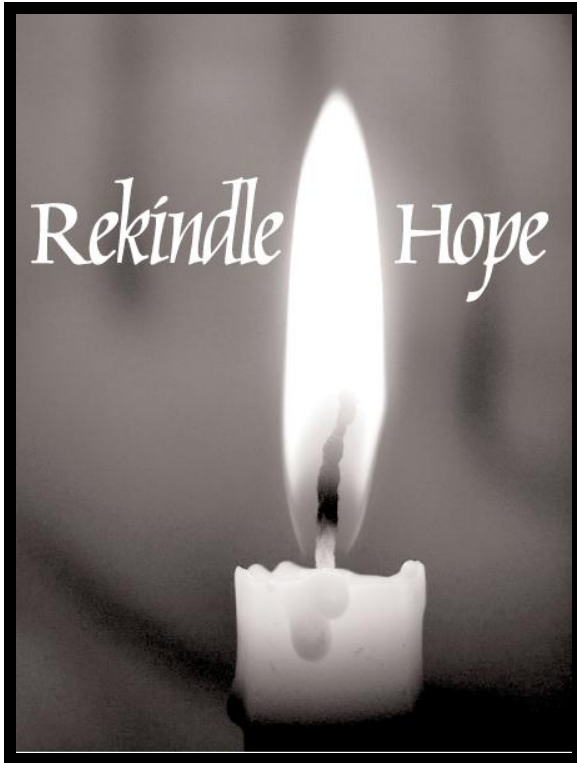


**First United Church
of Oak Park**

18 Dec 2011

Fourth Sunday of Advent



An open community united in love and justice

848 Lake Street – Oak Park, Illinois 60301

708.386.5215 www.FirstUnitedOakPark.com

Preparing for Worship

“The mystic chords of memory, stretching from every battlefield, and patriot grave, to every living heart and hearthstone all over this broad land, will yet swell the chorus of the Union, when again touched, as surely they will be, by the better angels of our nature.” – Abraham Lincoln, March 4, 1861

Gathering as God’s People

*Please stand if you are able—**Speak in unison at the bold face areas.**
Please silence cell phones.

GATHERING MUSIC *Three Carols: In Dulci Jubilo, What Is This Lovely
Fragrance, Greensleeves* Paul Manz

ADVENT CANDLE LIGHTING Dave Dallam and Gabriel Dunbar
A verse from *“Let All Mortal Flesh Keep Silence”*

King of Kings, yet born of Ma - ry, As of old on
5 Earth he stood, Lord of lords, in hu - man ves - ture,
10 In the bo - dy and the blood, He will give to all the
15 faith - - - ful His own self for heav - en - ly food.

We wait in the in-between time and listen to Mary’s words.

*After the angel Gabriel declared that Mary would bear the child of God,
Mary said to the angel,*

"How will this happen since I haven't been with a man?"

*The angel replied, "The Holy Spirit will come over you,
and the power of the Most High will overshadow you.*

Therefore, the one who is to be born will be holy.

He will be called God's Son.

Nothing is impossible for God."

Then Mary said, "I am the Lord's servant.

Let it be with me just as you have said."

(Luke 2:34-38)

We light the fourth candle to remind us that nothing is impossible for God.
God will light our way.

**We open our hearts to light from heaven,
and ask for the courage to live as God's servants.**

All of our waiting is a waiting for God.

All of our waiting is a waiting for God.

God of our hearts, we wait for you alone.

God of our hearts, we wait for you alone.

**HYMN 49*

Once in Royal David's City

IRBY

(blue hymnal)

CALL TO CONFESSION

Marylen Marty-Gentile

How can we stand in the presence of God? Let us confess those places
where we need to be emptied in order to prepare for Christ to come into
our lives.

PRAYER OF CONFESSION

**Holy One, we wait for you. We are impatient for you to come and set
things right. We are insecure with our world, fearful of crime in the
streets, and anxious about many things. We often wish you would act
according to our plans, but we refuse to listen to your guidance. We
seldom pause to consider that you are waiting for us: waiting for some
genuine act of contrition; waiting for us to repent and change; waiting
for us to listen and respond with a burning passion for your truth,
justice and mercy.**

Silence is kept.

Give us humble hearts and willing spirits to receive you as you come to us, through all the experiences of our lives. Amen.

ASSURANCE OF PARDON

This is the good news in Jesus Christ. We can stand before God, not through our own goodness, but through God's great kindness to us. Rejoice and be glad, for God come to us! Amen.

**PASSING* The peace of Christ be with you.
the **And also with you.**
PEACE Please share the peace of Christ with those around you.

