

A photograph of a flock of sheep grazing in a field at sunset. A large, leafy tree stands in the center, with the sun setting behind it, creating a bright glow. The text "Weaving the Future" is overlaid in a white, cursive font across the tree and sky.

Weaving the Future

Welcome to St Peter's UCC Virtual Worship

Service! Subscribe to our [YouTube Channel](#) to catch a new service at 10am each Sunday! We also share a [podcast](#) weekly of the scripture readings and sermon.

Open Holy Communion. We have communion the 1st 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, 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 two online 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.

- **For one-time donations**, go to [PayPal.me/stpeteruccskokie](https://www.paypal.com/STPETERUCCSKOKIE) Uncheck the "Paying for Goods or Services" box to not pass on the fees to St Peters.
- **For regular giving**, 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, that is also an option), select your donation frequency, amount, and add payment info. There is also an option here to offset the processing fee.

You can still mail in a check, if that is easiest for you. 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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(Oakton and Laramie)
847-673-8166

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Ben Westphal (Music Director): bcwestphal@gmail.com

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OUR ORDER OF WORSHIP FOR
Sunday, July 26, 2020 10:00 AM
Eighth Sunday after Pentecost

WELCOME GUESTS!

* Indicates all who are able are invited to stand

PRELUDE: "St. Elizabeth" arr. Robert Thomspson

THE RINGING OF THE BELLS

THE SHARING OF ANNOUNCEMENTS Jenn Schneider

CALL TO WORSHIP

Leader: We have been called to walk the faithful road and to choose the way of God's justice.

Congregation: We tune in because we believe strongly that our God is good, and that we live in that goodness. We gather in spirit to proclaim our faith and to seek direction along this faith journey.

L: Come together in spirit, then, to be God's people. Follow Christ and listen for the

good things that God has done. Rise up
in praise and thanksgiving!

C: ***We will share with others the
goodness that we have found in
God. May our lives be an expression
of that grace!***

***PRAYER OF CONFESSION**

**We have promised to live as Your people, God.
Yet we confess that we fail You and one another.
As the body of Christ,
We are often disjointed and clumsy.
We do not work together as one to Your glory.
We refuse Your cry for help
In the voices of the poor and hungry.
We have not been faithful to the trust
You have placed in us.
Merciful God,
Receive us as we are, and forgive us.
Encourage us with Your love,
That we may commit ourselves anew to live
As those who belong to You;
Through the grace of Jesus Christ. Amen.**

***ASSURANCE OF PARDON**

Hear the good news: in the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus, we learn that God’s love has no bounds. In Christ we are forgiven and are empowered to begin anew in lives led by the Spirit! In laying hold of this great good news, let the whole church say . . .

All: Alleluia! Amen.

***HYMN: “For the Beauty of the Earth” # 12 (vv. 1, 3, 4)**

Adoration and Praise

12

FOLIOTT S. PIERPOINT, 1864 7. 7. 7. 7. 7. 7.

Abridged from Chorale, *Treuer Heiland*
DIX
CONRAD KOCHER, 1838

Joyously

1. For the beau - ty of the earth, For the glo - ry of the skies,
 2. For the won - der of each hour, Of the day and of the night,
 3. For the joy of hu - man love, Broth - er, sis - ter, par - ent, child,
 4. For Thy church that ev - er - more Lift - eth ho - ly hands a - bove,

For the love which from our birth O - ver and a - round us lies,
 Hill and vale, and tree and flower, Sun and moon, and stars of light,
 Friends on earth, and friends a - bove, For all gen - tle thoughts and mild,
 Of - fering up on ev - ery shore Her pure sac - ri - fice of love,

REFRAIN

Lord of all, to Thee we raise This our hymn of grate - ful praise. A - MEN.

WORDS ABOUT OFFERING

PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION

Mandy Steegmueller

Gospel:

Matthew 13:31-33, 44-52

MUSICAL MEDITATION: "Tallis Canon"

arr. Charles Callahan

EPISTLE:

Romans 8: 26-39

SERMON

The Rev. Catherine Watkins

***HYMN** "To What Can the Kingdom of God Be Compared"

(Sing to the hymn tune of "TO GOD BE THE GLORY")

To what can the kingdom of God be compared?

A mustard seed falls where a field's been prepared,

And there, where predictable plantings should be,

There grows up a wild bush — as big as a tree!

**God of love, here on earth, hidden things still
surprise:**

**Loving deeds ... signs of birth ... faithful, Spirit-
filled lives.**

Your reign is amazing, your ways still astound,

**Just like that new life springing forth from the
ground.**

A small bit of leaven will change the whole bread:

A poor woman sees that her neighbors are fed,

A church reaches out to the youth in the town,

A man shares his faith and God's blessings abound.

