

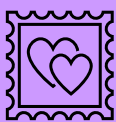


The ANNOUNCER

Quick Upcoming

A publication of St. Peter's UCC in Skokie

- 2/2** Groundhog Day
- 2/3** 10AM to 12PM - Soft Goods Public Drop-off
- 2/4** Installation Sunday
- 2/10** 10AM - Soft Goods Truck Load
- 2/11** 11AM - All Boards Brunch
4PM - Super Bowl Watch Party
- 2/14** Ash Wednesday Services at 11:30AM & 7PM
- 2/17** 9AM to 12PM – Veterans Collection Drop-off
- 2/18** 11:15 AM - Church Council
12PM to 3PM – Veterans Collection Drop-off
- 2/19** March Announcer Deadline
- 2/21** 6:30 PM - Lenten Soup-n-Study Begins



Don't forget! Mini-food pantry items needed, especially during these cold months. Donations collected on the shelves near the office entrance.

ASH WEDNESDAY & LENTEN BIBLE STUDY

Ash Wednesday is coming **Wednesday, February 14th!** Since attendance at the two services last year was about equal, ***we will once again have services at both 11:30 AM and 7:00 PM.*** The Lenten Bible Study will begin the Wednesday evening after that, **February 21st.** The plan is to meet in person, with the previous Soup-n-Study format of gathering and eating from 6:30 to 7:00 PM, then going over our chapter from 7 to 8 PM. If there is substantial resistance to meeting in person or rotating “soup responsibilities,” we will adjust! The study as it comes to us will be Chapters 4 on into 11 of John. We did the first part of Part One last year, with the idea of

completing the study with that second half of Part One in 2024. The study will have 5 nights for us, which helps us to stay within Lenten parameters (ending Wednesday, March 20th). Right now, the booklet is only available to download at a cost of less than \$4 each. We are exploring any legally protected abilities to print some hard copies for people who do not or cannot download material. Please let Pastor know if you are interested and have not already been contacted, and at the same time let him know if you can receive and make use of a downloadable study booklet! It's to be found at Pilgrim Press under Listen Up! Bible studies.

A ❤️ FOR THE VETERANS

Veterans transitioning from homelessness to homes need everyday supplies to help them succeed. Give a gift to a Veteran exiting homelessness! Through the month of February we are collecting items like soap, household cleaners laundry detergent, mops, brooms, towels, and much more (a detailed list is included on the flyer in this Announcer) for these folks to have in their new homes. ***We'll also be having a public collection weekend***

February 17th from 9AM to 12PM and Sunday February 18th from 12PM to 3PM. We are also collecting portable food items for the Veterans hospital for their patients to have a hot meal while they come in. Items like microwaveable soups, stews, pastas, sweet and savory snacks, drinks and more. You can bring your items to our office doors during the week (9AM-2PM) or on Sundays, to the box located in the Memorial Room.

FROM THE MINISTER'S DESK

This year we have Ash Wednesday on the same day as Saint Valentine's Day (or as some have put it, St. Hallmark's Day). What a clash! Not really. Ash Wednesday is about facing the mortal truth: we will all die, and we are accountable for our sins. Without repentance, judgment awaits.

Valentine's Day is about romance and love. One of the essentials of love is also the truth. As in telling your beloved the truth in daily life (and often, tell them very diplomatically!). Paul exhorts us to "speak the truth in love" (Ephesians 4:15). It means telling your beloved the truth, period, and that goes both ways. For example, long ago in our married life I resolved not to be the stereotypical husband who, when asked how one's wife 'looked' in something, answer positively and affirmatively, even if it's not what you think. NO, tell the truth, kindly. Beth counts on me to give it to her straight when it comes to this little example, and I expect the same from her – in so many other areas of life. Love is grounded in trust, and trust is built on knowing your beloved will tell you the truth about whatever.

So, look! Ash Wednesday and Valentine's Day both are about honesty before the Other / other. In a context of love, both of them, as in worship we believe we confess and repent before a God who is more willing to forgive us than we are to confess, and in romantic / loving relationships we speak the truth in love to our beloved, who may also need to forgive us! Or be forgiven. As we are honest and that honesty is honored by the Other / other, we experience grace. Thanks be to God!

