

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!

Bring *Flat Jesus* with you wherever you go this summer!

Be sure to take him along on all your adventures, snap some photos, and send the photos to: flatjesus@stjohnuccfreeport.org

*We'll post them in the Sunday School hallway
so you can see what Flat Jesus has been up to!*



SUNDAY, 8/30, BEGINNING AT 10:00 AM

Our Rally Day celebration welcomes us back from summer's fun and labors. Come join in morning worship, sharing stories of God's blessings for us all. Stay for the annual Rally Day Pot-Luck Lunch. Bring your family's favorite dish to pass and sample others' faves. Celebrate as the community in Christ at St. John UCC, sharing the radical hospitality of God's all-embracing love!

Please sign up that you're coming on the bulletin board in the narthex!

ST. JOHN UCC STAFF

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Pastor Emeritus: Rev. Dr. Donnley Dutcher

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NINTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

July 26, 2026 • 10:00 am

WELCOMING MUSIC and ANNOUNCEMENTS

PRELUDE

Trouble In My Way The Dixie Hummingbirds

arr. Carl Cole

*CALL TO WORSHIP

Diane Jochum

One: Life is messy.

All: My experience tells me so.

One: There, standing in the middle of the clutter
and warren of dust bunnies,

All: Is you.

One: Unlike a merry maid service,
you will not pick up my mess.

**All: You will help me sort it, navigate through it, clean up,
and repair what needs fixing.**

*HYMN

Love Divine, All Love Excelling

BEECHER

WAR #358

*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.*

CELEBRATION OF BIRTHDAYS AND GIFTS

GATHERING PRAYER

Silent Centering

Congregational Prayer (speaking together)

God of patience I ask a lot of Why questions. Why do relationships end? Why do people I love get sick? Why can’t we all just get along? Why do somethings hurt so much?

In my desires for answers or shifting of blame I point at you. Why do you let bad things happen? Why did you author pain? Why do you use suffering to teach lessons? My hurting keeps me from seeing that you did not write suffering into the creation. You do not let bad things happen and wisdom gained through suffering is not the only way to learn.

Through stories and experiences, you want me to see and to know that you are with me in my darkest moments. You love me despite the messes I make. You love me when I do not like myself all that much. You help me to repair it. You do this because you want me to know life and experience it abundantly. Amen

GOD’S WORD IN SCRIPTURE

Genesis 29:15-28 NRSV, Updated Edition

A MOMENT FOR ALL AGES

Liz Reyes

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

I Know the Lord Will Make a Way

E. Smith;

arr. C. Cole

GOD’S WORD IN SCRIPTURE

Matthew 13:31-33, 44-52 NRSV, Updated Edition

MESSAGE

Jacob, Leah, Zilpah, and Rachel. Oh My!

Rev. Ted Michalsen

*HYMN

O God. You Search Me

O GOD. YOU SEARCH ME

GTG #29

PRESENTING OUR HEARTS +AND GIFTS TO GOD

Moment for Mission

Summer Giving Campaign

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 I’ve Got a Feeling Everything’s Gonna Be Alright

Spiritual arr. Carl Cole

Doxology (CH #48)

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

Jesus Loves Me, This I Know

JESUS LOVES ME

WAR #437

*BENEDICTION

*RESPONSE

With Grateful Heart

GRATUS

WAR #720, v.I

*POSTLUDE

Trouble in My Way (Reprise)

The Dixie Hummingbirds

arr. Carl Cole

ANNOUNCEMENTS



AMITY UNDERWEAR DRIVE

There is a great need for new underwear for underprivileged households in our community. We are called to reach out and let them know that we care. A laundry basket is in the Atrium for donations of children's sizes 8-18, but especially women's M-L and men's M-2XL underwear of all types. Drop off your donations weekdays from 9:00 am - 2:00 pm.



2026 BACKPACK BLESSING

SUNDAY, 8/16 10:00 AM

Ring in a new school year with us!
Kids, bring in your backpacks to receive a blessing
and tag as we celebrate you going back to school!

St. John United Church of Christ – Freeport, IL

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



BATTING CLEAN-UP DAY

Sunday, 8/2 12:00 pm – 2:00 pm

As a part of this year's Summer FUNd Giving Campaign, Batting Clean-Up is a Little Cubs Field All-Church outing! Join us for a ton of fun on the field and some baseball themed menu items available for purchase:

Single: 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.



ANNUAL ICE CREAM SOCIAL

Wednesday, 8/12 4:30pm-7:00pm

Come enjoy an evening of fun, food and relaxation with friends from the St. John UCC community. Barbecue sandwiches, hot dogs, chips, pasta salad and drinks will be served, along with cake, pie and ice cream to complete your meal! Tickets are available in the church office or on Sundays.

**\$8 for BBQ or Hot Dog,
with Chips, Pasta Salad, and Drink**

\$5 for Pie or Cake, Ice Cream, and Drink

If you are able to donate a pie or cake, or willing to volunteer your time to serve as cashier, server, kitchen crew, or cleanup crew, please sign up on the bulletin board in the Narthex. Thank you for your help!

779 O God, you search me

Bernadette Farrell

♩ = ca. 60

Chorus:

1. O God, you search me and you know me. All my
 2. You know my res - ting and my ri - sing. You dis -
 3. Be - fore a word is on my tongue, Lord, you have
 4. Al - though your Spi - rit is u - pon me, still I
 5. For you cre - a - ted me and shaped me, gave me

Verse:

thoughts lie o - pen to your gaze. When I
 cern my pur - pose from a - far. And with
 known its mea - ning through and through. You are
 search for shel - ter from your light. There is
 life wi - thin my mo - ther's womb. For the

Bridge:

walk or lie down you are be - fore me: e - ver the
 love ev - er - las - ting you be - siege me: in ev' - ry
 with me, be - yond my un - der - stan - ding: God of my
 no - where on earth I can es - cape you: ev - en the
 won - der of who I am, I praise you: safe in your

Final Verse:

ma - ker and kee - per of my days.
 mo - ment of life and death, you are.
 pre - sent, my past and fu - ture, too.
 dark - ness is ra - diant in your sight.
 hands, all cre - a - tion is made new.

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Bernadette Farrell, from Psalm 138 (139)