**God of love, here on earth, hidden things still
surprise:**

**Loving deeds ... signs of birth ... faithful, Spirit-
filled lives.**

**Your reign is among us, creation is blessed,
When even a few faithful lives change the rest.**

**While some look for treasure or one priceless pearl,
God's reign is the gift wise ones seek in this world.**

**A girl sells possessions to help those in need;
A boy chooses faithfulness rather than greed.**

**God of love, here on earth, hidden things still
surprise:**

**Loving deeds ... signs of birth ... faithful, Spirit-
filled lives.**

**Your reign is a treasure that wise ones pursue;
May we seek your kingdom in all that we do.**

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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.**

***HYMN:** "We are Marching in the Light of God" SSB #26



Si - ya - hamb' e - ku - kha - nyen' kwen - khos', si - ya - hamb' e - ku - kha -
 We are march - ing in the light of God. we are march - ing in the



nyen' kwen - khos'. Si - ya - hamb' e - ku - kha - nyen' kwen - khos',
 light of God. We are march - ing in the light of God.



si - ya - hamb' e - ku - kha - nyen' kwen - khos'.
 we are march - ing in the light of God.



Si - ya - ham - ba (ham - ba, si - ya - ham - ba) OO
 We are march - ing (march - ing, we are march - ing) OO



si - ya - hamb' e - ku - kha - nyen' kwen - khos'.
 we are march - ing in the light of God.



Si - ya - ham - ba (ham - ba, si - ya - ham - ba) OO
 We are march - ing (march - ing, we are march - ing) OO



si - ya - hamb' e - ku - kha - nyen' kwen - khos'.
 we are march - ing in the light of God.

Additional stanzas ad lib.:

We are singing ...

Text: South African traditional; tr. Freedom Is Coming, 1984

Music: SIYAHAMBA, South African traditional

Tr. © 1984 Utyrek, admin. Walton Music Corp.

*CHARGE AND BENEDICTION

***POSTLUDE:** "Siyahamba"

Traditional South African Melody

FOR WORSHIP TODAY

MINISTER

Rev. Richard Lanford

MUSIC DIRECTOR

Ben Westphal

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Good Morning! Welcome, dear friends. Because nothing can "separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Romans 8:39), we have gathered to respond in worship and praise.

We welcome the Rev. Catherine Watkins to our lectern / pulpit! A member of the First Congregational Church (U.C.C.), Evanston, she serves with and for those living with mental health challenges. Pastor knows her from CMA Cluster 1 and is glad she is available to bless us today!

For Sunday, August 2nd, the Lector / lay liturgist will be Annie Noorts, working in tandem with our guest preacher and Communion celebrant, the Rev. Brittany Caine-Conley of the Night Ministry! Remember to have Communion elements ready when the service starts so you don't have to scurry away and miss something.

The Church Council met last Sunday after virtual worship and made this decision on regathering: **"The strong consensus, and then the official vote, was in favor of NOT returning to in person worship at this time.** We will

NOT be gathering in person on August 9 or the following Sunday either. We will continue to provide worship via YouTube, and record the services on Saturdays. We do not anticipate gathering at St. Peter's for worship before September, and the likelihood of gathering in person for worship will not happen until later in the fall. We endeavor to remain flexible, and monitor this global health crisis, with an eye to the needs of our members and the ministries we support."

Our plans to shift to live-streaming worship when we are back in-person is still our hope but we are increasingly aware of its requirements, including 2 or 3 persons to manage the equipment weekly, and upgrades to certain things that could be pretty expensive. We will keep you posted.

HOSPITALIZED: June Peterson is now at Bella Serra for physical therapy and care (not Oakton Pavilion, where she had been before suffering a major gash in her thigh there, requiring 20 some stitches). Please keep her in your prayers! Beth Lanford's brother Dan's partner Eric is now in a physical therapy / rehab place in Texas and Ginger's friend Marty is at Wesley Place but still has BP and oxygen issues. Please hold them up too.

We are always grateful for any and all offerings to the church. No amount is too small! As we said in the opening announcements, you can support our work (and thus, your work too) by mailing in a check, signing up for electronic

giving, or using PayPal as indicated, with links, on the first main page of announcements. Depending on how you set up your PayPal account, you can arrange to pay whatever transaction fee there is yourself, or, that it will be included in your donation and deducted before it hits St. Peter's account (so St. Peter's, in effect, pays it). Thank you very much for giving!

