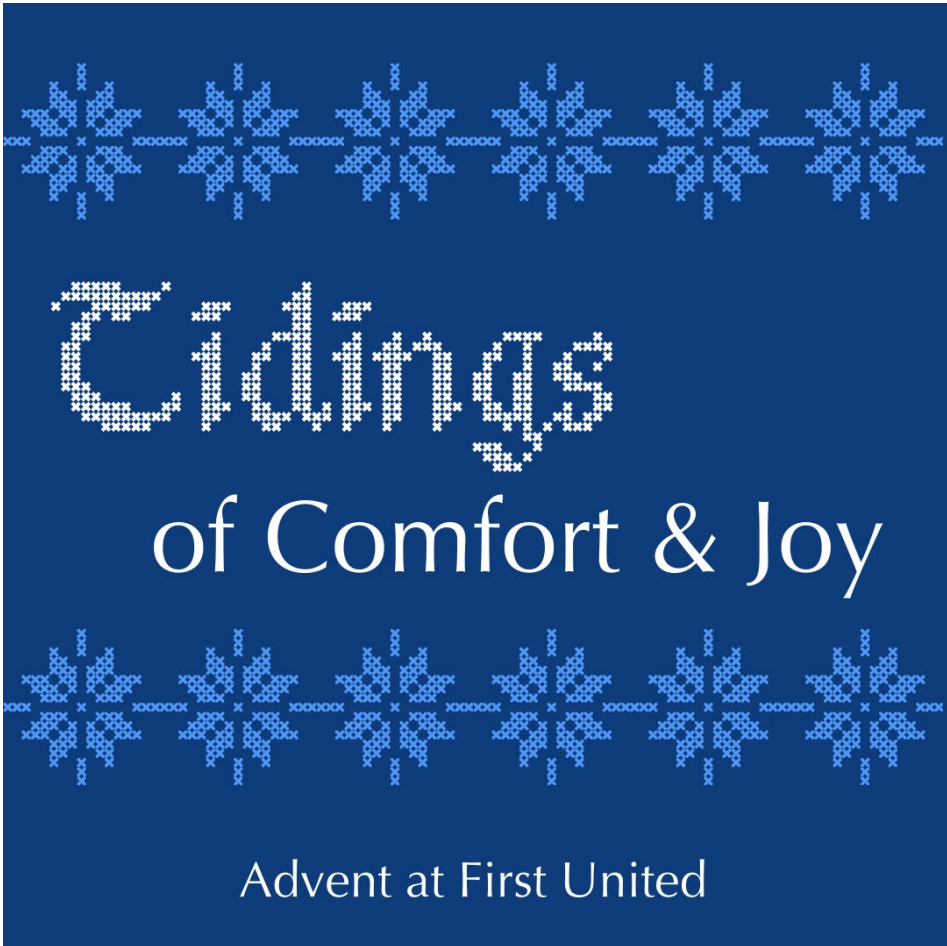


FIRST UNITED CHURCH OF OAK PARK
November 28, 2021



An open community united in love and justice

PREPARING FOR WORSHIP

PRELUDE

Michael Surratt

Sleepers, Wake! by J.S. Bach

WELCOME

Alicia Reese

*LIGHTING OF THE ADVENT CANDLE – HOPE

The Temperly Family

We light one candle today, the candle of hope.

And we remember the times when one light is all that is needed:

A ship in a storm sighting a lighthouse,

A fire in a campsite keeping the whole night away,

The great wide world and all her people warmed by the light of one single sun.

Some days, one light of hope is all that is needed.

Please join us in reading this prayer by Howard Thurman

**I will light Candles this Christmas,
Candles of joy despite all the sadness,
Candles of hope where despair keeps watch,
Candles of courage for fears ever present,
Candles of peace for tempest-tossed days,
Candles of grace to ease heavy burdens,
Candles of love to inspire all my living,
Candles that will burn all year long.**

MUSICAL RESPONSE

Sanctuary Choir

God rest your mind, O humankind, let strife and conflict cease.

Remember love is active here, and only to increase,

To carry us to well-springs of God's joyous hope and peace.

Oh, tidings of comfort and joy.

