

Welcome

ORDER OF WORSHIP FOR

**Sunday,
February 23,
2025
10:00 AM**

**Seventh Sunday
after Epiphany**

JOHN 3
...nded from heaven, the Son of
...nd as Moses lifted up ²⁴
...nt in the wilderness, so must
...of man be lifted up, ¹⁵ that
...r believes in him may have
...life. ²² h
...or God so loved the ¹⁶ ²⁴
...that he gave his only Son, that
...ver believes in him should n
...h but have eternal life. ¹⁷ For C
...the Son into the world, but th
...to condemn the world, through
...rld might be saved through
...He who believes in him is n
...ondemned; he who does no
...ondemned already, because
...believed in the name of th
...God. ¹⁹ And this is th
...that the light b
...men love





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!

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 in Skokie
Order of Worship for
Sunday, February 23, 2025 at 10:00am
Seventh Sunday after Epiphany

Welcome to worship. The music before the service is intended as a time of silent prayer and preparation.

PRELUDE "Sonata No. 5" by GF Handel
Judith Brown, flute

THE RINGING OF THE BELLS

ANNOUNCEMENTS Peggy Reins

Will those who are able please stand up

CALL TO WORSHIP

P: Dear friends, as we gather in this sacred space, we
hear the words of Jesus calling us to a higher way of
loving.

**C: We come with open hearts, ready to love our
enemies and seek peace.**

P: In a world that often divides us, we are invited to
extend kindness even to those who oppose us.

**C: We pledge to practice compassion, to forgive, and to
embrace our shared humanity.**

P: Jesus teaches us to give generously and to judge with grace, for in doing so, we reflect the love of God.

C: May our worship today inspire us to live out these radical teachings in our daily lives.

P: Let us worship together, with love, hope, and a commitment to justice.

All: Amen.

OPENING HYMN

“Gathered Here in the Mystery of this Hour”

Text and music: Phil Porter, 1990

The musical notation is written on two staves in 4/4 time with a key signature of one flat (B-flat). The melody is a simple, flowing line. The lyrics are written below the notes. The first staff contains measures 1 and 2, and the second staff contains measures 3 and 4. The lyrics are: "Gath-ered here in the mys-tery of this hour, gath-ered here in one strong bod-y, gath-ered here in the strug-gle and the power, Spir - it draw near."

1 Gath-ered here in the mys-tery of this hour, 2 gath-ered here in one strong

3 bod-y, 4 gath-ered here in the strug-gle and the power, Spir - it draw near.

This chant may be sung as a round.

PRAYER OF CONFESSION

P: Please join me in our prayer of confession:

A: Gracious God, we come before you acknowledging our shortcomings. We confess that we have often turned away from your call to love one another. We have held grudges against those who hurt us and failed to offer grace to those who seek forgiveness. We have closed our hearts to the needs of others, clinging tightly to our own desires. We have judged others without compassion and let fear silence our voices for justice.

P: In this moment of silence, we lift our personal confessions to you...

Pause for a moment of silence

A: Forgive us, O God, and guide us to embody the love and mercy you so freely give. Amen

ASSURANCE OF PARDON

P: Friends, hear the good news: God's love is unconditional and ever-present. In Jesus Christ, we are offered forgiveness and the chance to begin anew. We are loved, we are forgiven, and we are called to extend that grace to others. Go forth with the assurance that you are embraced by mercy and empowered to love.

A: Thanks be to God! Amen.

HYMN “O Love That Will Not Let Me Go”

1 O Love that wilt not let me go, I rest my
 2 O Light that fol-lowest all my way, I yield my
 3 O Joy that seek - est me through pain, I can - not
 4 O Cross that lift - est up my head, I dare not

wea - ry soul in thee; I give thee back the life I owe, that
 flick - ering torch to thee; my heart re - stores its bor - rowed ray, that
 close my heart to thee; I trace the rain - bow through the rain, and
 ask to fly from thee; I lay in dust life's glo - ry dead, and

in thine o - cean depths its flow may rich - er, full - er be.
 in thy sun - shine's blaze its day may bright - er, fair - er be.
 feel the prom - ise is not vain that morn shall tear - less be.
 from the ground there blos - soms red life that shall end - less be.

