

A photograph of many lit candles in a church setting. The candles are of various heights and are placed in ornate, dark-colored holders. The flames are bright and warm, creating a soft glow. In the background, a large, arched stained glass window is visible, with light filtering through its colorful panes. The overall atmosphere is solemn and reverent.

# Tending God's Light

## **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 1<sup>st</sup> 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**

8013 Laramie Avenue, Skokie, IL 60077  
(Oakton and Laramie)

**847-673-8166**

[www.stpeteruccskokie.org](http://www.stpeteruccskokie.org)

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

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

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

**St. Peter's United Church of Christ**  
**Oakton Street and Laramie Avenue, Skokie, IL**  
[www.stpeteruccskokie.org](http://www.stpeteruccskokie.org)  
**847-673-8166**

---

**OUR ORDER OF WORSHIP FOR**  
**Sunday, November 8, 2020 10:15 AM**  
**Twenty-third Sunday after Pentecost**  
**Stewardship Sunday #1**

**WELCOME GUESTS!**

\* Indicates all who are able are invited to stand

**PRELUDE:** "Give Thanks" by Henry Smith

**THE SHARING OF ANNOUNCEMENTS** Jenn Schneider

**CALL TO WORSHIP**

Pastor: God has given us this beautiful earth and  
all that grows and runs upon it.

***Congregation: It is an honor to give back to God!***

P: God has given us breath to live and spirit  
to sing.

***C: It is an honor to give back to God.***

P: God has gathered us virtually into a  
community of care and worship.

***C: Let us worship our God with love,  
thanksgiving and praise.***

**\*CALL TO CONFESSION** (from Ps. 24 and I Peter 5)

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

**C: *Those who have clean hands and a pure heart." We don't think that's any one of us. So how do we ascend it?***

P: "Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, so that God may exalt you in due time. Cast all your cares on God, for God cares for you."

**\*PRAYER OF CONFESSION**

**All-wise God, we confess that as we extolled the honor of giving to Your work in our Call to Worship, we are not totally honest. There is an element of fear for many of us when we make a pledge or write a bigger check. Will we still have enough? What if misfortune falls? Less often do we fear that our gifts will not be enough to enable our ministries to survive or thrive. Help us to be truly honest with ourselves, our families and with You, as we contemplate the stewardship of our lives, including financial offerings! Renew our trust as well as our hope, gratitude and joy. In Christ's name we pray. Amen.**

## **\*ASSURANCE OF PARDON**

The prophet Zephaniah told the people, "Do not fear, O Zion; do not let your hands grow weak. The Lord your God is in your midst . . . God will rejoice over you with gladness, will renew you in His love; God will exult over you with loud singing as on a day of festival" (3:16-18a).

Friends, believe the good news: Our God is a forgiving God, a renewing God, a loving God who sings loudly over us as we return. We especially meet this grace and power for transformation in Jesus Christ. Have we anything to say to this gospel of new life?

**All: Yes we do! Alleluia! Thanks be to God!**

\*HYMN:

"America the Beautiful"

#443 (vv. 1, 3)

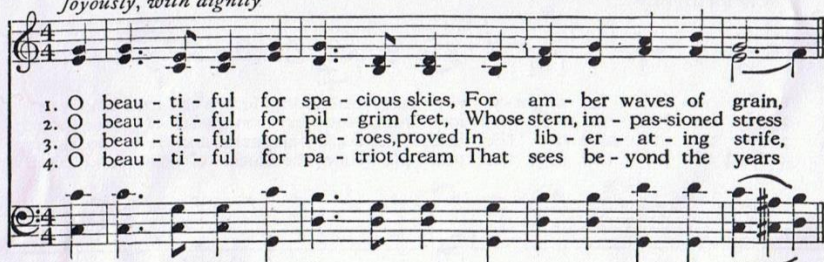
443

KATHARINE LEE BATES, 1895  
*Joyously, with dignity*

C. M. D.

MATERNA  
S. A. WARD, 1882

# Seasons and Special Services



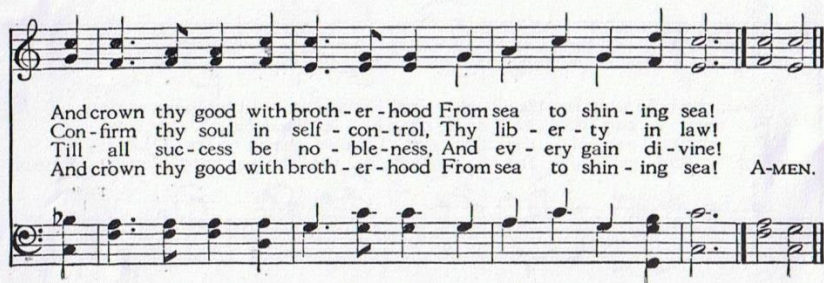
1. O beau - ti - ful for spa - cious skies, For am - ber waves of grain,  
2. O beau - ti - ful for pil - grim feet, Whose stern, im - pas - sioned stress  
3. O beau - ti - ful for he - roes, proved In lib - er - at - ing strife,  
4. O beau - ti - ful for pa - triot dream That sees be - yond the years



