

# TIDINGS



**September 2025**

*A Regular Sharing of our Mission and Ministry*



**Sunday, 9/7, beginning at 10:00 am**

Our Rally Day celebration welcomes us back from summer's fun, labors, and vacations.

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 Pot-Luck Lunch. Bring your family's favorite dish to pass, and sample others' faves.

Help out with our Empty Bowls Project in support of 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!

*Please sign up that you're coming  
on the bulletin board in the narthex.*



**TIMBERLAKE PLAYHOUSE**

**Sunday, 9/21, 2:00 pm**

Tickets are still available! Share a date at the theater with your church friends!

*See p. 5 for more information*



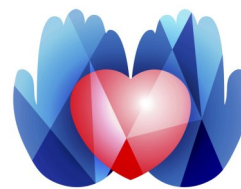
**SAFE CHURCH TRAINING**

**Sunday, 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 by Sunday, 9/7, and include special dietary restrictions or food allergies, and accessibility needs to:

*[safechurch@stjohnuccfreeport.org](mailto:safechurch@stjohnuccfreeport.org)*



**WELLNESS MINISTRY**

**Next Meeting: 9/10, 10:00 am**

Do you have a heart that cares for connecting with our members and friends aging in place, residing in senior living communities, or in rehabilitation care?

Come and meet our Wellness Ministry Team on Wednesday, 9/10, beginning at 10:00. You are welcome (AND ENCOURAGED!) to join the meeting and learn more about this meaningful, caring ministry.

*See p. 4 for more information*



**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



## CHRISTMAS IN JULY: UPDATE

Thank you all for your support of the Christmas in July mid-summer stewardship campaign. The No Bake Bake Sale raised \$8,695! Your amazing generous gifts raised 40% of our audacious \$22,000 goal!

*Like the song says,  
“Let’s make the whole year Christmas!”*

If that expectant joy of Christmastide is just now blooming in you, there is always time to make a late-summer/early fall additional gift to the No Bake Bake Sale. Contact the church office today, and keep that Christmas spirit going all the way to Advent!

*Thank you for your generous support  
of the mission and ministry of St. John UCC!*




## LEADERSHIP TEAMS:

### How our congregation does its ministry

Are you interested in becoming more involved at St. John UCC beyond worship on Sundays? Please consider attending a Leadership Team meeting, and see where you are called to engage in the St. John UCC community and beyond.

<u>Leadership Team</u>	<u>Next Meeting</u>
Church Council	9/9, 6:00 pm
Care & Community	9/3, 6:00 pm
Mission & Outreach	9/15, 6:30 pm
Worship & Education	TBD
Wellness Ministry	9/10, 10:00 am

 JULY & YTD FINANCIAL SUMMARY			
Income	Actual	Budget	Difference
Pledges/Gifts	\$17,919	\$27,083	\$ -9,927
Monthly Income	\$32,812	\$38,267	\$11,828
Monthly Expenses	\$41,495	\$38,956	\$2,539
YTD Pledges/Gifts	\$127,039	\$189,583	\$ -62,544
YTD Income	\$212,3323	\$267,867	\$ -55,534
YTD Expenses	\$271,801	\$276,453	\$ -4,652
YTD Total	\$ -59,468	\$ -8,586	\$ -50,882

**Stewardship Note:** Summer stewardship remained generous in comparison to the past three years. Pledged gifts remain behind, so please do review your offerings and gifts to date.

Monthly expenses were slightly higher than budgeted, while Year-to-Date stewardship continues below budget. Thank you for your continuing support of our mission and ministry.

Our Annual Campaign is coming up in October. Look for our narrative budget in the next edition of Tidings!

## ST. JOHN UCC MINISTRY TEAM

<b>Senior Pastor</b>	Rev. Henry E. “Hank” Fairman Hank@stjohnuccfreeport.org	703-473-3534
<b>Visitation Pastor</b>	Rev. Ted Michalsen Ted@stjohnuccfreeport.org	440-536-1044
<b>Director of Congregational Life</b>	Pam Wessel Pam@stjohnuccfreeport.org	815-275-7202
<b>Creative &amp; Administrative Assistant</b>	Karla Hardersen karla@stjohnuccfreeport.org	
<b>Digital Media Intern</b>	Max Gibson	
<b>Church Musician</b>	Randy Cook	
<b>Bell &amp; Choir Director</b>	Coming Soon!	
<b>Pastor Emeritus</b>	Rev. Dr. Donnley Dutcher	

**Email the church office at:**  
office@stjohnuccfreeport.org

# MISSION AND OUTREACH



## CELEBRATING HISPANIC HERITAGE MONTH

Each year from September 15 to October 15, we celebrate Hispanic Heritage Month—a time to recognize and honor the diverse histories, cultures, and contributions of Americans with roots in Spain, Mexico, the Caribbean, and Central and South America. This month invites us to reflect on the blessings of diversity and the ways in which God’s people bring their unique gifts to enrich our shared community.



