



# Welcome

ORDER OF WORSHIP FOR

**Sunday,  
November 3,  
2024**

**10:00 AM**

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**Twenty-fourth  
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 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](mailto:office@stpeteruccskokie.org)

Office hours Mon-Fri 9am to 2pm

**Ben Westphal (Music Director):** [bcwestphal@gmail.com](mailto:bcwestphal@gmail.com)

**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, November 3, 2024 at 10:00am**  
**Twenty-fourth Sunday after Pentecost**

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

**PRELUDE**                      “Joyful, Joyful”                      arr. Clemens

**THE RINGING OF THE BELLS**

**THE SHARING OF ANNOUNCEMENTS**                      Peggy Reins

*Will those who are able please stand up*

**CALL TO WORSHIP**

**P:** Come, let us gather in praise of the One who brings justice and hope.

**C:** **We lift our hearts to God, who is faithful forever.**

**P:** God is the Creator, sustaining all life, and calls us to uphold love and justice.

**C:** **We seek to follow this call, to care for the oppressed and to welcome the stranger.**

P: Blessed are those whose hope is in the Lord, who brings sight to the blind and lifts up those who are bowed down.

**C: We rejoice in the God who liberates, who sets the prisoners free and protects those who are vulnerable.**

P: Let us worship with hearts full of gratitude, placing our trust in the One who is our strength and our song.

**A: Praise be to God, our hope, our justice, our peace, now and forever. Amen.**

# OPENING RESPONSE

## “Gathered Here in the Mystery of the Hour”

*Text and music: Phil Porter, 1990*



Gath-ered here in the mys-tery of this hour, gath-ered here in one strong



bod - y, gath-ered here in the strug-gle and the power, Spir - it draw near.

*This chant may be sung as a round.*

## **PRAYER OF CONFESSION**

P: Please join me in prayer:

**A: God of Love and Compassion, we confess that we have not always lived as those who love You with our whole heart, soul, mind, and strength. We have allowed lesser priorities to distract us, and we have neglected to love our neighbors as ourselves. Too often, we seek our own comfort and convenience rather than reaching out in love to those around us. Forgive us for the ways we fall short of the love you call us to embody. Renew our hearts, O God, so that we may truly live out Your commandment. Help us to love as Jesus loved, to serve as He served, and to welcome as He welcomed, so that we may reflect Your light in this world. Amen.**

*Silent Reflection*

## **ASSURANCE OF PARDON**

P: Hear the good news: God's love is steadfast and unchanging. In Christ, we are forgiven and empowered to live out the greatest commandment. Receive this assurance: you are forgiven, you are loved, and you are called to go forth in grace.

**C: Thanks be to God, who renews us in love and sends us forth to love others. Amen.**

## HYMN "God of Grace and God of Glory"

1 God of grace and God of glo - ry, on your peo - ple  
 2 From the e - vils that sur - round us and as - sail the  
 3 Cure your chil - dren's war - ring mad - ness; bend our pride to  
 4 Set our feet on loft - y plac - es; gird our lives that  
 5 Save us from weak res - ig - na - tion to the e - vils

pour your power; crown your an - cient church - 's sto - ry;  
 Sav - ior's ways, from the fears that long have bound us—  
 your con - trol, Shame our reck - less, self - ish glad - ness,  
 they may be ar - mored with all Christ - like grac - es,  
 we de - plore; let the search for your sal - va - tion

bring its bud to glo - rious flower. Grant us wis - dom, grant us cour - age,  
 free our hearts for faith and praise. Grant us wis - dom, grant us cour - age,  
 rich in things and poor in soul. Grant us wis - dom, grant us cour - age,  
 in the fight to set us free. Grant us wis - dom, grant us cour - age,  
 be our glo - ry ev - er - more. Grant us wis - dom, grant us cour - age,

for the fac - ing of this hour, for the fac - ing of this hour.  
 for the liv - ing of these days, for the liv - ing of these days.  
 make our bro - ken spir - its whole, make our bro - ken spir - its whole.  
 in the quest for lib - er - ty, in the quest for lib - er - ty.  
 serv - ing you whom we a - dore, serv - ing you whom we a - dore.

