
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

Whirl welcomes youth Kindergarten to 5th Grade to learn Bible stories, ask questions, and explore their faith together in **Room S8**. This multi-age Summer Sunday School takes place during the 10:00 worship hour, following the *Conversation with the Children*.

Explore a Bible story together, enjoy the *Sunday Funnies*, and partner with kids of different ages for crafts and activities.

Youth in sixth grade and up are invited to sign up to be a Youth Helper for the class, serving as mentors to their younger peers. See the schedule on the bulletin board or contact Pastor Hank to sign up.

Adult Faith Formation will return from its summer break the week following Rally Day, 9/14! We look forward to this coming year, preparing new ways to feed you, body, mind, and spirit!

ST. JOHN UCC STAFF

Senior Pastor:

Rev. Henry E. “Hank” Fairman

hank@stjohnuccfreeport.org

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Visitation Pastor:

Rev. Ted Michalsen

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Director of Congregational Life:

Pam Wessel

pam@stjohnuccfreeport.org

Creative & Administrative Assistant:

Karla Hardersen

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Digital Media Assistants: Max Gibson

Church Musician: Randy Cook Bell and Choir Director: Coming Soon

Pastor Emeritus: Rev. Dr. Donnley Dutcher

1010 South Park Boulevard Freeport, IL 61032
815.235.2824 • www.stjohnuccfreeport.org



TWELFTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

LABOR DAY WEEKEND

August 31, 2025 • 10:00 am

WELCOMING MUSIC and ANNOUNCEMENTS

PRELUDE

Come, Christians, Join to Sing

arr. Alex-Zsolt

*CALL TO WORSHIP

Christina Ables Fairman

One: This is a gathering time – a time to come together, settle in, and remember who we are.

**All: We are the church,
yesterday, today, and tomorrow.**

One: We are greeted by the Spirit of Jesus who made common tables special and welcomed all to the feast.

**All: The Spirit is within us,
yesterday, today, and tomorrow.**

One: Working together in life’s labors, we stretch out our hands in friendship and discover the presence of God.

**All: We build together in God’s realm of love,
yesterday, today, and tomorrow.**

One: Come, let us worship and give thanks for our labors.

*HYMN

Come Labor On

ORA LABORA

(NCH #532, 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.*

CELEBRATION OF BIRTHDAYS AND GIFTS

GATHERING PRAYER

Silent Centering

Congregational Prayer (speaking together)

Always working God,
whose breath built the earth,
whose hands molded our bodies,
whose spirit stitched the stars across the heavens,
we gather in your presence this morning
with praise and thanksgiving for all that you have made.

You have so linked our lives one with another
that all we do affects, for good or ill, all other lives.

Always blessing Spirit,
guide us in the work we do,
that we may do it not for self alone, but for the common good.
As we seek a proper return for our own labor,
make us mindful of the rightful aspirations of other workers,
and arouse our concern for those who are out of work.

Always loving Christ,
meet us here.
Strengthen our hearts and our hands
to work with you in the building of a world
filled with justice and peace for all of your creation.
With the hope of good labors done, we pray. Amen.

GOD’S WORD IN SCRIPTURE

Hebrews 13:1-8, 15-16 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.

GOD’S WORD IN SCRIPTURE

Luke 14:1, 7-14 NRSV, Updated Edition

LABOR DAY HYMN SING

In celebration of Labor Day Weekend, you are invited to select one
verse of your favorite hymn or song from the hymnal.

In honor of the upcoming seasons of
Advent, Christmas, and Epiphany,
please consider selections outside of the range of #152 to #247.

PRESENTING OUR HEARTS AND GIFTS TO GOD

Gathering the Gifts with Praise

Offering Song *How Can I Keep from Singing?*
arr. Rebecca Groom te Velde

Doxology (CH #48 lyrics, on screen) OLD 100TH
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 *Keep Your Lamps Trimmed and Burning* KEEP YOUR LAMPS
(NCH #369, on screen)

*BENEDICTION

*RESPONSE *Sing a New Church Into Being* NETTLETON
(WAR #577, v. 4)

*POSTLUDE *Oh, That I Had a Thousand Voices* arr. M. Burkhardt

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

ANNOUNCEMENTS



MUSIC MINISTRY RESUMES
Thursday, 9/4, 6:30 Bells, 7:30 Choir

Have you missed singing in the choirs? How about ringing your handbells? Our Music Ministry groups are regathering for fall, winter, and beyond! Come, bring your musical selves, and make a joyful sound for God!



