Prelude and Welcome

Opening Words

Adapted from John L. Bell

One: Thanks be to you O God, that we have risen this day,
All: To the rising of this life itself.

One: Be the purpose of God between us and each purpose,
All: The hand of God between us and each hand.

One: The pain of Christ between us and each pain,
All: The love of Christ between us and each love.

One: Thanks be to you O God, that we have risen this day.
All: Let us worship and praise you. Amen.

Hymn NCH#153 "Who Would Think That What Was Needed"

Tune: Scarlet Ribbon
Celebrating the retirement of the Reverend Al Schon. We have been so blessed by your ministry!

**PRAYER OF INVOCATION**

*Worship Ways, adapted*

The beginning of a new year is upon us and today we gather to offer the strides as well as the struggles of the past year to God. We gather to give to the Creator both our hopes and our fears, as we gather to worship the Lord our God. Holy Spirit, fill our hearts and our lives this morning as we worship. Grant us each the strength to sing our song, to pray our prayer, and to listen for the Word that will drive our fears away and move us to offer praise and thanksgiving. Inspire us today we pray, in Jesus name, Amen.

***RESPONSE NCH #136***

"Jesus, Jesus"

Tune: Wonderful Child

At the appointed time the Promised One will come in glory, escorted by all the angels of heaven, and will sit upon the royal throne, with all the nations assembled below. Then the Promised One will separate them from one another, as a shepherd divides the sheep from the goats. The sheep will be placed on the right hand, the goats on the left. The ruler will say to those on the right, ‘Come, you blessed of my Abba God! Inherit the kindom prepared for you from the creation of the world! For I was hungry and you fed me; I was thirsty and you gave me drink. I was a stranger and you welcomed me; naked and you clothed me. I was ill and you comforted me; in prison and you came to visit me.” Then these just will ask, ‘When did we see you hungry and feed you, or see you thirsty and give you drink: When did we see you as a stranger and invite you in, or clothe you in your nakedness? When did we see you ill or in prison and come to visit you? The ruler will answer them, ‘the truth is, every time you did this for the least of my sisters or brothers, you did it for me.’
A READING FROM THIS TIME AND PLACE

When the song of the angels is stilled,
when the star in the sky is gone,
when the kings and princes are home,
when the shepherds are back with their flocks,
the work of Christmas begins:
to find the lost,
to heal the broken,
to feed the hungry,
to release the prisoner,
to rebuild the nations,
to bring peace among the people,
to make music in the heart

One: For the marvelous blend of fact, myth, poetry, and story that is in scripture, we give thanks.

Many: May the Spirit open us to the wisdom we most need to hear.

CHILDREN’S TIME
Following the story, young children are encouraged to remain in worship or they may go to the nursery (birth-3).

SPECIAL MUSIC
“For All That You Have Done” arr. Heather Sorenson
New Year’s Vocal Ensemble

HYMN
“Come Now You Blessed, Eat at My Table” Text: Ruth Duck
Tune: Morecambe

*HYMN
"Come now you blessed, eat at my table,
When did we see you hungry or thirsty?
When you gave bread to earth’s hungry children,
Christ, when we see you out on life’s roadways,
said Jesus Christ to the righteous above,
When were you homeless, a stranger alone?
when you gave shelter to war’s refugees,
looking to us in the faces of need,
"When I was hungry, thirsty, and homeless,
When did we see you sick or in prison?
when you remembered those most forgotten,
then may we know you, welcome, and show you
sick and in prison, you showed me your love.
What have we done that you call us your own?
you cared for me in the smallest of these.
love that is faithful in word and in deed."
In Our Prayers…

Please note our Holiday Schedule Changes

The Church Office will be closed on January 2nd.

Job Jar will not meet on January 2nd.

Church School and Youth Learning Hour will resume on Sunday, January 8th at 9:45 a.m.

Good Questions will resume on Sunday, January 15th.

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE
Believing that each joy and/or concern expressed is indeed a prayer, after each expression, the worship leader will say: Loving God. And the people may respond:
Hear our prayer.

PASTORAL PRAYER

LORD’S PRAYER

Our loving parent who dwells both within and without us,
Your name is sacred to us.
May your dream for us be realized here on earth as it is in you.
Give us what we need for today and let us be satisfied with that.
And let us treat others as we would want them to treat us.
Don’t let us be tempted to the baser ways to which people often resort.
Let us instead follow your dream for us.
For you are the creator, redeemer and sustainer of all life.
Amen.

LITURGY FOR THE RETIREMENT OF AL SCHON FROM PEACE UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

Rev. Bruner: In 2007, Peace United Church of Christ called Al Schon as a licensed minister and in 2012 you again called him, this time as an ordained minister to serve as Pastoral Associate. Now Al is asking to retire from active ministry.

