



## The Identity of the Poor

It's happened to all of us. You walk or drive through a certain business district and all of a sudden it's there. It's invisible, sensuous, inviting. It affects you physically...you salivate, your stomach begins to churn, and you feel hungry. What has happened is that you've smelled the aroma of cooking food: the unmistakable fragrance of bread baking, the delectable odors of Oriental, or Latin, or Hindu, or Middle Eastern, or French or Italian cuisine. Even McDonalds has its distinctive air. So does the backyard grill as its smoke carries the delectable scent across the whole neighborhood. Even as I write about this, I find that my mouth is watering! Is yours?

When this happens, we can pull into Panera Bread and buy a loaf of sourdough, or call our favorite eatery for carryout, or even stop at Micky D's for a quick burger and fries. But have you ever thought about the homeless and hungry? They walk the same streets we do. They are exposed to these same aromas. Their bodies react in the same ways ours do, but because of their circumstance, they can't stop in at a fast food place, or the bakery, or anyplace else to ease their pangs (or are they "pains?"). That requires resources they don't have.

The emphasis for this month is hunger. Stomach churning, mouth watering, gut-gripping hunger. And it's here among us. It's always been that way. There have always been people who are on the fringes of society who have been hungry, but more and more we're seeing people at our food pantries and soup kitchens who aren't "fringe" dwellers.

Throughout the telling of the Gospels, Jesus lifts up the plight of the poor. Our response to Christ's call is measured, in part, by how we treat "the widows and orphans, the poor, the stranger in our midst." So far this year the Oak Park/River Forest Food Pantry, housed in First United Church, has averaged nearly 3,100 people each month who are provided with a once-a-month food supplement that equals about 4 days' worth of meals. Surely hunger isn't the only issue facing the folk that rely on food assistance from faith-based institutions and the government, but it is a primary issue, a symptom of the wider economic problems, an issue of life and death.

Because these hungry are on our doorsteps, in our neighborhoods, residents of our lives, they are our responsibility. They are as Jesus says in Matthew 25, "the least of these my sisters and brothers." But the crucial element of faith in the issues surrounding hunger is what Jesus said about who these sisters and brothers really are: "Because you did it to the least of these, my sisters and brothers, you did it to me." In other words, in the face of the hungry, we come face to face with the Christ. Isn't that a good enough reason to support efforts at alleviating these needs and the root causes of them?

Shalom,

Mark Buck

*Interim Associate Pastor for Membership and Mission*

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## Transitions

### Baptisms:

*James Haewon Caughran,*

son of Bruce Caughran and Octavia Kincaid, brother of Ailsa

*William Thomas Blazenko,*

son of Deanna and Peter, brother of Nathan

*Emmett Charles and Paige Soledad Foster-Simbulan*

son and daughter of Kim and Daisy Foster-Simbulan,  
brother and sister of Lorenza and Mia

### Marriage:

*Nydia Sahagun and Beatrice Cruz*

### Compassion:

*Mary,* sister of Stan Davis

*Sam Mrkovic*

*Anne Robinson*

*Steve Saliny*

*Eva and Frank Sordilla*

*Carl Nauert Sr.,* father of Carl Nauert

*Jim McAulay*



## Thanksgiving Worship Service.

The Community of Congregations, will be holding an Ecumenical Thanksgiving Service in our sanctuary at 7:00 pm on Sunday, Nov. 22. Please watch the Bulletin for additional information.

### First's Fourth Sunday

(September) Mission Offering Report  
—Mark Buck

*"Give a man a fish and he will eat for a day. Teach a man to fish and he will eat for a lifetime."*

You have helped! First United Church came through for an important local mission: the Oak Park River Forest Food Pantry on September 27th. This monthly giving opportunity, which provides support for a variety of our mission partners throughout the year, reaped \$979.37 from loose offering (cash and coin) collected on that Sunday. While the root causes of local hunger issues remain, this support of the Oak Park River Forest Food Pantry is a significant help in addressing the immediate need of those whose resources are supplemented through this service.

### Knitting for Our Sister Church

—Marylen Marty-Gentile

Our Shawl Ministry has created shawls to send with travelers who will visit our sister church in Beirut, the National Evangelical (Presbyterian) Church of Beirut. During the month of October, we knit four shawls-- white, purple and green, chocolate brown and purple-- to send with Pauline Coffman and Judy Vojta as they travel with other folks from the Chicago Presbytery and visit the Middle East for three weeks in November. Pray for the travelers, and pray that the shawls we send will bring warmth and comfort to those who use them.

### All Church Retreat

—Julie R. Harley

Twenty-four members of First United spent a weekend at Stronghold Retreat Center in Oregon, IL, sharing *Holy Conversations*, led by Leah Fowler, Julie Harley and Marylen Marty-Gentile. We prayed, we talked, we walked, we spent time in silence, we sang hymns and show tunes around the campfire, we laughed, we washed each other's feet, we shared communion, and we discovered the wonder of deep friendship and fellowship. One retreator said this: *"I learned once again that God's voice and face for me are in the presence of people and in the loving hearts they bring. I often drift off into feeling that God is "out there" somewhere, but the retreat and other spiritual times remind me that God is truly with me, right in the same room or the same pew"*.

Mark your calendars for next year's all-church retreat, to be held on the last weekend of September 2010.

—Beth Mrkvicka

**Clerk's  
Corner**

Our September meeting opened with our joys and concerns, most notably for our fellow Council member Beth Drews. Connie Ronnow shared her experiences as part of our Visitation Team. She views this as something she has been sent to do and it is a spiritual practice that brings a sense of calling to her.

We welcomed new Interim Minister Mark Buck to his first Council meeting and shared excitement and joy at having a full pastoral staff as the fall programming year begins. Mark led us in a discussion of a chapter on discernment from the book we are reading together. It seemed particularly relevant, as our Pastoral Search Committee and 2020 Vision Task Force both discern what is next for First United. We agreed that discerning God's will for us require deep trust and patience.

Julie Harley provided a deeper explanation of her expectations involving the 2020 Vision Task Force. As she has studied First United's history, it is evident to her that we are a visionary congregation. Notably, we created an endowment during the middle of the Depression, we were on the forefront of Fair Housing in the early '60s and most recently we took a stand on becoming an Open and Affirming congregation. *continued>*

## WIG

The Wildly Important

Goal of First United Church is

"creating and maintaining a framework that nourishes the spiritual welfare of the congregation"

**Clerk's Corner** continued>

She believes that we can and need to discern our next vision and encouraged us all to look up and out for a broad view of our calling.

The Big Picture Conversation this month centered on the 2010 Budget. Julie O'Shea shared some of the highlights of the budget, which is an increase of 10-12%. Final budget figures will be dependent on our stewardship campaign. There are several opportunities to ask questions and learn more about the 2010 budget prior to the vote on November 22.

In addition to Mark Buck, we welcomed and commissioned Elizabeth Crowell to Council as a new youth member. As the church school and youth groups resumed this month, we reviewed the Child Protection Policy which applies to everyone working with youth at First United. In other committee news Council approved a recommendation by Faith in Action to promote taking a stand on health care reform.

