
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 will resume on 9/13, from 9:00-9:45. High school youth and adults of all ages are welcome to gather in the Chapel Hearth Room, exploring different topics and formats weekly.

Our next Adult Faith Formation series will examine the ways in which language tunes our love. We'll learn how the words we use to talk (and sing) about faith have changed over time to become more inclusive, more expansive, and more welcoming of all God's people.

ST. JOHN UCC STAFF

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SEASON OF CREATION I: FOREST SUNDAY FIFTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

September 6th, 2026 • 10:00 am

WELCOMING MUSIC and ANNOUNCEMENTS

PRELUDE

Come Christians, Join to Sing

arr. Neil Harmon

*CALL TO WORSHIP

Thompson Brandt

One: Come through the boundary of the night
into the light of this new day.

**All: We come to remember what is under our feet,
and be surprised by what is being planted.**

One: Let us grow together in our praise and delight,
feeling the wind tickle our branches,
and the groundwater feeding our roots.

**All: You and I, let us move in this gentle breeze to live
and move and have our being.**

One: Let us find the beauty and wonder in being God's
offspring together.

**All: So we come, forest, trees, and all,
and we worship!**

*HYMN

Come Labor On

ORA LABORA

GTG #719

*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.*

Silent Centering

Congregational Prayer (speaking together)

Grow with us, God,
to understand what it means
not only for us to be your offspring
but to share this identity
with the trees and rocks and creatures
creeping, crawling, flying and climbing
through Forest's boundaries.

Open us to find our first neighbors
and teachers in Forest today.

Help us to look and listen,
touch and hear
the goodness and wisdom
you have planted.

Ground us in this wisdom
so we can grow more and more
into your mystery. Amen.

Psalm 119:33-40 NRSV, Updated Edition

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.

The Bell Choir

Matthew 18:15-20 NRSV, Updated Edition

In celebration of Labor Day Weekend, you are invited to select one verse of your favorite hymn or song from the hymnal.

In honor of the upcoming seasons of Advent, Christmas, and Epiphany, please make selections outside of the range of #152-#247.

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.

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

Invitation to the Table

One: Come to taste God's Mystery.
Come to remember and believe
how connected we are with all that God created.

**All: God's Mystery gathers us here. It is not easily seen.
It is hard to grasp but her stories come to live in us.
And so we live in the community of Creation.**

Breaking Bread and Pouring Wine

Sharing the Elements

Christ's table is open to all who wish to participate.

*Red Wine and White Grape juice and **all bread is gluten free***

meeting the personal and dietary needs of every person.

Please take a serving cup and wait to join everyone gathered in the Sanctuary and at home in communion as one body in Christ's extravagant welcome and love.

We give you thanks, O God of Earth and Heaven,
for the life and knowledge that you have made known to us
through the way of Christ that teaches peace through love.

As this broken bread was scattered upon the mountains,
and being gathered together became one,
so may your church be gathered together
from the ends of the earth into your kingdom;
for yours is the glory and the power,
through Jesus Christ, forever and ever.

Amen.

*BENEDICTION

***POSTLUDE** *O, That I Had a Thousand Voices* arr. Paul Manz

Come, Labor On

532

Jane Laurie Borthwick, 1859, rev. 1863; alt.

Matt. 9:37-38; 20:1-7

1 Come, la-bor on. Who dares stay i - dle on the har-vest plain
 2 Come, la-bor on. Claim the high call-ing an - gels can-not share;
 3 Come, la-bor on. A - way with gloom-y doubts and faith-less fear!
 4 Come, la-bor on. No time for rest, till glows the west-ern sky,

while all a-round us waves the gold-en grain? And to each ser-vant
 to young and old the gos-pel glad-ness bear. Re-deem the time; its
 No one so weak but may do ser-vice here; Though fee-ble a-gents,
 till the long shad-ows o'er the path-way lie, And a glad sound comes

does the Sav-ior say, "Go work to-day."
 hours too swift-ly fly. The night draws nigh.
 may we all ful-fill God's righ-teous will.
 with the set-ting sun, "Well done, well done!"

Jane Laurie Borthwick, along with her sister, Sarah, was a member of the Scottish Free Church and translated many German hymns. English-born Thomas Tertius Noble was organist-choirmaster at St. Thomas' Church, New York City, for thirty-five years.

Tune: ORA LABORA 4.10.10.4.
 Thomas Tertius Noble, 1918

ANNOUNCEMENTS



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

Join with the community at St. John UCC in our second Oktoberfest festival! Dress in your finest German attire (lederhosen and dirndls welcomed!) and celebrate our community's German roots with great music, food, activities, and silent auction

If you'd like to participate or want to volunteer to help, please let us know by contacting Lisa Ebbers or the front office!

Tickets will be available Sundays beginning on 9/13 and at the door

Adults \$15.00, Children 10 and under \$10.00.

We hope this event will be a fun-filled event for St. John UCC and the whole Freeport community!

*Plan on arriving early and staying until the root beer ends!
 Can't wait to see you there! Prost!*

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).*



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 9/1-9/31.

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



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!



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>*



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 granola bars, fruit cups, pudding cups, applesauce cups, crackers, pretzels, or popcorn (snack-size items/multipacks only, please!). 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