Rev. Schon: I thank the congregation of Peace United Church of Christ for the love, kindness, and support shown me in these last 9 years. As I retire from active ministry, I ask forgiveness for the mistakes I have made along the way. I also wish to express my gratitude for the ways my leadership has been accepted, my thankfulness for the opportunity to have been your Pastoral Associate and to tell you that I will cherish all the ways in which you have encouraged me and caused me to grow.

People: We receive your thankfulness, offer forgiveness, and accept that you are now retiring from active ministry. We express our gratitude for your time among us. We ask forgiveness for our mistakes. We know that your influence on our faith and faithfulness will continue with us.

Rev. Schon: I forgive you and accept your gratitude, trusting that our time together has been pleasing to God.

Rev. Wendy Bruner: Do you, the congregation of Peace United Church of Christ release Al Schon from the duties of Pastoral Associate?

People: We do, with the help of God.

Rev. Wendy Bruner: Do you offer your encouragement to Al as he enters retirement?

People: We do, with the help of God.

Rev. Wendy Bruner: Do you, Al, release this local church from turning to you and depending upon you; and do you offer your encouragement for the continued ministry here?

Rev. Al Schon: I do, with the help of God.
Rev. Ann Asper Wilson: On behalf of the St. Louis Association and the United Church of Christ, I witness to the words spoken: words of thankfulness, forgiveness, and release. The member churches of our association and conference hold all of you in prayer. Thanks be to God.

Rev. Wendy Bruner: Let us pray. O God, we give thanks for remembered times when we, together, have shared the life of faith. We thank you for the moments we have shared with Al in worship, in learning, in service. We pray that Al will be aware of your Spirit’s presence as he moves into retirement. In Jesus name, Amen.

CELEBRATION OF COMMUNION
INVITATION AND REMEMBRANCE based on our Theological Assumptions

Minister: Come, Holy Spirit, and move among these elements assembled at this Table.
Many: Through this sacrament, transform our hurt into healing, our fear into faith, and death into life.
Minister: As the grain, sown in hills and valleys, is harvested, and now becomes one in the loaf,
Many: so we, scattered, diverse, separated and isolated from one another, hear your invitation to become one body around this Table, the center of our life together.
Liturgist: As this juice, grown in vineyards under the sun, fills the cup, may we be filled and refreshed by this meal,
Many: and strengthened to respond to your call to reach out in compassion to all living things.
Minister: In sharing this meal we remember.
Many: We remember meals Jesus shared with friends and enemies, outcasts and marginalized, fearful and earnest.
Minister: He took the bread and, giving thanks, blessed it and broke it and shared it with his friends as a symbol of his sacrifice.
Many: As we share the bread today, we eat it as those who seek to follow Jesus.
Liturgist: After the meal, Jesus took the cup. Giving thanks, he shared it with his friends, symbolizing a new relationship with God, a relationship of partnership founded on grace.
Many: As we share the cup, we seek to experience that grace in which Jesus lived fully.
All: Come, Holy Spirit, come.
Bless this bread and bless this fruit of the vine.
Bless all of us in our eating and drinking that our eyes might be opened, that we might recognize the risen Christ in our midst, indeed, in one another.
Come, Holy Spirit, come.

The Congregation is invited to come forward by the center aisle, partake of the bread and juice, (gluten free bread and chalice available) and light a candle in prayer, and place an offering in the plates beside the table. If you prefer to give electronically, please scan the QR code on the following page. Catch the eye of a table host if you would prefer to be served at your seat.

Fisher’s Circle is Recommending a Change in the By-laws to Work Towards a More Inclusive Community

For the past several months, the Fisher Circle has been studying the process by which people become involved in our community. Much of our focus has been on our stated value of inclusiveness. During our discussions, we kept running up against the word “member” and wondering if that word really spoke to being an inclusive community. The word “member” denotes that the person is “in” and, by default, others are “out.” People are members of country clubs, political parties, and all sorts of other organizations. Those who are “in” get special privileges while those who are “out” don’t. Some of those who would like to be “in” are kept “out” by the rules adopted by those who are “in.”

Jesus calls us to be the ultimate “in” group where ALL are welcome, not just the chosen few. We don’t get to say that anyone is not welcome at his table. We at Peace try very hard to live up to that challenge. We have welcomed LGBTQ people when that wasn’t the norm. We have made room at the table for people of various political persuasions. We recognize our neighbors of color as equal participants in God’s love and our community.

So why, then, do we still use the term “member” to refer to some people in our community, but not all? As we looked at this term, we realized that there are a lot of people in our congregation who are very active and indeed vital to our health as a congregation but for whatever reason have not become “members.” This made the circle feel as though we were not actually living out our promise to be inclusive.