WELCOME

Meghan Premo-Hopkins

*PASSING THE PEACE

GATHERING MUSIC

Sanctuary Choir

Watcher, Tell Us of the Night

Watcher, tell us of the night, what its signs of promise are,
Traveler, O a wondrous sight! See that glory-beaming star!
Watcher, does its beauteous ray news of joy or hope foretell?
Traveler, yes; it brings the day, promised day of Israel!

Watcher, tell us of the night, higher yet that star ascends.
Traveler, blessedness and light, peace and truth its course portends.
Watcher, will its beams alone gild the spot that gave them birth?
Traveler, ages are its own; see, it bursts o'er all the earth!

Watcher, tell us of the night, for the morning seems to dawn.
Traveler, shadows take their flight, doubt and terror are withdrawn.
Watcher, you may go your way; hasten to your quiet home.
Traveler, I rejoice today, for Emmanuel has come!

PRAYER FOR WHOLENESS & ASSURANCE OF LOVE

Alicia Reese

MUSICAL RESPONSE

Sanctuary Choir

O Little Town of Bethlehem (verse 3)

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.

LISTENING FOR GOD'S WORD TO US

TIME FOR SHARING

Lydia Mulkey & Alicia Reese

The children of the congregation are invited to draw their attention to the front for a special message. Any child who has difficulty seeing is invited to stand on the pew with the permission and help of your adult.

SCRIPTURE READING – ISAIAH 40:1-8

John Edgerton

SERMON – ANOTHER PROPHETIC PERSPECTIVE

SERMON RESPONSE

Sanctuary Choir

It Came Upon the Midnight Clear (verse 4)

For lo, the days are hastening on, by prophet bards foretold,
When with the ever-circling years comes round the age of gold;
When peace shall over all the earth its ancient splendors fling,
And all the world send back the song which now the angels sing.

RESPONDING TO GOD'S WORD

*CALL TO OFFERING

Alicia Reese

*During the offering, you are invited to come forward to receive communion elements.
Everyone is welcome, please bring the communion elements back to your seat unopened.
Online worshippers are invited to gather communion elements from your home during this time.*

OFFERTORY ANTHEM

Sanctuary Choir

And the Glory of the Lord from Messiah by George Frideric Handel

And the glory of the Lord shall be revealed,
And all flesh shall see it together:
For the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it.

COMMUNION

John Edgerton

Communion elements will be served in individual packages containing both bread and juice. Those worshipping at home are invited to partake at the same time as those worshipping indoors that we might share in communion.

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE & THE LORD'S PRAYER

Lydia Mulkey

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, the power, and the glory forever.

Amen.

GOING FORTH IN DEDICATION AND SERVICE

BLESSING

Alicia Reese

*CLOSING HYMN

Black Hymnal #101 – Comfort, Comfort O My People

“Comfort, comfort O my people, tell of peace,” thus says our God;
Comfort those whose hearts are shrouded, mourning under sorrow’s load.
Speak unto Jerusalem of the peace that waits for them;
Tell them that their sins I cover, and their warfare now is over.

For the herald’s voice is calling in the desert far and near,
Bidding us to make repentance since the realm of God is here.
Oh, that warning cry obey! Now prepare for God a way;
Let the valleys rise in meeting and the hills bow down in greeting.

Straight shall be what long was crooked, and the rougher places plain!
Let your hearts be true and humble, for Messiah’s holy reign.
For God’s glory evermore shall be known o’er all the world;
And all flesh shall see the token that God’s word is never broken.

POSTLUDE

Michael Surratt

Sleepers, Wake! by Johann Gottfried Walther

EVENTS AND UPDATES

Below is just a sampling of the news and events at First United. We invite you to subscribe to receive our monthly "Messenger Bell" newsletter and our weekly "News & Events" eblast by visiting firstunitedoakpark.com. Follow us on Facebook (facebook.com/firstunitedoakpark) where we share our weekly newsletter and lots more!

CHAPEL PRAYER WITH THE DEACONS

Deacons will be in the chapel after worship today for those who would like a time of private prayer and anointing.

