

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.

Service Credits, Copyright, and Streaming Notice

All music and hymns in this service are reprinted, recorded/podcasted, and/or streamed with permission obtained from:

- CCLI Copyright License # 2752305, Streaming License # 20105443,
- CCS PERFORMmusic and WORSHIPcast License # 13435.
- or OneLicense Copyright and Podcasting License # A-726513.

Original compositions and arrangements remain the property of the artist, and are used with their express permission for performing, reprinting, recording, and streaming.



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 are on Sunday mornings, 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. Continuing 9/27, with the topic of :

- 9/27 The Faith We Sing;
Singing the Songs and Hymns to a different tune (with Britney Kieselhorst)
- 10/4 DOXA LOGIA
Worship Words and their Way with Us

ST. JOHN UCC STAFF

- Senior Pastor:
Rev. Henry E. “Hank” Fairman hank@stjohnuccfreeport.org
mobile: 703-473-3534
- Visitation Pastor:
Rev. Ted Michalsen ted@stjohnuccfreeport.org
- Director of Congregational Life:
Pam Wessel pam@stjohnuccfreeport.org
- Creative & Administrative Assistant:
Myles Halberstadt myles@stjohnuccfreeport.org
- Digital Media Assistants: Max Gibson, Elliot Fairman
- Music Director: Britney Kieselhorst britney@stjohnuccfreeport.org
- Church Musician: Randy Cook

Pastor Emeritus: Rev. Dr. Donnley Dutcher

1010 South Park Boulevard Freeport, IL 61032
815.235.2824 • www.stjohnuccfreeport.org



SEASON OF CREATION 4: RIVER SUNDAY
EIGHTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

September 27th, 2026 • 10:00 am

WELCOMING MUSIC and ANNOUNCEMENTS

- PRELUDE *Precious Lord* Dr. T. Dorsey,
Carl & Dianna Cole arr. C. Cole
- *CALL TO WORSHIP Diane Jochum

One: See the clouds part on this new day
and the colorful bow that reaches across the sky
as a sign of welcome

All: We come to remember
all that is between us and God, not just us.

One: Come to remember that that promise reaches to us
where we might see that colorful reflection.

All: Let us quake with anticipation and wonder,
feeling the water tickle our toes
and call us into the fullness of life.

One: You and I, let us ride on the rapids of hope.

All: Let us find the beauty and wonder
in being so connected to creation.

One: Let us be one in worship of our God.

- *HYMN *Crashing Waters of Creation* STUTTGART
NCH #326

*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)

Gracious God, be with us today,
in our joy and sorrow,
anticipation, and exhaustion.

Lead us to your life-giving water
so that we may be renewed
to carry out your transformative work
in the world.

Flow with us through the loud rushing rapids
and among the deep silent pools.

Acknowledge our many sources and outlets
for sharing our gifts as we come together
to find all that bubbles up in your wisdom.

Rivers are made for flowing free
– and so are our lives.

Move us into the current
of your creative energy
as we immerse ourselves
in worship and praise
with River as our guide.

Be with us in peace, flow with us in hope,
and flood us with love. Amen

GOD’S WORD IN SCRIPTURE

Psalm 78:1-4, 12-16

NRSV, Updated Edition

A MOMENT FOR ALL AGES

Anita Bicksler

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

Deep River
Carl & Dianna Cole

Spiritual; arr. C. Cole

GOD’S WORD IN SCRIPTURE

Matthew 21:23-32

NRSV, Updated Edition

MESSAGE

A River Runs Through It

Rev. Ted Michaelson

*HYMN

I Want Jesus to Walk with Me

WAR #506

SPIRITUAL

PRESENTING OUR HEARTS +AND GIFTS TO GOD

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

Down by the Riverside

Carl & Dianna Cole

Spiritual;
arr. C. Cole

Doxology (CH #48)

Praise God, from whom all blessings flow!
Praise Christ, all creatures here below!
Praise Holy Spirit, evermore!
One God, triune, whom we adore. Amen.

OLD 100TH

SHARING CELEBRATIONS AND CONCERNS

Prayers of the People & Pastoral Prayer

*HYMN

Lean On, O Cloud of Presence

CH #633

LANCASHIRE

*BENEDICTION

*RESPONSE

Touch the Earth Lightly

WAR #38, v.I

TENDERNESS

*POSTLUDE

Down by the Riverside (Reprise)

Carl & Dianna Cole

Spiritual;
arr. C. Cole

ANNOUNCEMENTS



NEXT 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.

Unlimited Refill Mugs \$10

(Last year’s mugs also receive free refills)

Tickets will be available on Sunday mornings,
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



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.

