



ROAD TO FREEDOM

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 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.

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OUR ORDER OF WORSHIP FOR
Sunday, September 13, 2020 10:00 AM
Fifteenth Sunday after Pentecost

WELCOME GUESTS!

* Indicates all who are able are invited to stand

PRELUDE: "Let My People Go"
Traditional African-American Spiritual

THE SHARING OF ANNOUNCEMENTS Jenn Schneider

CALL TO WORSHIP

Our Call to Worship this morning is a short simple song led by our Pastor on guitar. It's straight out of the Sermon on the Mount and is called "Seek Ye First." We'll sing verse 1, then 2, then 1 again. Here are the words:

V. 1. "Seek ye first the kingdom of God / And His righteousness,

And all these things shall be added unto you / Allelu, alleluia.

2. Ask and it shall be given unto you / seek and ye shall find,

**Knock and the door will be opened unto you /
Allelu, alleluia!"**

***PRAYER OF INVOCATION AND CONFESSION**

Majestic God, who led our spiritual ancestors with a pillar of cloud that hid them by day and protected them by night, lead us through the threatening times in which we live. Save us from the floods of our own misplaced trust, as You saved them from the waters of the sea and the weapons of their pursuers. On this day, please grant strength to those who are weak and support for all who are stumbling. Let every tongue praise You as we give account to You of our deeds.

We bow before Your judgment seat, O God. We have ranked our sisters and brothers by the faulty standards of our society to decide who is worthy of our attention. We have rejected those whom we dislike and have been harsh with those we think do not measure up. We have been quite willing to overlook our own faults as we look down on other people. O God, You have shown us a better way. Save us from the pain we inflict and help us to discover the blessing of forgiveness. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

***ASSURANCE OF PARDON**

"Now may our Lord Jesus Christ himself and God our Father, who loved us and through grace gave us eternal

comfort and good hope, comfort your hearts and strengthen them in every good work and word" (2nd Thessalonians 2:16, 17).

God forgives us so we can really have eternal comfort and good hope. God does forgive us through Jesus crucified and risen; it is grace, ready to be received by trust and lived out in our own forgiveness of, and grace toward, others. Have we any reaction to this great good news?

All: (singing): **"Ask and it shall be given unto you / seek, and ye shall find, Knock, and the door will be opened unto you / Allelu, alleluia."**

WORDS ABOUT OFFERING

PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION

Old Testament:

Dan Guenther

Exodus 14: 19-31

Epistle:

Romans 14: 1-12

MUSICAL MEDITATION:

"Seek Ye First/Be Still and Know"

arr. Westphal

***GOSPEL:**

Matthew 18:21-35

HOMILY

"The Fruit of Pursuit"

***HYMN:** "When Israel Was in Egypt's Land"

**When Israel was in Egypt's land (Let my people go),
Oppressed so hard they could not stand (let my people go).**

**Refrain: Go down, Moses, way down in Egypt's land
Tell old Pharaoh to let my people go.**

**"Thus spoke our God," bold Moses said, "Let my people go,
If not, I'll smite your firstborn dead, let my people go."
Refrain**

**No more in bondage shall they toil (let my people go)
Nor spill their blood on Egypt's soil (let my people go).
Refrain**

**Oh, let us all from bondage flee (let my people go),
And let us all in Christ be free (let my people go).
Refrain and end.**

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:** "A King Once Told His Servants"

(Sing to the tune of "Lead On, O King Eternal")

A king once told his servants, "Now pay me what is mine!"

One came to him and begged him, "I'll pay! Just give me time!"

And so the king forgave him, though that man's debt was great.

What joy to be unburdened! What cause to celebrate!

Though he had been forgiven, that man was not so kind.

He threatened one who owed him, "Now pay me what is mine!"

He would not show compassion toward one whose debt was small.

What judgment came upon him! How bitter was his fall!

O God, in Christ you freed us; now may we not forget.

Our sin was overwhelming but you once paid the debt.

**May we live lives of mercy, forgiving, blessing, too;
And may our grace toward others reflect our thanks to you.**

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***CHARGE** (from Romans 14):

P: "We do not live to ourselves, and we do not die to ourselves.