News from the staff included Julie Harley reporting that worship planning has been outlined through June. She is excited about attendance, membership classes and the response to the September spiritual retreat. Marylen Marty Gentile reported on chaotic but spirited starts to church school and Quest. Leah Fowler informed Council of new offerings in Adult Ed and the youth groups and hopes to have the FUSH workcamp site selected by the end of October. She is looking into ways of staying tied to our college aged members, how to connect to sixth graders, and is exploring a mission trip to Colombia. Mark Buck has dug in to work on mission, meeting with Food Pantry leaders and membership, with a new members class scheduled for October. We ended our September meeting by gathering around a prayer shawl that was knit for Beth Drews. We prayed that it would provide comfort and strength to her and her family.

**Pastoral Search Committee Update**

—Lou Valsoano

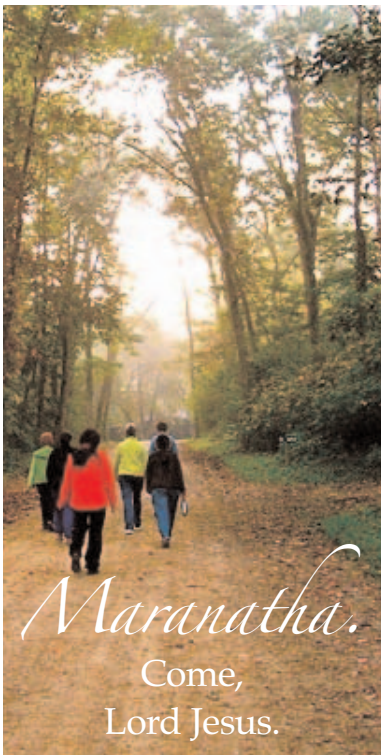
The Pastor Search Committee for the called associate minister position continues to meet on an almost weekly basis. Since last month, we've accomplished the following tasks: Our church profile is complete and posted on both denominations web-sites.

- ◆ An advertisement for the associate minister position has been placed in *The Christian Century* and runs during October.
- ◆ As of October 8, we've already received 7 applications as a result of these postings and have 2 additional applications that were previously submitted. We're anticipating a significant influx of applications over the next 30 days.
- ◆ The Committee has had lengthy discussions regarding the criteria we will use to evaluate candidates. We've obtained and considered input from the committees that will work directly with this minister as well as feedback from the general congregation regarding what traits, characteristics, and skills we should be looking for in the ideal candidate.
- ◆ We've divided the PSC into sub-groups for the purpose of reviewing the initial round of applications.
- ◆ During our October 15 meeting, the Committee reviewed 2 applications together. This gave us a chance to discuss the criteria for rating candidates and will ensure we are in substantial agreement regarding how to evaluate applications.

As mentioned in previous *Messenger Bell* articles, we will continue to seek input from members of First United. If you have thoughts you'd like to share with the Committee regarding the skills, traits, and knowledge necessary for this position, please feel free to contact a member of the search committee. The members are: Marilyn Kauffmann, Robert Hickok, Shanti Kulkarni, Steve Mrkvicka, Janet Guevara, Sara Faust, Melinda Haag, Ted Despotes, Donnie Kuntz and Lou Valsoano. Please remember our committee in your prayers as we continue our work.

**What is that word....Maranatha?**

Maranatha; maranâ' thâ' or ; maran 'athâ' ) is an Aramaic phrase occurring once only in the New Testament (see Aramaic of Jesus). It is transliterated into Greek letters rather than translated, and is found at the end of Paul's First Epistle to the Corinthians (1 Cor 16:22) . The phrase may have been used as a greeting between Early Christians, and it is possibly in this way that it was used by the Apostle Paul.



## Faith **IN ACTION**

—Bob Hahn

The Faith In Action Committee has been working hard over the past 6-7 months planning and organizing various mission projects. This has encompassed mission projects for our major local and global mission initiatives as well as continued support for our resident, global and local mission partners. Since taking a congregational survey to research the direction for a major, local, long term mission initiative, it was decided that the initiative would be centered on the local hunger issue. In addition to financially supporting our resident mission partner, the OPRF Food Pantry, we are looking into developing food and product collections to fill needs for the Pantry's clients, expanding our participation in the Crop Walk, engaging in advocacy to raise awareness of hunger issues, establishing hunger related programs with our neighboring faith organizations to benefit the Food Pantry as well as a trip to the Greater Chicago Food Depository.

Our other long-term mission initiative is in its second year as we continue to support justice for the indigenous peoples in Colombia who are being forced off their land. Again, we are not only supporting this effort financially; Mamie Broadhurst, a missionary from our church, and her husband Richard are working in Colombia through the Presbyterian Church. We are also working to provide sanctuary for those being threatened due to taking a stand against the injustice that is occurring in Colombia. It is a tremendous blessing to have one of our own as a missionary in Colombia and a profound opportunity that this presents to this congregation to be in the forefront of standing up to injustice in Christian witness.

We also continue our support of our resident mission partners, the Food Pantry, PADS, Cluster Tutoring and the Walk In Ministry. All these missions are supported financially and with volunteers from First United. As the lines continue to form from the door of the food pantry stretching out to the street and down the sidewalk, and another season of welcoming the homeless, and mentors greeting kids after school with a safe place and a doubling of the clients being helped at the Walk In Ministry, First United Church continues to respond to God's grace by helping those in need in our community. Our global missions continue to reach out for peace in the Middle East, against the ongoing war as well as to Kenya, Africa where a woman's group is bringing together an entire village with our support. Gay rights continues to be supported and advocated by First United as well as continuing our support for local agencies such as Interfaith House, Erie House, Sister House, Casa Central, Infant Welfare and other long term mission partners.

It is the intent of the Faith In Action Committee to bring mission into the hearts and minds of the congregation. It is our hope that each and every member of the church involves themselves in mission as they continue their faith journey. Mission is a hands on, dynamic process that transforms each of us but most importantly transforms others. To get involved in any of the mission projects contact any member of the Faith In Action Committee.

### Greater Chicago Food Depository

—Nancy Fox

As part of the Faith in Action Committee's focus on hunger with Local Missions, we would like to take a group of First United volunteers to the Greater Chicago Food Depository (GCFD) on a Saturday in the first part of 2010 for a three hour repack session.

Here is some basic information about GCFD and volunteering from their website [www.chicagosfoodbank.org](http://www.chicagosfoodbank.org):

The Greater Chicago Food Depository, Chicago's food bank, is a nonprofit food distribution and training center providing food for hungry people while striving to end hunger in our community. The Food Depository distributes donated and purchased food through a network of 600 pantries, soup kitchens and shelters to 500,000 adults and children in Cook County every year. Last year, the Food Depository distributed 58 million pounds of nonperishable food and fresh produce, dairy products and meat, the equivalent of 119,000 meals every day. Innovative training programs and initiatives developed by the Food Depository also work to provide men, women and children with the tools necessary to break their individual cycles of poverty.

