

# Defining Moments

A vertical photograph featuring a person standing on a dark, flat horizon line. The sky above is filled with large, dramatic, billowing clouds in shades of white, grey, and blue. The text "Defining Moments" is written vertically in a large, bold, white sans-serif font, centered over the image.

**Welcome to St Peter's UCC Livestream Virtual Worship Service!** Subscribe to our **YouTube Channel** to catch a new service at 10 am each Sunday! We also share a **podcast** weekly of the scripture readings and sermon. The podcast can also be found on most podcast catchers & platforms, under "The Redheaded Preacher." Give us a like and 5-star rating to help others find us!

**Open Holy Communion.** We have communion the 1<sup>st</sup> Sunday of the month and we invite all Christians and seekers after God to partake of the Lord's Supper with us regardless of denominational background. To participate from home, please have a small cup of juice, wine, or other beverage you are comfortable with, and a piece of bread with you. When Rev. Lanford prompts us to "take and eat" (and "drink"), then we will all do so - physically separated, but together in spirit.

**Who We Are.** St. Peter's is an Open and Affirming congregation. We've been in the heart of downtown Skokie for over 152 years. We are a part of the United Church of Christ, which means we are passionate about our faith and open in our thinking. We believe in a Triune God who loves everyone, regardless of gender identity, orientation, race, status, or physical or mental ability, and we **welcome all people** to share worship, membership, marriage, baptism, funeral, and fellowship with us.

**Attendance.** We would like to get to know you better, too! If you are comfortable doing so, please put your first name and last initial in the comments section under the video, and where you are watching us from!

**Donations.** We have several options for giving, and your donation helps support our church and its various ministries. Now more than ever, every contribution (large or small) is important to keep us going:

- **Text Your Gift.** Text the amount you want to donate to **844-997-2346**.
- **PayPal.** Visit **PayPal.me/stpeteruccskokie** Uncheck the "Paying for Goods or Services" box to not pass on the fees to St Peters.
- **Vanco Give+ App.** Download the Vanco GIVE+ app from **iTunes** or **Google Play**, put in the church's zip code 60077 and select St. Peter's from the drop down. Set up an account with a password (or process as a guest), select your donation frequency, amount, and add payment info. There is also an option here to offset the processing fee.
- **Mail a Check.** We are collecting mail daily, and depositing regularly throughout the week.

**Contact Us.** You can email us – we are accessing email from home during the Shelter-in-Place order. Or call and leave a voicemail, we are picking up messages regularly while we are not in the building. Follow us on **Facebook** and **Instagram** for daily updates and messages, and check our website for additional details, weekly announcements, and more.

### **St. Peter's United Church of Christ**

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**\*OPENING RESPONSE: "Sing Hallelujah to the Lord"**

SSB #1

*Descant*  
Sing hal-le - lu-jah to the Lord.

*Unison*  
Sing hal-le - lu - jah to the Lord. Sing hal-le -

This system contains three staves of music. The top staff is a vocal line with a descant, starting with a whole rest and then moving to a series of eighth notes. The middle staff is a vocal line in unison, starting with a quarter note and ending with a half note. The bottom staff is a bass line with a quarter note and a half note.

Sing hal-le - lu - jah, hal - le - lu -

lu-jah to the Lord. Sing hal-le-lu - jah, sing hal-le -

This system contains three staves of music. The top staff is a vocal line with a quarter note and a half note. The middle staff is a vocal line with a quarter note and a half note. The bottom staff is a bass line with a quarter note and a half note.

1 2  
jah; sing hal-le - lu-jah to the Lord.

1 2  
lu - jah. Sing hal-le-lu-jah to the Lord.

This system contains three staves of music. The top staff is a vocal line with a quarter note and a half note, followed by a first ending and a second ending. The middle staff is a vocal line with a quarter note and a half note, followed by a first ending and a second ending. The bottom staff is a bass line with a quarter note and a half note.

## **\*CALL TO CONFESSION**

P: John the Baptizer appeared in the wilderness, proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. We, who have received the gift of baptism, recognize the need to confess our sins to remind ourselves of our finitude and of God's amazing grace.

