

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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Faith Formation for All Ages

Our regular faith formation classes for youth take place during the worship hour at 10:00, following the *For the Child in All of Us*.

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 welcomes high school youth and adults of all ages to gather in the Chapel Hearth Room from 9:00-9:45, exploring different topics and formats weekly.

In April and May we will learn how to be welcoming, supportive, inclusive, and engaged in the work of mental health care and be present in the lives of those who are seeking treatment.

4/12 Introduction to Mental Health:
Eradicating the Stigma

4/19 Mental Health in Freeport:
What mental health services exist in our community

ST. JOHN UCC STAFF

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SECOND SUNDAY OF EASTER / HOLY HUMOR SUNDAY

April 12, 2026 • 10:00 am

WELCOMING MUSIC and ANNOUNCEMENTS

PRELUDE *Awake, My Heart, with Gladness* arr. K. T. Kosche

*CALL TO WORSHIP Lisa Schubert

One Knock, knock!

All: Who's there?

One: Orange.

All: Orange who?

One: Orange you glad you came to church today?

**All: In the groans, and in the chuckles, and in the guffaws,
God is with us in the laughter.**

One: Our joy is as present as God's life-bringing breath:

**All: In the wiggles and giggles of the children,
in the not-so-whispers of the youth,
in the smiles and deep laughs of the adults.**

One: Let our praise break forth
in the most unlikely places and in silly ways.

**All: Let our celebration fill our hearts and in our songs.
Let the laughter be deep, for we are God's people.**

*HYMN *God of Grace and God of Laughter* NETTLETON
Words: Carl P. Daw © 1989, Hope Publishing Company

*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)

God, you smile, this much we know
for you created laughter so that we might join in the enjoyment
of the creative energy that surrounds us.

We give thanks for those wonderful color schemes
of bird, butterfly, flower, and human skin.

We celebrate the shapes and expressions
on large elephants, tiny insects, and each person we meet.

We don't doubt it: these weren't created by a boring God.
Each was drawn and planned by you, laughing God,
showing your joy in creating. And that's a comforting thought!

Fill us with Easter's laughter;
fill us with your healing joy;
fill us with the love poured into us
in our following the way of Christ.

Creator God, we thank you for your creation,
a world full of laughter, full of Spirit, full of love. Amen.

GOD'S WORD IN SCRIPTURE

Acts 2:14a, 22-32

NRSV, Updated Edition

FOR THE CHILD IN ALL OF US

Anita Bicksler

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

Was It a Morning Like This

Jim Croegaert

Britney Kieselhorst and Randy Cook

GOD'S WORD IN SCRIPTURE

John 20:19-31

NRSV, Updated Edition

MESSAGE

No Joke.

Rev. Hank Fairman

*HYMN

Earth is Full of Wit and Wisdom

HOLY MANNA

Words: Adam M.L. Tice © 2009, GIA Publications

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.

Offering Song *O Sons and Daughters, Let Us Sing*

arr. Michael Burkhardt

Doxology (CH #48 lyrics, on screen)

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

Sing a Happy Alleluia

HYMN TO JOY

Words: Shirley Erena Murray, © 1992 Hope Publishing

*BENEDICTION

St. John United Church of Christ – Freeport, IL

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

*RESPONSE

That Easter Day with Joy Was Bright

PUER NOBIS

WAR #299, v. 4

*POSTLUDE

Forth in the Peace of Christ We Go

Rosen / Quinn

ANNOUNCEMENTS



2026 FREEPORT PRIDE PLANNING MEETING

Today, Following Worship

There will be a meeting today after worship to start the planning process for the 2026 Freeport Pride Picnic on 6/13. Anyone who would like to join the planning team is welcome to attend. If you're interested in getting involved but can't make it to the meeting, please email Liz at lizzybeth123@gmail.com.



PEACE POLE PROJECT INSTALLATION DAY

& SPRING CLEAN UP DAY

SATURDAY, 4/18, 8:30 AM

Join the Mission & Outreach Team with the Peace Pole Project on Saturday, 4/18 at 8:30 am. The Peace Pole will be installed on the Park Boulevard front lawn of the church near the flagpole. Its location will be registered with The Peace Pole Project, sharing our commitment to building a more just and peaceful world in our time.