Repack sessions are the most common volunteer opportunity at the Food Depository. These are held in three hour time slots. The majority of the food that the Food Depository receives needs something to be done with it: repacking bulk product to individual/family size,

*continued on next page>*

### Prayers for Peace

On the front steps of the church every Friday evening at 7pm

### INNERPEACE WORLDPEACE

Saturday at 8:30 am, in the Conference Room  
All are invited.



How they shine, this  
grand procession,  
this priceless gift, this  
shining chain of gold.

Turn away from one,  
you turn from all the rest.  
Look, each a slash of  
bright sunlight.  
Through different  
windows.

—Michael Green, *One Song*

### Food Depository continued>

assembling boxes with assorted food, checking expiration dates, labeling product, gleaning products, etc.

While projects are determined based on warehouse needs, all repack sessions are spent in the warehouse.

Volunteers need to be 13 years old to volunteer at the Food Depository during regular sessions. Ages 16 and older can volunteer self supervised. Ages 13-15 need to have one adult supervisor per four youths.

The Food Depository hosts Kids Days once a month on a Saturday afternoon. Kids ages 5-12 may volunteer with an adult during Kids Days only. If you are interested in signing up to help at the GCFD please contact me at nancyf@chicagosemester.org. I will announce a specific date once we get one.

### Cluster Tutoring: Help Before Help Is Needed —Kathy McCabe

Cluster Tutoring still has several students on its wait list who need a volunteer tutor. At this point, many of the students on the wait list are quite young—kindergarten through second grade. (We do have a few students who are older—grades 3 through 8.) So for those of you with math phobia or no knowledge of science, this might be the perfect time for you to volunteer! No trigonometry to worry about, no laws of physics to explain, or periodic table of elements to memorize. This is also a great opportunity to reach out to a child before he or she gets too far behind in school. It's a chance to develop a love of reading in a young one, to make sure he or she can count and knows the sounds of the letters in the alphabet. Cluster meets from 6:30 to 8:00 pm on Tuesdays at the Pine Avenue Church in Chicago or on Thursdays at First United. The main requirement to be a tutor is ability to commit to coming to most of your weekly tutoring sessions from whenever you start until the end of the tutoring year in mid-May. If you are interested in being a volunteer tutor, please contact Cluster Tutoring at (773) 378-5530 or via email at clustertp@hotmail.com.

### Where in the World Are Mamie Broadhurst and Richard Williams? —Julie R. Harley

Keep up with the ever-changing adventures of our missionaries to Colombia, South America, by visiting their blog: [www.calledtocolombia.org](http://www.calledtocolombia.org). During September, they were in language school in Guatemala and doing some sight-seeing through Central America. Please keep their ministry in your prayers, and remember the people of Colombia whom they will soon be accompanying through the work of the global Presbyterian Church.

### Faith in Action Hunger Sunday, November 8th — Jackie Kareb

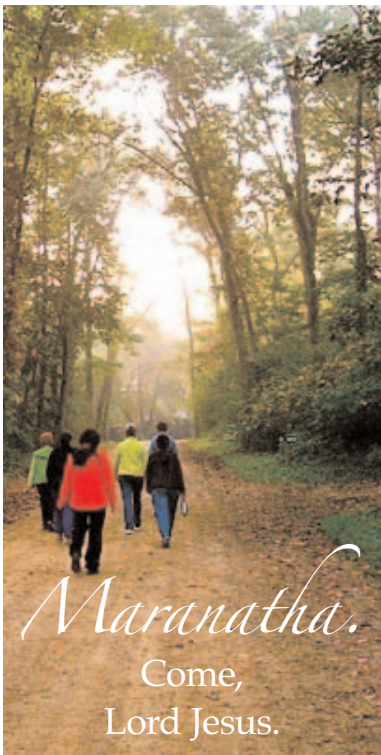
November 8 has been designated "Hunger Sunday" at First United. This is one of several activities in keeping with our local mission focus on hunger. On Hunger Sunday, Faith in Action Committee is sponsoring Bread for the World's 2009 Offering of Letters. Bills aimed at improving U.S. support of global development and reducing hunger and poverty are pending in both houses of Congress. Bread for the World is working to raise a "collective Christian voice" on this issue through the Offering of Letters. Did you know handwritten letters are considered unique and more likely to gain the attention of our legislators? Come and help our voices be heard! The letters we generate from this activity are important for urging our nation's decision makers to end hunger both at home and abroad. Information for letter writing will be available both before and after worship on Hunger Sunday.

### Sack Sundays — Pat Slovak

As part of our focus on hunger issues, the Faith in Action Committee has organized three "Sack Sundays" during November to benefit the Oak Park River Forest Food Pantry. On November 8, 15 and 22, you will be handed an empty grocery sack along with your bulletin as you enter church. Attached to the bag will be a list of suggested items which our guests at the Food Pantry need but which are not available at the Greater Chicago Food Depository. All you have to do is fill the bag up and bring it back to church before the end of November. Many thanks to our FUJI members who will be helping FIA with this project.

### Make Volunteering A Part of Your Life! —Mark Buck

A list of Volunteer Opportunities has been posted on the Mission Bulletin Board (where copies of the list are available) adjacent to the Lounge Restroom and on Mark Buck's office door. Volunteer situations include West Suburban PADS, the Walk-in Ministry, along with other opportunities in and around Oak Park. The listing, produced by The Volunteer Center, introduces you to the wide variety of ways to put one's faith into action in or own community.



## **Witness Against Torture** Take Action in Defense of Human Rights Nov. 20-23

— Julie R. Harley

Each year thousands of peacemakers gather at the School of the Americas (SOA) in Ft. Benning, GA, to take a stand against violence. The SOA, renamed WHINSEC (the Western Hemisphere Institute for Security Cooperation), has trained over 64,000 Latin American soldiers in counterinsurgency techniques, sniper training, commando and psychological warfare, and interrogation tactics. Graduates of the SOA have been consistently linked to human rights violations against educators, union organizers, religious workers, students and others working for the poor. SOA graduates were responsible for the assassination of Archbishop Oscar Romero and the torture, rape, disappearance and murder of thousands of others. I will lead a group to this military base near Atlanta on Nov. 20-23. Please contact me ASAP to arrange a flight and hotel. We will meet others from Chicago organized by the Chicago Religious Leadership Network on Latin America (CRLN).

## **Spiritual Guidance Groups**

— Julie R. Harley

Each month, about 20 people gather in the Chapel at First United to listen for God's voice in their lives. We pray and listen to a scripture text being read aloud. We listen to it again. We pray in silence. Then we divide into groups of four or five people and share our responses to the scripture passage. Sometimes we just talk about what is happening in our lives.

Sometimes we share deep anxieties. Sometimes we discuss good news. Sometimes we share our hurts and vulnerabilities. Each month this is a time of spiritual friendship and intimacy... a rare gift in our busy and often fragmented lives. If you would like to feel connected to others in a confidential and caring community, please consider joining our Spiritual Guidance Groups. We will welcome new members in January 2010. In the meantime, pray about how God might be nudging you to try something new. You may discover a whole new world, right here in this place.

