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:

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

And check out this week's Announcements for our Advent Series: *The Heart That Grew Three Sizes*, featuring meditations inspired by Dr. Seuss' *How the Grinch Stole Christmas.*

ST. JOHN UCC STAFF

Senior Pastor:
Rev. Henry E. "Hank" Fairman — hank@stjohnuccfreeport.org, mobile: 703-473-3534

Visitation Pastor:
Rev. Ted Michalsen — ted@stjohnuccfreeport.org

Director of Congregational Life:
Pam Wessel — pam@stjohnuccfreeport.org

Creative & Administrative Assistant:
Myles Halberstadt — myles@stjohnuccfreeport.org

Digital Media Assistants: Max Gibson, Elliot Fairman

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

ST JOHN
United Church of Christ
Freeport, Illinois

TWENTY-SIXTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST
COMMITMENT SUNDAY | THANKSGIVING SUNDAY
November 22, 2026 ● 10:00 am

WELCOMING MUSIC and ANNOUNCEMENTS

PRELUDE *Ritornello on "Nun Danket"* David Schelat

***CALL TO WORSHIP** Anita Bicksler

One: Welcome to a celebration of God's love for us!

**All: Even in times of hopeless fragility,
we welcome God's promising gifts.**

One: You've come to the right place.
This is a place where all of us
can seek God's presence and share our hearts.

**All: We are glad for a place where we can wrestle
with our faith, and seek a clear calling
in our mission.**

One: Don't fear! God is with us always,
like treasure in the clay jars of our lives.

**All: May God's gifts fill us to the brim,
and multiply our generous lives today! Amen.**

One: Come, sing praise, and worship our Giving God.

***HYMN** *Come Ye Thankful People Come*

WAR #721, v. 1,2,4 ST. GEORGE'S, WINDSOR

***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)

Almighty God,
amidst all the forces in our world claiming supremacy,
we know that you are sovereign.

We again pledge our hearts and lives to you alone.

Above all the causes clamoring for our allegiance and attention,
we know that your ways of righteousness and justice
are what really matter.

Beyond the limits of human heart and emotion,
we know that the love between and among us is more powerful
than hatred or fear.

We know that no trial, grief, or sin can separate us
from your presence.

We know that in you, in one another,
we have everything we need.

Help us to remember these truths and hold onto them,
even when we fear them slipping away.

Show us the way, in your powerful mercy and love.

In the name of Christ, Amen

RECEPTION OF NEW MEMBERS: an Affirmation of Baptism

Invitation & Sentences

Questions of the Candidates

Affirmation of Faith (on screen) UCC Statement of Faith

Address & Question about Participation

Welcome and Reception

One: Let us, the members of St. John United Church of Christ, express our welcome and affirm our mutual ministry in Christ.

All: We welcome you with joy in the common life of this church. We promise you our friendship and prayers as we share the hopes and labors of the church of Jesus Christ. By the power of the Holy Spirit may we continue to grow together in God's knowledge and love and be witnesses of our risen Savior.

Prayer & Greeting of Christian Love

GOD'S WORD IN SCRIPTURE

Matthew 25:31-46 *NRSV, Updated Edition*

A MOMENT FOR ALL AGES Anita Bicksler

Change for Change Mission Collection

This month's collection will support: ***FSD 145 Shoe Fund***
and their work to provide winter appropriate footwear to area youth

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 *Shoshone Love Song* arr. Roger Emerson

The Chancel Choir

GOD'S WORD IN SCRIPTURE

2 Corinthians 4:5-12 *NRSV, Updated Edition*

MESSAGE *Interpreting Spiritual Things* Rev. Hank Fairman

*HYMN *For the Fruit of All Creation* ARHYD Y NOS

WAR #723

PRESENTING OUR HEARTS +AND GIFTS TO GOD

Gathering the Gifts with Praise

Offering Song *Wendeyaho* arr. Hilton Kean Jones

The Chancel Choir

St. John United Church of Christ – Freeport, IL

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

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

CONSECRATING OUR GENEROSITY

A Word of Generosity: "

…There Your Heart Will Be"

Responding in Generosity *We Gather Together* KREMSER
(WAR #81, v. 1)

Sharing our Commitments

When invited, please come forward, and place your Faith Promise Card in the Cornucopia at the front of the church.

Responding in Generosity *We Gather Together* KREMSER
(WAR #81, v. 2)

Litany for Thanksgiving and Dedication

One: Let us give thanks to God, creator of all that can ever be, for all the good gifts so freely bestowed on us.

All: We come to praise God joyfully.
Let us sing praise to God with thanksgiving.

After each prayerful moment, please respond:

All: We thank you, God!

*HYMN *God Whose Giving Knows No Ending* NETTLETON

NCH #565

*BENEDICTION

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

WAR #590, v. 2

*POSTLUDE *Come, Ye Thankful People* arr. Alan Bullard

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.



