

June 2026

*A Regular Sharing of our Mission and Ministry*



## MILTON HOUSE TRIP

**Saturday, 6/20 - Depart 8:00 am**

A quick reminder about the upcoming visit to the Underground Railroad Museum for those who signed up for the trip. *See Diane Jochum with any questions.*



## From 1776 to the Seventh Inning Stretch: Hitting a Home Run for St. John UCC Summer FUNd Raisers & Community Events

Flip over to the back's *One More Thought* column, and check inside for an info sheet on the kick-off event: A trip to Beloit for a Sunday game with the Sky Carp!

## 100TH BIRTHDAY OPEN HOUSE FOR JEAN KOCH

**Saturday, 6/27, 1-4PM**

Please come and shower Jean Koch with cards in the Fellowship Hall, at St. John UCC, as her family and friends celebrates her 100th birthday. If you are unable to attend, please send a card to:

Jean Koch  
1234 S Park Blvd. #110,  
Freeport IL 61032

## FREEPORT PRIDE

**FREEPORT PRIDE WEEKEND**

**PRIDE Picnic, 6/13 11:00—3:00pm**

Celebrate LGBTQ+ Pride in Freeport at an all-ages community picnic sponsored by St. John UCC and community partners. This summer, the event will again take place on St. John UCC Park Blvd. lawn.

. There will be food, vendors, games, crafts, and more. Everyone is invited, so come join us, and bring your family and friends.

We are also looking for volunteers to help with the event. We need volunteers to help set-up in the morning, and others to help take down after the event. During the picnic we need to fill two shifts (11 am-1 pm and 1-3pm) of two volunteers to help:

- Serve food
- Lead games
- Create crafts

If you would like to help before, during, or after the event please email Liz at [lizzybeth123@gmail.com](mailto:lizzybeth123@gmail.com).

**PRIDE Worship, 6/14**

Join in worship on Pride Sunday, honoring the LGBTQ+ and supporting community, and our congregation's continuing ONA commitment.



**Find Our  
Extravagant  
Welcome**

Come together in the Sanctuary or share in our streaming Online Worship every Sunday, 10:00 am:  
**[facebook.com/stjohnuccfreeport/live](https://facebook.com/stjohnuccfreeport/live)**

*Wherever you are on life's journey, worship as one community every Sunday*

# A MONTH AT A GLANCE

## What's going on at church in June?

It's a pretty common question heard in the church office: *What meetings are going on this month?* The St. John UCC campus is busy six days and nights a week (and often there's something on the seventh day, too!) See what's happening this month, and discover a new way to share your time, talents and treasures. Help us be the church God is calling us to be in Freeport and beyond!

