



Welcome to St Peter's UCC In-Person and 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 on our website 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 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](https://www.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

8013 Laramie Avenue, Skokie, IL 60077

(Oakton and Laramie)

847-673-8166

Our network name is: ATTUNITEDCHURCH; Pass: UNITEDCHURCH8166

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
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OUR ORDER OF WORSHIP FOR
Sunday, January 9, 2022 10:00 AM
First Sunday after Epiphany

WELCOME GUESTS!

* Indicates all who are able are invited to stand

PRELUDE Theme and Variations on "Helmsley"

THE RINGING OF THE BELLS

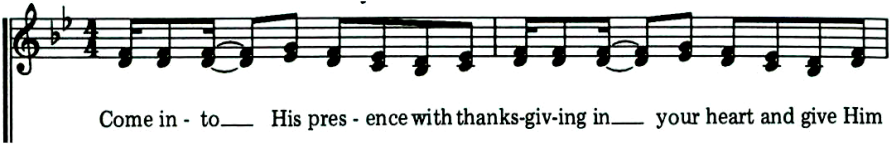
THE SHARING OF ANNOUNCEMENTS Jenn Schneider

***CALL TO WORSHIP**

Our Call to Worship is a song! Let's sing

"Come into His Presence"

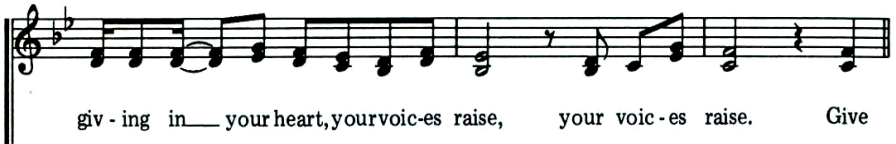
SSB #15




Come in - to His pres - ence with thanks-giv-ing in your heart and give Him



praise, and give Him praise; Come in - to His pres-ence with thanks-



giv - ing in your heart, your voic-es raise, your voic-es raise. Give



glo - ry and hon - or and pow - er un - to



Him, Je - sus, the name a-bove all names.

***CALL TO CONFESSION**

Pastor: Epiphany celebrates God's inclusiveness. The mystery of Jesus Christ is revealed, not to an elite few, but to the whole world.

Congregation: Yet we continue to build barriers to protect our own interests and keep others at a distance. If loyalty to God calls for accepting and embracing all God's children in love, we have much to confess!

***PRAYER OF CONFESSION (unison)**

God of Light, we admit our retreat into the shadows of pretension and exclusion. How often we choose to associate with people who are like us and then look down on, or away from, others who differ from us. It is easier to discover their sins than to admit our own. We judge the poor and unknowingly join their oppressors, while You call us to identify with those in need, that all may prosper together. We imagine that we alone are faithful stewards of Your grace, while You welcome, as fellow saints with us, many whom we ignore.

Save us from our earthbound judgments, O God, that we may look up and be guided by the star that draws all people to Yourself. Awed by Your forgiving presence, we kneel in our hearts to worship You. In Christ's name we pray. Amen.

***ASSURANCE OF PARDON**

Verse 10 of Hebrews 10 says "And it is by God's will that we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all." To be sanctified in this case, according to my study Bible, is to be "ceremonially cleansed and perfected." By our Savior Jesus. Through His offering of love to pay what we never could, our sins are wiped away and we become clean and complete before God, so great was the accomplishment of grace on Golgotha. Please join me in claiming aloud this priceless gift by saying together . .

.

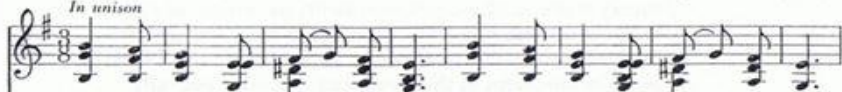
ALL: Alleluia! Thanks be to God!