## *Children's Ministry*

—Marylen Marty-Gentile

### **The Calm Before the Storm**

We are standing at the edge of holiday madness. I urge you to do yourself and your children a big favor. As these days approach, calm yourselves and calm your family life down during the holy-days. Step away from the edge.

We have created a religion of busy-ness and full-schedules. We worship the carpool. We worship the spread-sheet of activities we paste on our refrigerators. We make liturgy out of cramming more into our lives. We sing hymns to schedules and practices. The Christmas season (and we struggle to even remember Advent) makes this need to do everything and do more even worse as we add concerts we "must" see and shopping we "must" do.

The liturgical season of Advent offers us the opportunity to take a holy-time out, a time to step back, a time to say "No" to the rush the world offers us. In the dead of winter, as the days shorten, we are invited to remember again the coming of Jesus again and anticipate the coming of Christ again. We wait. Wait. Wait. We cannot hurry this arrival. We must slow down and wait or we will miss it. Again.

The season of Advent begins the church year. Our Advent color is deep blue, the color of a late afternoon sky, the color of royalty that will arrive for the world in the form of a baby. The Advent wreath walks us through the four Sundays of waiting before the birth. Candles suggest the light that will shine in the darkness of our lives. A simple Advent calendar can help children count the long days one by one, waiting not for the arrival of more stuff for playrooms that need no more stuff, but for the gift of God-with-us, Emmanuel.

Maybe this will be the season when you and your family actually slow down and say "No" to more, the season when you put a wreath in the middle of your table, light a candle each night and practice waiting and listening and praying. Maranatha. Come, Lord Jesus.

## YOUTH NEWS —Leah Fowler

A Haiku

On the topic: FUSH  
Care group dinners, cancer quilts  
FUSH love all around

Also, breaking ice:  
Freshman interviews; weird times—  
All questions answered

And forward to next:  
Apple pie and culture leaps  
Just more things to come

Fall retreat will be  
Bonding, welcoming for all,  
And things not yet said

So, from us to all  
Spread the word across the town  
FUSH love never falls

—Conrad Wight, FUSHee

### FUJI Schedule:

Nov. 1: Rake Leaves: meet at church at 4 pm; return at 6:00 to church for dinner together.  
Finish at 6:30.  
Nov. 8: FUJI Olympics  
Nov. 13-14: Lock-In  
Nov. 22: Interfaith Service  
Nov. 29- No FUJI (Thanksgiving break)

### FUSH Schedule:

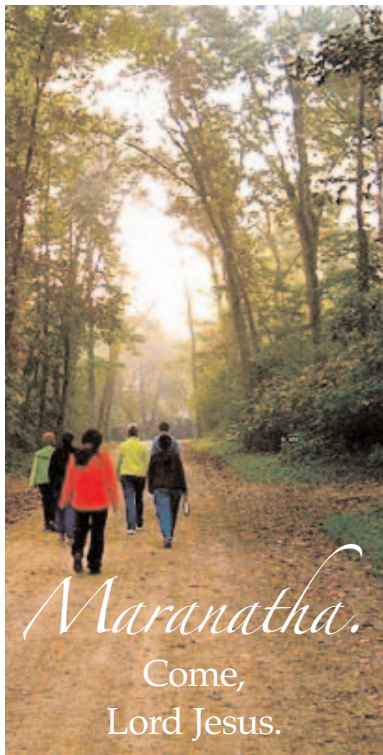
Nov. 1: Apple Pie and Pumpkin Pie Baking  
Nov. 8: Guest speaker- a teenager from Iraq  
Nov. 15: Game Night  
Nov. 22 Food Drive  
Nov. 29- No FUSH (Thanksgiving break)

## Quest

Big Questions —Jeff Foels

Quest. Journey. Faith. The Word of the Lord. Each of these has been the 'word of the day' for one of the first four sessions of QUEST, First United Oak Park's confirmation program. It's been my distinct pleasure to walk with this group of a dozen of the church's ninth graders, discussing faith and the Bible, with conversations about God on the horizon for November. So far, we have come up with some BIG questions: Why are these particular stories important? Does the Bible lead to something larger? How do we recognize God's love? Such questions would test my seminary professors, and show clearly the caliber of this group. As Thomas Merton said, "We too often forget that faith is a matter of questioning and struggle before it becomes one of certitude and peace."

Pray for our QUESTors as we explore this difficult journey!



*Maranatha.*  
Come,  
Lord Jesus.

**Adult Education**

—Leah Fowler

**Lectionary Bible Study** Continues Sunday mornings at 9:30 am in the Conference Room.

**Midweek Bible Study** Continues Wednesday mornings at 11:00 am in the Conference Room

**Adult Education** will focus in November on Hunger—both spiritual and physical. Classes are Sundays at 9:30 am in the Chapel.

**Nov. 1: Spiritual Direction** (Chapel) Spiritual Director Alice Dehm talks to us about Spiritual Direction, a practice that has its roots in early Christianity. Spiritual Direction is the practice of being with people as they attempt to deepen their relationship with the divine, or to learn and grow in their own personal spirituality. Alice will lead us in learning and discussion about this ancient tool for spiritual growth.

**Nov. 8: "A Hungry Heart"** (Chapel)

Everyone has a hungry heart. Many of us have a spiritual hunger that gets fed in different ways. Spiritual Director Jill Bates leads us in discussion and reflection on what spiritual hunger is, and how we tend to it according to our individual needs.

**November 15 and 22: "Church Responses to Hunger, Near and Far"** (Chapel)

Some of the earliest biblical texts called Christians to feed the hungry. Throughout church history, individual Christians and small groups have shared food with hungry people around them. In the twentieth century, however, Christians created large organizations to feed the hungry, both in their communities and around the world. These two sessions will look at the theology, politics, and motivations that created and directed these institutions—a history that will help us think about our own understanding of hunger, poverty and theology. Dan Sack, a UCC pastor member of our congregation, will teach the class.

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**All Saints Sunday**  
features John Rutter's Requiem

—Bill Chin

Our annual service of remembrance will include the beautiful setting of the Requiem mass by British composer John Rutter. All but two of the movements will be heard in the course of the service, sung by our Sanctuary Choir and friends. The instrumental ensemble accompanying them will be musician members of the First United congregation: Marilee Castañeda, flute; Ricardo Castañeda, oboe; Julie O'Shea, cello; Bobby Everson, timpani; with local harpist Stephen Hartman joining them. Cathryn Wilkinson will play the organ, and I will conduct.

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**Children's Choir sings on November 22**

The First United Children's Choir is looking forward to its first service this year. If you're a singer in third through eighth grade, you should join us for the next time we sing. The choir rehearses for half an hour after Sunday services.

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**Music At First's  
Annual Christmas  
Spectacular!**

—Elaine Pierce

**Mark it on your calendar now—**  
Saturday, December 19, 7:30 pm at First United.  
It's Sing We Joyous, an evening of holiday cheer for the whole family. While this year's raffle will benefit Cluster Tutoring, the punch and cookies and Christmas carol sing-along and candle light and beautiful music will most definitely benefit you! Stay tuned for more details.

