

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.

4/19 Mental Health in Freeport *with Hugh Knapp:*
What mental health services exist in our community

4/26 Mental Health First Aid
Ways to support someone facing a mental health challenge

ST. JOHN UCC STAFF

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Church Musician: Randy Cook

Pastor Emeritus: Rev. Dr. Donnley Dutcher

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THIRD SUNDAY OF EASTER / EARTH DAY

April 19, 2026 • 10:00 am

WELCOMING MUSIC and ANNOUNCEMENTS

PRELUDE *God of the Sparrow* arr. J. Wayne Kerr

*CALL TO WORSHIP Diane Jochum

One: Come—soil, seed, and rain.
None will hunger in a garden where workers share the harvest, for where two or more are gathered in God's name.

All: **There is our God.**

One: Come—algae, fish, and streams.
None will thirst where mindful stewards protect our waters, for where two or more are gathered in God's name.

All: **There is our God.**

One: Come—people from every place on life's journey.
None will fall ill where the faithful to Christ's Way protect one another from toxic burdens, for where two or more are gathered in God's name.

All: **There is our God.**

One: Come, one and all, and worship our Earth-Creating God.

*HYMN *Genesis of Phytoplankton* BEECHER
Words: Hannah C. Brown © 2022, GIA Publications

*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)

Risen and redeeming God, you came into this world to live among us.

We thank you for teaching us what it means to live in right relationship with all Creation. Following in Christ's ways have taught us to love. We praise you for the gift of this community, growing together in your love.

In all your Creation you have revealed to us the fragile interdependence of life. We confess, at times, we have rebelled against you with ideas of self-sufficiency and extreme individualism. We reap without sowing and do harm without knowing.

Open our eyes and hearts to your Creation and all who labor to offer us daily with food, water, energy, and sanitation. Help us to build a just, sustainable community of equitable sharing, solidarity, and gratitude.

We are bound together with a gift of unity into one Body of Christ. We are bound together with our Earth home. May the power of your love ever be constant with us, renewing our families, our schools, our workplaces, our churches, our neighborhoods, and all Creation. Amen.

GOD'S WORD IN SCRIPTURE

Psalm 8

MSG

FOR THE CHILD IN ALL OF US

Jan Kunkle

Change for Change Mission Collection

This month's collection will support:
Summer Camp Scholarships for children and youth attending Outdoor Ministries Programs in the Illinois Conference UCC

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

How Great Thou Art
The Chancel Choir

Stuart K. Hine

GOD'S WORD IN SCRIPTURE

Luke 24:13-35

NRSV, Updated Edition

MESSAGE

Branching Out

Rev. Hank Fairman

*HYMN

O God, You Made the Trees

TERRA BEATA

Words: Carolyn Winfrey Gillette, © 2021

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 *For the Beauty of the Earth* Folliott S. Pierpoint
The Chancel Choir

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, true, 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

For All Things Worth Praising

PUER NOBIS

Words: David Bjornlin, © 2022

*BENEDICTION

*RESPONSE

That Easter Day with Joy Was Bright

PUER NOBIS

WAR #299, v. 4

*POSTLUDE

All Things Bright and Beautiful

arr. Thomas H. Jones

ANNOUNCEMENTS



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.

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

O God, You Made The Trees

TERRA BEATA (6.6.8.6 D)

1. O God, you made the trees! The oak and Doug - las fir,
2. You made each liv - ing thing to give and to re - ceive.
3. How of - ten we for - get the for - ests and their worth!
4. O God you made the trees— the ap - ple and the pine.

the ma - ple, beech, and sweet-gum reach their bran - ches hea - ven - ward.
As roots grow down in - to the ground, they twist and in - ter - leave.
We lay ce - ment on pla - ces meant to be the lungs of earth.
You made them all and still you call, "Take care of what was mine!"

The will - ow, grow - ing wide, the red-wood, tall, and strong,
a can - o - py of green re - stores and cools the air.
For pro - fit and for gain, we build and build some more;
May we re - ceive your gift and give our-selves a - new

and ce - dar trees! Yes, all of these sing out cre - a - tion's song.
Great bran - ches shade the earth you made, and dance— as if in prayer.
We cut down woods in neigh - bor - hoods of peo - ple who are poor.
to do our best, and we've been blessed, to care for trees for you.

Words by Carolyn Winfrey Gillette, Music by Franklin L. Sheppard
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Genesis of Phytoplankton

BEECHER (8.7.8.7 D)

1. Gen - e - sis of phy-to plan-ton, fid - dle fern and gink - o tree,
2. Sculp-tor form-ing clay and feld-spar, lime-stone cave and moun-tain slate,
3. Weav-er craft-ing e - co sys-tems, arc - tic tun-dra, prai - rie sedge,
4. Love com-post-ing all cre - a - tion in our queer, com - plex ar - ray,

brist - le-mouth and long-horn bee - tle, bub-ble snail and ma - son bee;
des - ert sands and ti - dal wet-lands, for - est floor and seiz-mic plate;
broad-leave shade and sun - lit can - yon, deep-est sea and wa - ter's edge;
plac - ing at the heart of na - ture var - i - a - tion, change and play;

Source of end-less al - ter a - tion, bas - al flow'r and finch-es' beek,
Pow - er wield-ing wing and wa - ter, breeze and cur - rent, mist and squall:
Ax - si spin - ning earth and sea - sons, cyc - les of pre - cise de - sign:
Dream-er teach - ing plant and crea - ture how to har - mo - nize in key:

we meet you in ev' ry spec - ies, each e - volv - ing and u - nique.
we meet you in cease-less mo - tion, as you move and mold us all.
we meet you in place and pat - tern, as your el - e - ments com - bine.
we meet you as one of man - y in your glor - ious sym - pho - ny.

