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?*

Inspired by the resources curated at The Salt Project, we'll talk about things like:

11/15 *Amazing Grace:*
Shifting our lens from *"What we need, but don't have."*
to *"What we do have and what is possible."*

11/22 *"So What?":*
Listening to Pledge Cards and Narrative Budgets speak

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

TWENTY-FIFTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST
November 15, 2026 ● 10:00 am

WELCOMING MUSIC and ANNOUNCEMENTS

PRELUDE *Christian Hearts, in Love United* arr. A. Lovelace

*CALL TO WORSHIP Jill Collin

One: God is able to do more
than we could ask or imagine.
All: God goes beyond our doubt
to give us faith.

One: God is able to give more
than we can understand.
All: God goes beyond our cruelty
to give us kindness.

One: God soars
to reach our minds and hearts.
All: God goes beyond our anger
to give us empowerment.

One: God expands our possibilities.
All: God goes beyond
our injustice to give us hope.

One: And so we come, and praise our Giving God.

*HYMN *God of Grace and God of Glory* CWM RHONDDA
WAR #569

*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)

Gracious God, today we are seeking wisdom which goes beyond what our eyes can see or our hands can touch. We are seeking wisdom of the heart.

You have told your people what is good and right and perfect and so today we ask you to tell us again.

Help us to see when and where to do justice, and how; help us to love kindness and teach us how to show mercy; and lead us in ways to walk humbly beside you.

Make our wandering paths straight and our lives worthy of our calling.

Speak to our hearts about your commandments of love and justice.

In Christ, in whom we live, and love, and pray. Amen

GOD'S WORD IN SCRIPTURE

Zephaniah 1:7, 12-18 *NRSV, Updated Edition*

A MOMENT FOR ALL AGES Tim Ebbers

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 *I'm So Blessed* Cain, Matz, et al.

Sounds of the Spirit

GOD'S WORD IN SCRIPTURE

Matthew 25:14-30 *NRSV, Updated Edition*

MESSAGE *Investing Not Withholding* Rev. Ted Michalsen

*HYMN *The Summons* KELVINGROVE

GTG #726

PRESENTING OUR HEARTS +AND GIFTS TO GOD

Generosity Moment: Annual Giving Campaign

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.

Offering Song *Take This Moment, Sign, and Space*

J. Bell & G. Maule

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

St. John United Church of Christ – Freeport, IL

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

*HYMN *This Is a Day of New Beginnings* BEGINNINGS

NCH #417

*BENEDICTION

*RESPONSE *Rise Up, O Saints of God!* FESTAL SONG

WAR #590, v. 5

*POSTLUDE *Forth in Your Name* arr. D. Cherwien

ANNOUNCEMENTS



HOLIDAY PIES: LAST DAY TO ORDER

Celebrate the holidays with our traditional pies! The cost is $15 per pies. Apple, cherry, and pumpkin pie with pick up on Wednesday, 11/25, at 12:00 pm. Place your order on the sign-up sheet on the bulletin board or by calling the church office.

HANGING OF THE GREENS 11/29, FOLLOWING WORSHIP

Advent's light begins shining on 11/29 with the Hanging of the Greens. One of the great traditions of sharing our faith across the generations is our preparing for Advent and Christmas.

We will gather for a Soup and Salad luncheon and decorate the church for the season. All ages are warmly invited.

ANNOUNCEMENTS



COMING SOON TO ADULT FAITH FORMATION:

Starting Sunday, 11/29 **at 8:30 am**, join the Adult Faith Formation class to explore faith themes in *How the Grinch Stole Christmas!* We'll be using *The Heart That Grew Three Sizes* by Matt Rawle. Optional short books will be available until 12/6 for $10.

Reach out to formation@stjohnucc.org for more details.

HOLIDAY BAKE SALE: SUNDAY 12/6 AFTER SERVICE



Do you miss the Cookie Walk? So do we! So come and share in this year's Holiday Bake Sale! Holiday sweets and treats will be available on Sunday, 12/6 after church, with proceeds supporting our congregation's mission and ministry. If you would be willing to donate baked goods, cookies, bars, snack mix etc. please sign up on the Narthex bulletin board.

Donations should be brought to the church on Friday 12/4 before 2pm or on Saturday 12/5 by noon.



