

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.

This month we'll ponder what it takes to "*be the church God calls us to be in Freeport and beyond.*"

- 1/11 *Discerning*: Progressive and Expansive Thought and Theology
- 1/18 *Engaged*: Community Service and Living out justice with the Social Gospel

ST. JOHN UCC STAFF

Senior Pastor:

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EPIPHANY & BAPTISM OF CHRIST SUNDAY

"Fear Doesn't Stop Us"

January 11, 2026 • 10:00 am

WELCOMING MUSIC and ANNOUNCEMENTS

PRELUDE

What Star Is This

arr. Michael Burkhardt

*CALL TO WORSHIP

One: In the dark of morning,

All: the stars still shine.

One: In the depth of winter,

All: the birds still climb.

One: At the start of the year,
tender and new,

All: God is here.

God is near.

One: Do not rest in your fear.

All: God is here.

One: So like the stars and the birds,

All: Let us worship holy God.

*HYMN

We Three Kings of Orient Are

WAR #233, Refrain after vv. 1 and 5 only

KINGS OF ORIENT

*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)

Ever-loving God,
we longed for Christmas to usher in a season of peace and joy.
However, we know that is not how the world works.

Even just days after Christmas, we find ourselves face to face
with fear once again.

So today we pray:

Challenge us when we allow fear to stop us in our tracks.

Embrace us when our own fear prevents us from following
your call.

Help us listen clearly when fear is louder than love.

Guide us how to turn our fear into action.

Show us how to live like the magi who searched for you in a
fearful world.

Baptize us anew with the Spirit's passion to see your realm and
work for it to become real in our world today.

With hope we pray, Amen.

GOD'S WORD IN SCRIPTURE

Matthew 2:1-12

NRSV, Updated Edition

FOR THE CHILD IN ALL OF US

Jan Kunkle

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

When we must bear persistent pain

The Chancel Choir

Ruth Duck

GOD'S WORD IN SCRIPTURE

Matthew 3:13-17

NRSV, Updated Edition

MESSAGE

Counting in Threes

Rev. Hank Fairman

*HYMN

At the Font We Start Our Journey

NCH #308

WESTMINSTER ABBEY

PRESENTING OUR HEARTS AND GIFTS TO GOD

Gathering the Gifts with Praise

Offering Song *O Radiant Christ, Incarnate Word*

Ruth Duck

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

Sharing Star Words

*HYMN

When Jesus Came to Jordan

MUNICH

WAR #241

*BENEDICTION

*RESPONSE

Arise, Your Light is Come!

FESTAL SONG

WAR #231, vv. 1, 4

*POSTLUDE

Songs of Thankfulness and Praise

arr. Philip Moore

St. John United Church of Christ – Freeport, IL

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

ANNOUNCEMENTS



EPIPHANY BRUNCH TODAY

With the star guiding us in thankful praise, we will gather in Fellowship Hall following worship for our annual Epiphany brunch.

NEW MEMBERS WELCOMING SESSION

Are you interested in learning more about St. John UCC and what it means to be an active part of our church community? Grab a plate of hospitality at the Epiphany Brunch and meet in the Chapel Hearth Room for an hour on our church's history and ministry.



MARDI GRAS PLANNING MEETING

1/14, 6:30 PM

There will be a planning meeting for our upcoming Mardi Gras Potluck and Bingo on 1/14 at 6:30 pm at the home of Judi Buus. Please see Judi for more information.



CLIMATE CHANGE SPEAKER SERIES

Starting 1/20, 6:30 PM

Mark your calendars! The Green Team invites you to attend a series of five "Cost of Living with Climate Change" lectures, beginning on Tuesday, 1/20, and continuing through May. All sessions will be held at Freeport Public Library at 6:30 p.m. and are sponsored by our local Environmental Study Group. The first speaker is Dr. Don Wuebbles, Endowed Professor in the Dept. of Atmospheric Sciences at U of I Urbana-Champaign. Refreshments will be provided. Please see Jan Kunkle with any questions.

2026
ANNUAL
CONGREGATIONAL
MEETING

2026 ANNUAL CONGREGATIONAL MEETING

2/1, 11:30 AM

All members of St. John United Church of Christ are called to the Annual Congregational Meeting on Sunday, February 1, at 11:30 am in accordance with Article V of the Constitution and Article I of the Bylaws of St. John UCC.

Signed,
/s/ Jill Gastel, Clerk of Council

Copies of the annual ministry and financial reports and budget will be available one week prior to the meeting. Watch for information on in-person and hybrid meeting closer to the day of the meeting.



MARDI GRAS POTLUCK AND BINGO

2/7, 4-7 PM

Come enjoy an evening of food and fellowship at Mardi Gras Potluck and Bingo night, on Saturday, 2/7, from 4-7 pm, or until the bingo prizes run out!

There will be jambalaya, gumbo, dirty rice, king cakes, and more! Pick your favorite Cajun dish (or any other dish!) and bring enough to share at the potluck.

Following the potluck, we will have an evening of bingo, complete with prizes! If you have any unused gifts from Christmas, or any white elephant prizes that you'd like to donate to our prize box, we will put them to good use! Please bring them to the office by February 1st.

We would also encourage you to decorate a shoebox float, with a Mardi Gras-theme. If you'd like to build a float, or need an idea, please let the committee know.

If you have any other questions or would like to be part of the planning team, please contact Judi Buus or the office.

“Laissez les bons temps rouler” -
Let the good times roll!

At the Font We Start Our Journey

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Jeffery Rowthorn, 1992

Col. 3:15; Acts 10:36-43

1 At the font we start our jour - ney, in the Eas - ter
 2 At the pul - pit we are fash-ioned by the Eas - ter
 3 At the al - tar we are nour-ished with the Eas - ter
 4 At the door we are com - mis-sioned, now the Eas - ter

faith bap - tized; doubts and fears no long - er blind us,
 tale re - told in - to wit - nes - ses and proph - ets,
 gift of bread; in our break - ing it to piec - es
 vic - tory's won, to re - store a world di - vid - ed

by the light of Christ sur - prised. Al - le - lu - ia,
 by the power of Christ made bold. Al - le - lu - ia,
 see the love of Christ out - spread. Al - le - lu - ia,
 to the peace of Christ as one. Al - le - lu - ia,

al - le - lu - ia! Hope held out and re - al - ized.
 al - le - lu - ia! Faith pro - claimed, yet still un - told.
 al - le - lu - ia! Life em - braced, yet free - ly shed.
 al - le - lu - ia! Eas - ter's work must still be done.

This text was written for a parish in the Episcopal Diocese of Connecticut, where the author served as bishop suffragan. Born and educated in Britain, Rowthorn has held positions at Union Theological Seminary and Yale University Divinity School, and more recently was appointed bishop in charge of the Convocation of American Churches in Europe.

Tune: WESTMINSTER ABBEY 8.7.8.7.8.7.

Henry Purcell, c. 1680

Arr. Ernest Hawkins, 1842