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 *Moment for All Ages*.

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 meetings are on Sunday mornings, from 9:00-9:45. This month, we'll seek the Spirit's wisdom on this question: *What does it mean to be a generous steward, investing in the mission of today's church?*

We will take time to consider the personal and spiritual side of our commitment that leads us to support a congregation like ours. Inspired by the resources curated at The Salt Project, we'll talk about things like:

10/25 *Reforming our Thinking:*
Stewardship beyond the Offering Plate

11/1 *Inspired by our Ancestors:*
A Legacy of support for the Future Church

ST. JOHN UCC STAFF

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Church Musician: Randy Cook

Pastor Emeritus: Rev. Dr. Donnley Dutcher

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ST JOHN
United Church of Christ
Freeport, Illinois

REFORMATION SUNDAY
TWENTY SECOND SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST
October 25, 2026 ● 10:00 am

WELCOMING MUSIC and ANNOUNCEMENTS

PRELUDE — *What a Mighty God We Serve* — Spiritual
Carl & Dianna Cole — arr. C. Cole

***CALL TO WORSHIP** — Tim Ebbers

One: Our journey following Christ's Way
brings us to the edge. All this has happened before,
and it will all happen again.

All: We welcome God's grace.

One: We come to remember what it means to be alive.
Nothing is as it was. The story has changed.

All: We invite Christ's love.

One: We come together to imagine and dream
beyond the fear or pain. Into the unknown,
we lean on each other to share our stories.

All: We welcome the Spirit's comfort.

One: Let us find ourselves in God's story today.

All: Let our stories come alive with God's love..

One: Let us join in worship today.

***HYMN** — *A Mighty Fortress is Our God* — EIN' FESTE BURG
NCH #439

***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)

God, of forming and reforming faith,
we give you thanks for the witness of the generations of your people and communities that shaped us and brought us here.

We thank you for the ways you have made yourself known to different groups of Christians over time, blessing them with unique insights and traditions to help them know you better and share your love with the world.

We thank you for your persistence with us, that when we have strayed from your ways while claiming your name, you send prophets and reformers to turn us back to you.

Make us ready for your re-forming spirit to correct us when we forget your will. Keep us from the idols of power, security, and self-importance.

Just as you are steadfast and ready to forgive, shape us in your image. Bless us in this time of worship to meet you again, to know you more fully, and to share your love anew.

Amen

GOD'S WORD IN SCRIPTURE

Deuteronomy 34:1-12 — *NRSV, Updated Edition*

MOMENT FOR MISSION

VOICES of Stephenson County
Beth Maskell, Executive Director

A MOMENT FOR ALL AGES — Anita Bicksler

Change for Change Mission Collection

This month's collection will support Voices of Stephenson County, *in response to the October observation of Domestic Violence Awareness Month, and their 24/7 helpline for Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault Services*

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 — *How Great Thou Art* — Boberg, tr. Hine

Carl & Dianna Cole — arr. C. Cole

GOD'S WORD IN SCRIPTURE

Matthew 22:34-46 — *NRSV, Updated Edition*

MESSAGE — *Looseness with Words* — Rev. Hank Fairman

*HYMN — *Christian, Rise and Act your Creed*

NCH #537 — INNOCENTS

PRESENTING OUR HEARTS +AND GIFTS TO GOD

Generosity Moment: Annual Giving Campaign

Liz Reyes and Robert Mayfield, Generosity Co-Chairs

Gathering the Gifts with Praise

One: Jesus said, "I was hungry, and you gave me food.
All: "I was thirsty, and you gave me something to drink.
One: "I was a stranger and you welcomed me,
All: "I was naked and you gave me clothing,
One: "I was sick and you took care of me,
All: "I was in prison and you visited me."
One: When did I do this?
All: "Inasmuch as you did to the least of these, my family and neighbors, you did it to me."
One: Let all you do be done in love.

St. John United Church of Christ – Freeport, IL

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

Offering Song — *Glory, Glory Hallelujah* — Spiritual

Carl & Dianna Cole — arr. C. Cole

Doxology (CH #48) — 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 — *O God We Are a Church Reformed* — AZMON

© Carolyn Winfrey Gillette, 1998

*BENEDICTION

*RESPONSE — *I Come With Joy* — DOVE OF PEACE

WAR #706, v. 5

*POSTLUDE — *Glory, Glory Hallelujah (Reprise)* — Spiritual

Carl & Dianna Cole — arr. C. Cole

ANNOUNCEMENTS



TOTENFEST 11/1 DURING WORSHIP

Totenfest, the "Festival of the Departed," will take place on Sunday, November 1 during morning worship. We will remember our members and friends who have died during this past year.

If you would like to have your loved one's name read as part of the celebration, please email the church office with their: name, photograph, birthday, and date of death by end of today, 10/25.

ANNOUNCEMENTS



PERIOD PRODUCTS FOR PRETZELS

St. John UCC amplifies the message of our mission partner, Voices of Stephenson county. They are in great need of menstrual hygiene products due to recent funding cuts.