RALLY DAY AND EMPTY BOWLS PROJECT
Sunday, 9/7

Our annual Rally Day celebration is arriving soon! Come join in morning worship, sharing stories of God’s blessings for us all and Communion with each other and our Creator.

Stay for the annual Rally Day Potluck Lunch. Bring your family’s favorite dish to pass, and sample others’ faves. Help with our *Empty Bowls* Hunger Relief Mission Support Project supporting FACC’s Kreeger Memorial Food Pantry. Celebrate as the community in Christ at St. John UCC, sharing the radical hospitality of God’s all-embracing love!

Sign up on the Narthex Bulletin Board to save your seat!



WELLNESS MINISTRY
9/10, 10:00 am

Our renewed Wellness Ministry will gather for a conversation on Wednesday, 9/10 at 10:00 am. You are welcome (AND ENCOURAGED!) to come and learn more. You may find just the place to share yourself and your gifts. We will discern our best way to be the church our congregation needs us to be in caring for our community.

Please contact Rev. Ted or Pam Wessel to answer any questions.

Come, Labor On

Jane Laurie Borthwick, 1859, rev. 1863; alt.

532

Matt. 9:37-38; 20:1-7

1 Come, la-bor on. Who dares stay i - dle on the har-vest plain
 2 Come, la-bor on. Claim the high call - ing an - gels can - not share;
 3 Come, la-bor on. A - way with gloom-y doubts and faith-less fear!
 4 Come, la-bor on. No time for rest, till glows the west-ern sky,

while all a - round us waves the gold-en grain? And to each ser - vant
 to young and old the gos - pel glad-ness bear. Re - deem the time; its
 No one so weak but may do ser - vice here; Though fee - ble a - gents,
 till the long shad-ows o'er the path-way lie, And a glad sound comes

does the Sav-ior say, "Go work to - day."
 hours too swift-ly fly. The night draws night.
 may we all ful - fill God's righ - - - teous will.
 with the set - ting sun, "Well done, well done!"

Jane Laurie Borthwick, along with her sister, Sarah, was a member of the Scottish Free Church and translated many German hymns. English-born Thomas Tertius Noble was organist-choirmaster at St. Thomas' Church, New York City, for thirty-five years.

Tune: ORA LABORA 4.10.10.10.4.
 Thomas Tertius Noble, 1918

ANNIVERSARIES AND DEDICATIONS

369

Keep Your Lamps Trimmed and Burning

Matt. 25:1-13; Gal. 6:9

African-American spiritual

1 Keep your lamps trimmed and burn - ing, keep your lamps trimmed and burn -
 2 It's our faith makes us hap - py, it's our faith makes us hap -
 3 We are climb - ing Ja - cobs's lad - der, we are climb - ing Ja - cob's lad -
 4 Ev - ery round goes high - er, high - er, ev - ery round goes high - er, high -

Last time, end
 - ing, keep your lamps trimmed and burn - ing, for this work's al - most done.
 - py, it's our faith makes us hap - py, for this work's al - most done.
 - der, we are climb - ing Ja - cob's lad - der, for this work's al - most done.
 - er ev - ery round goes high - er, high - er, for this work's al - most done.

Refrain
 Sis - ters, don't grow wear - y, broth - ers, don't grow
 wear - y, chil - dren, don't grow wear - y, for this work's al - most done.

By tradition, a leader may call out substitute words for the refrain, such as "Christians don't grow weary, Christians don't grow weary, . . ." etc., or "people," "preacher," or any others that may be appropriate.

This spiritual is possibly one of the code songs in which to keep one's lamp "trimmed and burning" could have meant keeping a lookout for a conductor of the underground railroad, such as Harriet Tubman. It is often sung at church dedication services.

Tune: KEEP YOUR LAMPS 7.7.7.6.6.6.6.6
 African-American spiritual
 Harm. The New Century Hymnal, 1994

ANNOUNCEMENTS



SAFE CHURCH TRAINING

9/14, 11:30-2:30 pm

Church members who work with children, youth, or vulnerable adults and church leadership should attend a Safe Church Training every three years to review our policies for protecting people in our care. Lunch is provided.

Please RSVP for the training to safechurch@stjohnnucfreeport.org by Sunday 9/7, and include special dietary restrictions or food allergies, and accessibility needs.



JOIN US AT THE THEATER!

Timberlake Playhouse in Mt. Carroll, IL

9/21, 2:00 pm

We have reserved a block of 20 tickets at \$30 each (we need at least 10 going to receive the group rate). Please sign up on the Narthex board by 9/7. We plan to meet at church at 12:45pm to carpool down.

Questions and payments to Lisa Ebbers (815-275-3106)

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