

# Welcome

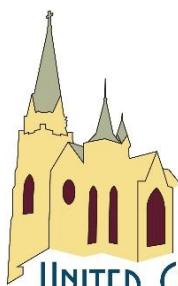


ORDER OF WORSHIP FOR

**Sunday,  
January 4, 2026  
10:00 AM**

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**Epiphany**



**ST. PETER'S**  
UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST  
OPEN & AFFIRMING IN SKOKIE, IL



# 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](mailto: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](mailto:pastor@stpeteruccskokie.org)

**Ben Westphal (Music Director):** [bcwestphal@gmail.com](mailto:bcwestphal@gmail.com)

**Laura Olson (Office Manager):** [office@stpeteruccskokie.org](mailto:office@stpeteruccskokie.org)

Office hours Mon-Fri 9am to 2pm

**Facebook/Instagram/YouTube:** [@stpeteruccskokie](https://www.facebook.com/stpeteruccskokie)

**Website:** [www.stpeteruccskokie.org](http://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, January 4, 2026 at 10:00am  
Epiphany**

*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 Selected

## THE RINGING OF THE BELLS

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

Peggy Reins

*You may stand in body or spirit.*

# CALL TO WORSHIP

One: Arise! Shine! Your light has come!

**All: The glory of the Lord has risen upon you!**

One: We have seen the star in the east, and we follow.

**All:** We remember God's wonder and promise,  
and we worship.

One: Lift up your eyes and look around;

**All:** We gather as God's people to open our hearts and sing out our praise.

One: The mystery of God's wonder and grace is here:

**All: Born is the king of Israel!**

## CAROL "The First Noel"

*In the style of a Carol*

1. The first No - well the an - gels did say Was to cer - tain poor  
 2. They look - ed up and saw a star, Shin-ing in the  
 3. And by the light of that same star, Three Wise Men  
 4. This star drew nigh to the north - west, O'er Beth - le -  
 5. Then en - tered in those Wise Men three Full rev - erent  
 6. Then let us all with one ac - cord Sing prais - es

shep-herds in fields as they lay, In fields as they lay keep-ing their  
 east be - yond them far, And to the earth it gave great  
 came from a coun-try a - far, To seek for a king was their in -  
 hem it took its rest, And there it did both stop and  
 ly up - on their knee, And of - fered there in His pres -  
 to our heaven - ly Lord, That hath made heaven and earth of

REFRAIN

REFRAIN

sheep, On a cold win-ter's night that was so deep.  
 light, And so it con - tin-ued both day and night.  
 tent, And to fol - low the star wher - ev - er it went.  
 stay, Right o - ver the place where Je - sus lay.  
 ence Their gold, and myrrh, and frank - in-cense.  
 naught, And with His blood man - kind hath bought.

No - well, No -

well, No - well, No - well, Born is the King of Is - ra - el!

## CALL TO CONFESSION

One: The God of wonder and mystery dares to love us despite our inability to respond fully. And so we join together in confession:

## PRAYER OF CONFESSION

All: God of the Universe, you continue to lead us forward to seek justice, love kindness, and walk humbly in your ways. As we struggle with political wrangling of this world, violence committed daily against the innocent, and pain of broken relationships, you remain steadfast in your care and devotion for us. It is almost too much to take in sometimes. Even in our doubts and disbelief, constant misunderstanding, and our flat-out ignorance about your ways, you remain constantly present to us. Teach us to trust your love and care. Amen.

*Pause for quiet reflection*

## WORDS OF ASSURANCE

One: The God of wonder and mystery surprises us in every age. Into the hardness of the world, God brings the greatest power we have known in the form of an infant.

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: Thanks be to God!

All: Amen!

