

Welcome

ORDER OF WORSHIP FOR

**Sunday,
September 13,
2026
10:00 AM**

**Sixteenth Sunday
after Pentecost**

**Sunday School
Rally Day**



The Lord Is My Shepherd

Psalm 23
This is one of King David's songs
about God:

The LORD is my shepherd.
He gives me everything I need.
He lets me lie down in fields
of grass. He leads me to
rest.





Welcome to Worship!

SUNDAYS @ 10:00AM

In-person Worship. All are welcome to join us

Livestream on YouTube. Live at 10am then available on our channel after



Ways to Give

Send a Check. Mail to the address below ... this way still works fine!

Send with Zelle. Use your banking app to send to finance@stpeteruccskokie.org

Use PayPal. <https://www.paypal.me/stpeteruccskokie>

Set up Vanco. <https://secure.myvanco.com/L-ZCME/home>

Set up your account or log in to give



Open Communion

All Christians and seekers after God are invited to partake of the Lord's Supper with us the **first Sunday of every month** and special Holy Days (Christmas, Maundy Thursday, and Easter). **At-home Communion** participants are invited to provide their own elements and join when Pastor bids you, "take, eat, and drink."



About St. Peter's UCC

We've been in the heart of downtown Skokie since 1867. 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 **joyously welcome all people** to share worship, membership, marriage, baptism, funeral, and fellowship with us.



Contact, Follow, or Talk to Us

Rev. Brenda Barnes Jamieson (Interim Pastor): pastor@stpeteruccskokie.org

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

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

Office hours Mon-Fri 9am to 2pm

Facebook/Instagram/YouTube: @stpeteruccskokie

Website: www.stpeteruccskokie.org

Like, follow, or join our email list for up-to-date info about events and activities!



8013 Laramie Avenue, Skokie, IL 60077 | 847-673-8166

**St. Peter's United Church of Christ
8013 Laramie Ave., Skokie, IL 60077
Order of Worship for
Sixteenth Sunday After Pentecost
Sunday, September 13, 2026 at 10:00am**

*Listen. Be attentive. Feel God's Spirit connect all of us gathered here,
those with us online and in spirit, and those who cannot be present today.*

PRELUDE

Selected

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Peggy Reins

You may stand in body or spirit.

CALL TO WORSHIP

One: We worship you, O Liberating God.

**All: You saw your people suffering and Moses to
speak words of love and compassion.**

One: You set an impossible dream in motion.

**All: You move us in awesome and life-sustaining
ways.**

One: You open us to a new future of mercy and grace.

**All: We share our wonder and praise that you
continue to care for us so deeply and so
faithfully.**

One: We sing your story of old

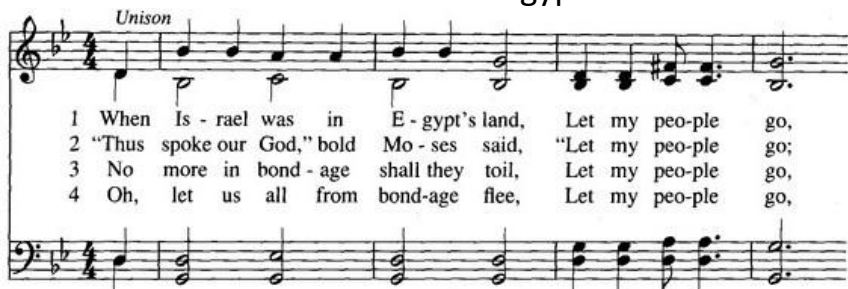
All: And your future made new in us today.

One: Let us worship God.

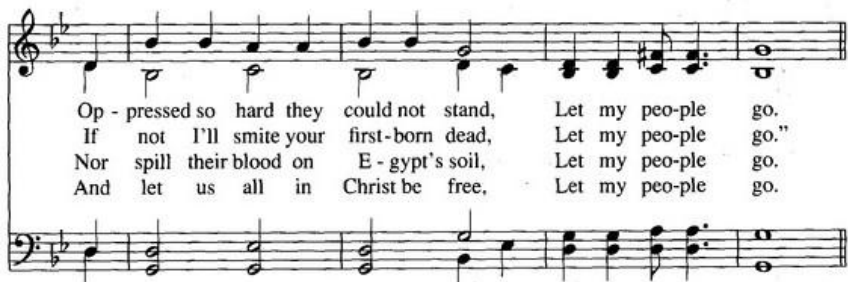
GATHERING HYMN

"When Israel was in Egypt's Land"

Unison



1 When Is - rael was in E - gypt's land, Let my peo-ple go,
 2 "Thus spoke our God," bold Mo - ses said, "Let my peo-ple go;
 3 No more in bond - age shall they toil, Let my peo-ple go,
 4 Oh, let us all from bond-age flee, Let my peo-ple go,



Op - pressed so hard they could not stand, Let my peo-ple go.
 If not I'll smite your first-born dead, Let my peo-ple go."
 Nor spill their blood on E - gypt's soil, Let my peo-ple go.
 And let us all in Christ be free, Let my peo-ple go.