The congregation may be seated

PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION AND SCRIPTURE READING

Jenn Schneider

Old Testament Lesson

Genesis 45:3-11, 15

Epistle Lesson

I Corinthians 15:35-38, 42-50

MUSICAL MEDITATION “Sonata No. 2”

by JS Bach

Judith Brown, flute

GOSPEL

Luke 6: 27-38

The Congregation may be seated

PASTORAL AND SILENT PRAYERS

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.**

CALL TO OFFERING

OFFERTORY

If you donate electronically, feel free to place an “Electronic Giving” card into the plate as it comes around so you can enjoy participating in the physical act of giving.

Will those who are able please rise to sing

OFFERTORY RESPONSE "We Are An Offering" SSB #11

We lift our voi - ces, we lift our hands, we lift our

lives up to You, we are an of - fer - ing; Lord, use our

voi - ces, Lord, use our hands, Lord, use our

lives, they are Yours, we are an of - fer - ing.

All that we have, all that we are,

all that we hope to be we give to You, we

give to You. We lift our

voi - ces, we lift our hands, we lift our

lives up to You, we are an of - fer - ing, we are an of - fer - ing.

PRAYER OF DEDICATION

A: Gracious God, we come before you with thankful hearts, recognizing that all we have is a gift from you. As we present our offerings today, we dedicate these gifts to your service and the work of your kingdom. May they be used to strengthen our community, uplift those in need, and spread your love and grace in the world. Inspire us to give joyfully and generously, reflecting your abundant love through our actions. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen.

The congregation may be seated

SERMON

“Pursue Love”

Will those who are able please stand up

HYMN “Love Divine, All Loves Excelling”

1 Love di - vine, all loves ex - cel - ling, Joy of heav'n, to
 2 Breathe, oh, breathe thy lov - ing Spir - it in - to ev - 'ry
 3 Come, Al - might - y, to de - liv - er; let us all thy
 4 Fin - ish then thy new cre - a - tion, pure and spot - less

earth come down! Fix in us thy hum - ble dwell - ing, all thy
 trou - bled breast; let us all in thee in - her - it; let us
 life re - ceive; sud - den - ly re - turn, and nev - er, nev - er -
 let us be; let us see thy great sal - va - tion per - fect -

faith - ful mer - cies crown. Je - sus, thou art all com - pas - sion,
 find thy prom - ised rest. Take a - way the love of sin - ning;
 more thy tem - ples leave. Thee we would be al - ways bless - ing,
 ly re - stored in thee! Changed from glo - ry in - to glo - ry,

pure, un - bound - ed love thou art; vis - it us with
 Al - pha and O - me - ga be; end of faith, as
 serve thee as thy hosts a - bove, pray, and praise thee
 till in heav'n we take our place, till we cast our

thy sal - va - tion, en - ter ev - 'ry trem - bling heart.
 its be - gin - ning, set our hearts at lib - er - ty.
 with - out ceas - ing, glo - ry in thy per - fect love.
 crowns be - fore thee, lost in won - der, love, and praise!

The Liturgy of Transition

Pastor Wayne: The writer of Ecclesiastes states, “To everything there is a season and a time for every purpose under heaven.” The congregation of St. Peter’s United Church of Christ began an intense season of change at the departure of Pastor Richard Lanford in June 2024, a 32-year season of ministry during which the church, its neighborhood, its denomination, as well as the world changed in ways no one could have imagined.

Congregation: **During this time, our purpose has remained constant: to worship with thanksgiving, to sing God’s praises, to embody the gospel of love, grace, mercy, and justice, to serve God and neighbor, to be transformed by our faith in God, our love for Jesus, and the Holy Spirit’s sustaining power.**

Pastor Wayne: As this season of transition began, the leaders of this church recognized that changes in the denominational search and call process needed an unofficial transition team of pastors and preachers to lead worship, preach the gospel, and

to assist the congregation. I am proud to represent that team of pastors and preachers.