### Weekly Church & Community Activities

**Sunday:** Worship, Fellowship, & Faith Formation

10:00 am Worship

11:00 am Fellowship Hour

**Monday:** 5:15 pm Hippy Mat Yoga

6:30 pm Hippy Chair Yoga

6:30 pm Girl Scouts Troop #832

7:00 pm Freeport Choral Society

**Thursday:** Music Ministry

6:30 pm Bell Choir

7:30 pm Chancel Choir

7:00 pm Boy Scouts Troop #4

### Week of 6/1-6/6

6/3 11:00 am Retired Clergy Group

6/3 5:30 pm NAMI Family-to-Family

6/3 6:00 pm Care & Community Team

6/5 8:00 am Men's Group

### Week of 6/7-6/13

6/9 6:00 pm Church Council

6/10 10:00 am Wellness Ministry Team

6/10 5:30 pm NAMI Family-to-Family

6/13 11:00 am Freeport **PRIDE** Picnic

### Week of 6/14-6/20

6/15 1:00 pm PEO Chapter LI

6/15 6:30 pm Mission & Outreach Team

6/16 6:30 pm Subversive Book Club

6/17 5:30 pm NAMI Family-to-Family

6/20 8:00 am Milton House Trip

### Week of 6/21-6/27

6/21 11:30 am Worship and Education

6/23 6:00 pm Property Team

6/27 1:00 pm Jean Koch 100th Birthday Celebration Open House

### Week of 6/28-7/4

6/28 2:00 pm Confirmation Class

7/4 Independence Day:  
**Church Office Closed**

**SUMMER FUN (AND BEYOND)!!**



**BELOIT SKYCARP  
CHURCH GAMEDAY**  
7/5



**LITTLE CUBS  
FIELD DAY**  
8/2



**ANNUAL ICE  
CREAM SOCIAL**  
8/12



**RALLY DAY**  
8/30



**OKTOBERFEST**  
10/3

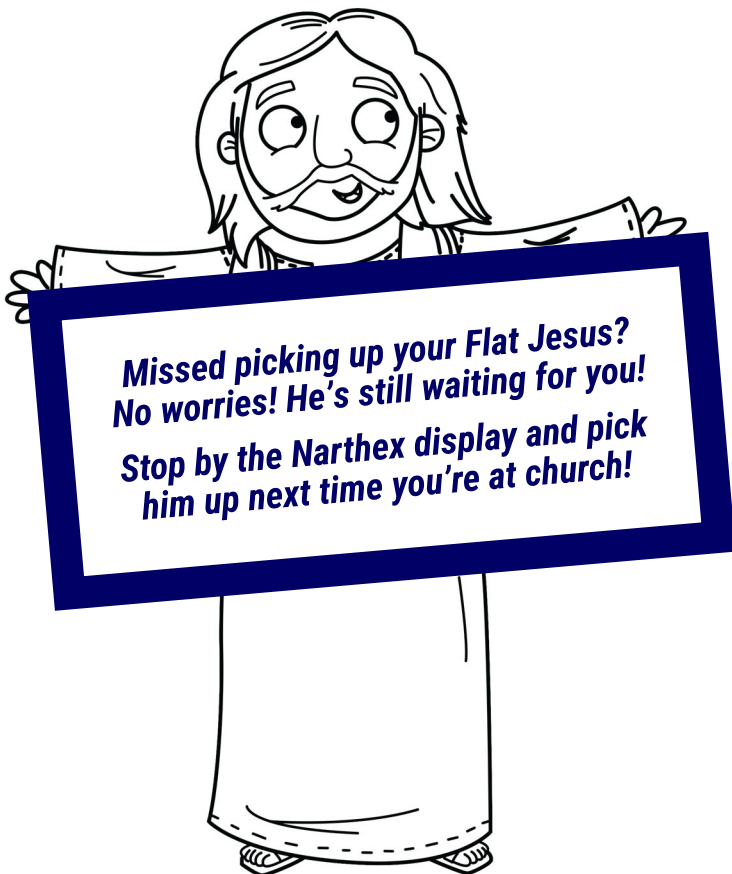
# SUMMER FAITH FORMATION NEWS

## **With our Youth & Families: Church on the Go**

Are you a family with at least one young person up to Eighth Grade? Stop by the Narthex to pick up your family's Church on the Go box!

*Church on the Go* is St. John UCC's way of helping your family bring your faith along wherever the summer takes you. Inside the box you'll find activities designed to help you learn, grow, and have lots of fun—including your very own Flat Jesus! Snap some photos of you and Flat Jesus during your summer adventures and send them to the church. We'll post the photos in the Sunday School hallway so you can stop by and see what Flat Jesus has been up to.

We can't wait to see you around church this summer—and when we don't, we hope you're out there having adventures and growing in faith together. And remember that you can always worship with us online on our Facebook page, no matter where you are!



**Missed picking up your Flat Jesus?  
No worries! He's still waiting for you!  
Stop by the Narthex display and pick  
him up next time you're at church!**



## **THANK YOU FOR ANOTHER AWE-INSPIRING YEAR OF HELIX**

As school wraps up, we give thanks to the many awesome youth who have shared their wisdom, experience, and participation in the “new” HELIX program.

Our growth in social and emotional learning is evident! Our mission to engage youth in growing as individuals, building strong relationships, exploring their values and beliefs, and serving the needs of our community has led us to amazing new places!

That said, the future is a big, wonderful place, and we look forward to seeing what HELIX will look like in the 2026-2027 school year.

With the additional changes in FSD #145's schedules and programs, we will be working closely with their administration to ensure our partnership helping youth grow into their emotions and embrace community remains strong.

Parents, we thank you for entrusting your youth to the HELIX program! Youth, we thank you for putting up with our shenanigans!

*Your HELIX Guides,  
Madison, Kendra, and Tay*

***We'll see you in the Fall!  
HELIX resumes the first week of September.***

# OUR COMMITMENT TO JUSTICE



## JUNETEENTH: a Brief History

Juneteenth, celebrated annually on June 19, is a federal holiday commemorating the end of chattel slavery in the United States, and often called “America’s Second Independence Day”—it holds an important place in the nation’s history.

