

Welcome



ORDER OF WORSHIP FOR

**Sunday,
December 14,
2025
10:00 AM**

**Third Sunday of
Advent**





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>

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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](https://www.facebook.com/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 in Skokie
Order of Worship for
Sunday, December 14, 2025 at 10:00am
The Third Sunday of Advent

During our sacred music, listen. Be attentive. Feel God's Spirit connecting all of us gathered here, those with us online and in spirit, and those who cannot be present today.

PRELUDE “Gabriel’s Message”

THE RINGING OF THE BELLS

ANNOUNCEMENTS Peggy Reins

You may stand in body or spirit.

CALL TO WORSHIP

One: God's Spirit has led us here.

All: **And where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is HOPE.**

One: God's Spirit has led us here.

All: **And where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is PEACE.**

One: God's Spirit has led us here.

All: **And where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is JOY.**

One: The Spirit prepares the way for God-With-Us.

ALL: O Come, O Come Emmanuel!

OPENING HYMN “O Come, O Come Emmanuel”

A: O come, O Day-spring, come and cheer
our spirits by your advent here.
Love stir within the womb of night
and death's own shadows put to flight.
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to you, O
Israel.

A WORD OF PEACE

Marilyn Froelich

LIGHTING OF THE ADVENT CANDLE *Three candles are lit.*

Lighting the candle of Joy today are Angelo and Alex Iannotti.

P = Pastor

C = Congregation

A = All

RESPONSE "Light Three Candles to Watch for Messiah"

v.3

Am Em/G F Dm

1. Light one can - dle to watch for Mes - si - ah;
2. Light two can - dles to watch for Mes - si - ah;
3. Light three can - dles to watch for Mes - si - ah;
4. Light four can - dles to watch for Mes - si - ah;

3 E Am/E E Am E/B

let the light ban - ish dark - ness. He shall bring sal -
let the light ban - ish dark - ness. He shall feed the
let the light ban - ish dark - ness. Lift your heads and
let the light ban - ish dark - ness. He is com - ing,

6 Am/C Dm Dm/F Dm

va - tion to Is - ra - el, God ful - fills the
flock like a shep - herd, gent - ly lead them
lift high the gate - way for the King of
tell the glad tid - ings, Let your lights be

8 E(SUS4) E E(SUS4) E Am

prom - ise.
home - ward.
glo - ry.
shin - ing!

CALL TO CONFESSiON

One: Let us bring before God our greatest hopes and all that stands in the way of sharing God's joy.

PRAYER OF CONFESSiON

All: Great Redeemer, too often we allow the idea of absolute happiness to block our sense of joy. Our hopes can be crushed under the weight of the world's sorrows, and our peace is disturbed by the agony of injustice. Sometimes we race toward solutions without pausing to seek your greater good. We may lay bare our sorrows while ignoring the small delights that make the work toward justice worthwhile. Relieve us of the pain we carry, and open us to your love. Amen.

Pause for quiet reflection

WORDS OF ASSURANCE

One: Rejoice my friends. God's everlasting love is coming into the world, filling us with peace and hope.

All: **For 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! Amen!**

SUNG RESPONSE “Gloria”

A: **Glo-o-o-o-o-ria, in excelsis Deo,
Glo-o-o-o-o-ria, in excelsis Deo.**

PASSING OF THE PEACE

One: The peace of Christ be with you all.

A: **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.

P = Pastor

C = Congregation

A = All

HYMN "Awake, Awake to Greet the New Morn" v 1-2



1. A - wake! a - wake, and greet the new morn, For
2. To us, to all in sor - row and fear, Em -
3. In dark - est night his com - ing shall be, When
4. Re - joice, re - joice, take heart in the night, Though



an - gels her - ald its dawn-ing, Sing out your joy, for
man - u - el comes a - sing - ing, His hum - ble song is
all the world is de - spair - ing, As morn - ing light so
dark the win - ter and cheer-less, The ris - ing sun shall



soon he is born, Be - hold! the Child of our long - ing.
qui - et and near, Yet fills the earth with its ring - ing;
qui - et and free, So warm and gen - tle and car - ing.
crown you with light, Be strong and lov - ing and fear - less;