ONE WEEK LEFT FOR HOLIDAY FOOD & GIFT BASKET

There's still time to sponsor an individual or family through this year's Holiday Food & Gift basket. Pick up a gift tag in the lounge. Look for Sher Watts Spooner by the little Christmas tree. All gifts are due back at church on Sunday, December 5.

DINNER & A MOVIE, DECEMBER 3

Dinner & a Movie moves up a week in December. Join us on December 3 for a screening of "Barbershop." Welcome to Calvin's Barbershop. They'll cut what's on your head while you say what's on your mind. The barbershop is a place where everyone comes together and is together. Everybody's equal, at least until they walk out the door. You come in for a haircut. You leave with a lot more. No dinner. Movie (free) at 7 p.m. Call Liz Swan (708-567-3490) to RSVP.

ADVENT EVENT, DECEMBER 4

First United's Children's Ministry Team celebrates Advent with our annual Advent Event. Come to First United on Saturday, December 4 from 9-11 a.m. Journey through craft and activity stations where you can make an Advent wreath, Christmas ornaments, a peg people nativity set, and take fun holiday pictures in the photo booth. Invite your friends—the event is free and open to the whole community!

* Please note that this year our event takes place at the same time as food distribution for Beyond Hunger. We ask that you please park on the side streets around church to make space for those who serve our neighbors in need!

HANGING OF THE GREENS, DECEMBER 5

Next week in worship we further prepare for Christmas with our annual Hanging of the Greens service! Our Church School classes will lead worship as they process in with poinsettias and décor, provide service music, and even share the sermon in the form of a play.

SING WE JOYOUS TICKETS NOW AVAILABLE!

Sing We Joyous returns to the live stage in December 2021. This beloved family concert filled with beautiful music and hilarious antics will take place here at First United on December 11 (7:30 p.m.) and 12 (4 p.m.). Visit oriana.org/sing-we-joyous for all the details and for the link to purchase tickets.

DATE CHANGE: PARENT CONVERSATION, DECEMBER 12

Join Associate Pastor of Education Lydia Mulkey to talk about Santa, Shopping, and Baby Jesus: Making Christmas Mean Something. Join us in the conference room at 9:50 a.m.

MIDPOINT WHITE ELEPHANT, DECEMBER 15

The annual MIDPOINT Christmas party and famous White Elephant gift exchange is Saturday, December 11 at Melinda Haag and Jane Barker's home, 7426 Iowa St, River Forest. Please bring a sweet or savory treat to share, your favorite beer or wine, and a silly white elephant gift. This is a MIDPOINT favorite! Please join us. Covid vaccination required. Please contact Barbara Metric (<mailto:barbarametric@comcast.net>) with any questions.

WELCOME TO FIRST UNITED!

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 GLBTQ people in membership & ministry.

ADULT EDUCATION

Faith formation doesn't end after Church School. Adult Education takes a variety of forms from small group Bible studies to Sunday Morning speaker series. Watch the Thursday Eblast for the latest offerings.

CHILDREN IN WORSHIP & OUR NURSERY

We love to have children in worship! Age-appropriate worship activities and books are available as you enter the sanctuary. We also offer safe, quality childcare and quiet play for children five and under in our nursery. Ask an usher for directions.

CHURCH SCHOOL

Church School is for children ages birth through 8th grade. Meeting most Sundays at 9:45 a.m., we tell stories of the Bible using a lens of love and justice with singing, praying, and creating. Visit firstunitedoakpark.com/youth-education or speak with Lydia Mulkey (lmulkey@firstunitedoakpark.com) to learn more.

MUSIC MINISTRIES

We hope you enjoy the music of our Sanctuary Choir and soloists in worship. COVID-19 has altered the way we do music, but music remains deeply important to our worship experience. For more information, visit firstunitedoakpark.com/music-ministries or contact Bill Chin (bill@firstunitedoakpark.com).

YOUTH PROGRAMS

FUJI (First United Junior High) and FUSH (First United Senior High) youth groups meet on Sunday evenings at 5 p.m. here at the church. Visit firstunitedoakpark.com/youth-fellowship or contact Alicia Reese (areese@firstunitedoakpark.com) for more information.



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