

ANNUAL REPORT 2022

St. Peter United Church of Christ






A Note from Our Lay Shepherds

Although the 2021-2022 church year was challenging as we continued to deal with Covid-19 and its effects, many exciting things took place at St. Peter:

- We blessed Pastor Ruth with an autumnal sabbatical and enjoyed Pastor Brian Miller's time with us as he filled the pulpit during her absence.
- As always, we shared the hope, peace, joy, and love of Christmas with those in our community and beyond. Again this year CARoling was a huge success with both the shut-ins we visited and the carolers alike. We also blessed Lake County Haven shelter for women and children with gifts of money, cards of encouragement, and much needed supplies. It was also a delight to have in the building Christmas Eve (and Easter) services again.
- We were finally able to make masks optional in early 2022! It is lovely to see full faces, but we also continue to respect the decisions of those who choose to keep masking. We are also delighted that the live streaming of our services is still blessing many who cannot safely attend worship services in the building yet.
- In the spring, many lights in the Sanctuary and Narthex were repaired and upgraded which made those spaces much brighter. At the same time, most of the light switches in the Christian Education wing were changed to motion detectors to save electricity. A 20+ year old leaking water heater was also replaced this fiscal year.
- Food Truck Party Vacation Bible School was an enormous success. In particular, it was a delight to see the children's parents and families at our ice cream social on the last day.
- New audio visual equipment was purchased and installed to help those in the building and online be able to participate more easily in worship services.

Be sure to look through the rest of this annual report for more information regarding all that has taken place at St. Peter during the past year.



As we close, we wish to express our sincere gratitude to:

- the congregation for its trust, patience, and prayers, and for the generous financial support that makes it possible for St. Peter to live out God's vision;
- the 2021-2022 Act, Belong, and Engage teams leads (Barry Bordenave, Katie Grover, and Linda Davis) for their service to our church;
- all St. Peter part-time staff, contractors, and volunteers for the way they skillfully and faithfully work together to handle the day-to-day operations of the church; and
- Pastor Ruth, for her steadfast guidance, leadership, and unwavering devotion to the health and welfare of the congregation.

Thank you for the opportunity to serve St. Peter United Church of Christ.

Respectfully submitted,
The Lay Shepherds (Ben Bercher, Beth Krischke, and Dean Olerich)



Worship Experiences

Pastor Ruth's Sabbatical & Pastor Brian

Pastor Ruth went on **sabbatical leave** from October 1 — December 11, 2021, after having graciously postponed it because of the pandemic. **Rev. Dr. Brian Miller** served as the supply pastor while she was on leave. Many thanks to Pastor Brian!

Fall Sermon Series: The Parables of Jesus

Pastor Brian led the congregation through **11 parables** of Jesus, helping us discover what God is saying to us through each one.

Christmas Eve

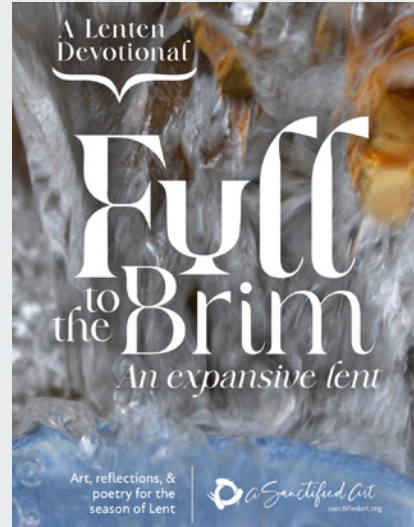
We celebrated the **Jesus' birth** with beautiful, meaningful Christmas Eve services. 261 people joined us online and 70 were with us in the building.



Worship Experiences

Full to the Brim Lent

In our Lenten series, we listened to Jesus call us to be authentically **who we are**, to counter scarcity and injustice at every turn, to pour out even more grace wherever it is needed. We passed out devotional booklets and cards to help us increase our capacity to **receive and give grace upon grace**.



Palm Parade

On Palm Sunday, our kids led a parade around the Sanctuary to **welcome Jesus** into our church!

Bell Choir

Alice Grubb led the Bell Choir this year. They rehearsed and played multiple times through the year.

Worship Experiences

Easter

After a meaningful Lent, we had 78 people join us online and 70 people in building to celebrate **Jesus' victory over death!**



Chancel Choir

Our lead vocalist, Samantha D'Adamo, led the choir this year. We held a "pop up" choir where singers could just show up at rehearsal before the service and sing that day!

Bread Summer Sermon Series

We took the elements of bread baking, mixed them with scripture, and saw what God baked up for our lives!