But this freedom came two and a half years too late. On January 1, 1863, as the nation entered the third year of a bloody Civil War, President Abraham Lincoln issued the final Emancipation Proclamation. The proclamation confirmed what enslaved people had insisted upon from the start: that the war for the Union must become a war for freedom.

Two months after Confederate General Robert E. Lee surrendered at Appomattox and more than two years after the Emancipation Proclamation took effect, the institution of slavery remained fully operational in Texas. The state’s isolation and the absence of significant Union military presence had allowed enslavers to defy federal law with impunity.

On June 19, 1865, Union Major General Gordon Granger, arrived in Galveston the previous day, issued an order on June 19, 1865 announcing that the state’s over 250,000 enslaved African Americans were, by executive decree, free.

The 13th Amendment, ratified 12/6/1865, finished what Lincoln started on New Year’s Day. This constitutional amendment was the final, decisive act, making the institution illegal everywhere in the nation.

*For more in-depth history of Juneteenth, visit the National Museum of African American History and Culture:*

[nmaahc.si.edu/explore/stories/historical-legacy-juneteenth](https://nmaahc.si.edu/explore/stories/historical-legacy-juneteenth)



## RACIAL JUSTICE MOMENT: LGBTQ People of Color & Mental Health

As we celebrate Pride Month, it is important to recognize the many mental health and other challenges faced by LGBTQIA+ youth and adults. These challenges are especially difficult for LGBTQIA+ people of color. Here are a few statistics from the Human Rights Campaign:

- “LGBTQ+ high schoolers of color are...more likely to attempt suicide (27%) compared to LGBTQ+ high schoolers (22%) and non-LGBTQ+ high schoolers (5%) in the United States.”
- “LGBTQ+ people who are BIPOC often face barriers to treatment and care because of mistrust of the medical community, and high uninsurance rates among many other societal injustices. In the United States, more than one-quarter (28%) of LGBTQ+ adults of color have no health insurance coverage, compared to 8% of all adults.”
- “While LGBTQ+ adults of color experience similar rates of mental health challenges as LGBTQ+ adults generally, they receive unequal rates of diagnoses. A rate of 29% of LGBTQ+ adults of color say they have been diagnosed with a depressive disorder from a provider, compared to 39% of the LGBTQ+ adults broadly, a ten point gap. Moreover, only 35% of LGBTQ+ youth of color receive emotional counseling.” (<https://www.hrc.org/resources/qtbiopoc-mental-health-and-well-being>)

Solutions must be found to address these inequities.

Happy Pride Month! Let’s keep working for a world that is healthy and safe for LGBTQIA+ people of color, and for all!

*This article appeared in the June 2024 Tidings, written by Diane Joebum for the Racial Justice Team*

# OUR COMMITMENT TO COMMUNITY



## FACC FOOD PANTRY

Our congregation's generous support of the Food Pantry at FACC and its clients offers us a way to spread care and compassion throughout the year. In June we are asked to collect:



### Instant Boxed Potatoes

*Donations can be placed in the collection carts in the Atrium entryway.*

## CHICAGO AVENUE MISSION DINNER PROGRAM

Help provide some joy by preparing a Wednesday meal for the Chicago Avenue Mission. Prepare the meal yourself, or gather a group of friends! Please sign up on the bulletin board if you can help with a meal, or contact Marla Kreeger or Pam Wessel.

GREEN ENERGY REPORT			
Month	Generated	Used	Difference
February	2547 kWh	4686 kWh	2139 kWh
March	3414 kWh	4256 kWh	824 kWh
April	5136 kWh	2568 kWh	<b>-2568 kWh</b>

**Green Team Note:** In April, we literally produced 200% of our electric supply usage! This average ALMOST equals our purchased electricity in February and March! FYI, the ComEd bill was only \$63.26!!!

*God said, "Let there be light!" And it was Good!!*



## TO BE A WISE CONGREGATION: An Update on our journey

As we concluded our sessions, we are grateful for everyone's caring, inclusive witness. The energy within our community is palpable, and there is a strong desire to pursue the goal of becoming a *WISE* Congregation.

The next steps towards becoming a *WISE* Congregation asks for the formation of a team who will guide the discernment. The open call is out for persons wishing to come together, and create our congregation's *WISE* Covenant. Do you feel called to be part of this group? Please speak with Rev. Ted, Pam Wessel, or the members of the Wellness Ministry for meeting dates and times.