*The congregation may be seated*

## **PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION AND SCRIPTURE READING**

Barb Todd

Hebrew Scripture Lesson:

Ruth 1:1-18

Psalter:

Psalm 146

## **CHORAL ANTHEM “I Just Came to Praise the Lord”**

by Wayne Romero

## **GOSPEL**

Mark 12: 28-34

## **RESPONSE**

“Hallelujah”

#495

*The congregation may be seated*

## **PASTORAL AND SILENT PRAYERS**

## **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*

**RESPONSE**

**“We are An Offering”**

**SSB #11**



We lift our voi - ces, — we lift our hands, — we lift our



lives — up to You, we are an of - fer - ing; — Lord, use our



voi - ces, — Lord, use our hands, — Lord, use our



lives, — they are Yours, we are an of - fer - ing. —



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



voi - ces, — we lift our hands, — we lift our



lives — up to You, we are an of - fer - ing, — we are an of - fer - ing. —

**PRAYER OF DEDICATION**

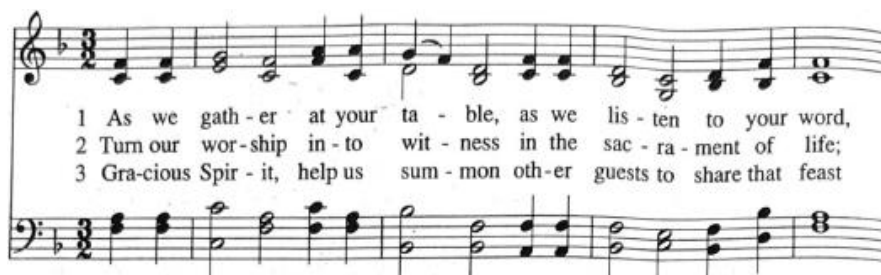
**A: Loving God, with gratitude, we bring these gifts to You, acknowledging that all we have is a blessing from Your hand. May these offerings be used to bring healing, justice, and hope to our world. Bless them, that they might reflect Your love and expand Your work of compassion and peace. Use us, too, as instruments of Your grace. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.**

*The congregation may be seated*

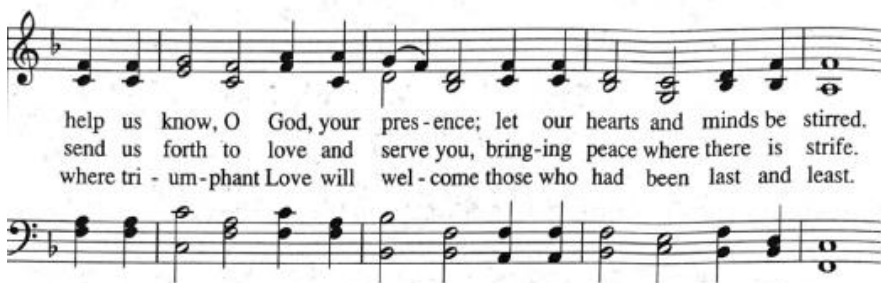
**SERMON**

**“Love Who???”**

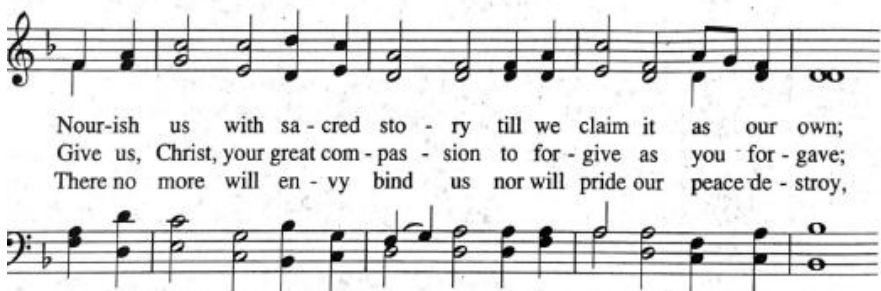
## HYMN "As We Gather at Your Table"



