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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Until the Dawn
CRY OUT



Bread of Tears | Hannah Garrity
Inspired by Psalm 80:1–7, 17–19
18"x18" Paper lace and graphite overlaid acrylic on paper

ST. JOHN UCC STAFF

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

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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

FIRST SUNDAY OF ADVENT: THE CANDLE OF HOPE

UNTIL THE DAWN: Cry Out

November 29, 2026 ● 10:00 am

WELCOMING MUSIC and ANNOUNCEMENTS

PRELUDE — *Kum By Yah* — Spiritual; arr. C. Cole
Carl & Dianna Cole

*CALL TO WORSHIP

One: In God's house,
All: we are free to wear our hearts on our sleeves.
One: In God's house,
All: we may come exactly as we are.
One: In God's house,
All: we dare to hope. We dream new dreams. We cry out. We call upon God.
One: In God's house,
All: all are welcome and all are heard.
One: So come and worship.
All: God is here. God is listening. God is still speaking.
One: Let us worship our with us God.

*HYMN — *O Come, O Come, Emmanuel* — VENI EMMANUEL
WAR #154

*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

Lighting of Advent Candles

One: When the nights are long
and the roads are hard,

All: we turn our eyes to the stars.

One: When the work is demanding
and injustice unending,

All: we stand together, arm in arm.

One: When fear looms large
and grief weighs heavy,

All: we cry out to God without holding back.

One: And when the dawn of tomorrow
feels far away,

**All: we gather together to light the candle
of hope.**

The Candle of Hope is lit.

One: Like the stars above, may this light shine bright.

All: May it guide our path. May it inspire deeper hope.

One: Until God's promised day, may it be so. Amen.

Response *One Candle is Lit* CRADLE SONG
CH #128, v. 1

GOD'S WORD IN SCRIPTURE

Isaiah 64:1-9 *NRSV, Updated Edition*

A MOMENT FOR ALL AGES

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 *Come Thou Fount of Every Blessing* R. Robinson

Carl & Dianna Cole arr. C. Cole

GOD'S WORD IN SCRIPTURE

Mark 13:24-37 *NRSV, Updated Edition*

MESSAGE *Longing for Light* Rev. Hank Fairman

*HYMN *Restore Us, God* ST. LOUIS

Words: Anna Stickland, © 2026

PRESENTING OUR HEARTS +AND GIFTS TO GOD

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 *Come Thou Fount of Every Blessing* atr. Witt
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 *Hark how the Heralds Now Proclaim* TRURO

Words: Hannah C. Brown, © 2026

*BENEDICTION

*RESPONSE *While We are Waiting, Come* WAITING

GTG #92, v. 1

*POSTLUDE *Come Thou Fount of Every Blessing (Reprise)* R. Robinson

Carl and Dianna Cole arr. C. Cole

ANNOUNCEMENTS



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.

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.*



HANGING OF THE GREENS TODAY, FOLLOWING WORSHIP



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

Need a little Christmas crunch? Come join with friends and make our traditional peanut brittle on Saturday, 12/5, starting at 8:30am.

If you've always loved eating or gifting our "Almost" world-famous peanut brittle and are curious how it's made, we have just the deal for you!

No prior experience is required –It's easy!
Measure ingredients, Stir a pot! You will do great!

We will make as many batches as time allows.



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

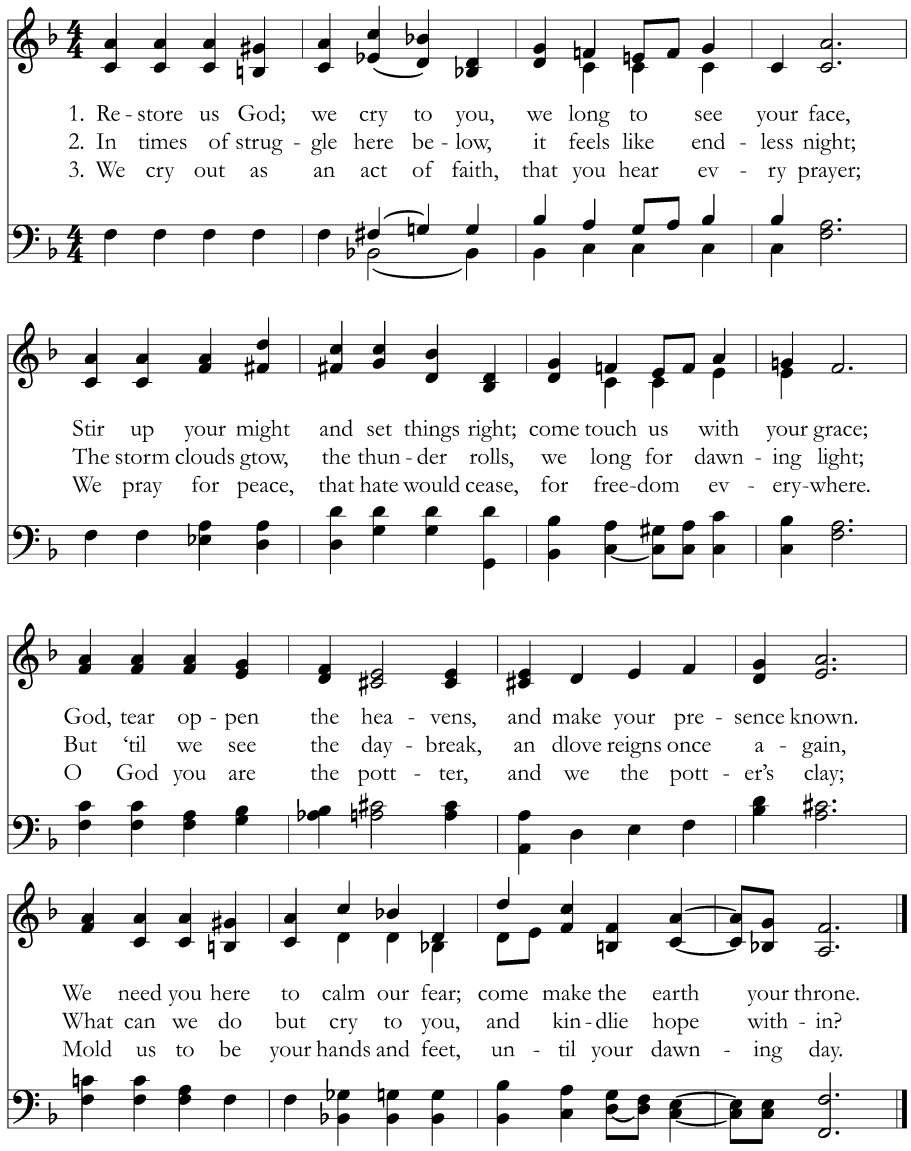
St John United Church of Christ, Freeport, Illinois

