

TIDINGS

July / August 2026

A Regular Sharing of our Mission and Ministry

FROM 1776 TO THE 7TH INNING STRETCH HIT A HOMERUN FOR ST. JOHN UCC!

Please join in the 2026 Annual Summer Giving Campaign as we “round the bases” during the month of July!

This year we’re combining our celebration of the 250th Anniversary of the Declaration of Independence together with America's favorite pastime: baseball! Throughout the month, we’ll be sharing in team fun and community-building events:

Batting Lead Off on Sunday, July 5th is a fun All-Church outing to beautiful ABC Supply Stadium between the Beloit Sky Carp and South Bend Cubs.

Batting Clean-Up is a Little Cubs Field All-Church outing on Sunday, August 2nd from 12-2pm! Join us for a ton of fun on the field and some baseball themed menu items (See the menu on the back panel!)

In between the first and last at bats, we have a whole crackerjack pack of FUNdraising activities supporting St. John UCC’s progressive, Christian voice in Freeport and beyond.

Swing over to p. 3 for more on these, and all of the 1776 to 7th Inning Summer Fun!

SAVE THE DATES:

BELOIT SKYCARP
CHURCH GAMEDAY
7/5, 12:05 @ BELOIT

LITTLE CUBS FIELD DAY
8/2, 12:00-2:00 PM

ICE CREAM SOCIAL
8/13, 4:30-7:00 pm

SAFE CHURCH
TRAINING
8/16, 11:30-1:30

RALLY DAY
8/30, 10:00 am



Come together in the Sanctuary or share in our streaming Online Worship every Sunday, 10:00 am:
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 July and August?

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!

Week of 6/28-7/4

6/28	2:00pm	Confirmation Class
7/1	11:00am	Retired Clergy Group
7/1	6:00pm	Care & Community
7/3	Independence Day: Church Office Closed	

Week of 7/5-7/11

7/5	12:00pm	Sky Carp Game @ Beloit
7/7	6:00pm	Property Team
7/8	10:00am	Wellness Ministry
7/8	7:00pm	Boy Scout Leaders
7/11	8:00am	Men's Ministry

Week of 7/12-7/18

7/12	11:00am	Mission & Outreach Project
7/14	6:00pm	Camera Club
7/14	6:00pm	Church Council

Week of 7/19-7/25

7/21	6:30pm	Subversive Book Group
7/23	6:00pm	Girl Scouts

Week of 7/26-8/1

7/26	11:30am	Worship & Education
8/1	8:00am	Men's Group

Week of 8/2-8/8

8/2	3:00pm	Little Cubs Field Event
8/2	7:00pm	Freeport Choral Society Concert (Krape Park)
8/4	6:00pm	Property Team
8/5	11:00am	Retired Clergy Group
8/5	6:00pm	Care & Community
8/6	3:00pm	Freeport Social Services

Week of 8/9-8/15

8/11	6:00pm	Camera Club
8/11	6:00pm	Church Council
8/12	10:00am	Wellness Ministry
8/12	4:30am	Ice Cream Social
8/12	7:00pm	Boy Scout Leaders

Week of 8/16-8/22

8/16	11:30am	Safe Church Training
8/17	1:00pm	PEO Chapter LI
8/17	6:30pm	Mission & Outreach
8/18	6:30pm	Subversive Book Group

Week of 8/23-8/29

8/23	11:30am	Worship & Education
8/27	6:00pm	Girl Scouts

August 30th

Rally Day

Weekly Church & Community Activities

Sunday: Worship, Fellowship

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: 7:00 pm Boy Scouts Troop #4

FROM 1776 TO THE 7TH INNING STRETCH: MORE WAYS TO STEP UP TO THE PLATE!

BATTER UP!

Step up to the plate with a better-than-average generous gift!

By now you've probably noticed the ball diamond on the Narthex bulletin board. Alongside it is a bat rack holding 6 colored bats, each representing an associated batting average (and dollar value):



- **Gold** - Batting 1.000 (\$1,000)
- **Silver** - Batting .500 (\$500)
- **Red** - Batting .250 (\$250)
- **White** - Batting .100 (\$100)
- **Blue** - Batting .050 (\$50)
- **Green** - Batting .020 (\$20)

Based on your batting average (or given donation), you are welcome to add a baseball sticker to the appropriate bat/s. We encourage you to make some hits! For instance, a \$2,500 donor would add 2 ball stickers to the gold bat and one to the silver bat. Similarly, a \$300 donor would add a sticker to the red and blue bats.

