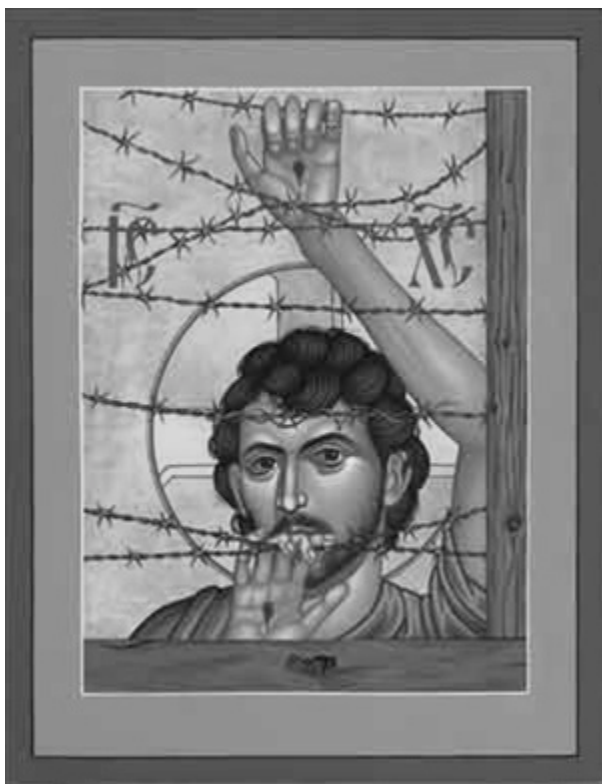


First United Church of Oak Park

20 Nov 2011



An open community united in love and justice
848 Lake Street - Oak Park, Illinois 60301
708.386.5215
www.FirstUnitedOakPark.com

Preparing for Worship

GATHERING MUSIC Now Thank We All Our God (two settings) J. S.
BACH

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

Please silence cell phones.

Gathering as God's People

*CALL to WORSHIP

Rob Leveridge

We come, for God gathers us here, with that community called faith:

where the hungry are served first, where the thirsty drink life's water.

We come, for God welcomes us here into that home called grace:

**where the naked are clothed in robes of hope;
where the stranger is embraced as the long-lost prodigal.**

We come, for God reunites us here,
sisters and brothers in that family called love:

**where the imprisoned model justice,
where the sick are cradled in God's peace.**

*HYMN 551

WINDSOR
(blue hymnal)

Come, Ye Thankful People, Come

ST. GEORGE'S

CALL to CONFESSION

Leveridge

Rob

They are the promises stretching back into the dim recesses of time, yet as new as this very moment. When we lose our way, God searches for us until we are found. When we hurt others, God brings healing to all. When we sin, God forgives us. Let us hold these promises close to our hearts, as we confess those things we try to hide.

PRAYER of CONFESSION

We stock the food pantries,
but brush aside those who hunger for friendship.
We give our hand-me-downs away,
but overlook those whose hopes have been stripped away.
We glad-hand those just like us,
but turn a deaf ear to our neighbors who 'talk funny.'
Silence is kept

Forgive us, Hope of the ages.
You persistently search for us in the side streets of the world,
gathering us up and bringing us home,
so we may be drenched in the waters
of your bottomless pool of forgiveness,
watched over by your Child, Jesus Christ, our Lord and Savior.

ASSURANCE

of

PARDON

God searches for the lost,

and finds us;

God invites the hungry to the table,

and feeds us;

God sends Jesus,

and frees us from death's prison;

God forgives all who sin,

and heals us with mercy and grace.

Thanks be to God. Amen.

*PASSING

THE

PEACE

around you.

The peace of Christ be with you.

And also with you.

Please share the peace of Christ with those

OUR LIFE TOGETHER

Marty-Gentile

TIME for SHARING

Marylen

Rick Steele

SONG of ILLUMINATION

Be Still and Know

John Bell

Be still and know that I am God.

Be still and know that I am God.

Words and Music: John Bell, © 1989 GIA/Iona Community/WGRG.
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A READING
from the
OLD TESTAMENT

Ezekiel 34:11-16 (OT, p.
803)

Marylen Marty-Gentile

A READING from the
Leah Fowler
GOSPEL

Matthew 25:31-46 (NT, p. 29)

***HYMN 151**
(blue hymnal)

Crown Him with Many Crowns
DIADEMATA

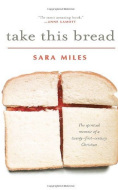
SERMON
Leah Fowler

Constituency of the Sheep and the Goat

Responding to God's Word

OFFERTORY: Thanks Be to God (Children's Choir & Sanctuary Choir) MARTY
HAUGEN
(Place pink prayer cards in the offering plate.)