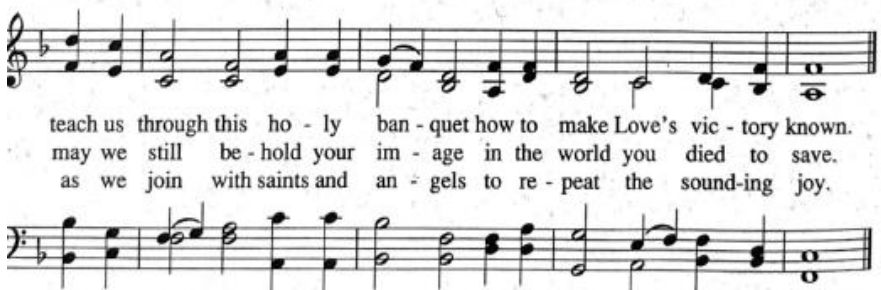
1 As we gath - er at your ta - ble, as we lis - ten to your word,  
 2 Turn our wor - ship in - to wit - ness in the sac - ra - ment of life;  
 3 Gra - cious Spir - it, help us sum - mon oth - er guests to share that feast



help us know, O God, your pres - ence; let our hearts and minds be stirred.  
 send us forth to love and serve you, bring - ing peace where there is strife.  
 where tri - um - phant Love will wel - come those who had been last and least.



Nour - ish us with sa - cred sto - ry till we claim it as our own;  
 Give us, Christ, your great com - pas - sion to for - give as you for - gave;  
 There no more will en - vy bind us nor will pride our peace de - stroy,



teach us through this ho - ly ban - quet how to make Love's vic - tory known.  
 may we still be - hold your im - age in the world you died to save.  
 as we join with saints and an - gels to re - peat the sound - ing joy.

## THE SACRAMENT OF THE LORD'S SUPPER

### Exhortation and Invitation

#### Sursum Corda:

P: The Lord be with you.

**C: *And also with you.***

P: Lift up your hearts!

**C: *We lift them up to the Lord!***

P: Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

**C: *It is right to give God thanks and praise.***

### Prayer of Thanksgiving and Consecration Participation

## CLOSING PRAYER AND 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.**

Will those who are able please stand up

## HYMN "Jesu, Jesu, Fill Us with Your Love"

*Refrain Unison*

Je - su, Je - su, fill us with your love, show

us how to serve the neigh-bors we have from you.

1 Knelt at the feet of his friends, si - lent - ly wash - ing their  
 2 Neigh-bors are rich and poor, var - ied in col - or and  
 3 These are the ones we should serve, these are the ones we should  
 4 Lov - ing puts us on our knees, show - ing our faith by our  
 5 Kneel at the feet of our friends, si - lent - ly wash - ing their

feet, Je - su, you act - ed as ser - vant to them.  
 race, neigh-bors are near and far a - way.  
 love; all these are neigh-bors to us and you.  
 deeds, serv - ing the neigh-bors we have from you.  
 feet, this is the way we should live with you.

**CHARGE & BENEDICTION****POSTLUDE**      “Jesu, Jesu Fill Us With Your Love”

*The music after the service is intended as a time of reflection. The Pastor will be pleased to greet you at the Sanctuary doors as soon as the postlude has concluded, and our livestream has stopped.*

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**FOR WORSHIP TODAY**

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GUEST MINISTER	Rev. Ally Vertigan
MUSIC DIRECTOR	Ben Westphal
DEACON	Beth Sterba
LIVESTREAM RECORDING	Jenn Schneider
NURSERY ATTENDANT	Carolyn Van Til

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# Handcrafted Wreaths and Decorations



**24" Balsam Wreath with Velvet Ribbon**

Single Face Balsam Outdoor Wreath 24", 30", 40"  
Double Face Balsam 36"



