

# Welcome

ORDER OF WORSHIP FOR

**Sunday,  
January 7, 2024  
10:00 AM**

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**Epiphany**

**Baptism of  
Christ**





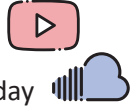
# Welcome to Worship!

**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/merchpot/display/cpPage?merchantid=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](mailto:revlanford@gmail.com)

In the office Wed-Sat (times vary) and Sundays

**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](https://www.facebook.com/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 7, 2024 at 10:00am  
First Sunday after Epiphany  
Baptism of Christ**

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

**PRELUDE**      "O Morning Star, How Bright and Fair"

**THE RINGING OF THE BELLS**

**ANNOUNCEMENTS**

Peggy Reins

*Will those who are able please stand up*

**CALL TO WORSHIP**

P: We have been through Advent and the birth of Jesus.

**C: Christmastide came to an end late last week.**

P: Yesterday was the feast of the Epiphany.

**C: The traditional marking of the appearance of the magi.**

P: And suddenly we are at the baptism of Jesus Christ!

**C: God is about to take us on another journey, another adventure.**

P: In Jesus' life story, may we also find ours.

**C: This is right, for it is in Him we find and have our true life. Let us worship God!**

# OPENING RESPONSE "Sing Hallelujah to the Lord"

SSB #1 (w/repeat)

*Descant*

Sing hal-le-lu-jah to the Lord.

*Unison*

Sing hal-le-lu-jah to the Lord. Sing hal-le-

Sing hal-le-lu-jah, hal-le-lu-

lu-jah to the Lord. Sing hal-le-lu-jah, sing hal-le-

1 2

jah; sing hal-le-lu-jah to the Lord.

1 2

lu-jah. Sing hal-le-lu-jah to the Lord.

## CALL TO CONFESSION

P: A Star Trek character once opined, “Times change; man never changes.”

**C: That was a cynical comment, but he was right; we are always in need of God’s mercy and grace even when we do change for the better.**

P: We change for the better through the work of the Spirit around us and within us; let us clear the path for the Spirit to work more fully in us again, and confess our missing the mark.

## PRAYER OF CONFESSION

P: Isaiah bids God’s people to rise and shine, for our light has come. We confess to a spiritual malaise which hears the call but too often is so moribund or even bored that we fail to rise in hope, joy or even faith! Forgive us and heal us of our spiritual ennui and dullness in the face of Your Christ.

**C: Forgive us and heal us of the times we have not welcomed strangers among us like the holy family welcomed the unfamiliar wise ones from the East.**

P: Forgive and heal us of the lack of reflection we have done in relation to the fact that we were (if we were) baptized. Can we bear witness to what it means to us to have been baptized in the name of the Triune God? Lord have mercy.

**A: For these sins of commission and omission we ask your cleansing pardon and transformative power, in Jesus’ name. Amen.**

**ASSURANCE OF PARDON** *Titus 2:11, 13, 14*

P: “For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation to all . . . while we wait for the blessed hope and the manifestation of the glory of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ. He it is who gave himself for us that he might redeem us from all iniquity and purify for himself a people of his own who are zealous for good deeds.”

Christ gave himself for us, we give ourselves to him in selfless praise and seeking to live lives of love like his. In his name, our sins are forgiven and we can be changed by the Spirit of resurrection. Anyone here who wants to call out their thanksgiving for this priceless gift?

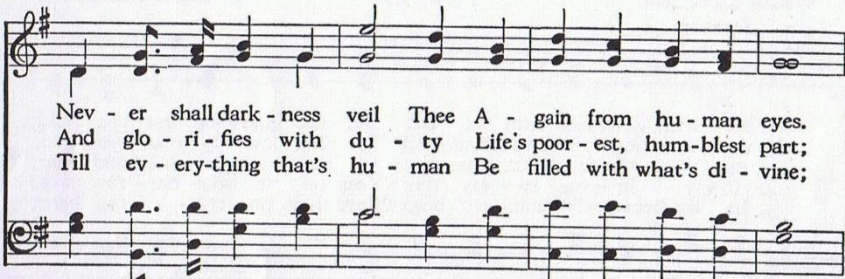
**All: That would be us. Thanks be to God! Alleluia! Amen.**