Refrain



Go down, Mo - ses, way down in E - gypt's land,



Tell old Pha - raoh to let my peo-ple go.

According to historian Jon Michael Spencer, this is the most famous of the spirituals to speak subtly of the desire the enslaved had for freedom, believing that God would set them free just as

Tune: GO DOWN, MOSES 8.5.8.5. with refrain
African-American spiritual

CALL TO TRANSFORMATION

One: Followers of Christ, we live in a world where we hurt one another, where sin divides us one from another and makes us enemies instead of neighbors.

All: Yet we are a people of grace, called by Christ to forgive and repair the rifts between us.

One: The divisions in our world seem like too much to overcome, and we wonder if this forgiveness thing really works anymore. Maybe it worked for Jesus, but not for us.

All: Yet we are a people of grace, called by Christ to forgive and repair the rifts between us.

One: We find ourselves tempted by easy answers and quick solutions, reticent to do the slow and difficult work of reconciliation.

All: Yet we are a people of grace, called by Christ to forgive and repair the rifts between us.

One: In this place, may we encounter Christ who meets us in the places where we want to give up, where we despair that life-giving change is even possible, with abundant grace to sustain us on the journey.

PRAYER FOR TRANSFORMATION AND NEW LIFE

All: God, form us today as people of grace, called by Christ to forgive and repair the rifts between us.
Amen.

Pause for quiet reflection

WORDS OF GRACE

One: God leads us out of bondage and into life-sustaining ways. We remember the gospel again and again:

All: There is nothing we can do, and nothing that can be done to us, that will ever stop God from loving us.

One: In Jesus our Christ, we are forgiven. We are loved.
We are being made whole.

All: Thanks be to God!

PASSING OF THE PEACE OF CHRIST

The peace of Christ be with you all!

All: And also with you!

Share a sign of God's peace: a smile, a wave, an elbow bump, a handshake, a hug. Let us fill this space with love.

SUNG RESPONSE**Halle, Halle, Hallelujah! Halle, Halle, Hallelujah!****Halle, Halle, Hallelujah! Hallelujah, Hallelujah!***The congregation may be seated.***PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION**

Peggy Reins

Hebrew Scripture

Exodus 14:19-31

*You may wish to stand for the reading of the Gospel.***Matthew 18:21:35***Please be seated.***SPECIAL MUSIC**

Selected

ChoHee Hwang, soprano

SERMON

“Keeping Score”

HYMN OF RESPONSE: God, How Can We Forgive?

by Ruth Duck, *The Faith We Sing*, #2169

**God, how can we forgive
when bonds of love are torn?
How can we rise and start anew,
our trust reborn?
When human loving fails
and every hope is gone,
Your love gives strength beyond our own
to face the dawn.**

**When we have missed the mark,
and tears of anguish flow,
How can you still release our guilt,
the debt we owe?
The ocean depth of grace
surpasses all our needs.
A priest who shares our human pain,
Christ intercedes.**

**Who dares to throw the stone
to damn another's sin,
When you, while knowing all our past,
forgive again?
No more we play the judge,
for by your grace we live.
As you, O God, forgive our sin,
may we forgive.**

CALL TO PRAYER**JOYS, CONCERNS, PRAYER REQUESTS****SILENT PRAYER, THE LORD'S PRAYER**

**A: 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**

OFFERTORY

If you donate electronically, you may place an "Electronic Giving" card into the plate as it comes around so you can enjoy participating in the physical act of giving.

You may stand in body or in spirit.

OFFERTORY RESPONSE

**All: Praise God from whom all blessings flow,
praise God, all creatures, here below!**

Alleluia, Alleluia!

**Praise God above, you heavenly host,
Creator, Christ and Holy Ghost!**

Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia!

