

# Welcome

ORDER OF WORSHIP FOR

**Sunday,  
January 8, 2023  
10:00 AM**

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**Epiphany Observed  
& The Baptism of  
Christ**



AN OPEN & AFFIRMING CONGREGATION IN SKOKIE, IL





# Welcome to Worship!

**SUNDAYS @ 10:00AM**

**In-person Worship.** Following COVID safety protocols

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



**"The Redheaded Preacher" Podcast.** On Soundcloud, includes sermon and scriptures only, posted weekly by Tuesday



## Ways to Give

**Text Your Gift.** 844-997-2346 Super easy after a first-time setup

**PayPal.** [PayPal.me/stpeteruccskokie](https://www.paypal.com/merchpot/show?item_id=stpeteruccskokie) Uncheck the "Paying for Goods or Services" box to not pass on the fees to St Peter's

**Check or Cash.** Mail to the address below ... this way still works fine

**Vanco GivePlus App.** Contact the church office to set up regular giving



## 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 invite all people to share worship, membership, marriage, baptism, funeral, and fellowship with us.



## Contact, Follow, or Talk to Us

**Rev. Richard Lanford (Pastor):** [revlanford@gmail.com](mailto:revlanford@gmail.com)

In the office Wed-Sat (times vary) and Sundays

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

Office hours Mon-Fri 9am to 2pm

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

**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**

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**St. Peter's United Church of Christ in Skokie**  
**Order of Worship for**  
**Sunday, January 8, 2023 at 10:00am**  
**Epiphany Observed & The Baptism of Christ**

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

**PRELUDE** "We Three Kings"

**THE RINGING OF THE BELLS**

*Those who are able please stand*

**CALL TO WORSHIP** *this morning is in song; sing along!*

"Down by the Riverside"

*In celebration of the Baptism of Christ and of Finch Bernat*

**V. 1: "Gonna lay down my burden . . . "**

**V. 2: "Gonna lay down my sword and shield . . . "**

**CALL TO CONFESSION**

**PRAYER OF CONFESSION**

**P:** We may easily and gladly sing songs of laying down our burdens and songs of peace; but down deep we confess we are more complicated, and life is, too. We often, and sometimes unconsciously, will not lay our burdens down before You, God, or "turn it over."

**C:** **No, we think we can handle it all. Or, it takes too long for the idea of going to You for help to even cross our minds!**

**P:** We confess it is hard for most of us to consistently retain a peaceful spirit, one which seeks a creative, non-violent way to address big conflicts. These are tense and fearful times. Speaking of peace, we are often uncomfortable too, when our military-industrial complex is questioned, as if asking such questions was wrong.

- C: Jesus, give us your prophetic Spirit. Give us your Spirit of wisdom, discernment, and love!**
- A: Laying down our burdens and working for peace with justice can be so hard, O God, for various reasons, that we are tempted to skip that and find something else we hope will please You. Open our eyes to Your will for us, we humbly pray. In Jesus' name we ask this. Amen.**

**ASSURANCE OF PARDON** *Psalm 32:5*

P: "Then I acknowledged my sin to You, and I did not hide my iniquity; I said, 'I will confess my transgressions to the Lord,' and You forgave the guilt of my sin."

In the name of Jesus Christ crucified and risen, our sins are forgiven. God sends the Holy Spirit to be received by faith, who transforms us more and more into the image of God's Son! Astounding grace which calls for our response! What can we say?