Congregation: We are thankful for the ministries of Harriet Dart, Roger Dart, Terry Gallagher, Wayne MacPherson, Carol Munro, Ally Vertigan, and Renita Ward who blessed us with their wisdom and understanding, who preached the Word of God, who listened to our hopes and our fears, and who waited with us.

Pastor Wayne: A new season of change has begun. The church has called Rev. Brenda Barnes Jamieson to be the Intentional Interim Minister for St. Peter's United Church of Christ in Skokie, Illinois. We welcome her and ask her to come forward.

Congregation: We are grateful for your presence here today, symbolic of this new season in our lives as God's people. We are grateful for your experiences with transitional ministry. Most of all, we are grateful for you, a beloved child of God. May our time together be a blessing in your life.

Pastor Brenda responds and ends with a benediction.

POSTLUDE

“Hyfrydol”

The music after the service is intended as a time of reflection. Pastor will be pleased to greet you at the Sanctuary doors as soon as the postlude has concluded, and our livestream has stopped.

FOR WORSHIP TODAY

GUEST PREACHER Pastor Wayne MacPherson

INTENTIONAL INTERIM PASTOR

Rev. Brenda Barnes Jamieson

MUSIC DIRECTOR Ben Westphal

DEACON Barb Bailey

LIVESTREAM RECORDING Beth Sterba

NURSERY ATTENDANT Carolyn Van Til

A for the Veterans

Move-in Essentials Collection

GIVE A GIFT TO VETERANS EXITING HOMELESSNESS

Personal Hygiene:

Bath Soap ★ Hand Soap
Toothbrush ★ Toothpaste
Deodorant
Shaving Cream
Hairbrush ★ Comb
Nail Clippers

Kitchen & Cleaning:

Dishwashing Liquid
Paper Towels ★ Windex
Kitchen Trash Can
Garbage Bags ★ Dish Cloth
Mop & Bucket ★ Sponge
Broom & Dustpan

Bathroom:

Toilet Brush ★ Plunger
Toilet Bowl Cleaner
Bath Towels ★ Wash Cloth
Shower Curtain
Toilet Paper

Miscellaneous:

Flashlight ★ Light Bulbs
Sandwich Bags
Laundry Detergent
Hamper ★ Laundry Basket
Aluminum Foil
Pot Holders

VISIT STPETERUCCSKOKIE.ORG FOR MORE INFO

Feb 15th 9-12_{pm}
Feb 16th 12-3_{pm}

St Peter's UCC
8013 Laramie

Open to All!

News in the Pews

Welcome to worship. God plants us like trees beside streams of living water, provided by Jesus himself (Psalm 1:3; John 4:14). All who are thirsty, come and drink!

We would like to offer a warm welcome to Judith Brown, a friend of St. Peter's, and thank her for the gift of her flute playing in our worship service this morning.

Please join us after worship for a special Coffee Hour welcoming our Intentional Interim Pastor, Rev. Brenda Barnes Jamieson!

We have a new email address for our Pastor! If you'd like to contact Rev. Brenda, please email her at pastor@stpeteruccskokie.org.

A ❤️ For the Veterans collection is going strong. Our donation drive last weekend was a big success, thank you to everyone who participated, and thank you to those who spent time here this weekend collecting those donations! We can still use more items and you have one more week to donate! We are collecting household supplies for Military Outreach USA's "Veterans Transitioning from Homelessness to Homes" program all of February. Drop off during office hours or during worship. Items should be brand new, unopened toiletries, household cleaners, linens, bath accessories, kitchen accessories and more. A

full list is on our flyers posted around the church and in the bulletin.

Help Refresh St. Peter's! Church Maintenance Days - Join us on ***Saturdays in March from 9:00 AM to 1:00 PM*** as we work together to repair and refresh our beloved church building! The Trustees are creating a list of projects to repair and refresh the St. Peter's building. It will be a mix of projects including hanging curtains, painting, simple plumbing, and other various tasks. We will be doing asbestos abatement, but we will limit involvement given the nature of the project. Anyone who is willing and able can join Rich Schneider (richschneider@comcast.net) for any part of the scheduled time. Please let him know if you have a particular skill that you can share.

