



Welcome

ORDER OF WORSHIP FOR

**Sunday,
December 3,
2023**

10:00 AM

**First Sunday of
Advent**





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/display?hosted_curl=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

**St. Peter's United Church of Christ in Skokie
Order of Worship for
Sunday, December 3, 2023 at 10:00am
First Sunday of Advent**

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

PRELUDE "Wachet Auf!" arr. Charles Callahan

THE RINGING OF THE BELLS

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Peggy Reins

Will those who are able please stand up

CALL TO WORSHIP

P: It is the waiting time.

C: We wait for the coming of the Incarnate God.

P: It is the waiting time.

C: We wait for the star to lead us.

P: It is the waiting time.

C: We wait for glad tidings of great joy.

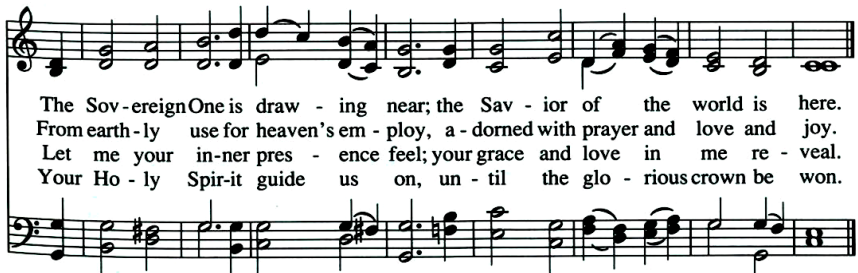
P: It is the waiting time.

C: We turn our faces east, anticipating the good news of new life!

OPENING RESPONSE “Lift Up Your Heads” SSB #9 (v.1)



1 Lift up your heads, O might-y gates; be-hold the glo - rious Rul - er waits!
 2 Fling wide the por - tals of your heart; make it a tem - ple, set a - part
 3 Re - deem - er, come! I o - pen wide my heart to you; here, Christ, a - bide!
 4 So come, my Sov - ereign; en - ter in! Let new and no - bler life be - gin;



The Sov - ereign One is draw - ing near; the Sav - ior of the world is here.
 From earth - ly use for heaven's em - ploy, a - dorned with prayer and love and joy.
 Let me your in - ner pres - ence feel; your grace and love in me re - veal.
 Your Ho - ly Spir - it guide us on, un - til the glo - rious crown be won.

CALL TO CONFESSION

P: As a new year begins in the church, we seek to leave behind our past unfaithfulness.

C: **We remember our doubts and neglect, the empty times when prayer is forgotten and our focus is narrowed to petty concerns.**

P: God is waiting to hear from us! Let us pray:

PRAYER OF CONFESSION

P: Almighty God, we confess the sin of our separation from You. We have blamed You for hiding from us, rather than admitting we have failed to see You in the thousands of ways You reveal Yourself to us every day.

C: **We have not called on You, and we have not listened to Your call to us. Without You, we have become tiny**

islands of self-concern. Our links with the rest of Your children are stretched and broken.

P: O God, we long for that loving community in which Your reign is acknowledged and your purposes are served.

A: Move us to that place, we pray; in Jesus' name. Amen.

ASSURANCE OF PARDON *1 Corinthians 1:3-4, 8-9*

P: Paul wrote, "Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. I give thanks to my God always for you because of the grace of God that has been given you in Christ Jesus. He will also strengthen you to the end, so that you may be blameless on the day of our Lord Jesus Christ. God is faithful; by him you were called into the fellowship of his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord."

Grace is unmerited love which we receive from God, especially known to us in the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. He makes us without blemish before God, righteous in God's sight, so Paul could say we may be blameless on the Day of the Lord. That is forgiveness of sins and entry into the heavenly kingdom; by God's grace we are forgiven and given the Spirit of new creation within us to live lives showing forth the same grace God shows us. Will you join me in saying aloud in praise . . .

All: Thanks be to God! Alleluia! Amen!