C: If we live, we live to the Lord, and if we die, we die to the Lord;

All: So then, whether we live or whether we die, we are the Lord's."

***BENEDICTION**

***POSTLUDE:** "Go Down, Moses" arr. Mark Hayes

FOR WORSHIP TODAY

MINISTER

Rev. Richard Lanford

MUSIC DIRECTOR

Ben Westphal

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Good Morning! Welcome to worship and Christian education, a time to reconnect and form new connections. May the Lord enrich our time together.

Ben Westphal would like to extend a heartfelt thank you for all of the well wishes and warm sentiments upon his first Anniversary at St. Peter's. It's a blessing to serve this wonderful congregation and church family! Thank you!!

The older age-level of Sunday School began via Zoom today!

We are always grateful for any and all offerings to the church. No amount is too small! So much thanks to everyone who's been keeping us going with your donations! See inside front cover for details on how to donate.

HOSPITALIZED: June Peterson remains in hospice care at Bella Terra; 8425 Waukegan Road, MG, IL 60053. Please keep her in your prayers, along with others whom we lift up together today. Sue Bailey's friend Sue Sparks has been hospitalized and prayers are requested. Ginger's friend Marty, who has frequented our fundraisers, has moved for now to Norwood Crossing, 6016 Nina, Chicago, 60631.

UNDY 500 is back! Since the Indy 500 was postponed due to COVID-19 concerns we also did not hold the annual Undy 500, until now with a special virtual edition. We are encouraging members to either make monetary donations directly to The Night Ministry via their website

<https://thenightministry.ejoinme.org/MyPages/DonationPage/tabid/79631/Default.aspx?fbclid=IwAR3-nGJXojUh8ApiwB75GvwwbTcrO1GisZzW914rS-vB4wQX4raqPBOoabU>; or by ordering women's, men's, and/or youth underwear online and choosing to have it delivered directly to The Night Ministry. The address is below and remember, colors only please, all sizes needed. The Night Ministry, 1735 N Ashland Ave; Suite 2000, Chicago, IL 60622.

Tomorrow is the last day for rummage to be dropped off before the Rummage Sale. Annie will be at the church at 5 PM to accept the donations!

Rummage Sale Update - Rummage sorting the next 2 weeks will be Monday thru Thursday evenings, 6:30-8:30. The openers/closers for this week: Monday – Heidi; Tuesday - Beth L; Wednesday- Sharon; Thursday - Carol I. **All help is welcome and needed!!** People have been signing up to come and shop. We are totally booked up Friday, and almost fully booked on Saturday. We may have to schedule more times for shoppers IF we get volunteers to be there. **More volunteers are needed to work the sale, especially Friday morning.** Please sign up online,

<https://www.signupgenius.com/go/904094ca8ab2fa5f85-rummage> or call/text Annie (847-772-2717). Church

members can start shopping on Tuesday (9/15), and are welcome to bring friends and family to shop as well. Keep in mind that not all the items will be out until the days of the sale, so you might want to stop in more than once. Instructions for the member honor system shopping are below, after the announcements.

Save the date: Rummage clean-up will take place on October 10th. We will be packing all the household items and loading them into a trailer to be picked up by the Cancer Federation. We will be keeping all soft items to go to Savers in February. We will continue to collect soft goods through the end of January. Savers will pay us \$0.20/pound for these items. Soft goods include clothing, shoes, purses, linens, stuffed animals, hats, belts and scarves.

Village Inn Fundraiser Update! Thank you to everyone who's been participating; the first event totals were \$113.71, the second one brought in \$107.07! Our next Village Inn Fundraiser will be ***Sunday, September 27th from 11 AM to 11PM.*** All you have to do is order food on that day any way you like, and tell your server it's for the St. Peter's UCC Fundraiser. We get 20% of whatever you spend - it's that easy!

The Church Council is meeting via Zoom after our virtual worship service next Sunday. If you are responsible for a report, please prepare it / them and submit to the Council Drop Box for September, as soon as you can this week. Thank you!

Our Office Manager and Custodian Laura Olson will be taking some vacation time next week. She'll be unavailable from Wednesday, September 23rd through Sunday the 27th.

