



Welcome

ORDER OF WORSHIP FOR

**Sunday,
December 18,
2022**

10:00 AM

**Fourth Sunday of
Advent**



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/merchot/?x=1&url=https://www.paypal.com/paypalme/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

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

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

Office hours Mon-Fri 9am to 2pm

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

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 18, 2022 at 10:00am
Fourth Sunday of Advent

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

PRELUDE "O Come, O Come Emmanuel"

THE SHARING OF ANNOUNCEMENTS Jenn Schneider

Those who are able please stand

CALL TO WORSHIP

P: O magnify the Lord with me!

C: **And let us exalt God's name together.**

P: O magnify the Lord with me!

C: **For God has done great things.**

P: O magnify the Lord with me!

C: **Holy is God's name.**

P: O magnify the Lord with me!

C: **We are here to worship God!**

P: Let us praise our God in worship today.

OPENING RESPONSE "People Look East" SSB #36 (v.4)

1. Peo - ple, look east, the time is near of the
 2. Fur - rows, be glad. Though earth is bare, one more
 3. Stars, keep the watch. When night is dim, one more
 4. An - gels an - nounce with shouts of mirth him who

crown - ing of the year. Make your house fair as you are
 seed is plant - ed there. Give up your strength the seed to
 light the bowl shall brim, shin - ing be - yond the frost - y
 brings new life to earth. Set ev - ery peak and val - ley

a - ble, trim the hearth and set the ta - ble.
 nour - ish, that in course the flower may flour - ish.
 weath - er, bright as sun and moon to - geth - er.
 hum - ming with the word, the Lord is com - ing.

Peo - ple, look east and sing to - day:

Peo - ple, look east: Love, the Guest, is on the way.
 Love, the Rose, is on the way.

Peo - ple, look east: Love, the Star, is on the way.
 Love, the Lord, is on the way.

CALL TO CONFESSION

- P:** The time we live in is one that is skeptical towards belief in God; sometimes that can affect us, and we indulge our doubts. The letter to the Hebrews reminds us that without faith it is impossible to please God, so let us admit to God the times we have, if we have, checked out on our trust in Jesus and let it twist in the wind. We take encouragement in that the same verse says God rewards those who seek Him.
- C:** **There are other ways we have missed the mark as regards following Jesus; we want to confess those as well.**
- P:** After reading the prayer together silently, let us pray it aloud together.

PRAYER OF CONFESSION

- A:** **Soon enough we will sing “O Come, All ye Faithful,” God, but we confess that we are not always faithful. We could have shown love this past week, but we kept ourselves busy with other things. We spoke without thinking and hurt someone. We treated the cards, gifts, greetings and meals as chores, leaving out the most important ingredient – caring. We are sorry. Please forgive us, change us, and accept our worship.**

Amid the bright colors that surround us this season – the red, the green, the gold – send the light of Your Christ, that all which is good may be revealed more clearly and all that is wrong may be exposed and changed.

We pray in the name of Jesus, who was born in Bethlehem, who lived and died for our sakes, and who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, now and forever. Amen.

ASSURANCE OF PARDON *Ephesians 1:5-8a*

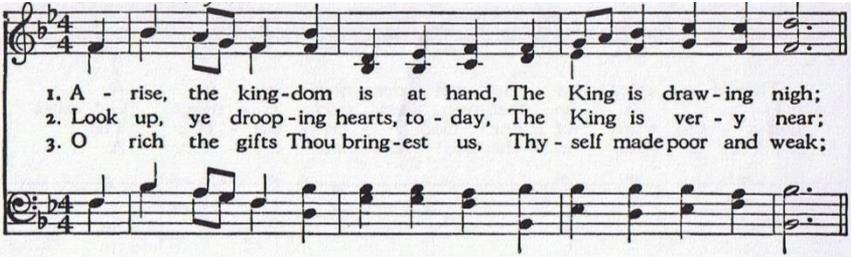
P: Paul wrote to the Ephesian church, God “destined us for adoption as God’s children through Jesus Christ, according to the good pleasure of His will, to the praise of His glorious grace that God freely bestowed on us in the Beloved. In Christ we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses according to the riches of God’s grace that God lavished upon us.”