**Lamps of love**

O Lord, take my ears and  
hear through them,  
take my hands and use  
them, take my lips and  
speak through them,  
take my eyes and smile  
through them, take my heart  
and mind and will,  
and use them as  
lamps of love,  
by which your light may  
shine in all the darkness  
of this suffering world.

—Anonymous  
*The Bridge of Stars*



**Music  
At First**

*You are invited to  
A Recital at First United Church*

**"OCCASIONAL  
ORGAN  
MUSIC"**

Cathryn Wilkinson  
performs on the 88-rank Casavant pipe organ  
Saturday, November 14, 2009 at 7:00 pm  
Admission is free.

All offerings will support the Walk-In Ministry of Oak Park housed at First United Church. A good hour of beautiful music written to commemorate special occasions by William Walton, Margaret Sandresky, and Frank Ferko. Of course, to make any occasion complete, there will be a prelude and fugue by J. S. Bach! Children (and all music lovers!) are welcome on this musical occasion!

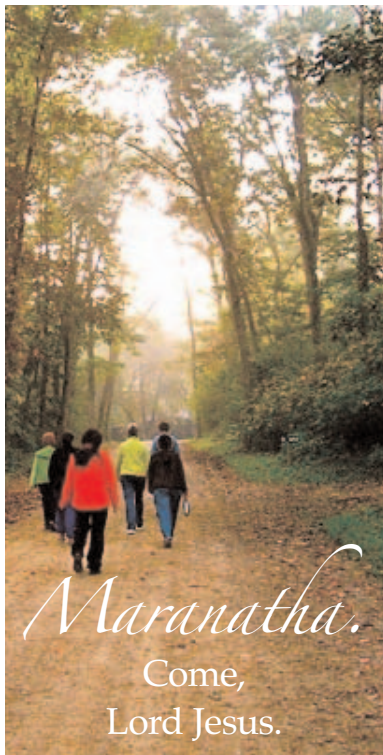
For more information,  
please call 708-386-5215, ext. 61

### **Operations Report** —Judith Loevy

We have been very focused on several important infrastructure issues. We have contracted to have the flat roof directly over the Narthex repaired. The repairs on the roof over the classrooms must be reevaluated by the roofer. He will be doing a water test to see if they can identify where this leak is originating. The electrician will be coming out to re-attach the main electrical box to the outside of the building. We also have the boiler folks coming out, at their expense, to look at why the Kewaunee Boiler is leaking in the spot where it was repaired this last summer. The Kewaunee is 93 years old this year. Every day is a new day with an older building. Our goal is to keep this plant running efficiently; some days are more challenging than others. If you see something that needs attention please call me or send me an email at [operations@firstunitedoakpark.com](mailto:operations@firstunitedoakpark.com). Your input is always gratefully received.

### **Automated Pledge Contributions** — Julie O'Shea

At the church we need our members who are able to fulfill their pledge obligations. We rely on the pledge support to keep our congregation and church vibrant and strong. If paying your pledge is a difficult task to remember or is always getting put at the bottom of the pile of things to do – consider automatic contributions. The church, or you, can set up a recurring transaction that transfers your pledge amount all at once, once monthly, twice monthly or quarterly. You can choose if this transaction is to happen on the 1st, 5th, 15th or 20th of the month – whatever works for your finances. Please consider setting this up by going to the church website [www.firstunitedoakpark.com](http://www.firstunitedoakpark.com), choose the Giving Tab, go to Stewardship/Giving and scroll down to the Give Online section and select the donate now link. From here you can set up a one time transfer or a recurring gift to the church. For questions contact me at the Church office.



*Maranatha.*

Come,  
Lord Jesus.

## Our Stewardship is an Act of Justice

—Chris Ronnow

Last August I had the privilege to join with five other members of First United and travel along with representatives from other Chicago churches to Colombia. We saw first hand the critical mission work being done by our church as they seek to be in solidarity with the oppressed and to bring justice to those who are being denied basic human rights. We support missions like this by pledging to First United.

I was reminded of the words from Reinhold Niebuhr that our “capacity for justice makes democracy possible, but (our) capacity for injustice makes democracy necessary.” I believe that there is within these words a striking call in which to frame our sense of justice and our opportunities to be better stewards of our time and talents. We are a blessed people but too often we take things so much for granted. Yet problems of homelessness, hunger and the absence of access to meet basic human need persists. When we are honest with one another we acknowledge that there is an imbalance when it comes to access to and the distributon of resources. And we can do something about it! Gloria Steinem has observed “it’s more rewarding to watch money change the world than to watch it accumulate.” We can see and experience this directly as we support the work in Colombia, work in the food pantry, volunteer in cluster tutoring, provide grandmothers in Kenya resources that help them raise their grandchildren, and in dozens of other projects we support at First United.

I want to affirm without any apology that it is the responsibility of the powerful, the wealthy, and the privileged to take the lead in gifts of justice. And at the risk of losing you, we are by most objective measurements the powerful, the wealthy and the privileged. While some might be struggling with some momentary disruption —hopefully short term—for the majority of us we have plenty to give. Our 4th Sunday cash offerings have been a wonderful affirmation of this. Our annual pledge to support the mission and ministry programs of First United is another.

It is right and just to speak up for the dispossessed, to give shelter to the disadvantaged, to work to assure access to quality education, to vote and vote with informed consent, to be willing to add our names to petitions and lobby our elected representatives for just laws, to buy products that are “fair trade” products and which helps ensure workers in developing countries a living wage.

We change the world one step and one day at a time. I believe our giving is a sacred act and must be done carefully with a deep passion for justice, a belief that in justice we seek and find reconciliation. What does the Lord require of us....but to do justice, love mercy, and walk humbly!

**The perfect chord**  
The diversity in the  
family should be the cause  
of love and  
harmony, as it is in music  
where many different notes  
blend together in the  
making of the  
perfect chord.

—from Baha’i scriptures, Persia  
*The Bridge of Stars*

## Gifts That Keep Giving

—Kris Ronnow

Years ago, a long time church member gave a “legacy” gift to First United. Angeline Gebhard gave the proceeds from a sale of real estate to endow a fund to honor her husband Paul. She stipulated that half of the proceeds be used for church building projects and half to “aid in expanding the awareness and understanding of the mission of Christ’s church.” The earnings from this endowed fund continue to be available to church members engaging in mission trips nationally and internationally. Dozens have received assistance over the years.

Angie believed in mission and her creative and inquisitive commitment provides a role model for all of us. She was the first woman to serve on the Session of First Presbyterian Church and the first woman to serve as a Trustee of the VOP. She was active in the LWV and an early advocate for LGBT concerns. She believed in the world wide mission of the church and traveled alone to Korea shortly after that war ended and she was among the first of our congregation to travel to the MidEast. She served on the Board of National Missions of the Presbyterian Church and the Board of McCormick Theological Seminary. In all these ministries, she witnessed the transforming work being done by the church. She believed in the underlying value of direct exposure to God in action throughout the world. Her witness continues to live on!