The deadline for submissions to the October issue of the Announcer is a week from tomorrow (Sept. 21st).

Having birthdays this week are Judy Williford (yesterday, sorry!), Errol Mitchell and Dylan Kahn. Jackie (Meyer) and Dave Rosenthal have a wedding anniversary on Friday, and Maribel (Powers) and Joey Laarveld on the 12th (late also; sorry!).

Next week the scheduled Lector is Beth Sterba.

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CHURCH LEADERSHIP

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

St Peter's Member (family and friends) Shopping Instructions

1) When can members shop?

Members with keys are welcome to go into the gym to shop anytime starting Tuesday, Sept 15. Those who do not have keys can contact Annie Noorts or the office to schedule a time to shop. Family and friends are welcome to shop WITH church members. Shoppers are always invited to come by during sorting times as well. Keep in mind all the items will not be out until the sale days, so feel free to come by more than once.

2) How will the honor system sale work?

Upon entering the gym, please use the hand sanitizer that is on the table to the right. Also wear face covering while you are in the building. The sale is set up very differently than in years past in an effort to allow for physical distancing, and everything being in the gym. There is a small boutique set up near the entrance to the gym rather than on the stage. Most items are not priced, except those in the boutique. Price sheets will be sitting next to the hand sanitizer.

3) How do I pay for my purchase?

Members can pay by cash or check and leave it in the box labeled "payments." There are envelopes in the box to put payments into. You can also pay thru PayPal or the Text to Give app.

Text Your payment. Text the amount you are paying to 844-997-2346. If you haven't done this before you will need to add your credit card information.

PayPal – log into your PayPal account. Go to [PayPal.me/stpeteruccskokie](https://www.paypal.com/merchot/?x=1&from=seller=&from=paypalmerch). Enter the amount of your payment, and send it.

If you will be shopping more than one time, feel free to fill out an index card and put it into the file box. Payment will be due in full at the end of the sale.

4) Are there bags and packing materials?

There are bags under the table and packing material at the far end of the table where hand sanitizer is. Help yourself to whatever you need.

FIFTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

September 13, 2020

Exodus 14:19-31

Road to Freedom *Faith Formation Sunday*

As Moses and the other escaped slaves traveling with him ran from Pharaoh, they were met with a miracle on the shores of the Red Sea. The seas parted and Moses and the people walked to freedom on dry land.

This is a favorite story to tell children. From cartoons to vacation bible school curriculums, the elders of the church like to share this with youngsters whenever they are given an opportunity.

But this is not just a story for children. It's important for people of all ages. If you are older than Sunday school age, try reading it again, and you may find its powerful message is for you, too. As you read it again, you may find that one of the joys of rediscovering Bible stories you thought you knew as a child is the opportunity to ask new questions of the old texts.

Although this is a story full of miracle and wonder, its primary message is not about the fancy special effects. Look beyond the flashy pyrotechnics and start asking questions. For example, what does it mean to people of all ages that God showed such amazing works of power on behalf of a people who had been enslaved? Perhaps the cloud by day and the fire by night - not to mention the parting of the waters - was God's way of getting our attention, of making sure that we especially notice this story above others.

And why get our attention for this story? Maybe these miracles are so surprising and dazzling because this story is one that God really wants us to notice. Why would that be? Maybe it's because the liberation of people is the primary Divine hope and joy for all of God's children. Maybe it's because God has a special preference and love for those of God's children that are captured and enslaved. Maybe it's because God wants all of us to keep working toward the day when all, not just some but ALL, are free.

Today is Faith Formation Sunday. If you haven't heard the story of Moses and the people crossing the Red Sea, listen again. In that old, old story, you may hear a new message, one that is as thrilling as those miracles you heard about in Sunday school long ago.



8 1/2" x 11" UCC SUNDAY BULLETIN SERVICE

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SCRIPTURES FOR THE CONGREGATION

September 13, 2020

Exodus 14:19 - 31

The angel of God who was going before the Israelite army moved and went behind them; and the pillar of cloud moved from in front of them and took its place behind them. It came between the army of Egypt and the army of Israel. And so the cloud was there with the darkness, and it lit up the night; one did not come near the other all night.