God’s grace towards us is rich, and that grace is lavished upon us! Forgiveness is part of God’s mercy and love as we come back to God, finding Jesus meeting us there. In laying hold of this gospel, let the congregation shout . . .

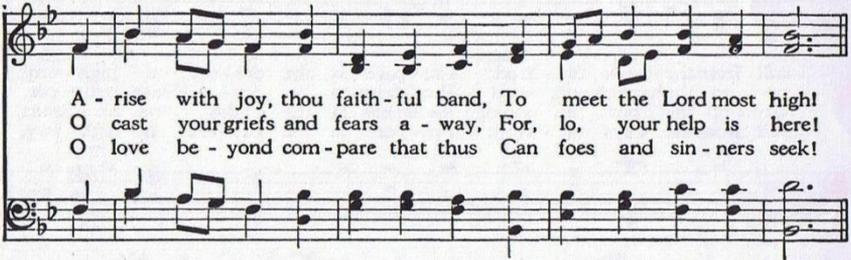
A: Praise be to God! Amen.

HYMN "Arise, the Kingdom is at Hand"

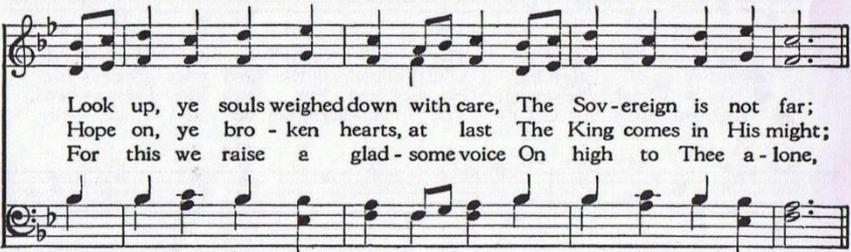
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1. A - rise, the king-dom is at hand, The King is draw-ing nigh;
 2. Look up, ye droop-ing hearts, to - day, The King is ver - y near;
 3. O rich the gifts Thou bring-est us, Thy - self made poor and weak;



A - rise with joy, thou faith-ful band, To meet the Lord most high
 O cast your griefs and fears a - way, For, lo, your help is here!
 O love be - yond com- pare that thus Can foes and sin - ners seek!



Look up, ye souls weighed down with care, The Sov-ereign is not far;
 Hope on, ye bro - ken hearts, at last The King comes in His might;
 For this we raise a glad - some voice On high to Thee a - lone,



Look up, faint hearts, from your de-spair, Be - hold the Morn - ing Star!
 He loved us in the a - ges past, When we lay wrapped in night.
 And ev - er - more with thanks re-joyce Be - fore Thy glo-rious throne. A-MEN.

The congregation may be seated

LIGHTING THE THIRD ADVENT CANDLE

Lighting the Candle of Love this morning and sharing some thoughts on Joy is Beth Sterba.

RESPONSE “Light One Candle to Watch for Messiah” (v. 4)

Light four candles to watch for Messiah;

Let the light banish darkness.

He is coming, tell the glad tidings,

Let your lights be shining.

WORDS ABOUT OFFERING

PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION

Beth Lanford

Prophecy:

Isaiah 7: 10-16

Epistle:

Romans 1: 1-7

MUSICAL MEDITATION “Rejoice, Rejoice!”

Those who are able please stand

GOSPEL:

Matthew 1: 18-25

RESPONSE:

“He’s My Source”

SSB #17

The congregation may retake their seats

PASTORAL & 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**

SERMON “What Joseph Brought to His Dream”

Will those who are able please rise to sing

HYMN: “Joseph Was Troubled”

Sing to the tune “Have Thine own Way, Lord”

**Joseph was troubled by what he knew!
Mary was pregnant; what should he do?
He wanted justice — not to cause shame.
He would dismiss her, placing no blame.**

**Joseph was sleeping; that night he dreamed.
Nothing was really as it had seemed.
"Don't be afraid — make Mary your wife.
God has a plan for your baby's life."**

**Hearing that message, Joseph obeyed,
Seeing a new path God's love had made.
He stood by Mary, waiting that birth,
Seeing God's Son there — Savior of earth!**

**God, when our troubles seem far too great,
Help us to listen, wonder and wait;
Sometimes the world is not as it seems.
Give us your vision; give us your dreams.**

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Included in God's World is Changing: New Hymns for Advent and Christmas (2022) and those who have the book like our Pastor can reprint such a text with permission.