For pur - ple moun - tain maj - es - ties A - bove the fruit - ed plain!  
A thor - ough - fare for free - dom beat A - cross the wil - der - ness!  
Who more than self their coun - try loved, And mer - cy more than life!  
Thine al - a - bas - ter cit - ies gleam Un - dimmed by hu - mar: tears!



A - mer - i - ca! A - mer - i - ca! God shed His grace on thee,  
A - mer - i - ca! A - mer - i - ca! God mend thine ev - ery flaw,  
A - mer - i - ca! A - mer - i - ca! May God thy gold re - fine,  
A - mer - i - ca! A - mer - i - ca! God shed His grace on thee,



And crown thy good with broth - er - hood From sea to shin - ing sea!  
Con - firm thy soul in self - con - trol, Thy lib - er - ty in law!  
Till all suc - cess be no - ble - ness, And ev - ery gain di - vine!  
And crown thy good with broth - er - hood From sea to shin - ing sea! A - MEN.

## **WORDS ABOUT OFFERING**

### **PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION**

Olivia Altmayer

Old Testament:

Joshua 24:1-3a, 14-25

Epistle:

Romans 8:22-25

**MUSICAL MEDITATION:** “Prayer Song” by Richard Carlson

### **GOSPEL:**

Matthew 25:1-13

### **SERMON:**

“What's in Your 'Go-bag'?”

# HYMN: "God of our Fathers, Whose Almighty Hand"

#440 (vv. 2, 3, 4)

440

DANIEL C. ROBERTS, 1876  
*In march rhythm*

## The Nation

10. 10. 10. 10.

NATIONAL HYMN  
GEORGE WILLIAM WARREN, 1892

Trumpets, before  
each stanza

1. God of our fa - thers, whose al-might - y hand
2. Thy love di-vine hath led us in the past;
3. From war's a-larms, from dead-ly pes - ti-lence,
4. Re - fresh Thy peo - ple on their toil-some way,

Leads forth in beau - ty all the star - ry band  
In this free land by Thee our lot is cast;  
Be Thy strong arm our ev - er sure de - fense;  
Lead us from night to nev - er - end - ing day;

Of shin - ing worlds in splen - dor through the skies,  
Be Thou our Rul - er, Guard - ian, Guide, and Stay;  
Thy true re - li - gion in our hearts in - crease,  
Fill all our lives with love and grace di - vine,

Our grate - ful songs be - fore Thy throne a - rise.  
Thy word our law, Thy paths our cho - sen way.  
Thy boun - teous good - ness nour - ish us in peace.  
And glo - ry, laud, and praise be ev - er Thine. A - MEN.

## 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

### CHARGE

P: Go out into the world in peace;  
Have courage;  
Hold onto what is good;  
Return no one evil for evil;

***C: Strengthen the fainthearted;  
Support the weak, and help the suffering;  
Honor everyone;***

L: Love and serve our God,

***C: Rejoicing in the power of the Holy Spirit!***

### BENEDICTION

**\*POSTLUDE:** "Now Thank We All Our God" by Johann Crüger

---

FOR WORSHIP TODAY

---

MINISTER

Rev. Richard Lanford

MUSIC DIRECTOR

Ben Westphal

---

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

---

**Good Morning!** Friends in Christ, it's a joy to be with you today for worship! Please welcome one another with a sign of Christ's peace.

**We join our grateful nation in honoring all the veterans of our Armed Services.** Thank you, veterans!

**Next Sunday is our Church Council meeting via Zoom after worship (Nov. 15th).** If you are responsible for a report, please submit it to the Council Dropbox as soon as you can this week.

**A Heads-Up:** The annual Interfaith Thanksgiving Service will be held, via Zoom, on Tuesday, November 24th at 7:30 PM. When the link comes in to us, we will share it. Pastor Lanford is contributing once again, "live" and hopefully from our sanctuary.

**This Thursday, November 12th, is our next Village inn fundraiser!** For carry-out, delivery, or during their limited-space heated outdoor patio dining, just mention while ordering that you are with the St. Peter's U.C.C. fundraiser, and we'll get 20% of the proceeds!

**Pastor Richard's SoundCloud Podcast "The RedHeaded Preacher,"** carrying the Scriptures and the sermon from the previous Sunday, goes out weekly for those who missed service and want to listen, or for any other reason! Last week included an addition with a prayer for election day which he got from the U.C.C.