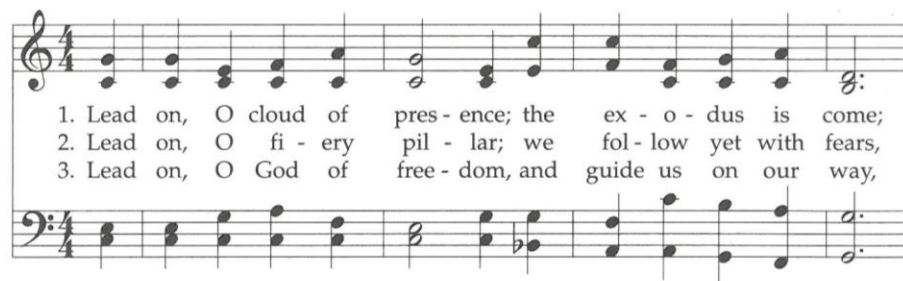
Crashing Waters at Creation

STUTT GART (8.7.8.7)

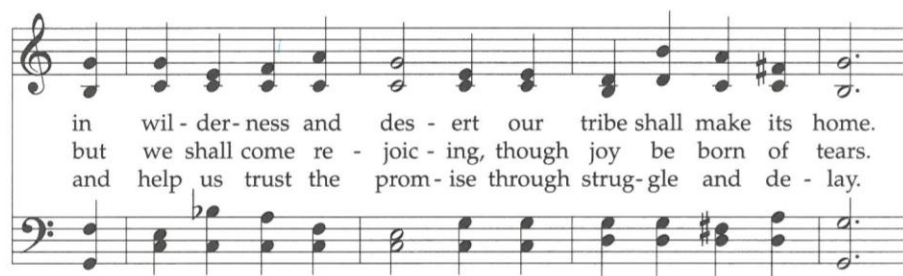
1. Crash - ing wa - ters at cre - a - tion or - dered by the Spir - it's breath,
2. Part - ing wa - ter stood and trem - bled as the cap - tives passed on through,
3. Cleans - ing wa - ter once at Jor - dan closed a - round the One fore - told,
4. Liv - ing wa - ter, nev - er end - ing, quench the thirst and flood the soul.

First to wit - ness day's be - gin - ning from the bright - ness of night's death.
Wash - ing off the chains of bond - age, chan - nel to a life made new.
O - pened to re - veal the glo - ry ev - er new and ev - er old.
Well - spring, Source of life e - ter - nal, drench our dry - ness, make us whole.

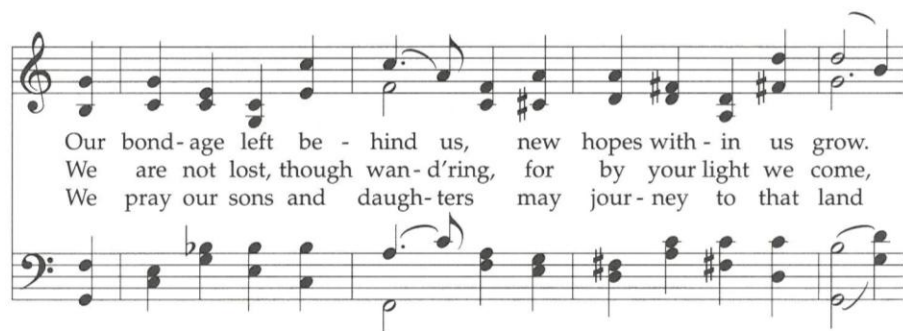
Lead On, O Cloud of Presence 633



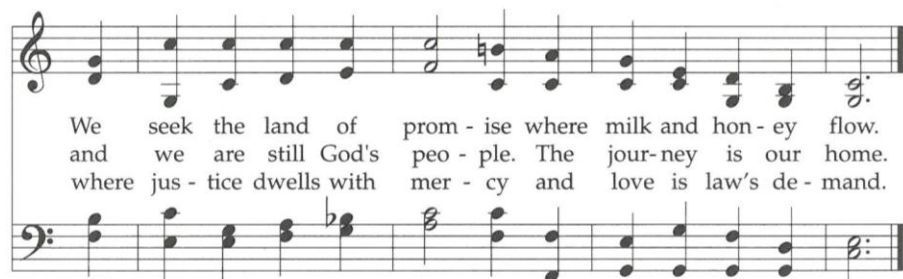
1. Lead on, O cloud of pres - ence; the ex - o - dus is come;
 2. Lead on, O fi - ery pil - lar; we fol - low yet with fears,
 3. Lead on, O God of free - dom, and guide us on our way,



in wil - der - ness and des - ert our tribe shall make its home.
 but we shall come re - joic - ing, though joy be born of tears.
 and help us trust the prom - ise through strug - gle and de - lay.



Our bond - age left be - hind us, new hopes with - in us grow.
 We are not lost, though wan - d'ring, for by your light we come,
 We pray our sons and daugh - ters may jour - ney to that land



We seek the land of prom - ise where milk and hon - ey flow.
 and we are still God's peo - ple. The jour - ney is our home.
 where jus - tice dwells with mer - cy and love is law's de - mand.

WORDS: Ruth Duck, 1974, rev. 1989
 MUSIC: Henry T. Smart, 1835

LANCASHIRE
 76.76D

Words © 1992 GIA Publications, Inc.

ANNOUNCEMENTS



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.



bit.ly/sjucccwisesurvey

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

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



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!