

FIRST UNITED CHURCH OF OAK PARK
March 26, 2023



An open community united in love and justice

PREPARING FOR WORSHIP

PRELUDE

Mark Sudeith

Variations on the Hebrew Melody 'Leoni' by David Cameron

WELCOME

Alicia Reese

*CALL TO WORSHIP

Immortal, invisible, Creator God, the bleakness of winter has begun to give way to warm sunshine and with it the hope and renewal of spring.

We are grateful for these reminders of hope in our midst,

For Lent is a time to respect and reflect on the harsher realities of our faith:

That hope follows despair,

That forgiveness requires repentance,

That hurt precedes healing,

And that life flows out of death.

Our journey through the wilderness is nearly at an end.

Our journey to hope continues and begins anew.

We walk together, we follow you, Creator, Redeemer, Sustainer. Amen.

*PASSING THE PEACE

The peace of Christ be with you.

And also with you.

*OPENING HYMN

Community of Christ (Black hymnal no. 314)

Sanctuary Choir
& Congregation

Community of Christ, who make the Cross your own,

live out your creed and risk your life for God alone:

The God who wears your face, to whom all worlds belong,

whose children are of every race and every song.

Community of Christ, look past the church's door

and see the refugee, the hungry, and the poor.

**Take hands with the oppressed, the jobless in your street,
take towel and water, that you wash your neighbor's feet.**

**Community of Christ, through whom the word must sound—
cry out for justice and for peace the whole world 'round.
Disarm the powers that war and all that can destroy,
turn bombs to bread, and tears of anguish into joy.**

**When menace melts away, so shall God's will be done,
the climate of the world be peace and Christ its Sun;
Our currency be love and kindness our law,
our food and faith be shared as one for evermore.**

PRAYER FOR WHOLENESS

Lydia Mulkey

**Creative One, by your Spirit, free us from the constraints evil has placed
upon our dreams. We struggle to hope outside of what we have known. We
find it difficult to practice imagination that is not bound by our fears or
tainted with cynicism. Open our minds. Fill us with grand visions of life
abundant and love that frees, that we might not be a stumbling block to
your transformation among us.**

Time for silence.

ASSURANCE OF LOVE

Hear the good news! God's creative and transforming spirit is at work within
you, doing far more than you know how to ask for or even to imagine! Live in
the knowledge that you are loved, forgiven, and free!

MUSICAL RESPONSE

Sanctuary Choir
& Congregation

Give Me a Clean Heart (Black hymnal no. 188)

Give me a clean heart so I may serve you.

God, fix my heart so that I may be used by you.

For I'm not worthy of all these blessings,

Give me a clean heart and I'll follow you.

LISTENING FOR GOD'S WORD TO US

TIME FOR SHARING

Lydia Mulkey

SONG OF ILLUMINATION

Be Now My Vision (Black hymnal no. 451)

Sanctuary Choir
& Congregation

**Be now my vision, O God of my heart;
nothing surpasses the love you impart—
You my best thought, by day or by night,
waking or sleeping, your presence my light.**

**Be now my wisdom, and be my true word;
ever within me, my soul is assured;
Mother and Father, you are both to me,
now and forever your child I will be.**

**Riches I need not, nor life's empty praise,
you, my inheritance, now and always,
You and you only are first in my heart,
great God, my treasure, may we never part.**

**Sovereign of heaven, my victory won,
may I reach heaven's joys, O bright heaven's Sun!
Heart of my own heart, whatever befall,
still be my vision, O Ruler of all.**

SCRIPTURE READING – ROMANS 8:6-11

SERMON – SINS OF THE SPIRIT

Beth Dickerson

SERMON RESPONSE

In the Midst of New Dimensions

(Black hymnal no. 391, v. 1 & refrain)

Sanctuary Choir
& Congregation

In the midst of new dimensions, in the face of changing ways,

**Who will lead the pilgrim peoples wandering in their separate ways?
God of rainbow, fiery pillar, leading where the eagles soar,
We your people, ours the journey now and ever,
now and ever, now and evermore.**

RESPONDING TO GOD'S WORD

CALL TO THE OFFERING – 4TH SUNDAY
Learning Edge

Sher Watts Spooner

OFFERTORY ANTHEM

Sanctuary Choir

I Don't Feel No Ways Tired by Curtis Burrell

I don't feel no ways tired

I've come too far from where I've started from.

Nobody told me that the road would be easy.

I don't believe He brought me this far to leave me.

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

Sweet, Sweet Spirit (Black hymnal no. 293)

& Congregation

There's a sweet, sweet Spirit in this place,

and I know that it's the Spirit of the Lord;

there are sweet expressions on each face,

and I know they feel the presence of the Lord.

**Refrain: Sweet Holy Spirit, sweet heavenly Dove,
stay right here with us, filling us with your love;
And for these blessings we lift our hearts in praise.
Without a doubt we'll know that we have been revived
when we shall leave this place.**

*BLESSING

Beth Dickerson

*BENEDICTION RESPONSE

Sanctuary Choir
& Congregation

Now Is the Time Approaching (Black hymnal no. 609, v. 1)
**Now is the time approaching, by prophets long foretold,
when all shall dwell together, secure and manifold.
Let war be learned no longer, let strife and tumult cease,
all earth a blessed garden that God shall tend in peace.**

POSTLUDE

Mark Sudeith

Prelude on 'Slane' by Gordon Young

*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!

PALM SUNDAY NEXT WEEK

Next Sunday we celebrate Jesus' triumphant entry into Jerusalem on Palm Sunday as we process with palms into worship. We will also welcome new members. It is sure to be a joyous Sunday.

ADULT ED NEXT SUNDAY

Next Sunday, April 2, the Bible Group will focus on the events of Holy Week, beginning with the Passover, as told in Matthew 26:14-27:66. The Bible Group will meet at 9:45 a.m. in the conference room next to the lounge.

VOLUNTEER ROLES AVAILABLE FOR MAUNDY THURSDAY

We will host our traditional soup supper and Tenebrae service for Maundy Thursday on April 6. Volunteers are needed to bake bread, set up, host tables, and clean up. This is a wonderful tradition supported by our whole Church family. Use the QR Code to access the signup genius or use the button in the weekly eblast.



JOIN IN THE WORK OF FIRST UNITED

The Nominating Team is inviting you to think about how you might join in the work, mission, and governance of our church. If you are interested in getting involved, please use the QR code to access and fill out the quick on-line form to register your interest. You can also reach out directly to Barbara Metric (barbarametric@comcast.net).



Parents' Night Out, April 15

Looking for a night out and want to support our FUSH youth as they raise money for their summer service trip? Drop your kiddos at First United on Saturday, April 15 from 5-8 p.m. Our youth and adult volunteers will provide dinner, activities, games, crafts and a movie for three hours while you enjoy an evening out. Suggested donations range from \$20 for one child to \$50 for 4 or more children. Use the QR code if you are ready to register or reach out to Alicia Reese (areese@firstunitedoakpark.com) for more information.



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 – 7 pm here at the church. Contact Alicia Reese (areese@firstunitedoakpark.com) for more information.



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www.firstunitedoakpark.com | facebook.com/firstunitedoakpark

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