**A: Thanks be to God! Amen.**

## RESPONSE

## "We Three Kings"

SSB #37 (vv. 1&amp;5)

*In unison*



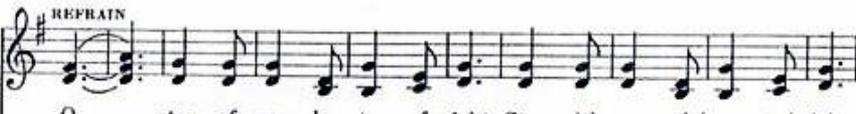
1 We three kings of O-ri-ent are, Bear-ing gifts we trav-erse a - far  
 2 Born a king on Beth-le-hem's plain, Gold I bring to crown him a - gain,  
 3 Frank-in-cense to of-fer have I, In - cense owns a de-i - ty nigh;  
 4 Myrrh is mine; its bit-ter per-fume Breathes a life of gath-er-ing gloom:  
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



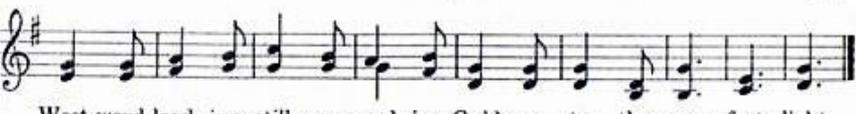

Field and foun-tain, moor and moun-tain, Fol-low-ing yon-der star.  
 King for - ev - er, ceas - ing nev - er O - ver us all to reign.  
 Prayer and prais - ing, all men rais - ing, Wor-ship him, God on high.  
 Sor-rowing, sigh - ing, bleed - ing, dy - ing, Sealed in the stone-cold tomb.  
 Al - le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



**REFRAIN**



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.



*The congregation may be seated*

## **WORDS ABOUT OFFERINGS**

### **PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION**

The Prophet

Beth Sterba

Isaiah 42:1-9

The Gospel

Matthew 2:1-12

### **CHORAL ANTHEM** “I Think of that Star of Long Ago”

*Will the congregation please rise*

### **THE GOSPEL AGAIN**

Matthew 3:13-17

**RESPONSE:**

“Alleluia!”

#495

### **THE SACRAMENT OF BAPTISM**

*Baptized today is Finch Declan Bernat, born May 26, 2022. His parents are Heather Kipper and Kenneth Bernat. The sponsors are Danny Workman and Kristen Billick. The congregation is participating in this covenant and sacrament, so please participate aloud as indicated below.*

### **WELCOME**

P: They were bringing children to Jesus that He might touch them; and the disciples rebuked them. But when Jesus saw it, He was indignant and said to them,

**C: ‘Let the children come to me, do not hinder them; for to such belongs the kingdom of God. Truly, I say to you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God like a child shall never enter it.’**

P: And Jesus took them in his arms and blessed them, laying His hands upon them.

### **ADDRESS**

P: (the address ends with the words . . . ) Inasmuch as the promise of the gospel is not only to us but also to our children, baptism

with water and the Holy Spirit is the mark of their acceptance into the care of Christ's church, the sign and seal of their participation in God's forgiveness, and the beginning of their growth into full Christian faith and discipleship.

**C: This is the water of baptism. Out of this water we rise with new life, forgiven of sin and one in Christ, members of Christ's Body.**

## **QUESTIONS TO THE PARENTS AND SPONSORS**

### **Congregational Covenant**

P: Jesus Christ calls us to make disciples of all nations and to offer them the gift of grace in baptism. Do you who witness and celebrate this sacrament promise your love, support and care to the one about to be baptized, as he lives and grows in Christ?

**C: We promise our love, support, and care.**

### **AFFIRMATION OF FAITH**

P: Let us unite with the Church in all times and places in confessing our faith in the Triune God. Do you believe in God?

**C: I believe in God.**

P: Do you believe in Jesus Christ?

**C: I believe in Jesus Christ.**

P: Do you believe in the Holy Spirit?

