




Welcome



ORDER OF WORSHIP FOR
Sunday,
January 19, 2025
10:00 AM

Second Sunday
after Epiphany





Welcome to Worship!

SUNDAYS @ 10:00AM

In-person Worship. Masks and distance recommended, not required

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

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

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Like, follow, or join our email list for up-to-date info about events and activities!



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St. Peter's United Church of Christ in Skokie
Order of Worship for
Sunday, January 19, 2025 at 10:00am
Second Sunday after Epiphany

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

PRELUDE “For the Beauty of the Earth”

THE RINGING OF THE BELLS

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Peggy Reins

Will those who are able please stand up

CALL TO WORSHIP

P: We gather today in the light of God's steadfast love, which reaches to the heavens and fills the earth.

C: **With gratitude, we celebrate the abundance of grace that surrounds us.**

P: Like a fountain of life, God pours wisdom into our hearts, guiding us in our journey.

C: **May we open our spirits to the beauty of creation and the call to justice.**

P: Come, let us seek refuge in the divine, where love sustains us and hope ignites our souls.

C: **Together, we will share in the warmth of community, committed to compassion and inclusion.**

P: Let us worship the One who invites us to thrive and flourish in every season of life.

OPENING RESPONSE “Enter, Rejoice, and Come In”

Unison C FM7 C C7 FM7 Dm7 G7 C

1 En - ter, re - joice, and come in. En - ter, re - joice, and come in.
 2 O - pen your - self to the song. O - pen your - self to the song.
 3 O - pen your hearts ev - ery - one. O - pen your hearts ev - ery - one.
 4 Don't be a - fraid of some change. Don't be a - fraid of some change.
 5 En - ter, re - joice, and come in. En - ter, re - joice, and come in.

C7 FM7 Dm7 G7 C F Em7 A7 Dm7sus4 Dm7 G7 C

To - day will be a joy - ful day; en - ter, re - joice, and come in.

PRAYER OF CONFESSION

P: In the presence of our loving Creator, we acknowledge our imperfections and the times we fall short of embodying love and grace. Please join me in prayer:

A: **O God of abundance, we confess our desire for control, our tendency to cling to the familiar, and our hesitation to embrace change. Like the servants at the wedding, we struggle to trust in the unexpected miracles that you offer. Forgive us for the times we doubt your goodness and resist your call to transformation. May we open our hearts to new possibilities and be willing to share the gifts of your grace with others. In your mercy, Lord, help us to**

embody the joy of your presence in our lives. Amen.

Pause for silent reflection

ASSURANCE OF PARDON

P: Hear the good news: Just as Jesus transformed water into wine, God is continuously transforming our lives and offering us fresh starts. We are forgiven and set free to live in love, open to the wonders that unfold around us. May we go forth, renewed in spirit, ready to share the joy of God's abundant grace with the world.

C: Thanks be to God! Amen.

HYMN "For the Beauty of the Earth"

1 For the beau-ty of the earth, for the splen-dor of the skies,
 2 For the won-der of each hour of the day and of the night,
 3 For the joy of hu-man love, broth-er, sis-ter, par-ent, child,
 4 For the good that love in-spires, for a world where none ex-clude,

For the love which from our birth o-ver and a-round us lies,
 Hill and vale, and tree and flower, sun and moon, and stars of light,
 Friends on earth, and friends a-bove, for all gen-tle thoughts and mild,
 For a faith that nev-er tires, and for ev-ery heart re-newed,

Refrain

God of all, to you we raise this our hymn of grate-ful praise.

The congregation may be seated

PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION AND SCRIPTURE READING

Barb Todd

Psalter Lesson

Psalms 36: 5-10

CHORAL ANTHEM "I Sing the Almighty Power of God"

Arr. McCullough

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 stand up

OFFERTORY RESPONSE "We Are an Offering" SSB #11

The musical score is written in 4/4 time. The vocal line is on a treble clef staff, and the piano accompaniment is on a grand staff (treble and bass clefs). The lyrics are: "We lift our voices, we lift our hands, we lift our lives up to You, we are an offering; Lord, use our voices, Lord, use our hands, Lord, use our lives, they are Yours, we are an offering. 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 voices, we lift our hands, we lift our lives up to You, we are an offering, we are an offering."

PRAYER OF DEDICATION

A: We come before you today with hearts full of gratitude as we gather in this sacred space. Just as Jesus transformed water into wine at the wedding in Cana, we ask that you bless our offerings, transforming them into vessels of love, hope, and community. As we remember the miracles in our lives and the abundance you provide, inspire us to recognize the beauty in diversity and the strength in unity. Let each of us be a conduit of your grace, sharing abundance with those around us.