PRAYER OF DEDICATION

**All: Holy One, we present these offerings to you in
hope and love. May they be a gift in our
community and the world. May they spread hope
and love. And, may they witness to your abundant
and generous creation. Amen.**

HYMN OF COMMITMENT “Help Us Accept Each Other”

**Help us accept each other as Christ accepted us;
teach us as sister, brother, each person to embrace.
Be present, Lord, among us and Bring us to believe:
we are ourselves accepted and meant to love and live.**

**Teach us, O Lord, your lessons, as in our daily life
we struggle to be human and search for hope and faith.
Teach us to care for people, for all - not just for some,
to love them as we find them or as they may become.**

**Let your acceptance change us so that we may be
moved
in living situations to do the truth in love;
to practice your acceptance until we know by heart
the table of forgiveness and laughter's healing art.**

**Lord, for today's encounters with all who are in need,
who hunger for acceptance, for justice and for bread,
we need new eyes for seeing, new hands for holding on:
renew us with your Spirit; Lord, free us, make us one!**

Author Fred Kaan © 1975 Hope Publishing Company

CHARGE AND BENEDICTION

POSTLUDE Selected

We pause to reflect during the Postlude as we prepare to follow God out into the world.

Today's liturgy is adapted from:

Written by Moira Laidlaw on Liturgies Online. Re-posted on the re:Worship blog at <https://re-worship.blogspot.com/2011/09/opening-prayer-exodus-14-19-31.html>.

and Dr. Lisa Hancock, Discipleship Ministries, May 2026.

FOR WORSHIP TODAY

INTERIM MINISTER	Rev. Brenda Barnes Jamieson
MUSIC DIRECTOR	Ben Westphal
DEACON	Beth Sterba
LIVESTREAM RECORDING	Rich Schneider
NURSERY ATTENDANT	Heidi Tarzian

News in the Pews

Welcome, friends! On this marvelous Sunday, let us open our spirits to the loving presence of God that we may be spiritually fed and renewed by his grace.

Thank you to ChoHee Hwang, our guest singer today!

ChoHee Hwang is originally from Ulsan, South Korea. She met our music director, Ben, while they were both attending graduate school in Flagstaff, Arizona. An active performer and dedicated teacher, ChoHee now lives in Las Vegas with her husband, Micah, who is originally from Lake Geneva, Wisconsin. We are delighted to have her sharing her musical gifts with us today. Please give ChoHee a warm welcome!

Another Christian Education year has begun! Thank you to our teachers and Board of Education for your hard work. Thank you to our students for their hard work and for coming every week!

Help us fill our pantry shelves for the fall. We made it through summer, thanks to all of you for donating! Now we need a good supply for the fall/early winter. If you can donate, bring your items to the shelves outside the offices, to the office doors or on Sundays. Thank you so much!

Sign up to work the Rummage and Bake Sale! There will be jobs for everyone no matter what your ability. We'll take any amount of time you are available Friday and/or Saturday, from 9-3PM. Contact Annie Noorts or the office to sign up.

We need baked goods! We need you to make your best creations for the Bake Sale portion of the Rummage and Bake Sale. We ask if you are able, please individually pack the items in plastic or foil pans. Items can be brought on September 24th to the kitchen to be priced or drop off in the days prior.

Our Rummage and Bake Sale will be Friday and Saturday September 25th and 26th from 9AM to 3PM.

Rummage Sorting – please join us Tuesdays from 10AM-12PM, Wednesday evenings from 6:30-8:30PM and Fridays 10AM-2PM each week to sort. No experience necessary, just a willingness to help. We'll find a job that works for you. It's a lot of fun, and even better when you find something you need! Come see what its all about.

Calling all Crafters. Our annual craft show will be on Saturday, November 7th from 10-3. If you are interested in a table, or have a question, please see Annie Noorts or email Wendy Svenson at stpeteruccbazaar@gmail.com.

Our People

Please keep St. Peter's extended family in your thoughts and prayers. Other folks that need your prayers include:

- Pastor Brenda and her family.
- Ben Westphal and his family.
- The Iannotti family who lost Carol's cousin Diane, who also was extended family of St. Peter's UCC.
- Annie Noorts' friend Geo Bonamasso who is fighting cancer.
- Mark Taylor.
- Wendy, friend and colleague of Beth Sterba, who is fighting liver cancer.
- Annie's friend Renee is fighting a long term, rare illness.
- Nicole McGinnis, childhood friend of Laura's who is fighting stage 4 cancer.
- Prayers for Julius and all immigrants, refugees and displaced people.
- Sharon Johnson's daughter Donna continues her battle with Lymphoma, which can be controlled but not cured.
- Susan Garcia's Aunt Janice battling cancer.
- Paul Brzozowski has now completed all treatment and will have MRIs every 2 months.

Others in our church family to keep close in our hearts include Larry Baumhardt and Lois Jarmuth.

If you are aware of others to include in our shared prayers, please let a church officer, an Elder, or the office know!

Happy Birthday this week to Errol Mitchell, Dylan Kahn, Megan Caras and Ryan Pucket.

According to the schedule and barring any switches, next Sunday's Lector is Rich Schneider, our Nursery attendant is Carolyn Van Til. Thank you so much for your service!

CHURCH LEADERSHIP

PRESIDENT	Peggy Reins
VICE-PRESIDENT	Karen Christianson
TREASURER	Carolyn Kuechler (interim)
SECRETARY	Jenn Schneider
FINANCIAL SECRETARY	Maria Altmayer (interim)

Regular Reminders!

Let us know you were here! Please sign the attendance sheet in the black pew pads and when you think your pew is ready, please pass the pad towards the center aisle of the church.

Private Signs: You will notice certain rooms around the church have been designated as "private." If ICE should ever come to our building, they will not be allowed to enter any room marked "private."

Donations to our mini-food pantry are always needed and greatly appreciated! Donations can be left in the narthex or downstairs by the offices on the designated shelves. Thank you!



MISSION MOMENTS

September 13, 2026

Exodus 14:19-31

Road to Freedom

Even if you have not spent much time in church or in Bible study, the story of the crossing of the Red Sea is probably a little familiar. Take a look at the story with new eyes today, reading it through a lens that is new to you. What new message or insight do you get from this story by reading it in this new way?

A literary reading considers the story from the point of view of literature. How does the plot arc and flow keep you, as the reader or listener, engaged? What are some of the literary devices, such as use of language? Who are the characters and how are they developed? What is your point of view as a reader or listener? How does the story change if you consider it from another point of view?

A historical reading considers the story from the point of view of its place in history. Take into account the place and time that the story takes place. What is the culture of God's people and of Pharaoh's people at the time? What are other forces at work in these societies?

Another way to read a Bible story is as a story of God's work in the world. In reading this way, pay attention to where God is and what God is doing. What is God like in this story and how does this compare to God's presence in other stories? How does God look and sound? In what ways does God circumvent expected or natural law in order to accomplish Divine goals?

You may also want to read a scripture story devotionally, as a way to intentionally deepen your walk with God. In reading this way, read the story slowly three times. The first time, pay attention to any words or phrases that jump out at you and make note of them. The second time, read while asking God to show you God's purpose in the world. The third time, read asking God to reveal something that you need for your own particular faith walk.

Yet another way to read the Bible, and perhaps a particularly helpful one on this Just Peace Sunday (<https://www.ucc.org/just-peace/>), is through a liberation theology lens. Liberation theology is based on the fundamental value that God's preference is always for the marginalized and oppressed. As you read this way, look for clues that God is working for freedom for the enslaved, and disruption of systems of oppression.

Exodus 14:19-31

¹⁹ 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. ²⁰ 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.

²¹ 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. ²² The Israelites went into the sea on dry ground, the waters forming a wall for them on their right and on their left. ²³ The Egyptians pursued and went into the sea after them, all of Pharaoh's horses, chariots, and chariot drivers. ²⁴ At the morning watch the Lord, in the pillar of fire and cloud, looked down on the Egyptian army and threw the Egyptian army into a panic. ²⁵ He clogged^[a] 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."

²⁶ 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." ²⁷ So 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. ²⁸ 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. ²⁹ But the Israelites walked on dry ground through the sea, the waters forming a wall for them on their right and on their left.

³⁰ Thus the Lord saved Israel that day from the Egyptians, and Israel saw the Egyptians dead on the seashore. ³¹ 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.

Matthew 18:21-35

²¹ Then Peter came and said to him, “Lord, if my brother or sister sins against me, how often should I forgive? As many as seven times?” ²² Jesus said to him, “Not seven times, but, I tell you, seventy-seven^[a] times.

²³ “For this reason the kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king who wished to settle accounts with his slaves. ²⁴ When he began the reckoning, one who owed him ten thousand talents was brought to him, ²⁵ and, as he could not pay, the lord ordered him to be sold, together with his wife and children and all his possessions and payment to be made. ²⁶ So the slave fell on his knees before him, saying, ‘Have patience with me, and I will pay you everything.’ ²⁷ And out of pity for him, the lord of that slave released him and forgave him the debt. ²⁸ But that same slave, as he went out, came upon one of his fellow slaves who owed him a hundred denarii, and seizing him by the throat he said, ‘Pay what you owe.’ ²⁹ Then his fellow slave fell down and pleaded with him, ‘Have patience with me, and I will pay you.’ ³⁰ But he refused; then he went and threw him into prison until he would pay the debt. ³¹ 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. ³² Then his lord summoned him and said to him, ‘You wicked slave! I forgave you all that debt because you pleaded with me. ³³ Should you not have had mercy on your fellow slave, as I had mercy on you?’ ³⁴ And in anger his lord handed him over to be tortured until he would pay his entire debt. ³⁵ So my heavenly Father will also do to every one of you, if you do not forgive your brother or sister from your heart.”