



Shouts of

JOY

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, 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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(Oakton and Laramie)

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OUR ORDER OF WORSHIP FOR
Sunday, December 13, 2020 10:15 AM
Third Sunday of Advent

WELCOME GUESTS!

* Indicates all who are able are invited to stand

PRELUDE "O Promised One of Israel"
Ralph Vaughan Williams

THE SHARING OF ANNOUNCEMENTS Jenn Schneider

CALL TO WORSHIP

Pastor: God has shown love among us by coming into the world in Christ, that all people might live.

Congregation: My friends, if God has so loved us, we also ought to love one another, for if we love one another, God dwells in us.

P: Let us worship the Holy One

C: *and seek to love as we have been loved!*

CALL TO CONFESSION

P: God's winnowing fork separates faithful ones from the unfaithful, honest ones from the dishonest, gentle ones from those who vent their anger against the innocent. God seeks to remove the chaff from our lives, and in our best selves so do you and I. Please join me in prayer as we ask God to show mercy, to remove it now, and fashion our souls for the life that really is life.

***PRAYER OF CONFESSION**

P: O Holy God, our Advent waiting is a confession. We wait for a Messiah because the proud are still powerful, the mighty are still exalted, and hungry people stand unheard, and in growing numbers, at the door.

C: *We wait for Your incarnation in human form because we have not recognized You in our sister, we have not loved You in our brother, we have not served You in our neighbor.*

P: In the stillness of Advent love and light,

C: *Heal us and make us new through the good tidings of Your presence in our lives. In Christ's name we pray. Amen.*

***ASSURANCE OF PARDON**

“The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him and declared, ‘Here is the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world! This is he of whom I said, “After me comes a man who ranks ahead of me because he was before me.”’”

Jesus, the Good Shepherd of we the sheep; incarnate he is also the Lamb of God who takes away our sin and that of the world. By grace and in the name of Jesus the Christ, our sins are forgiven and we are offered a transformed life! Let all those who embrace this gospel join me in saying . . . Alleluia! Amen.

88

Our Lord Jesus Christ

VENI EMMANUEL

From Latin, 12th century
 Stanzas 1 and 2 Tr. JOHN MASON NEALE, 1851
 Stanza 3 Tr. HENRY S. COFFIN, 1916

8. 8. 8. 8. 8. 8. Ancient plain song, 13th century (Mode I)

Unison, with spirit

1. O come, O come, Em - man - u - el, And ran - som cap - tive
 2. O come, Thou Day-spring, come and cheer Our spir - its by Thine
 3. O come, De - sire of na - tions, bind All peo - ples in one

Is - ra - el, That mourns in lone - ly ex - ile here
 ad - vent here; Dis - perse the gloom - y clouds of night,
 heart and mind; Bid en - vy, strife and dis - cord cease;

HARMONY

Un - til the Son of God ap - pear. Re - joice! Re - joice! Em -
 And death's dark shad - ows put to flight. Re - joice! Re - joice! Em -
 Fill the whole world with heav - en's peace. Re - joice! Re - joice! Em -

UNISON

man - u - el Shall come to thee, O Is - ra - el!
 man - u - el Shall come to thee, O Is - ra - el!
 man - u - el Shall come to thee, O Is - ra - el! A-MEN.

LIGHTING THE THIRD ADVENT CANDLE

Lighting the Candle of Joy this morning and sharing some thoughts on what joy means to them are Barb Todd and Beth Sterba.

RESPONSE: "Light One Candle to Watch for Messiah"

Flute accompaniment by Lisa Nazar (v. 3)

Light One Candle to Watch for Messiah

ELW 240

Traditional Yiddish Folk Tune

Lyrics by Wayne L. Wold

Am Em/G F Dm

1. Light one can - dle to watch for Mes - si - ah:
 2. Light two can - dles to watch for Mes - si - ah:
 3. Light three can - dles to watch for Mes - si - ah:
 4. Light four can - dles to watch for Mes - si - ah:

3 E Am/E E Am E/B

let the light ban - ish dark - ness. He ___ shall bring sal -
 let the light ban - ish dark - ness. He ___ shall feed the
 let the light ban - ish dark - ness. Lift ___ your heads and
 let the light ban - ish dark - ness. He ___ is com - ing,

6 Am/C Dm Dm/F Dm

va - tion to Is - ra - el, God - ful - fills ___ the
 flock like a shep - herd, gent - ly lead ___ them
 lift high the gate - way for the King ___ of
 tell the glad tid - ings, Let your lights ___ be

8 E(sus4) E E(sus4) E Am

prom - ise.
 home - ward.
 glo - ry.
 shin - ing!

PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION

Old Testament:

David Iannotti

Psalm 126

Isaiah 61:1-4, 8, 9

The following is our third introduction to this Advent's Hymn of the Month, featuring, as did our "Light One Candle," accompaniment by flautist Lisa Nazar.

SPECIAL MUSIC: "Awake, Awake and Greet the New Morn"

by Marty Haugen

ELW 242

Awake! Awake and Greet the New Morn

Marty Haugen

♩ = 63

1. A - wake! a - wake, and greet the new morn, For
 2. To us, to all in sor - row and fear, Em -
 3. In dark - est night his com - ing shall be, When
 4. Re - joice, re - joice, take heart in the night, Though

an - gels her - ald its dawn - ing, Sing out your joy, for
 man - uel comes a sing - ing, His hum - ble song is
 all the world is de - spair - ing, As morn - ing light so
 dark the win - ter and cheer - less, The ris - ing sun shall

now he is born, Be - hold the Child of our long - ing.
 qui - et and near, Yet fills the earth with its ring - ing;
 qui - et and free, So warm and gen - tle and car - ing;
 crown you with light, Be strong and lov - ing and fear - less;

Come as a ba - by weak and poor, To bring all hearts to -
 Mu - sic to heal the bro - ken soul And hymns of lov - ing
 Then shall the mute break forth in song, The lame shall leap in
 Love be our song and love our prayer, And love, our end - less

geth - er, He o - pens wide the heav'n - ly door And
 kind - ness, The thun - der of his an - thems roll To
 won - der, The weak be raised a - bove the strong, And
 sto - ry, May God fill ev - ry day we share, And

Tag at end with ritard

lives not in - side us for - ev - er,
 shat - ter all ha - tred and blind - ness,
 weap - ons be bro - ken a - sun - der,
 bring us at last in - to glo - ry.

12/19/2018

GOSPEL:

John 1:6-8, 19-28

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**

A CALL TO OFFERING

CONGREGATIONAL RESPONSE:

**What can I give Him, poor as I am?
If I were a Shepherd, I would bring a Lamb.
If I were a magi, I would do my part.
Yet what can I give Him? Give my heart.**
(Written by Christina Rossetti)

SERMON

“Bringing in the Sheaves”

HYMN: "John Came Preaching, Bearing Witness"
(Sing to the tune of "Angels, from the Realms of Glory")

**John came preaching, bearing witness,
Pointing to God's only Son.
He proclaimed the truth with boldness:
"Now believe! God's light has come!"
Yet he would not be the focus;
He proclaimed a greater One.
Thank you, God, for all your servants
Who proclaim your light each day.
Brave and bold, like John, they bless us,
Pointing us to Jesus' way.
They proclaim your kingdom's nearness
In the things they do and say.
May we live in that tradition;
Fill us with integrity.
Take away our vain ambition;
Keep us in humility.
Make us faithful in our mission
As we serve Christ joyfully.**

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CHARGE & BENEDICTION

P: Go forth and carry on the journey of Advent. Continue your preparations, advance your planning, look to the future, but in all you and I are doing, let us keep

focused on the great gift, Jesus of Nazareth, the Christ Child of Bethlehem.

Remember, as benediction, the Light shines in the darkness, and the darkness will never overcome it. Walk in the Light as Christ is our Light. Amen.

***POSTLUDE:** "Gaude, Gaude! Emmanuel"

FOR WORSHIP TODAY

MINISTER

Rev. Richard Lanford

MUSIC DIRECTOR

Ben Westphal

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Good Morning! Welcome, family of Christ! Each person adds to our worship. Thank you for being here.

Next Sunday we light the Candle of Love. Another mom and daughter team help us as Annie Noorts and Molly Uchtman have agreed to share some on Love and light its Advent Candle.

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.

Christmas Eve Plans: Will be finalized (in this pandemic?!) by your Church Council which meets via Zoom after worship today.

Next week there will be a Zoom Coffee Hour, hosted by your Micah 6:8 Committee! It features a brief new video from our mission partner the Night Ministry letting us know what the new happenings there are. Please plan to stay after worship next Sunday!