Thanks be to God when people care, thanks be for friends and loved ones,
Thanks be to God forever and ever.
Thanks be to God for food and home, thanks be for health and laughter,
Thanks be to God forever and ever.
Thanks be to God when hatred ends, thanks be for peace and safety
Thanks be to God forever and ever.
Teach us the way of your peace, kindle your fire within us,



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.

The Wildly Important Goal of First United Church is “creating and maintaining a framework that nourishes the spiritual welfare of the congregation.”

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** Today is New Year's Eve in the church. It is the last Sunday of the church year. It is the last day for the

color green, the color of what the church calls Ordinary Time, for a while. Next week things will change. This week, encourage your child to look around the sanctuary for signs of green. Next week, let him or her notice what has changed.

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

Congregational Meeting Today After Worship The Church Council will present two items of business for congregational vote: change in the endowment draw formula from 6% to 5% and the proposed 2012 budget. The meeting will be held in the sanctuary immediately after worship.

FUSH Youth are taking orders for a Pizza Delivery! We will be making pizzas to order, and will deliver to your home at time slots between 5:30pm–7:30 pm. Please place your order for pizza in the Lounge following worship. You can make a donation for the pizza. Also it's already time for you to order cookies for the FUSH Cookie Bake! Cookies will be ready for pick-up on Dec. 18. Both these fundraisers help to keep costs low for our FUSH Work Camp to Harlan, KY, where youth and advisors will be building homes for the rural poor.

Alternative Christmas Store...for Thanksgiving??? You Bet!

As you make plans for the Thanksgiving holiday, and start thinking about "hostess gifts" or items that you may require for your own hosting, please keep the ACS in mind. We will be set up for an "abbreviated" sale this Sunday, with a focus on food related items. Think coffee, chocolate (introducing a new flavor!), Palestinian Olive Oil, and Erie House pecans! We will be set up at 9:30am until 10:50am, and again after service. As our congregation continues it's focus on relationships that bless, challenge and transform, please help to transform the lives of others, with purchases from the ACS this year! Our first full sale will be on Sunday, November 27th, with great new items, as well as many familiar items for sale!

About Today's Worship: The Call to Worship and Prayer of Confession were written by Thom M. Shuman.

Thanks to the First United Children's Choir (Lily Alter, Ailsa Caughran, Nicole Cerniglia, Lura Honderich, Camryn Zdziarski-West, Rowan Zdziarski-West) for singing in worship today. There's room for more singers! You can join us at our next rehearsal, which will be after the service on Dec 4.

The flowers in the sanctuary today were donated by Ted and Joanne Despotes in gratitude for the grace of God.

Recognition for Judy Schoenbaum-Wood: Please sign the large card in the lounge for Judy Schoenbaum-Wood, our office manager for the last 16 years, who is going through chemotherapy. We are collecting a cash gift to honor Judy for her long years of service. To contribute, please give cash or a check payable to "First United" before Nov. 30 to Julie O'Shea, our financial manager.

Children's Benefit Tea This Afternoon Mark your calendars! This year's Children's Benefit Tea will be held today at the home of Ann and Gene Armstrong, 1113 North Elmwood Avenue, Oak Park from 2 - 4 pm. Donations will support Erie House and UCAN. Speakers will be there to describe their programs. Contact Carole Ferguson at 708-383-5566 for further information.

The Community Interfaith Thanksgiving Service will be held at 7:00 pm on Sun, Nov. 20, at Ascension Catholic Church in Oak Park.

Upcoming Events

Our Fourth Sunday offering this month will support the Pastoral Services Fund. Our pastors use this fund to provide emergency financial assistance to church members in need. Please give generously; we have expended all funds this year.

Celebrate the Christmas season with Evening Division on Thursday, December 1. Sandy Jefferson, First United member and outstanding tenor, presents Christmas carols and music. Wassail bowl get-together is at 5:30pm, dinner at 6:00 and program begins at 7:00. Call Ruth Ashman at 708-366-3689 for dinner reservations or sign up at the Elders Desk.