HYMN "Awake, Awake, and Greet the New Morn"



1. A - wake! a - wake, and greet the new morn, For
 2. To us, to all in sor - row and fear, Em -
 3. In dark - est night his com - ing shall be, When
 4. Re - joice, re - joice, take heart in the night, Though



an - gels her - ald its dawn - ing, Sing out your joy, for
 man - u - el comes a - sing - ing, His hum - ble song is
 all the world is de - spair - ing, As morn - ing light so
 dark the win - ter and cheer - less, The ris - ing sun shall



soon he is born, Be - hold! the Child of our long - ing.
 qui - et and near, Yet fills the earth with its ring - ing;
 qui - et and free, So warm and gen - tle and car - ing.
 crown you with light, Be strong and lov - ing and fear - less;



Come as a ba - by weak and poor, To bring all hearts to -
 Mu - sic to heal the bro - ken soul And hymns of lov - ing
 Then shall the mute break forth in song, The lame shall leap in
 Love be our song and love our prayer, And love, our end - less



geth - er, He o - pens wide the heav'n - ly door And
 kind - ness, The thun - der of his an - thems roll To
 won - der, The weak be raised a - bove the strong, And
 sto - ry, May God fill ev - 'ry day we share, And



lives now in - side us for ev - er.
 shat - ter all ha - tred and blind - ness.
 weap - ons be bro - ken a - sun - der.
 bring us at last in - to glo - ry.

The congregation may be seated

LIGHTING THE FIRST ADVENT CANDLE

Lighting the Candle of Hope this morning and sharing some thoughts on what hope means to him is Bill Schaller.

RESPONSE: "Light One Candle to Watch for Messiah" (v. 1)



1 Light one can-dle to watch for Mes-si - ah: let the light ban-ish dark - ness.



He shall bring sal - va - tion to Is - ra - el, God ful - fills the prom - ise.

The congregation may be seated

MISSION MOMENT

PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION

From the Prophets:

Gospel:

David Iannotti

Isaiah 64:1-9

Mark 13:24-37

CHORAL ANTHEM "Emmanuel Shall Come"

by Alan Bullard

PASTORAL PRAYER AND SILENT PRAYERS

OFFERTORY

Will those who are able please stand up

OFFERTORY RESPONSE "O Come, O Come, Emmanuel" 88

Unison, with organ

1. O come, O come, Em - man - u - el, And ran - som cap - tive
 2. O come, Thou Day-spring, come and cheer Our spir - its by Thine
 3. O come, De - sire of ra - tions, bind All peo - ples in one

Is - ra - el, That mourns in lone - ly ex - ile here
 ad - vent here; Dis - perse the gloom - y clouds of night,
 heart and mind; Bid en - vy, strife and dis - cord cease;

HARMONY

Un - til the Son of God ap - pear. Re - joice! Re - joice! Em -
 And death's dark shad - ows put to flight. Re - joice! Re - joice! Em -
 Fill the whole world with heav - en's peace. Re - joice! Re - joice! Em -

UNISON

man - u - el Shall come to thee, O Is - ra - el!
 man - u - el Shall come to thee, O Is - ra - el!
 man - u - el Shall come to thee, O Is - ra - el! **A-MEN.**

The congregation may be seated

HOMILY "Eschatology 101: The End of the Age"

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 & Consecration

The Words of Institution

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

ADVENT DOXOLOGY

Unison

Praise to God, the One who made us. Praise to Christ, the soon - born Son.
the new - born

Praise the Spir - it, ev - er with us. Praise the God - head, Three in One.

Clear a path! Pre-pare the way! Ad - vent leads to Christ - mas Day!

CHARGE

P: Go forth and continue the journey of Advent. Begin your preparations, start the planning, look to the future, but in all you're doing, keep focused on the great gift, Jesus of Nazareth, the Christ Child of Bethlehem. Amen.

BENEDICTION

P: On this journey of darkness into light, may you know the presence of God. May you find quiet places in the darkness where you are companioned into places of peace and reconciliation.

C: Amen.

POSTLUDE "An Advent Proclamation" arr. P. Lehenbauer

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	Jenn Schneider
LIVESTREAM RECORDING	Beth Sterba
NURSERY ATTENDANT	Kathy Zipperer

News in the Pews

On this first day of Advent, Lord, I am eager for your coming — at Christmas, at the end of time and in the present moment. Amen.

Today is the day we start the Sunday School Advent Mission Project of collecting things for newborns and their moms which we'll bring to the Niles Township Food Pantry after the last Sunday in December. A full list of what's asked for is in the December Announcer.

Today, after worship, is also the assembly line of cookies to be counted into 3's, 'bagged and tagged' into Ziploc baggies and stickered, counted again by the # of bags, and boxed for the Night Ministry's Outreach Health Van and its teen shelter residences for the holidays. Many hands make light work; there are more things to count and box besides cookies, too! Please help if you can. Find us in the Gym.