OUR LIFE TOGETHER Leah Fowler

SACRAMENT for August Ray Balch
of BAPTISM Child of Nicole and Brandon Balch
 (see baptism liturgy on colored insert)

TIME for SHARING Leah Fowler

Listening for God's Word to Us

SONG of ILLUMINATION Wait for the Lord
Sing three times

Wait for the Lord, whose day is near.

Wait for the Lord: keep watch, take heart!

The image shows two staves of musical notation in G major and 3/4 time. The first staff contains the melody for the first line of the song, and the second staff contains the melody for the second line. The lyrics are written below the notes.

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A READING from the Romans 16:25-27 (NT, p. 165) Marylen Marty-Gentile
NEW TESTAMENT

A READING from the Luke 1:26-56 (NT, p. 56) Emma and Rachel Harley
GOSPEL

*HYMN 525
(blue hymnal)

Here I Am, Lord

(Choir sings verses and congregation sings chorus.)

Responding to God’s Word

OFFERTORY:

Joys Seven

Stephen Cleobury

(Please place pink prayer cards in the offering plates.)

We invite you to share gifts to the Christmas offering, which supports the Presbytery Peace Fellowship and the United Church of Christ Justice and Witness Ministries. Please use Christmas Offering envelopes in the pew racks.

The first good joy that Mary had, It was the joy of one;
To see her own son Jesus Christ When he was first her son:
When he was first her son, good man: And blessed may he be,
Both Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, To all eternity.

The next good joy that Mary had, It was the joy of two;
To see her own son Jesus Christ, To make the lame to go:
To make the lame to go, good man: And blessed may he be,
Both Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, To all eternity.

The next good joy that Mary had, It was the joy of three;
To see her own son Jesus Christ, To make the blind to see:
To make the blind to see, good man: And blessed may he be,
Both Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, To all eternity.

The next good joy that Mary had, It was the joy of four;
To see her own son Jesus Christ, To read the Bible o’er:
To read the Bible o’er, good man: And blessed may he be,
Both Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, To all eternity.

The next good joy that Mary had, It was the joy of five;
To see her own son Jesus Christ, To bring the dead alive:

To bring the dead alive, good man: And blessed may he be,
Both Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, To all eternity.

The next good joy that Mary had, It was the joy of six;
To see her own son Jesus Christ, Upon the crucifix:
Upon the crucifix, good man: And blessed may he be,
Both Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, To all eternity.

The next good joy that Mary had, It was the joy of sev'n;
To see her own son Jesus Christ, To wear the crown of heav'n:
To wear the crown of heav'n, good man: And blessed may he be,
Both Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, To all eternity.

***DOXOLOGY** Praise God from whom all blessings flow;
(Old Hundredth) Praise Christ all people here below;
Praise Holy Spirit evermore;
Praise Triune God, whom we adore. Amen.

PRAYERS of the PEOPLE
and

Rick Steele

THE LORD'S PRAYER

**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.**

Going Forth in Dedication and Service

***HYMN 48**
(blue hymnal)

Lo, How a Rose E'er Blooming

ES IST EIN' ROS'

***CHARGE and BENEDICTION**

SENDING MUSIC

In Dulci Jubilo

J. S. Bach

Christmas Eve Services, Sat., Dec. 24

5:00 pm Christmas Pageant and Communion, led by our children and youth

8:00 pm Christmas Eve Communion Service with guest musicians

11:00 pm Christmas Eve Communion Service with the sanctuary choir, liturgical dance and young adult readers

Please arrive 15 minutes early for a musical prelude at each service.

Christmas Day Service, Sun., Dec. 25

(no education classes)

11:00 am Christmas Worship – “What Child Is This?”

Luke 2:15-19

New Year’s Day Service, Sun., Jan. 1

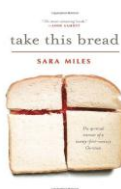
9:30 am “Spiritual Practices in the New Year”

led by Julie in the Chapel

11:00 am New Year’s Day Worship

The Church offices will be closed on Monday, Dec. 26, Friday, Dec. 30, and Monday, Jan. 2.

Welcome to First United



Are you new to First United? We’d like to give you a gift – no strings attached. A greeter or a pastor can give you a copy of the book *Take This Bread*, which is a story of someone who came to Christian faith as she engaged in service with poor and vulnerable members of her community. We hope this story will be a blessing to you as you grow in your own relationship with God, and we’re very glad you have joined us for worship today!

All are invited to coffee hour immediately after worship in the lounge.

