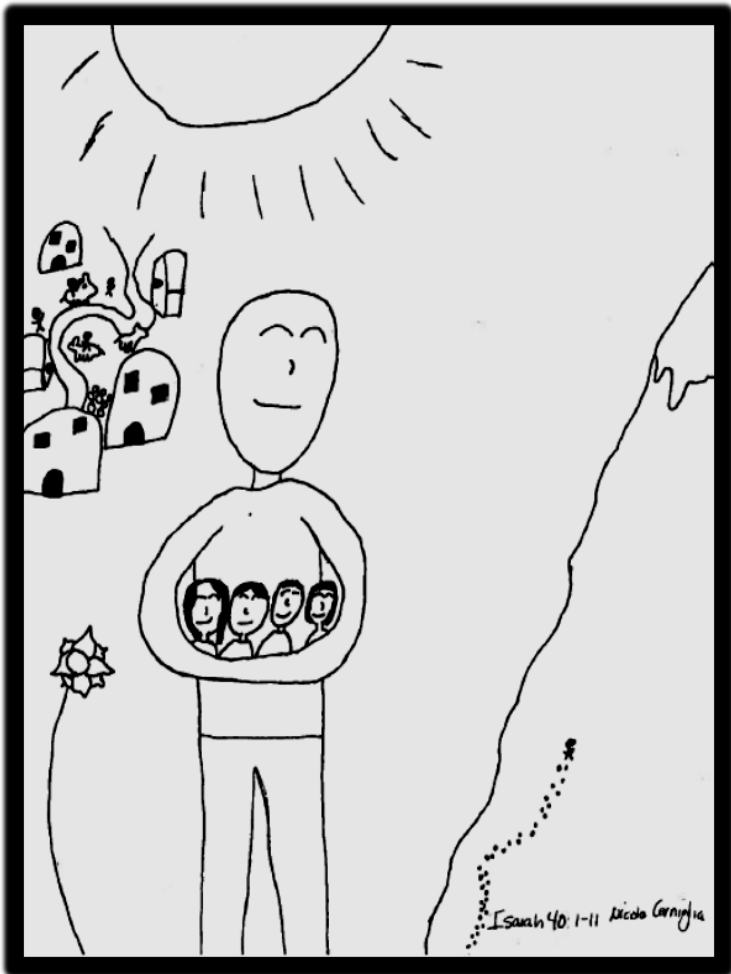


First United Church of Oak Park

4 Dec 2011

Second 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

*Darkness cannot drive out darkness; only light can do that.
Hate cannot drive out hate; only love can do that. (Breaking the Chains)*

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 *Be Thou My Vision* arr. Bryan Kidd
(Hanging of the Greens Orchestra, Bill Gilmer, director)

Silence is kept...

ADVENT CANDLE LIGHTING Colin Lonergan, Camryn Zdziarski-West

Let All Mortal Flesh Keep Silence

Rank on rank the host of _____ heav - en Spreads its van-guard
on the _____ way, As the light of light des - cend - eth
From the realms of end - less _____ day, That the ev - il powers may
van - - - ish As the dark-ness clears a - way.

We listen as the prophet cries out from the wilderness!
*Clear the Lord's way in the desert.
Make a level highway in the wilderness for our God!*

*Every valley will be raised up, and every mountain will be flattened.
The Lord's glory will appear and all humanity will see it together;
the Lord's mouth has commanded it!*

We light a second candle to remind of us of John, who calls us to leave the wilderness and wade in the waters of new life.

We open our hearts to the light God gives us through baptism.

We ask for help to carry our light into a dark world.

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 4*

Creator of the Stars of Night

CONDITOR ALME SIDERUM

(blue hymnal) *Please listen as the children sing VV 1-2, then join in on V 3.*

CALL to CONFESSION

Anna Wright

God is patient with us, not wanting us to perish. But we have turned away from God. We have chosen to fit in with our friends and fit into the culture rather than to live into God's dream. Let the church confess its failures.

PRAYER of CONFESSION

Silence is kept...

Gracious God, our everlasting light, we confess that we have not recognized you in our midst nor listened for your voice.

Our faith is fragile.

We can't even recognize our own sins as we preen and jockey for power and position.

We live as if we don't need to account for the life you have given us.

We forget that you have called us to change our lives from the inside out.

We fail day after day to prepare the way for the entry of Jesus into our world.

We don't make space for Jesus in our lives.

Creator of the stars of night, hear us when we call.

Pardon us. Change us, we pray.

ASSURANCE OF GRACE

Gabriel Chapman-Reinstra

God speaks tenderly to us and assures us our debt has been paid,
our sins forgiven, our paths made straight.

God's glory is waiting to burst into the midst of all who accept the good news.

Surely our salvation is at hand.

Faithfulness will spring up from the ground.

Righteousness will look down from the sky.

Let the baptism of the Holy Spirit wash us clean! Amen.

