

The background of the image is a detailed, close-up photograph of ancient Egyptian hieroglyphs. The hieroglyphs are carved into a dark, textured stone surface, showing various symbols such as birds, lotus flowers, and other traditional motifs. The lighting is dramatic, highlighting the three-dimensional quality of the carvings. In the center of the image, there is a white rectangular box with a thin black border. Inside this box, the words "CHOSEN" and "JOURNEYS" are written in a white, serif, all-caps font, stacked vertically. The text is centered within the box and partially overlaps the hieroglyphs.

CHOSEN
JOURNEYS

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/merchhost/showItemfrom?item_id=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](#) 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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OUR ORDER OF WORSHIP FOR
Sunday, July 5, 2020 10:00 AM
Fifth Sunday after Pentecost
Independence Day Sunday

WELCOME GUESTS!

* Indicates all who are able are invited to stand

PRELUDE: "Theme on a Patriotic Anthem"
Ludwig van Beethoven

THE RINGING OF THE BELLS
THE SHARING OF ANNOUNCEMENTS Jenn Schneider

CALL TO WORSHIP

Pastor: On this national holiday weekend we recall the brave men who pledged their lives, their fortunes and their 'sacred honor' in pursuit of independence from Britain.

Congregation: As Christians we always remember the brave men, women, youth and children who bravely risked, and sometimes lost, their lives for the sake of the gospel.

P: They are the ones who make up the great cloud of witnesses of which the Letter to the Hebrews speaks, encouraging us in our faithfulness during stressful and dangerous times.

C: *May we be built up in this hour of worship, so that we, also, are brave, faithful, and striving for freedom in the living of these days. Let us worship God!*

CALL TO CONFESSION (from Psalm 24)

P: "Who shall ascend the hill of the Lord? And who shall stand in God's holy place?"

C: *Those who have clean hands and pure hearts, who do not lift up their souls to what is false, and do not swear deceitfully.*"

P: Those who have pure hearts may sit out this confession of sin, then.

C: *That would not be any of us. Let us join together in the spirit of prayer and repentance.*

***PRAYER OF CONFESSION**

Christ Jesus, we have lived as if we did not need you, pretending that life is what we make it. In those rare moments of openness when we received the gift of faith, we have assumed it meant for ourselves alone. Awaken us by your Spirit to fuller dimensions of faith. Lead us to find in our neighbors new occasions to love, in the social order

new paths to justice, and among the nations new ways towards peace. Reform our attitudes and behavior until in every circumstance we may, by Your grace, be the instruments of Your saving Word. In Christ's blessed name we pray for forgiveness and change. Amen.

***ASSURANCE OF PARDON**

"The Lord is gracious and merciful, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love. The Lord is good to all, and God's compassion is over all that He has made."

We especially know God's mercy, compassion and steadfast love in the person and works of Jesus, who died for our sins and was raised for our eternity. Whosoever will may come, Jesus said, and those who come to Jesus will not only encounter forgiveness, but also transformation. That's not only good, it is necessary and fantastic news. Alleluia! Amen!

***HYMN:** "We Praise Thee, O God, Our Redeemer, Creator"
 #19 (w. 1, 3)

19

Adoration and Praise

JULIA BULKLEY CADY CORY, 1902

KREMSER
 Old Netherlands melody in
 The Collection, by ADRIANUS VALERIUS, 1625

12. 11. 12. 11.

May be sung in unison. Majestically

1. We praise Thee, O God, our Re - deem - er, Cre - a - tor,
 2. We wor - ship Thee, God of our fa - thers, we bless Thee;
 3. With voi - ces u - nit - ed our prais - es we of - fer,

In grate - ful de - vo - tion our trib - ute we bring.
 Through life's storm and tem - pest our Guide hast Thou been.
 And glad - ly our an - thems of wor - ship we raise.

We lay it be - fore Thee, we kneel and a - dore Thee,
 When per - ils o'er - take us, es - cape Thou wilt make us,
 Thy strong arm will guide us, our God is be - side us,

We bless Thy ho - ly Name, glad prais - es we sing.
 And with Thy help, O Lord, life's bat - tles we win.
 To Thee, our great Re - deem - er, for - ev - er be praise. A - MEN.

PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION

Ben Westphal

Epistle:

Romans 7: 15-25

Gospel:

Matthew 11: 16-19, 25-30

MUSICAL MEDITATION: "Unity" arr. Daniel M. Cason II

WORDS ABOUT OFFERINGS

HOMILY

"The Great Invitation"

***HYMN** "My Country, 'tis of Thee" # 441 (vv. 1, 3, 4)

(In Verse 1, line 3, "land where my fathers died" can be replaced by "land where our forebears died;" and in Verse 4, line 1, you may choose to sing "Our forebears' God" in place of "Our fathers' God.")

441

Seasons and Special Services

SAMUEL F. SMITH, 1832

6. 6. 4. 6. 6. 6. 4.

AMERICA
Thesaurus Musicus, 1740

1. My coun - try, 'tis of thee, Sweet land of
2. My na - tive coun - try, thee, Land of
3. Let mu - sic swell the breeze, And ring from
4. Our fa - thers' God, to Thee, Au - thor of

lib - er - ty, Of thee I sing; Land where my
no - ble free, Thy name I love; I love thy
all the trees Sweet free - dom's song; Let mor - tal
lib - er - ty, To Thee we sing; Long may our

fa - thers died, Land of the pil - grims' pride,
rocks and rills, Thy woods and tem - pled hills;
tongues a - wake; Let all that breathe par - take;
land be bright With free - dom's ho - ly light;

From ev - ery moun - tain side Let free - dom ring.
My heart with rap - ture thrills Like that a - bove.
Let rocks their si - lence break, The sound pro - long.
Pro - tect us by Thy might, Great God, our King. A - MEN.

PASTORAL AND SILENT PRAYERS

THE SACRAMENT OF THE LORD'S SUPPER

Exhortation and Invitation

Prayer of Thanksgiving

Prayer of Consecration

P: Eternal God, pour out your Holy Spirit upon us and upon these gifts, that Christ may be present as we share this meal, that our eyes may be opened and that we may recognize him in our midst.

All: Bless this bread and cup and bless us, that in the fullness of time every cup will be filled to overflowing, every table will be one of welcome, and every life will be filled with abundant love. In Christ's name we pray. Amen.

The Words of Institution

Participation

CLOSING PRAYER (in unison)

All: Eternal God, we thank You for Your presence in the simplicity and splendor of this holy meal. By the power of your Holy Spirit, unite us with all whom Christ welcomes, that we may be the servant church of the servant Christ, in whose name we pray and using the words that he gave us, we also pray . . .

THE LORD'S PRAYER ('debts')

***CHARGE** (from Galatians 5)

P: "For freedom Christ has set us free. Stand firm therefore, and do not submit again to a yoke of slavery.

C: *For you were called to freedom, brothers and sisters; only do not use your freedom as an opportunity for self-indulgence,*

P: but through love become servants to one another.

C: *For the whole law is summed up in a single commandment,*

All: 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.'"

***BENEDICTION**

C: *Amen.*

***POSTLUDE:** "Lift Every Voice and Sing"

John Rosamond Johnson

FOR WORSHIP TODAY

MINISTER

Rev. Richard Lanford

MUSIC DIRECTOR

Ben Westphal

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Good Morning! Welcome to worship this midsummer day! May faith and hope grow in you, as crops and flowers and fruits ripen all around us these days.

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!

About Communion: We are inviting folks to have ready with them some piece of bread and a cup of something (wine, water, juice) for the elements. As always, we will partake together in the Spirit (although apart in space and time) when the Pastor prompts us. Please note this week we have a responsive Prayer of Consecration.

On June 21st, the Church Council revisited our plans for eventual reopening of Saint Peter's to our members and friends for worship and meetings. The bottom line 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 on July 19th, as will our decision to continue keeping the offices closed for another month. This has been shared via regular mail for those w/o benefit of email, and in an email from our Church President letting you know "the full" of the Council decision about this.

The Micah 6:8 Committee plus 3 others continue the Wednesday 6:30 PM Zoom sessions with the UCC's "White Privilege: Let's Talk" curriculum.

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!

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!

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.

Having birthdays this week are: Nancy Lindroth, Sandy Piper, Ron Schuhrke, Wendy Svenson and Hillary Gack.

The Board of Elders held a phone meeting last Thursday at 4 PM. The next scheduled one is Thursday, July 9th.