Sign up for ☕ Coffee Hour! We hope to have regular coffee hours on the 2nd and 4th Sundays of the month but need folks to sign-up to host. Contact the office if you are willing to host or co-host and we'll find you someone to assist if needed.

We are collecting funds for victims of the California wildfires through February. Please pray for those whose lives have been upended and consider making a gift to the UCC's disaster relief fund. Simply write a check or make an online contribution to St. Peter's with the note "California Wildfires." Your gift—100% of it—will go directly to disaster relief efforts. Thank you for your generous response to date.

Our People

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

- Maria A. asks for prayers for our friend Julius. We hope he is doing well with all the immigration issues.
- Ricky Riley had heart surgery and is home now and on the mend.
- Ann Herren's daughter Jennifer is undergoing radiation treatments for breast cancer.
- Anna Riley's mom for her continued improvement and healing after emergency surgery.
- The family of Ursula Dworak.
- Annmarie Gloeckner is in rehab after a fall.
- Those in California affected by the wildfires.
- Judy Paige is having knee therapy for the third time.
- Sharon Johnson's daughter Donna continues her battle with Lymphoma, which can be controlled but not cured.
- Denise's young friend is doing better but still fragile.
- Cancer has returned for Susan Garcia's Aunt Janice.
- Jane Abramchik continues to recover at home aided by a team of home caregivers and her husband Paul.
- Paul Brzozowski who is continuing chemotherapy and a trial drug for brain cancer for another four months.
- Annie has asked for continuing prayers for the many people struggling with cancer.

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!

This week Happy Birthdays go out to Eric and Lincoln
Svenson.

According to the schedule and barring any switches, next
Sunday's Lector will be Karen Christianson, and our Nursery
Attendant will be Mike Ryan.

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.

**Our mini-food pantry is a daily mission this church does
for the community of Skokie.** If you are able, please
donate!



Mission Moment

Love Your Enemies (2/23/2025)

Seventh Sunday after Epiphany

GREEN

Luke 6:27-38

In her book, *The Hiding Place*, Corrie ten Boom shares how during World War II, at the age of 50, she joined the Dutch resistance, working with her older sister, Betsie, in helping to hide their Jewish neighbors from the Nazis behind a sliding panel in a bedroom of their family home in Holland.

In 1944, though, the family was caught and arrested by the Gestapo. The sisters were subsequently sent to a concentration camp. Despite the brutal conditions, Betsie and Corrie clung to Jesus' command of loving one another, loving even the very people who were holding them captive.

Corrie, though, recalled how one especially trying day her sister spoke words of faith and encouragement to her, reminding her that, "if people can be taught to hate, they can be taught to love."

"We must find a way, you and I, no matter how long it takes," said Betsie to the younger Corrie.

Corrie did find way. After the war was over, she committed the remainder of her days modeling what is perhaps one of the hardest things Jesus asks of us here in Luke's gospel: Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, pray for those who mistreat you.

Corrie ten Boom modeled radical love by forgiving the guards in the concentration camp. She continued to write and give lectures about the healing power of God's love extended to those who hurt us, and how that love was the only thing capable of healing a broken world.

Decades have passed since ten Boom wrote *The Hiding Place* and hate still seems to be winning over love. We read the news headlines and hear the broadcasts of retaliation and retribution rather than redemption and forgiveness. The few times the media does share such a story of love winning over hate, we find it hard to imagine — let alone imagine us being the ones displaying such love. It seems impossible. Unfathomable.

But we must find a way to love our enemies, bless those who curse us and pray for those who mistreat us. No matter how long it takes, the world, which has mastered how to hate, needs to be taught love. It's a lesson that begins at home, with each one of us choosing for love to be our guide this day and always.

Merciful God, You who are our hiding place in times of trouble, we boldly ask for the strength to do the impossible this day — love our enemies and forgive those who have hurt us. All things are possible with You, O God. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen.

Please join me in spirit of prayer as we offer up our Prayer of Illumination.

Holy Spirit of Wisdom, open our hearts and minds to your truth. Help us to see with compassion, to listen with humility, and to grow in love and understanding. May these sacred words challenge and inspire us, leading us ever closer to mercy, justice, and peace. Amen.