RESPONSE:*"We Three Kings"**

SSB #37

(all verses but v. 3)

143

We Three Kings of Orient Are*John H. Hopkins, Jr., 1820-1891, alt.*KINGS OF ORIENT 8.8.8.6. with Refrain
*John H. Hopkins, Jr., 1820-1891**In unison*

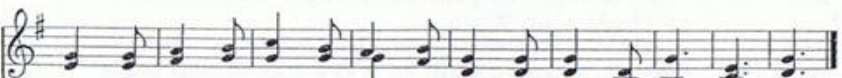
- 1 We three kings of O-ri-ent are, Bear-ing gifts we trav-erse a - far
 2 Born a king on Beth-le-hem's plain, Gold I bring to crown him a - gain,
 3 Frank-in-cense to of-fer have I, In - cense owns a de - i - ty nigh;
 4 Myrrh is mine; its bit-ter per-fume Breathes a life of gath-er-ing gloom:
 5 Glo-rious now be - hold him a - rise, King and God and Sac - ri - fice;



Field and foun-tain, moor and moun-tain, Fol-low-ing yon-der star.
 King for - ev - er, ceas - ing nev - er O - ver us all to reign.
 Prayer and prais - ing, all men rais - ing, Wor-ship him, God on high.
 Sor-rowing, sigh - ing, bleed - ing, dy - ing, Sealed in the stone - cold tomb.
 Al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia! Sounds through the earth and skies.



O star of won - der, star of night, Star with roy - al beau - ty bright,



West-ward lead - ing, still pro-ceed - ing, Guide us to thy per - fect light.



BIRTH

WORDS ABOUT OFFERING

PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION

Prophecy:

First Gospel:

Dan Guenther

Isaiah 43:1-7

Matthew 2:1-12

***MUSICAL MEDITATION** "Shine, Jesus, Shine!"

***GOSPEL THE 2ND:**

Luke 3:15-17, 21-22

***RESPONSE:** "Alleluia!"

#495

PASTORAL PRAYER AND SILENT PRAYERS

THE LORD'S PRAYER ('debts')

(The Lord's Prayer is on p. 37 of the hymnal)

SERMON: "In Good Company"

***HYMN:** ""Down by the Jordan"

(Sing to the hymn tune of "Praise Ye the Lord, the Almighty")

Down by the Jordan, a prophet named John was baptizing,

Preaching a message the people found bold and surprising:

"God will forgive! Show that you'll change how you live!

Surely God's new day is rising!"

There by the river, the crowd came with great expectation:

"Are you God's Chosen One, sent here to rescue our nation?"

"No!" John replied. "He who is mightier than I Judges and offers salvation."

**Jesus, you went to be baptized along with the others,
Taking your place among sinners, God's lost sons and daughters.**

**Then with great love, God's Spirit came as a dove!
Your work began in those waters.**

**Here in the Church, we are baptized and filled with
God's Spirit.**

**Freed and forgiven, we're welcomed with joy! Can
you hear it?**

**This is God's sign! This is how God says, "You're
mine!"**

Let's take the good news and share it!

(Text: Copyright © 2000 by Carolyn Winfrey Gillette. All rights reserved. Copied from Songs of Grace: New Hymns for God and Neighbor by Carolyn Winfrey Gillette; permission is given to those owning the book to reprint for a single worship service at a time (Upper Room Books, 2009).

Rev. Lanford owns a copy.

***CHARGE**

P: Go in peace;

C: Keep the faith;

P: Love one another;

C: Serve the Lord!

***BENEDICTION**

P: May the One who sent the star and sends still the Spirit, send you and me to those who need us. May those whom we need be sent to us. May the God who equipped Jesus for ministry in birth and baptism give us confidence that we, too, are given what we need so we can do what God calls us to do. Amen!

C: Amen!

***POSTLUDE:** "Kings of the Orient" arr. John Stallsmith
FOR WORSHIP TODAY

| | |
|----------------|-----------------------------|
| MINISTER | Rev. Richard Lanford |
| MUSIC DIRECTOR | Ben Westphal |
| DEACON | Beth Sterba |
| COUNTERS | Annie Noorts/Maria Altmayer |
| NURSERY | Annie Noorts |

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Good Morning! Welcome to worship — each and every one of you, a chosen and beloved child of God. May we follow Jesus into the work of ministry.

Please know that while we are foregoing regular coffee hours after worship, we do encourage folks to come downstairs to the Memorial Room after worship for conversation and fellowship!