## HYMN "Light of the World, We Hail Thee" #124 (vv. 1,3)

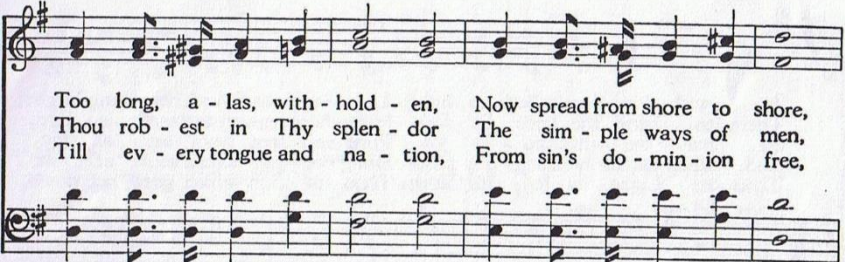
*Joyfully*



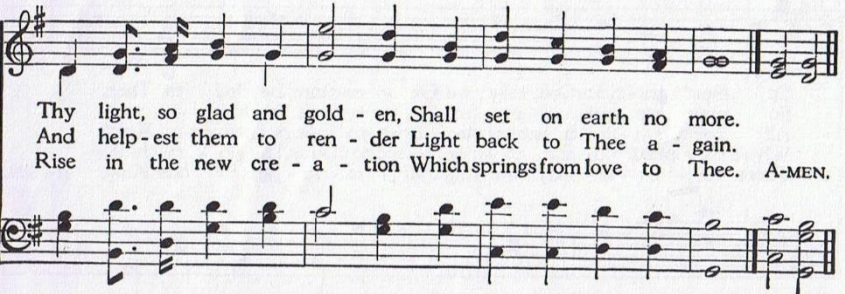
1. Light of the world, we hail Thee Flush - ing the east - ern skies;  
 2. Light of the world, Thy beau - ty Steals in - to ev - ery heart  
 3. Light of the world, il - lu - mine This dark - ened land of Thine,



Nev - er shall dark - ness veil Thee A - gain from hu - man eyes.  
 And glo - ri - fies with du - ty Life's poor - est, hum - blest part;  
 Till ev - ery - thing that's, hu - man Be filled with what's di - vine;



Too long, a - las, with - hold - en, Now spread from shore to shore,  
 Thou rob - est in Thy splen - dor The sim - ple ways of men,  
 Till ev - ery tongue and na - tion, From sin's do - min - ion free,



Thy light, so glad and gold - en, Shall set on earth no more.  
 And help - est them to ren - der Light back to Thee a - gain.  
 Rise in the new cre - a - tion Which springs from love to Thee. A - MEN.

*The congregation may be seated*

**PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION**

Marcia Hilliard

From the Prophets:

Isaiah 60:1-6

Gospel:

Matthew 2:1-12

**CHORAL ANTHEM** “Shine, Jesus Shine”

**GOSPEL**

Mark 1:4-11

**RESPONSE**

Gloria Creator (tune #493)

**Glory to the Creator,  
The Christ, the Holy Spirit,  
Three in One!**

**As it was in the beginning,  
Is now and ever shall be,  
World without end! Amen, amen.**

*The congregation may be seated*

**INTRODUCTION TO THE OFFERING**

**OFFERTORY**



*Will those who are able please stand up*

## OFFERTORY RESPONSE "We Three Kings" SSB #37 (v.1)

*In unison*

1 We three kings of O - ri - ent are, Bear - ing gifts we trav - erse a - far  
 2 Born a king on Beth - le - hem's plain, Gold I bring to crown him a - gain,  
 3 Frank - in - cense to of - fer have I, In - cense owns a de - i - ty nigh;  
 4 Myrrh is mine; its bit - ter per - fume Breathes a life of gath - er - ing gloom;  
 5 Glo - rious now be - hold him a - rise, King and God and Sac - ri - fice;

Field and foun - tain, moor and moun - tain, Fol - low - ing yon - der star.  
 King for - ev - er, ceas - ing nev - er O - ver us all to reign.  
 Prayer and prais - ing, all men rais - ing, Wor - ship him, God on high.  
 Sor - rowing, sigh - ing, bleed - ing, dy - ing, Sealed in the stone - cold tomb.  
 Al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia! Sounds through the earth and skies.

**REFRAIN**

O star of won - der, star of night, Star with roy - al beau - ty bright,

West - ward lead - ing, still pro - ceed - ing, Guide us to thy per - fect light.

The congregation may be seated

## PASTORAL AND SILENT PRAYERS

HOMILY “On the Road with the Magi”

### 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 Prayer of Consecration

RESPOND  
153

Eat of This Bread

The musical score is written in 3/4 time with a key signature of two flats (B-flat and E-flat). It consists of four staves of music. The lyrics are: 'Eat of this bread, drink of this wine; come and be fed, come now and dine. Eat of this bread, drink of this wine; here all are fed, here all may dine.' The chords are: Cm, Eb, Ab, Ddim, Gm, Cm, Fm, Fm7, Bb7sus, Bb, Eb, Ab, Ddim, Gm, Cm, Fm, Bb, Eb.

Eat of this bread, drink of this wine;  
come and be fed, come now and dine.  
Eat of this bread, drink of this wine;  
here all are fed, here all may dine.