SONG OF GRACE

In This Mystery

Trisha Watts

(Toddler, Preschool, Kinder Class)

*In this mystery of birth, God from heaven, God to earth,
Bring salvation to us here, Child of Peace.*

**PASSING the PEACE*

The peace of Christ be with you.

And also with you. (*Please share the peace of Christ with those around you.*)

OUR LIFE TOGETHER

Marylen Marty-Gentile

Listening for God's Word to Us

SONG of ILLUMINATION *Prepare Thyself, Zion*

J.S. Bach

(Fifth and Sixth Grades)

*Prepare thyself, Zion, with tender affection,
the purest, the fairest this day to receive.*

SECOND TESTAMENT READING 2 Peter 3:8-15a (NT, p. 238)

Lily Alter

FIRST TESTAMENT READING Isaiah 40:1-11 (OT, p. 667)

Sydney Gillette

REFLECTION "What's Love Got to Do with It?" Seventh and Eighth Graders

ANTHEM *Hosanna, Hosanna*
(Third and Fourth Grades)

Natalie Sleeth

*Hosanna, Hosanna, O blessed is he
Who comes now among us our savior to be.
A sign of God's glory to you and to me: he comes in the name of our God.
Hosanna, Hosanna, with joy let us sing;
A message of love to the earth he will bring.
Now offer him welcome and hail him King: he comes in the name of our God.
Prepare the way! Let ev'ry heart rejoice!
Prepare the way with heart and soul and voice.*

DECLARATION OF FAITH

**Comfort, comfort all people.
Raise our voices loud and clear.
Right Living pours down from the skies.
Right Living and Peace kiss each other.
God gives goodness and beauty.
We walk before God and make a path for God's steps.**

OFFERTORY: *Come, Thou Fount of Every Blessing* arr. Jay Dawson
(Hanging of the Greens Orchestra) *(Please fill out pink prayer cards)*

***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

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 12**
(blue hymnal)

People, Look East

BESANCON

***CHARGE AND BENEDICTION**

RESPONSE

Come Walk with Us

AFRICAN, TRADITIONAL

(First and Second Grades)(Evan Jacobson, drums)

Come walk with us a prophet has come.

Getting ready, a Savior will come.

Join in singing, salvation is near.

SENDING MUSIC

Divinum Mysterium

James Swearingen

(Hanging of the Greens Orchestra)

Next Sunday, Dec. 11, 2011

11:00 am Worship – Third Sunday of Advent

Sermon: "Expectant"

Scripture Reading: Isaiah 61:1-4, 8-11, John 1:6-8, 19-28

Welcome to First United

take this bread
SARA MILES



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.

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

WORSHIP WITH YOUR CHILD Who can be worship leaders? Today our children lead us as we believe that liturgy, the words of the church, are the work of the whole people. No matter our age, we can be ministers of God's word. Today our children are.

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 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.

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 Thursday evenings in December 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.

"MIDWINTER'S TALES" WIM and OPFT BENEFIT Walk-In Ministry and Oak Park Festival Theatre present their 5th annual benefit event: *Midwinter's Tales* of peace, joy and hope tonight at 5pm at Unity Temple. Local playwright Belinda Bremner draws on diverse sources to illuminate the spirit of caring and giving we feel as we express our diversity of beliefs. Refreshments & Raffle follow the performance. Tickets \$20 adults, \$15 students and seniors (\$5 more at the door) at OakParkFestival.com or call WIM at 708.386.1946.

ADULT EDUCATION DEC. 11 (9:30 AM)

Care for the Caregiver This 2-part series on Dec. 11 and 18 will be taught by Ryan Whitmore, from WisdomFlame, a non-profit that offers care and support for caregivers of loved ones. This seminar will educate and empower people facing long-term care decisions and their loved ones who care for them. It will offer resources to support caregivers who face complicated situations. and honor the legacies of elders as sources of wisdom.

Bible Study of the Minor Prophets meets in the Conference Room; newcomers are welcome!

DRIVERS ARE NEEDED TO TRANSPORT CHRISTMAS GIFTS for the more than 100 needy people served in the Sponsor-A-Family program to a central drop-off point in northeast Oak Park. Please meet at 7:30 p.m. Monday, Dec. 5, in the church parking lot. (No earlier, please.) If you weren't able to bring your gift today, please contact Sher Watts Spooner at 383.4408.

THE CHILDREN'S CHOIR RESUMES THIS SUNDAY Join the third through eighth graders who sang two Sundays ago as we prepare for our next time singing in worship. We meet in the choir room right after the service for half an hour of singing and enjoying friendship.