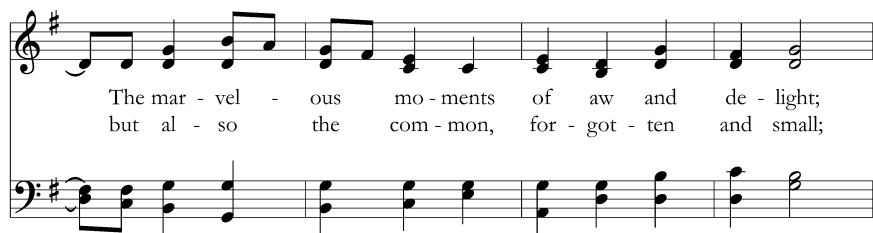
Words by Hannah C. Brown, Music by John Zundel
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For All Things Worth Praising

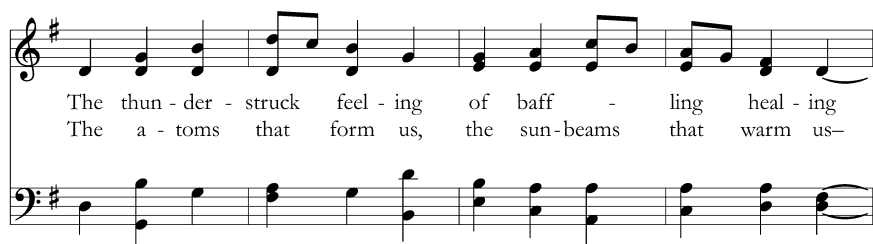
THE ASH GROVE (12.11.12.11 D)



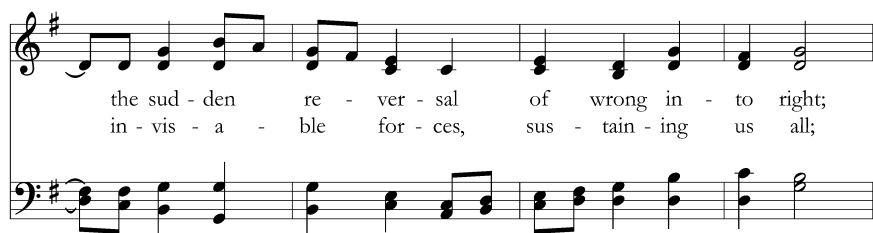
1. For all things worth prai - sing - the vast and a - maz - ing -
2. For all things worth prai - sing - the vast and a - maz - ing -



The mar - vel - ous mo - ments of aw and de - light;
but al - so the com - mon, for - got - ten and small;



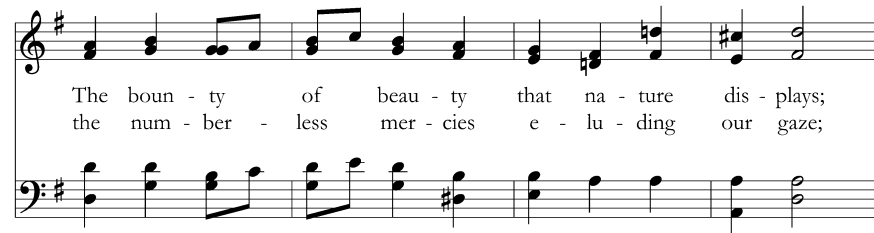
The thun - der - struck feel - ing of baff - ling heal - ing
The a - toms that form us, the sun - beams that warm us -



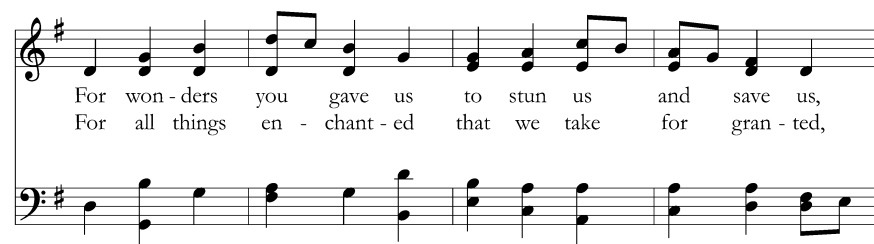
the sud - den re - ver - sal of wrong in - to right;
in - vis - a - ble for - ces, sus - tain - ing us all;



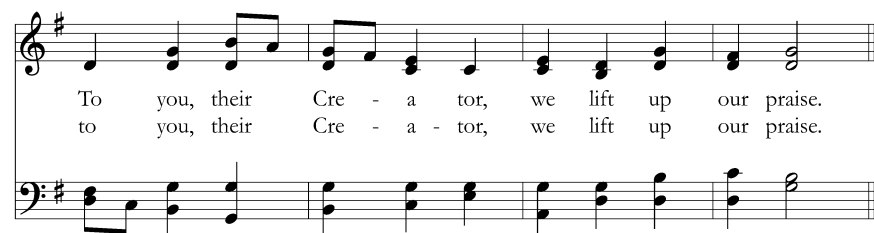
The span of cre - a tion, that sparks in - spir - a tion;
The in tri - cate fea - tures of lit - tle - est crea - tures;



The boun - ty of beau - ty that na - ture dis - plays;
the num - ber - less mer - cies e - lu - ding our gaze;



For won - ders you gave us to stun us and save us,
For all things en - chant - ed that we take for gran - ted,



To you, their Cre - a tor, we lift up our praise.
to you, their Cre - a - tor, we lift up our praise.