Come as a ba - by weak and poor, To bring all hearts to -
Mu - sic to heal the bro - ken soul And hymns of lov - ing
Then shall the mute break forth in song, The lame shall leap in
Love be our song and love our prayer, And love, our end - less



geth - er, He o - pens wide the heav'n - ly door And
kind - ness, The thun - der of his an - thems roll To
won - der, The weak be raised a - bove the strong, And
sto - ry, May God fill ev - 'ry day we share, And



lives now in - side us for ev - - er.
shat - ter all ha - tred and blind - - ness.
weap - ons be bro - ken a - sun - - der.
bring us at last in - to glo - - ry.

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PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION

Hebrew Scripture

Carolyn Van Til

Isaiah 35:1-10

You may wish to stand for the reading of the Gospel.

CHRISTIAN SCRIPTURE

Please be seated.

Luke 1:47-55

SPECIAL MUSIC

“Joy!”

SERMON

“On the Way”

P = Pastor

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A = All

HYMN "Good Christian Friends, Rejoice!"



1 Good Chris-tian friends, re - joice with heart and soul and
2 Good Chris-tian friends, re - joice with heart and soul and
3 Good Chris-tian friends, re - joice with heart and soul and



voice; give ye heed to what we say:
voice; now ye hear of end - less bliss:
voice; now ye need not fear the grave:



Je - sus Christ is born to - day; ox and ass be -
Je - sus Christ was born for this! He has o - pened
Je - sus Christ was born to save! Calls you one and



fore him bow, and he is in the man - ger now.
heav - en's door, and we are blest for - ev - er-more.
calls you all to gain the ev - er - last - ing hall.



Christ is born to - day! Christ is born to - day!
Christ was born for this! Christ was born for this!
Christ was born to save! Christ was born to save!



PASTORAL AND 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

Sing to the tune of "All Praise to Thee, My God, This Night"

A: What can I give him, poor as I am?

If I were a shepherd, I would bring a lamb;
If I were a wise man, I would do my part;
yet what I can I give him: give my heart.

PRAYER OF DEDICATION

A: Precious God, take these gifts in the spirit they were given, with joy and love for our siblings around the world. May we recognize that when all share, all are enriched. In joyful thanksgiving, we offer our gifts.

Amen.

P = Pastor

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A = All

CLOSING HYMN "Joy to the World" vs. 1, 2, 4

1. Joy to the world! the Lord is come: Let earth re -
2. Joy to the earth! the Sav - iour reigns: Let men their -
3. He rules the world with truth and grace, And makes the

ceive her King; Let ev - ery heart pre - pare Him room,
songs em - ploy; While fields and floods, rocks, hills, and plains
na - tions prove The glo - ries of His right - eous - ness,

And heaven and na - ture sing, And heaven and na - ture
Re - peat the sound - ing joy, Re - peat the sound - ing
And won - ders of His love, And won - ders of His

And heaven and na - ture sing, And heaven and na - ture
Re - peat the sound - ing joy, And won - ders of His
And won - ders of His love, sing,
And Re - And

sing, And heaven, and heaven and na - ture sing.
joy, Re - peat, re - peat the sound - ing joy.
love, And won - ders, won - ders of His love. A-MEN.

heaven and na - ture sing,
peat the sound - ing joy,
won - ders of His love.

CHARGE AND BENEDICTION

POSTLUDE

“Joy to the World”

During the Postlude, we pause to reflect as we prepare to follow God out into the world.

Today's liturgy is adapted from:

Called the Holy Way: Service Prayers for the Third Sunday of Advent Year A, by Maria Mankin.