## SUNG RESPONSE      “The First Noel”

A:      **Noel, Noel, Noel, Noel! Born is the King of Israel!**

**PASSING OF THE PEACE OF CHRIST**

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.*

**SUNG RESPONSE**      "The First Noel"

**A: Noel, Noel, Noel, Noel! Born is the King of Israel!**

**PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION**

Karen Christianson

Hebrew Scripture

Isaiah 60:1-6

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

**CHRISTIAN SCRIPTURE**

Matthew 2:1-12

*Please be seated.*

P = Pastor

C = Congregation

A = All

## CAROL

## "We Three Kings"



1 We three kings of O-ri-ent are, Bear-ing gifts we trav-erse a - far  
2 Born a king on Beth-le-hem'splain, Gold I bring to crown him a - gain,  
3 Frank-in-cense to of-fer have I, In - cense owns a de-i - ty nigh;  
4 Myrrh is mine; its bit-ter per-fume Breathes a life of gath-er-ing gloom:  
5 Glo-ri-ous now be - hold him a - rise, King and God and Sac - ri - fice;



Field and foun-tain, moor and moun-tain, Fol - low - ing yon - der star.  
King for - ev - er, ceas - ing nev - er O - ver us all to reign.  
Prayer and prais - ing, all men rais - ing, Wor-ship him, God on high.  
Sor-rowing, sigh - ing, bleed - ing, dy - ing, Sealed in the stone-cold tomb.  
Al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia! Sounds through the earth and skies.



O star of won - der, star of night, Star with roy - al beau - ty bright,



West-ward lead - ing, still pro-ceed - ing, Guide us to thy per - fect light.



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**SERMON****“By Another Way”****SPECIAL MUSIC**

Selected

**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: Lord Jesus, Messiah, God-With-Us, we dedicate  
these earthly things to your use, that they and all  
the world might shine with your light. Amen.**

## SERVICE OF HOLY COMMUNION

### Invitation

One: It is here, at Christ's table,

**All: where brokenness leads to wholeness.**

One: It is here, at Christ's table,

**All: where cracks allow light to shine forth.**

One: It is here, at Christ's table,

**All: where we see him most clearly.**

One: For this is the joyful feast of the people of God. It is

Christ himself who invites all of you to come, eat,  
drink, and see.

### Great Prayer of Thanksgiving

One: May the Light of Christ be with you.

**All: And also with you.**

One: Lift up your hearts!

**All: We lift them up to the Giver of Light.**

One: Give thanks to God!

**All: It is right to give God our thanks and praise.**

One: Let us pray . . .

### Words of Institution and Consecration

### Sharing of Bread and Cup

### Prayer of Gratitude:

**All: Thank you, O God, for filling us with good things —  
not just bread and wine, but your very self. May  
this glimpse of your reign give us eyes to see you  
at work in every place, and strength to be your  
body in the world. As your people, make us light  
for the world. In Jesus name. Amen.**

P = Pastor

C = Congregation

A = All

## CLOSING HYMN “Arise, Your Light has Come”



1 A - rise, your light is come! The Spir - it's call o - obey;

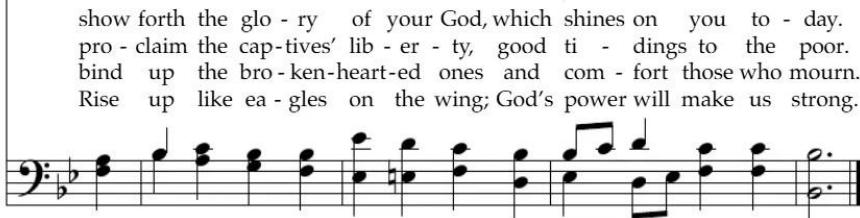
2 A - rise, your light is come! Fling wide the pris - on door;

3 A - rise, your light is come! All you in sor - row born,

4 A - rise, your light is come! The moun - tains burst in song!



show forth the glo - ry of your God, which shines on you to - day.  
pro - claim the cap-tives' lib - er - ty, good ti - dings to the poor.  
bind up the bro - ken-heart-ed ones and com - fort those who mourn.  
Rise up like ea - gles on the wing; God's power will make us strong.