*Keep and share the miraculous faith,
Rev. Richard Lanford*

SAVERS PUBLIC DROP-OFF & TRUCK LOAD

Thank you to everyone who's been donating! We have a little time left to donate, and our special public drop off date is **Sat. Feb. 3rd from 10AM to 12PM.** Anyone can come drop off items. We are collecting in the office through Fri. Feb. 9th, and we also want to remind folks we'll need

lots of help on **Saturday, February 10th starting at 10AM** to get all those bags into a truck to go to SAVERS. It shouldn't take very long with all that help, so plan to come if you are strong and able. If you have any questions contact the office or Annie at annie.noorts@gmail.com.

ANNUAL INSTALLATION OF OFFICERS AND BOARD MEMBERS

Will be Sunday, February 4th this year. Given that we're having hybrid worship, it's preferred to be present in person during worship in the sanctuary, but someone elected could be installed from home.

If you are being installed remotely, remember to follow along with your e-bulletin and answer the questions posed in the service as if you were in the sanctuary in the group on the chancel steps!

**SUPER BOWL LVIII WATCH PARTY HERE!**

Chad McCoy would like to invite you to come and watch the big game (or just the commercials if you prefer) with your church family on **Sunday, February 11th starting at 4PM** (kickoff is at 5:30PM) in the Memorial Room. Bring a dish,

or some snacks, beverages, games, etc. We'll treat it like a large family living room and enjoy some fun time together. This is not a fundraiser, but hopefully a "FUN"raiser. Contact Chad at chadwood.mccoy@gmail.com for any questions!

BIG WELCOME TO OUR NEW MEMBERS

We're so glad you've joined our family! During worship on Sunday, January 21st, St. Peter's U.C.C. received four women into official membership of the church! They are Julie McGinnis, Rita McMahan, Ann Herren and Denise Hopp. They have all been regular attendees and participants in the life of St. Peter's for some time now.

Joining when they did allowed them to experience the Annual Congregational Meeting of St. Peter's as members, possibly to even being brought onto one of the Boards! We will try to have more about them in next month's Announcer. A special coffee hour was held afterwards, of course, in celebration.

CALLING FOR PICTURES AND MEMORABILIA

The news is out about our Pastor’s retirement! We want to celebrate his service to our congregation and are looking for pictures that span his 30+ years at St. Peter’s UCC. If you have photos or memorabilia to share, please email digital copies of them to the office. You can also mail or bring your originals to the office to be scanned for our digital copy. We will return them to you after scanning them. Please contact Laura at

office@stpeteruccskokie.org or (847) 673-8166 with any questions. Gathering pictures is just the start. Your Church Council will be establishing a special committee to guide the many ways we wish to honor Pastor for his service. It will be an agenda item for the February Council meeting. Please contact President Peggy at peggy.reins@gmail.com if you are interested in serving on the soon-to-be-formed Committee.

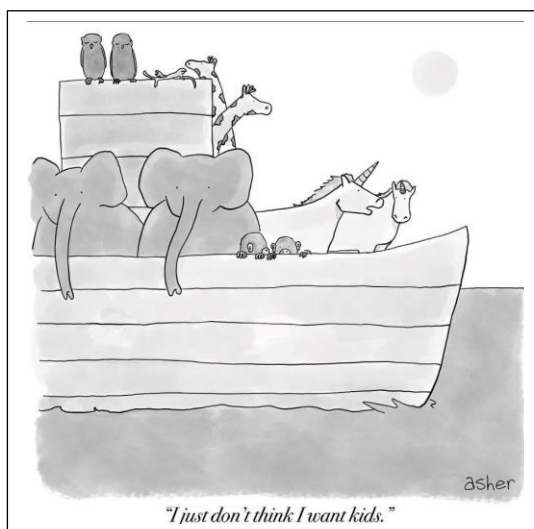
NEW SIGN-UP SHEET FOR COFFEE HOURS

We have a brand-new year and with it a new Coffee Hour sign up sheet which at this moment has plenty of room for you to sign up for a coffee hour!! Getting together and visiting after worship is so

important, it strengthens our bonds and our church. So please consider signing up, and if you aren’t sure what to do, talk to Pastor or the office and we’ll get you started.

EASTER FLOWERS

Please find at the end of this newsletter an order form for Easter flowers! We’ll be offering a variety of flowers to order and dedicate in honor or in memory of anyone you wish for our Easter services. After the service is over you may take them home to beautify your gardens.