**Noble Fir Mixed Wreath 20" Indoor/Outdoor**



**4' Mantelpiece/Centerpiece**

**Place your order by Friday November 15th.**  
(Contact Rich Schneider or call 847.673.8166)

**Pickup will be on Saturday Dec 7th from 1 - 2 pm or at St. Peter's after worship on Sunday Dec 8th.**

24" Single Face Balsam	\$18.00
Cemetery Stand	included
30" Single Face Balsam	\$30.00
36" Double Face Balsam	\$53.00
40" Single Face Balsam	\$45.00
4' Noble Mix Mantelpiece / Centerpiece	\$45.00
12" Candle Ring Wreath (No Candle)	\$21.00
12" Holiday Yule Log	\$21.00
32" Evergreen Planter	\$31.00
42" Evergreen Planter	\$51.00
Fire Starter Basket	\$21.00
Balsam Door Swag	\$16.00
20" Premium Noble Fir Mix Wreath	\$26.00
24" Boxed Decorator Wreath	\$41.00
25' Balsam Garland	\$33.00



**32" Evergreen Planter  
42"+ Evergreen Planter**



**12" Candle Ring Wreath  
WITHOUT Candle**



**24" Boxed Decorator Wreath**



**Holiday Yule Log 12"**



**25' Balsam Fir Garland**



**Firestarter Basket**



**Balsam Swag**

# CHRISTMAS WREATHS AND MORE!

We are taking orders for fresh pine Christmas wreaths and decorations from Northern Wisconsin to adorn your home or to be placed at a cemetery.

**The standard 24 inch diameter wreath, with red velvet bow and pine cones is \$18.00.**

Cemetery stands are included at no additional charge.

Proceeds from this fundraiser help to decorate the church for Christmas with the remainder going to the General Operating Fund.

We will place wreaths on graves at the St. Peter's UCC Cemetery, if you desire.

All orders **must be placed by Friday Nov 15th.**

**Pickup will be at the St. Peter's Laramie entrance on Saturday Dec 7th from 1 - 2 pm or after worship in the Lanford Fellowship Hall on Sunday Dec 8th.**

To place an order, please:

- **fill in the form and place in collection plate with payment.**
- **fill in the form and mail it with payment to St Peter's.**
- **or, email your order form to [office@stpeteruccskokie.org](mailto:office@stpeteruccskokie.org) and send payment separately via mail or use PayPal.**

Please make checks payable to:  
St. Peter's UCC.

Name		
Address		
I will pick up my order up at church		
Please place on cemetery for:		
<b>Item Description</b>	<b>Price</b>	<b>Quantity</b>
24" Single Face Balsam Wreath w/ Velvet Ribbon for Home or Cemetery	\$18.00	
Cemetery Stands	included w/ cemetery placement	
30" Single Face Balsam	\$30.00	
36" Double Face Balsam	\$53.00	
40" Single Face Balsam	\$45.00	
4' Noble Mix Mantlepiece/ Centerpiece	\$45.00	
12" Noble Candle Wreath (Candle not included)	\$21.00	
12" Holiday Yule Log	\$21.00	
32" Evergreen Planter	\$31.00	
42" Evergreen Planter	\$51.00	
Fire Starter Basket	\$21.00	
Balsam Door Swag	\$16.00	
20" Premium Noble Fir Mix Wreath	\$26.00	
24" Boxed Decorator Wreath	\$41.00	
25' Balsam Garland	\$33.00	
Total Amount (\$)		



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# News in the Pews

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**Welcome to St. Peter's United Church of Christ. Together with the faithful of every time and place, let us worship God.**

**Please extend a warm St. Peter's welcome to Rev. Ally Vertigan.**

Rev Vertigan (she/her) serves as the chaplain for Supportive Oncology at RUSH MD Anderson Cancer Center in Chicago. She is Board Certified with the Association of Professional Chaplains and enjoys companioning patients, loved ones, and staff navigating the ups and downs of life. Raised in the United Church of Christ, she attended a UCC college and seminary. Ally lives in Chicago with her wife and their 3 cats- all of whom enjoy cuddling up with a good book!

