

Wheat and Weeds Together



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
8013 Laramie Avenue, Skokie, IL 60077
(Oakton and Laramie)
847-673-8166

www.stpeteruccskokie.org

Rev. Richard Lanford (Pastor): revlanford@gmail.com

Laura Olson (Office Manager): office@stpeteruccskokie.org

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

St. Peter's United Church of Christ
Oakton Street and Laramie Avenue, Skokie, IL
www.stpeteruccskokie.org
847-673-8166

OUR ORDER OF WORSHIP FOR
Sunday, July 19, 2020 10:00 AM
Seventh Sunday after Pentecost

WELCOME GUESTS!

* Indicates all who are able are invited to stand

PRELUDE: "Come, Christians Join to Sing" arr. Mark Hayes

THE RINGING OF THE BELLS

THE SHARING OF ANNOUNCEMENTS Jenn Schneider

CALL TO WORSHIP

Pastor: Come, all of you who long for light.

**Congregation: *We want to see the light shining in
the midst of the darkness.***

P: Come, all of you who want your joy to be
increased.

C: *We yearn to be filled with this joy.*

P: Come, all of you who are carrying heavy
burdens.

**C: *We have many to offer. Take them
from us, Lord!***

P: Come, all who need a Savior.

C: *We are seeking the Wonderful Counselor, the Mighty God, the Prince of Peace.*

P: Come, wherever we are, let us worship the Lord.

C: *We are with you in spirit to praise our God!*

***PRAYER OF CONFESSION**

Search us and test us, that all wickedness may be purged from us, O Creator. Save us from the futile striving after our own advantage. Reshape our will to conform with Your intentions for us. We confess that we have allowed weeds to grow in our lives. Our focus has drifted away from the harvest You plan to the fears and possessiveness that hold us hostage. Release us, O God, from bondage to decay, that we may grow in likeness to Jesus Christ. We want to bear fruit for You. Turn us to the brightness of Your new day. In Christ's name we pray. Amen.

***ASSURANCE OF PARDON**

Paul wrote in Romans 6, "So what advantage did you then get from the things of which you now are ashamed? The end of those things is death. But now that you have been freed from sin and enslaved to God, the advantage you get is sanctification. The end is eternal life. For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord" (vv. 21-23).

When we remain adhered to any part of ourselves that is apart from Christ, we serve it, but the payment at the end is death. Jesus offers us a free gift, grace by definition, which is forgiveness, transformation via the Holy Spirit, and a resurrection life here and in the hereafter. Thanks be to God! Amen!

***HYMN:** "O for a Thousand Tongues to Sing"

SSB # 6 (vv. 1-3)

1 O for a thou-sand tongues to sing my great Re-deem-er's praise,
 2 My gra-cious Sav - ior and my God, as - sist me to pro - claim,
 3 Je - sus! the name that calms our fears, that bids our sor - rows cease
 4 Glo - ry to God, and love and praise be ev - er, ev - er given

The glo - ries ev - er ech - o - ing the tri - umphs of God's grace!
 To spread through all the earth a - broad the hon - ors of your name.
 Is mu - sic in the sin - ner's ears, is life, and health, and peace!
 By all the saints in ev - ery age, the church in earth and heaven.

The hymn is a cento from a longer poem of eighteen stanzas written by Charles Wesley on the first anniversary of his conversion. The present form of the hymn is one edited by John Wesley for The Wesleyan Hymn Book, 1780.

Tune: AZMON C.M.
 Carl G. Gläser, 1828
 Adapt. in L. Mason's Modern Psalmody, 1839
 Alternate tune: RICHMOND

WORDS ABOUT OFFERINGS

PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION

Barb Todd

Epistle:

Romans 8: 12-25

Gospel:

Matthew 13: 24-30, 36-43

MUSICAL MEDITATION: "How Great Thou Art"

arr. Chris Rice

SERMON "The Hard Work Before the Harvest"

***HYMN "When We Face an Unknown Future"**

(Please sing this to the tune of the Easter hymn "Alleluia, alleluia" aka Hyfrydol)

**When we face an unknown future that we can't
imagine yet,
when the closeness we have treasured turns from
blessing into threat —
As we miss our friends and loved ones, as we crave
community,
may we look, God, in this season, for a whole new
way to be.**

**Jesus faced the lonely desert as a time to look
within.
There he met such trial and conflict; there he knew
you were with him.
In this time of separation when we miss the life
we've known,**

**may we hear your voice proclaiming: "I am here!
You're not alone."**

**May we cherish those around us as we never have
before.**

**May we think much less of profit; may we learn
what matters more.**

**May we hear our neighbors' suffering; may we see
our neighbors' pain.**

**May we learn new ways of offering life and health
and hope again.**

**God, when illness comes to threaten, and when so
much here goes wrong,**

**may we know this thing for certain — that your
love is sure and strong.**

**You're beside us in our suffering — and when times
are surely tough,**

**we may face an unknown future, but it's filled,
Lord, with your love.**

(Text: Copyright © 2020 by Carolyn Winfrey Gillette. All rights reserved. This is a new hymn for singing during the COVID-19 pandemic. Churches have permission to use this hymn for free.)