Her “legacy” gift had an initial value of \$ 27,000 and has grown through reinvestment to now value approximately \$ 75,000 with annual grants totaling \$5,000. As you do your estate planning give thanks for people like Angie who believed in the transforming power of God. Please prayerfully consider what you might do for First United through an estate gift!

**Do You Use GoodSearch... When Searching the Web?** —Mark Buck

Global Ministries received the following recently from Diane Millar, member of Pilgrim Faith UCC, Oak Lawn Illinois and a Ministries and Mission Interpreter (MMI): "A couple of years ago I received an invitation to use the GoodSearch website to benefit Global Ministries. I've been using it 10 to 15 times most days ever since. If I just click 10 times a day, I generate \$36 dollars a year to Global Ministries. I'm clicking anyway, so why not do some good at the same time?" More than \$480 has been generated by people using GoodSearch and choosing Global Ministries – Disciples of Christ and United Church of Christ as the cause they support. You too can set a bookmark or toolbar to use GoodSearch easily every time you search online and benefit Global Ministries. Invite your friends, family and others in your church to do the same. Go to <http://www.goodsearch.com/?charityid=847213> for more information and to start giving while you search the internet. [Note: I have checked this out, concluded a search, and it really does work, with comparable speed to other on-line search engines. You are not limited to Global Ministries, but may determine your own object (or objects) of giving.]

**PrimeTime Goes Retro!** — Janet Haisman

Join us for an evening of fun and fellowship on Saturday, November 14, 6-9 pm, at the home of Bob and Marilyn Giles, 1035 North Grove in Oak Park. We will celebrate our formative years with food, photos, and fun! Bring a dish like Mom used to make (comfort food is the theme!), and bring two (2) photos from your earlier years. (Think: birthday, new clothes, new car, sports, music, dance, hobbies, pets, graduation, wedding, family reunions – anything that tells a story!) Please let us know that you will be joining us, and let us know what you will be bringing. Call or e-mail Marilyn Heinrichs, our co-host, at (708)366-7453 or [marl.heinrichs@gmail.com](mailto:marl.heinrichs@gmail.com) -- Plan on great eats and lots of laughter! See you then!

**"Called to Be Family"— Women's Retreat February 5-7, 2010**

—Jackie Eckholm

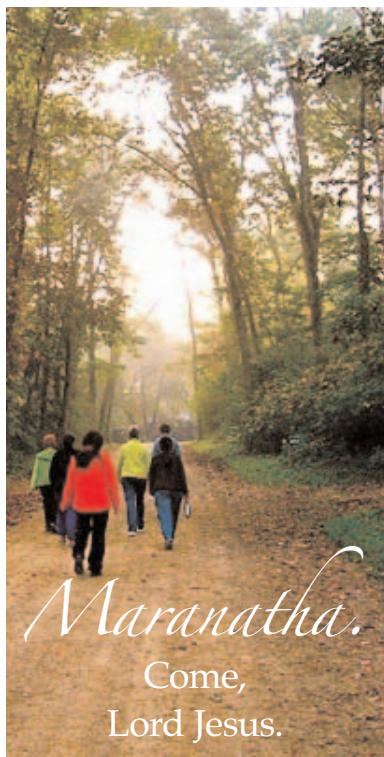
Our 26th annual joint retreat with Lincoln Park Presbyterian will once again be held at the Siena Center in Racine, Wisconsin. This year our leader will be the Rev. Alex Hendrickson, a Presbyterian pastor from the St. Louis area. She will help us explore the ways that we are called to be "family" as individuals and faith communities and what the joys and responsibilities of that calling are. The Women's Retreat Committee needs volunteers to help make this retreat a success. If you would be willing to give some of your time to this event please contact me (386-5478 or [jmeckholm@comcast.net](mailto:jmeckholm@comcast.net)) or Cindy Palombi (383-0945 or [cindy.palombi@sbcglobal.net](mailto:cindy.palombi@sbcglobal.net)).

**Evening Division Program** —Marcia Ashton

Thursday November 5th at 6:30 pm, Centennial Hall. We will gain insight into some of the remarkable women who helped build Chicago in this illustrated program presented by docents of the Chicago Architectural Foundation. Notable women include Juliette Kinzie, Bertha Palmer, Frances Glessner and Ruth Page. Reservations/cancellations due by Monday, November 2nd. Call Grace Behrendes at 708- 386-2721. All women of the church are encouraged to attend this exceptional program!

**PrimeTime FYI Bulletin Board** —Bud and Susan Meyers

The PrimeTime FYI Bulletin Board is a twice-monthly announcement of generally less-publicized local area events/activities. Fellow PrimeTime friends have submitted these suggestions to share their interests with others. The suggestions are for social, community-building enjoyment, and they are in addition to the scheduled PrimeTime monthly events. They will not be hosted unless specified in the announcement. The FYI Bulletin Board is posted online and on the PrimeTime display in the church Lounge on the 15th and 30th of each month. It is also available via U.S. Postal mail! Call us, 524-1634, if you would like to join our mailing list.



*Maranatha.*  
Come,  
Lord Jesus.

**Marriage Enrichment Weekend**

River Glen Presbyterian Church

November 13, 6:30 – 8:30 pm

& November 14, 9 am – 12 pm

—Mark Buck

Rev. Dr. Christopher Miller, director of the Counseling Center in Evanston will lead in conversation on relationship and provide tools to continually develop one’s journey with God and spouse. Cost - \$25 per household for the entire weekend. (Child care will be provided for both days) Contact River Glen Presbyterian Church to reserve your place in this workshop, 630-357-5104.

**Sponsor A Family**

—Sher Watts Spooner

The Holiday Food and Gift Basket Program needs sponsors to buy Christmas presents for needy families again this year. This may be the only way some needy local families will receive any Christmas gifts. Can’t afford to adopt a whole family? You also can take a gift tag for just one individual. Sign up before and after church in November, take a gift tag or two, and buy gifts, to be returned wrapped and tagged, on Sunday, Dec. 6. Questions? Look for me by the little Christmas tree in the lounge on Sundays in November, starting Nov. 1; call me at 383-4408; or e-mail me at sandaspooner@comcast.net.

**Walk-in Ministry Benefit Performances of Mrs. Coney**

7:00 pm, November 20 & 22 at Oak Park’s Unity Temple

—Belinda Bremner

The memory play, performed as a concert reading beginning with traditional music and sing-along, centers on a man’s memories of his boyhood Christmas in Kentucky in the hard-scrabble days of the Great Depression. Magic, folklore, and the spirit of Christmas combine to weave a powerful spell celebrating generosity and kindness. The performance is a benefit for the Walk-in Ministry and Oak Park Festival Theatre. The Walk-in Ministry provides short-term immediate assistance to the unemployed and under-employed through help with transportation, food and clothing. Oak Park Festival Theatre brought Shakespeare and other classics to audiences for thirty-five years. Tickets available at the door - \$15 Adults - \$10 Seniors and Students. For more information call (708) 445-4440.

