



# Welcome

ORDER OF WORSHIP FOR

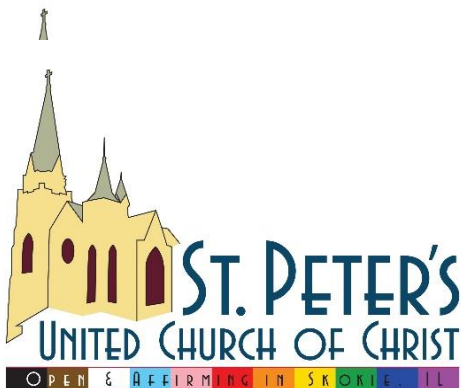
**Sunday,  
January 11, 2026  
10:00 AM**

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**First Sunday  
After Epiphany**



god  
IS  
love  
1 JOHN 4:8





# 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

**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 11, 2026 at 10:00am**  
**First Sunday after Epiphany**

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*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** "Chaconne in C" by Distler

**THE RINGING OF THE BELLS**

**ANNOUNCEMENTS** Peggy Reins

*You may stand in body or spirit.*

**CALL TO WORSHIP**

One: The heavens open. The Spirit descends.

**All: Jesus emerges from the water.**

One: And a voice echoes through the blue expanse.

**All: "This is my child, the Beloved,  
with whom I am well-pleased."**

One: Jesus is named. Claimed.

**All: We come to the water.**

**We remember we are named. Claimed.**

One: Can it be so? What a thing to be named. Claimed.

**All: Let us worship the one who names and claims us  
still.**

**GATHERING HYMN** ‘Crashing Waters at Creation”

**A:     Crashing waters at creation  
          Ordered by the Spirit’s breath,  
          First to witness day’s beginning  
          From the brightness of night’s death.**

**Parting water stood and trembled,  
As the captives passed on through,  
Washing off the chains of bond-age-  
Channel to a life made new.**

**Cleansing water once at Jordan  
Closed around the One foretold,  
Opened to reveal the glory  
Ever new and ever old.**

**Living water, never ending,  
Quench the thirst and flood the soul.  
Well-spring, Source of life eternal,  
Drench our dry-ness, make us whole.**

**PRAYER FOR TRANSFORMATION AND NEW LIFE**

**One:** The activity of God stretches our seeing. We are invited down into the waters of life where the Spirit flows. From there we may rise to go, to dare, to walk, and to serve beyond where we have been before. Let us pray together.

**All: God of Voice, Body and Spirit,  
You have named and claimed us. We receive your  
love and affirmation. We cherish your guidance  
and direction. We follow your path and example.  
Remind us of our connection to you and your  
covenantal relationship with us. Wash us in the  
baptized life for renewal and revitalization. Amen.**

*Pause for quiet reflection*

**WORDS OF GRACE**

**One:** You are God's Child, God's beloved servant, the chosen, in whom God's soul delights.

**All: There is nothing we can do and nothing that can  
be done to us that will ever separate us from the  
love of God.**

**One:** Again and again, let us say together the good news:

**All: In Jesus our Christ, we are forgiven, we are loved,  
we are being made whole.**

**One:** Thanks be to God.

**All: Amen**

**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** "Emmanuel"

**A: Emmanuel, Emmanuel,  
his name is called Emmanuel.  
God with us, revealed in us,  
his name is called Emmanuel.**

**PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION**

Hebrew Scripture

Beth Sterba

Isaiah 42:1-9

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

**CHRISTIAN SCRIPTURE**

Matthew 3:13-17

*Please be seated.*

**SPECIAL MUSIC** "Wade in the Water"**SERMON** "Dip In With Jesus"

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## AFFIRMATION OF FAITH AND RENEWAL OF BAPTISM

*(Adapted from a Reading from the Second National Meeting of United Church of Christ Women)*

One: O God, because you are the source of all life  
And love and being,

**All: We call you Creator.**

One: Because we know of your history of presence  
among your people and honor their tradition,

**All: We call you Lord.**

One: Because our Savior, Jesus Christ, your obedient  
child, knew you intimately and spoke of you so,

**All: We call you Father.**

One: Because you are present in each act of birth; and  
because you shelter, nurture and care for us,

**All: We call you Mother.**

One: Because you hold us up and give us strength and  
courage when we are weak and in need,

**All: We call you Sustainer.**

One: Because we have known you in our pain and  
suffering,

**All: We call you Comforter.**

One: Because beyond pain lies your promise of all  
things made new,

**All: We call you Hope.**

One: Because you are the means of liberation  
the way to freedom,

**All: We call you Deliverer.**

One: Because you have chosen to come among us  
and share our common lot,  
making the hard choices, suffering and dying;

because you rose victorious, bringing new life,

**All: We call you Redeemer.**

One: Confident that you will hear, we call upon you with all the names that make you real to us, the names which create an image in our minds and hearts, an image which our souls can understand and touch.