Our Council priority is to build relationships that Bless, Challenge and Transform... with God, with each other and with the world.

Our Vision for the Future has three core themes:

1. Moving from words to God-pleasing actions in our relationship with God.
2. Moving from individualism to intimacy in our relationship with others.
3. Moving from providing charity to changing structures of injustice in our relationship to the world.

We are a union church of the Presbyterian Church (USA) and the United Church of Christ. We seek to be an inclusive expression of Christ's body celebrating our diversity while finding our unity in Christ. We are a "More Light"/"Open and Affirming" congregation, committed to the full inclusion of GLBT people in membership and ministry, and advocating for full inclusion in political life.

Age-appropriate worship activities for children are available as you enter the Sanctuary. Children kindergarten age and younger may leave after Time for Sharing and go to Rooms 14 and 15.

Jesus Doll A Jesus doll is on the front pew near the worship baskets. Jesus is available for a child who may want to take him and sit with him during worship. Your child may need some comfort. Your child may want to tell Jesus a secret or story. Jesus is there for your child, just as Jesus is present for us.

Worship with Your Child Megan Aeschleman is pouring water into the font. Most churches don't have rivers running through their sanctuaries, so many, like First United, have fonts, beautiful basins that are stand-ins for the River Jordan where Jesus was baptized by John the Baptist. Make sure your children can see today's baptism so that they can see August become part of the church, one of God's beloved children. Welcome, August!

During worship, please help reduce distraction by using restrooms located downstairs under the Lake Street entrance. Please use the side aisles and rear exits except for emergencies.

Ushers will close the doors to the sanctuary at 11:00 a.m. and ask latecomers to wait to enter until the first hymn. We wish to reduce distractions from the service for worshipers who are in the sanctuary.

Please contact one of the pastors if you have a prayer request, hospitalization or a personal or spiritual concern.

Contact our Church Council with questions or suggestions about our life together by e-mailing council@firstunitedoakpark.com.

The Deacons of the month are Pauline Geary and Natalie Nemeth. They will be available in the lounge for joys and concerns. You may send the Deacons a note by emailing deacons@firstunitedoakpark.com.

Today at First United

TODAY'S OFFERTORY ANTHEM is by Stephen Cleobury, Director of Music at King's College, Cambridge.

THE PRAYER OF CONFESSION AND ASSURANCE OF PARDON come from *Touch Holiness*, edited by Ruth Duck and Maren Tirabassi.

CHRISTMAS OFFERING Envision world peace! Your gift to our Christmas Offering will support the Presbyterian Peace Fellowship and the United Church of Christ Justice and Witness Ministries, as well as our own peace and justice work here at First United. Please use the Christmas offering envelopes mailed to your home or those in the pew racks.

ALTERNATIVE CHRISTMAS STORE This is your last day to shop in the Church lounge. If the ACS is new to you, 100% of our proceeds are returned to the local community and world wide organizations we sponsor, including donations made to Church World Service and the

Walk-in-Ministry, as well as the artisans and fair trade organizations that provide the products on our tables. We ask you to rethink your shopping, shop at the ACS, and to support our mission partners for another year. As our congregation continues its focus on relationships that bless, challenge and transform, please help to transform the lives of others, with purchases/donations from the ACS this year! Selling hours are 9:30-10:55am, and 12noon - 12:30pm.

COOKIE BAKE ORDERS ARE READY TODAY! Please pick yours up in the lounge from our FUSH bakers. Thabks for your support!
Sent from my Verizon Wireless BlackBerry

2011 FINAL PLEDGE PAYMENTS So far we are having a successful year at staying in the "black" but we are counting on members to fulfill their pledges. If you are not sure of your pledge balance please call the church office or send an e-mail to Julie O'Shea at financial@firstunitedoakpark.com.

Lord Jesus Christ, You are the light of the world.
Fill our minds with your peace, And our hearts with your love. Amen.
- Marcus Borg

Upcoming Events

ADVENT DEVOTIONAL SERVICES on Thursday evenings Dec. 22 and 29 we will gather for simple, peaceful worship from 7:00 until 7:45 in the chapel. The services will be very simple, with singing and prayer, with guitars, piano, percussion and strings, and with a mixture of Advent hymns and praise and worship songs. In the midst of a hectic and complicated time on the calendar, this will be a time make space for calm and community. Join us! If you have questions, or want to join the group that will play the music, contact Rob – rleveridge@firstunitedoakpark.com.

SPIRITUAL RETREAT JAN. 7, 2012 Take time to discern your values and re-examine priorities. You are invited to a spiritual retreat on Sat., Jan. 7, at Dominican University's Priory Campus, led by Julie R. Harley.