Throughout the remainder of the month of October, Mission and Outreach is asking for donations of maxi pads, overnight pads, regular pads, mini pads, panty liners, and tampons of all sizes and types.

Thank you for your generous spirits meeting the needs of our neighbors in Freeport and beyond.

Donations can be dropped off at the collection box outside of the church office

BUDGET GOALS MEETING WITH POTATO BAR LUNCH
Sunday 11/8, 11:30 am

The Church Council welcomes our community to gather and learn about "the bottom line" of our congregation's finances, mission, and vision for the coming year. We will sit down for a community meal, review last year's generosity, and dream together all that God is calling us to do and be in 2027 through our ministry in Freeport and beyond. Bring a salad or dessert, and be a part of the conversation.

Sign up on the Narthex Bulletin Board today!

A Mighty Fortress Is Our God — 439

Martin Luther, c. 1529
Transl. Frederick H. Hedge, 1853; adapt. Ruth Duck, 1981
Ps. 46

1 A might - y for - tress is our God, a bul - wark nev - er fail - ing,
2 Did we in our own strength con - fide, our striv - ing would be los - ing,
3 And though this world with dev - ils filled should threat-en to un - do us,
4 That word be - yond all earth - ly powers for - ev - er is a - bid - ing;

Our pres-ent help a - mid the flood of mor - tal ills pre - vail - ing.
But there is one who takes our side, the One of God's own choos - ing.
We will not fear for God has willed the truth to tri - umph through us.
The Spir - it and the gifts are ours, for Christ is with us sid - ing.

For still our an - cient foe does seek to work us woe with craft and pow - er
You ask who that may be? Christ Je - sus sets us free! With might-y power to
The powers of e - vil grim, we trem-ble not for them; their rage we can en -
Let goods and kin - dred go, this mor - tal life al - so; the bod - y they may

great, and armed with cru - el hate, on earth with-out an e - qual.
save, vic - to - rious o'er the grave, Christ will pre - vail tri - um - phant.
dure, for lo, their doom is sure: one lit - tle word shall fell them.
kill; God's truth shall tri - umph still; God's reign en - dures for - ev - er.

There is speculation that this psalm paraphrase was written in 1527 when Martin Luther's friend was burned at the stake, or in 1529, when Lutheran German princes protested the revocation of their liberties. It has been translated into more than fifty languages.

Tune: EIN' FESTE BURG (isometric) 8.7.8.7.6.6.6.6.7.
Martin Luther, c. 1529
Harm. The New Hymnal for American Youth, *1930; alt.*
For another version, see 440

Christian, Rise and Act Your Creed 537

Francis Albert Rollo Russell, 1893; alt.

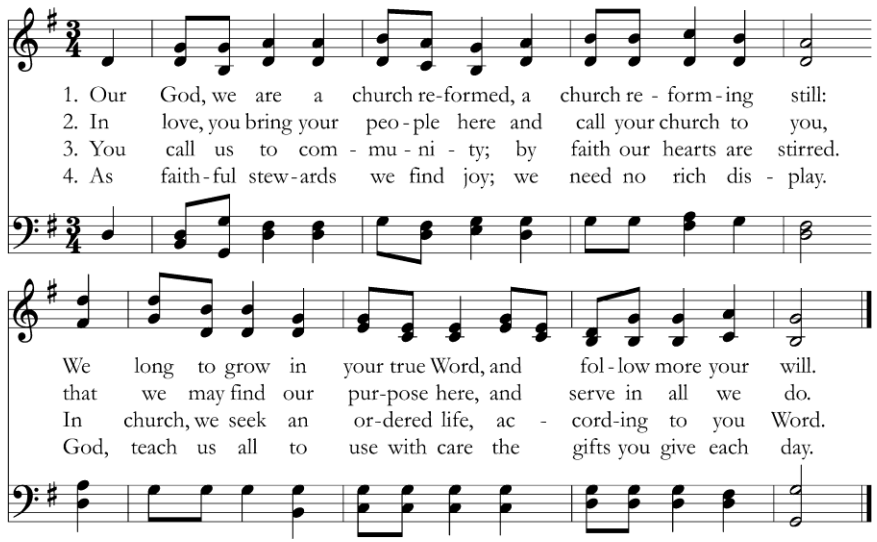


Francis Albert Rollo Russell was a writer on scientific subjects and a Fellow of the Royal Meteorological Society. This hymn was first published in the Pilgrim Hymnal *(1904). The tune originated with a text used for the Feast of the Holy Innocents.*

Tune: INNOCENTS 7.7.7.7.
The Parish Choir, *1850*

Our God, We Are a Church Reformed

AZMON (8.6.8.6)



Words: Carolyn Winfrey Gillette, Music: Carl Gotthilf Gläser
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NEW MEMBERS WELCOMING SESSION
SUNDAY, 11/1 AFTER WORSHIP

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 and meet in the Chapel Hearth Room for an hour on our church's history and ministry. Childcare will be arranged as requests are made.

Questions? Contact Rev. Hank