Offering Envelopes & Haben 2021 Calendars: We will have these things on a table in the hall by the office doors. If you have a key you can go in anytime to pick them up.

You can also pick them up during Baby Items drop off days (see article below). We will be mailing them to our shut-ins and those not in our area who use them regularly. If

you'd like yours mailed contact the office. We wish to limit this due to postage costs.

UPDATE & slight change! Baby Items for the Niles

Township Collection: To keep things COVID safe we will be collecting these items on these days: **Monday, Dec. 14th from 9 AM to 2 PM (newly added);** Saturday, Dec. 19th from 1-2:30 PM; Monday, December 21st from 9 AM to 2 PM and January 4th from 9 AM to 2 PM. **On Saturday the 19th, we will be leaving the doors open for you to drop off the items and pick up your offering envelopes and a calendar if you wish.** On the Mondays, we ask that you ring the bell if you don't have a key, and leave the item outside. *If you'd like your offering envelope, just wait 6 feet from the door and we'll get it for you.* If you have a key you can go in and drop off the items and grab your envelopes. Thanks so much!

Soft Goods Drive. Now through January start cleaning out your storage areas and give us all your soft goods such as clothing, accessories like belts, purses, shoes, linens, bedding, stuffed toys, coats, etc. You need to call the office to schedule a drop off. Laura is there on Mondays but not always near the door, so call ahead if you plan to come. If that doesn't work, we can coordinate with our volunteers to meet you there when it works for you. (847) 673-8166.

Jewel Holiday Meal program- Meals will be distributed in time for Christmas, but donations are needed. Please be sure to get those donations in at the nearby Village Crossing Jewel

if you haven't. You can donate at the register or go to the service desk at the Jewel on Touhy at the Village Crossing Shopping Center in Niles. Thanks so much!

Wishing Mrs. Judy Paige a very happy birthday on the 16th!

Thanks to everyone who was able to participate in last week's Village Inn Pizza Fundraiser.

The Quarantine Weekly for this past week included information about our 2020 December and January 2021 mission projects and fundraisers, with links to lists or ways to donate, including dropping stuff off here in person at a scheduled time. Please read it if you haven't, and check these email-letters regularly for important information. This includes the annual United Church of Christ offering for Veterans of the Cross and the Christmas Emergency Fund. Donations to this fund through St. Peter's U.C.C. directly help our retired (and in some cases still employed) U. C. C. pastors, widowed clergy spouses, and some lay employees with health insurance premium supplementation, emergency cash grants, pension supplementation for those retirees with low pension funds, and Christmas 'Thank You' gift checks. All gifts and supplementations are administered by the U.C.C. Pension Boards' charitable arm, the Board for Ministerial Assistance. Checks sent to the church should be marked in the memo section as designated for this Veterans of the Cross offering. Thank you!

According to the schedule, next week’s Lector is Karen Christianson.

There will not be a virtual worship service on Sunday, December 27th but tune in at 10:15 AM for a brief video message from our Pastor (who will be on vacation the 5 days after Christmas).

We appreciate very much the musical offerings of Lisa Nazar on her flute for our worship today! Thank you, Lisa!

Laura will be taking off Tuesday, Dec. 15th. Pastor will call in as usual for messages.

Our prayer of confession, here responsive, is reprinted by permission of the publisher from Touch Holiness (Resources for Worship, Updated), ed. Ruth C. Duck and Maren C. Tirabassi. Copyright 1990 by The Pilgrim Press, Copyright 2012 Ruth C. Duck and Maren C. Tirabassi.

CHURCH LEADERSHIP

PRESIDENT	Jenn Schneider
VICE-PRESIDENT	Judy Paige
TREASURER	Mandy Steegmueller
SECRETARY	Carolyn Kuechler
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Now through January

WINTER

SOFT GOODS

FUNDDRIVE



ST. PETER'S
UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

LGBTQ
CONGREGATION
IN ILLINOIS

DROP OFF AT
THE GYM
8013
LARAME,
SKOKIE OR
CALL TO
SCHEDULE
(847)
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WE NEED
CLOTHING
LINENS
BEDDING
STUFFED
TOYS
ACCESSORIES
AND MORE

Shouts of Joy

If you've ever been through a period of grieving, it's likely that someone in your life has, at one time or another, shaken their head and clucked their tongue and assured you that "God doesn't give anyone more than they can handle." Or, maybe that someone patted your hand and said "God is just testing you right now. If you have enough faith, you can get through it." Or maybe even, "Don't cry."