Our Old Testament Lesson is Genesis 45:3-11, 15.

³ Joseph said to his brothers, "I am Joseph! Is my father still living?" But his brothers were not able to answer him, because they were terrified at his presence.

⁴ Then Joseph said to his brothers, "Come close to me." When they had done so, he said, "I am your brother Joseph, the one you sold into Egypt! ⁵ And now, do not be distressed and do not be angry with yourselves for selling me here, because it was to save lives that God sent me ahead of you. ⁶ For two years now there has been famine in the land, and for the next five years there will be no plowing and reaping. ⁷ But God sent me ahead of you to preserve for you a remnant on earth and to save your lives by a great deliverance.^[a]

⁸ "So then, it was not you who sent me here, but God. He made me father to Pharaoh, lord of his entire household and ruler of all Egypt. ⁹ Now hurry back to my father and say to him, 'This is what your son Joseph says: God has made me lord of all Egypt. Come down to me; don't delay. ¹⁰ You shall live in the region of Goshen and be near me—you, your children and grandchildren, your flocks and herds, and all you have. ¹¹ I will provide for you there, because five years of famine are still to come. Otherwise you and your household and all who belong to you will become destitute.'

¹⁵ And he kissed all his brothers and wept over them. Afterward his brothers talked with him.

This ends our reading from Genesis. Our Epistle Lesson is I Corinthians 15:35-38, 42-50.

³⁵ But someone will ask, "How are the dead raised? With what kind of body will they come?" ³⁶ How foolish! What you sow does not come to life unless it dies. ³⁷ When you sow, you do not plant the body that will be, but just a seed, perhaps of wheat or of something else. ³⁸ But God gives it a body as he has determined, and to each kind of seed he gives its own body. ⁴² So will it be with the resurrection of the dead. The body that is sown is perishable, it is raised imperishable; ⁴³ it is sown in dishonor, it is raised in glory; it is sown in weakness, it is raised in power; ⁴⁴ it is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body.

If there is a natural body, there is also a spiritual body. ⁴⁵ So it is written: "The first man Adam became a living being"^[a]; the last Adam, a life-giving spirit. ⁴⁶ The spiritual did not come first, but the natural, and after that the spiritual. ⁴⁷ The first man was of the dust of the earth; the second man is of heaven. ⁴⁸ As was the earthly man, so are those who are of the earth; and as is the heavenly man, so also are those who are of heaven. ⁴⁹ And just as we have borne the image of the earthly man, so shall we^[b] bear the image of the heavenly man.

⁵⁰ I declare to you, brothers and sisters, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, nor does the perishable inherit the imperishable.

**This ends our reading from I Corinthians. Our worship continues with a musical meditation
(*The reader may sit down*)**

Thank you, Ben.

Please Stand for the reading of the Gospel. Our Gospel lesson is Luke 6:27-38.

²⁷ "But to you who are listening I say: Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, ²⁸ bless those who curse you, pray for those who mistreat you. ²⁹ If someone slaps you on one cheek, turn to them the other also. If someone takes your coat, do not withhold your shirt from them. ³⁰ Give to everyone who asks you, and if anyone takes what belongs to you, do not demand it back. ³¹ Do to others as you would have them do to you.

³² "If you love those who love you, what credit is that to you? Even sinners love those who love them. ³³ And if you do good to those who are good to you, what credit is that to you? Even sinners do that. ³⁴ And if you lend to those from whom you expect repayment, what credit is that to you? Even sinners lend to sinners, expecting to be repaid in full. ³⁵ But love your enemies, do good to them, and lend to them without expecting to get anything back. Then your reward will be great, and you will be children of the Most High, because he is kind to the ungrateful and wicked. ³⁶ Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful. ³⁷ "Do not judge, and you will not be judged. Do not condemn, and you will not be condemned. Forgive, and you will be forgiven. ³⁸ Give, and it will be given to you. A good measure, pressed down, shaken together and running over, will be poured into your lap. For with the measure you use, it will be measured to you."

This ends our scripture reading for this morning's service. May God grant us a wise and generous understanding of this God's holy word. You may be seated.