<<https://worshipwords.co.uk/responsive-reading-inspired-by-isaiah-35-duncan-wilson-uk/>>

FOR WORSHIP TODAY

INTERIM MINISTER

Rev. Brenda Barnes Jamieson

MUSIC DIRECTOR

Ben Westphal

DEACON

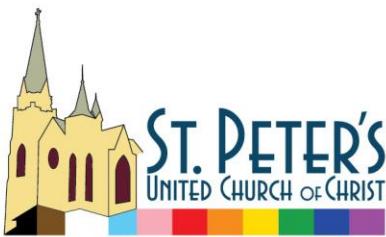
Beth Sterba

LIVESTREAM RECORDING

Peter Svenson

NURSERY ATTENDANT

Laurie Mitchell



AN OPEN & AFFIRMING CONGREGATION

8013 Laramie Ave. Skokie, IL 60077 | 847.673.8166 | www.stpeteruccskokie.org

November 2025

Dear St. Peter's Members and Friends,

Please accept our gratitude for your ongoing support, prayers, presence and generosity during this period of transition at St. Peter's. We continue to be a vibrant worshipping presence in our community with mission projects that help others beyond our walls. It is in times such as these, that having St. Peter's UCC is more important than ever.

Being able to give is both a blessing and an awesome opportunity to be a witness to God's love. Your regular contributions to St. Peter's combine to form the main source of financial support for the salaries of our church staff, mission and outreach, and building maintenance. We have supported our many community partners this year: The Night Ministry, Military Outreach USA, A Just Harvest, Niles Township Food Pantry, The Douglas Center, Refugee One, C.A.R.E. and more.

As we look ahead, the following projects will be worked on next year. Front steps will be repaired and the brick walls supporting them replaced. The flooring in our Sunday school wing will need to be updated. The heating and cooling systems continue to surprise us with necessary and costly repairs.

As you think about your 2025 year-end giving, we ask that you consider making an extra gift to St. Peter's. You might also think about including St. Peter's in your estate planning to become a legacy donor.

May this coming Advent season be a blessing to you and your family, and may God bless and guide you in your giving!

Faithfully,
The Board of Finance

Mail check to:
St. Peter's UCC
8013 Laramie Ave
Skokie, IL. 60077

Donations may be made safely via Zelle using the email, finance@stpeteruccskokie.org



You can also donate electronically safely via PayPal or Vanco on our web site
<https://www.stpeteruccskokie.org/donate>



News in the Pews

The time draws near to celebrate our Savior's birth! Welcome to worship, which is part of our preparation. It's good to be here together.

We extend heartfelt gratitude to all our volunteers; without their help, this and every service would not be possible – thank you.

Special thanks to those who were able to come finish up the Advent decorating and Christmas Carol Sing prep.

Christmas Carol Sing today, December 14th at 3PM! Join us as we celebrate the holidays together in song. After, we'll meet downstairs for snacks and fellowship. Bring a savory snack to share. Come join us for holiday cheer!

This year, we want two sets of volunteers to assist us with our Advent candles each week. 1. candle lighters and partner/family/friend(s) who will read our candle lighting liturgy; and 2. a worshipper to talk about their personal reflections on the theme of the week (hope, peace, love, joy). If you are interested in either role, please see the sign-up sheets at church, or let Brenda or Laura know.

Christmas Carol Sing December 14th at 3PM! Join us as we celebrate the holidays together in song. We will meet in the Sanctuary, and we hear the Women's Guild will be heading up appetizers after the event. Come join us and have some fun!

Baby Shower for Jesus! Our Sunday School program is sponsoring collecting baby items for the Niles Township Food pantry to give to their needy families. Items like baby food formula, diapers, lotions,

cheerios, fruit cups, fruit snacks, juice and milk boxes and pudding cups are all great items to donate. You can place your items in the sanctuary under the tree on Sundays, or on the table outside the gym during the week. Thank you so much for your help!

Christmas dinner donations needed NOW at the Jewel! Go to the Jewel Foods at the Village Crossing Shopping center to donate at the service desk, (5667 Touhy, Niles) or if shopping, donate at the registers. If you can't make it, you can give the donation to Heidi Tarzian, hctarzian@gmail.com, who works there, and she'll donate it. If you have any questions, contact me (Laura) in the office.