## **\*PRAYER OF CONFESSION**

**Creator God, You have created us, but we have chosen to go our own ways. You have reclaimed us, but we have, by our arrogant attitudes and actions, rejected the claim. You have sent Your Holy Spirit to break into our controlled and unimaginative routines, and we have not appreciated that burst of creative energy. We are ready now, ready to admit that our ways are full of dangerous byways. Our mistakes and failures have often come because, in our false pride, we have not listened to You. Save us again by Your forgiving love! In Christ's name we pray. Amen.**

## **\*ASSURANCE OF PARDON**

Zechariah prophesied of his son John, "And, you, child, will be called the prophet of the Most High; for you will go before the Lord to prepare his ways, to give knowledge of salvation to his people by the forgiveness of their sins" (Luke 1:76, 77).

Salvation has since come in the person and work of Jesus of Nazareth, the Christ of God! The light of God's mercy

shines upon us, and upon the world, be it accepted or not. Forgiveness of sins is part of God's good news, accompanied by the transformation of our orientations to be towards this self-giving, loving God. In claiming the gospel, let the worshiping people scattered-but-one say . .

**All: Alleluia! Amen.**

\*HYMN: "Shine, Jesus, Shine"

SSB #32

*Refrain*



Shine, Je - sus, shine, fill this land with the Fa - ther's glo - ry;



blaze, Spir - it, blaze, set our hearts on fire.



Flow, riv - er, flow, flood the na - tions with grace and mer - cy:



send forth your Word, Lord, and let there be light!



1 Lord, the light of your love is shin - ing, in the midst of the  
2 As we gaze on your king - ly bright - ness, so our fac - es dis -



dark - ness, shin - ing; Je - sus, light of the world, shine up - on us,  
play your like - ness, ev - er chang - ing from glo - ry to glo - ry.



set us free by the truth you now bring us.  
mir - rored here. may our lives tell your sto - ry.

*Refrain*



Shine on on me. shine on on me:  
Shine on on me. shine on on me:

Text: Graham Kendrick

Music: SHINE, JESUS, SHINE, Graham Kendrick

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## **PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION**

Old Testament:

Beth Sterba  
Genesis 1: 1-5  
Psalm 29

## **MUSICAL MEDITATION** "Moderato con moto"

by César Frank

## **GOSPEL:**

Mark 1:4-11

## **A CALL TO OFFERING**

### **A CALL TO PRAYER** (sung)

"O Lord, hear my prayer, O Lord, hear my prayer, when I  
call, answer me;

O Lord hear my prayer, O Lord, hear my prayer, come and  
listen to me."

## **PASTORAL AND SILENT PRAYERS**

### **THE LORD'S PRAYER** ('debts')

**Our Father, who art in heaven,  
hallowed be Thy name.**

**Thy kingdom come, thy will be done,  
on earth as it is in heaven.**

**Give us this day our daily bread,  
and forgive us our debts,  
as we forgive our debtors.**

**And lead us not into temptation,  
but deliver us from evil;**

**for Thine is the kingdom, and the power,  
and the glory forever. Amen**

**SERMON:** "Words Create Worlds"

**HYMN:** "Creator of the Water" C.W. Gillette  
(Sing to the tune of "The Day of Resurrection")

**Creator of the water that makes the world so green,  
That satisfies the thirsty, and keeps us cool and clean,  
We take from your creation this gift we use each day;  
You call us now to use it in this most holy way.  
As in the time of Noah, the sea engulfed the land,  
And through the Red Sea, Moses led Israel 'cross the sand,  
And to the Jordan waters, Christ went and was baptized —  
Your water has a power: it changes all our lives.  
May this your gift of water, long springing from the earth,  
Become for all new Christians their fountain of rebirth.  
Lord, wash away their sinning, and give them life anew —  
Pour out your Spirit on them, that they may follow you.  
God, through your gift of water, your family we become;  
You take away divisions; in Christ you make us one.  
Now send your Spirit on us and give us work to do**

**That we may share with others the love we have from you.**

**Text: Copyright © 1998 by Carolyn Winfrey Gillette. All rights reserved.**

**CHARGE**

**BENEDICTION**

Jesus said to his disciples in a very fearful atmosphere, "In the world you have tribulation, but be of good cheer; for I have overcome the world" (John 16:33).

**All: Amen.**

**\*POSTLUDE:** "Shine, Jesus, Shine!"

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FOR WORSHIP TODAY

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MINISTER

Rev. Richard Lanford

MUSIC DIRECTOR

Ben Westphal

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**ANNOUNCEMENTS**

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**Good Morning!** "In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth" (Genesis 1:1): sky, waters, ground; sun, moon, stars; plants, animals, people. Then God rested. So, welcome to this time for rest and worship.