Thanks to everyone who took delivery, carry-out, or dined-outdoors at Skokie's Village Inn last Thursday in our fundraiser there!

Pastor wants to hold a "New Members / Seekers Class" over Zoom before (or during) the end of the summer. If you are interested in participating, and perhaps later join St. Peter's United Church of Christ, please contact him soon!

The "White Privilege: Let's Talk" study and discussion continues for one more session this coming Wednesday the 29th at 6:30 PM.

Rummage Sorting is happening! It is Tuesday and Wednesday evenings from 6:30 to 8:30 PM.

Having birthdays this week are Alice Schaller, Ryan Miller, Ralph Burmeister and Linda Haig. Blessings upon you on your birth-anniversary days!

Pastor Richard returns from vacation Wednesday, August 5th. He is taking Tuesday the 4th as a day off. If

pastoral services are needed or desired while he is away, contact Laura Olson, Jenn Schneider or Judy Paige. They have the contact info for some pastors who are willing to be contacted in emergencies while he's gone.

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Pastor's podcasts The Redheaded Preacher, is available online anytime by clicking this link:

<https://soundcloud.com/user-601376219>. Each week we record Pastor's sermon and the scripture readings. Great for walks while you stay safe! If people don't have time to sit before a screen for most of an hour, the podcast gives you the Scriptures by the lector and message. If people don't have time to sit before a screen for most of an hour, the podcast gives you the Scriptures by the lector and message.

CHURCH LEADERSHIP

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

Weaving the Future

The National Youth Event (NYE), which met earlier this week at Purdue University in Indiana, brought together thousands of young people from across the United Church of Christ for a week of worship, fellowship and engaged service, built on 6 pillars. As you read more about each of these pillars, consider what your youth will find at home. How will the youth continue to build on the foundation that they have begun to build? Will they find these pillars in place in their home church? How do the adults in your community make the youth, and their ongoing faith journey, a priority?

Faith

NYE grounds youth in the love and power of the Gospel as well as the identity and community of the United Church of Christ through worship and spiritual journey.

Reflection

NYE empowers youth through courageous reflection and the critique of systems and power that diminishes the humanity and God-image of every person and community.

Encounter

NYE calls youth to serve and demonstrate the Gospel's solidarity and radical pastoral accompaniment, recognizing we are already connected to that which we engage.

Justice

NYE lives into the mission of the United Church of Christ, sustained by grace, to build a just world for all.

Community Building

NYE sustains youth through community building and celebration of life, building strong connections for a lifetime journey.

Leadership

NYE cultivates the leadership of our youth, from its planning to realization, calling youth to create and problem solve towards a just world for all.



SCRIPTURES FOR THE CONGREGATION

July 26, 2020

MATTHEW 13:31-33, 44-52

Jesus put before them another parable: "The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed that someone took and sowed in his field; it is the smallest of all the seeds, but when it has grown it is the greatest of shrubs and becomes a tree, so that the birds of the air come and make nests in its branches."

He told them another parable: "The kingdom of heaven is like yeast that a woman took and mixed in with three measures of flour until all of it was leavened."

"The kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field, which someone found and hid; then in his joy he goes and sells all that he has and buys that field.

"Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant in search of fine pearls; on finding one pearl of great value, he went and sold all that he had and bought it.

"Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a net that was thrown into the sea and caught fish of every kind; when it was full, they drew it ashore, sat down, and put the good into baskets but threw out the bad. So it will be at the end of the age. The angels will come out

and separate the evil from the righteous and throw them into the furnace of fire, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

"Have you understood all this?" They answered, "Yes." And he said to them, "Therefore every scribe who has been trained for the kingdom of heaven is like the master of a household who brings out of his treasure what is new and what is old."

ROMANS 8:26-39

"Likewise the Spirit helps us in our weakness; for we do not know how to pray as we ought, but that very Spirit intercedes with sighs too deep for words. And God, who searches the heart, knows what is the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints according to the will of God.

We know that all things work together for good for those who love God, who are called according to his purpose. For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, in order that he might be the firstborn within a large family. And those whom he predestined he also called; and those whom he called he also justified; and those whom he justified he also glorified.

What then are we to say about these things? If God is for us, who is against us? He who did not withhold his own Son, but gave him up for all of us, will he not with him also give us everything else?

Who will bring any charge against God's elect? It is God who justifies. Who is to condemn? It is Christ Jesus, who died, yes, who was raised, who is at the right hand of God, who indeed intercedes for us.

Who will separate us from the love of Christ? Will hardship, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?

As it is written, "For your sake we are being killed all day long; we are accounted as sheep to be slaughtered."

No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor rulers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord."