

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

on Facebook: [www.facebook.com/stjohnuccfreeport](https://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](https://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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Zechariah and the Angel | Hannah Garrity  
*Paper lace and graphite drawing, backed with cyanotype print*

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## FIRST SUNDAY OF ADVENT: HOPE

*"In the time of Herod, we long for God to break in"*

November 30, 2025 • 10:00 am

## WELCOMING MUSIC AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

### PRELUDE

*Kum by Yah*

Spiritual; arr. C. Cole

Carl & Dianna Cole

### \*CALL TO WORSHIP

Christina Ables Fairman

One: On Sundays and Mondays,

**All: on good days and bad days,**

One: early in the morning and very late at night,

**All: here in this room,  
and out in the world,  
God, we long for you to break in.**

One: Meet us in this space.

**All: Surprise us with your presence.**

One: Fill this room with your good news.

**All: With hope, we sing, we worship, we pray,  
and watch fear fade in the candle's light.**

### \*HYMN

*Let All Mortal Flesh Keep Silence*

PICARDY

CH #124, on screen

### \*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

Lighting of Advent Candles

One: In a world full of fear, where do you see hope?

All: We see hope when we look to the next generation.  
We feel hopeful when we gather together.  
We know hope, deep in our bones, when  
we dream of a better world.

One: You are right.  
Even in a fearful world, hope is all around us.  
The prophet Isaiah hoped. Even when his world was  
turned upside down, he hoped. And in the middle of  
fear, he shared God’s word with the world,

“... they shall beat their swords into plowshares  
and their spears into pruning hooks;  
nation shall not lift up sword against nation;  
neither shall they learn war any more.”

hoping for God’s light to break into our hurting and  
healing world.

The Candle of Hope is lit.

One: Today we light the candle of hope as a reminder of this  
good news. May this flicker of light help us remember  
that we have reason to hope.

All: Let Hope light our way. Thanks be to God! Amen.

Response We Are a People of Hope, v.1 TABLE OF GRACE  
Words: B. Hamm, © 2009 Hope Publishing, on screen

GOD’S WORD IN SCRIPTURE

Isaiah 2:1-5 NRSV, Updated Edition

FOR THE CHILD IN ALL OF US

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

My Hope is Built  
Carl & Dianna Cole

Edward Mote  
arr. C. Cole

GOD’S WORD IN SCRIPTURE

Luke 1:5-13 NRSV, Updated Edition

MESSAGE

Don’t Fear. Rev. Hank Fairman

\*HYMN

In the Time of Herod CRANHAM  
Words: Anna Strickland, © 2025, A Sanctified Art, on screen

PRESENTING OUR HEARTS AND GIFTS TO GOD

Gathering the Gifts with Praise

Offering Song Come Thou Long Expected Jesus Charles Wesley  
arr. C. Cole

Doxology (CH #48 lyrics, on screen) OLD 100<sup>TH</sup>

Praise God, from whom all blessings flow!  
Praise Christ, all creatures here below!  
Praise Holy Spirit, evermore!  
One God, triune, whom we adore. Amen.

SHARING CELEBRATIONS AND CONCERNS

Prayers of the People & Pastoral Prayer

\*HYMN

O Come, O Come, Emmanuel VENI EMMANUEL  
WAR #154

\*BENEDICTION

\*RESPONSE Comfort, Comfort Now My People GENEVAN 42  
WAR #155, v. I

\*POSTLUDE Kum by Yah (reprise) Spiritual; arr. C. Cole

St. John United Church of Christ – Freeport, IL  
an Open and Affirming, Racial Justice Congregation,  
where God is Still Speaking

ANNOUNCEMENTS



Advent’s light begins to shine, showing us the way to hope, peace, love,  
and joy. It all begins on today 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* invites 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.



## ANNOUNCEMENTS



### **HANGING OF THE GREENS and FAMILY TREES** **Today, Following Worship**

Advent's light begins shining today 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.



### **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.



### **MARDI GRAS PLANNING MEETING, 12/10, 6:30pm**

There will be a planning meeting for our upcoming Mardi Gras Potluck and Bingo on 12/10 at 6:30 pm at the home of Judi Buus. Please see Judi for more information.



### **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!*



**twelve**  
**songs of**  
**Christmas**

**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.

## How Can You Help?

### SHOP FOR SUPPLIES

- Locally or online (see inside for more details)
- Through our Amazon Shopping List:  
[bit.ly/stjohnperiodpacks](https://bit.ly/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 20-  
count 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.