We offer this dedication in the spirit of love and fellowship, trusting that through our collective generosity, we may reflect your glory in the world. Amen.

The congregation may be seated

SERMON

Will those who are able please stand up

HYMN "Great is Thy Faithfulness"

Great is thy faith-ful-ness, O God my Fa-ther; there is no shad-ow of
Sum-mer and win-ter, and spring-time and har-vest, sun, moon, and stars in their
Par-don for sin and a peace that en-dur-eth, thine own dear pres-ence to

turn-ing with thee. Thou chang-est not; thy com-pas-sions they fail not.
cours-es a-bove join with all na-ture in man-i-fold wit-ness,
cheer and to guide, strength for to-day and bright hope for to-mor-row:

As thou hast been thou for-ev-er wilt be. Great is thy faith-ful-ness!
to thy great faith-ful-ness, mer-cy, and love,
bless-ings all mine, with ten thou-sand be-side!

Great is thy faith-ful-ness Morn-ing by morn-ing, new mer-cies I see. All I have
need-ed thy hand hath pro-vid-ed. Great is thy faith-ful-ness, Lord un-to me!

CHARGE AND BENEDICTION

POSTLUDE “Faithfulness”

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	Reverend Ally Vertigan
MUSIC DIRECTOR	Ben Westphal
DEACON	Maria Altmayer
LIVESTREAM RECORDING	Greg Dennis
NURSERY ATTENDANT	Annie Noorts







News in the Pews

Psalm 36 declares God's love to be steadfast, precious and a place of refuge. Welcome, friends. In God, you are loved and safe.

There is no coffee hour today. The Church Council will meet in the gym immediately after worship.

The Annual Congregational Meeting of St. Peter's UCC is next Sunday after worship. A light lunch will be served. If you are a member of St. Peter's please plan to stay. Paper copies of the Annual Report are available; and electronic copies were emailed out Friday.

Please extend a warm St. Peter's welcome back to Rev. Ally Vertigan - Rev Vertigan (she/her) serves as the chaplain for Supportive Oncology at RUSH MD Anderson Cancer Center in Chicago and is Board Certified with the Association of Professional Chaplains. Ally lives in Chicago with her wife and their 3 cats- all of whom enjoy cuddling up with a good book!

Softgoods Clothing Drive is on! Clean out those closets & storage spaces, we're looking for soft goods. Items such as  clothing,  bedding, linens, towels,  shoes,  hats, belts,  purses,  stuffed toys- we'll take them all as Savers pays by the pound. Start the new year off right and help us raise funds. Thanks so much for your consideration!

The devastating California wildfires have taken more than 24 lives and covered more than 30,000 acres, destroying homes, businesses, churches, and other beloved places. In January and into February, we are inviting St. Peter's members and friends to donate 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.

Our very own Ricky Riley will be starring as Olaf in Frozen

LIVE February 1st & 2nd, 2PM at Ebinger School, 7350 W. Pratt Ave., Chicago. Tickets are on sale now! For more information and to purchase tickets go here:

<https://specialgiftstheatre.app.neoncrm.com/nx/portal/neonevents/events?path=%2Fportal%2Fevents%2F11399>

Update on our Pastoral Search - St. Peter's journey to find an interim minister continues! Our Local Church Profile for an Interim Search has generated interest from candidates and that's good news! The Church Council is now engaged in a process of search, call, and holy discernment. Contact Council president Peggy Reins with questions. Your continued support and prayers are appreciated as we journey forward together.

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. We are working on new ways to sign-up (including online) soon; contact the office in the meantime if you'd be willing to host or co-host and we'll find you someone to assist if needed.

Our People

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

- Those in California affected by the wildfires.
- Judy Paige will be starting knee therapy for the third time.
- Parents of Anna Riley, prayers for healing and strength.
- Ricky Riley's heart surgery has been scheduled for February 7th, 2025.
- Ann Herren's two daughters; Betsy Herren is doing well having finished her radiation treatment. Jennifer had her surgery and is recovering nicely.
- Sharon Johnson's daughter Donna is doing very well after having surgery but 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, whom we've prayed for previously.
- Jane Abramchik continues to recover at home aided by a team of home caregivers and her husband Paul.
- Paul Brzozowski had an MRI on January 9th and his doctor said it "looks beautiful". He will continue chemotherapy and a trial drug for brain cancer for another four months. His wife Beth asked for "prayers and positivity always."
- Annie has asked for continuing prayers for the many people struggling with cancer.
- Those affected by the devastation of Hurricane Helene and Milton and other disaster victims.

Others in our church family to keep close in our hearts include Larry Baumhardt, Ursula Dworak, 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 we wish a Happy Birthday to Alane (Schaller) Swiderski, Richard W.A. Schaller, Ricky Riley and Layla Costello.
Happy Anniversary to Annie and Gerry Noorts!