People of Hispanic heritage have made lasting contributions in every part of society—shaping the arts, music, literature, science, education, business, and public service.

As we mark this season, let’s take time to learn from one another, share our testimonies, and give thanks for the many ways God works through every culture to share love in the world



## 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 September we are asked to collect:



### Ramen Noodles

*Donations can be placed in the collection carts 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

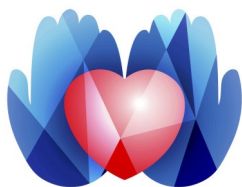


Month	Generated	Used	Difference
May	5,414 kWh	2,753 kWh	-2,661 kWh
June	5,307 kWh	3,131 kWh	-2,176 kWh
July	4,561 kWh	2,784 kWh	-1,777 kWh

**Green Team Note:** Our current Net Metering Credit “Bank” sits at 6.6 MWh—that’s “Mega Watt Hours” of stored energy. That is equivalent to one average mid-winter month’s electricity usage. We’ve still got three more months of generation to add in 2025!



# CARING FOR OUR COMMUNITY



## WELLNESS MINISTRY: 9/10, 10:00 am

The Wellness Ministry is called to bring the circle of care across the generations at St. John UCC. Our congregation has a long history of caring for our community. From the Prayer Chain to lay caregivers, to COVID community-wide phone calls, we bring compassionate, loving support.

The Wellness Ministry Team is made up of trained visitors who are committed to sharing the compassionate love of Jesus Christ. We are looking to add several more folks to the team. You may find that this is just the place to share yourself and your gifts. Come discern with us the many ways to be the church our congregation needs us to be.

***Please contact Rev. Ted or Pam Wessel  
to join the team or to answer your questions.***

## OUR HOMEBOUND FRIENDS

Our friends who reside in senior living facilities or are homebound would love a visit or a card from those thinking of them.

**Parkview:** Anna Carroll, Jean Koch

**Ascension St. Joseph Center:** Marilyn Ruthe

**Rock River Health Care:** June Nagel

**Liberty Village:** Stan Bomgarden, Arnold Eder

**Pearl Pavilion:** Delores Siemens

**Oakley Courts:** Mavis Clark

**Winn Prairie:** Ray Nieman

**Evansville Manor:** Wayne Bahn

**In their homes:** Marilyn DeVries

***Please contact Pam for addresses.***

## CHECK IT OUT NOW!

### Uthlaut Memorial Library Rededication 9/14, following worship

The St. John UCC Laura Uthlaut Memorial Library re-opens on Sunday, 9/14, after a summer of re-cataloging, labeling, and revising the collection!



Beginning in March, the Spring Break project scanned our 1,000+ volumes' titles into our *TinyCat* online catalog (it's a public web-based system to "check out" our collection!)

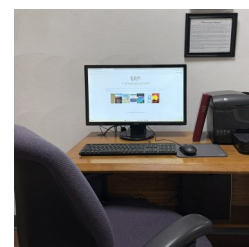
<https://www.librarycat.org/lib/stjohnfreeport>

There are special collections covering a variety of personal and ecclesial area. Here's a few of them to check for books on your TBR list:

- Faith Formation for children, youth, & adults
- Spiritual Enrichment and Small Groups
- Gender & Sexuality Justice
- Racial Justice

More areas will be added as our collections grow in the coming years

Our new Check-In Station is up and running, and waiting to help you discover all that our collection has to offer.



*Who was Laura Uthlaut? Come check out her story  
on the dedication plaque in the Library!*

# ONE IN THE SPIRIT



## TIMBERLAKE PLAYHOUSE

**Sunday, 9/21, 2:00 pm**

Based on the novel by Robert James Waller:

*A sweeping romance with a Tony Award-winning score, The Bridges of Madison County tells the story of a chance meeting between an Iowa housewife and a traveling photographer that changes their lives forever.*

*A breathtaking musical about love, longing, and the choices that define us.*

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 September 7th. We plan to meet at church at 12:45pm to carpool down.

**Contact the church office to reserve tickets:**  
**[office@stjohnuccfreeport.org](mailto:office@stjohnuccfreeport.org)**



## 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. It's not too early to start thinking about items you might want to donate 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!

***If you have questions, please see or call:***  
***Jan Kunkle (815-908-9125).***



## 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 returns this year with their creativity and commitment to connecting 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.

### September Schedule

- 9/3 HELIX: Building a Foundation
- 9/10 HELIX: Building a Community
- 9/17 HELIX: Being a Team
- 9/24 District Institute—No Meeting

[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)



## 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!

# FAITH FORMATION FOR ALL AGES

## REGULAR YOUTH FAITH FORMATION RESUMES THIS MONTH!

Sunday, 9/7 is Rally Day, when our regular faith formation classes for youth take place during the worship hour, following the *For the Child in All of Us*.