**We are always grateful for any and all offerings to the church.** No amount is too small! So many thanks to everyone who's been keeping us going with your donations! See inside front cover for details on how to donate.

**The Church Council meets next week via Zoom after worship.** If you are responsible for a report, please submit it (or them!) to the Council Drop box as soon as you can this week, so Council members will have plenty of time to read them ahead of the meeting Sunday. Thank you!

**Thank you to everyone who contributed baby items for the Niles Township Food Pantry through our Sunday School Advent / Christmas mission project!**

These were handed over last week. ALSO delivered to the Night Ministry last week were the hundreds of winter hats knitted by the Burmeisters and all the other winter-wear and related gifts for this offering. Thanks to the contributors and knitters, and at this closing-end, our members and staff who saw this through!

**Soft goods donations and special collection days!**

Now's a great time to clear out those closets, basements, storage lockers and garages and help us at the same time! We are collecting clothing, shoes, hats, belts, purses, linens, stuffed toys and bedding through the end of January. We get 20 cents/pound and our goal is 1,000 pounds. We will be at church for people to drop off donations January 20 and 27 6:30-8:30 pm and January 23 and 30 11:00-1:00. We also collect them on Mondays when the office is open. Anyone

who has keys can bring donations anytime, they should leave them in the gym.

**January 30th is our time to serve!** With the help of mission partners like St. Peter's, A Just Harvest Community Kitchen continues to provide delicious, hot meals 365 days a year even during a pandemic. Our day to serve traditionally comes on the fifth Saturday of the month. (In 2021 the months of January, May, July, and October have five Saturdays). Support from St. Peter's members and friends will help the Kitchen staff prepare a community meal to go. While we can't offer our typical meal of sloppy joes and side dishes and don't need to rally dining room helpers, we still need your participation in this hands-on ministry. Please make a financial contribution so that the Kitchen can purchase and prepare food for our hungry neighbors. We need \$500 to provide the community meal on January 30th. Please follow this link to let us know you can donate: **AJH Community Kitchen Pledge Tracker, January 2021**. St. Peter's collective generosity keeps the spirit of service alive even while we are physically apart. Please pledge and make your gift by January 20th so that we can continue this long-time ministry.

**Burmeisters Update:** Carol called our pastor last week to let him, and us, know that their plans for relocating to an assisted living place in Niles, has been moving forward more quickly than originally imagined. She and Ralph will keep us posted when they really do move; she is doing better now.

**FROM THE PRESIDENT** – Official Announcement about our Annual Meeting – In the interest of safety, and the likelihood that Illinois will not allow large gatherings by the end of January, Council is choosing to be pro-active and has decided to hold our Annual Meeting on January 31st as a Zoom call. We realize and acknowledge that NOT EVERYONE can attend this type of meeting. We are giving ample notice about this to allow for alternative solutions to this challenge. Perhaps if you are not able to Zoom, you can (safely) join a friend or family member on that day that CAN Zoom, and participate in that way. Or communicate your thoughts or concerns to a Council member before-hand ... we will allow proxies at this meeting. Sadly, we haven't figured out how to feed everyone this way ☹️ More information will be available about the Agenda items and meeting structure as we get closer to the meeting itself.

**It is safe to assume that, financials aside,** we ask everyone who is responsible for submitting a report for the Annual Congregational Meeting please do so by Monday, January 18th. A special drop-box folder for annual reports is in the St. Peter's Drop box here: **Dropbox Annual Report folder.**

**NEW St. Peter's Zoom Account!** We now have an official Church Zoom account. There are many more benefits we are able to use because of this. If you are having a Zoom meeting, contact Laura in the office and she'll share the

username and password so you might host an online meeting using the church account.

**Pastor's Podcast is now on all the Podcast platforms-** iTunes, Stitcher, Overcast, Spotify, Podcast Addict, Amazon Music and more. Just look up "The Redheaded Preacher" on your podcast catcher or music streaming service then hit subscribe and you'll get the newest editions weekly! Give us a 5-star rating and review if you can, it helps us grow so much.

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According to the schedule, due to a switch next week's Lector is Dan Guenther.