**Thank you to everyone who volunteered and/or shopped at our**

**Holiday Craft Show and Bake Sale yesterday!** Special thanks to chairs Wendy Svenson and Annie Noorts, Roy Svenson, our raffle basket wizards, our baking queens, and everyone else who was able to lend a hand. It is always such a special event!!

**Thanks to everyone who took books to Half Price Books.** Please be sure to turn the money from Half Price Books into Laura ASAP or put it in the offering plate with a note saying what it's from. Please let Annie know if you have money to turn in, ([annie@mollyu.com](mailto:annie@mollyu.com)). Thank you!

**The Livestream Team Needs Your Help!** The overlap between the Deacons and the Livestreamers has become a challenge and we need more volunteers. The livestream setup is very easy to run, and we can be flexible – schedule you for specific Sundays instead of once a month - but we are really in need right now. Please contact Jen directly if you can join this important part of our ministry – we hear

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all the time that people ARE watching our livestream, and we want to be sure it's available every Sunday for those folks.

**Rev. David Russell from the Illinois Conference and Rev. Michael Mulberry of the UCC Great Lakes Creation Collaborative will lead an intergenerational Climate Action Retreat**, Friday and Saturday, November 8-9, at the Pilgrim Park Camp and Conference Center near Princeton, Illinois. All faith leaders and families, students and teachers, activists and seekers are invited! Peggy and Chad McCoy are planning to attend. To encourage youth participation, organizers are offering scholarships to participants between the ages of 12 and 29. For more information talk to Peggy or Chad or email Peggy at [peggy.reins@gmail.com](mailto:peggy.reins@gmail.com).

**Our next time to serve at A Just Harvest Community Kitchen** is Saturday, November 30<sup>th</sup>. Our support for this long-time community partner includes purchasing ingredients for the meal on that date and providing volunteer meal servers from 11am-2:30pm. If you are available to serve, please contact Chad McCoy, and of course, contributions to support the cost of the meal are welcome.

**We're taking Wreath Orders now!** Please see the insert for details and order form. Orders are due Friday, November 15<sup>th</sup>.

**Please join us next Sunday** when Minister Renita Ward returns to the pulpit! Minister and Attorney Renita Ward is passionate for Jesus Christ. This fuels her ministry and professional efforts of living out Christ's model as an advocate, teacher, mediator, and preacher. She is a Member in Discernment with the Chicago Metropolitan Association of our Illinois Conference of the UCC, and member of Trinity UCC - Chicago. We can look forward to hearing from her on November 10th and 17th.

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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:**

- Sharon Johnson, though recovering well from her surgery, has contracted Covid. She is resting and isolating at home.
- Continued prayers of healing for Diane Hickman, friend of Rich & Jen Schneider, who was hit by a car while on her bike. She has multiple broken bones and brain trauma.  
Betsy Herren, daughter of Ann, in Oregon. She is in treatment for breast cancer and has begun radiation treatment.
- Sharon Johnson's daughter, Donna, in addition to fighting cancer has been hospitalized for a blockage due to scar tissue. She had surgery Thursday.
- Marcia Hilliard as she recovers from her surgery this month and prepares for another surgery.
- Those affected by the devastation of Hurricane Helene and Milton.
- 15-year-old family friend of Denise Hopp is currently suffering from self-harm.
- Cancer has returned for Susan Garcia's Aunt Janice, whom we've prayed for previously.
- Ricky Riley, who will be undergoing heart surgery in February.
- Jane Abramchik continues to recover at home aided by a team of home caregivers and her husband Paul.
- Jen Schneider's mom Dorene Schurman, who is in hospice care in Ohio.
- Paul Brzozowski is doing well after additional treatments following brain cancer surgery.
- Annie and Gerry Noorts's cousin Scott Richter completed his chemo. His wife Susie Richter, who has breast cancer, had surgery and will be starting treatment soon. Also, their friends Bunny and Eddy Thompson are both fighting cancer.