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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Restore Us, God

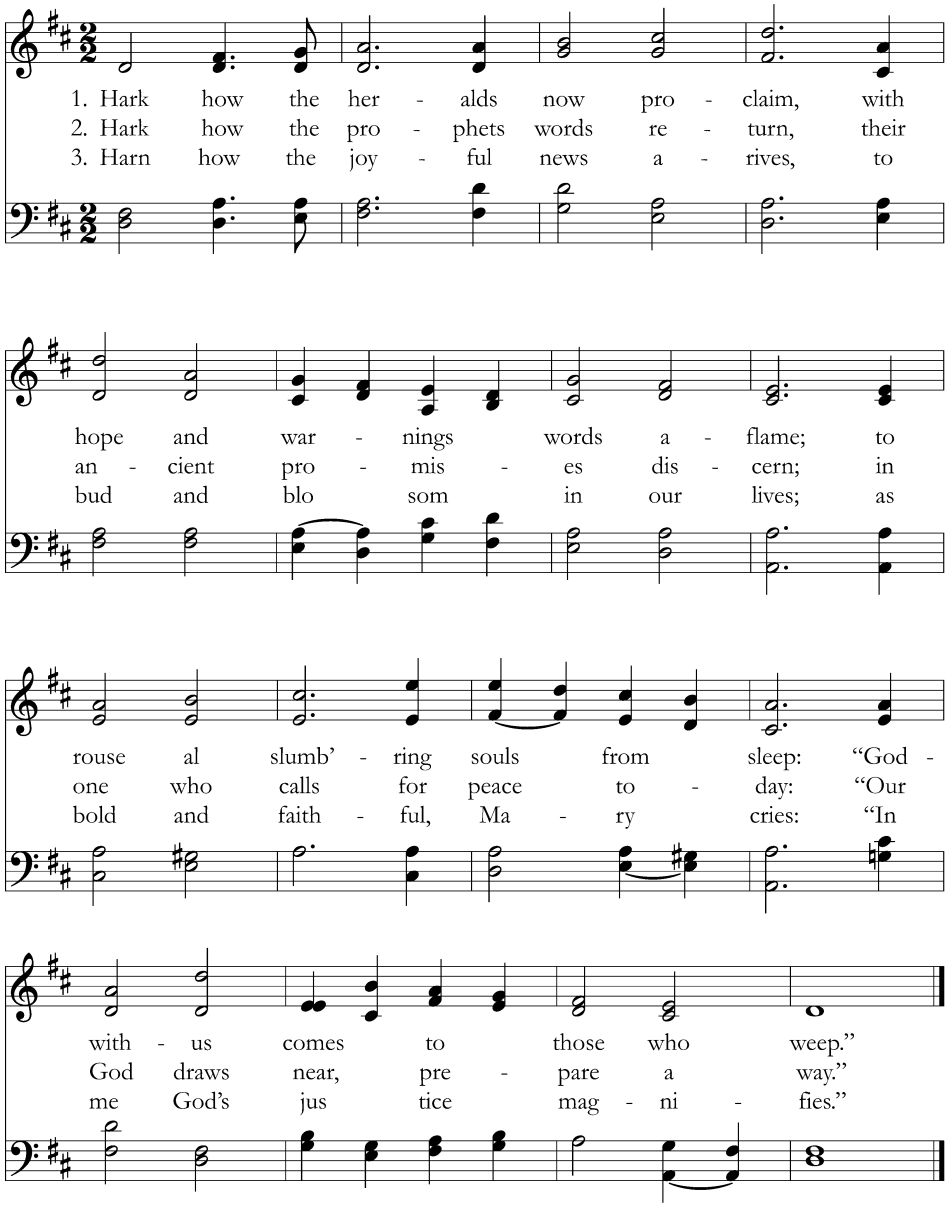
ST. LOUIS (8.6.8.6 D)



Words by Anna Strickland, Commissioned by A Sanctified Art, Music by Phillips Brooks
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Hark How the Heralds

TRURO (8.8.8.8), vv 1-3



Words by Hannah C. Brown, Music by Anonymous (1778)
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ANNOUNCEMENTS

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 BAKE SALE: SUNDAY 12/6 AFTER SERVICE

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.