PEANUT BRITTLE MAKING SATURDAY, 12/5 8:30 am

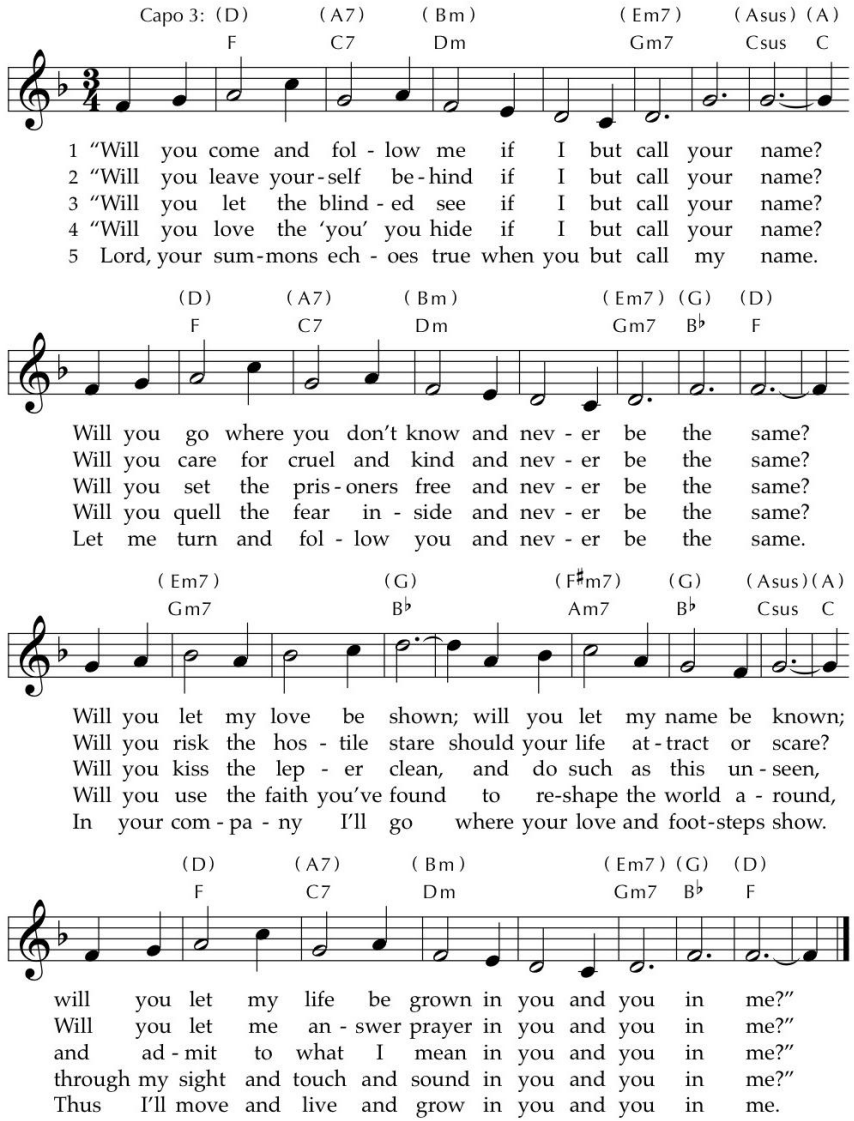
Need a little Christmas crunch? Come join with friends and make our traditional peanut brittle at the make and take party!

No prior experience necessary.

DISCIPLESHIP AND MISSION

726 Will You Come and Follow Me

The Summons



The first four stanzas of this ballad-like hymn are understood to be in the voice of Christ, with the fifth reflecting the individual singer's response. Created for this traditional Scottish tune, the text was written to mark the conclusion of a youth volunteer's time of ministry.

TEXT: John L. Bell and Graham Maule, 1987
MUSIC: Scottish melody; arr. John L. Bell, 1987
Text and Music Arr. © 1987 WGRG, Iona Community (admin. GIA Publications, Inc.)