**All: And yet we know that you are more than all of these. Blessing and power, glory and honor be unto you, our God, Amen.**

One: Do you believe in the One of Many Names, God, Jesus Christ, and Holy Spirit?

**All: We believe in the God of Many Names.**

One: Do you reject the powers of oppression in this world, the systems that marginalize and degrade human beings and communities created by God, and the norms of the world at odds with the way of the kingdom?

**All: We do, with the help of God.**

One: Do you embrace grace as God's gift, to be freely given and freely received?

**All: We do, with the help of God.**

One: Do you recommit to the covenantal and baptized life, the cost and joy of discipleship, and the community of belonging as a member of the Body of Christ?

**All: We do, with the help of God.**

**Renewal "I am God's Beloved. I am Baptized."**



**HYMN OF AFFIRMATION:** “Lord, I Want to be a Christian”

1 Lord, I want to be a Chris-tian in my heart, in my heart;  
 2 Lord, I want to be more lov - ing in my heart, in my heart;  
 3 Lord, I want to be more ho - ly in my heart, in my heart;  
 4 Lord, I want to be like Je - sus in my heart, in my heart;

Lord, I want to be a Chris-tian in my heart.  
 Lord, I want to be more lov - ing in my heart.  
 Lord, I want to be more ho - ly in my heart.  
 Lord, I want to be like Je - sus in my heart.

In my heart, in my heart,  
 In my heart, in my heart,  
 In my heart,

Lord, I want to be a Chris-tian in my heart.  
 Lord, I want to be more lov - ing in my heart.  
 Lord, I want to be more ho - ly in my heart.  
 Lord, I want to be like Je - sus in my heart.

## **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**

*Sung*

**A: Glo-o-oria! In excelsis Deo! Glo-o-oria! In excelsis  
Deo!**

### **PRAYER OF DEDICATION**

**A: Giver and Sustainer of Life, pour out your blessing  
upon these gifts and upon all who give from their  
hearts. Multiply them so they reach farther than our  
imaginations can carry them. In the blessed name of  
our Redeemer, we pray. Amen.**

# CLOSING HYMN "I am the Light of the World"

*Unison Introduction*

*Refrain*

"I am the light of the world!"

You peo-ple come and fol-low me!" If you fol-low and love you'll

learn the mys-ter-y of what you were meant to do and be.

*Last time, end*

1 When the song of the an-gels is stilled, when the  
 2 7 To find the lost and lone-ly one, 7 to  
 3 7 To free the pris-oner from all chains, 7 to  
 4 To bring hope to ev-ery task you do, 7 to

*Continued on next page*

P = Pastor

C = Congregation

A = All

star in the sky is gone,  
 heal the bro - ken soul with love,  
 make the pow - er - ful care,  
 dance at a ba - by's new birth,

When the  
 7 To  
 To re -  
 7 To

sag - es and the shep - herds have found their way home, the  
 feed the hun - gry chil - dren with warmth and good food, To  
 build the na - tions with strength of good will, to  
 make mu - sic in . . . an old per - son's heart, and

work of Christ-mas is be - gun:  
 feel the earth be - low, the sky a - bove!  
 see all God's chil - dren ev - ery - where!  
 sing to the col - ors of the earth!

Return to §

Chords: Gm, Dm, C, F, Bb, Gm7

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**CHARGE AND BENEDICTION**

**POSTLUDE**                      “Celebration in C”                      by Smith

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

*Today’s liturgy is adapted from:*  
~ Caela Wood, Pastor at the First Congregational United Church of Christ, Manhattan, Kansas.  
Martha Brunell, *The Abingdon Women’s Preaching Annual, Series 2, Year A* (Abingdon Press, 2001), 58.  
*Be Baptized: Service Prayers for the First Sunday after Epiphany* by The Rev. Dr. Cheryl A. Lindsay, Minister for Worship and Theology, United Church of Christ.

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**FOR WORSHIP TODAY**

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INTERIM MINISTER	Rev. Brenda Barnes Jamieson
MUSIC DIRECTOR	Ben Westphal
DEACON	Beth Sterba
LIVESTREAM RECORDING	Rich Schneider
NURSERY ATTENDANT	Kathy Zipperer

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# News in the Pews

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**Long ago, wise travelers followed a star in search of the promised Savior — and their journey led them to joy. Whatever brought you here today, we're glad you came! May you find God's presence and guidance shining brightly in your life.**

**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!** We collect 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!

