

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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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.

The business conducted shall be:

- The receipt of the 2025 ministry, financial, and endowment reports
- The report of the Property Management Team on Sanctuary Renovations and Organ Renewal
- The report of the Worship & Education Team, and action on, revisions to the Safe Church /Safe Conduct policy
- The approval of the 2026 ministry & operations budget and any business deemed appropriate by Church Council.

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.

ST. JOHN UCC STAFF

Senior Pastor:

Rev. Henry E. "Hank" Fairman

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Visitation Pastor:

Rev. Ted Michalsen

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Director of Congregational Life:

Pam Wessel

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Creative & Administrative Assistant:

Karla Hardersen

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Digital Media Assistant: Max Gibson

Music Director: Britney Kieselhorst

britney@stjohnuccfreeport.org

Church Musician: Randy Cook

Pastor Emeritus: Rev. Dr. Donnley Dutcher

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



SECOND SUNDAY AFTER EPIPHANY & ECUMENICAL SUNDAY

January 18, 2026 • 10:00 am

WELCOMING MUSIC and ANNOUNCEMENTS

PRELUDE

Like the Murmur of the Dove's Song

arr. M. Burkhardt

*CALL TO WORSHIP

Tim Ebbers

One: We wait patiently for our God.

All: We will sing, we will sing new songs of the One who calls us here.

One: We will not chase after other gods.

All: We will sing, we will sing new songs of the One in whom we can trust.

One: We will tell of all God has done for us.

All: We will sing, we will sing new songs of the One whose salvation is for all.

*HYMN

Bornng Cry

WATERLIFE

WAR #680

*SHARING THE PEACE OF CHRIST

GATHERING PRAYER

Silent Centering

** 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.*

Congregational Prayer (speaking together)

God of all time,
you have called us to be stewards of your light and love,
to share messages of hope and healing.

We ask that you travel with us, offering hope and love to all we
meet. Let us be your hands, feet, smile, and voice.

God, we sometimes struggle with the in-between – the push
and pull of being called kind and being kind. We struggle with
the in-between of being a voice for love and being silent so as
not to offend. We struggle with believing we’re enough and
being enough.

Help us to see with eyes of compassion, to listen with care and
concern, to respond with a passionate purpose, following in
Christ’s way of justice and peace.

May it always be so, in our worship today
and in the days to come. Amen.

GOD’S WORD IN SCRIPTURE

Isaiah 1:12-18 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

Keep Your Lamps arr. Dr. Andre Thomas
The Chancel Choir

GOD’S WORD IN SCRIPTURE

Luke 10:25-37 NRSV, Updated Edition

MESSAGE

“Love ...is the heartbeat
of the moral cosmos.” Rev. Hank Fairman

*HYMN

We Plant a Grain of Mustard Seed NEW BEGINNINGS
NCH #540, vv. 1-4

PRESENTING OUR HEARTS AND GIFTS TO GOD

Gathering the Gifts with Praise

Offering Song I Want to Walk as a Child of the Light Thomerson
arr. M. Hayes

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

A Litany of Civil Rights, Justice and Healing (insert)

*HYMN

Praise the One Who Breaks the Darkness NETTLETON
WAR #93

*BENEDICTION

*RESPONSE

Arise, Your Light is Come! FESTAL SONG
WAR #231, vv. 1, 4

*POSTLUDE

Flourish on CRUGER David Blackwell

A Litany of Civil Rights, Justice and Healing

One: In a sermon delivered on August 11, 1957, Dr. Martin Luther King,
Jr. stated “Life’s most persistent and urgent question is,
‘what are you doing for others?’”

All: Therefore, let us pray for courage and determination by those
who are oppressed....

One: We remember Dr. King’s warning that
“a negative peace which is the absence of tension”
is less than “a positive peace which is the presence of justice.”

All: Therefore, let us pray that those who work for peace in our
world may cry out first for justice...

One: We remember Dr. King’s insight that
“injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere. We are caught in an
unescapable network of mutuality tied in a single garment of destiny. Whatever
affects one directly affects all indirectly”

All: Therefore, let us pray that we may see nothing in isolation, but
may know ourselves bound to one another and to all people
under heaven...

One: We remember Martin’s lament that “the contemporary church is often a
weak, ineffectual voice with an uncertain sound. It is so often the arch-supporter of
the status quo. Far from being disturbed by the presence of the church, the power
structure of the average community is consoled by the church’s silent and often
vocal sanction of things as they are.”

All: Therefore, let us pray that neither this congregation nor any
congregation of Christ’s people may be silent in the face of
wrong, but that we may be disturbers of the status quo when
that is God’s call to us...

One: We remember Martin’s “hope that dark clouds of racial prejudice will soon
pass away and the deep fog of misunderstanding will be lifted from our fear
drenched communities and in some not too distant tomorrow the radiant stars of
love and brotherhood will shine over our great nation with all their scintillating
beauty.”

All: Therefore, in faith, let us commit ourselves to the work of
justice and healing of the whole of God’s creation.

One: Remembering the wisdom God has given us through the work of Dr.
King and the leaders of the Civil Rights Era, we are challenged. What
will be our response to life’s most persistent and urgent question?

All: In response to the question,
we endeavor to rise above the narrow confines of individualistic
concerns and commit ourselves to making a difference for the
betterment of society at large and within the communities in
which live. Amen.

Adapted from United Methodist Book of Worship © 1992, and University of South
Carolina MLK Day Celebration 2010

St. John United Church of Christ – Freeport, IL

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

ANNOUNCEMENTS



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.



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.

After the meal, 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!

***Please sign up on the bulletin board in the Narthex
so we know how many to plan for!***

We Plant a Grain of Mustard Seed

Matt. 13:31-32; Mark 4:30-32; Luke 13:18-19;
John 13:34-35; 15:12-17

Mary Bryan Matney, 1990

1 We plant a grain of mus-tard seed, and in our faith we find
2 Our ac-tions, more than words, de-fine how love's ex-am-ple feeds
3 When stooped to lend a help-ing hand, we find a touch that heals,
4 Make love our pur-pose, love our aim, for love en-dures all things,

the proof of God is love, in-deed, which blos-soms from its kind;
a great-er love, for love di-vine bursts forth from small-est seeds;
for love in-vest-ed will ex-pand to bear the fruit love yields;
and choos-ing love our lives will claim the peace for-give-ness brings;

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