HOSPITALIZED: June Peterson remains at Advocate Lutheran General after a second surgery last week to clean up around her badly broken ankle (which was operated on the day it happened, last month). Please keep her in your prayers! An update on Barb Bailey's friend Eva Villegas for whom we've been praying: when her blood counts allow, she is still undergoing chemotherapy. Beth Lanford's brother Dan's partner Eric may be in a physical therapy / rehab place by now (in Texas). Please hold them up too.

Please keep in your prayers Jennifer Castillo, Maribel Powers, Angela Washek Kuras and Barb and Jim Todd's granddaughter Kathryn Camardo, all of whom are serving in hospitals as nurses or anesthesiologists, including work with COVID patients, and their families. Cristy Lopez, Merle Tilos and Charlie Rasmason are also health care workers.

Let us know if there are others we are missing whom we can add for prayers!

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According to the schedule next Sunday’s lector is Marcia Hilliard.

CHURCH LEADERSHIP

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

July 5, 2020

Matthew 11:16-19, 25-30

Chosen Journeys

On this day after Independence Day, we remember that as God's people, we are called to community and covenant. In short, we are called to INTERdependence over independence. One of our responsibilities and our joys as a covenant people is to face the problems in our world head on.

According to the UCC initiative "Our Faith, Our Vote" (<https://www.ucc.org/ourfaithourvote>), *"The problems in our world often seem too big to confront. We see injustice every day and feel that change can't or won't happen. But our faith is infused with hope and built on a foundation of action. By serving the vulnerable, feeding the hungry, and standing in solidarity with the oppressed, we serve as God's hands.

Voting is a natural extension of faithful action. The decisions made by our representatives have a wide-reaching impact. We have enormous potential to make positive change. We must engage our legislators, vote, and encourage everyone in our communities to do the same.

Our faithful voice is needed. It is tempting to disengage from the political process. As people dedicated to creating a just world for all, we know we must be involved.

Visit <https://www.ucc.org/ourfaithourvote> to join the Our Faith, Our Vote campaign. Discover how your congregation can participate in the electoral process through faithful, nonpartisan engagement. You can find out more about how your congregation can be legally involved in elections at: <https://www.ucc.org/ourfaithourvote-be-active>. In addition, the United Church of Christ can help with resources on civic engagement, voter registration information, issue education, and voter mobilization.

This election season it is essential that people raise their voices and vote."

*Accessed January 2020. <https://www.ucc.org/ourfaithourvote>



SCRIPTURES FOR THE CONGREGATION

July 5th, 2020

Romans 7:15 - 25

Paul wrote, 15I do not understand my own actions. For I do not do what I want, but I do the very thing I hate. 16Now if I do what I do not want, I agree that the law is good. 17But in fact it is no longer I that do it, but sin that dwells within me. 18For I know that nothing good dwells within me, that is, in my flesh. I can will what is right, but I cannot do it. 19For I do not do the good I want, but the evil I do not want is what I do. 20Now if I do what I do not want, it is no longer I that do it, but sin that dwells within me.

21So I find it to be a law that when I want to do what is good, evil lies close at hand. 22For I delight in the law of God in my inmost self, 23but I see in my members another law at war with the law of my mind, making me captive to the law of sin that dwells in my members. 24Wretched man that I am! Who will rescue me from this body of death? 25Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord!

Matthew 11:16 – 19, 25 - 30

Jesus said, 16“But to what will I compare this generation? It is like children sitting in the marketplaces and calling to one another, 17 ‘We played the flute for you, and you did not dance; we wailed,

and you did not mourn.’ 18For John came neither eating nor drinking, and they say, ‘He has a demon’; 19the Son of Man came eating and drinking, and they say, ‘Look, a glutton and a drunkard, a friend of tax collectors and sinners!’ Yet wisdom is vindicated by her deeds.”□

25At that time Jesus said, “I thank□ you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because you have hidden these things from the wise and the intelligent and have revealed them to infants; 26yes, Father, for such was your gracious will.□ 27All things have been handed over to me by my Father; and no one knows the Son except the Father, and no one knows the Father except the Son and anyone to whom the Son chooses to reveal him.

28“Come to me, all you that are weary and are carrying heavy burdens, and I will give you rest. 29Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me; for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. 30For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.”