

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 :

- 9/20 The People of the Book:
Reading the scriptures in context of our translations
- 9/27 The Faith We Sing:
Singing the Songs and Hymns to a different tune (with Britney Kieselhorst)

ST. JOHN UCC STAFF

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- Church Musician: Randy Cook

Pastor Emeritus: Rev. Dr. Donnley Dutcher

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SEASON OF CREATION 3: WILDERNESS SUNDAY
SEVENTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

September 20th, 2026 • 10:00 am

WELCOMING MUSIC and ANNOUNCEMENTS

PRELUDE *Here I am to Listen* F. Matthews
The Chancel Choir

*CALL TO WORSHIP Tim Ebbers

- One: God calls to us from the Wilderness:
- All: Arid lands and frozen tundra,
give us ground on which to stand.
- One: Welcome the wilds that stretch our horizons
even as they draw us inward:
- All: Sun-bleached sands and jungled canopies,
open us to breathe-blowing Spirit around
and within.
- One: We seek your gifts, God of Wilderness.
Spur us to your hopes in healing
our relationship with creation.
- All: Salmon and monarchs,
carry us to the waters of faith’s birth
and the future land of new life.
- One: Come into the Wilderness of this time,
and worship our creator.

*HYMN *From All That Dwell Below the Skies*
NCH #27 LASST UNS ERFREUEN

*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)

Wild God, like so much of your work, we arrive on the edge of Wilderness with a sense of what it can be for us.

We imagine it to be many things, and our minds run wild.

We remember the Wilderness you created,
the wild places on Earth, the worlds of wonder and mystery,
and the distant dreaming of the ocean’s shore.

We remember the wild worlds and hiding places of our
childhood, where we felt the mystery of caves and wild
creatures in the mountains.

We remember and we rejoice.

Bring us to this spacious place again where we might know how
Wilderness understands itself.

Move us beyond our assumptions to find wisdom in what we
too quickly assume to be barren and desolate.

Connect us and remind us that we are part of Wilderness.
We are a part of all that is untamed.
Teach us who we really are. Amen.

GOD’S WORD IN SCRIPTURE

Psalm 105:1-6, 37-45 NRSV, Updated Edition

A MOMENT FOR ALL AGES

Jan Kunkle

Change for Change Mission Collection

Change for Change Mission Collection

*This month’s collection will support Voices of Stephenson County,
in response to the October observation of Domestic Violence Awareness Month,
and their 24/ 7 helpline for Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault Services*

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

For the Music of Creation Shirley Erena Murray
The Chancel Choir Bankson/Trenney

GOD’S WORD IN SCRIPTURE

Matthew 20:1-16 NRSV, Updated Edition

MESSAGE

Out There Rev. Hank Fairman

*HYMN

When in Awe of God’s Creation HYFRYDOL
CH #688

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 *Terra Beata* arr. Neil Harmon

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

Guide Me, O My Great Redeemer CWM RHONDAA
NCH #19

*BENEDICTION

*RESPONSE

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

*POSTLUDE

Festivity on “Holy Manna” 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
<i>Bratwurst (bot dogs for kids) German potato salad buttered green beans sauerkraut pickled red cabbage soft pretzel.</i>
Nachtisch
<i>Black Forest cupcakes and gluten-free peach kuchen</i>



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



LENS OF FAITH COMMUNITY PROJECT

Join us in our Lens of Faith Community Project! Please take photos during service and look through old photos! We are asking for photos to be emailed to us for upcoming projects. While we appreciate any photos that are sent, we are specifically looking for ones that show who we are as a community, and what our weekly Worship looks like. Please be sure that photos are in high resolution when sending them.

All photos can be sent to our office email,
officeforward@stjohnuccfreeport.org

Thank you!



SPECIAL MISSION OFFERING, 10/4

Neighbors in Need (NIN) is a special mission offering of the United Church of Christ that supports ministries of justice and compassion in the United States, with one-third of the offering given to the Council for American Indian Ministries and the remaining two-thirds supporting UCC justice ministries.

The funds collected support the work of the UCC's Washington D.C. Office for Public Policy and Advocacy, in partnership with congregations and church members across the nation. The work is shared through collective advocacy, with and for one another.

From All That Dwell below the Skies

Isaac Watts, 1719; alt.

