

A large, colorful stained glass window depicting the Resurrection. The central figure is Jesus Christ, standing in a white robe with a red sash, holding a staff. He is surrounded by other figures, including a man in a dark robe kneeling in prayer. The scene is set against a background of a landscape with a rising sun and a rainbow. The window is framed by a dark wooden border.

Welcome

ORDER OF WORSHIP FOR

**Sunday,
September 17,
2023
10:00 AM**

**Sixteenth Sunday
After Pentecost**





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

"The Redheaded Preacher" Podcast. Available wherever you get your podcasts, includes sermon and scriptures only, posted weekly by Tuesday



Ways to Give

Text Your Gift. Text your gift to [844-977-2346](tel:844-977-2346)

After a short set-up the first time, simply text your gift amount

Use PayPal. [PayPal.me/stpeteruccskokie](https://www.paypal.com/merchot/?x=1&from=paypal-merchant-directory&to=stpeteruccskokie)

Send a Check. Mail to the address below ... this way still works fine

Set up Vanco. Contact the church office to enroll in 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 **joyously welcome 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

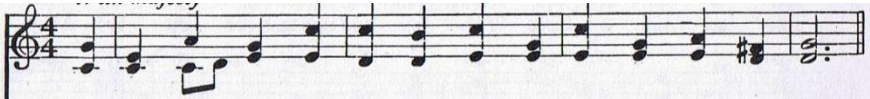
Facebook/Instagram/YouTube: [stpeteruccskokie](https://www.facebook.com/stpeteruccskokie)

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

RESPONSE "Our God, Our Help in Ages Past" #63 (vv. 1,2)

1. Our God, our help in a - ges past, Our hope for years to come,
2. Un - der the shad - ow of Thy throne Thy saints have dwelt se - cure;
3. Be - fore the hills in or - der stood, Or earth re - ceived her frame,
4. A thou - sand a - ges in Thy sight Are like an eve - ning gone;
5. Time, like an ev - er - roll - ing stream, Bears all its sons a - way;
6. Our God, our help in a - ges past, Our hope for years to come,



Our shel - ter from the storm - y blast, And our e - ter - nal home:
 Suf - fi - cient is Thine arm a - lone, And our de - fense is sure.
 From ev - er - last - ing Thou art God, To end - less years the same.
 Short as the watch that ends the night Be - fore the ris - ing sun.
 They fly for - got - ten, as a dream Dies at the open - ing day.
 Be Thou our guard while trou - bles last, And our e - ter - nal home. A-MEN.

**CALL TO CONFESSION** *Isaiah 55:7*

P: The prophet cries out, "Let the wicked forsake their way, and the unrighteous their thoughts; let them return to the Lord, that the Lord may have mercy on them, and to our God, who will abundantly pardon." Let us then, forsake and abandon those flaws which keep obstruct our faithfulness and usefulness to God and the Creation; let us pray:

PRAYER OF CONFESSION

- P:** We know, dear God, that we have not completely lived according to Your desires for us. We freely admit that the brokenness in the world, and the sin and despair in our hearts, threaten to consume us as a mighty flood. It is hard to keep up our hope, and our faith can take a beating.
- C:** **In frustration at unanswered prayers, we have turned away from You or at least felt some resentment or anger. Like Israelites of the past, we have sometimes wondered, “where are You?” Not only is it hard to keep going with love, joy and peace; in our deeper grief we wonder what’s the purpose in trying.**
- A:** **Please understand us, and do not judge us nor forsake us! Hear our plea in the name of Jesus, who knows what it is to be human and to have His patience stretched. Forgive us and teach us, that we may ever shine Your gracious light of redemption and changed lives. Amen.**

ASSURANCE OF PARDON

- P:** Friends, hear this Good News: the love of God is beyond measure, and you are included in that love. Know that you are forgiven and thus freed to love and serve. Let the people who lay ahold of this Good News reply . . .

A: Alleluia! Amen.

—Beth Merrill Neel, posted on holdfasttowhatisgood.com.

HYMN "Great is Thy Faithfulness"

SSB #2



1 Great is thy faith-ful-ness, O God my Fa-ther; there is no
 2 Sum-mer and win-ter and spring-time and har-vest, sun, moon, and
 3 Par-don for sin and a peace that en-dur-eth, thine own dear



shad-ow of turn-ing with thee; thou chang-est not, thy com-
 stars in their cours-es a-bove join with all na-ture in
 pres-ence to cheer and to guide; strength for to-day and bright



pas-sions they fail not; as thou hast been, thou for-ev-er wilt be.
 man-i-fold wit-ness to thy great faith-ful-ness, mer-cy, and love.
 hope for to-mor-row, bless-ings all mine, with ten thou-sand be-side!

Refrain

Great is thy faith-ful-ness! 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.