THEN, this later-afternoon is the holiday music concert in the sanctuary by The Lakeside Flutes! It starts at 3 o'clock. The show is followed by a Jingle Mingle reception time, at 4 PM in the Gym, with hors d'oeuvres and sweets in the Memorial Room. The donation we request is \$10 (\$5 for kids over 3, under 3 are free). Pastor Richard will be looking for persons to read Scriptures on Christmas Eve, so don't wait long to let him know if you are interested and available to read at our 7:00 PM service!

As the December Announcer tells us, Christmas Eve this year is also the Fourth Sunday of Advent, which service will be 10 AM Sunday, December 24th. Christmas Eve evening worship on

Sunday the 24th will be at 7:00 PM with a Choral Anthem, the Lord's Supper, lessons, carols, a homily and closing candlelight. There is no service on Christmas Day, and a lay-participant service without Pastor Richard will be held at 10 AM on Sunday, December 31st!

Last call for Poinsettia Orders- there are still some available!

Find the form in this bulletin. Orders must be received by **December 5th** and there are limited amounts this year.

Please donate to the Holiday Meals program at the Jewel at Village Crossing Shopping Center in Niles. We provide a full holiday dinner for needy 4-6 people for Christmas. All you must do is donate at the register to their holiday meal program. While you're at it, shop there and support them, they've been doing this for many years and we are so grateful to be the only beneficiary!!

Change in 2024 Offering Envelopes - Due to the increase in online giving, we are downsizing our offering envelopes starting with the 2024 offering envelopes. If you've been using your envelopes you will still continue to receive them, and the number will be changed due to the downsize. We will have a limited amount of extras in the event you would like them and were taken off the list, or for newer folks. For specific holidays like Lent, Easter, Thanksgiving and Christmas we will provide special envelopes in the pews for those who do not already have them in your offering envelopes. Envelopes will be available by 12/15 in the Narthex, we will update you when they have arrived. Please speak to anyone on the Board of Finance with questions and thanks so much!

The Nominating Committee is at work asking members to consider staying on a Board, or coming onto a Board, or becoming an Officer of the Church. Please do pray about the request; there

is a reason you were thought of to approach. It is always an honor to serve God in these ways, and we do need folks to help carry on the labors the Church!

Cub Scouts Pack #85 of Skokie meets this Tuesday night at St. Peter's from 6:30 to 7:30.

Pastor will be attending the monthly meeting of the Niles Township Clergy Forum meeting this coming Wednesday at 8:30 AM. Then on Thursday morning he'll meet with the CMA's Cluster 1 in Evanston until past Noon.

Our People

Winter is coming! It's a good time to buy a plot at our St. Peter's U.C.C. Cemetery. See Kathy Zipperer to get the ball rolling.

Happy birthday! Celebrating birthdays this week are Louie Lopez, Peggy Reins, Mary Ann Kuehn and Drew Ryan! Celebrating an Anniversary is Nancy & Phillip Lindroth. God's blessings to all!

According to the schedule, next weekend's lector is Peter Svenson and the Nursery attendant is Laurie Mitchell.

Today's Call to Confession and Prayer of Confession are reprinted of United Church Press from Led by Love, by Lavon Bayler. Copyright 1996 by The United Church Press.

There will be a Coffee Hour after worship next Sunday, December 10th.

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! See inside the bulletin's front cover for details on how to donate.

Mini Food Pantry food needed!! Donations accepted during office hours or on Sundays; leave it on the shelves by the offices and thank you so much!

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.

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!

POINSETTIAS

Orders are now being taken for Christmas

Poinsettias. This years' colors are Red and Marble. See below for details on each. To place an order, please fill in the form below, include payment and drop it off at the office, mail it to St Peter's, or place it in the collection plate on Sunday morning. *The deadline for ordering is Tuesday, December 5th, 2023.* The plants will be delivered to the church in time to decorate the sanctuary on Christmas Eve. Please take your plants after Christmas Eve worship if possible.



Name:	Phone #:	
In Honor Of:	In Memory Of:	

Quantity	Color	Price	Total
	Red (6-½) Single (12 available)	\$16.00	
	Marble (6-½) Single (6 available)	\$16.00	
Grand Total			



MISSION MOMENTS

December 3, 2023

First Sunday of Advent (Year B)

Psalm 80:1-7, 17-19

Where Are You, God?

