



FIRST UNITED CHURCH OF OAK PARK

24 DECEMBER 2017

11 A.M. CHRISTMAS EVE

An open community united in love and justice

PREPARING FOR WORSHIP

"To reverence the child in each human heart is to reverence the Christ everywhere."

- William L. Wallace

*Please stand in body or spirit. Please silence cell phones.

GATHERING MUSIC

Noel with Variations

Claude Louis Balbastre

WELCOME

Please sign and pass the connections pew pad.

Lydia Mulkey

As we prepare for worship, let us state why we gather as First United Church of Oak Park:

We are moving from words to witness in our relationship with God,

From individualism to intimate fellowship in our relationship with each other,

From charity to changing structures of injustice in our relationship with the world.

May we do so through our worship today.

WE GATHER

THE ADVENT WREATH

The Huff Family

Why have you come to this place and this time?

We come to worship and to wait.

What is it you want from your God?

We come hoping for hope, praying for peace, dreaming of joy, and longing for love.

Have you heard the words of John the Evangelist?

We have heard the words of John, saying,

"This is how the love of God is revealed to us: God has sent God's only Son into the world so that we can live through him."

This is the light that is coming into the world.

This is the light of love.

The candle of love is lit.

GIFT OF SONG

Love Is Christmas

by Sara Bareilles
Lily Alter

THE CHRIST CANDLE

The prophet Isaiah proclaimed a time when those who walked in the shadows would see a great light. A light would shine and a child would be born to us. The evangelist Luke painted the nativity sky and repeated the heavenly song of the angels, "Glory, peace on earth and goodwill!" John declared that this great light is Christ, the Word made flesh. This great light lives among us. By it we behold God's glory—full of grace and truth. Rejoice, people of God!
The light has come into the world!

The Christ candle is lit as we sing.

One Candle Is Lit

CRADLE SONG

**Come, listen, the sounds of God-with-us ring clear,
and signs of a cross in the distance appear.
The Word once made flesh, yet the Word ever near.
One candle is lit for the Christ-birthday here.**

CALL TO PRAYER

Jane Vachon

We are asked to be ready. Ready for the rebirth of hope, peace, joy and love. We have had time to prepare, and yet we struggle to welcome these gifts into our lives. Let us pray.

SUNG PRAYER FOR WHOLENESS

**O little town of Bethlehem, how still we see thee lie!
Above thy deep and dreamless sleep, the silent stars go by.
Yet in thy dark streets shineth the everlasting light;
The hopes and fears of all the years are met in thee tonight.**

**O holy child of Bethlehem, descend to us, we pray;
Cast out our sin, and enter in, be born in us today.
We hear the Christmas angels the great glad tidings tell;
O come to us, abide with us, our Lord Emmanuel!**

SILENCE IS KEPT.

SUNG ASSURANCE OF LOVE

**How silently, how silently, the wondrous gift is given!
So God imparts to human hearts the glorious love of heaven.
No one discerns God's coming, but in this world of sin,
Where yearning souls long to be whole, the dear Christ enters in.**

***PASSING THE PEACE**

The peace of Christ be with you.
And also with you.

Juliet Thurman

WE HEAR THE STORY

As we hear the story, please remain seated for all hymns.

SONG OF ILLUMINATION

O Come, O Come, Emmanuel

VENI EMMANUEL

**O come, O come, Emmanuel, and ransom captive Israel,
That mourns in lonely exile here until the child of God appear.
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel!**

THE ANNOUNCEMENT

Luke 1:26-32

Julio Desir and Paul Raducha

ANTHEM

The Angel Gabriel from Heaven Came

Basque Carol
Lily Alter and Colin Lonergan

THE BIRTH

Luke 2:1-7

Sophie Lever

HYMN

Away In a Manger

CRADLE SONG

**Away in a manger, no crib for a bed,
The little Lord Jesus laid down his sweet head.
The stars in the sky looked down where he lay,
The little Lord Jesus asleep on the hay.**

THE ANGELS TELL THE NEWS

Luke 2:8-14

Julio Desir and Paul Raducha

HYMN

Angels We Have Heard On High

GLORIA

**Angels we have heard on high, sweetly singing o'er the plains,
And the mountains in reply echoing their joyous strains.
Gloria in excelsis Deo; Gloria in excelsis Deo.**

**Shepherds, why this jubilee? Why your joyous strains prolong?
What the gladsome tidings be, which inspire your heav'nly song?
Gloria in excelsis Deo; Gloria in excelsis Deo.**

**Come to Bethlehem and see Him whose birth the angels sing;
Come, adore on bended knee Christ the Lord, the newborn King.
Gloria in excelsis Deo; Gloria in excelsis Deo.**

SHEPHERDS JOURNEY TO BETHLEHEM

Luke 2:15-18

Jane Vachon

HYMN*The First Nowell*

THE FIRST NOWELL

The first Nowell, the angel did say, was to certain poor shepherds in fields as they lay;
In fields where they lay keeping their sheep, on a cold winter's night that was so deep.
Nowell, Nowell, Nowell, Nowell, Born is the King of Israel.