<b>APRIL &amp; YTD FINANCIAL SUMMARY</b>			
Income	Actual	Budget	Difference
Pledges/Gifts	\$18,365	\$27,083	\$-8,718
Monthly Income	\$26,777	\$38,267	\$-11,490
Monthly Expenses	\$36,111	\$38,560	\$-2,449
YTD Pledges/Gifts	\$36,106	\$54,167	\$-18,061
YTD Income	\$102,139	\$153,037	\$-50,928
YTD Expenses	\$153,930	\$156,383	\$-2,453
YTD Total	\$-51,791	\$-3,316	\$-48,475

**Stewardship Note:** Pledges and Identified Gifts are receiving behind budget. Expenses remain under budget. The first half of the budgeted annual Endowment support has been requested. This will add a total of \$12,000 to the YTD income in May. The second half of that support will be received later in the year, allowing those dollars to remain invested until needed.

*Thank you for your continued generous support of St. John UCC!*

# COMMUNITY, INCLUSION, AND JUSTICE

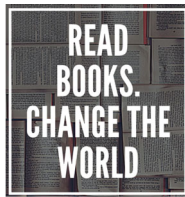


## MAT & CHAIR YOGA AT ST. JOHN UCC MONDAYS STARTING AT 5:15 PM

Bless your spiritual and physical self with yoga at St. John UCC. Join yoga instructor Katherine Ray of *Hippy Yoga* for a one hour session of mat yoga starting at 5:15 pm. Chair yoga will follow at 6:30 pm.

**Bring your own mat. Chairs are provided.  
Bring cushions or a blanket for your comfort.  
Wear loose, comfortable clothing.**

**Price is \$5 a person, per class.**  
Cash, PayPal, Venmo, and Cash App accepted



## SUBVERSIVE BOOK GROUP 6/16, 6:30 pm

Our next meeting is Tuesday, 6/16, beginning at 6:30 pm. Information about the chosen book can be found in the Book Group mail slot outside the church office or by contacting [sbgfpt@gmail.com](mailto:sbgfpt@gmail.com).

*Happy Reading!*



## First Saturdays, 8:00 am

Come join the next gathering of the Men's Ministry. Join the lively group in the Chapel Hearth Room.



## OUR WORDS HAVE VALUE Inclusive and Expansive Language

This summer, the Worship & Education Leadership Team is going to spend time exploring the use of inclusive and expansive language at St. John UCC. Let's start with: What *is* inclusive and expansive language?

In short, *expansive language* in reference to God recognizes the use of rich language in scripture that describes and names God in diverse ways: female (mother, woman, mother bear, hen, midwife), male (father, husband, king), and gender-neutral (Creator, baker, eagle, fire, wind, I Am).

*Inclusive language* is used to refer to God's people. It shows respect for the beautiful diversity of all of us, affirming racial and ethnic backgrounds, stages of maturity, sexuality, and levels of disability and ability.

We can find the use of inclusive and expansive language in different scripture translations—like the New Revised Standard Updated Edition and the Inclusive Bible, both of which we read from during worship. We can hear it in the hymns we sing—including updated lyrics to favorite hymns from *The New Century Hymnal*, *Chalice Hymnal*, and *Glory To God Hymnal*. And we can enjoy hymns with new lyrics set to familiar tunes, or altogether new songs, all of which allow us to celebrate the many faces of God and the divine in each other.

*Stay tuned this summer as the Worship & Education Team continues the conversation about inclusive and expansive language at St. John UCC!*

# OUR CHURCH COMMUNITY

## JUNE BIRTHDAYS

6/1 Tommy Prieue	6/17 Steve Schubert
6/2 Sarah Wittbecker	6/18 Marsha Boll Laurie Ditsworth
6/3 Lorraine McMurray	6/19 June Nagel Addi Hartman
6/4 Ella Kubatzke	6/22 Will Engel Tara Boddie
6/5 Jan Kunkle Owen Queckboerner Maggie Schrock	6/23 Diane Peterson
6/11 Paula Rawleigh Steve Monte	6/26 Kelli Marcum
6/12 Randy Cook	6/28 Gwen Drew Mac Bertram
6/17 Jeanne Koch	6/30 Mary Spencer