According to the schedule and barring any switches, next Sunday's Lector will be Mark Loach, and our Nursery Attendant will be Laurie Mitchell.

CHURCH LEADERSHIP

PRESIDENT	Peggy Reins
VICE-PRESIDENT	
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 bulletin's 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 bring food to help us keep it going. Food can be left on the shelves by the office doors, or in the narthex. Thank you so much!



UNITED CHURCH
OF CHRIST

MISSION MOMENTS

Extravagant Sign (1/19/2025)

Second Sunday after Epiphany

GREEN

John 2:1-11

Jesus is making his public debut as the Son of God, performing the first of seven recorded miracles in John's gospel — turning 120 gallons of water into wine at a wedding in Cana of Galilee.

Now it wasn't the place or the time that Jesus had intended to display his divinity, but when your mother asks you to do something, as Mary did, you do it.

Mary's insistence for Jesus to intervene was out of concern for their hosts, as running out of wine was a great embarrassment. It was expected for food and drink to be abundant for the many days of wedding feasting. (Weddings in Jesus' time weren't just a sit-down dinner or a morning brunch. They went on for days.)

John's telling of this miracle, though, is not about saving face — or even just revealing the face of God in Jesus.

There's a life-changing lesson for us today that is swishing around the six stone jars of water that are on the premises of the wedding banquet.

To start, John's point of telling us there are six jars is important. Numbers have great significance in Jewish teachings. Seven, for example, represents perfection and completeness. Six, however, symbolizes imperfection. Jesus viewing those six jars as valuable for this miracle moment shows us how God sees all the things we deem unworthy as worthy.

There's more. The water in those jars were not meant for drinking, but rather for ceremonial washing. It was customary for Jews to wash their hands and say a blessing before any meal that included bread. It would be considered disgusting to drink from those six jars.

Jesus, though, does the unthinkable. He disregards Jewish beliefs and traditions, turning the untouchable water into the best wine anyone has ever tasted. Had the guests known the water for ceremonial washing was used for the wine they were sipping; they would have been aghast. Yet those privy to this miracle were getting preview of what Jesus' mission would be: To dismantle the systems that separate the clean from the unclean, that keep the downtrodden down and the oppressed oppress.

Would we have sipped that wine if we knew we it came from? Would we be willing to bend rules, break traditions, rid ourselves of rituals if it meant experiencing amazing water-into-wine miracles that God has for us?

There's so much God wants to do in our lives, but first we need to let go of our assumptions of how life should be. Are you ready for a boundary-breaking, rule-busting God to turn your water into wine?

God, forgive us for those times we are so set in our ways that we close our hearts to the new thing You want to do in our lives. Open us this day to all the beautiful and exciting possibilities. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen.

Scriptures for Sunday, January 19, 2025

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 first scripture reading this morning is Psalm 36: 5-10.

Your steadfast love, O LORD, extends to the heavens,
your faithfulness to the clouds.

⁶Your righteousness is like the mighty mountains;
your judgments are like the great deep;
you save humans and animals alike, O LORD.

⁷How precious is your steadfast love, O God!
All people may take refuge in the shadow of your wings.

⁸They feast on the abundance of your house,
and you give them drink from the river of your delights.

⁹For with you is the fountain of life;
in your light we see light.

¹⁰O continue your steadfast love to those who know you
and your salvation to the upright of heart!

This ends our first reading. Our worship continues with an Anthem sung by our choir.

Thank you, choir. Please rise for the reading of the Gospel. Our Gospel lesson is John 2: 1-11.

On the third day there was a wedding in Cana of Galilee, and the mother of Jesus was there. ² Jesus and his disciples had also been invited to the wedding. ³ When the wine gave out, the mother of Jesus said to him, "They have no wine." ⁴ And Jesus said to her, "Woman, what concern is that to me and to you?^[a] My hour has not yet come." ⁵ His mother said to the servants, "Do whatever he tells you." ⁶ Now standing there were six stone water jars for the Jewish rites of purification, each holding twenty or thirty gallons. ⁷ Jesus said to them, "Fill the jars with water." And they filled them up to the brim. ⁸ He said to them, "Now draw some out, and take it to the person in charge of the banquet." So they took it. ⁹ When the person in charge tasted the water that had become wine and did not know where it came from (though the servants who had drawn the water knew), that person called the bridegroom ¹⁰ and said to him, "Everyone serves the good wine first and then the inferior wine after the guests have become drunk. But you have kept the good wine until now." ¹¹ Jesus did this, the first of his signs, in Cana of Galilee and revealed his glory, and his disciples believed in him.

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