On the same day, the Property Management Team will work on annual spring maintenance around the church campus. Please consider joining them to help beautify our space for spring.

For both activities, please dress appropriately for the weather and be prepared to get a little dirty.

*Please sign up in the Narthex if you are available to assist
with the Peace Pole Installation so we can plan accordingly.*



SAFE CONDUCT TRAINING SUNDAY, 5/3, 11:30-2:30 PM

Church members who work with children, youth, or vulnerable adults and church leadership should attend a Safe Church/Safe Conduct Training every three years to review our policies for protecting people in our care. Lunch is provided.

Please RSVP for the training by Sunday, 4/19 and include special dietary restrictions or food allergies, and accessibility needs to:

safechurch@stjohnuccfreeport.org



SPRING MAY BASKETS: DONATIONS NEEDED

The Wellness Ministry Team will be assembling Spring May Baskets for our aging in place, senior living, and rehabilitation care community members.

If you would like to donate a few items, please place them into the basket in the narthex. Some suggestions might be candies, crackers, cookies, ChapStick, Kleenex, body wash, window clings, or other small gifts (we have lots of puzzle books and lotions).

Please drop off your donation no later than Monday, 5/3. Thank you for spreading some sunshine and brightening someone's day!

God of Grace and God of Laughter

NETTLETON (8.7.8.7 D)

1. God of grace and God of laugh-ter, sing - ing worlds from nought to be—
 2. When our lives are torn by sad-ness heal our wounds with tune - ful balm;
 3. Turn our sigh - ing in - to sing - ing, music born of hope re - stored:

sun and stas and all there-af - ter, joined in cos - mic har - mo - ny:
 when all seems dis - cord-and mad-ness, help us find a meas-ured calm.
 set our souls and voic - es ring - ing, tune our hearts in true a - ccord:

give us songs of joy and won - der, mu - sic mak - ing hearts re-joyce;
 Stead - y us with mu - sic's an - chor when the storms of life in - crease
 till we form a migh - y chor - us, join - ing an - gel - choirs a - bove,

let our prais - es swell like thun - der echo - ing our Mak - er's voice.
 in the midst of hurt and ran - cor, make us in - stru - ments of peace.
 with all those who went be - fore us, in e - ter - nal hymns of love.

Earth is Full of Wit and Wisdom

HOLY MANNA (8.7.8.7 D)

1. Earth is full of wit and wis - dom sound-ing God de - light-ed laugh.
 2. Earth is full of wit and wis - dom: pen-guin, plat - y - pus and snail,

From the ti - ny ro - ly - po - ly to the tree-top - tall gir -affe,
 cac - tus, sea-slug, oak and al - gae, from the mic-robe to the whale.

all cre - a - tion sings in won-der; ev - en rocks and trees re - joiice
 In this great and strave cre - a - tion, with a breag God gives us birth;

as they join the ring-ing cho - rus: ech-oes of our Mak-er's voice.
 born of soil to live as stew ards, called to love and serve the earth.

Sing a Happy Alleluia

HYMN TO JOY (8.7.8.7 D)

1. Sing a hap - py Al - le - lu - ia, sing it out with heart and style-
 2. We're the rpoog of God's good hu-mor, we're the twin - kle in God's eye,
 3. Sa - rah laughed at God's good tim-ing, Ma - ry sand and Da - vid danced,
 4. Ev' - ry day sing Al - le - lu - ia! We are loved, though so ab - surd,

we're the ech - o of God's laugh-ter we're the im - age of God's smile.
 Made to shine, re - flect the glo - ry, giv - en light and space to fly.
 Je - sus smiled and hugged the chil-dren, so is life for us en-hanced.
 hu - man, fool - ish, chos - en pe - ple, God still takes us at our word!

Al - le - lu - ia, all cre - a - tion al - le - lu - ia, ev' - ry one!

Al - le - lu - ia, all cre - a - tion, al - le - lu - ia, ev' - ry one!