Worship Experiences

SteppingStones

In order for our students to grow in faith, we offer a series of SteppingStones classes every other year from Kindergarten – 12th Grade. This year we celebrated the first **Communion** of one of our 4th graders, **Confirmation** for our three 8th graders, and **gave Bibles** to our three 2/3rd graders.



Worship Participation

Online

Each week, an average of 110 people **worshipped with us through our website and Facebook page**. Most viewers were in Illinois, with the vast majority in the Lake Zurich area.

We reached over **5,000 people through our online platforms** and our Facebook page was visited **more than 17,000 times!**

In Building

We had a total of **1609 people worship** in the building.

Our average weekly attendance at all worship services was **34**, with our **average Sunday morning attendance at 32** (10/3/2021-8/7/22).



hearts+minds Experiences

Parable Palaver

During Pastor Brian's Parables of Jesus fall sermon series, he hosted a Parable Palaver where participants could go deeper and discuss with others what God was teaching them.

Full to the Brim Discussion Group

Folks gathered with Pastor Ruth to discuss our Lenten theme each Sunday of the season.

Hearts & Minds "Sunday School"

Kids Pre-K through 5th Grade met each month to learn about God and how to apply the Christian faith to their own lives.



hearts+minds Experiences

Tuesday Afternoon Women's Study Group

This year, 8-10 women **gathered** most Tuesdays to study "Be Kind to Yourself" by Cindy Bunch, the Full to the Brim Bible Study by Rev. Ruth Farrell, and "Sensible Shoes" by Sharon Garlough Brown.



Dinner (Church)

8-12 adults spent a few weeks celebrating Communion **the way that Jesus did** – with a meal that filled not just bodies, but our whole selves. Participants also developed their communication skills through discussion of communion-related topics.



hearts+minds Experiences



VBS

Our "chefs" and teen volunteers **cooked up fun all week** at Food Truck Party VBS! Many thanks to our adult volunteers who kept it all running smoothly!



Belong

Everyone works to create a culture of oneness, unity, and togetherness.

- We each seek to make our church community a safe and inclusive place for all.
- We respect, learn from, support, and love each other unconditionally.
- We continually nurture deeper relationships with each other.
- We celebrate each other's gifts.

We realize this by:

- Offering an inclusive welcome to all (ages, orientations, genders, political/theological perspectives, etc).
- Embracing those who are new to our community.
- Having fun together.

The **Belong Team** (led by Katie Gwost) strove to live out these elements of our church's Vision this year by:

Trunk or Treat

Kids from St. Peter and the community came to Trunk or Treat at our creatively decorated vehicles!



Belong

Easter Egg Hunt

The Easter bunny joined us for a fun-filled Easter Egg hunt on the front lawn.



Coffee Hour

May 2022 saw the return of weekly Coffee Hour! We have 4 teams ready to host. We're so glad to be back!



Engage

Everyone uses their gifts consistently to help our church thrive.

- We rely on each other and, therefore, each one is needed to consistently contribute to the life of our church.
- We strive to offer well-defined avenues for all (ages, orientations, genders, political/theological perspectives, etc) to be connected and involved.

We realize this by:

- Offering a range of times and ways in which people can participate in our life together.
- Intentionally ensuring every generation is represented in our whole church decision-making.
- Supporting the next generation of leaders as they grow into their roles and encourage new ideas and creativity through the regular rotation of our leaders.

The **Engage Team** (led by Linda Davis) strove to live out these elements of our church's Vision this year by:

Prayer Gatherings

Our prayer list goes out each week, then each Tuesday, about five people **gather to pray** for our church, community, and world.



Visitations

The Visitation team **engages our shut-ins** and keeps them connected with the St. Peter body. About **100 calls and visits** were made this past year!

Engage

CARoling

We decorated our cars and drove around the community to **visit our elder members** and sang carols from a safe distance!



Spring Cleanup

It's important for us to **contribute** to the upkeep of our church home. We had volunteers who helped with tasks such as weeding, cleaning up brush, and window washing! Thanks for all who helped!

Act

Everyone gives of themselves in service to our neighborhood and beyond, inspired and energized to act by the love of God.

- We walk the talk of our faith not just at church events, but in everything we do.
- We live the Gospel, encouraging all to love as Jesus loved.
- We create a world of justice and hope for all.