*Every "hit" helps our batting average,
and your gift will support our St. John UCC team
(just like in baseball, the higher, the better)!*

SNACK PACKS! GET YOUR SNACK PACKS!!

It's hard to go to the ball diamond without having some snacks! Each Sunday, we encourage you to bring your cash and enjoy a pack of *Peanuts in the Shell* & *Cracker Jack*.



You will find the tasty treats tied together with a special Surprise inside! Each pack has a baseball tucked in that contains a dollar value of \$5, \$10 or \$20. Choose a random pack to discover your suggested donation amount.



All of the stats from our donations will be tracked on the narthex ball diamond, with flat Jesus running the bases to let us know how we're doing! He'll reach:

- 1st base once we collect \$5,000
- 2nd base at \$10,000
- 3rd base at \$15,000
- and score that Home Run at \$20,000 or more!

On behalf of the Church Council, we sincerely appreciate and thank you for your continuing generous support of the ministries and missions of St. John UCC! Thank you for Swinging for the Fences with us!

Your Team Captains:

Lisa Ebbbers, Jill Gastel, Anita Bicksler
Kelly Priewe, Carla Meyer

SUMMER FAITH FORMATION NEWS

With our Youth & Families: Church on the Go

We hope you are enjoying this summer's *Church on the Go* box! There's so much to do inside! And if you run out of Conversation Cards, or need another maze or more Bingo sheets, reach out to the Church Office!

And when you're at church, check out the photos in the Sunday School hallway 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!



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 July we are asked to collect:



Cereal

In August we are asked to collect :



Macaroni and Cheese

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



BECOMING WISE FOR MENTAL HEALTH: Next Steps: The Wise Covenant Team

St. John UCC is walking the path towards being recognized as a congregation that is WISE for mental health (Welcoming, Inclusive, Supportive, and Engaged). Our journey began with educational sessions sharing the UCC Mental Health Network's process for a congregation to become certified in their welcome for those with mental health experiences. The feedback from those sessions was to begin the process to attain that certification at St. John UCC.

Our next step is to form a WISE Covenant writing team. The Wellness Ministry team is inviting people who have a passion for mental health to collaborate in this endeavor. This is a six-month commitment that will begin at the 7/19 meeting following worship.

To sign up or for more information reach out to Pastor Ted or a member of the Wellness Ministry

GREEN ENERGY REPORT 			
Month	Generated	Used	Difference
March	3414 kWh	4256 kWh	824 kWh
April	5136 kWh	2568 kWh	-2568 kWh
May	5218 kWh	2211 kWh	-3007 kWh

Green Team Note: In May, our production was almost 200% of our actual usage. Our "Net Metering Bank" now stands at 5575 kWh, which is close to our usage in a typical November or December.

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



MAY & YTD FINANCIAL SUMMARY

Income	Actual	Budget	Difference
Pledges/Gifts	\$21,483	\$27,083	\$-5,600
Monthly Income	\$40,918	\$38,267	\$2,651
Monthly Expenses	\$43,107	\$38,560	\$-2,449
YTD Pledges/Gifts	\$94,033	\$135,416	\$-41,383
YTD Income	\$143,059	\$191,334	\$-48,275
YTD Expenses	\$197,226	\$195,592	\$1,634
YTD Total	\$ -54,167	\$ -4,259	\$ -49,908

Stewardship Note: Expenses are trending at a typical rate. Pledges and are receiving behind budget. Giving Statements for the first half of the year will be arriving soon. If you contribute monthly or quarterly, please verify that your gift is up to date for the current period.

COMMUNITY, INCLUSION, AND JUSTICE



MONDAY MAT & CHAIR YOGA

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

7/21, 6:30 pm

Our next meeting is Tuesday, 7/21, 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.

Happy Reading!



SPECIAL DATE THIS MONTH:

7/11, 8:00 am

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



OUR WORDS SHARE GOD'S IMAGE

This summer, the Worship & Education Leadership Team is spending time exploring the use of inclusive and expansive language at St. John UCC. In this edition of Tidings, let's explore: Why do we use inclusive and expansive language here?