CHARGE AND BENEDICTION

P: We live always during Advent, waiting for One whose coming will change our lives.

C: We live knowing that God requires nothing less than to bear good fruit: to share clothes and food, to live with others in justice and compassion.

P: As we wait for the coming, and coming back, of Messiah, the One whose power surpasses even the most vivid conceptions, may God continue to bear good fruit in you, strengthening you for all the days ahead. Go in hope, peace, love and joy.

C: Amen!

POSTLUDE

Selected

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

MINISTER	Rev. Richard Lanford
MUSIC DIRECTOR	Ben Westphal
DEACON	Beth Lanford
LIVESTREAM RECORDING	Jen Schneider
NURSERY ATTENDANT	Kathy Zipperer

News in the Pews

Good Morning! ... and they shall name him Emmanuel," which means, "God is with us" (Matthew 1:23, NRSV). What message is more comforting and praiseworthy? Welcome to worship.

Thanks to everyone who participated in last Sunday's Village Inn Fundraiser!

The Church Council meets after worship today.

Articles for the January 2023 newsletter are due no later than Monday, December 26th.

The Sunday School Program is collecting "Baby Items for Jesus" as their yearly mission project. Please donate diapers, wipes, lotions, baby food, baby snacks and formula to the tree under the sanctuary on Sundays or leave by the office and we'll bring it upstairs. January 1st is the last Sunday to bring something!

This month has 5 Saturdays, which is our covenanted time to cook for / serve at the Community Kitchen of A Just Harvest. They are only serving lunch right now, and we are asking our members and friends to contribute a total of \$500 for the cost of the meal (the staff will prepare it for us this month at least), and ALSO this time we are to provide 5 or 6 volunteers to serve (half indoors in-person, half are curbside) who will be at the Kitchen on Saturday, December 31st from 11:30 AM to 2:30 PM (service is from 12 to 2). We used to meet at the church to carpool over there; if you are new to helping, you may benefit

if we do this again, so let us know! Please let Pastor or Beth Lanford or Maria Altmayer know if you can volunteer, and please contribute to the cost of the meal so it will add up to the \$500! Thank you in advance.

Pastor Richard is looking for 3 or 4 more persons to read Scriptures on Christmas Eve.

Christmas Eve this year is Saturday the 24th at 7:00 PM with a Choral Anthem, the Lord's Supper, lessons, carols, a homily and closing candle-light. Christmas Day is a Sunday, so there will also be a special worship service celebrating Jesus' birth at 10 AM then, too, also with Communion.

Now collecting cookies, cocoa, hats and gloves for the Night

Ministry: We're collecting now and bagging and tagging January 8th. An email from the Ministry told us they receive gifts of winter hats, gloves and scarves through March (cookies were not mentioned although Pastor mentioned them).

FunDrive Soft Goods Collection in January! Start cleaning out those closets, garages, basements and storage units (and those piles of stuffed animals, make room for new ones from Santa) now and get them ready for our Winter FUNDrive Soft Goods collection. 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 Noorts is our point-person for this project so if you have questions let her know!

Our People

HOSPITALIZED: Ron Schuhrke fell at home on December 9th and broke his left femur. Surgery was last Monday and went well at Lake Forest Hospital. Please keep him in your prayers.

Birthdays and Anniversaries: We have no one celebrating a wedding anniversary this week, but former Sunday Schoolers Calder and Cordelia Lundeen have a birthday on the 20th, and Payton MacDonald has a birthday on December 24th! Blessings to all 3 on their earth-birthdays!

IN MEMORIAM: We learned last week of the death of former member Louise M. Hrynkow on December 7th. She lived to be 103 and several months!

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The Nominating Committee is at work asking members to consider staying on a Board, or coming onto a Board, or becoming an Officer of the Church. Please do pray about the request; there is a reason you were thought of to approach. It is an honor to serve God in these ways, and we do need folks to help carry on the labors the Church!

A heads-up on some time off: Pastor Richard will be on vacation December 26th through 28th. The Church Office is closed on December 26th, and Laura will also be off on the 27th (her birthday) and possibly part of or all of the 28th.