THE WILD STAR

Matthew 2:1-11

Juliet Thurman

WE RESPOND***HYMN***O Come, All Ye Faithful*

ADESTE FIDELES

O come, all ye faithful, joyful and triumphant,
O come ye, O come ye to Bethlehem!
Come and behold him, born the king of angels!
O come, let us adore him, O come, let us adore him,
O come let us adore him, Christ the Lord!

Yea, Lord, we greet Thee, born this happy morning,
Jesus to thee be all glory given;
Word of the Father, now in flesh appearing!
O come, let us adore him, O come, let us adore him,
O come let us adore him, Christ the Lord!

Sing, choirs of angels, sing in exultation!
Sing, all ye citizens of heav'n above!
Glory to God, all glory in the highest!
O come, let us adore him, O come, let us adore him,
O come let us adore him, Christ the Lord!

PRAYER OF DEDICATION

Colin Lonergan

Offerings are a sacred act of worship. We invite you to use the green giving cards in the pew rack to celebrate what you've already given or to make an additional donation.

OFFERTORY*Greensleeves*

Rowan Zdziarski-West

***DOXOLOGY**

OLD HUNDREDTH

Praise God from whom all blessings flow;
Praise Christ, all people here below.
Praise Holy Spirit evermore;
Praise Triune God whom we adore. Amen.

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

Alicia Reese

In gratitude, may our hearts turn to receive the Light of Christ as we pray.

O God, You call us each by name. Teach us to serve all creatures of your sacred creation. Guide us toward a future filled with love and unity; healing our division. Grant us that hope. We lift our voices to God:

May the Hope of Christ light our path.

The nations are yours, part of your wondrous body. May all leaders know they are called to care; may they heed your peoples' cries for release from senseless oppression. Guide us toward justice and peace. We lift our voices to God:

May the Peace of Christ light our path.

You are the author of all joy. Guide our hearts, minds, and bodies in the ways of joy, that we might hear and heed the pleas of friends among us who hunger, thirst, and face the cold nights. Guide us toward mercy, healing our fear, and lead us to be joy-bearers in your world. We lift our voices to God:

May the Joy of Christ light our path.

Strengthen all who suffer, and those who care for them. Open our hearts to see your tender Presence already within us. Guide us as we love one another into wholeness. We lift our voices to God:

May the Love of Christ light our path.

God of promise, we seek the Star of Wonder and pray for that light to illumine our paths. We lay in your open hands our prayers for the Hope, Peace, Joy, and Love that only you can bring. Guide us, we pray.

May the Presence of Christ light our path. Amen.

HYMN

It Came Upon The Midnight Clear

CAROL

**It came upon the midnight clear,
That glorious song of old,
From angels bending near the earth,
To touch their harps of gold:
"Peace on the earth, goodwill to men
From heavens all gracious King!"
The world in solemn stillness lay
To hear the angels sing.**

**And ye, beneath life's crushing load,
whose forms are bending low,
who toil along the climbing way
with painful steps and slow,
look now! for glad and golden hours
come swiftly on the wing.**

**O rest beside the weary road,
and hear the angels sing!** *Continued on the next page*

For lo! the days are hastening on,
by prophet seen of old,
when with the ever-circling years
shall come the time foretold
when peace shall over all the earth
its ancient splendors fling,
and the whole world send back the song
which now the angels sing.

WE GO OUT TO SERVE

THE GIFT

John 1:1-5; 14

Nick Larson, Romy Auch,
Ellie Hickok-Fletcher

*HYMN

Silent Night, Holy Night

STILLE NACHT

Silent night, holy night! All is calm, all is bright,
Round yon virgin mother and child!
Holy Infant, so tender and mild,
Sleep in heavenly peace, sleep in heavenly peace.

Silent night, holy night! Shepherds quake at the sight,
Glories stream from heaven afar,
Heavenly hosts sing: "Alleluia;
Christ the Savior is born, Christ the Savior is born."

Silent night, holy night! Son of God, love's pure light,
Radiant beams from Thy holy face,
With the dawn of redeeming grace,
Jesus, Lord, at Thy birth, Jesus, Lord, at Thy birth.

Silent night, holy night! Wondrous star, lend thy light;
With the angels let us sing,
Alleluia to our King;
Christ the Savior is born, Christ the Savior is born.

*CHARGE AND BENEDICTION

Lydia Mulkey, Romy Auch, Charlotte Auch, and Mabel Stemley

*BENEDICTION RESPONSE

Joy to the World!

Joy to the world! The Lord is come:
Let earth receive her king;
Let every heart prepare Christ room,
and heaven and nature sing, and heaven and nature sing,
and heaven, and heaven and nature sing. *Continued on the next page*

Joy to the earth! The Savior reigns!
Let all their songs employ;
While fields and floods, rocks, hills, and plains
repeat the sounding joy, repeat the sounding joy,
repeat, repeat the sounding joy.