This is the first Sunday of Advent, the season when we set time aside to express the human longing for God to be right here with us. There are many moods in this season. Some of us are too busy and some of us are too lonely. Some of us take joy in all that there is, some of us grieve all that is lost. Some of us find comfort in the same story told a new way each year, some of us just want to hurry along to the turning of the year. Some of us find deep peace in the rituals of this season, and some of us feel very anxious. And many of us feel all these things! On each of our Advent Sundays, we are invited to sink deeply into our spiritual lives with a time of devotion and contemplation, knowing that God meets us exactly where we are - busy and lonely, joyful and grieving, comfortable and hurried, peaceful and anxious.

Give us life, and we will call on your name. / Restore us, O God:
Let your face shine, that we may be saved. Psalm 80:18b-19

First, read the focus scripture for this day.

Read it again, more slowly, perhaps even out loud.

Now read it a third time.

What are the questions or images that come to mind?
Here are some to get you started. You may have others.

-With one voice, the people call for life, meaning that they have felt in some way dead or numb to the world and to God. Have you or your community ever felt far from God or God's purpose for you? What was that like? Remember that people in all times and places have had seasons of feeling far from God, but that did not stop them from seeking God's face.

-The people cry out to be restored, brought back to life. What would it look like to be restored or renewed? What is your most audacious hope for the future of yourself or your faith community? Make it your intention, in these next weeks until the coming of the Christ Child, to imagine without limits all the good that God has in store for you.

-The people ask for God's face to shine upon them. Remember now a time that you felt God's presence very close and near. Where were you? What did it look, sound, smell like? Who were you with? It might be a time and place very far away; it might be the place where you are right now. Allow yourself to bask in the warmth of God's close companionship.

-The people ask to be saved. Some traditions proclaim the idea of being "saved" more than others. Does the notion of being saved resonate with your spirituality? Why or why not? Is there another word you would use in place of this one?

End your time with this prayer: God, sometimes we are too busy to find you. Sometimes we are lonely, and you feel far away. Wherever we are, come near to us we pray. Amen.

ISAIAH 64:1-9

“O that you would tear open the heavens and come down,
so that the mountains would quake at your presence—
as when fire kindles brushwood
and the fire causes water to boil—
to make your name known to your adversaries,
so that the nations might tremble at your presence!
When you did awesome deeds that we did not expect,
you came down, the mountains quaked at your presence.
From ages past no one has heard,
no ear has perceived,
no eye has seen any God besides you,
who works for those who wait for him.
You meet those who gladly do right,
those who remember you in your ways.
But you were angry, and we sinned;
because you hid yourself we transgressed.
We have all become like one who is unclean,
and all our righteous deeds are like a filthy cloth.
We all fade like a leaf,
and our iniquities, like the wind, take us away.
There is no one who calls on your name,
or attempts to take hold of you;
for you have hidden your face from us,
and have delivered us into the hand of our iniquity.

Yet, O LORD, you are our Father;
 we are the clay, and you are our potter;
 we are all the work of your hand.
 Do not be exceedingly angry, O LORD,
 and do not remember iniquity forever.
 Now consider, we are all your people.”

MARK 13:24-37

Jesus said, “²⁴“But in those days, after that suffering,
 the sun will be darkened,
 and the moon will not give its light,
²⁵ and the stars will be falling from heaven,
 and the powers in the heavens will be shaken.

²⁶Then they will see ‘the Son of Man coming in clouds’ with great power
 and glory. ²⁷Then he will send out the angels, and gather his elect from the
 four winds, from the ends of the earth to the ends of heaven.

²⁸“From the fig tree learn its lesson: as soon as its branch becomes tender
 and puts forth its leaves, you know that summer is near. ²⁹So also, when you
 see these things taking place, you know that he is near, at the very gates.

³⁰Truly I tell you, this generation will not pass away until all these things
 have taken place. ³¹Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not
 pass away.

³²“But about that day or hour no one knows, neither the angels in heaven,
 nor the Son, but only the Father. ³³Beware, keep alert; for you do not know
 when the time will come. ³⁴It is like a man going on a journey, when he
 leaves home and puts his slaves in charge, each with his work, and
 commands the doorkeeper to be on the watch. ³⁵Therefore, keep awake—for

you do not know when the master of the house will come, in the evening, or at midnight, or at cockcrow, or at dawn,³⁶ or else he may find you asleep when he comes suddenly.³⁷ And what I say to you I say to all: Keep awake.”