

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 *Moment for All Ages*.

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 meetings resume this week, from 9:00-9:45. Adults of all ages are welcome to gather in the Chapel Hearth Room, exploring different topics and formats weekly.

This fall, our first Adult Faith Formation series will take the conversation into the history, tradition, and present of the words we use in worship, formation, and mission. Beginning on 9/13, with the topics of :

- 9/13 Reforming the Word:
What history teaches us about the language of faith
- 9/20 The People of the Book:
Reading the scriptures in context of our translations

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SEASON OF CREATION 2: LAND SUNDAY
SIXTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

September 13th, 2026 • 10:00 am

WELCOMING MUSIC and ANNOUNCEMENTS

PRELUDE *Where the Green Will Rise Again* Murray,
Britney Kieselhorst arr. Strathdee

*CALL TO WORSHIP Anita Bicksler

One: From many different lands we gather
on this land, in this place, at this time.

All: You are with us.

One: God of the Earth, the land, the sky;
in difficult times, on rocky ground,
when the landscape seems to have changed,

All: we gather to worship.

One: Find us, O God, shaped by the dust,
grounded in hope, and eager to grow.

All: God is with us.
We root ourselves in praise!

*HYMN *I Sing the Mighty Power of God* ELLACOMBE
WAR #31

*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)

We listen for you God,
in the Earth beneath our feet.

The Land is inviting us in.
She asks us to join in her song deep
within the Earth.

She cries out from the ground;
there is grief in her song
but there is a rhythm of hope.

We are not separate.
Our hearts beat together as one.
Where could we go from Spirit?

Nowhere. Nowhere.

You, God, are the Land.
You support us under our feet.
You watch over our heads.

You are here.
And so we listen... Amen.

GOD’S WORD IN SCRIPTURE

Psalm 103:1-13 NRSV, Updated Edition

A MOMENT FOR ALL AGES

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

When You Believe Schwartz, arr. DeCesare
Britney Kieselhorst on clarinet

GOD’S WORD IN SCRIPTURE

Matthew 18:21-35 NRSV, Updated Edition

MESSAGE

Dry Forgiveness Rev. Hank Fairman

*HYMN

Will You Come and Follow Me KELVINGROVE
WAR #350

PRESENTING OUR HEARTS +AND GIFTS TO GOD

Moment for Mission CROP Hunger Walk

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 God the Sculptor of the Mountains A. Husberg
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

God Reigns o’er All the Earth TERRA BEATA
NCH #21

*BENEDICTION

*RESPONSE

Touch the Earth Lightly TENDERNESS
WAR #38, v.I

*POSTLUDE

All Who Have Breath Douglas E. Wagner

ANNOUNCEMENTS



SATURDAY, 10/3, 4:00 PM-7:00 PM

Join with the community at St. John UCC in our Second Annual Oktoberfest! Dress in your finest German attire (lederhosen and dirndls welcomed!) and celebrate our community’s German roots with great music and food activities! For your enjoyment, the German folk band will be back again this year! There will be stein-holding and yodeling contests, silent auction and so much more! To volunteer please sign up in the Narthex.

Adults \$15.00

Children (under 10) \$10.00.

Tickets will be available on Sunday mornings,
in the church office, or at the door on
Oktoberfest Day.

Can’t wait to see you there! Prost!

die Speisekarte
Bratwurst (hot dogs for kids) German potato salad buttered green beans sauerkraut pickled red cabbage soft pretzel.
Nachtisch
Black Forest cupcakes and gluten-free peach kuchen



Tickets can also be purchased
from the online giving portal:
stjohnuccfreeport.breezechms.com/give/online

St. John United Church of Christ – Freeport, IL
an Open and Affirming, Racial Justice Congregation,
where God is Still Speaking



SUNDAY 10/4, REGISTER: 1:00 PM | WALK: 1:30 PM

The CROP Hunger Walk is a national effort sponsored by Church World Service. Local churches and individuals walk to raise money to help end hunger. Twenty-five percent of the funds raised stay local, supporting community services in Freeport and Stephenson County.

Please meet in Debate Square if you wish to walk!