**C: I believe in the Holy Spirit.**

## **PRAYER OF BAPTISM AND OVER THE WATER**

### **THE BAPTISM AND BLESSING**

### **INTRODUCTION TO THE CONGREGATION**

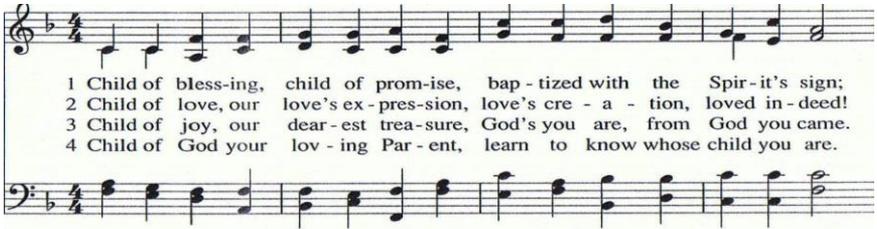
### **THE PRONOUNCEMENT**

P: We have all entered into a holy covenant this day. May God grant us the grace to keep it. Go in the peace of Christ.

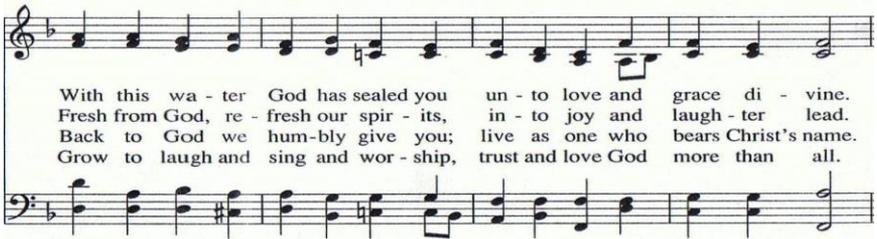
**C: Thanks be to God!**

*Will those who are able please rise to sing*

**HYMN:** "Child of Blessing, Child of Promise"



1 Child of bless-ing, child of prom-ise, bap-tized with the Spir-it's sign;  
 2 Child of love, our love's ex-pres-sion, love's cre-a-tion, loved in-deed!  
 3 Child of joy, our dear-est trea-sure, God's you are, from God you came.  
 4 Child of God your lov-ing Par-ent, learn to know whose child you are.



With this wa-ter God has sealed you un-to love and grace di-vine.  
 Fresh from God, re-fresh our spir-its, in-to joy and laugh-ter lead.  
 Back to God we hum-bly give you; live as one who bears Christ's name.  
 Grow to laugh and sing and wor-ship, trust and love God more than all.

*The congregation may now take their seats*

**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**

**HOMILY** "Embracing Baptism: Pleasing and Belonging"

*Will the congregation please rise and sing*

**HYMN** "Down by the Jordan"

*Sing to the tune of "Praise Ye the Lord, the Almighty"*

**Down by the Jordan, a prophet named John was baptizing,  
Preaching a message the people found bold and surprising:  
"God will forgive! Show that you'll change how you live!  
Surely God's new day is rising!"**

**There by the river, the crowd came with great expectation:  
"Are you God's Chosen One, sent here to rescue our nation?"  
"No!" John replied. "He who is mightier than I  
Judges and offers salvation."**

**Jesus, you went to be baptized along with the others,  
Taking your place among sinners, God's lost sons and daughters.  
Then with great love, God's Spirit came as a dove!  
Your work began in those waters.**

**Here in the Church, we are baptized and filled with God's Spirit.  
Freed and forgiven, we're welcomed with joy! Can you hear it?  
This is God's sign! This is how God says, "You're mine!"  
Let's take the good news and share it!**

*Text: Copyright © 2000 by Carolyn Winfrey Gillette. All rights reserved.  
Included in Songs of Grace: New Hymns for God and Neighbor (Upper Room  
Books, 2009). Hymn Use Permission: Songs of Grace: New Hymns for God and  
Neighbor includes a permission note for those who own this book to use this  
hymn (along with the 76 other new hymns in the book) in their local church's  
worship services. Our Pastor owns the book.*

**CHARGE & BENEDICTION****POSTLUDE**      “Kings of the Orient”

*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.*

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**FOR WORSHIP TODAY**

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MINISTER	Rev. Richard Lanford
MUSIC DIRECTOR	Ben Westphal
DEACON	Beth Sterba
LIVESTREAM RECORDING	Jenn Schneider
NURSERY ATTENDANT	Laurie Mitchell

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# News in the Pews

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**Welcome, beloved of God!** As the Holy Spirit descended on Jesus at his baptism, so does God's Spirit rest on us as we gather today — and always.