Text: Thomas O. Chisholm, 1866-1960

Music: FAITHFULNESS, William M. Runyan, 1870-1957

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The congregation may be seated

A CALL TO OFFERING

PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION

Peter Svenson

Old Testament:

Isaiah 40:25-31

Epistle:

Hebrews 10:32-39

CORAL ANTHEM

“On Eagle's Wings”

arr. Hayes

Will those who are able please stand up

GOSPEL

Matthew 24:45-51

RESPONSE

“Alleluia!”

#495

The congregation may be seated

PASTORAL PRAYER 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

SERMON

“Hanging On”

Will those who are able please rise to sing

HYMN "Guide Me, O Thou Great Jehovah" #80



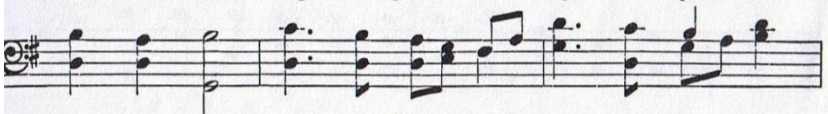
1. Guide me, O Thou great Je - ho - vah, Pil - grim through this
 2. O - pen now the crys - tal foun - tain, Whence the heal - ing
 3. When I tread the verge of Jor - dan, Bid my anx - ious



bar - ren land; I am weak, but Thou art might - y; Hold me with Thy
 stream doth flow; Let the fire and cloud-y pil - lar Lead me all my
 fears sub-side; Death of death, and hell's de - struc-tion, Land me safe on



power - ful hand; Bread of heav - en, Bread of heav - en,
 jour - ney through; Strong De - liv - erer, strong De - liv - erer,
 Ca - naan's side; Songs of prais - es, songs of prais - es



Feed me till I want no more, Feed me till I want no more.
 Be Thou still my Strength and Shield, Be Thou still my Strength and Shield.
 I will ev - er give to Thee, I will ev - er give to Thee. A-MEN.



CHARGE & BENEDICTION

P: As we leave this place, let us depart in the assurance that God does not remain hidden in a cloud, concealed from us.

C: God is still among us!

P: Let us not gaze longingly at heaven for a sign.

C: God is revealed!

P: Let us glimpse the face of Christ in one another.

C: Let us celebrate the Holy Spirit, who works in our community.

A: Let us give glory to God our Creator, today and every day. Amen.

POSTLUDE “Guide Me, O Thou Great Jehovah”

arr. Callahan

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	Maria Altmayer
LIVESTREAM RECORDING	Beth Lanford
NURSERY ATTENDANT	Heidi Tarzian

News in the Pews

In the words of the Israelites: “The Lord is ... the reason for [our] song, because he has saved [us]” (Exodus 15:2, CEV).
Welcome to worship!

The Church Council meets today after worship!

Our Micah 6:8 Committee meets tonight over Zoom at 6:30 PM.

The Rummage Sale is just days away!! Please come help this week. There will be sorting, pricing and putting on the final touches on Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday, from 10-5 along with the usual Wednesday evening. We're going to have a small presale for friends and family on Wednesday during sorting time, 6:30-8:30, though the boutique may not be ready for the presale. Also, all rummage sale workers are welcome to bring friends and family to shop anytime, just be sure to put their payment in the worker card box.

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED FOR THE DAY OF THE RUMMAGE SALE. BAKERS ALSO NEEDED FOR THE BAKE SALE. There is a sign-up sheet for the day of the sale posted on the gym doors. Just sign up for a spot, and if you aren't sure, contact Annie Noorts (847) 772-2717 and she'll put you in a spot that works for you. If you are able to bake for the bake sale, contact Barb Todd (847) 965-0345. *Barb will be accepting*

baked goods on Thursday the 21st from 3-5PM. If you cannot make it then please talk to Barb about when.

This Monday the 18th, is the DEADLINE for articles for our October Announcer!

The Fall Meeting of our Chicago Metropolitan Association is happening on Saturday, September 30th from 10 AM to 1 PM at our Cluster 1's Northfield Community Church. If you are not planning on helping serve that day for St. Peter's at A Just Harvest's Community Kitchen, here's a good chance to be exposed to new ideas and new friends within our wider church! Let Pastor know of your interest.

Pastor Lanford is trying to schedule a New Members/Seekers Class, to hopefully be held as soon as possible. Please talk with him or email revlanford@aol.com if you are interested in being part of this exploratory and educational one-time class!

We shop groceries for, and serve at, the Community Kitchen of A Just Harvest this month! Our turn is September 30th, from 11:30 AM to 2:30 PM, and both Chad and Peggy McCoy cannot be there as usual. Please, we'll need \$500 total in cash donations to purchase the groceries, with which the kitchen staff will make the lunch, and then 5 servers to help serve the meal. Although he will be gone that Saturday, if you're interested or have questions, please see or email Chad today at chadwood.mccoy@gmail.com!