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

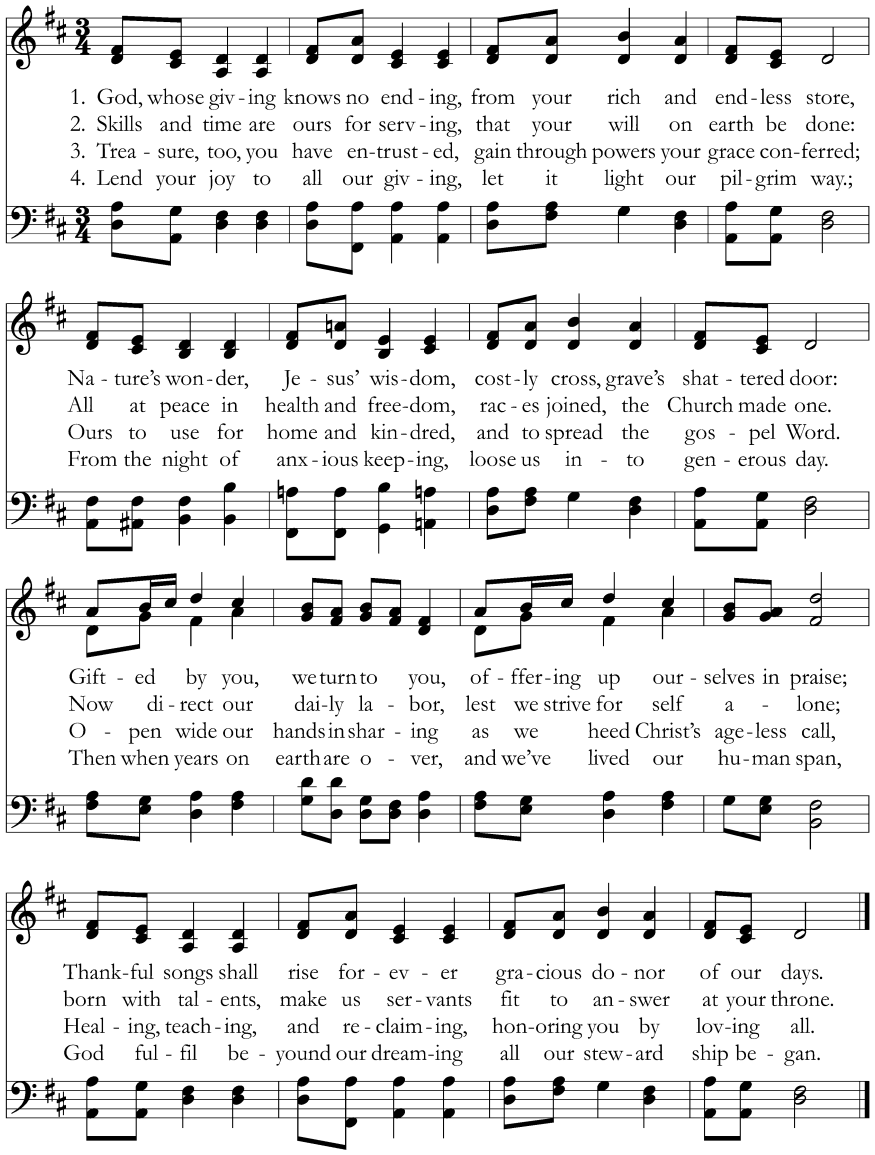
Contribute to the FSD 145 Shoe Fund and give the gift of warmth this season.
Donations will be taken at the concert.

ST JOHN UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST
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God Whose Giving Knows No Ending

NETTLETON (8.7.8.7 D)



Words by Robert Lansing Edwards, Music by Wyeth's Repository of Sacred Music, Part Second, 1813
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ANNOUNCEMENTS



COMING SOON TO ADULT FAITH FORMATION:

We don't know why the Grinch hated Christmas—
we just know he did…

This Advent and Christmas season, look at a familiar classic through the lens of faith and see how God is still speaking. Join the Adult Faith Formation class on Sundays at 9:00 AM in the Chapel Hearth Room to explore faith themes in the Christmas classic *How the Grinch Stole Christmas!* using *The Heart That Grew Three Sizes* from Matt Rawle.

We will be gathering at 8:30 AM prior to our regular morning session on the first week of the series (Sunday 11/29) for a viewing of Dr. Seuss' *How the Grinch Stole Christmas!*

11/29: When Everything is Wrong

12/6: When Christmas Isn't Christmas

12/13: When Light Shines

12/20: When Joy Is Our Song

Short books with supporting material to read between classes (suggested, but not required) will be available for purchase in the office for $10 until Sunday 12/6. The book is also available as an e-book; reach out to formation@stjohnuccfreeport.org. for details.

Contact the Church Office if you would like a book
but need financial assistance.

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.

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!



HOLIDAY PIES PICK UP WEDNESDAY, 11/25 12:00 PM

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.