Then Moses stretched out his hand over the sea. The LORD drove the sea back by a strong east wind all night, and turned the sea into dry land; and the waters were divided. The Israelites went into the sea on dry ground, the waters forming a wall for them on their right and on their left. The Egyptians pursued, and went into the sea after them, all of Pharaoh's horses, chariots, and chariot drivers. At the morning watch the LORD in the pillar of fire and cloud looked down upon the Egyptian army, and threw the Egyptian army into panic. He clogged their chariot wheels so that they turned with

difficulty. The Egyptians said, “Let us flee from the Israelites, for the LORD is fighting for them against Egypt.”

Then the LORD said to Moses, “Stretch out your hand over the sea, so that the water may come back upon the Egyptians, upon their chariots and chariot drivers.” ⁷So Moses stretched out his hand over the sea, and at dawn the sea returned to its normal depth. As the Egyptians fled before it, the LORD tossed the Egyptians into the sea. The waters returned and covered the chariots and the chariot drivers, the entire army of Pharaoh that had followed them into the sea; not one of them remained. But the Israelites walked on dry ground through the sea, the waters forming a wall for them on their right and on their left.

Thus the LORD saved Israel that day from the Egyptians; and Israel saw the Egyptians dead on the seashore. Israel saw the great work that the LORD did against the Egyptians. So the people feared the LORD and believed in the LORD and in his servant Moses.

The Apostle Paul writes about some of things that those who are on a journey with God should and can do. An over-arching theme of

this passage is that love respects the scruples of others as long as the bottom line of faith in Christ is preserved.

Romans 14:1 - 12

Welcome those who are weak in faith, but not for the purpose of quarreling over opinions. Some believe in eating anything, while the weak eat only vegetables. Those who eat must not despise those who abstain, and those who abstain must not pass judgment on those who eat; for God has welcomed them. Who are you to pass judgment on servants of another? It is before their own lord that they stand or fall. And they will be upheld, for the Lord is able to make them stand.

Some judge one day to be better than another, while others judge all days to be alike. Let all be fully convinced in their own minds.

Those who observe the day, observe it in honor of the Lord. Also those who eat, eat in honor of the Lord, since they give thanks to God; while those who abstain, abstain in honor of the Lord and give thanks to God. We do not live to ourselves, and we do not die to ourselves. If we live, we live to the Lord, and if we die, we die to

the Lord; so then, whether we live or whether we die, we are the Lord's. For to this end Christ died and lived again, so that he might be Lord of both the dead and the living.

Why do you pass judgment on your brother or sister? Or you, why do you despise your brother or sister? For we will all stand before the judgment seat of God. For it is written, "As I live, says the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall give praise to God." So then, each of us will be accountable to God.

Matthew 18:21-35

"Then Peter came and said to Jesus, 'Lord, if another member of the church sins against me, how often should I forgive? As many as seven times?' Jesus said to him, 'Not seven times, but, I tell you, seventy-seven times.'

"For this reason the kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king who wished to settle accounts with his slaves. When he began the reckoning, one who owed him ten thousand talents was brought to him; and, as he could not pay, his lord ordered him to be

sold, together with his wife and children and all his possessions, and payment to be made. So the slave fell on his knees before him, saying, ‘Have patience with me, and I will pay you everything.’ And out of pity for him, the lord of that slave released him and forgave him the debt.

“But that same slave, as he went out, came upon one of his fellow slaves who owed him a hundred denarii (pron. De-NARY-eye); and, seizing him by the throat, he said, ‘Pay what you owe.’ Then his fellow slave fell down and pleaded with him, ‘Have patience with me, and I will pay you.’ But he refused; then he went and threw him into prison until he would pay the debt. When his fellow slaves saw what had happened, they were greatly distressed, and they went and reported to their lord all that had taken place.

“Then his lord summoned him and said to him, ‘You wicked slave! I forgave you all that debt because you pleaded with me. Should you not have had mercy on your fellow slave, as I had mercy on you?’ And in anger his lord handed him over to be tortured until he would pay his entire debt. So my heavenly Father

will also do to every one of you, if you do not forgive your brother or sister from your heart.”