GOD

27

Ps. 117

Unison

1 From all that dwell be - low the skies let the Cre - a - tor's praise a -
2 E - ter - nal are your mer - cies, God; your truth stands ev - er high and

(Harmony) *(Unison)*

rise; Al - le - lu - ia! Al - le - lu - ia! Let the Re - deem - er's name be
broad: Al - le - lu - ia! Al - le - lu - ia! Your praise shall sound from shore to

(Harmony)

sung through ev - ery land, by ev - ery tongue. Al - le - lu - ia, al - le -
shore till suns shall rise and set no more.

(Unison)

lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia!

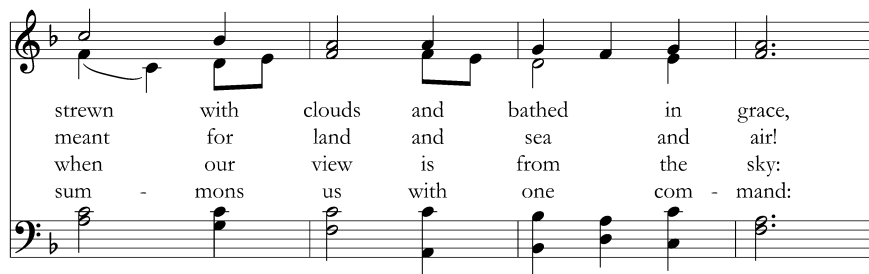
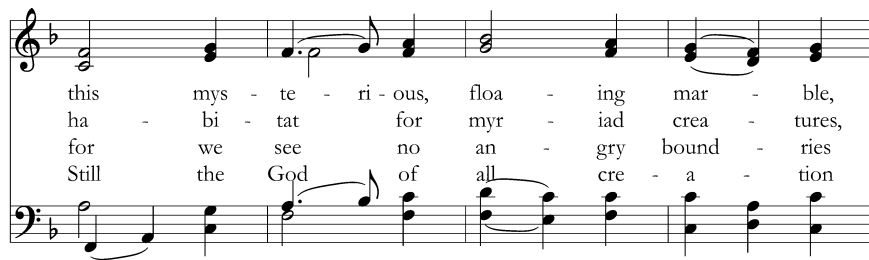
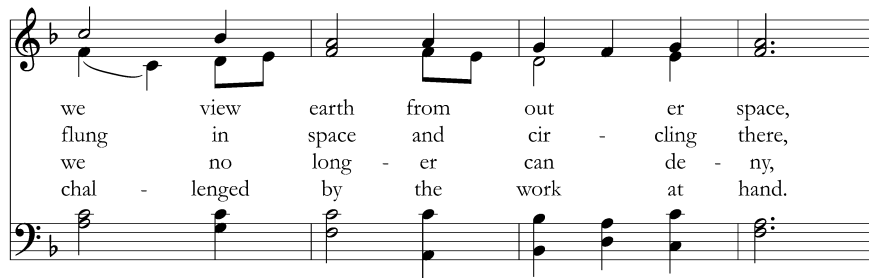
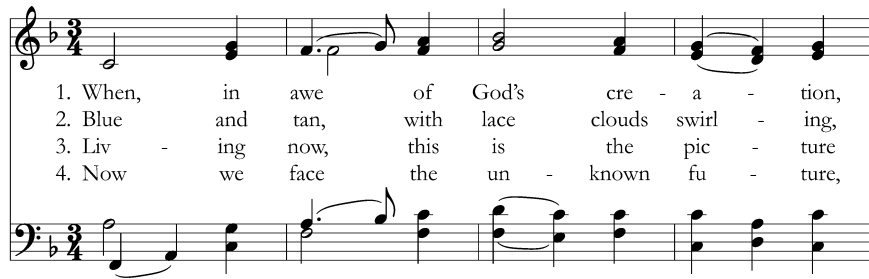
Isaac Watts, author of more than 600 hymns, paraphrased the two verses of Psalm 117 into this two-stanza hymn, which was included in his *Psalms of David*, 1719. The tune originated in a German Catholic hymnal.

Harmonization Copyright ©, Oxford University Press. From *The English Hymnal* 1906.

