

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 *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.

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

5/3 Family Systems
Families significantly impact a person's healing and recovery

ST. JOHN UCC STAFF

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Church Musician: Randy Cook

Pastor Emeritus: Rev. Dr. Donnley Dutcher

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FOURTH SUNDAY OF EASTER

April 26, 2026 • 10:00 am

WELCOMING MUSIC and ANNOUNCEMENTS

PRELUDE *I Have Decided to Follow Jesus* Simon Marak
Carl & Dianna Cole arr. C. Cole

*CALL TO WORSHIP Jill Collin

One: Goodness and Mercy are following us.
They are there in the darkest valley,

All: and at the banquet table.

One: We see them toiling in the hard work of life,

All: and gentle at the moments of ease.

One: They are present with us

All: for worship, right now.

One: During all of our earthly days
and while we dwell in the house of the Lord

All: goodness and mercy shall follow us.

*HYMN *God is Here* ABBOT'S LEIGH
WAR #1

*SHARING THE PEACE OF CHRIST

CELEBRATION OF BIRTHDAYS AND GIFTS

* 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)

Loving Shepherd,
you are keeping watch over our whole life. You lead us to greener pasture and guide us through the shadows.

You prepare a table which has leaves to stretch it and chairs aplenty. Anyone who wishes to be present and share the good things you place before us all is welcome.

With your voice you call each of us by name. In your eyes every single one of your sheep is precious. Those who are lost, those who are prone to wandering off, and those who remain close to your staff, each of them is loved.

Loving Shepherd, in your flock we are known by name, provided and cared for, we have all that we need for life.
Amen.

GOD'S WORD IN SCRIPTURE

Psalm 23 *NRSV, Updated Edition*

FOR THE CHILD IN ALL OF US

Tim Ebbers

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

Lead Me, Guide Me Doris Akers; arr. C. Cole

GOD'S WORD IN SCRIPTURE

John 10:1-10 *NRSV, Updated Edition*

MESSAGE

The Good Shepherd Rev. Ted Michalsen

*HYMN *I Lift My Eyes to the Quiet Hills*
WAR #488

DAVOS

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 *Where He Leads Me, I Will Follow* E.W. Blandly
arr. C. Cole

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 *Savior, Like a Shepherd Lead Us* BRADBURY
WAR #440

*BENEDICTION

*RESPONSE *That Easter Day with Joy Was Bright* PUER NOBIS
WAR #299, v. 4

*POSTLUDE *Where He Leads Me (reprise)* Blandly/arr. C. Cole

St. John United Church of Christ – Freeport, IL

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

ANNOUNCEMENTS



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!



2026 FREEPORT PRIDE PLANNING MEETING

Today, Following Worship

There will be a meeting today after worship to discuss the 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.



CLIMATE CHANGE SPEAKER SERIES

5/6, 6:30 PM

There is just one more opportunity to learn about the cost of living with climate change. The fifth and final lecture is scheduled for Wednesday, 5/6 at 6:30 pm at the Freeport Public Library. The featured speaker will be Dr. Jessica Rudnick, State Climate Resilience Specialist with the U of I Extension. She will be joined by Randi Kohlbauer, Environmental, Health & Safety, and Operations Coordinator for the City of Freeport, and Rob Boyer, Freeport City Manager. Refreshments will be provided.



**DAY TRIP TO THE MILTON HOUSE
UNDERGROUND RAILROAD MUSEUM
6/20, 8:00 am Departure**

The Mission & Outreach Committee invites you to escape and go North for a family friendly historically educational time at the only certified Underground Railroad site in WI. Come learn about historical figures and experience what former African American slaves encountered, escaping slavery, on their travels north to freedom. Feel free to invite friends. Good fellowship time follows over lunch and our travels together.

Date: Saturday, June 20, 2026

Time: Leave church parking lot at 8:00 a.m. (carpooling)

What: One hour tour of the museum and grounds begins at 10:30 a.m.

Lunch: In Janesville after the museum tour before heading home (location with details TBD. Each person will cover their own lunch expenses at the restaurant.)

Tour Ticket Prices:

Adults 18-61	\$15 ea
Senior Adults 62+	\$10 ea
Youth 6-17	\$10 ea
Child 5 & under	Free
Military Vets	Free

Please sign up for which tickets and how many you need from the categories above, listed on the sign-up sheet on the bulletin board by 5/17. Make checks payable to St. John UCC with Milton House Trip on the memo line. Electronic payments can be made via the church donation portal with notation for the Milton House Trip included.