CHURCH LEADERSHIP

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

Regular Reminders!

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.

Silent Night, Holy Night

St. Peter's United Church of Christ
invites you to be with us on

Christmas Eve

at 7:00 pm

In-person and
Live-streamed on YouTube

FEATURING:

- Special Music
- Candlelight and Carols
- Holy Communion for All
(Children receive Candy Canes)

St Peter's UCC • 8013 Laramie Ave. Skokie
www.stpeteruccskokie.org • 847-673-8166
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All are welcome!



UNITED CHURCH
OF CHRIST

MISSION MOMENTS

December 18, 2022

Fourth Sunday of Advent

Matthew 1:18-25

God With Us

According to the dictionary, the term incarnation means “a person who embodies in the flesh a deity, spirit, or abstract quality.” In Jesus, the Holy came to earth to live like us, to laugh like us, to mourn like us, and to love like us. In the simplest terms, the incarnation is the Divine coming to earth as a child, the infant Jesus, for the purpose of embodying concretely the abstract quality of love for one another.

Although only Jesus is the Incarnation with a capital I, Christ’s followers can continue to embody in the flesh and make real the abstract quality of love. It is one thing for us to say that they love one another. Demonstrating that love through acts of service and compassion truly incarnates the love that Christ came to demonstrate.

One way we as the United Church of Christ incarnate Christ’s love at this time of year is by contributing to the Christmas Fund (formerly called the Veterans of the Cross).

The Christmas Fund has been caring for active and retired clergy and lay employees of the United Church of Christ for over 100 years, providing emergency grants, supplementation of small annuities and health premiums, and Christmas “Thank You” gift checks each December to our lower-income retirees.

United Church of Christ congregations and members have blessed the Christmas Fund with their generosity for many years. This year, your care and compassion will be especially appreciated by those servants of the church who are facing a time of need.

This testimonial from a Christmas Fund recipient was shared last year, a reminder that the fruits of loving incarnation will always be gratitude, joy, and connection. “The grant is enough to allow me a little breathing room at the end of each month. Thank you for that gift. But equally important to me personally is this grant symbolizes a wonderful connection to the church I love. I have been blessed in so many ways.”

For more information visit: <https://www.ucc.org/giving/ways-to-give/our-churchs-wider-mission/christmas-fund/>

Isaiah 7:10-16

"Again the LORD spoke to Ahaz, saying, "Ask a sign of the LORD your God; let it be deep as Sheol or high as heaven."

But Ahaz said, "I will not ask, and I will not put the LORD to the test."

Then Isaiah said: "Hear then, O house of David! Is it too little for you to weary mortals, that you weary my God also? Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign. Look, the young woman is with child and shall bear a son, and shall name him Immanuel. He shall eat curds and honey by the time he knows how to refuse the evil and choose the good. For before the child knows how to refuse the evil and choose the good, the land before whose two kings you are in dread will be deserted. The LORD will bring on you and on your people and on your ancestral house such days as have not come since the day that Ephraim departed from Judah -- the king of Assyria."

Romans 1:1-7

Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle, set apart for the gospel of God, which he promised beforehand through his prophets in the holy scriptures, the gospel concerning his Son, who was descended from David according to the flesh and was declared to be Son of God with power according to the spirit of holiness by resurrection from the dead, Jesus Christ our Lord, through whom we have received grace and apostleship to bring about the obedience of faith among all the Gentiles for the sake of his name, including yourselves who are called to belong to Jesus Christ,

To all God's beloved in Rome, who are called to be saints:
Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Matthew 1:18-25

"Now the birth of Jesus the Messiah took place in this way. When his mother Mary had been engaged to Joseph, but before they lived together, she was found to be with child from the Holy Spirit. Her husband Joseph, being a righteous man and unwilling to expose her to public disgrace, planned to dismiss her quietly.

But just when he had resolved to do this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, "Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife, for the child conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. She will bear a son, and you are to name him Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins."

All this took place to fulfill what had been spoken by the Lord through the prophet:

"Look, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall name him Emmanuel," which means, "God is with us."

When Joseph awoke from sleep, he did as the angel of the Lord commanded him; he took her as his wife, but had no marital relations with her until she had borne a son; and he named him Jesus."