Tune: LASST UNS ERFREUEN
8.8.4.4.8.8. with alleluias
Geistliche Kirchengesänge, Cologne, 1623
Harm. Ralph Vaughan Williams, 1906

When in Awe of God's Creation

HYFRYDOL (8.7.8.7 D)



Words by Jane Parker Huber, Music by Rowland H. Pritchard
 Words, © 1992 Jane Parker Huber; Music, Public Domain



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

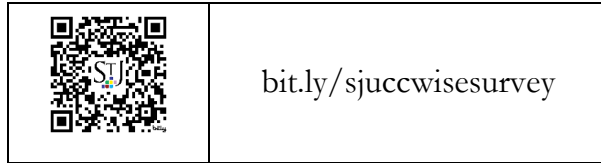
St. John UCC supports @FSD145 in their caring for all students. All month long, the Mission & Outreach Team will be collecting items for the FACE Team's snack supplies drive. Suggested items include (snack-size items/multipacks only, please!):

- 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



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.

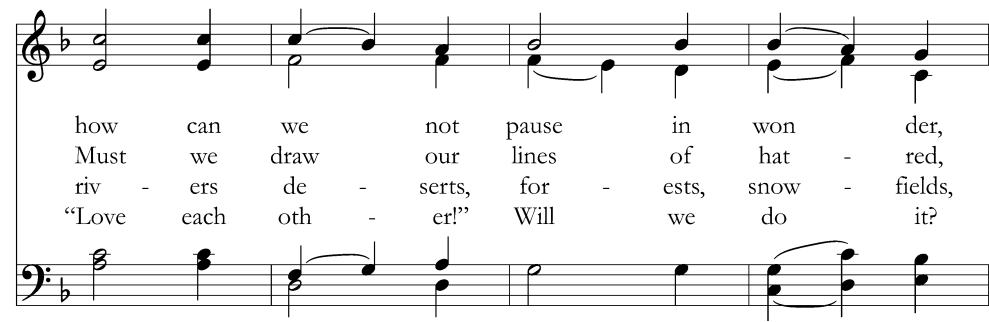
We thank you in advance for sharing your thoughts, reflections, and opinions!



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>*



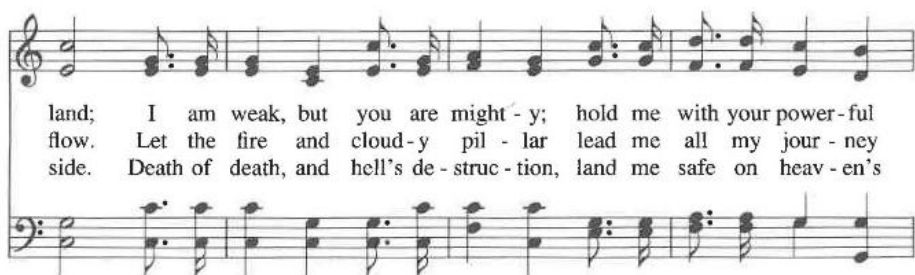
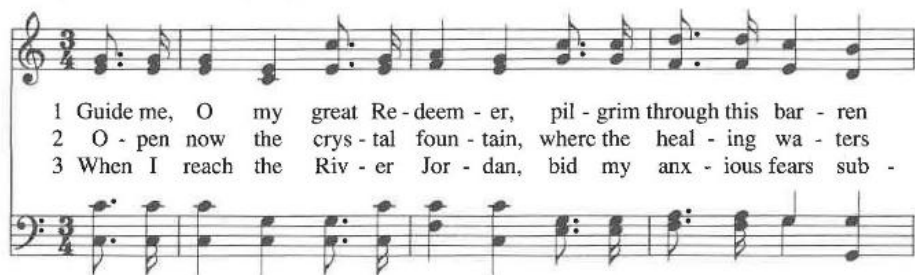
Guide Me, O My Great Redeemer

William Williams, 1745

St. 1, transl. Peter Williams, 1771; alt.

St. 2-3, transl. William Williams, 1772; alt.

Exod. 13:21; 16:4; 17:6; Ps. 105:39-44; Rev. 22:1-2



The Thomas Hastings tune for this text is popular in the United States. A self-taught musician, Hastings was a colleague of Lowell Mason in New York City, where they worked together to raise the standard of worship music.

Tune: ZION 8.7.8.7.4.7.4.7.

Thomas Hastings, 1830

Alternate setting: CWM RHONDDA

GOD

19

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).*



MONDAYS 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!