## CHARGE AND BENEDICTION

### POSTLUDE

### Selected

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

*Today's liturgy is adapted from:*

*John A. Nelson, Pastor and Teacher of Niantic Community Church, Niantic, Connecticut. Worship Ways: Worship Resources for the United Church of Christ @ucc.org.*

*Nathan Williams and Teri Peterson,*

[https://www.liturgylink.net/category/christmas/epiphany.](https://www.liturgylink.net/category/christmas/epiphany)

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## FOR WORSHIP TODAY

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INTERIM MINISTER

Rev. Brenda Barnes Jamieson

MUSIC DIRECTOR

Ben Westphal

DEACON

Jenn Schneider

LIVESTREAM RECORDING

Greg Dennis

NURSERY ATTENDANT

Mike Ryan

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# News in the Pews

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**We're so glad you're here! There are many good reasons to come to church, but the best one is to worship and thank God for His amazing love — shown through the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. That's what our church is all about.**

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

**Softgoods Drive in January!** Starting January 4<sup>th</sup>, we will be collecting clothing, bedding, linens, shoes, belts, hats, coats, pillows & stuffed toys for our Savers Fundrive, which pays by the pound. Bring your items to the office on weekdays or on Sundays. Thanks for your help!

**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.

**Annual Congregational Meeting January 25<sup>th</sup> after worship.** All are invited to attend. All reports should be turned into the office no later January 12<sup>th</sup>. Thank you!

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**A call to Audit.** Your Board of Finance is looking for one of two people that could volunteer to help audit the records of the Financial Secretary and the Treasurer before our annual meeting. If you or someone you know has a skillset or an inquiring mind to dive in and ask pertinent questions about how St. Peter's manages our finances, please reach out to Chad McCoy at [chadwood.mccoy@gmail.com](mailto:chadwood.mccoy@gmail.com). The time would be a few hours in the church office sometime in mid-January. Thank You!

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

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# Our People

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**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.

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- 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 Alec Ryan, Jennifer Mau Gemignani, Jenn Schneider and Usha Rajbhandari.

**According to the schedule** and barring any switches, next Sunday's Lector is Beth Sterba, and Kathy Zipperer is on Nursery duty. Thank you so much for your service!

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## CHURCH LEADERSHIP

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

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## *Regular Reminders!*

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**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."

**You can now donate via Zelle!** Put finance@stpeteruccskokie.org in the address. Please indicate under memo/notes where the funds should go.

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## **MISSION MOMENTS**

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**Another Road**

**January 4, 2026**

**Second Sunday after Christmas**

**WHITE**

**John 1:(1-9), 10-18**

There's nothing more inviting than a candle's warm glow on a cold winter's night. The flickering flame dances as if being led by some divine melody. It's a light that calls to mind the opening of John's Gospel that speaks of a light in which no darkness can overcome.

Since the discovery of fire, a candle burning in the pitch black has always held symbolic hope. Back in the day, placing a candle in the window announced there was a birth in the house. It was also a sign of someone's passing or a remembrance of a loved one. During the persecution of Catholic priests in Ireland, a candle in the window let a priest know that the home was a place of refuge.

We all need a candle burning in the window guiding us to our place of refuge, for we all seem to be groping in the dark these days, wandering for far too long on uncertain roads. Where is that spark of hope leading us to a place of belonging?

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Long after the Christmas season of light is over, I continue to embrace every opportunity I have to light candles. With a strike of a match, darkened nooks in my home magically come to life. I also find a soothing calmness wash over me while watching a candle burn. The limited reach of its flame is my reminder to stop trying to see so far ahead. Rather, trust what the light is revealing, no matter how narrow or short the path it illuminates is. It's then I realize I don't need search lights to be found. All I need is the Christ light shining on me.

There's a poem by Howard Thurman who writes about lighting candles all year long. In it he encourages us all to light "candles of joy, despite the sadness; candles of hope where despair keeps watch; candles of peace for tempest-tossed days; candles of grace to ease heavy burdens; and candles of love to inspire all my living."

There's a light to be found in the world — one that the darkness will not overcome. May we do our part in keeping the light of Christ burning brightly in 2026.

*Loving God, help us be the ones who light the candles of joy, hope, peace, grace and love this year, illuminating the darkness for those who are lost and shining a beacon of welcome to those who are lonely. 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.)