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 an Offering"

SSB #11

We lift our voi - ces, — we lift our hands, — we lift our
lives — up to You, we are an of - fer - ing; — Lord, use our
voi - ces, — Lord, use our hands, — Lord, use our
lives, — they are Yours, we are an of - fer - ing. —
All that we have, — all that we are, —
all that we hope to be we give to You, we
give to You. — We lift our
voi - ces, — we lift our hands, — we lift our
lives — up to You, we are an of - fer - ing, — we are an of - fer - ing. —

***CHARGE AND BENEDICTION**

P: Paul gave both a charge and a blessing as he began to close his letter to the Galatians: "So let us not grow weary in doing what is right, for we will reap at harvest time, if we do not give up. So then, whenever we have an opportunity, let us work for the good of all, and especially for those of the family of faith." Amen!

C: ***Amen!***

***POSTLUDE:** "Praise, My Soul, the King of Heaven"

arr. John Gross

FOR WORSHIP TODAY

MINISTER

Rev. Richard Lanford

MUSIC DIRECTOR

Ben Westphal

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Good Morning! After a vision, Jacob declared, "How awesome is this place! This is none other than the house of God" (Genesis 28:17). This worship space, too, is the house of God, and so is your heart. Welcome.

Thanks to everyone who helped make today's virtual worship on YouTube possible, and thanks to everyone who watches and encourages others to watch! Your words of encouragement and appreciation, and especially when you tell us others have started joining us through word-of-mouth invitation, mean very much!

Today after the service, the Church Council meets for July. We will, among other items of business, revisit our current plan for using our building for members and friends for worship and meetings. The bottom line so far is, if our area does not go backwards in the metrics of the growth of COVID-19, our tentative, cautious plan is to gather as a congregation for a prayer service on our front lawn Sunday, August 9th (probably after the Farmers Market and New Life Church are gone) with no definite time set yet. Then we hope to return to the very sanitized sanctuary and building for 10 AM worship on August 16th. This decision will be revisited at the Council meeting today, as will our decision about whether, when, and how much to open the offices with exposure to the public.

Pastor and Beth Lanford are leaving on vacation this coming Thursday. He will be on vacation through Monday, August 3rd, and will still have Tuesday off as part of his $\frac{3}{4}$ time situation. He will have lined up pastors who are willing to be contacted in case of pastoral emergency during his absence. Check with either Laura Olson, Jen Schneider or V.P. Judy Paige if you need to contact one of them!

According to the schedule, next Sunday's lector and lay liturgist will be Mandy Steegmueller. The guest preacher for that service will be the Rev. Catherine Watkins, a member of the Congregational Church of Evanston (U.C.C.) whose ministry experience and calling has primarily been in the realm of mental health. This will be her first time preaching here. Then for August 2nd, the Lector / lay liturgist is

scheduled to be Annie Noorts, working in tandem with our guest preacher and Communion celebrant for August 2nd, the Rev. Brittany Caine-Conley of the Night Ministry! She preached here last fall.

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!

We hope to keep our freshly-repainted entrance doors to the St. Peter's building clean looking as long as possible, and some new informational / directional signs for being by doors are coming, we ask: Please, don't anyone tape anything to the doors! Old tape was one of the biggest issues in painting our new doors. We are looking into mounting a "tape rail" – a thin piece of black plastic to adhere signs etc. to when needed. But for now, please don't tape anything to the doors!

Having birthdays this week are Louise Dahm (?), Heidi Tarzian's son A. J., Justin Mitchell and Kaitlin Garcia. The question mark after Louise's name is after she moved out of

the area we have not heard from her or her family in a very long time.

The Board of Elders had a conference call meeting last Thursday. The “White Privilege: Let’s Talk” study and discussion continues for another couple of Wednesdays at 6:30 PM.

HOSPITALIZED: June Peterson is now at Bella Terra 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). Address: 8425 Waukegan Rd., MG, 60053. Bill Schaller is undergoing some infusion therapy of Rituxan as an outpatient. Please keep them in your prayers! Aaliyah Svenson’s mystery weakness and tightness returned and has asked for continued prayer. 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-level issues. Please hold them up too.

We will be sorting rummage this summer! Though our sale will not be a normal one and our sorting will look a little different and adhere to social distancing guidelines, we do have some plans to sort all the rummage we’ve accumulated so far. We’ll start evening sorting this week on Tuesdays and Wednesdays from 6:30-8:30 PM. More information will be sent out in our Monday weekly “Quarantine emails.” Contact Annie Noorts for more information or the office and also to schedule a time to drop off rummage.

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!

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.