These platitudes, although they are usually intended to comfort, can instead sting. They can leave the recipient feeling that if only their faith was stronger, they would not feel sad or angry.

The psalmist shows us a different way of thinking of God. The psalmist knows that hard times and sorrows are neither tests from God, nor signs of the displeasure of God. The author of Psalm 126 sings instead that sorrows and grieving are just part of life. These words remind us that God does not bring misfortune; instead God is with us in our grief.

One UCC church in New Hampshire wanted to demonstrate God-with-us to the whole neighborhood last Advent. Motivated by the tragic death in their congregation, the church decided to show God's light in the darkness of grief. They invited members of the church to purchase a string of Christmas lights in memory of someone who had passed. Overseen by a professional lighting design company, it took twenty volunteers to hang all the lights that were donated. When the thousands of lights were strung together all over the outside of the building and surrounding greenery, they were a very visible reminder to all who passed of the light of the presence of God in the community. *See link below.

During Advent, we anticipate the incarnation - the coming of the God to earth in the form of a human. The Divine One comes to us as Christ Jesus to remind us that through all the ups and downs and griefs of life, God is never far from us. And, like memorial lights in a New England winter, that presence can bring more joy than all the well-meaning words in the world.

*https://www.ucc.org/news_light_bulbs_tragedy_memorial_idea_set_n_h_church_aglow_for_christmas_12202019



SCRIPTURES FOR THE CONGREGATION

December 13th, 2020

Psalm 126

When the LORD restored the fortunes Zion,
we were like those who dream.

Then our mouth was filled with laughter,
and our tongue with shouts of joy;

then it was said among the nations,

“The LORD has done great things for them.”

The LORD has done great things for us, and we rejoiced.

Restore our fortunes, O LORD,

like the watercourses in the Negeb.

May those who sow in tears reap with shouts of joy.

Those who go out weeping, bearing the seed for sowing,

shall come home with shouts of joy, carrying their sheaves.

Isaiah 61:1 – 4, 8-9

1 The spirit of the Lord GOD is upon me,
because the LORD has anointed me;
he has sent me to bring good news to the oppressed,
to bind up the brokenhearted,
to proclaim liberty to the captives, and release to the
prisoners;

2 to proclaim the year of the LORD’S favor,
and the day of vengeance of our God;
to comfort all who mourn;

3 to provide for those who mourn in Zion—
to give them a garland instead of ashes,
the oil of gladness instead of mourning,
the mantle of praise instead of a faint spirit.
They will be called oaks of righteousness,

- the planting of the LORD, to display his glory.
- 4 They shall build up the ancient ruins,
they shall raise up the former devastations;
they shall repair the ruined cities,
the devastations of many generations.
- 8 For I the LORD love justice, I hate robbery and
wrongdoing;
I will faithfully give them their recompense,
and I will make an everlasting covenant with them.
- 9 Their descendants shall be known among the nations,
and their offspring among the peoples;
all who see them shall acknowledge
that they are a people whom the LORD has blessed.

John 1:6 – 8, 19 - 28

- 6 There was a man sent from God, whose name was John.
- 7 He came as a witness to testify to the light, so that all might
believe through him. 8He himself was not the light, but he
came to testify to the light.
- 19 This is the testimony given by John when the Jews sent
priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, “Who are
you?”
- 20 He confessed and did not deny it, but confessed, “I am not
the Messiah.”
- 21 And they asked him, “What then? Are you Elijah?” He said,
“I am not.” “Are you the prophet?” He answered, “No.”
- 22 Then they said to him, “Who are you? Let us have an
answer for those who sent us. What do you say about
yourself?”
- 23 He said,

“I am the voice of one crying out in the wilderness,
‘Make straight the way of the Lord,’” as the prophet Isaiah
said.

24 Now they had been sent from the Pharisees.

25 They asked him, “Why then are you baptizing if you are
neither the Messiah, nor Elijah, nor the prophet?”

26 John answered them, “I baptize with water. Among you
stands one whom you do not know,

27 the one who is coming after me; I am not worthy to untie the
thong of his sandal.”

28 This took place in Bethany across the Jordan where John
was baptizing.