Next week, we will share with you our thoughts about how we can change our terminology to better suit our intentional statement about inclusiveness. In the following weeks, we will outline a proposal that will be brought to the congregation at our next congregational meeting to change the church bylaws to be reflective of both our inclusiveness and our covenantal relationship with each other and the church.
Moms’ Group—
Attention Moms’ Group. We will meet to put up our feet and debrief the holidays on Friday, January 6 at 9:30 in the fireside room. Please call Dee Ban (xxx-xxxx) ahead of time if you need child care.

Men’s Breakfast—
We meet at 8:00 a.m. on the 2nd Thursday of the month at First Watch, 220 W Lockwood Ave. Next meeting: January 12

Job Jar—
We meet at the church on the first and third Mondays of the month. Join us at 9:15 a.m. for coffee, fellowship, and a few chores around the church. Please note that the Job Jar will not meet on January 2nd. Next meeting: January 16

Scan and Give
Supporting the work of this church has never been easier. Just scan the QR code with your smartphone and you can make a donation to Peace UCC.

Want to be in the know about Peace UCC?
Sign up to receive our weekly email newsletter.
Text KNOWPEACE to 22828 to get started.

Bulletin recycling: Though we invite you to take your bulletin home to review the prayers and opportunities throughout the week, if you choose to leave your bulletin after the 8:30a.m. service, place it in the basket and we will use it again. Bulletins placed in the basket after the 11:00a.m. service will be recycled.

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*COMMUNION RESPONSE

Marty Haugen

"Plenty of Bread"

Refrain:

There is plenty of bread at the feast of life;

Plenty of bread to share; Plenty of bread at the feast of life, there is

plenty of bread to share. Bread for all the children:

Blessed are you, Creator:

Room for all the need-y:

(Plenty to share) Fish for all the elders: (Plenty to share)
(Plenty to share) For granting us this bounty: (Plenty to share)
The (Plenty to share) and welcome in the stranger: (Plenty to share)
The

Food for every hunger: (Plenty to share), you have
fruits of field and waters: (Plenty to share), you have
Love of God sur-rounds us: (Plenty to share), you have

To Refrain

plenty of fish to share.
plenty of bread to share.
plenty of love to share.
Giver and Sustainer of Life, pour out your blessing upon these gifts and upon all who give from their hearts. Multiply them so they reach farther than our imaginations can carry them. In the blessed name of our Redeemer, we pray. Amen.

HOW WILL WE DO GOD’S WORK IN THE WORLD THIS WEEK?

*HYMN
"Together We Serve" Tune: San Anselmo

To-gether we serve, u-nited by love, in-viting God’s world to the glo-rious hope, a lamp for the heart and a light for the poor, the busy, the lone-ly, and all who need work, re-mem-ber-ing Je-sus, in whom we grow feast. We work and we pray through sor-row and feet. We learn, year by year, to let love shine care. We of-fer a home to those who will strong. To-gether we serve in Spir-it and joy, ex-tend-ing your love to the last and the least. through un-til we see Christ in each per-son we meet. come, our hands quick to help, our heart read-y to dare. truth, re-mem-ber-ing love is the strength of our song.

*BENEDICTION

*POSTLUDE

THIS WEEK AT PEACE UCC

SUNDAY, JANUARY 1 TODAY
11:00a.m. Worship Service
2:00p.m. Korean Drumming
7:00p.m. Narcotics Anonymous

MONDAY, JANUARY 2
The Church Office is closed in observance of New Year’s Day.

TUESDAY, JANUARY 3
5:30a.m. Magnolia Fitness in Fellowship Hall
8:30a.m. Walking Group

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 4
5:30a.m. Magnolia Fitness in Fellowship Hall
1:30p.m. Peace Staff Meeting
2:00p.m. Noteworthy Music School for Strings—Paul Huppert
4:30p.m. Children’s Choir
7:00p.m. Refuge Recovery Meeting, Room 20 (A Buddhist Path to Addiction Recovery)

THURSDAY, JANUARY 5
5:30a.m. Magnolia Fitness in Fellowship Hall
8:30a.m. Walking Group
7:00p.m. Chancel Choir
7:00p.m. Sts C&F Liturgy Committee

FRIDAY, JANUARY 6
7:00a.m. Contemplative Prayer—Sts C&F
9:30a.m. Moms’ Group in the Fireside Room

SATURDAY, JANUARY 7
8:00a.m. Magnolia Fitness in Fellowship Hall
9:30a.m. Handchimes
10:30a.m. Narcotics Anonymous
11:00a.m. Youth Choir
5:00p.m. Sts. Clare and Francis Mass

For a complete calendar visit: www.peaceuccstl.org