*Please keep them and their families in your prayers.*

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Others in our church family to keep close in our hearts include Larry Baumhardt, Ursula Dworak, Lois Jarmuth, Bob Seitman, and Jackie Johnson. **If you are aware of others to include in our shared prayers, please let a church officer, an Elder, or the office know!**

**According to the schedule** and barring any switches, next Sunday's Lector will be Jenn Schneider, and our Nursery Attendant will be Rita McMahon.

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### CHURCH LEADERSHIP

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PRESIDENT	Peggy Reins
VICE-PRESIDENT	Ann Herren
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.** 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.

**Our mini-food pantry is a daily mission this church does for the community of Skokie.** The Niles Township Food Pantry tells us ours is the most successful in the area. But we can't keep it going without regular donations. 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!

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UNITED CHURCH  
OF CHRIST

## MISSION MOMENTS

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**Wherever You Go (11/3/2024)**

**24th Sunday after Pentecost**

**GREEN**

**Ruth 1:1-18**

The Book of Ruth has been heralded as a beautiful romance novella, where the main character — Ruth — displays courage and undying love amid great uncertainty and heartache.

Even before we begin reading, though, we get a sense of how this story unfolds, as Ruth's name in Hebrew means "compassionate friend." And that's exactly what this young widow becomes to her mother-in-law, Naomi.

A great famine in the land of Moab led to deaths of their spouses, so Naomi prepares to return to Bethlehem. She tells Ruth and her other daughter-in-law, Orpah, to stay with their own people. Orpah does. Ruth doesn't. Instead, she clings to Naomi. The word "cling" being the same word used in Deuteronomy that describes God's steadfast embrace of the children of Israel.

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Ruth then proclaims her love and devotion, saying, “Where you go, I go; your people shall be my people and your God, my God.” Is it any wonder Ruth’s heartfelt words are often recited at weddings? You are not alone anymore. No longer are decisions made solely. We will navigate life’s detours together. Your people will be my people. Your God, my God.

Ruth is not only committing to her mother-in-law, but in doing so she is willingly relinquishing the beliefs that have shaped her identity. She is opening herself to all the new God possibilities that are being born out of adversity.

So often we cling to our beliefs and expect others to fall in line with them. Change, even compromise, are not favorite words in our vocabularies anymore. Yet what would happen if in our relationships we held loosely to our wants, needs and beliefs? What if we dared to allow room for God’s Spirit to open us to new customs, ideas, traditions — even a new way forward?

Ruth not only models for us the importance of being compassionate friends on the road of life, but she also shows us that nothing ever grows in the soil of comfort.

It is beyond our comfort zones where the blessings lie. Just ask Ruth. The Moabite widow never would have dreamt her faithful steps would lead to being part of God’s plan of salvation. And yet they did. Where are your steps leading you?

*God, thank you for Your steadfast love and companionship in our lives. May we cling to Your truth that while life brings many changes, Your great care for us changes not. We are never alone in this world. Amen.*

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**Please join me in spirit of prayer as we offer up our Prayer of Illumination.**

*Lord, open our hearts and minds by the power of your Holy Spirit, that as the Scriptures are read and your Word is proclaimed, we may hear with joy what you say to us today. Amen.*

