

# FIRST UNITED CHURCH OF OAK PARK

August 20, 2023



*An open community united in love and justice*

## PREPARING FOR WORSHIP

---

### PRELUDE

Bobby Nguyen

*Andante* from Sonata for Piano No. 16 in C Major by W. A. Mozart

### WELCOME

Alicia Reese

### \*CALL TO WORSHIP

Don Sibley

Creator God, we thank you for all the ways your creatures minister to us.

**For the fruits and vegetables we eat, we thank the bees, the butterflies, and bats that pollinated them.**

For the air we breathe, we thank the trees that cycled carbon dioxide into oxygen, as well as the birds and woodland creatures that carry and bury trees' seeds to help them multiply and thrive.

**For the water we use to quench our thirst and wash our clothes, we thank the fish and other creatures for sharing it with us.**

For sounds that fill our days: buzzing, chirping, purring, barking, scurrying—we thank a diversity of creatures for reminding us that we are not alone.

**God of all creatures, we are grateful every day for your web of creation. Out of that gratitude flows our desire to cherish, protect, restore, and rightly share our common earthly home. Amen.**

### \*PASSING THE PEACE

May the peace of Christ be with you.

**And also with you!**

### \*OPENING HYMN

Congregation

*All Things Bright and Beautiful* (Black hymnal no. 31)

**Refrain: All things bright and beautiful, all creatures great and small,  
All things wise and wonderful, our dear God made them all.**

**Each little flower that opens, each little bird that sings,  
God made their glowing colors, and made their tiny wings. R/**

**The purple-headed mountain, the river running by,  
The sunset, and the morning that brightens up the sky. R/**

**The cold wind in the winter, the pleasant summer sun,  
The ripe fruits in the garden, God made them every one. R/**

### PRAYER FOR WHOLENESS

Don Sibley

Let us join in asking God to return us to right relationship with creation.

**God of All Being, too often we look at the universe as if it were a collection of objects instead of the miracle of your spirit incarnating. We do not recognize other creatures as wonders of your unfolding love, do not see the robin as our brother or the tiger as our sister. We have failed to honor air, earth, and water as aspects of your being. God, replace both our pride and our shame with true humility. Restore us to the astonishment of having a rightful place in the family of your cosmos.**

*Time for Silent Prayer*

### ASSURANCE OF LOVE

The Spirit of Love created this world of breathtaking variety with intrinsic interdependence. Humans were created to be the living mirror of nature, reflective participants in this web of life. When we find our place in the community of God's creation, we are restored to wholeness. For this mercy, we give thanks. **Amen.**

### MUSICAL RESPONSE

Congregation

*Spirit of the Living God* (Black hymnal no. 283)

**Spirit of the living God, fall afresh on me;**

**Spirit of the living God, fall afresh on me.**

**Melt me, mold me, fill me, use me.**

**Spirit of the living God, fall afresh on me.**

## LISTENING FOR GOD'S WORD TO US

---

### BLESSING OF THE TEACHERS

Lydia Mulkey

As a new school year begins, we shower these teachers, whom You have called, with love.

**Bless them with wisdom and grace.**

May their lesson plans be just what their students' minds need.

**May their love and care be just what their students' souls need.**

May they be strengthened by your presence with them in their classrooms and beyond.

**May we never fail to offer our support and prayers as they live out Your calling on their lives.**

BLESSING OF THE BACKPACKS

Alicia Reese

Bless this backpack.

**Make it strong for its job of helping this student learn.**

May its straps never break, its padding never give out, and its zippers never jam.

**May it never be forgotten in strange places.**

May the burdens in it be light.

**May the body that bears it be strong, and growing, and whole,**

And blessed, ever blessed, by your love.

**In the name of the great Teacher at whose knee we are all students. Amen.**

\*SONG OF ILLUMINATION

Congregation

*See following page*

# God of all learning

God of all learn - ing, God of all know - ing,  
Bless all the stu - dents, young ones and old ones,  
Some kids are poor and some kids are wealth - y;  
Bless all who learn and bless those who guide them,

we bring these back - packs filled with sup - plies. \_\_\_\_\_  
walk - ing or rid - ing, trav - eling by bus. \_\_\_\_\_  
may we give all the tools that they need. \_\_\_\_\_  
bless those who teach and coun - sel and care. \_\_\_\_\_

Bless all these tools of learn - ing and grow - ing.  
May they re - mem - ber that you go with them,  
May we make sure they're safe, loved and health - y  
May they re - mem - ber you walk be - side them.

Use them, we pray, to change man - y lives.  
and that they all are pre - cious to us.  
so that they all may thrive and suc - ceed.  
Through all their school days, you, Lord, are there.

SCRIPTURE READING – Luke 12:22-24

Don Sibley

The word of God for the people of God.

**Thanks be to God.**

READING FROM CHRISTIAN HISTORY

Apprehend God in all things,

for God is in all things.

Every single creature is full of God,

and is a book about God.

Every creature is a word of God.

