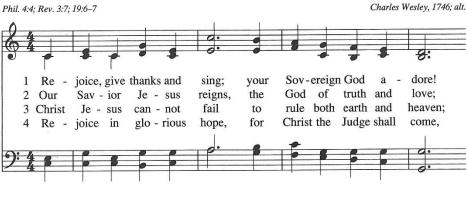
Tune: AR HYD Y NOS 8.4.8.4.8.8.8.4.

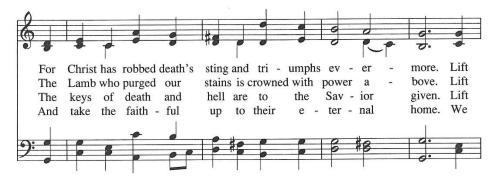
Welsh traditional melody

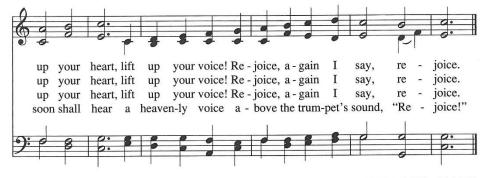
Musical Relicks of the Welsh Bards, Dublin, 1784

Harm. L. O. Emerson, 1906

For another harmonization, see 82







This Ascension text, one of the festival hymns by Charles Wesley, was published originally in John Wesley's Moral and Sacred Poems (1744). Somewhat altered, it appeared in this familiar version in Charles' 1746 collection, Hymns for Our Lord's Resurrection.

Tune: DARWALL'S 148th 6.6.6.6.8.8. John Darwall, 1770

How Can You Help?

SHOP FOR SUPPLIES

- Locally or online (see inside for more details)
- Through our Amazon Shopping List: bit.lv/stjohnperiodpacks



DONATE

If you don't want to shop for supplies, you can donate funds to support the Period Packs Service Project. Donations will go towards the cost of supplies.

- Donate online at https://stjohnuccfreeport.org/giving
- Donate by mailing a check to the church office at 1010 S Park Blvd, Freeport IL 61032
- Bring your donation to the Friendship Tea, 12/6, 10:00



A CHRISTMAS FRIENDSHIP TEA FOR GIVING Fellowship and Missions Collection, 12/6, 10:00 am

Women of the St. John UCC community are invited to a Christmas Tea on 12/9, 10:00-12:00 in the Chapel Hearth Room. This gathering time is hosted by our Mission & Outreach Leadership Team. In the spirit of Christmas, and recognizing the financial stresses that exist in our society today, we will be creating Period Packs (like the ones we made for UCC General Synod in 2023) for distribution in our community.

Mission & Outreach is partnering with FSD #145 through Empire Elementary School's Community Pantry, Jones Farrar IB World School, Freeport Middle School, and Freeport High School and FHS Athletics, to provide a stock of the Period Packs at each location. Our goal is to create 50 identical packs, based on the Church World Service (CWS) Period Pack list.

What is a Period Pack?

Also known as a Menstrual Hygiene Kit, these kits are one of the kits offered by Church World Services (along with Hygiene Kits, School Kits, Emergency Cleanup Buckets, and Welcome Backpacks) to provide supplies to folks in need.

Period packs include a month's supply of products to get a person who menstruates through their period: pads, tampons, wet wipes, flushable wipes, hand sanitizer, bath soap, laundry detergent sheets, and trash bags, all inside a large resealable bag.

AVAILABLE LOCALLY



Unscented regular tampons (5 per period pack)



Unscented regular tampons (5 per period pack)



Unscented, long, super, ultra-thin pads (10 per period pack)



Fragrance-free Dove bar soap,
3 oz. size bar or larger
(1 per period pack)



Quart zip-top bags (1 per period pack)

AVAILABLE LOCALLY



Fragrance-free
Wet Ones, travel-size 20count package
(1 per period pack)



Fragrance-free hand sanitizer, 2 oz. size (2 per period pack)



Unscented small trash bags, 4-gallon size (3 per period pack)



Gallon zip-top bags (1 per period pack)

AVAILABLE AT AMAZON



Fragrance-free Tru Earth laundry detergent sheets (6 per period pack)



Fragrance-free flushable wipes, 42-count package (1 per period pack)

WHEN SHOPPING FOR SUPPLIES:

Please shop the brands shown on the supply list here or at Amazon. Church World Service (CWS, the organization receiving the Period Packs) has particular requirements around what they can accept, and we want to be sure the packs we send can be used. The brands on the supply lists meet the needs of CWS.

Ensure the supplies you donate are new, and in their original packaging.