FUNDrive: DATE EXTENDED UNTIL JANUARY 23rd! Due to the postponement of our Outreach Open House (see below) we have decided to extend the date a week to collect more soft goods. *This also means our truck & loading date has changed. It is now January 29th!* We're collecting gently used clothing,

bedding, shoes, hats, purses, linens, belts, stuffed goods and more. Our goal is 1,000 lbs! Items are being collected right inside the door. Please note, do not bring the items to the stage per Annie. Drop off during office hours, on Sunday when we are open for worship, or call us and we'll make arrangements that work for you if we can (and you don't already have a key). If you have any questions on whether your items are donatable, contact Annie Noorts. ***On January 29th starting at 9 AM we need lots of helpers to load all the donations into a truck and haul them to Saver. We will also need a rental truck driver!***

POSTPONED: Our Outreach Open House has been postponed due to COVID surges. We feel with a large gathering we cannot fully protect ourselves and others and decided to postpone the event until spring, most likely after the Spring Craft Show. Our partners also agree and have limited and cancelled their upcoming events as well. When we have a new date we will let everyone know!

Hospitalized: Dorothy Panzke has left quarantine at Harmony House and was moved earlier this week to a different room. She is now in Room 308, Bed One; 3919 W. Foster, Chicago, 60625.

Other than financial information from the Board of Finance, all other Annual Reports for the upcoming January 30th Annual Congregational Meeting are due today to Office Manager Laura Olson.

Thanks to everyone who continues to donate to our mini-pantry. Just as we thought we were getting stocked up,

the pantry was almost empty Thurs morning, it is really being used by our community! So keep those donations coming, if you are able. You can bring them Sundays or during the week and leave your items in the narthex or downstairs on the shelves by the offices. Thank you so much for your generosity!

Your Church Council meets next Sunday after worship!

We ask that those responsible for reports to the Council please prepare them and upload them in the 2022 Council January drop-box as early in the week as you can.

Next Sunday, January 16, is also our Fundraiser with the

Village Inn! From 11 to 11, eat-in, carry-out or delivery, whatever you order (and mention you are with the St. Peter's U.C.C. fundraiser when you do) will help St. Peter's because afterward, the Village Inn will give the church 20% of all proceeds from your orders! We hope you can participate, and thank you if you do.

Having birthdays this week are Usha Rajbhandari (Peggy's daughter), Jenn Schneider, and Beth Brzozowski. We wish all of them a joyful celebration.

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!

According to the new 2022 Lector schedule, next Sunday's lector is Katy Schuhrke Aguayo; the nursery attendant will be Mike Ryan.

Pastor's podcast is available wherever you listen to podcasts! Just type in "The Redheaded Preacher" and you'll find us! Pastor's weekly podcasts include the prior Sunday's scriptures & sermon, and some words and prayer from Pastor just for the listeners of the podcast! Check it out!

Today's call to confession, prayer of confession, and prayer for illumination are reprinted by permission of United Church Press from Gathered by Love by Lavon Bayler, copyright 1994 by United Church Press.

Thanks to everyone who held the fort (church) during Pastor's vacation.

A Just Harvest Kitchen is this month – Since January has 5 Saturdays, this means it is our "turn" on the 5th Saturday to "serve" (donate for now) to the Community Kitchen of A Just Harvest! Since The Virus hit, the food has been distributed curbside to prevent infection and not have a large group indoors at the same time, dining. The Kitchen staff has been using money we collect and send over, \$500 per event, to buy the groceries, cook the sloppy joes, and prepare the rest of the meal we would be responsible for, and do the serving. Due to generosity left over from our October appeal, we are asking for

donations for this ministry but we do not need the full \$500. Thank you in advance for your participation in this mission!

Thank you to our Sunday School team, particularly Karen Christianson, and everybody who helped the “Baby shower for Jesus” mission project last month, buying diapers, sani-wipes and other similar things which were brought to the Niles Township Pantry to share with those in need of that kind of help!

Thanks also go very much to everyone who was able to respond to the year-end / Christmas appeal from our Board of Finance last month!

CHURCH LEADERSHIP

| | |
|---------------------|------------------|
| PRESIDENT | Jenn Schneider |
| VICE-PRESIDENT | Judy Paige |
| TREASURER | Chad McCoy |
| SECRETARY | Carolyn Kuechler |
| FINANCIAL SECRETARY | Marcia Hilliard |

**THE BAPTISM OF CHRIST
FIRST SUNDAY AFTER EPIPHANY**

January 9, 2022

Luke 3:15-17, 21-22

Affirmed by Love

When Jesus was baptized by John in the Jordan River, a voice came from heaven introducing and announcing him as “beloved.” Since that holy day, belovedness has marked every baptized person as known, named and cherished by God.