Our People

Happy birthday / anniversary! Having a birthday this week are Judy's grandson Ryan Puckett, Dylan Kahn, Errol Mitchell and Megan (Knowles) Caras; Dave and Jackie (Meyer) Rosenthal have an anniversary. May God bless their celebrations and grant them all a year of good health and spiritual growth.

According to the schedule, barring any switches, next Sunday's Lector will be Judy Paige. The Nursery attendant will be Carolyn Van Til.

The sermon next Sunday will be about dealing with difficult people.

CHURCH LEADERSHIP

PRESIDENT	Peggy Reins
VICE-PRESIDENT	Beth Lanford
TREASURER	Chad McCoy
SECRETARY	Annie Noorts
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.

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. Our Deacon will pick them up after worship. Please fill them out; having a record of your being with us is important to us! Thank you.

Please remember that we can always use food contributions for the Mini-Pantry!

Pastor's podcast is available wherever you listen to podcasts! Just type in "The Redheaded Preacher" and you'll find us! Pastor's weekly podcasts include the prior Sunday's scriptures and sermon, and some words and prayer from Pastor just for the listeners of the podcast!



MISSION MOMENTS

September 17, 2023

Sixteenth Sunday after Pentecost

Exodus 14:19-31

Road to Freedom

Just Peace Sunday

Even if you have not spent much time in church or in Bible study, the story of the crossing of the Red Sea is probably a little familiar. Take a look at the story with new eyes today, reading it through a lens that is new to you. What new message or insight do you get from this story by reading it in this new way?

A literary reading considers the story from the point of view of literature. How does the plot arc and flow keep you, as the reader or listener, engaged? What are some of the literary devices, such as use of language? Who are the characters and how are they developed? What is your point of view as a reader or listener? How does the story change if you consider it from another point of view?

A historical reading considers the story from the point of view of its place in history. Take into account the place and time that the story takes place. What is the culture of God's people and of Pharaoh's people at the time? What are other forces at work in these societies?

Another way to read a Bible story is as a story of God's work in the world. In reading this way, pay attention to where God is and what God is doing. What is God like in this story and how does this compare to God's presence in other stories? How does God look and sound? In what ways does God circumvent expected or natural law in order to accomplish Divine goals?

You may also want to read a scripture story devotionally, as a way to intentionally deepen your walk with God. In reading this way, read the story slowly three times. The first time, pay attention to any words or phrases that jump out at you and make note of them. The second time, read while asking God to show you God's purpose in the world. The third time, read asking God to reveal something that you need for your own particular faith walk.

Yet another way to read the Bible, and perhaps a particularly helpful one on this Just Peace Sunday (<https://www.ucc.org/just-peace/>), is through a liberation theology lens. Liberation theology is based on the fundamental value that God's preference is always for the marginalized and oppressed. As you read this way, look for clues that God is working for freedom for the enslaved, and disruption of systems of oppression.

Isaiah 40:25-31

To whom then will you compare me, or who is my equal?

says the Holy One.

Lift up your eyes on high and see: Who created these?

He who brings out their host and numbers them,

calling them all by name; because he is great in strength,

mighty in power, not one is missing.

Why do you say, O Jacob, and speak, O Israel,

"My way is hidden from the LORD,

and my right is disregarded by my God"?

Have you not known? Have you not heard?

The LORD is the everlasting God, the Creator of the ends of the earth.

He does not faint or grow weary; his understanding is unsearchable.

He gives power to the faint and strengthens the powerless.

Even youths will faint and be weary, and the young will fall exhausted;

but those who wait for the LORD shall renew their strength,

they shall mount up with wings like eagles,

they shall run and not be weary, they shall walk and not faint.

Hebrews 10:32-39

But recall those earlier days when, after you had been enlightened, you endured a hard struggle with sufferings, sometimes being publicly exposed to abuse and persecution, and sometimes being partners with those so treated. For you had compassion for those who were in prison, and you cheerfully accepted the plundering of your possessions, knowing that you yourselves possessed something better and more lasting. Do not, therefore, abandon that confidence of yours; it brings a great reward. For you need endurance, so that when you have done the will of God, you may receive what was promised. For yet

"in a very little while, the one who is coming will come and will not delay;

but my righteous one will live by faith.

My soul takes no pleasure in anyone who shrinks back."

But we are not among those who shrink back and so are lost, but among those who have faith and so are saved.

Matthew 24:45-51

"Who then is the faithful and wise slave, whom his master has put in charge of his household, to give the other slaves their allowance of food at the proper time? Blessed is that slave whom his master will find at work when he arrives. Truly I tell you, he will put that one in charge of all his possessions. But if that wicked slave says to himself, 'My master is delayed,' and he begins to beat his fellow slaves, and eats and drinks with drunkards, the master of that slave will come on a day when he does not expect him and at an hour that he does not know. He will cut him in pieces and put him with the hypocrites, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.