## JUNE ANNIVERSARIES

6/5 Steve & Ann Young	6/13 Carlos & Liz Reyes
6/7 Lyle & Jane Krug	6/18 Tom & Dianne Mathews Stan & Sylvia Bomgarden
6/9 Kyle & Kelli Marcum	6/20 Albert & Kathy Skwara
6/10 Jack & Diana Fox	6/26 Kyle & Kristi Kamholz
6/11 Greg & Anita Bicksler Dennis & Diane Jochum	6/30 Larry & Marsha Boll
6/12 Donnley & Sandy Dutcher	



## A CUP OF FELLOWSHIP

Thank you to those who have volunteered to bring weekly treats and host a Sunday. We really do appreciate you. Hosts are needed to prepare treats and share in our extravagant welcome.

Please sign up on the bulletin board in the narthex.



## The Memorial Fund

supporting the future of the mission and growing ministry and outreach of St. John United Church of Christ

The Memorial Fund at St. John UCC exists to support the mission, ministry, and outreach of the congregation. The Fund was created from the generosity of gifts celebrating the lives and impact of loved ones and family members of the congregation.

In 2018, Church Council received a recommendation from the Memorial and Tangible Gift Team to consolidate the memorial gifts into three designated and one undesignated funds:

### ***Congregational Support Fund***

Supports church members and their families in times of financial need. Requests are made to Care & Community Leadership Team.

### ***Worship & Arts Fund***

Provides for creative worship and artistic display throughout the church campus. Curated by Worship & Education Leadership Team.

### ***Library Fund***

The Laura S. Uthlaut Library Fund supports the collection of resources in the church library. Managed by the Library Volunteers.

### ***Undesignated Gifts Fund***

Allows special projects and non-budgeted needs to enhance church life. Coordinated by Church Council Executive Team.

To make a donation to the Memorial Fund or to ask questions related to the fund, contact Pam Wessel.



Place  
Stamp  
Here

1010 South Park Boulevard

Freeport, IL 61032

[www.stjohnuccfreeport.org](http://www.stjohnuccfreeport.org)

Change Service Requested



## ONE MORE THOUGHT: WARMING UP FOR THE SUMMER GIVING CAMPAIGN

Our Annual Summer Giving Campaign is in the On-Deck Circle, waiting for its first plate appearance in July! This year, we're combining the 250th Anniversary of the Declaration of Independence, and celebrating America's favorite past time!

Our "run around the bases" is a way to talk about our mission and ministry. It will last all July long, batting first with an All-Church trip to Beloit, WI for a minor league baseball game between the Beloit Sky Carp and South Bend Cubs on 7/5; and cleaning up with a Little Cubs Field outing on 8/2.

And in between, there will be a whole crackerjack box of FUNd raising activities all July long supporting St. John UCC's progressive, Christian voice in Freeport and beyond. Swing for the fences with us! !

*Find ticket information on the 7/5 Sky Carp game and St. John UCC baseball tees inside!*

*Look for the starting line-up in the July TIDINGS*





## TAKE ME OUT TO THE BALLGAME!

St. John UCC is heading to Beloit, WI for a minor league baseball game between the Beloit Sky Carp and South Bend Cubs!

The game will be on Sunday, 7/5/2026, with gates opening at 12:05 pm and first pitch at 1:05 pm.

**Tickets are \$40** (fans 3 and under are free). This includes your **entry, all-you can eat lunch buffet, and non-alcoholic beverages.**

*Ticket Orders must be placed by Sunday, 6/21*

And we're getting gameday St. John UCC baseball tees! If you would like to order yours for the game, follow this link to our *CustomInk* Group Order Page:

**\$25 *without* custom Name / Number**

**\$35 *with* custom Name / Number**

*Shirt Orders must be placed by 6/14 for delivery before the Big Day*

**For Game Tickets,  
follow this link:**

**For St. John UCC Tees, go to  
our *CustomInk* Group Order**



[bit.ly/STJSkycarp2026](https://bit.ly/STJSkycarp2026)

[bit.ly/STJShirts2026](https://bit.ly/STJShirts2026)

*Payment for both tickets and shirts can be made through the church office, or through our online giving portal: <https://bit.ly/GiveToStJohnUCC>  
Choose "Give to General Fund,"  
and note "Baseball Trip" in the comments on the second screen.*

STJ @



7/5/2026

Gates Opening at 12:05 pm

First Pitch at 1:05 pm