Yet too often the church has been a place of condemnation and judgment for those who seek healing and solace. Especially bereft are the many at the mercy of our nation’s prison industry. But here and there, voices within the United Church of Christ call for healing and hope for these often-forgotten beloved ones.

*Rev. Phillip Reller of Arizona writes, “We are called to embody Jesus’ heart and show forth his compassion to prisoners.

It is a very practical ministry of – Incarnation – love made visible in the flesh. Being there. Ours are a new set of ears listening to immensely consequential stories which have worn thin in the retelling to familiar cell and pod mates. Ours are new conversations and new perspectives.

It is a ministry of advocacy. Being there. The men I visit are cut off by thousands of miles from their families, communities, and support systems in private for-profit prisons. They are treated as strange enemies and are forced into culturally and religiously molded programs of “rehabilitation” which strip them of their cultural identity and dignity. Visiting allows us to witness their struggle and speak as allies for rehabilitation and respectful treatment.

It is a ministry of reconciliation. Being there. I have been allowed to share first-hand reports of the condition of their sons, husbands, and daddies with families who have been estranged or ashamed or in the confusion of unresolved anger and grief. Appropriate sharing can build bridges towards forgiveness and new relationships. It can calm deep anxieties. It can pave the way for connections that create positive re-entry.”

On this celebration of baptism day, be in prayer about how you can “be there” along with Rev. Reller with God’s imprisoned beloved ones.

**Reller, Phillip. “Prison Ministry.” United Church of Christ,
www.ucc.org/domestic-policy/justice_criminal-justice_prison-ministry/.*



SCRIPTURES FOR THE CONGREGATION

January 9, 2022

Our first reading is Isaiah 43, verses 1 through 7. Preceded in Chapter 42 with words of judgment, these verses speak to Israel of its redemption.

Isaiah 43:1-7

But now thus says the LORD,
he who created you, O Jacob, he who formed you, O Israel:
Do not fear, for I have redeemed you;

I have called you by name, you are mine.

When you pass through the waters, I will be with you;
and through the rivers, they shall not overwhelm you;
when you walk through fire you shall not be burned,
and the flame shall not consume you.

For I am the LORD your God, the Holy One of Israel, your
Savior.

I give Egypt as your ransom, Ethiopia and Seba in exchange
for you.

Because you are precious in my sight, and honored, and I love
you,

I give people in return for you, nations in exchange for your
life.

Do not fear, for I am with you;

I will bring your offspring from the east, and from the west I
will gather you;

I will say to the north, "Give them up," and to the south, "Do
not withhold;

bring my sons from far away and my daughters from the end of
the earth—

everyone who is called by my name,
whom I created for my glory, whom I formed and made."

Matthew 2:1-12

In the time of King Herod, after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea, wise men from the East came to Jerusalem, asking, "Where is the child who has been born king of the Jews? For we observed his star at its rising, and have come to pay him homage."

When King Herod heard this, he was frightened, and all Jerusalem with him;

and calling together all the chief priests and scribes of the people, he inquired of them where the Messiah was to be born. They told him, "In Bethlehem of Judea; for so it has been written by the prophet:

'And you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, are by no means least among the rulers of Judah; for from you shall come a ruler who is to shepherd my people Israel.'"

Then Herod secretly called for the wise men and learned from them the exact time when the star had appeared. Then he sent them to Bethlehem, saying, "Go and search diligently for the child; and when you have found him, bring me word so that I may also go and pay him homage."

When they had heard the king, they set out; and there, ahead of them, went the star that they had seen at its rising, until it stopped over the place where the child was. When they saw that the star had stopped, they were overwhelmed with joy. On entering the house, they saw the child with Mary his mother; and they knelt down and paid him homage. Then, opening their treasure chests, they offered him gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh.

And having been warned in a dream not to return to Herod, they left for their own country by another road.

Luke 3:15-17, 21-22

As the people were filled with expectation, and all were questioning in their hearts concerning John, whether he might be the Messiah, John answered all of them by saying, "I baptize you with water; but one who is more powerful than I is coming; I am not worthy to untie the thong of his sandals. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire. His winnowing fork is in his hand, to clear his threshing floor and to gather the wheat into his granary; but the chaff he will burn with unquenchable fire."

Now when all the people were baptized, and when Jesus also had been baptized and was praying, the heaven was opened, and the Holy Spirit descended upon him in bodily form like a dove. And a voice came from heaven, "You are my Son, the Beloved; with you I am well pleased."