

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](https://www.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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Far More Abundantly
Lauren Wright Pittman

11"x14" Hand-carved block printed with oil-based ink on paper with gold leaf detail

ST. JOHN UCC STAFF

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THIRD SUNDAY IN LENT

the good news is...together, the impossible is possible

March 8, 2026 • 10:00 am

WELCOMING MUSIC and ANNOUNCEMENTS

PRELUDE *Come to Us, Creative Spirit* Richard Proulx
arr. Marilyn Biery

*CALL TO WORSHIP Shawn Killingbeck

One: If you need good news,
All: settle into this space.
We have good news to share.

One: If you need a word of hope,
All: then trust us when we say,
"there is hope enough to go around."

One: If you need a glimmer of joy,
All: then you're in luck!
We have resilient joy abounding.

One: If you need to feel God's presence in your midst,
All: then know that this is God's house.

One: This is the good news of the gospel.
All: God is here. Love is real. Joy is on the move.
Let us worship our with-us God!

*HYMN *Guide Me, O My Great Redeemer* CWM RHONDDA
NCH #18

*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

Congregational Prayer (speaking together)

Holy God,
with you the impossible is possible.

5,000 can be fed.
The blind can see.
The hopeless can find hope.

With you the impossible is possible,
but we are quick to forget that.

We look at our hurting world
and tell ourselves that nothing can be done.
We forget that you empowered
the disciples to feed the crowd.
We forget that you are always with us.

Forgive our small-minded ways.
Forgive us for doubting
that change could ever come.
But even more so,
forgive us when we refuse to be a part of it.

With hope for a better tomorrow we pray. Amen.

Words of Affirmation

One: Remember this:
no matter how many mistakes the disciples made,

**All: Jesus still washed their feet.
Jesus still fed them.
Jesus still called them beloved.**

One: The same is true for you and me,
so hear and believe this good news:

**All: Today is a new day, and once again,
we belong to God.
We are blessed. We are called. We are not alone.
What good, *good* news. Amen!**

GOD'S WORD IN SCRIPTURE

Mark 6:32-44

NRSV, Updated Edition

FOR THE CHILD IN ALL OF US

Jan Kunkle

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

Improbable

Britt Kusserow; arr. R. Hall

Britney Kieselhorst and Randy Cook

GOD'S WORD IN SCRIPTURE

Ephesians 3:20-21

NRSV, Updated Edition

MESSAGE

Five Thousand Fish Sandwiches

Rev. Hank Fairman

*HYMN

Human Minds Just Can't Imagine

AUSTRIAN HYMN

Words: Anna Strickland, © 2025, *A Sanctified Art*

PRESENTING OUR HEARTS AND GIFTS TO GOD

Gathering the Gifts with Praise

One: This is some good news:
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

Bread to Share

Marty Haugen

Doxology (CH #48 lyrics)

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

Where is Bread?

PROMISE

Words: C. W. Gillette, © 1986; Tune: N. Sleeth, © 1986

*BENEDICTION

*RESPONSE

From Gray Until Golden

ST. DENIO

*POSTLUDE

We All Are One in Mission

arr. Mark Sedio

THE SEASON OF LENT AT ST. JOHN UCC



Sundays in Lent

3/8 Third Week of Lent
The good news is... together, the impossible is possible

3/15 Fourth Week of Lent
The good news is... protection and care for the vulnerable

3/22 Fifth Week of Lent
The good news is... rooted in justice, mercy, and faithfulness

3/29 Palm / Passion Sunday
The good news is... inspiring us to act



**COME AWAY AND GO NORTH:
A Racial Justice Immersion Experience**

The Mission & Outreach Team invites you to enjoy a day trip to Milton, WI (outside of Janesville) to visit Wisconsin's only certified Underground Railroad site at the Milton House Museum and grounds. Tours last about an hour or so and this is a family-friendly event. The grounds are handicapped accessible, except for the tunnel passageway.

You can relive the experience of what it was like for African American slaves making their way out of slavery to freedom using the Underground Railroad and learn about some historical figures.

The trip will take place in June. We need your help selecting the best day for us to go.

Follow this link to our online survey form.



<https://bit.ly/SJUCCMiltonHouseTrip>

Then, we can set the actual tour date and gather payment for the tour tickets as we need to pre-register our group tour with the museum.