**Alternative Christmas Store**

—Beth Mrkvicka

The Alternative Christmas Store provides a direct connection to some of our mission partners, while also offering you and your family the chance to transform your holiday giving ritual. We will again be open the four Sundays of Advent. Through various worker cooperatives around the world and local organizations such as The Food Pantry and PADS, ACS offers some wonderful handcrafted items along with soups, chocolates, coffee and, of course, Erie House pecans.

Through Church World Service, you can help provide needed materials around the world. Why not consider purchasing a school kit for children in Kenya, or buying a sewing machine for women in an Argentinean village? There will be new opportunities for giving this year including a partnership with FUSH as they begin planning and working towards their work camp next summer. We plan to offer a way to support Presbyterian outreach in Colombia and will once again be selling fair trade olive oil from Palestine.

The Alternative Christmas Store will be open before and after worship on the four Sundays of Advent (November 29, December 6, 13 and 20). For those of you who want to get a jump-start on your holiday baking or Thanksgiving hosting, we will be selling Erie House pecans, coffee and chocolate before and after worship the Sunday before Thanksgiving, November 22.

**A life of learning**

I know that I will never  
stop learning.  
Because I am driven by  
my love, which touches  
the vital lives of others,  
much of what I learn  
will give me joy.  
I pray to receive from  
others the sparks of  
their inner light,  
ignited by the light  
I cast upon them.

*The Bridge of Stars*

**A Moment for Denominational Mission**

—Mark Buck

*"The church exists for mission as a fire exists for burning."* --Theologian Emil Brunner

An ongoing series of reports from the global ministries of the United Church of Christ and the Presbyterian Church USA.

**Missionary Alice Winters to Visit First United Church on November 30**

First United Church will host Presbyterian Missionary to Colombia, the Rev. Alice Winters, for an informational gathering about her ministry in that nation on Monday, November 30 at 7:00 pm. Please plan to attend this event to learn more about our support through the Chicago Religious Leadership Network on Latin America of the vital witness to justice in Colombia.

The Rev. Alice Winters teaches Bible and biblical languages in the School of theology of the Reformed University of Colombia. She is also on the editorial council of Journal of Latin American Biblical Studies, and participates in ecumenical Bible study programs for the Latin American Society of Biblical Scholars. She has been under appointment to Colombia since she was commissioned in 1977.

In response to the increasing violence in Colombia, Alice, along with others in the Presbyterian Church of Colombia, has become involved in the struggle for human rights. She is active in the Ecumenical Network of Churches and Christian Organizations for Human Rights and in the work with displaced persons in the area of Barranquilla, where she lives. A graduate of the University of Michigan Law School, Alice worked as a tax law specialist for the U.S. Internal Revenue Service in Washington, D.C. Her involvement in an inner-city Washington church led to her call to the gospel ministry.

During a year as an exchange student at the Latin American Biblical Seminary in Costa Rica, she discovered an abiding interest in the "revolutionary dimensions of the gospel" as a theological imperative in the struggle against poverty, injustice, and oppression. She first went to Colombia in 1977 to direct a program of leadership training among rural pastors in the jungle wilderness of northwest Colombia, incorporating health, agriculture, and community development into theological education. In 1983 she joined the faculty of the Presbyterian Theological Seminary, predecessor to the School of Theology of the Reformed University, and served as its president from 1987-1992. She was the first woman to be named president of a seminary in Latin America.

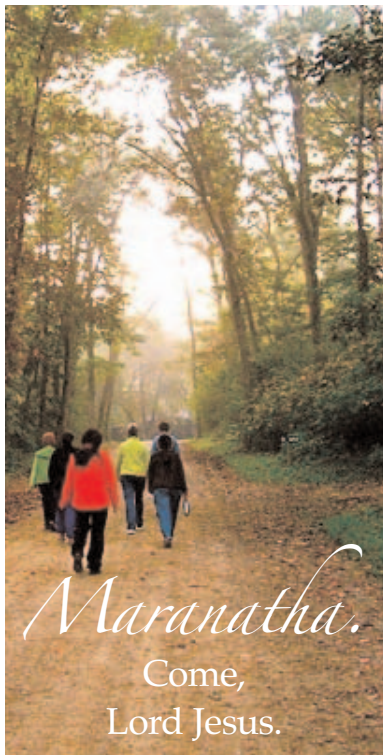
**Bread Sale, December 5, 2009 —****Hanging of the Greens Rehearsal Day — Jackie Eckholm**

During Saturday rehearsals for Hanging of the Greens, the aroma of fresh bread will be wafting through First United Church. Please help the Women's Retreat Committee by purchasing a loaf or more of homemade, fresh bread to support the 26th annual Women's Retreat at the Siena Center in Racine. If you would like to knead some dough and bake some bread the Retreat Committee would love your help. Please contact our Chief Chef, Nancy Carleton (386-9195 or [reclues@sbcglobal.net](mailto:reclues@sbcglobal.net)).

**Nursery School Registration Opens**

—Joan White

Registration for September, 2010, for First United Church Nursery School officially opens on November 3. Church families have priority to register until the Open House on January 20, 2010, at which time registration opens to the public. The Nursery School offers a quality early learning experience for children 2 through 5 years of age. The two-year-old classes meet Monday/Thursday and Tuesday/Friday. The 3, 4 and 5 year-old-classes meet Tuesday through Friday. The school offers several class options: 8:15 to 11:15, 8:45 to 11:15, 12:15 to 2:45 and 12:15 to 3:45 for four and five year olds. A Lunch Bunch is offered from 11:15 to 1:15 for ten children. For more information about the Nursery School program check out the school web site at [www.firstunitedschool.com](http://www.firstunitedschool.com). Prospective families are invited to visit the school at any time. Call me at (708) 848-4910, to arrange an appointment for a visit.

*Maranatha.*Come,  
Lord Jesus.

November 2009

**Regularly Scheduled Weekly Meetings:** Please check with convener if you have questions.

<i>Wednesdays</i> 2nd 3rd & 4th and 1st	3:30p 7:00p 7:00p	Food Pantry Open Food Pantry Open Adult Choir	Kathy Russell/Michele Zurakowski - 386-1324
<i>Thursdays</i>	6:30p	Cluster Tutoring Classes	Bill Chin - 386-5215
<i>Fridays</i>	7:00a	Men's Breakfast Group	Kathy McCabe - 773-378-5530
	7:00p	Peace Prayer Vigil	Ted Despotes - 386-4809
<i>Saturdays</i>	8:30a	Inner Peace/World Peace	Amy Pappageorge - 445-1633
	9:00a	Food Pantry	Jeff Olson - 383-3154
<b>Walk-in-Ministry</b>	Monday—Saturday 10 to 11am		Kathy Russell/Michele Zurakowski - 386-1324 Susan Zaruba—386-1946