**Our first scripture comes to us from Ruth Chapter 1, verses 1 through 18.**

**1** In the days when the judges ruled, there was a famine in the land, and a certain man of Bethlehem in Judah went to live in the country of Moab, he and his wife and two sons. **2** The name of the man was Elimelech and the name of his wife Naomi, and the names of his two sons were Mahlon<sup>a</sup> and Chilion;<sup>b</sup> they were Ephrathites from Bethlehem in Judah. They went into the country of Moab and remained there. **3** But Elimelech, the husband of Naomi, died, and she was left with her two sons. **4** These took Moabite wives; the name of the one was Orpah and the name of the other Ruth. When they had lived there about ten years, **5** both Mahlon and Chilion also died, so that the woman was left without her two sons and her husband. **6** Then she started to return with her daughters-in-law from the country of Moab, for she had heard in the country of Moab that the LORD had considered his people and given them food. **7** So she set out from the place where she had been living, she and her two daughters-in-law, and they went on their way to go back to the land of Judah. **8** But Naomi said to her two daughters-in-law, "Go back each of you to your mother's house. May the LORD deal kindly with you, as you have dealt with the dead and with me. **9** The LORD grant that you may find security, each of you in the house of your husband." Then she kissed them, and they wept aloud. **10** They said to her, "No, we will return with you to your people." **11** But Naomi said, "Turn back, my daughters. Why will you go with me? Do I still have sons in my womb that they may become your husbands? **12** Turn back, my daughters, go your way, for I am too old to have a husband. Even if I thought there was hope for me, even if I should have a husband tonight and bear sons, **13** would you then wait until they were grown? Would you then refrain from marrying? No, my daughters, it has been far more bitter for me than for you, because the hand of the LORD has turned against me." **14** Then they wept aloud again. Orpah kissed her mother-in-law goodbye, but Ruth clung to her. **15** So she said, "Look, your sister-in-law has gone back to her people and to her gods; return after your sister-in-law." **16** But Ruth said,

"Do not press me to leave you,  
to turn back from following you!

Where you go, I will go;  
where you lodge, I will lodge;  
your people shall be my people  
and your God my God.

**17** Where you die, I will die,  
and there will I be buried.

May the LORD do thus to me,  
and more as well,  
if even death parts me from you!"

**18** When Naomi saw that she was determined to go with her, she said no more to her.

**This ends our reading from the Hebrew Scriptures. Our second reading is Psalm 146**

Praise the LORD!

Praise the LORD, O my soul!

<sup>2</sup> I will praise the LORD as long as I live;  
I will sing praises to my God all my life long.

<sup>3</sup> Do not put your trust in princes,  
in mortals, in whom there is no help.

<sup>4</sup> When their breath departs, they return to the earth;  
on that very day their plans perish.

<sup>5</sup> Happy are those whose help is the God of Jacob,  
whose hope is in the LORD their God,

<sup>6</sup> who made heaven and earth,  
the sea, and all that is in them;

who keeps faith forever;

<sup>7</sup> who executes justice for the oppressed;  
who gives food to the hungry.

The LORD sets the prisoners free;

<sup>8</sup> the LORD opens the eyes of the blind.

The LORD lifts up those who are bowed down;  
the LORD loves the righteous.

<sup>9</sup> The LORD watches over the strangers;  
he upholds the orphan and the widow,  
but the way of the wicked he brings to ruin.

<sup>10</sup> The LORD will reign forever,  
your God, O Zion, for all generations.

Praise the LORD!

**This concludes our reading from the Psalter. Our worship continues with a choral anthem.**

*(The reader may sit down)*



**Please stand for the reading of the Gospel. Our Gospel lesson is Mark 12:28-34.**

<sup>28</sup> One of the scribes came near and heard them disputing with one another, and seeing that he answered them well he asked him, "Which commandment is the first of all?" <sup>29</sup> Jesus answered, "The first is, 'Hear, O Israel: the Lord our God, the Lord is one; <sup>30</sup> you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.' <sup>31</sup> The second is this, 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.' There is no other commandment greater than these." <sup>32</sup> Then the scribe said to him, "You are right, Teacher; you have truly said that 'he is one, and besides him there is no other'; <sup>33</sup> and 'to love him with all the heart and with all the understanding and with all the strength' and 'to love one's neighbor as oneself'—this is much more important than all whole burnt offerings and sacrifices." <sup>34</sup> When Jesus saw that he answered wisely, he said to him, "You are not far from the kingdom of God." After that no one dared to ask him any question.

**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.**