Christ rules the world with truth and grace,
and makes the nation prove
the glories of God's righteousness
and wonders of God's love, and wonders of God's love,
and wonders, wonders of God's love.

As you leave, please deposit your candles in the baskets by the entrances.

SENDING MUSIC

Noel

Louis Claude Daquin

NEW YEAR'S EVE STICKY CHURCH. December 31 - 11 a.m. in Centennial Hall

Start the year with sticky faith alongside family and friends! Worship will be interactive and kid-friendly, filled with intergenerational fun. Together we'll sing and pray and hear the stories of scripture, munch on breakfast, sing some more, and clean the space before going on our way.

OUR CHRISTMAS OFFERING supports mission programming here at First United. Ten percent of the offering will be shared with RefugeeOne, the agency through whom we sponsor a refugee family. RefugeeOne does incredible face-to-face work with families just arriving in the US, and walks with them as they get accustomed to living in a new country, speaking a new language, learning new ways of life, etc. The organization is also active in advocacy. Thank you for the many ways that you contribute to the mission of First United.

2017 POINSETTIA DEDICATIONS

In loving memory of Quigg and Joan Porter and Margaret Davis, from Reneé Davis.

In honor of Howard Davis, from Reneé Davis.

In honor of Charles and Leona Summers, and Andrew and Barbara Sorenson, from Dale Sorenson and Carol Summers.

In memory of Bill May and David Rickert and Carol Faust; in honor of Julia Faust, love Stan and Sara Faust.

In memory of our mama and grandmama, Janie Mae Arnold, love Jan Arnold and Mary Anderson.

In loving memory of Richard Waichler, from Nancy Waichler.

In memory of John R. Sibley, from the Sibley Family.

In memory of Gardner C. Borden and Christine B. Jennings, from the Sibley Family.

WELCOME TO FIRST UNITED. JOIN US ANY SUNDAY.

We're glad you're here to share our Christmas Eve service. Learn more about our church:

WORSHIP. Worship is our time to praise and grow closer to God. Worship each week includes song, prayer, learning, silence, and giving. Children participate fully in worship. We offer safe, quality childcare and quiet play for children five and under in our nursery. A member of the pastoral staff preaches every Sunday to lead the congregation in interpreting the word of God. An upcoming series of sermons will focus on the Sermon on the Mount and segue into Lent. To learn more about First United's approach to preaching, contact Interim Lead Pastor Deborah Kapp, 708-386-5215 (ext. 101) or dkapp@firstunitedoakpark.com.

EDUCATION FOR ALL. Church school and adult education classes are held at 9:30 every Sunday morning from September through late May. Children focus on Bible study, singing, and mission. Adult ed focuses on issues from Bible study to faith journeys to church history to current events to international conflicts. To find out more about the church's education classes, contact Lydia Mulkey, Associate Pastor of Education, at 708-386-5215 (ext. 103) or lmulkey@firstunitedoakpark.com.

CHILDREN'S MINISTRY. Besides church school, First United also offers our NAEYC-accredited First United Nursery School. An open house for parents interested in enrolling children ages 2-5 will be Tuesday, January 16. Contact Nursery School Director Joan White at 708-848-4910 or jwhite@firstunitedschool.com.

YOUTH MINISTRY. On Sunday nights we welcome youth to FUJI (junior highs) and FUSH (senior highs) for dinner, fellowship, service projects and more. Both groups take weekend retreats to bond, relax, play and just chill. This summer's FUSH work camp will be in Port Orchard, Washington, to focus on housing. For more information, contact Alicia Reese, Coordinator of Youth & Children's Ministry, at areese@firstunitedoakpark.com.

MUSIC. First United offers our weekly Sanctuary Choir, our Casavant organ, and occasionally the added music of our Handbell Choir and church school children. Singers interested in joining our Sanctuary Choir can contact William Chin, Director of Music, at 386-5215 (ext. 108) or bill@firstunitedoakpark.com. Music at First offers a series of concerts throughout the year, starting with a program of Shakespeare-inspired music by brass and choirs on February 10.

NEWCOMERS. 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 full inclusion of LGBTQ people in membership and ministry. Interested in learning more? A New Members' class will start in late winter. Contact Britt Cox, Associate Pastor for Discipleship, at 708-386-5215 (ext. 105) or bcox@firstunitedoakpark.com for more information.

MISSION. We have mission partners that work both within the church and in the wider community, from Chicago's Austin neighborhood to the Middle East. We offer hands-on opportunities to tutor, to work with a refugee family, to help with the Oak Park River Forest Food Pantry housed in our basement, and much more. We're a church that "walks the walk," which is reflected in the three paths of our Vision 2020 statement. We are moving from:

- **Words to witness** in our relationship with God.
- **Individualism to intimate fellowship** with other members of the church community.
- **Charity to changing structures** in our relationship with the world.



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848 Lake Street, Oak Park, IL 60301 | 708-386-5215
firstunitedoakpark.com | facebook.com/firstunitedoakpark