FEBRUARY BIRTHDAYS

- 2/2 – Madeleine Reese Todd
- 2/5 – Daniel (Mau) Gemignani
- 2/8 – Susan Leshner
- 2/16 – Sue (Burmeister) Speicher
- 2/18 – Atlas Fink
- 2/22 – Autumn Fink
- 2/19 – Hunter Medaglia; Lois Jarmuth; Richard Schaller
- 2/27 – Eric Svenson; Lincoln Svenson

FEBURARY ANNIVERSARIES

- 2/12- Karen and Ken Christianson



Budget at a Glance, December 2023

	December Actual	Monthly Budget	YTD Actual	YTD Budget
Income	\$47,382	\$14,342	\$209,127	\$172,100
Expenses	\$16,187	\$15,493	\$174,530	\$185,916
Gain/(Loss)	\$31,195	(\$1,151)	\$34,597	(\$13,816)

These numbers exclude line items for directed contributions, directed gifts and the Clara M. estate gift.



GOD-SHAPED HOLE

Have you ever neared the completion of a jigsaw puzzle, only to discover that a piece or two is missing? That’s an apt visual for what it’s like to live without God. Blaise Pascal, a 17th-century philosopher, observed: “There is a God-shaped vacuum in the heart of

each man which cannot be satisfied by any created thing but only by God the Creator, made known through Jesus Christ.” Centuries earlier, St. Augustine proclaimed “Thou hast made us for thyself, O Lord, and our hearts are restless until they find their rest in thee.” And in the Old Testament, the writer of Ecclesiastes expounded on the meaninglessness

of earthly striving and material pursuits. Only God’s Spirit can fill our emptiness and satisfy our eternal longings. “I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full,” says Jesus in John 10:10 (NIV). He alone provides the solution for emptiness. What comfort to be filled with — and to find our fulfillment in — our Savior!

Lector/Nursery for February 2024

Feb 4th Lector: Rich S.
Nursery: Rita M.

Feb 11th Lector: N/A
Nursery: N/A

Feb 18th Lector: N/A
Nursery: N/A

Feb. 25th Lector: N/A
Nursery: N/A

March 3rd Lector: N/A
Nursery: N/A



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The ANNOUNCER

JANUARY 2024

A PRAYER FOR LENT

Dear Christ, hasten to me. Release me from my sins. Free my arms from the chains of evil, that I may embrace you. Lift the scales of ignorance from my eyes that I may see you. Why do you delay? What are you waiting for? You are my God and my Lord, you are my refuge and strength, you are my glory and my hope. In you I put my trust. Dear Christ, hasten to me.

SPRING TRAINING FOR CHRISTIANS

The word Lent comes from 'lencten' in Latin, which means 'lengthen.' Lent is during the lengthening of days of spring. In light of the start of baseball season, some people call the pre-Easter season "spring training for Christians." This fresh perspective moves away from the flawed understanding that Lent must be somber, or that giving something up for Lent is punishment for sin or a way to earn God's favor.

As people of faith, we should never take a season off. But every so often — at least once a year! — we do well to examine where we need to get back in shape spiritually. Perhaps we will indeed opt to give something up: that swearing habit, sleeping in on Sundays, or the cost of a weekly treat so we can donate the money instead. Or maybe we'll take on something new for Lent: a Bible study, prayer routine or service project.

Hebrews describes spiritual discipline as challenging in the moment but yielding righteousness later. The writer urges us, "Lift your drooping hands and strengthen your weak knees ... so that what is lame may not be put out of joint but rather be healed" (12:11-13, ESV). May the spring training of Lent strengthen and heal us all.

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 17th 9-12_{pm}

Feb 18th 12-3_{pm}

St Peter's UCC

8013 Laramie

Open to All!

2024 EASTER FLOWER ORDERS



Please find below the order form for the Easter plants that we will have to beautify our chancel on Easter Sunday. Sometimes there are limited quantities of plants available, and G & E will substitute an equal value plant (Orders will be filled by date submitted.) Orders may be placed in the offering plate, brought or mailed to the church. Please write a separate check for your flower order made out to St Peter's UCC.

Orders must be placed by Sunday, March 10, 2024.

Quantity	Type	Price	Total
	Easter Lily 6" pot	11.00	
	Azalea 6" pot	19.00	
	Hyacinth 6" pot	8.50	
	Tulip 6" pot	8.00	
	Rieger Begonia 6" pot	10.50	
Total			

Name

Phone

In Honor/In Memory:
