

FIRST UNITED CHURCH OF OAK PARK
November 27, 2022



An open community united in love and justice

PREPARING FOR WORSHIP

PRELUDE

Mark Sudeith

Variations on 'Aberystwyth' by Ralph Vaughan Williams,
arr. by Herbert Byard

WELCOME

John Edgerton

*CALL TO WORSHIP

The Scaletta Family

& ADVENT WREATH LIGHTING

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.**

*PASSING THE PEACE

*OPENING HYMN

Sanctuary Choir
& Congregation

Watcher Tell Us of the Night (Black hymnal no. 103)

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Traveler, shadows take their flight, doubt and terror are withdrawn.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

The Scaletta Family

As we draw near to the fountain of grace, let us lay down burdens of hurt and guilt that we may receive with open hands the gifts God intends for us. Let us pray. . .

Holy God of compassion and grace, we lay down our need before you, trusting in your great love for us and for all creation. We bear wounds, and we ourselves have wounded others. We open ourselves to the work of your Spirit among us to free us from all that is not of you and to recreate us in your image. Praise and thanksgiving, honor and blessing be to you, divine Fount of healing and love, through your Word of grace made flesh, and your Spirit of Holiness and power.

Silence is held.

ASSURANCE OF LOVE

Friends, hear the good news: Nothing in all creation, neither what we do, nor what has been done to us, can separate us from the love of God made known to us in Jesus Christ and poured out on the church through the Holy Spirit.

Thanks be to God!

MUSICAL RESPONSE

My Lord! What a Morning (Blue hymnal no. 449, refrain)

My Lord! what a morning,

My Lord! what a morning,

Oh, my Lord! what a morning,

**When the stars begin to fall,
When the stars begin to fall.**

LISTENING FOR GOD'S WORD TO US

TIME FOR SHARING

Elaine Pierce

SCRIPTURE READING – Luke 1:5-20, 23-25, 39-45

The Scaletta Family

SERMON – THE CONCEPTION OF HOPE

Alicia Reese

*SERMON RESPONSE

Keep Your Lamps Trimmed and Burning, (Black hymnal no. 369, v. 1, refrain, v. 1)

**Keep your lamps trimmed and burning,
keep your lamps trimmed and burning,
keep your lamps trimmed and burning,
for this work's almost done.**

**Refrain: Sisters, don't grow weary,
brothers, don't grow weary,
children, don't grow weary,
for this work's almost**

Keep your lamps trimmed and burning. . .

RESPONDING TO GOD'S WORD

CALL TO THE OFFERING

John Edgerton

OFFERTORY ANTHEM

Sanctuary Choir

Zion Hears Her Watchmen's Voices by J. S. Bach

Zion hears her watchmen's voices,
Their gladd'ning cry her soul rejoices
The shadows of her night depart.
In His might her Lord appeareth,

His word of grace and truth she heareth,
The day-star riseth in her heart.
O come, in splendour bright,
Lord Jesu, Light of Light!
Hosianna!
We follow Thee, Thy joy to see,
Where everlasting bliss shall be.

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE & THE LORD'S PRAYER

Alicia Reese

**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

*CLOSING HYMN

Sanctuary Choir

Comfort, Comfort You My People (Blue hymnal no. 3)

& Congregation

**Comfort, comfort you my people, / Tell of peace, thus says our God;
Comfort those who sit in darkness / Bowed beneath oppression's load.
Speak you to 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 kingdom now is here.
O that warning cry obey! / Now prepare for God a way;
Let the valleys rise in meeting / And the hills bow down in greeting.**

**Make you straight what long was crooked, / Make the rougher places plain;
Let your hearts be true and humble, / As befits God's holy reign.
For the glory of the Lord / Now o'er earth is shed abroad;
And all flesh shall see the token / That God's word is never broken.**

*BLESSING

Alicia Reese

*BENEDICTION RESPONSE

My Soul Cries Out with a Joyful Shout (v. 1)

**My soul cries out with a joyful shout that the God of my heart is great,
and my spirit sings of the wondrous things that you bring to the ones who
wait.**

**You fixed your sight on your servant's plight, and my weakness you did not
spurn,**

**so from east to west shall my name be blest. Could the world be about to
turn?**

POSTLUDE

Mark Sudeith

Variation on 'Freu dich sehr, o meine Seele' by Johann Pachelbel

*The Deacons are available after worship in the Chapel for a time of private
prayer and conversation.*

EVENTS AND UPDATES

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

DINNER AND A MOVIE, DECEMBER 2

Join us on Friday, December 2 in the lounge for a showing of "The Eyes of Tammy Faye." Dinner at 6:00 (\$5 donation); movie at 6:30 (free). Call Liz Swan (708) 567-3490.

THINKING ABOUT MORTALITY, DECEMBER 3

Join the Deacons on Saturday, December 3 from 9:30 a.m. to 2 p.m. in the Chapel. Explore planning for and taking care of ourselves through the transition from life on this earth to the everlasting. Register using the QR code or by contacting Deacon Chair Anne Koerber (708-280-9914).



MIDPOINT CHRISTMAS PARTY, DECEMBER 3

MIDPOINT's annual Christmas party and White Elephant gift exchange is Saturday, December 3 at the home of David & Joy Marshall, 206 S. Grove Ave at 7:30 pm. Questions? Contact BarbaraMetric@comcast.net.

ALTERNATIVE CHRISTMAS STORE, STARTS DECEMBER 4

As we reflect on the Advent themes of hope, peace, love, and joy, impact social justice through your gift giving. Shop fair-trade goods in the lounge before and after service on **December 4, 11, and 18**. And make sure to visit Ten Thousand Villages (121 N. Marion St.) for a **special shopping event on Wednesday, December 7 from 6-8 p.m.** 15% of all sales will be distributed to several of First United's local mission partners. Wine, cheese, and light refreshments will be served.

CHRISTMAS & CULTURE CONTINUES NEXT WEEK

Pastor John and Stan Faust continue their Adult Ed Advent series on Christmas & Culture on December 4 in Centennial Hall at 9:45 a.m. Christmas readings from Garrison Keillor's "Lake Wobegon Days" will be followed by a discussion of how our culture affects how we celebrate Christmas today.

SING WE JOYOUS, DECEMBER 10 & 11

Sing We Joyous is back with the usual mix of beautiful music, outrageous hijinks, and multiple ensembles crowding the First United stage. December 10 at 7:30 p.m. and December 11 at 4 p.m. Admission is \$30. Tickets available at <https://singwejoyous2022.bpt.me/>

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 8th grade. Meeting Sundays at 9:45 a.m., we tell stories of the Bible using a lens of love and justice with singing, praying, and creating. Contact the office (office@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).

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) for more information.



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