MIDPOINT CHRISTMAS CELEBRATION All 30's, 40's and 50's join us for an evening of fun and fellowship **Friday, Dec. 9 at 7:30 pm** celebrating the Christmas holiday! In the spirit of giving we will collect non-perishable food items and/or cash donations for the food pantry. We hope you will join us for optional caroling and fun with your beverage of choice. We'll

meet at the home of Jane Barker and Melinda Haag 7426 Iowa St. River Forest, 708.366.2541

PRIMETIME'S FOURTH ANNUAL CAROL SING Join us on **Dec. 9 from 7 to 8:30 pm** in the church lounge to begin the Christmas season! Rev. Julie Harley will share Christmas readings and poems, and we will sing favorite Christmas carols. Afterward, we will enjoy refreshments and fellowship. As always, those who are in their 50's are welcome to join in the festivities! Please call or e-mail Anna Sadowski at 708.386.7896 or annahsadowski@gmail.com or just stop by!

SING WE JOYOUS IS BACK! Have your Christmas celebration here on Saturday Dec 17 with First United's annual Christmas party extraordinaire! Come at 6:30 to nibble treats and browse the unique silent auction items, then at 7:30 enjoy an evening of glorious music, dances, Christmas carol sing-along, and Carl Grapentine narrating Dylan Thomas's "A Child's Christmas in Wales." Adults \$20, seniors/students \$15, families \$50. Free child care.

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. The cost is \$20 per person. Register by emailing jrh@firstunitedoakpark.com.

YEAR END STOCK TRANSFERS/IRA CONTRIBUTIONS

If you are planning a year end stock transfer please make it by Dec. 15 so our investment company can complete the transaction and get the cash to the church by year end. Also, the IRA withdrawal contribution to charitable organizations tax incentive from the IRS (for those at least 70 ½ years old) has been extended through December 31, 2011. If you have an IRA that you are drawing from and can take advantage of this type on contribution to the church we will gladly receive it! To make this type of gift have your IRA make the check out directly to First United Church of Oak Park. Remember to let Julie O'Shea know about transfers when they have been initiated and if the proceeds are to be directed to the building loan or your pledge.

Hanging of the Greens 2011 Love has everything to do with it. Love has to do with why we wait in Advent for love in the form of Jesus to be born among us and born in our hearts. This worship is a labor of love by children who created images for our Advent tree, images that reflect the scripture:

mouths to shout "Prepare!"

eyes to look down from heaven, eyes to scan the horizon for the arrival of Jesus

ears to hear the words of the prophets

hands that gather us like a shepherd gathers sheep

feet that walk on God's path

hearts that open to the truth of Jesus

clocks that remind us to slow down.

It is a labor of love created by leaders who share words of hope and faith, God's words with our children, by youth who take what they hear and know and create ideas to provoke us, by Walter Miller who takes ideas from our youth and crafts them into a proclamation, by Andrea Kirksey, Rebecca Robinson and Kevin Bunschoten who with Walter heard our Seventh and Eighth Graders into understanding.

It is a labor of love created by Elaine Pierce who taught our children to sing with hope, peace, love and joy.

It is a labor of love by Bill Gilmer who birthed an orchestra from rusty and confident musicians: Cathy Cerniglia, Kelly Cerniglia, Carl Nauert (clarinet), Kevin Bunschoten, Nicole Cerniglia, Sam Cooke (oboe), Marilee Castañeda, Liz Gentile (flute), Micah Easty, Daniel Wheelock (trumpet), Pauline Coffman, Nick Fascione, Collin Pearce, Rebecca Robinson (trombone), Susan Cartland-Bode, Ricardo Castañeda, Melinda Haag (violin), Jesse Cornman, Ellen Everson (viola), Julie O'Shea (cello), Jackson Todd, Pete Todd (bass), Chase Gentile, Jonathan Gilmer, Sharon Pearce (tuba), Larry Pearce (euphonium), Bobby Everson, Andrew Fascione, Diane Fascione (percussion).

It is a gift of love to this congregation who welcomes and values children of God, no matter their age.

Hanging of the Greens is a gift of love, a gift full of the Holy Spirit, to God, and to Jesus our brother, for whom we wait. Come, Lord Jesus.

Weekly Calendar

Sun., Dec. 4

Alternative Christmas Store
9–11 am & 12 –1:30 pm
FUSH/FUJI Youth Groups 6 pm

Mon., Dec. 5

New Members Committee 7 pm
Recovery Group 7:30 pm

Tue., Dec. 6

Library Committee 6:30 pm
Adult Education Committee 7 pm
Faith in Action 7 pm
Families Anonymous 7:30 pm

Wed., Dec. 7

Bible Study 11 am
Advent Communion Service 6:30 pm
Adult Choir 7 pm
AA Marion Group 8 pm

Thur., Dec. 8

Cluster Tutoring 6:30 pm
Advent Music and Prayer Service 7 pm

Fri., Dec. 9

Peace Prayer Vigil 7 pm
Christmas Carol Sing-Along 7 pm

Sat., Dec. 10

Inner Peace World Peace 8:30 am

Sun., Dec. 11

Alternative Christmas Store
9–11 am & 12-1:30 pm
Education for All 9:30 am
Worship 11 am
FUSH Cookie Bake 3:30 pm
FUJI Youth Group 6 pm

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