### 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*

**HYMN** "Down by the Jordan"

*Please sing to the tune "Praise Ye the Lord, the Almighty"*

**Down by the Jordan, a prophet named John was baptizing,**

**Preaching a message the people found bold and surprising:**

**"God will forgive! Show that you'll change how you live! Surely God's new day is rising!"**

**There by the river, the crowd came with great expectation:**

**"Are you God's Chosen One, sent here to rescue our nation?"**

**"No!" John replied. "He who is mightier than I Judges and offers salvation."**

**Jesus, you went to be baptized along with the others, Taking your place among sinners, God's lost sons and daughters.**

**Then with great love, God's Spirit came as a dove! Your work began in those waters.**

**Here in the Church, we are baptized and filled with God's Spirit.**

**Freed and forgiven, we're welcomed with joy! Can you hear it?**

**This is God's sign! This is how God says, "You're mine!" Let's take the good news and share it!**

*Text: Copyright © 2000 by Carolyn Winfrey Gillette. All rights reserved. Included in **Songs of Grace: New Hymns for God and Neighbor** (Upper Room Books, 2009). This book includes a permission note for those who own this book to use this hymn (along with the 76 other new hymns in the book) in their local church's worship services. Rev. Lanford owns the book.*

**CHARGE**

- P: Go in peace;
- C: Keep the faith;**
- P: Love one another;
- C: Serve the Lord.**

**BENEDICTION**

- P: May God be beside you to accompany you,  
*Right: Within you to give you peace and power,*  
*Left: Above you to watch over you,*
- P: Beneath you to catch you,  
*Choir: And in front of you to show you the way.*
- A: Amen!

**POSTLUDE** Selected

*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.*

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**FOR WORSHIP TODAY**

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MINISTER	Rev. Richard Lanford
MUSIC DIRECTOR	Ben Westphal
DEACON	Jenn Schneider
LIVESTREAM RECORDING	Beth Sterba
NURSERY ATTENDANT	Rita McMahon

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# News in the Pews

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**Welcome to worship**, dear family of God. As we celebrate the Epiphany [and/or the Baptism of Our Lord], may God enlighten us all. We wish you a blessed 2024!

**About Communion:** We are back to passing the plates, but with the pre-filled, wafer-topped cups in the trays that are passed, for you to take. We practice Open Communion, where it does not matter what your denominational background or identity is; you are welcome to the Lord's Table here. We do ask that our St. Peter's kids have taken the Communicants Class first before partaking. Partake with the Pastor when he prompts us, first with the bread and then with the cup. You'll want to get a little head start pulling the wafer-tab up and away from the plastic cup. When done, please place the empty cup in the little cup holder rack on the rear of the pew in front of you.

**Annual Reports are due tomorrow!**

**There will be a special meeting after worship today** of the Church Council members who met as the Council last December 17th.

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**The Board of Elders is also scheduled to meet** after worship this morning.

**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!

**Moana Jr LIVE** - Our very own Ricky Riley will be narrating the Special Gifts Theatre's production of Moana Jr., a fun show for all ages!! Special Gifts Theater is not for profit that helps kids like Ricky with intellectual disabilities. Click this link for tickets <https://specialgiftstheatre.org/tickets-for-upcoming-events/> and come give him our support! The LIVE performances are **Saturday, Feb. 3rd & Sunday, Feb 4th at 2PM**, located at Ebinger School, 7350 W. Pratt Ave. Chicago. Talk to Anna Riley [annadriley@gmail.com](mailto:annadriley@gmail.com) for more info.

**2024 Envelopes available!** To everyone who's getting an envelope, you'll find them in the Memorial Room for pickup. If you don't see yours or want a set, let Chad or a BOF member know.

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**SAVERS FUNDRIVE has begun!** Softgoods like clothing, shoes, belts, hats, purses, linens, stuffed animals and more will be collected during the month of January through Feb. 3<sup>rd</sup>. There will be a designated spot on and/or near the stage for collection. Bring during office hours or on Sundays. As well, there will be a date to be announced soon for the public to drop off on a specific weekend date and time.

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## *Our People*

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**The Nominating Committee meets** this Thursday, January 11th at 7 PM over Zoom.

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

**Chicago Rocks and Minerals** is scheduled to have use of our Memorial Room this coming Saturday the 13th from 6 to 10 PM.

**Thanks again to all who donated to or served at our turn to serve a week ago yesterday** at the Community Kitchen of A Just Harvest!

**Thanks to Ben and all of you who** created and helped make last Sunday's worship time special!

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**Next Sunday the 14th will be a Board for Christian Education meeting** after worship; there will be a Micah 6:8 Committee meeting over Zoom that evening at 6:30 PM.