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**CHURCH LEADERSHIP**

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PRESIDENT	Jenn Schneider
VICE-PRESIDENT	Judy Paige
TREASURER	Mandy Steegmueller
SECRETARY	Carolyn Kuechler
FINANCIAL SECRETARY	Marcia Hilliard

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Now through January

WINTER

SOFT GOODS

FUNDDRIVE



ST. PETER'S  
UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

WELCOMING  
CONGREGATION  
IN ILLINOIS

DROP OFF AT  
THE GYM  
8013  
LARAME,  
SKOKIE OR  
CALL TO  
SCHEDULE  
(847)  
673-8166



WE NEED  
CLOTHING  
LINENS  
BEDDING  
STUFFED  
TOYS  
ACCESSORIES  
AND MORE

## FIRST SUNDAY AFTER EPIPHANY

January 10, 2021

Mark 1:4-11

### The Baptism of Christ Defining Moments

A rite of passage is a defining moment. Standing in the moment between two ages or phases of life, a rite of passage defines both who we were before the ritual and who we will become after it is completed. Anthropologists and theologians both know that we need rites of passage not only to know who we are individually but also to know who we are as part of our community. Without rites of passage, we cease to have these vital markers of our self and communal definition.

Baptism is a rite of passage for us, as it was for Jesus. Jesus goes to the river Jordan, where his cousin John is baptizing and calling for repentance or turning from sin. In the hundreds of pieces of art depicting this scene, we most often see Jesus alone with John - and sometimes the Holy Spirit in the form of a dove. But Jesus was hardly alone. The scripture tells us that *everyone* in Jerusalem was there, along with many from the countryside. There would have been a giant crowd with Jesus, to take part in and witness this important rite of passage.

Many cultures and religions, including the Judaism of John and Jesus' time had a ritual of washing. Jesus' baptism was an evolution of that ancient rite. It was not meant to replace the old ritual, but the meaning shifted to accommodate new understandings about God, society, and individuals.

Think about the rites of passage in your own life. Consider the times when you made a change from one stage or age to another. Who was there to witness and to participate? How did the presence of the wider community help you feel God's presence? In our changing time, how have new rites of passage grown out of old ones?



## SCRIPTURES FOR THE CONGREGATION

January 10, 2021

Genesis 1:1-5

In the beginning when God created the heavens and the earth, the earth was a formless void and darkness covered the face of the deep, while a wind from God swept over the face of the waters. Then God said, "Let there be light"; and there was light. And God saw that the light was good; and God separated the light from the darkness. God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night. And there was evening and there was morning, the first day. This ends the reading from Genesis. Our second reading is Psalm 29; an annotation in the Oxford Annotated Edition of the New RSV calls it "a hymn to the God of the storm."

Psalm 29

Ascribe to the LORD, O heavenly beings, ascribe to the LORD glory and strength.

Ascribe to the LORD the glory of his name; worship the LORD in holy splendor.

The voice of the LORD is over the waters;

the God of glory thunders, the LORD, over mighty waters.

The voice of the LORD is powerful; the voice of the LORD is full of majesty.

The voice of the LORD breaks the cedars;

the LORD breaks the cedars of Lebanon.

He makes Lebanon skip like a calf, and Sirion like a young wild ox.

The voice of the LORD flashes forth flames of fire.

The voice of the LORD shakes the wilderness;

the LORD shakes the wilderness of Kadesh.

The voice of the LORD causes the oaks to whirl, and strips the forest bare;

and in his temple all say, "Glory!"

The LORD sits enthroned over the flood;

the LORD sits enthroned as king forever.

May the LORD give strength to his people!

May the LORD bless his people with peace!

## Mark 1:4-11

John the baptizer appeared in the wilderness, proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. And people from the whole Judean countryside and all the people of Jerusalem were going out to him, and were baptized by him in the river Jordan, confessing their sins. Now John was clothed with camel's hair, with a leather belt around his waist, and he ate locusts and wild honey. He proclaimed, "The one who is more powerful than I is coming after me; I am not worthy to stoop down and untie the thong of his sandals. I have baptized you with water; but he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit."

In those days Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee and was baptized by John in the Jordan. And just as he was coming up out of the water, he saw the heavens torn apart and the Spirit descending like a dove on him. And a voice came from heaven, "You are my Son, the Beloved; with you I am well pleased."