**We especially welcome Finch Declan Bernat upon his baptism, his parents Kenneth Bernat and Heather Kipper, sponsors Kristen Billick and Danny Workman, and all friends and family who are here!**

**Lots of stuff happening after worship today, too!** We have to bag, tag, count and pack / box our cookies (home-made and storebought), winter hats, gloves, scarves, and hot cocoa mix, so they are ready to be delivered to the Night Ministry HQ at 1735 N. Ashland Avenue. We need a total count of everything. **THEN there's a meeting of your Nominating Committee!**

**Tomorrow is the deadline** for all non-financial Annual Reports. The Annual Congregational Meeting is only three weeks away!

**FunDrive Soft Goods Collection has begun!** We'll take clothing, bedding, accessories like shoes, hats, bets, purses, gloves, scarves etc. stuffed toys and anything soft and fabric like. They pay by the pound, and this is a great way for folks to help us and themselves!! Annie

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Noorts is our point-person for this project so if you have questions let her know!

**2023 wall calendars courtesy of Haben Funeral Home**, with St. Peter's contact information, are available for pick-up in the Narthex, on a desk by the office, and in the Memorial Room.

**We are still working on those offering envelopes**, and will have them out soon!

**The Cubs Scout Pack 85** will be in the Gym this Tuesday at 6:30 PM.

**A reminder that there is no Women's Guild meeting** this month.

**Chicago Rocks & Minerals** will be using the Memorial Room for its meeting this coming Saturday evening, 6 to 10 PM.

**Are you on our email list?** Get weekly updates, our monthly [Announcer](#) and weekly electronic bulletins and more by signing up. Give us your email address on the attendance register, or email us at [office@stpeteruccskokie.org](mailto:office@stpeteruccskokie.org)!

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# Our People

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**Birthdays this week** belong to Peggy Reins' daughter Usha Rajbhandari and Jennifer Schneider! We wish them grand and blessed days.

**Next Sunday, the 15th is a Church Council meeting!** Will those who are responsible for a report please submit it before mid-week if possible, giving everyone else enough time to read it before Sunday! Thank you.

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## CHURCH LEADERSHIP

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PRESIDENT	Jenn Schneider
VICE-PRESIDENT	Judy Paige
TREASURER	Chad McCoy
SECRETARY	Carolyn Kuechler
FINANCIAL SECRETARY	Maria Altmayer

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## Regular Reminders!

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**We are always grateful for any and all offerings** to the church. No amount is too small! So many thanks to everyone who's been keeping us going with your donations! See inside the bulletin's front cover for details on how to donate.

**Donations always needed for our food pantry.** There's a list of items on the shelves outside the offices if you aren't sure what to buy. Items can be left on those same shelves under the stairs by the offices.

**Pastor's Podcast is now on all the Podcast platforms-** iTunes, Stitcher, Overcast, Spotify, Podcast Addict, Amazon Music and more. Just look up "The Redheaded Preacher" on your podcast catcher or music streaming service then hit subscribe and you'll get the newest editions weekly! You can also get it via the church's webpage link. Give us a 5-star rating and review if you can, it helps us grow so much.

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## MISSION MOMENTS

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**January 8, 2023**

**The Baptism of Christ (First Sunday after Epiphany)**

**Mathew 3:13-17**

**Possibilities Unfolding**

Then Jesus came from Galilee to John at the Jordan, to be baptized by him. John would have prevented him, saying, "I need to be baptized by you, and do you come to me?" But Jesus answered him, "Let it be so now; for it is proper for us in this way to fulfill all righteousness." Then he consented. And when Jesus had been baptized, just as he came up from the water, suddenly the heavens were opened to him and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and alighting on him. And a voice from heaven said, "This is my Son, the Beloved, with whom I am well pleased."

