

FIRST UNITED CHURCH OF OAK PARK  
September 11, 2022

*Gathering  
Day*

*An open community united in love and justice*

# PREPARING FOR WORSHIP

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PRELUDE

Mark Sudeith

*Hymn-Prelude on 'St. Denio' by Percy Whitlock*

WELCOME

John Edgerton

\*CALL TO WORSHIP

Marteki Reed

Praise the Divine whose splendor is woven into all the earth.

**What wonders surround us! We linger in awe and appreciation.**

The beauty of the earth is a balm to the senses.

**Creation overflows with wisdom, ancient and new.**

The world, wild with creative energy, is adaptive through challenges and change.

**Precious is each creature! Every living thing, beloved and valued.**

Look around! You will see the sacred beauty of the Creator's work in each and every face.

\*PASSING THE PEACE

\*OPENING HYMN

*Immortal, Invisible, God Only Wise* (Black hymnal no. 1)

**Immortal, invisible, God only wise,**

**in light inaccessible hid from our eyes,**

**Most blessed, most glorious, the Ancient of Days,**

**almighty, victorious, your great name we praise.**

**Unresting, unchanging, and silent as light,**

**not wanting, not wasting, but ruling in might;**

**Your justice like mountains high soaring above,**

**your clouds which are fountains of goodness and love.**

**Your life is lifegiving—to both great and small;  
in all life you're living, the true life of all;  
We blossom and flourish as leaves and as flowers,  
then wither and perish—but naught dims your powers.**

**So perfect your glory, so brilliant your light,  
your angels adore you, all veiling their sight;  
All praise we now render as your angels do:  
in awe at the splendor of light hiding you.**

### PRAYER FOR WHOLENESS

Marteki Reed

**Spirit of Life, you created us in your image. You made us to be creators, healers, and protectors of one another and all the earth. We admit that we have destroyed when we needed to create, we have hurt when we needed to heal, and we have stood by when we needed to protect. Hear our prayers for wholeness.**

*Time for Silent Prayer*

### ASSURANCE OF LOVE

In holy defiance of all that spoils life through shame and destruction, we remember and proclaim together the truth from which we come and by which we hope to live:

**“God saw everything that was created and indeed, it was very good.”**

You are God's very good creation. Your Creator's love, forgiveness, and freedom are yours today and always. Thanks be to God!

# MUSICAL RESPONSE

*Fearfully, Wonderfully Made* by Nathan Crabtree & Eric Whitehill



1. You were known, known be - fore birth, wo - ven deep,  
2. You be - long, you are re - deemed. Loved by God,  
3. When you walk, walk through the flame. God is there,



deep in the earth. You were formed from star-dust. Sing praise! You are  
God is well pleased. Now em-brace what God has or - dained: You are  
cal - ling your name. God has said, "Do not be a - fraid." You are



fear - ful - ly, won - der - f'ly made, yes you are



fear - ful - ly, won - der - f'ly made.

## LISTENING FOR GOD'S WORD TO US

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TIME FOR SHARING

Lydia Mulkey

SCRIPTURE READING – Genesis 1:24-31: Creation

Marteki Reed

SERMON – CREATED TO CREATE

John Edgerton

\*SERMON RESPONSE

*To You, O God, All Creatures Sing* (Black hymnal no. 17, v. 1)

**To you, O God, all creatures sing,  
and all creation, everything  
sings your praises, alleluia!  
Your burning sun with golden beam,  
Your silver moon with softer gleam  
sing your praises, alleluia,  
alleluia, alleluia, alleluia!**

## RESPONDING TO GOD'S WORD

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CALL TO THE OFFERING

John Edgerton

OFFERTORY ANTHEM

Sanctuary Choir

*All Things Bright and Beautiful* by John Rutter

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

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\*CLOSING HYMN

*The God of Abraham Praise* (Black hymnal no. 24)

**The God of Abraham praise, all praises to God's name,  
who was and is and is to be, fore'er the same!  
The one eternal God, before what now appears;**

**the First, the Last: beyond all thought through timeless years!**

**God's spirit freely flows, high surging where it will;  
God spoke of old in prophet's word; that word speaks still.  
Established is God's law, and changeless it shall stand,  
deep written on the human heart, in every land.**

**God has eternal life implanted in the soul;  
God's love shall be our strength and stay, while ages roll.  
All praise the living God! Extol that hallowed name,  
who was, and is, and ever shall be still the same!**

**The god of Sarah praise, all praises to God's name,  
who was and is and is to be, fore'er the same!  
The one eternal God, before what now appears,  
the First, the Last: beyond all thought through timeless years!**

\*BLESSING

John Edgerton

\*BENEDICTION RESPONSE

*Take My Gifts* (Black hymnal no. 562, v. 1)

**Take my gifts and let me love you, God who first of all loved me,  
gave me light and food and shelter, gave me life and set me free,  
now because your love has touched me, I have love to give away,  
now the bread of love is rising, loaves of love to multiply!**

POSTLUDE

Mark Sudeith

*Toccata on 'Leoni'* by Joel Raney

# EVENTS AND UPDATES

*Below is just a sampling of the news and events at First United. Follow us on Facebook ([facebook.com/firstunitedoakpark](https://facebook.com/firstunitedoakpark)) where we share our weekly newsletter and lots more!*

**“IS 11 A.M. STILL THE MOST SEGREGATED HOUR IN AMERICA?”**, SEPTEMBER 18  
Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. famously asked the question, and our Adult Education group will revisit it in our first 2-part series focusing on changes in American religion with UIC Sociology Professor Emeritus Dr. Stephen Warner. Join us in Centennial Hall on September 18 at 9:45 a.m.

## CELEBRATING MICHAEL SURRATT, SEPTEMBER 18

We invite you to stay after worship on September 18 for a special retirement celebration for First United Organist Michael Surratt. Mike has gifted us with years of beautiful music. Now we'd like to honor him for his years of dedicated service. Our celebration will be largely outside, weather permitting.

## HOUSE TO HOME STARTS NEXT WEEK

Our Housing Justice Team has been working hard behind the scenes to organize this year's House to Home project. Help us supply basic necessities and comforts of home for four families coming out of transitional housing with Housing Forward. Use the QR code to access the electronic signup. Physical signup sheets will be in the lounge next week.



## FALL FELLOWSHIP FAIR, SEPTEMBER 25

Join us after worship on September 25 from 1-3 p.m. for a festival-style gathering on the lawn. Learn about First United ministry teams, enjoy some snacks, do an activity with your kids, listen to music, and enjoy time with friends old and new. Please invite your friends and neighbors and show them what an amazing church community we have at First United!

## BIBLE BREAKFAST, SEPTEMBER 25

Each year, our third graders receive Bibles to mark another milestone on their journey of faith as their growing reading skills allow them to explore the stories of the faith more deeply. This year we make up for lost (pandemic) time by gathering our third, fourth, and fifth graders together for this beloved tradition. We can't wait!

# 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 LGBTQ+ 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 8<sup>th</sup> 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. Speak with Lydia Mulkey ([lmulkey@firstunitedoakpark.com](mailto: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 contact Bill Chin ([bill@firstunitedoakpark.com](mailto:bill@firstunitedoakpark.com)).

## YOUTH PROGRAMS – FUJI (JR. HIGH) & FUSH (SR. HIGH)

The youth groups meet on Sunday evenings from 5 – 6:30 pm here at the church. Contact Alicia Reese ([areese@firstunitedoakpark.com](mailto:areese@firstunitedoakpark.com)) for more information.



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