Adult Educaton Nov. 27 9:30 am “Spiritual Practices for Advent” Lead Pastor Julie Harley will look at the theme of waiting, and explore ways to pray with expectation during Advent. Recommended reading: Seven Spiritual Gifts of Waiting by Holly W. Whitcomb

A Prayer to Take Home

Dear Lord, as the seasons change, you awake and remake each soul.

As the air becomes cool and crisp, clear my mind and spirit of anxiety and aimlessness.

As the shadows grow longer, help me to see by your own light.

As trees burst in golden, orange, crimson, help me to offer boldly my fleeting brilliance to you and all my neighbors, Amen.

Oriental Institute. We will meet Ted at the Institute at 1155 E. 58th St. at 10:30 am on Dec. 3. We will meet at the church at 9:45 am and create carpools. Reservation is being made at the Cedars Mediterranean Kitchen at 53rd and Woodlawn for lunch before returning to Oak Park. There is a sign up sheet on the desk in the lounge to indicate if you desire to go to the Oriental Institute and if you desire to be included in the luncheon reservation.

The Holiday Food and Gift Basket Program needs sponsors to buy Christmas presents for needy families again this year. You can

take a gift tag for a family or just one individual. Sign up before and after church in November and buy gifts, to be returned wrapped and tagged, on Sunday, Dec. 4. Questions? Look for Sher Watts Spooner by the little Christmas tree in the lounge on Sundays in November, starting today; call her at 383-4408; or e-mail her at sandaspooner@comcast.net.

“Midwinter’s Tales” WIM & OPFT benefit Walk-In Ministry and Oak Park Festival Theatre present their 5th annual benefit event: Midwinter’s Tales of peace, joy and hope on 12/3 at 7pm & 12/4 at 5pm at Unity Temple. Local playwright Belinda Bremner draws on such diverse sources as Wind in the Willows, the landmark social work of Jane Addams, and Yiddish folk tales of Hanukah to illuminate the spirit of caring and giving we feel as we express our diversity of beliefs. Refreshments & Raffle follow the performance. Advance tickets \$20 adults, \$15 students & seniors (\$5 more at the door) at OakParkFestival.com or by call WIM at 708-386-1946.

Green Giving Cards are now in the pew racks. Offerings are a sacred act of worship -- an opportunity to give back a portion of all we have received from God -- in gratitude and joy. The green giving cards in the pew racks provide a way for everyone to participate in today's offering -- either by celebrating having already given for the current period or making a credit or debit card donation. Please use these cards when you are not bringing an offering of cash or check --or in addition if appropriate.

Kids Kloset Donations In an effort to assist families with limited resources, we are establishing a free children’s closet. We are collecting sturdy, gently-used, clean children’s clothes (outerwear, backpacks, footwear & like-new toys). Donations can be dropped off M-F 9am-4pm at First United, 848 Lake St. Distribution will be at First United on Saturdays 9:30-11am. We’d also welcome volunteers to work Wed. or Sat. am.

The First United Children's Choir! Singers in third through eighth grades are invited to join us for rehearsals in the half hour immediately following the Sunday service. We sing in worship four times a year and have lots of fun learning great music and making friends. Contact Bill Chin for more information, or just come to our rehearsal in the choir room.

HOG Orchestra Calling all musicians, Grade 6 and older. The Hanging of the Greens Orchestra is forming under the direction of Bill Gilmer. All musicians are welcome, especially flutes and trumpets. There will be three rehearsals (Nov. 28, 30 & Dec. 3) and HOG worship on Sun. Dec. 4. Please contact Marylen Marty-Gentile if you are interested.

Weekly Calendar

Sunday, November 20

Congregational Meeting 12 noon
Children's Benefit Tea (Away)
2 – 4 pm

Deacons Meeting 6 pm
FUSH/FUJI Youth Groups 6 pm

Monday, November 21

Nominating Committee 6:30 pm
Evening Division 7 pm
Recovery Group 7:30 pm

Tuesday, November 22

Buildings & Grounds Cmmte 7 pm
Personnel Committee 7 pm
Families Anonymous 7:30 pm

Wednesday, 23

Adult Choir 7 pm
AA Marion Group 8 pm

Thursday, November 24

Thanksgiving Holiday
Church Offices Closed

Friday, November 25

Thanksgiving Holiday
Church Offices Closed
Peace Prayer Vigil 7 pm

Saturday, November 26

Inner Peace/World Peace 8:30 am

Sunday, November 27

Alternative Christmas Store 9 – 11 am
Education for All 9:30 am
Worship 11 am

Alternative Christmas Store 12 –
1:30pm

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

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

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