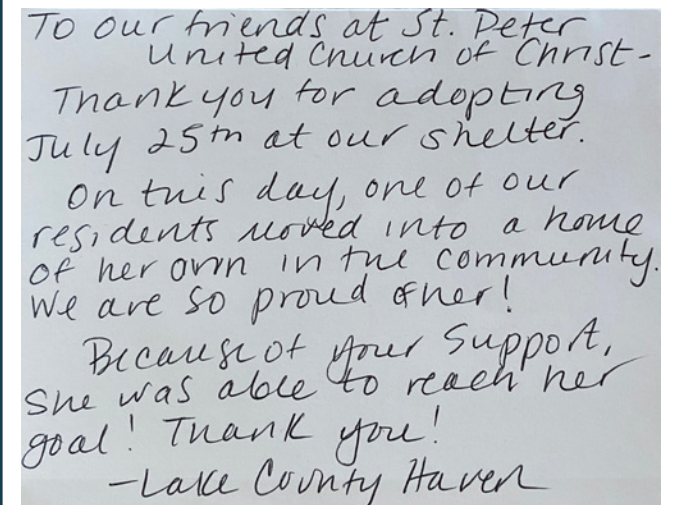
We realize this by:

- Graciously offering help to those in need.
- Holding our world in prayer.

The **Act Team** (led by Barry Bordenave) sponsored the following events to help our church serve our community and world:

Gift of Love 2021

This year, we raised **\$1525**, which sponsored **6 nights at Lake County Haven** for homeless women and children. We also collected much needed supplies and sent notes of encouragement to be given to those staying at LCH. Thank you for your generosity!

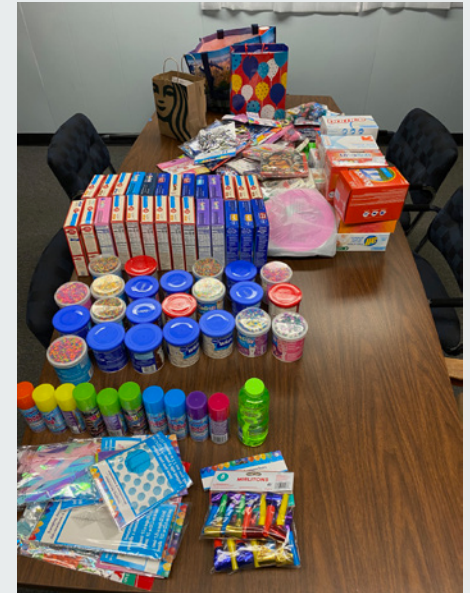


To our friends at St. Peter
United Church of Christ-
Thank you for adopting
July 25th at our shelter.
On this day, one of our
residents moved into a home
of her own in the community.
We are so proud of her!
Because of your support,
she was able to reach her
goal! Thank you!
-Lake County Haven

Act

VBS Mission Project

Our VBS "chefs" and their families **donated 248 items** to our VBS Mission project. We collected laundry items (14 bottles of laundry detergent and 18 boxes of fabric softener) as well as 216 birthday-related items for birthday party bags. Our items filled 32 birthday party bags, which were donated to Emmaus House.



My Promise My Faith Workshop

Pastor Ruth led 10 Lake Zurich Girl Scouts (4 of whom are part of the St. Peter community) in faith-based activities.

Piecemakers

The Piecemakers **donated over 280 items** to A Safe Place this past year! 115 quilts, 21 fleece blankets, and about 150 other small items were donated at the end of 2021.



Act

Feed My Starving Children Packing Session

We spread hope to the world by participating in a packing session at Feed My Starving Children in Libertyville.



St. Peter also served the greater community financially:

\$2495 given to
UCC's Ukraine Relief Fund

\$1050 given to
The Christmas Fund

\$800 in support for
One Great Hour of Sharing

\$1100 in support for
Our Church's Wider Mission

(Note: 2022 Strengthen the Church and Neighbors In Need offerings will be received after the publication of this report.)



A Note from Our Lead Pastor

Our Lenten theme this year was *Full to the Brim*. It seemed quite appropriate, as in many ways this year felt much fuller than the last few years. The church building was fuller on Sunday mornings as more people felt safe to return to in the building worship. Folks' full faces appeared as we were finally able to safely remove our masks in early 2022. Our schedule was full with Kids' and Adults' Hearts & Minds groups, prayer times, social gatherings, and so many other cherished St. Peter activities which began anew after a pandemic pause. I hope you'll join me in praising God for all the ways he has filled our church to the brim this year!

Hopefully we have also experienced the presence of God more fully this year. Jesus promised to be with us fully (Matthew 28:20), but some days we struggle to know he is present with us. God promised to fully guide us on our life's journey (Psalm 23), but some days we struggle to trust God is leading us. The Holy Spirit promised to fill our lives to the brim with her love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control (Galatians 5:22-23), but sometimes we struggle to feel her presence encouraging us. On those days when we ourselves struggle to experience God's presence, we give thanks for our siblings in Christ who can attest to the fullness of God's presence in our lives as individuals and as a whole church community.

As we continue to journey together with each other and God, let us be on the look out for the ways God is overflowing our lives and our church with grace upon grace.

Pastor Ruth