FSD 145 SNACK DRIVE

St. John UCC supports @FSD145 in their caring for all students. All month long, the Mission & Outreach Team will be collecting items for the FACE Team's snack supplies drive. Suggested items include (snack-size items/multipacks only, please!):

- granola bars
- fruit cups
- pudding / applesauce cups
- crackers
- pretzels
- or popcorn

Donations can be dropped off on Sunday mornings at the collection boxes by the church office, and on weekdays at the church office between 9:00 am-2:00 pm

God Reigns o'er All the Earth

Jane Parker Huber, 1981

GOD

21

Isa. 52:7-10

1 God reigns o'er all the earth! Green hills and val-leys low, the
 2 God reigns o'er hu-man life! Through youth and ag-ing years, in
 3 God reigns o'er time and space! In his-tory's by-gone days, Christ's
 4 God reigns! Em-man-u-el! God with us ev-ery day, in

farms and towns in golds and browns God's grace and beau-ty show.
 death, in birth, in grief, in mirth, in all our hopes and fears.
 faith-ful folk in rev-erence spoke to bring God earn-est praise.
 all our past and to the last, our com-fort and our stay.

God reigns o'er all the earth! Stone banks and spread-ing plains, in
 God reigns o'er hu-man life! Our in-spi-ra-tion still. Through
 God reigns o'er time and space! O'er gal-ax-y and sun, through
 God reigns! Em-man-u-el! Let praise to Christ be sung! God's

rain-bow hues—reds, yel-lows, blues—of streams and coun-try lanes.
 all our schemes, in all our dreams, we see God's reign-ing will.
 time-less years the cos-mos hears the heaven-ly mu-sic run.
 pres-ence here makes all things dear. Let joy-ful bells be rung!

The author's notes on this text describe it as a progression of awareness of God's reign among us—in physical surroundings, in the various stages of life, in time and space, and supremely in Christ, God with us.

Tune: TERRA BEATA S.M.D.
 Traditional English melody
 Adapt. Franklin L. Sheppard, 1915

ANNOUNCEMENTS



OKTOBERFEST SILENT AUCTION

We are planning a great FUNdraising event — our SECOND Oktoberfest! Along with delicious food, we will have some fun activities, including a silent auction. It's not too early to start thinking about items you might want to donate for the auction.

Possible ideas are gift baskets with various themes, artwork, baked goods, jewelry, gift cards for restaurants or stores, books, new and gently used items, - the possibilities are endless!

*If you have questions, please see or call
Jan Kunkle (815-908-9125).*



MONDAY, 9/14 5:15 PM / 6:30 PM

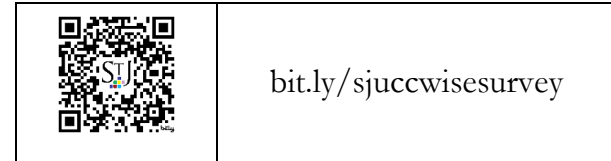
Join Hippy Yoga every Monday night, starting on 9/14, for a dose of knowledge, sweat, and laughter! Mat yoga is at 5:15 PM and chair yoga follows at 6:30 PM in Fellowship Hall. The cost is \$7 per person, and financial assistance is available. Wear comfortable clothes and bring something to drink (we prefer drinks with electrolytes and such to keep you replenished from sweat)! For any questions please contact Katherine Ray on her business page at www.facebook.com/HippyYogaLLC.

September Special!

If you are an existing yogi at St. John UCC, bring a newcomer to class during the month, and you only pay \$3, and so does your friend!



The Wellness Ministry is working to take the necessary steps towards an ever-wider welcome as a WISE Congregation. The survey below will ask how you believe our congregation can be a healing force in community and the wider world through our welcome, inclusion, and support of those with mental health experiences. It will also help us define our engagement with mental health advocacy and justice work. You can take the survey using the QR code below or pick up a paper copy in the Narthex or Church Office.



The survey will be open from 9/1-9/30.

We thank you in advance for sharing your thoughts, reflections, and opinions!



WOMEN'S SACRED RELAX & RENEWAL PILGRIM PARK CAMP, 10/2-3

Join for a 23-hour getaway to relax while engaging God's Holy Spirit! It's a time to reconnect with old friends, make new friends, and even bring along some friends. Unable to spend the night for the full retreat, but able to come for a portion? There are options to experience for the day on either Friday, Saturday, or both days. Full retreat with overnights cost is \$173.

*To register and for alternate pricing, go to:
<https://pilgrimpark.campbrainregistration.com>*