“Always We Begin Again” is our theme from 9:30 am to 3:00 pm. Register by emailing jrh@firstunitedoakpark.com. See the blue bulletin insert, which also describes our Jan. 8 Epiphany Concert.

FRANK YAMADA GUEST LECTURE ON JAN. 8 We welcome Frank Yamada, president of McCormick Theological Seminary, as our guest teacher for Adult Ed on Jan. 8, and also as our preacher that day. Dr. Yamada’s class is called “The Difference Culture Makes in Biblical Interpretation.” The class will be held in the chapel at 9:30 am. He will lead us through contributions from African American, Latino/a, and Asian American readers of the biblical text. We will also explore what it means to engage the Bible across differences of culture and race/ethnicity, and religion.

GOV. QUINN TO MEET WITH COMMUNITY RENEWAL SOCIETY SUPPORTERS We would like to bring 50 members of First United to a Martin Luther King Day Assembly from 9:30 am to noon on Sat., Jan. 16, at Kingdom Baptist Church in Austin (301 N. Central Ave.). Gov. Quinn and other state legislators will be there to hear from our youth and adults about justice priorities, including education funding reform, affordable rental housing and job opportunities for ex-offenders. To register, see Sarah or Erin Harmon in the lounge or contact Julie (jrh@firstunitedoakpark.com). Thank you to those who signed postcards to invite the governor; it worked!

WOMEN’S RETREAT FEB. 3-5, 2012, “COME OUT AND PLAY” Sign up for our annual Women’s Retreat at Siena Center in Racine, WI. Rev. Mieke Vandersall, Director of Presbyterian Welcome in New York, will lead an exploration of the theology of play. The retreat begins on Friday night and ends at 1 pm Sunday, and it is held jointly with Lincoln Park Presbyterian Church. Cost is \$160 and financial scholarships are available by contacting Leah Fowler. For questions or registration info, contact Jackie Eckholm at 708-386-5478 or jmeckholm@comcast.net.

Weekly Calendar

SUN., DEC. 18

Alternative Christmas Store
9–11 am & 12 –1:30 pm
FUSH Cookie Pickup 9 – 12 noon
Pageant Rehearsal 12 noon
Christmas Eve Dancers Rehearsal 2
pm
FUSH/FUJI Youth Groups 6 pm

MON., DEC. 19

Nominating Committee 6:30 pm

TUE., DEC. 20

Library Comm. Work Session 6 pm
Council Meeting 7:30 pm
Families Anonymous 7:30 pm

WED., DEC. 21

Adult Choir 7 pm
Cluster Tutoring Board Mtg 7 pm
AA Marion Group 8 pm

THUR., DEC. 22

Cluster Tutoring Pizza Party 6:30 pm
Advent Music and Prayer Service 7 pm
Shawl Ministry 7 pm

FRI., DEC. 23

Peace Prayer Vigil 7 pm

SAT., DEC. 24 – CHRISTMAS EVE

Inner Peace World Peace 8:30 am
Worship – Pageant – Communion 5 pm
Worship – Communion 5 pm
Worship – Candlelight– Communion 11
pm

SUN., DEC. 25 – CHRISTMAS DAY

Worship 11 am

Julie R. Harley, *Lead Pastor*, jrh@firstunitedoakpark.com

Leah Fowler, *Associate Pastor*, lfowler@firstunitedoakpark.com

Rob Leveridge, *Associate Pastor*, rleveridge@firstunitedoakpark.com

Marylen Marty-Gentile, *Director of Children & Family Ministries*,
marylen@firstunitedoakpark.com

Rick Steele, *Pastoral Intern*, rick.steele@4Rmanagement.com

William Chin, *Director of Music Ministries*, bill@firstunitedoakpark.com

Michael Surratt, *Interim Organist*, msurratt@sbcglobal.net

Adam Wilson, *Office Manager*, office@firstunitedoakpark.com

Fred Henders, *Operations Manager*, operations@firstunitedoakpark.com

Julie O'Shea, *Financial Manager*, financial@firstunitedoakpark.com

Joan White, *Nursery School Director*, jwhite@firstunitedschool.com

Church phone – 708.386.5215 / Church fax – 708.386.7480

Office e-mail – office@firstunitedoakpark.com

Church Office Hours: Monday - Friday 8am – 4pm

Walk-In Ministry Hours: Monday – Saturday 10am-11am

Food Pantry Hours: Sat. 9-noon, Wed. 3:30-5pm except 1st Wednesdays 7-8:30pm