One of the first things that you'll read on our church's webpage is an invitation to our extravagant welcome. (That line is in our mission statement, too!)

Thinking back to June's article, you might recall that expansive language describes and names God in diverse ways, and inclusive language is used to show respect for the beautiful diversity of all of God's people. Let's put these two ideas together: Part of being an extravagantly welcoming church is creating a space where everyone can see themselves reflected in images of the divine, and can recognize the image of God in themselves, in creation, and in others.

Can you imagine the comfort one person might feel in thinking of God as a baker, where another might find the same feeling thinking of God as a father? And another may draw strength from the idea of God as a mother bear, where still another marvels in the mystery of God as I Am? And we find ourselves—*as well as those who are not represented in the room with us*—in the stories we share from Scriptures when we use language that talks about our friends and neighbors, and our siblings in Christ.

Inclusive and expansive language creates a space for those of us who are here, those of us who stopped here on our journey to somewhere else, and those who of us who are still finding our way to this place. It lets us *know that no matter who you are, and where you are on life's journey, you are welcome here.*

OUR CHURCH COMMUNITY

JULY BIRTHDAYS

7/02 Addisyn Shaffer Levi Graybill	7/13 Vanessa Hughes 7/19 Jim Drew Shelly Adams 7/27 Mike Simler
7/03 Terry Atz Dylan Holbert Linda Heidenreich	7/28 Ryan Shaffer 7/29 William Kreeger 7/30 Wessel Young
7/06 Dale Priewe	
7/10 Martha Cowan	
7/12 Jeff Williams	

JULY ANNIVERSARIES

7/06 Larry & Mary Frazee	7/29 Thompson & Dagny Brandt
7/10 Peter & Joan Flynn	7/24 Perry & Martha Cowan, Hugh & Sarah Knapp
7/12 Daniel King & Robert Mayfield	
7/19 Tim & Tom Campbell-Outcault	



SAFE CONDUCT TRAINING Sunday, 8/16, 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, 8/16 and include special dietary restrictions or food allergies, and accessibility needs to:

safechurch@stjohnuccfreeport.org

AUGUST BIRTHDAYS

8/4 Dorothy McGregor	8/14 Clara Hansen
8/5 Lyle Krug	8/17 Donna Polhill
8/6 Rachel Wilkinson Sophia Wilkinson Shawn Killingbeck	8/18 Anita Bicksler 8/20 Jane Krug 8/23 Carla Meyer James Priewe
8/8 Kathy Skwara	8/24 Greg Ware
8/10 Pam Manus	8/29 Diana Fox Ann Young
8/12 Tom Campbell- Outcault	8/31 Suzanne Cook
8/13 Stephen Kreeger	

AUGUST ANNIVERSARIES

8/02 Robert & Barbara Luedeke	8/14 Bill & Lisa Condie
8/02 Carl & Ellen Roderick	8/15 Jeff & Dana Williams
8/11 Denairic & Karla Hardersen	8/18 Stan & Carol Smith
8/13 Dan & Pam Wessel	8/20 Andrew & Laura Hartman
	8/26 Jim & Marilyn Klever

SHARING OUR GIFTS: Online Giving and Automatic Donations

To honor our Faith Commitment to St. John UCC, you can donate electronically. Here is a direct link to our Online Giving Portal:

www.bit.ly/GiveToStJohnUCC



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



1010 South Park Boulevard

Freeport, IL 61032

www.stjohnuccfreeport.org

Change Service Requested

Place
Stamp
Here

**Be Out
Be Proud**
We Are Open and Affirming

ONE MORE THOUGHT: SUMMER VACATIONS ARE AMAZING!

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**

LITTLE CUBS FIELD DAY

Sunday 8/2, 12-2pm!

Here's your Lunchtime Line-up!

Single:

Hit it off with a Hotdog \$5

Double:

Add a Drink (water or lemonade) \$6

Triple:

Add Chips - OR -

Decorated Sugar Cookie \$7

Home Run:

Enjoy ALL the Above \$8

*Welcome your family, friends, and neighbors
to join in the fun!*