Depending upon which day works for most people, we can either have dinner in Janesville after a tour on a Saturday, or bring a sandwich to eat after worship on a Sunday before departure to WI for the tour. Travel time is about an hour and a half. Departure would be from the church parking lot.

Please join in this immersive learning experience with us!

Stay tuned for further updates.

THE SEASON OF LENT AT ST. JOHN UCC



**ADULT FAITH FORMATION SERIES
Sundays in Lent, 9:00 am**

On Sundays during Education Hour, gather with Christina Fairman and Liz Reyes in weekly sessions, sharing Kate Bowler's *Bless the Lent We Actually Have*. Each week, we will reflect together on sacred scripture and personal reflections. Because when we do the hard part, something else happens: we get to the good part:

3/8 ***Blessed Are Those Who Suffer***
Romans 5:1-11

3/15 ***Blessed Are the Lonely***
Psalm 23



**LENTEN SUPPER AND DISCUSSION SERIES
Wednesdays in Lent, 2/25-3/25
6:00 pm meal / 6:30-8:00 pm program**

On Wednesdays, gather for supper at 6:00 pm, and continue or join up at 6:30 with Pastor Hank for a wider view of our Lenten focus, A Sanctified Art's *Tell me something good: Grounded in the good news this Lent*.

Each week, we'll talk through the parallels, following along with the stories in Sunday's worship of the *Narrative Lectionary*:

3/11 ***The good news is...together, the impossible is possible***
Mark 6:32-44: *The feeding of the five thousand*

3/18 ***The good news is...protection and care for the vulnerable***
Matthew 19:13-15: Jesus blesses the children

The accompanying study guides for both the Sunday and Wednesday series are available in the Narthex. These can also be used for your personal Lenten devotions!

MARCH HYMN **MADNESS SURVEY**

a contest of musical proportions!

Thank you all for submitting your favorite hymns! The “Hymn Playoff Brackets” are up on the Narthex Bulletin Board. Each week, you will get a chance to vote for your favorite hymn of a set of paired hymns.

It's up to your votes! Remember to cast a ballot each week!



FELLOWSHIP POTLUCK LUNCH **3/15 After Worship**

Come and share a bit o' the Blarney at our St. Patrick's Day potluck meal. Share your best shamrock-inspired hot or cold dish with friends and family after worship. Table service and beverage will be provided.

Please sign up in the Narthex and let us know you'll be coming!



CLIMATE CHANGE SPEAKER SERIES

3/18, 6:30 PM

Mark your calendars! The Green Team invites you to attend the third lecture in the "Cost of Living with Climate Change" series on Wednesday, 3/18, 6:30 at Freeport Public Library. Featured speaker is Illinois State Climatologist Dr. Trent Ford, whose topic will be "Climate Change Impacts in Illinois: From Farms to Forests". Dr. Ford has been with the Prairie Research Institute at U of I since 2019 and is an expert in climate change and its interactions and impacts, especially as they relate to water. Refreshments will be provided.



FREEPORT BUNNY TRAIL: 4/4, 11:00 am - 1:00 pm

The Care & Community Team needs your help! The Freeport Park District is putting on their annual Bunny Trail on 4/4 from 11:00 am-1:00 pm at Krape Park. We need volunteers to help distribute candy and St. John UCC flyers to all participants. We also need candy donations to serve to the more than 600 youth that attend annually.

All donations can be brought to the church office. Let Pam Wessel know if you're able to assist and Hippy Hop over to Krape Park for some family fun! Everybunny is welcome!



EASTER LILIES

In celebration of Easter we will again enhance and beautify our sanctuary with lilies on Easter morning. The cost for a lily is \$20. If you wish to order a lily through the church, please turn in the completed form below with your payment by 3/22.

We also encourage you to bring in your own flowers or have them delivered before noon on Good Friday, 4/3. (Please mark them with your name.) You will also need to fill out the form below and turn it in by 3/22 if you would like your plant to be recognized in the bulletin with a dedication.

You can pick up your flower after the service on Easter Sunday.

Easter Lily Quantity: _____ x \$20.00 = **Total:** \$ _____

Enclosed is: \$ _____

_____ **I/We will bring flowers and deliver them before noon on Good Friday.**

IN MEMORY OF:

IN HONOR OF:

IN CELEBRATION OF:

PRESENTED BY:

Please check one of the following for after Easter:

Please take my lilies to a homebound member or friend. _____

I will pick up the flower after Easter services. _____