Don't you wonder what Jesus remembered about the day of his baptism? Was it his thoughts, the inner knowing that this would be the "proper" way to "fulfill all righteousness"? Was it his relationships and conversations, like John's reluctance to perform the sacrament, followed by his consent? Was it his physical sensations, like the feel of the cool water on dry and dusty skin? Would he most remember the miraculous arrival of the dove and the voice from heaven asserting his belovedness?

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When asked what they remembered about baptisms, their own or loved ones', two United Church of Christ clergywomen shared these strong memories.

Nicole Pickens recalls, "I remember my baptism vividly. I was 12 years old. The baptistry was located behind the chancel, with a window cut to about waist height. I could see my family and friends below. It was January 6, and the waters in which I was immersed were chilly! My pastor gently hurried me to my mom and a hair dryer. On the way home, Mom smiled and said we should stop at the grocery store for cake because we had a new birthday to celebrate."

Meg Wilson adds, "When my daughter was baptized the minister said to the congregation "is she worthy of God's love?" Everyone applauded and answered yes! Since becoming ordained I ask the question and people joyfully respond yes. I do it when I introduce the child to the congregation. Worthy is a powerful word!"

What do you remember about your baptism? The physical sensations? The words spoken? The relationships with others present? Your own internal knowing? If you don't remember your own, what other baptisms have been impactful to you?

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*Our first reading is from Isaiah 42, verses 1 through 9. This is what scholars call ‘the first Servant Song,’ of which there are four. Who is the servant? There are differing views on the servant’s identity, but a major interpretation is that the servant here is Israel itself.*

**Isaiah 42:1-9**

Here is my servant, whom I uphold,

my chosen, in whom my soul delights;

I have put my spirit upon him;

he will bring forth justice to the nations.

He will not cry or lift up his voice, or make it heard in the street;

a bruised reed he will not break,

and a dimly burning wick he will not quench;

he will faithfully bring forth justice.

He will not grow faint or be crushed

until he has established justice in the earth;

and the coastlands wait for his teaching.

Thus says God, the LORD,

who created the heavens and stretched them out,

who spread out the earth and what comes from it,

who gives breath to the people upon it

and spirit to those who walk in it:

I am the LORD, I have called you in righteousness,

I have taken you by the hand and kept you;

I have given you as a covenant to the people,

a light to the nations,

to open the eyes that are blind,

to bring out the prisoners from the dungeon,

from the prison those who sit in darkness.

I am the LORD, that is my name;

my glory I give to no other, nor my praise to idols.

See, the former things have come to pass,

and new things I now declare;

before they spring forth, I tell you of them.

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

In the time of King Herod, after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea, wise men from the East came to Jerusalem, asking, "Where is the child who has been born king of the Jews? For we observed his star at its rising, and have come to pay him homage."

When King Herod heard this, he was frightened, and all Jerusalem with him; and calling together all the chief priests and scribes of the people, he inquired of them where the Messiah was to be born. They told him, "In Bethlehem of Judea; for so it has been written by the prophet:

*'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 my people Israel.'*"

Then Herod secretly called for the wise men and learned from them the exact time when the star had appeared. 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." When they had heard the king, they set out; and there, ahead of them, went the star that they had seen at its rising, until it stopped over the place where the child was. When they saw that the star had stopped, they were overwhelmed with joy.

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. And having been warned in a dream not to return to Herod, they left for their own country by another road.

### **Matthew 3:13-17**

Then Jesus came from Galilee to John at the Jordan, to be baptized by him. John would have prevented him, saying, "I need to be baptized by you, and do you come to me?" But Jesus answered him, "Let it be so now; for it is proper for us in this way to fulfill all righteousness." Then he consented.

And when Jesus had been baptized, just as he came up from the water, suddenly the heavens were opened to him and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and alighting on him. And a voice from heaven said, "This is my Son, the Beloved, with whom I am well pleased."