Updated registration forms will be available on Rally Day. These are required for each child or youth for each new program year and must be completed before 9/30.



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

The Godly Play class teaches Bible stories to younger children through Montessori-style play and materials. This year, we're launching a new series of lessons with a focus on sharing our Bible's stories:

9/7	2.3 The Books of the Bible
9/14	6.1 The "Second" Creation
9/21	6.3 The Story of Sarah
9/28	6.4 The Story of Jacob



### KIDS' WORSHIP—4<sup>TH</sup>-8<sup>TH</sup> GRADES

The Kids' Worship class helps 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.

9/7	Forgiveness: Paul and Onesimus
9/14	Found: The Lost Sheep and Lost Coin
9/21	Pray: Pray for Everyone
9/28	Unashamed: Faith Passed Down



## ADULT FAITH FORMATION Sundays beginning 9/17, 9:00-9:45

Our Adult Formation meetings will return from summer break on Sunday, 9/14! We look forward to this coming year, preparing new ways to feed you, body, mind, and spirit.

Each week in September, we will take time to reflect on the *Season of Creation*, and how our United Church of Christ's ministry reaches out to the community of God's people we care for and the life-sustaining world we tend.

9/7	Ocean Sunday
9/14	Fauna and Flora Sunday
9/21	Storm Sunday
9/28	Cosmos Sunday

Each year from September 1 to October 4, the Christian family unites for this worldwide celebration of prayer and action to protect our common home.

## EVERYONE IN CHURCH SUNDAYS *Worshiping together to Grow in Faith*

We learned a lot last year about the importance of worshiping 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!*

# OUR CHURCH COMMUNITY

## SEPTEMBER BIRTHDAYS

9/02 Lisa Schubert	9/16 Jocelyn Walsh
Lisa Elsner	9/19 Deb Scott
Mike Queckborner	9/20 Arnold Eder
9/03 Roger Swanlund	Allen Buus
Marilyn	9/21 Deborah Fruth
Underwood	9/23 Elliot Fairman
9/04 Bill Condie	Barbara Luedeke
Nevaeh Graybill	9/25 Colton Krumm
9/05 Michael DeBoer	9/26 Maxen Hughes
9/08 Carol Ahrens	9/28 Tim Ebbers
9/09 Angeline Walsh	9/29 Carter Young
9/11 Heath Atz	9/30 Drew Dawson
Michael Weaver	Dan King
9/14 Olivia Shaffer	
9/15 Bryce Bicksler	
Karla Hardersen	
Lexi Schrock	

## SEPTEMBER ANNIVERSARIES

9/02 Denny & Judy	9/23 Jason & Andrea
Garkey	Hathaway
9/03 Jack & Jill Gastel	9/24 Tim & Lisa Ebbers
9/09 Steve & Lisa	9/25 Steve & Kathleen
Schubert	Monte
9/16 Allen & Judi Buus	9/26 Logan & Andrea
9/23 Terry & Deleana	Kuntz
Atz	9/29 Steve & Vicki
	Spyrison



## 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.*



## The Memorial Fund

supporting the future of the mission  
and growing ministry and outreach  
of St. John United Church of Christ

The Memorial Fund at St. John UCC exists to support the mission, ministry, and outreach of the congregation. The Fund was created from the generosity of gifts celebrating the lives and impact of loved ones and family members of the congregation.

In 2018, Church Council received a recommendation from the Memorial and Tangible Gift Team to consolidate the memorial gifts into three designated and one undesignated funds:

### ***Congregational Support Fund***

Supports church members and their families in times of financial need. Requests are made to Care & Community Leadership Team.

### ***Worship & Arts Fund***

Provides for creative worship and artistic display throughout the church campus. Curated by Worship & Education Leadership Team.

### ***Library Fund***

The Laura S. Uthlaut Library Fund supports the collection of resources in the church library. Managed by the Library Volunteers.

### ***Undesignated Gifts Fund***

Allows special projects and non-budgeted needs to enhance church life. Coordinated by Church Council Executive Team.

To make a donation to the Memorial Fund or to ask questions related to the fund, contact Pam Wessel.





1010 South Park Boulevard

Freeport, IL 61032

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

Change Service Requested

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## SAVE THE DATE: OKTOBERFEST - Saturday, 10/18, 4-7 pm

Join with the community at St. John UCC in our first-ever Oktoberfest festival! Dress in your finest German attire (lederhosen and dirndls welcomed!) and celebrate our community's German roots with great music, food, activities, and silent auction! There will be brats, pork chops, German potato salad, black forest cake, German folk music, stein-holding and yodeling contests, and so much more!

Stay tuned for more information in the bulletins, online, and in your emails. If you'd like to participate in the planning, or want to volunteer to help, please let us know by contacting Lisa Ebbers or the office. We hope this event will be a fun-filled event for St. John UCC and the whole Freeport community.

Plan on arriving early and staying until the root beer ends! Can't wait to see you there! *Prost!*