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## **Isaiah 60:1-9**

**60** Arise, shine, for your light has come,  
and the glory of the LORD has risen upon you.  
**2** For darkness shall cover the earth  
and thick darkness the peoples,  
but the LORD will arise upon you,  
and his glory will appear over you.  
**3** Nations shall come to your light  
and kings to the brightness of your dawn.  
**4** Lift up your eyes and look around;  
they all gather together; they come to you;  
your sons shall come from far away,  
and your daughters shall be carried in their nurses' arms.  
**5** Then you shall see and be radiant;  
your heart shall thrill and rejoice,<sup>[a]</sup>  
because the abundance of the sea shall be brought to you;  
the wealth of the nations shall come to you.  
**6** A multitude of camels shall cover you,  
the young camels of Midian and Ephah;  
all those from Sheba shall come.  
They shall bring gold and frankincense  
and shall proclaim the praise of the LORD.

## **Matthew 2:1-12**

**2** In the time of King Herod, after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea, magi<sup>[a]</sup> from the east came to Jerusalem, **2** asking, "Where is the child who has been born king of the Jews? For we observed his star in the east<sup>[b]</sup> and have come to pay him homage." **3** When King Herod heard this, he was frightened, and all Jerusalem with him, **4** and calling together all the chief priests and scribes of the people, he inquired of them where the Messiah<sup>[c]</sup> was to be born. **5** They told him, "In Bethlehem of Judea, for so it has been written by the prophet:  
**6** 'And you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah,  
are by no means least among the rulers of Judah,  
for from you shall come a ruler  
who is to shepherd<sup>[d]</sup> my people Israel.' "

**7** Then Herod secretly called for the magi<sup>[e]</sup> and learned from them the exact time

when the star had appeared. <sup>8</sup>Then he sent them to Bethlehem, saying, "Go and search diligently for the child, and when you have found him, bring me word so that I may also go and pay him homage." <sup>9</sup>When they had heard the king, they set out, and there, ahead of them, went the star that they had seen in the east,<sup>10</sup> until it stopped over the place where the child was. <sup>10</sup>When they saw that the star had stopped,<sup>[a]</sup> they were overwhelmed with joy. <sup>11</sup>On entering the house, they saw the child with Mary his mother, and they knelt down and paid him homage. Then, opening their treasure chests, they offered him gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh. <sup>12</sup>And having been warned in a dream not to return to Herod, they left for their own country by another road.

### **Matthew 2:13-23**

<sup>13</sup> Now after they had left, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream and said, "Get up, take the child and his mother, and flee to Egypt, and remain there until I tell you, for Herod is about to search for the child, to destroy him." <sup>14</sup>Then Joseph<sup>[a]</sup> got up, took the child and his mother by night, and went to Egypt <sup>15</sup>and remained there until the death of Herod. This was to fulfill what had been spoken by the Lord through the prophet, "Out of Egypt I have called my son."

<sup>16</sup> When Herod saw that he had been tricked by the magi,<sup>[b]</sup> he was infuriated, and he sent and killed all the children in and around Bethlehem who were two years old or under, according to the time that he had learned from the magi.<sup>[c]</sup> <sup>17</sup>Then what had been spoken through the prophet Jeremiah was fulfilled:

<sup>18</sup> "A voice was heard in Ramah,  
wailing and loud lamentation,  
Rachel weeping for her children;  
she refused to be consoled, because they are no more."

<sup>19</sup> When Herod died, an angel of the Lord suddenly appeared in a dream to Joseph in Egypt and said, <sup>20</sup>"Get up, take the child and his mother, and go to the land of Israel, for those who were seeking the child's life are dead." <sup>21</sup>Then Joseph<sup>[d]</sup> got up, took the child and his mother, and went to the land of Israel. <sup>22</sup>But when he heard that Archelaus was ruling Judea in place of his father Herod, he was afraid to go there. And after being warned in a dream, he went away to the district of Galilee. <sup>23</sup>There he made his home in a town called Nazareth, so that what had been spoken through the prophets might be fulfilled, "He will be called a Nazarene."