KELVINGROVE
13.13.7.7.13

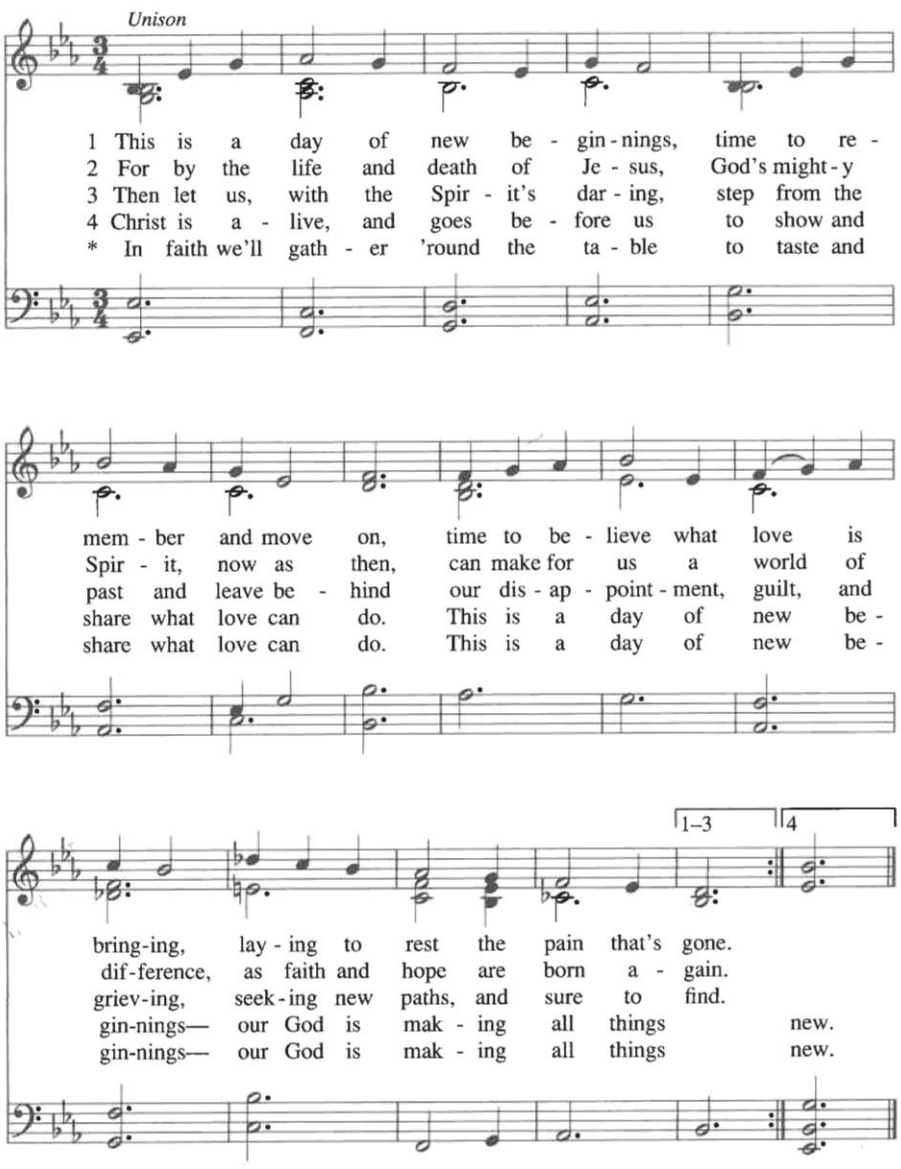
FAITH

417 This Is a Day of New Beginnings

2 Cor. 5:16–17

Brian Wren, 1978; rev. 1983

Unison



*Alternate fourth stanza for Holy Communion

Brian Wren wrote this hymn in 1978 for a New Year's Day service in Oxford, England. The music is by the editor of two hymnals of the United Methodist Church and was composed for the original Wren text.

Tune: BEGINNINGS 9.8.9.8.
Carlton R. Young, 1987

Copyright © 1987 by Hope Publishing Company

ANNOUNCEMENTS



WELLNESS MINISTRY: CHRISTMAS STOCKINGS

The Wellness Ministry Team will be assembling Christmas stockings for our aging in place, senior living, and rehabilitation care community members. Some suggested donations might be candies, mints, crackers, pens, lotions, ChapStick, or other small Christmas gifts.

Please drop off your donation no later than Sunday, 12/6. Thank you for spreading some Christmas spirit and brightening someone's day!



MITTEN TREE FOR AMITY

From November to December, our congregation works with Amity's Daycare, collecting mittens, hats, and gloves. Additionally, sweatshirts, sweatpants, sweaters, heavy socks, and boots are appreciated.

Please place your donations on the Christmas tree in the entry way or in the baskets surrounding it.

NATIONAL HUNGER AND HOMELESSNESS AWARENESS WEEK NOVEMBER 15-21, 2026

National Hunger and Homelessness Awareness Week creates awareness about the heartbreaking problems the less fortunate face in our society. Throughout the year, and especially during this week, donations are solicited and volunteers needed to help feed and rehabilitate those in need.



twelve songs of Christmas

Does holiday music strike a chord with you? Come share in a community music celebration of instruments, choirs, and much more!

Sunday, 12/6/2026
2:00 pm

fsd 145 SHOE fund

Contribute to the FSD 145 Shoe Fund and give the gift of warmth this season.

Donations will be taken at the concert.

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