**Winter is coming!** It's a good time to buy a plot at our St. Peter's U.C.C. Cemetery. See Kathy Zipperer to get the ball rolling.

**Your Worship and Music Committee meets via Zoom this Wednesday at 6:30 PM.** Please read the weekly email from the church office and Laura Olson to learn detailed wishes and plans for this coming Advent -- your voluntary participation is really encouraged! ALSO, if you have not read your Quarantine emails from Church lately, please read the Quarantine Weekly Update sent last Tuesday, as among other things it addresses the Council's tentative plan for a regathering for worship on Sunday, November 29th (the First Sunday of Advent). It is too long to be reprinted here. If you are not on the church's email list, please email the office at the address at the front of the bulletin and let us know!

**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.

**Wishes for blessed birthdays** go out to Laura Olson's granddaughter Arya Kira Pietroske, Bridgette Sterba, Paul Brzozowski, Michael Taheny, Peter Svenson, our late Lois Dennis' grandson Justin Balling, and Judy's granddaughter Alexandra Paige. Andre Gloeckner and Marcia Hilliard and Beth and John Sterba celebrate wedding anniversaries this week!

**There will NOT be Poinsettia orders taken this year due to COVID and concerns about worship.** Instead the Women's Guild will buy plants to decorate the sanctuary this year. In Honor/In Memory – we'd like to honor all of you for all you've done this crazy year to hang in there with us. See the insert in this bulletin or the Announcer and return it to us by Dec. 6th!

**Ten Thousand Villages Fundraiser** – November 19th we'll kick off a special 48-hour shop! A Zoom presentation with a rep from St. Peter's UCC will be at the shop live, explaining the fundraiser and how to shop, and will feature great gift ideas to get your list going. More details on this in the Announcer and forthcoming! If you aren't on our email list, send us a message at [office@stpeteruccskokie.org](mailto:office@stpeteruccskokie.org) so you don't miss out!

According to the schedule, barring any switches next Sunday's Lector will be Peter Svenson.

---

**CHURCH LEADERSHIP**

---

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

---

# POINSETTIAS



If you didn't hear, we won't be doing our usual Poinsettia order this year. Due to COVID we can't be certain on how our Christmas service will play out yet. Instead, our Women's Guild will be generously providing poinsettias for our altar, in honor of all members and friends of St. Peter's. As a HUGE THANK YOU to everyone for all your extra care, support, thoughtfulness and concern for St. Peter's UCC during this unprecedented time, we'd like to offer you the chance to dedicate one of these poinsettias in honor and/or in memory of whomever you'd like. Just fill out the form below and return it to the office by December 6<sup>th</sup>! You can email your info, mail it or call it in to the office. We'll still be doing an In honor/In Memory insert for our Christmas worship and we'll also include it in the January Announcer!

Name:	Phone #:
In Honor Of:	In Memory Of:



# FOOD FUNDRAISER

**Thurs. Nov 12th**  
**11am - 11 pm**

Order from Village Inn on this day, mention St. Peter's UCC's fundraiser and we get 20% of your total bill! Good for carryout, delivery and dining in. Call ahead to make in dining arrangements, subject to state COVID restrictions & guidelines.



8050 Lincoln Ave., Skokie, IL  
(847) 675-3737

915 Chicago Ave.  
Evanston (847) 733-8258



ten  
thousand  
villages



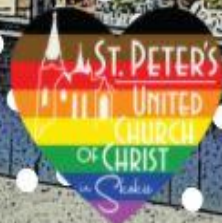
**Join us Nov. 19th at 6 PM  
online for a Zoom  
presentation -  
then start your shopping!**

How to shop: Shopping can be online at [www.ten-thousand-villages-evanston.com](http://www.ten-thousand-villages-evanston.com), in person at 915 Chicago Avenue or curbside pickup.

We have 48 hours from the presentation to shop, until 6 PM on the 21st. They will allow for special exceptions outside of that time period, if someone wants to shop in person but cannot get there during the shop days.

**YOU MUST MENTION YOU ARE SHOPPING FOR ST. PETER'S  
UCC'S FUNDRAISER WHEN ORDERING FOR US TO GET  
CREDIT.**

So you will have plenty of safe options to shop.



**NOVEMBER 19-21ST  
ONLINE & IN STORE**

## TWENTY-THIRD SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

November 8, 2020

Matthew 25:1-13

### Tending God's Light *Stewardship Sunday*

"Then the kingdom of heaven will be like this..."

Whenever Jesus begins a story this way, we have a clue that a truth about the reality of the world that God dreams for us is about to be revealed.