<b>Week of November 1</b>			
Sunday 1	8:30a 8:30a 9:30a 9:30a 11:00a 12:15p 12:15p 6:00p	New Member Breakfast Church School Visioning Christian Education for All Quest Worship-All Saints Sunday-Communion-Cantata-New Members Join PrimeTime Planning Children's Choir FUSH/FUJI Youth Groups	Mark Buck Marylen Marty-Gentile  Art Spooner/Marylen Marty-Gentile Janet Haisman Bill Chin Leah Fowler
Monday 2	7:00p	Fellowship of Reconciliation Finance Committee	Claudette Zobel
Tuesday 3	8:00a 11:00a 7:00p	FUNS Oversight Board Evening Division Board Faith in Worship Committee Adult Education Committee Library Committee Children's Ministry Committee	Carole Ferguson Scott Haldeman William Tweedley Cindy Palombi Andrea Altier & Barbara Metric
Wednesday 4	11:00a	Weekday Bible Study	Leah Fowler
Thursday 5	6:30p 7:30p	Evening Division Dinner Pastoral Search Committee	Carole Ferguson Melinda Haag
Friday 6		<b>Church Offices Closed for Veteran's Day</b>	
Saturday 7	1:00p	Dances of Universal Peace	Cindy Palombi

<b>Week of November 8</b>			
Sunday 8	8:30a 9:30a 9:30a 11:00a 12:15p 12:15p 6:00p	Church School Leader Breakfast Christian Education for All Quest Worship Budget Discernment Meeting Children's Choir FUSH/FUJI Youth Groups	Marylen Marty-Gentile Art Spooner/Marylen Marty-Gentile Claudette Zobel Bill Chin Leah Fowler
Tuesday 10	7:00p	Finance Committee Youth Board Deacons Shawl Ministry Vision Team	Claudette Zobel Leah Fowler Carl Nauert Elan Long
Wednesday 11	7:30p	Communication Committee	Mark Loafman
Thursday 12	8:00a	Weekday Bible Study	Martha Reese
Friday 13	11:00a	Pastoral Search Committee	Leah Fowler
Saturday 14	7:00p 6:00p 7:00p	FUJI Lock-in PrimeTime at Bob and Marilyn Giles' Organ Recital	Melinda Haag Leah Fowler Janet Haisman Cathryn Wilkinson

<b>Week of November 15</b>			
Sunday 15	9:30a 9:30a 11:00a 12:15p 6:00p 7:30p	Christian Education for All Quest Worship Children's Choir FUSH/FUJI Youth Groups Church Council	Art Spooner/Marylen Marty-Gentile Bill Chin Leah Fowler Laurie Jolicoeur
Tuesday 17	7:30p	Weekday Bible Study	Leah Fowler
Wednesday 18	11:00a	Spiritual Guidance Groups	Julie R. Harley
Thursday 19	7:00p 7:00p 7:30p	Shawl Ministry Pastoral Search Committee	Elan Long Melinda Haag
Friday 20	7:00p	Benefit Performance of Mrs. Coney at Unity Temple	
Saturday 21	9:00a	Directions at Member's Home	

<b>Week of November 22</b>			
Sunday 22	9:30a 9:30a 11:00a 12:00p 12:15p 3:00p 6:00p 7:00p	Christian Education for All Quest Worship Congregational Meeting to Vote on Budget 2010 Children's Choir PFLAG FUSH/FUJI Youth Groups Community of Congregations Thanksgiving Service Benefit Performance of Mrs. Coney at Unity Temple	Art Spooner/Marylen Marty-Gentile Claudette Zobel Bill Chin Kate Croker Leah Fowler Mark Buck
Monday 23	12:00p	Food Pantry Turkey Give Away	Kathy Russell
Tuesday 24	3:00p 7:00p	Food Pantry Food Packing Building and Grounds Committee Personnel Committee Faith in Action Committee New Member Committee Youth Committee Dinner and a Movie	Kathy Russell John Zaruba Al Parchem Bob Hahn Susan Saliny Judy Bradeen Ted Despotes
Wednesday 25	6:00p	<b>Church Offices Closed for Thanksgiving</b>	
Thursday 26 & Friday 27			

<b>Week of November 29</b>			
Sunday 29	9:30a 9:30a 9:30a & 12:00p 11:00a 12:15p	Christian Education for All Quest Alternative Christmas Store Worship-Advent 1-Communion Children's Choir	Art Spooner/Marylen Marty-Gentile Beth Mrkovic Bill Chin
Monday 30	7:00p	Alice Winters-Colombia Missionary	Mark Buck

Julie R. Harley,  
Lead Pastor

Leah Fowler,  
Associate Minister of Youth  
and Adult Education

Marylen Marty-Gentile,  
Director of Children  
& Family Ministries

Mark Buck,  
Interim Associate Pastor for  
Membership and Mission

Jeff Foels,  
McCormick Seminary Intern

Bill Chin,  
Director of Music Ministry

708.386.5215

Fax: 708.386.7480

office@firstunitedoakpark.com

*Thank You!*  
*Thank You!*  
*Thank You!*  
*Thank You!*

Thank you so much for your thoughtful cards, calls, meals, gifts, music, flowers, and all-around support. I am grateful to you from the bottom of my heart, as it has all served to lift my spirits, and those of Don, Ellen, and Tom. This journey would not have gone nearly as well without your faithful attention to me and my family. Bless you!

With three chemo treatments finished, and one to go before I return to MD Anderson Cancer Center for an assessment in early November, I'm feeling stronger each day. I do believe I'm getting better and will be back among you soon.

With much, much love,

—Beth Drews

## Save These Dates

<b>Sunday, November 1</b>	8:30a	New Member Breakfast
<b>Thursday, November 5</b>	6:30p	Evening Division Dinner
<b>Sunday, November 8</b>	8:30a	Church School Leader Breakfast
	12:15p	Budget Discernment Meeting
<b>Friday, November 13</b>	7:00p	FUJI Lock-in
<b>Saturday, November 14</b>	6:00p	PrimeTime at Giles' Home
	7:00p	Organ Recital at First United Church
<b>Friday, November 20</b>	7:00p	Benefit Performance of Mrs. Coney at Unity Temple
<b>Sunday, November 22</b>	12:00p	Congregational Meeting to Vote on Budget 2010
	7:00p	Community of Congregations Thanksgiving Service
	7:00p	Benefit Performance of Mrs Coney at Unity Temple
<b>Wednesday, November 25</b>	6:00p	Dinner and a Movie
<b>Thursday, November 26</b> <b>and Friday, November 27</b>		<b>Church Offices Closed for Thanksgiving</b>
<b>Sunday, November 29</b>	9:30a & 12p	Alternative Christmas Store
<b>Monday, November 30</b>	7:00p	Alice Winters-Colombia Missionary

**Deadline for the December 2009 issue is November 15th.**

*Please e-mail information or articles for the MB to:*

office@firstunitedoakpark.com

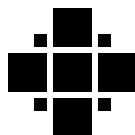
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## November 2009

848 Lake Street  
 Oak Park, Illinois 60301-1314  
 708-386-5215

www.firstunitedoakpark.com

# WEB Edition



**FIRST  
 UNITED  
 CHURCH**  
*of Oak Park*

*an open community  
 united in love  
 & justice*