Today’s Prayer of Confession is reprinted by permission of United Church Press from Taught by Love by Lavon Bayler. Copyright 1998 by United Church Press; copyright 2002 by The Pilgrim Press.

CHURCH LEADERSHIP

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

SEVENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

July 19, 2020

Matthew 13:24-30, 36-43

Wheat and Weeds Together

Jesus taught an agricultural and fishing people who were close to the source of the food they shared and consumed. Most people are many steps separated from the production of the food we eat each day. But, even if we have less understanding of agriculture than our ancestors did, we still understand that Jesus' command to feed one another refers to physical as well as spiritual feeding.

Whether or not they know where or how their food is grown, many United Church of Christ congregations affirm that food once produced is meant to be shared. Food pantries and meals offered by UCC congregations live out the most basic form of care for one another - giving of food.

Windsor Severance Food Pantry at Faith UCC in Colorado gives away the canned goods familiar to many food pantries. But they also offer an evening of fellowship and eating together each Wednesday evening. The pantry truly offers "a place at the table" for anyone in the neighborhood looking for a hot meal. You can find out more about their work at: <https://www.faithunitedchurchofchrist.com/a-place-at-the-table>.

The food pantry in Kirtland, Ohio's Old South United Church of Christ has seen so much need in recent years that they have expanded into three times their former space. Now Kirtland's pantry has moved to a more modern model of providing food. Clients to the pantry now shop the shelves, as if they are in a grocery store. You can read more at: https://www.news-herald.com/news/ohio/kirtland-s-old-south-united-church-of-christ-reopens-food/article_10bbff05-6707-52e0-af30-f795736acf98.html.

In Connecticut, the food pantry in Norfolk United Church of Christ pantry recently expanded not space, but hours, making their food pantry more accessible to those in need in their town. More here: <http://norfolkctucc.org/ucc/norfolk-food-pantry/>.

Wherever you are located, give some thought to your local congregation. How do you follow Christ's lead in feeding people in body as well as spirit? Prayerfully consider if there is some way that you could expand your feeding programs.



SCRIPTURES FOR THE CONGREGATION

July 19th, 2020

ROMANS 8:12-25

“¹²So then, brothers and sisters, [□] we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh—¹³for if you live according to the flesh, you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live. ¹⁴For all who are led by the Spirit of God are children of God. ¹⁵For you did not receive a spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you have received a spirit of adoption. When we cry, “Abba! [□] Father!” ¹⁶it is that very Spirit bearing witness [□] with our spirit that we are children of God, ¹⁷and if children, then heirs, heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ—if, in fact, we suffer with him so that we may also be glorified with him.

¹⁸I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory about to be revealed to us. ¹⁹For the creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the children of God; ²⁰for the creation was subjected to futility, not of its own will but by the will of the one who subjected it, in hope ²¹that the creation itself will be set free from its bondage to decay and will obtain the freedom of the glory of the children of God. ²²We know that the whole creation has been groaning in labor pains until now; ²³and not only the creation, but we ourselves, who have the first fruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly while we wait for adoption, the

redemption of our bodies. ²⁴For in hope we were saved. Now hope that is seen is not hope. For who hopes for what is seen? ²⁵But if we hope for what we do not see, we wait for it with patience.”

MATTHEW 13:24-30, 36-43

“²⁴ Jesus put before them another parable: “The kingdom of heaven may be compared to someone who sowed good seed in his field; ²⁵but while everybody was asleep, an enemy came and sowed weeds among the wheat, and then went away. ²⁶So when the plants came up and bore grain, then the weeds appeared as well. ²⁷And the slaves of the householder came and said to him, ‘Master, did you not sow good seed in your field? Where, then, did these weeds come from?’ ²⁸He answered, ‘An enemy has done this.’ The slaves said to him, ‘Then do you want us to go and gather them?’ ²⁹But he replied, ‘No; for in gathering the weeds you would uproot the wheat along with them. ³⁰Let both of them grow together until the harvest; and at harvest time I will tell the reapers, Collect the weeds first and bind them in bundles to be burned, but gather the wheat into my barn.’”

³⁶Then he left the crowds and went into the house. And his disciples approached him, saying, “Explain to us the parable of the weeds of the field.” ³⁷He answered, “The one who sows the good seed is the Son of Man; ³⁸the field is the world, and the good seed are the

children of the kingdom; the weeds are the children of the evil one,
³⁹and the enemy who sowed them is the devil; the harvest is the end
of the age, and the reapers are angels. ⁴⁰Just as the weeds are
collected and burned up with fire, so will it be at the end of the age.
⁴¹The Son of Man will send his angels, and they will collect out of
his kingdom all causes of sin and all evildoers, ⁴²and they will
throw them into the furnace of fire, where there will be weeping and
gnashing of teeth. ⁴³Then the righteous will shine like the sun in the
kingdom of their Father. Let anyone with ears listen!