Today we learn that the kingdom of heaven will be like ten young women, five of whom have enough oil to keep their lamps burning through the night and five of whom run out of oil, leaving their lamps in darkness.

As with any parable, there are many lenses through which to look at this story. But in the year 2020, one helpful way to look at this parable is as a story about being prepared.

Maybe through this parable, Jesus was giving us some clues about wrong ways and right ways to be prepared. The wrong way was not to anticipate all that might lead to needing a little extra. But it was also the wrong way to keep too much, to have more than was needed.

See, the wise bridesmaids did not bring too much. They did not hoard, did not stock up, clearing the shelves of all the oil and leaving none for their neighbors. They did not come to the evening with more than they would need. They brought enough to be prepared for the night ahead.

If 2020 has taught us anything, it is the importance of being prepared in the right way.

On this Stewardship Sunday especially, the parable of the ten bridesmaids (as it is sometimes called) gives us the opportunity to look ahead, asking ourselves what it means to be prepared enough, but not to accumulate. The wisdom of the parable teaches us that it is wise to have all that we might need. But it does not advise squirreling away a treasure hoard. What we have is to be used to make light in the world. Let us do so!



## SCRIPTURES FOR THE CONGREGATION

11 / 8 / 2020

The Israelites have moved into the Promised Land under the military leadership of Joshua, and now the tribes are going to split up into their newly-obtained territories. Before they go their separate ways into a tribal confederacy, Joshua is giving them a reminder and a challenge to be in covenant with God.

Joshua 24:1 – 3, 14-25

1Then Joshua gathered all the tribes of Israel to Shechem (pron. SHECK-em), and summoned the elders, the heads, the judges, and the officers of Israel; and they presented themselves before God.

2And Joshua said to all the people, “Thus says the LORD, the God of Israel: Long ago your ancestors—Terah and his sons Abraham and Nahor —lived beyond the Euphrates and served other gods.

3Then I took your father Abraham from beyond the River and led him through all the land of Canaan and made his offspring many.

14“Now therefore revere the LORD, and serve him in sincerity and in faithfulness; put away the gods that your ancestors served beyond the River and in Egypt, and serve the LORD. 15Now if you are

unwilling to serve the LORD, choose this day whom you will serve, whether the gods your ancestors served in the region beyond the River or the gods of the Amorites in whose land you are living; but as for me and my household, we will serve the LORD.”

16Then the people answered, “Far be it from us that we should forsake the LORD to serve other gods; for it is the LORD our God who brought us and our ancestors up from the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery, and who did those great signs in our sight. He protected us along all the way that we went, and among all the peoples through whom we passed; and the LORD drove out before us all the peoples, the Amorites who lived in the land. Therefore we also will serve the LORD, for he is our God.”

19But Joshua said to the people, “You cannot serve the LORD, for he is a holy God. He is a jealous God; he will not forgive your transgressions or your sins. 20If you forsake the LORD and serve foreign gods, then he will turn and do you harm, and consume you, after having done you good.” 21And the people said to Joshua, “No, we will serve the LORD!” 22Then Joshua said to the people, “You are witnesses against yourselves that you have chosen the

LORD, to serve him.” And they said, “We are witnesses.” 23He said, “Then put away the foreign gods that are among you, and incline your hearts to the LORD, the God of Israel.” 24The people said to Joshua, “The LORD our God we will serve, and him we will obey.” 25So Joshua made a covenant with the people that day, and made statutes and ordinances for them at Shechem.

Romans 8:22-25

We know that the whole creation has been groaning in labor pains until now; and 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. For in hope we were saved. Now hope that is seen is not hope. For who hopes for what is seen? But if we hope for what we do not see, we wait for it with patience.

Matthew 25:1 - 13

Jesus said, 1“Then the kingdom of heaven will be like this. Ten bridesmaids□ took their lamps and went to meet the bridegroom.□ 2Five of them were foolish, and five were wise. 3When the foolish took their lamps, they took no oil with them; 4but the wise took flasks of oil with their lamps. 5As the bridegroom was delayed, all

of them became drowsy and slept. 6But at midnight there was a shout, 'Look! Here is the bridegroom! Come out to meet him.' 7Then all those bridesmaids□ got up and trimmed their lamps. 8The foolish said to the wise, 'Give us some of your oil, for our lamps are going out.' 9But the wise replied, 'No! there will not be enough for you and for us; you had better go to the dealers and buy some for yourselves.' 10And while they went to buy it, the bridegroom came, and those who were ready went with him into the wedding banquet; and the door was shut. 11Later the other bridesmaids□ came also, saying, 'Lord, lord, open to us.' 12But he replied, 'Truly I tell you, I do not know you.' 13Keep awake therefore, for you know neither the day nor the hour.□