**We're having a special collection day for our Savers FUNDrive on January 24<sup>th</sup> from 10-2pm.** The scouts will be on hand to help with those big bags. Just stop by and drop it all off!

**Thinking about joining the church?** We will probably be holding classes in February, please note the change. If you might be interested, please tell Brenda, Laura or another church leader.

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**Annual Congregational Meeting January 25<sup>th</sup> after worship.** All are invited to attend.

**Annual reports should be emailed or brought to the office** by tomorrow. Thank you!

**FOUND:** A football and purse were found in the Memorial Room and accidentally taken home over Christmas. Did you lose these items, or did you leave them there? Please let me know. The purse is here and the football will be returned soon.

**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:**

- Annie Noorts, still recovering from colitis and a high fever.
  - 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 Andre Gloeckner, Harry Kuras, Karen Christianson, Alane (Schaller) Swiderski, Richard Schaller and Ricky Riley!!!  
Happy Anniversary to Annie and Gerry Noorts.

**According to the schedule** and barring any switches, next Sunday's Lector is Rich Schneider, Nursery duty is TBD. 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."

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## **MISSION MOMENTS**

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### **Possibilities Unfolding**

**January 11, 2026**

**The Baptism of Christ**

**First Sunday after Epiphany**

**WHITE**

**Mathew 3:13-17**

The sacrament of baptism is still so shrouded in mystery and misunderstanding. In conversations with families, I often discover the desire to have their child baptized is rooted in an expectation to carry on a tradition.

Baptism, though, is a rite not a tradition. It's a moment where a child is claimed as Christ's own. It's a moment where family — both blood and spiritual — make a commitment, promising to raise the child in the faith. And in that moment that I hold the child in my arms, there is a holy, fleeting second where I realize only God knows the future. It is only God that holds the possibilities born at the font that will keep unfolding for the child till the day their last breath is taken.

Yet after the water is sprinkled on a child's forehead, the excitement of these God possibilities is pushed aside for a slice of the celebratory cake and photo ops with the newly baptized.

What does it take for us to remember our baptismal identities as Christ's own? How would that identify then shape our lives?

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Thomas Merton, a 20th-century Catholic monk, addressed unfolding possibilities in a letter he wrote to a young mission worker who had become cynical and jaded. First, Merton urged the mission worker to stop relying on a job for fulfillment and to shape one's identity. This is only the world's way of trying to fend off a despairing sense of "nothingness."

Rather Merton advised that, "All the good that you will do will come not from you but the fact that you have allowed yourself, in obedience to faith, to be used by God's love."

Once we truly allow God to use our lives, the need to prove our worth disappears. We are set free to be our authentic selves, allowing God's power to work through us.

"The big results are not in your hands, but they suddenly happen. There is no point in building our lives on personal satisfaction," said Merton.

Through the waters of baptism, we are claimed as Christ's own. But the question remains to be answered: Do our lives reflect who we belong to? Are the possibilities unfolding before us truly God possibilities?

*God, we know Your plans for us are higher and better than we could ever imagine. We want to die to self and live for You. We want to claim our identities as Christ's own. Give us the strength to do so. Help us to let go of our tight grip on who we think we are or who we wish to be. May we surrender completely to Your will, so that all Your beautiful possibilities might be revealed. 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 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.

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

**3** a bruised reed he will not break,  
and a dimly burning wick he will not quench;  
he will faithfully bring forth justice.

**4** He will not grow faint or be crushed  
until he has established justice in the earth,  
and the coastlands wait for his teaching.

**5** 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:

**6** 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]  
a light to the nations,

**7** to open the eyes that are blind,  
to bring out the prisoners from the dungeon,  
from the prison those who sit in darkness.

**8** I am the Lord; that is my name;  
my glory I give to no other,  
nor my praise to idols.

**9** See, the former things have come to pass,  
and new things I now declare;  
before they spring forth,  
I tell you of them.

**Matthew 3:13-17**

<sup>13</sup> Then Jesus came from Galilee to John at the Jordan, to be baptized by him. <sup>14</sup> John would have prevented him, saying, "I need to be baptized by you, and do you come to me?" <sup>15</sup> 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. <sup>16</sup> And when Jesus had been baptized, just as he came up from the water, suddenly the heavens were opened to him and he saw God's Spirit descending like a dove and alighting on him. <sup>17</sup> And a voice from the heavens

said, “This is my Son, the Beloved,<sup>[a]</sup> with whom I am well pleased.”