Thinking about joining the church? We will be holding classes in January. If you might be interested, please tell Brenda, Laura or another church leader.

Advent devotional - Soon and Very Soon. This book brings diverse voices to our Advent reflections. In her introduction, Rev. Kaji Douša says waiting is hard, knowing how to wait is even harder. She suggests "one of the deepest expressions of hope is the willingness to wait with intention." We are now in the Advent season of waiting. You are invited to join others in a shared practice of daily devotional reading. Please email Laura at office@stpeteruccskokie.org to receive a link for your pdf copy of Soon and Very Soon. Laura will also print out a limited number of copies of the devotional for those who are unable to download the book.

2026 Calendars are in! Copies will be available in the Narthex, the Lanford Fellowship Hall, and near the offices. Take one for a friend, too!

You can now donate via Zelle! Put finance@stpeteruccskokie.org in the address. Please indicate under memo/notes where the funds should go, i.e. weekly offering, poinsettia order, etc.

Our People

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

- Matt Anthony, nephew of Marlene Russell, who has incurable cancer.
- Kate Traub, niece of the Bailey's, recovering from surgery.
- Mark Taylor.
- The Kuras family welcomed a baby girl Virginia! All are doing well.
- Daughters of Ann Herren Jenny and Betsy, both recovering after surgeries.
Wendy, friend and colleague of Beth Sterba, who is fighting liver cancer.
- Chad McCoy and his family.
- Richard Hook who had a stroke.
- Kathy Zipperer and her family.
- Dorothy Panzke with a new health concern.
- Annie's friend Renee is fighting a long term, rare illness. She and her family are fighting to find a remedy that will slow and maybe even reverse the progress of this illness.
- Nicole McGinnis, childhood friend of Laura's who is fighting stage 4 cancer.
- David, uncle of Chad McCoy, as he undergoes kidney dialysis treatments.
- Robert Elliot, brother-in-law of Anna Riley, diagnosed with cancer stage 2.
- 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, Lois Jarmuth and Bob Seitman.

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 Judy Paige! Happy Anniversary to Erik & Liesel Christianson.

According to the schedule and barring any switches, next Sunday's Lector will be Ann Herren, and Heidi Tarzian is on Nursery duty. Thank you so much for your service!

CHURCH LEADERSHIP

PRESIDENT	Peggy Reins
VICE-PRESIDENT	Barb Todd
TREASURER	Chad McCoy
SECRETARY	Annie Noorts
FINANCIAL SECRETARY	Maria Altmayer

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.

We are always grateful for all offerings to the church. So many thanks to everyone who's been keeping us going with your donations! See inside the front cover for details on how to donate.

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."



MISSION MOMENTS

Heartbeat of Justice

December 14, 2025

Third Sunday of Advent

PURPLE

Luke 1:46b-55

Mary, a teen engaged to Joseph, received the startling news that God had chosen her to birth hope into a bleak world. Quite an honor of the divine kind, yet quite a dishonor of the humankind. This pregnancy would ignite gossipy whispers and many a raised eyebrows among the villagers. Still, Mary said “yes,” relaying the brave and life-changing words to her angelic messenger: Let it be according to God’s will.

While young and innocent, Mary knew what even the most learned and worldly person failed to grasp: The Mighty One can and will do great things for all who have been told that they are not good enough to garner any worthy attention.

The holy mother-to-be also knew there was something greater in the works than her own blissful domesticity with Joseph. Her “yes” would bless generations to come. How often do we realize that our “yes” to God creates a ripple of blessings? When will we ever truly allow God’s plan to override our best laid plans for tomorrow? Can we give up our dreams so easily and so eagerly for that of God’s vision for us?

So in awe to be cast in the salvation story, Mary begins singing of God's power that sends the rich away empty. While the scholarly name of Mary's song is "The Magnificat" it could easily be called "The Heartbeat of Justice," for each word hits the right note of how God will dismantle the systems of oppression.

Mary had her season of saying "yes" to God. Now it is our turn, for we are being invited to play a pivotal role in the unfolding saga of salvation. It is our time to sing "The Heartbeat of Justice," making clear every note of God's care for all who have been forgotten.

But what exactly would our "yes" to God require? According to Dietrich Bonhoeffer, every "yes" to God is accompanied with a "no." As the German pastor, theologian and anti-Nazi dissident during World War II once reflected, "Our 'yes' to God requires our 'no' to all injustice, to all evil, to all lies, to all oppression and violation of the weak and poor."

"The Heartbeat of Justice" is playing. Who will sing it out loud?

Mighty and loving God, as Christmas songs fill the air with promises of jingling bells and flying reindeer, may our ears be attuned to the true song of Christmas. May we hear the lyrics of a justice seeking Love that sets prisoners free and lifts those kicked to the gutter. May we hear, may we sing, and may we find ourselves whispering our "yes" to You. May Your will be done in our lives. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen.

(Rev. Donna Frischknecht Jackson is a communications specialist for the United Church of Christ and author of today's Sunday Bulletin.)

Isaiah 35:1-10 as a responsive reading:

One: The desert will rejoice
and flowers will bloom in the wild places.
Everywhere will reflect God's glory.
Tired hands and bent knees will be strong again.

All: Eyes will see again, ears be opened.

**The lame will leap and dance
and silent lips break into laughter.**

One: Streams will flood the desert,
springs will refresh dry ground.

This is the time for telling everyone who is discouraged,

All: 'Take heart and don't be afraid!

God is coming to our rescue.'

One: The refugees are coming home
singing and dancing for joy.

The road to holiness is open again. Hear the message,

All: You will be happy for ever,

free from sorrow and grief.

Luke 1:39-56

³⁹ In those days Mary set out and went with haste to a Judean town in the hill country, ⁴⁰ where she entered the house of Zechariah and greeted Elizabeth. ⁴¹ When Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the child leaped in her womb. And Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit ⁴² and exclaimed with a loud cry, "Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb. ⁴³ And why has this happened to me, that the mother of my Lord comes to me? ⁴⁴ For as soon as I heard the sound of your greeting, the child in my womb leaped for joy. ⁴⁵ And blessed is she who believed that there would be^[a] a fulfillment of what was spoken to her by the Lord."

⁴⁶ And Mary^[b] said,

"My soul magnifies the Lord,

⁴⁷ and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior,

⁴⁸ for he has looked with favor on the lowly state of his servant.

 Surely from now on all generations will call me blessed,

⁴⁹ for the Mighty One has done great things for me,

 and holy is his name;

⁵⁰ indeed, his mercy is for those who fear him

 from generation to generation.

⁵¹ He has shown strength with his arm;

he has scattered the proud in the imagination of their hearts.
52 He has brought down the powerful from their thrones
and lifted up the lowly;
53 he has filled the hungry with good things
and sent the rich away empty.
54 He has come to the aid of his child Israel,
in remembrance of his mercy,
55 according to the promise he made to our ancestors,
to Abraham and to his descendants forever.”
56 And Mary remained with her about three months and then returned to her home.

Matthew 11:2-11

2 When John heard in prison what the Messiah^[a] was doing, he sent word by his^[b] disciples 3 and said to him, “Are you the one who is to come, or are we to wait for another?” 4 Jesus answered them, “Go and tell John what you hear and see: 5 the blind receive their sight, the lame walk, those with a skin disease are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the poor have good news brought to them. 6 And blessed is anyone who takes no offense at me.”
7 As they went away, Jesus began to speak to the crowds about John: “What did you go out into the wilderness to look at? A reed shaken by the wind? 8 What, then, did you go out to see? Someone^[c] dressed in soft robes? Look, those who wear soft robes are in royal palaces. 9 What, then, did you go out to see? A prophet?^[d] Yes, I tell you, and more than a prophet. 10 This is the one about whom it is written,
‘See, I am sending my messenger ahead of you,
who will prepare your way before you.’
11 “Truly I tell you, among those born of women no one has arisen greater than John the Baptist, yet the least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he.