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**CHURCH LEADERSHIP**

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PRESIDENT	Peggy Reins
VICE-PRESIDENT	Beth Lanford
TREASURER	Chad McCoy
SECRETARY	Annie Noorts
FINANCIAL SECRETARY	Maria Altmayer

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*Regular Reminders!*

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**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.

**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.

**Pastor's podcast is available wherever you listen to podcasts!** Just type in "The Redheaded Preacher" and you'll find us!

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## **MISSION MOMENTS**

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**January 7, 2024**

**The Baptism of Christ (First Sunday after Epiphany)**

**Mark 1:4-11**

**Defining Moments**

“Every time you listen with great attentiveness to the voice that calls you the Beloved, you will discover within yourself a desire to hear that voice longer and more deeply. It is like discovering a well in the desert. Once you have touched wet ground, you want to dig deeper.” -Henri Nouwen, *Life of the Beloved: Spiritual Living in a Secular World*.

A Dutch priest interested in the intersection of theology and psychology, Henri Nouwen was born in January 1932 and moved to the United States in the early 1960s. In the 1970s and into the 1980s, he taught at Yale and Harvard where many progressive seminary students received their education in those years. Nouwen’s teaching about the human need for connection with God and one another, and the necessity for creating peace in individuals as well as in communities and the world, was influential to a generation of pastors, many of whom went on to serve at United Church of Christ churches.

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Nouwen was deeply moved by the work of L'Arch communities, which are Christian communities formed of people both with and without developmental disabilities, and at the end of his life he left his relatively prestigious and well-paying career to live in a L'Arch community himself.

Nouwen wrote widely about this life and experience. But although he never spoke publicly about this, Nouwen revealed in his letters and in conversations with friends that he knew he was gay. Because of his generation and circumstances, the reality of Nouwen being closeted caused him pain and loneliness. And yet, his writings about the importance of creating beloved community taught countless student pastors who went on to lead movements to create Open and Affirming United Church of Christ congregations, which welcome all.

It is likely that the church where you are worshiping today was at one time led by a pastor who was taught by Henri Nouwen, who passed away in 1996. He was never able to live openly as full self, and for that this generation may grieve. Yet, his life opened doors for countless others and the impact of his teaching is still being felt today and for that, all who were touched by his life can rejoice.

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**Isaiah 60:1-6**

Arise, shine; for your light has come,

and the glory of the LORD has risen upon you.

For darkness shall cover the earth, and thick darkness the peoples;

but the LORD will arise upon you, and his glory will appear over you.

Nations shall come to your light, and kings to the brightness of your dawn.

Lift up your eyes and look around; they all gather together, they come to you;

your sons shall come from far away,

and your daughters shall be carried on their nurses' arms.

Then you shall see and be radiant; your heart shall thrill and rejoice,

because the abundance of the sea shall be brought to you,

the wealth of the nations shall come to you.

A multitude of camels shall cover you, the young camels of Midian and Ephah;

all those from Sheba shall come.

They shall bring gold and frankincense, and shall proclaim the praise of the LORD.

**Matthew 2:1-12**

“In the time of King Herod, after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea, wise men from the East came to Jerusalem, asking, "Where is the child who has been born king of the Jews? For we observed his star at its rising, and have come to pay him homage."

When King Herod heard this, he was frightened, and all Jerusalem with him; and calling together all the chief priests and scribes of the people, he inquired of them where the Messiah was to be born.

They told him, "In Bethlehem of Judea; for so it has been written by the prophet:

'And you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, are by no means least among the rulers of Judah; for from you shall come a ruler who is to shepherd my people Israel.'

Then Herod secretly called for the wise men and learned from them the exact time when the star had appeared.

Then he sent them to Bethlehem, saying, "Go and search diligently for the child; and when you have found him, bring me word so that I may also go and pay him homage."

When they had heard the king, they set out; and there, ahead of them, went the star that they had seen at its rising, until it stopped over the place where the child was. When they saw that the star had stopped, they were overwhelmed with joy.

On entering the house, they saw the child with Mary his mother; and they knelt down and paid him homage. Then, opening their treasure chests, they offered him gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh. And having been warned in a dream not to return to Herod, they left for their own country by another road."

### **Mark 1:4-11**

John the baptizer appeared in the wilderness, proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. And people from the whole Judean countryside and all the people of Jerusalem were going out to him, and were baptized by him in the river Jordan, confessing their sins. Now John was clothed with camel's hair, with a leather belt around his waist, and he ate locusts and wild honey. He proclaimed, "The one who is more powerful than I is coming after me; I am not worthy to stoop down and untie the thong of his sandals. I have baptized you with water; but he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit."

In those days Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee and was baptized by John in the Jordan. And just as he was coming up out of the water, he saw the heavens torn apart and the Spirit descending like a dove on him. And a voice came from heaven, "You are my Son, the Beloved; with you I am well pleased."