If I spent enough time with the tiniest creature--

even a caterpillar--

I would never have to prepare a sermon

so full of God

is every creature. – *Meister Eckhart, thirteenth-century Christian mystic*

FIRST REFLECTION

Lydia Mulkey

*Consider the Birds*

HYMN

Congregation

*God of the Sparrow God of the Whale* (Black hymnal no. 32, vv. 1 & 2)

**God of the Sparrow God of the whale God of the swirling stars**

**How does the creature say Awe / How does the creature say Praise**

**God of the earthquake God of the storm, God of the trumpet blast**

**How does the creature cry Woe / How does the creature say Thanks**

SECOND REFLECTION

Lydia Mulkey

*Consider the Dogs*

HYMN

Congregation

*God of the Sparrow God of the Whale* (Black hymnal no. 32, vv. 3 & 4)

**God of the rainbow God of the cross God of the empty grave**

**How does the creature say Grace / How does the creature say Thanks**

**God of the hungry God of the sick God of the prodigal**

**How does the creature say Care / How does the creature say Life**

FINAL REFLECTION

Lydia Mulkey

*Consider the Cats*

HYMN

*God of the Sparrow God of the Whale* (Black hymnal no. 32, vv. 5 & 6)

**God of the neighbor God of the sick God of the pruning hook**

**How does the creature say Love / How does the creature say Peace**

**God of the ages God near at hand God of the loving heart**

**How do your children say Joy / How do your children say Home**

## RESPONDING TO GOD'S WORD

---

CALL TO THE OFFERING

Alicia Reese

BLESSING OF THE ANIMALS

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

---

\*CLOSING SONG

Congregation

*All God's Critters Got a Place in the Choir* by Bill Staines

**Refrain: All God's critters got a place in the choir**

**Some sing low, some sing higher**

**Some sing out loud on the telephone wire**

**And some just clap their hands, or paws or anything they got now**

**Well, listen to the bass, it's the one on the bottom**

**Where the bullfrog croaks and the hippopotamus**

**Moans and groans with a big to-do**

**And the old cow just goes "Moo"**

**Well, the dogs and the cats they take up the middle**

**The honeybee hums and the crickets fiddle**

**The donkey brays and the pony neighs**

**The old coyote howls R/**

**Well, listen to the top where the little bird sings**

**The melody with the high voice ringing**

**The hoot owl hollers over everything**

**And the jaybird disagrees**

**Singing in the nighttime, singing in the day**

**The little duck quacks and he's on his way**

**The 'possum don't have much to say**

**And the porcupine talks to herself R/**

**Everybody here is a part of the plan**

**We all get to play in the great critter band**

**From the eagle in the sky to the whale in the sea**

**It's one great symphony R/ 2x**

\*BLESSING

Lydia Mulkey

Go in peace! Serving the Creator and loving all creatures!

**We go in peace, serving the Creator and loving our animal kin.**

\*BENEDICTION RESPONSE

Congregation

*Sweet, Sweet Spirit* (Black hymnal no. 293, v. 1 & refrain)

**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.**

POSTLUDE

Bobby Nguyen

*The Solid Rock* by W. B. Bradbury, arr. Marianne Kim

# EVENTS AND UPDATES

*Below is just a sampling of the news and events at First United. You can find our full calendar at [firstunitedoakpark.com/calendar](http://firstunitedoakpark.com/calendar). Follow us on Facebook ([facebook.com/firstunitedoakpark](https://facebook.com/firstunitedoakpark)) for our weekly newsletter and lots more.*

## Church School Registration

We are gearing up for Gathering Day and the opening of the 2023-24 Church School year! This year, we are asking our Church School superheroes from birth to 8th grade to assemble on September 10 and prepare for an amazing year. Parents, please use the QR code to register your kids for Church School.



## Slow Down with Summer Mindfulness

We invite you to explore mindfulness experiences with the Worship Music and Arts Team. On Sunday, August 27 from 3:30-5 p.m. WMA will host a mindfulness exercise as we slow down together into silence. To RSVP or ask questions text or call Meghan Premo-Hopkins (312-320-0609) or Laurie Jolicoeur (708-822-0265).

## Register for FUSH and FUJI

Junior high (FUJI) and senior high (FUSH) youth groups resume in September. Get ahead of the game and get your kids registered now. Use the QR code to register (one registration per child) to help us get our planning underway!



## Gathering Day on September 10

Gathering Day and the start of the program year will be here before you know it! As the traditional start of the program year, there will be lots of news about programming over the next few weeks. If you do not receive the eblast, please be in touch with Heather in the office ([hvanderberg@firstunitedoakpark.com](mailto:hvanderberg@firstunitedoakpark.com)) and she can get you signed up.

# 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. Our programs are currently on hiatus for the summer, but we look forward to seeing you again in September!

## 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 Sundays at 9:45 a.m., September through mid-May, we tell stories of the Bible using a lens of love and justice with singing, praying, and creating. Contact Lydia Mulkey ([lmulkey@firstunitedoakpark.com](mailto:lmulkey@firstunitedoakpark.com)) to learn more.

## MUSIC MINISTRIES

Are you interested in singing in worship with our Sanctuary Choir? Rehearsals will resume in September. 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 – 7 pm here at the church, September through mid-May. Contact Alicia Reese ([areese@firstunitedoakpark.com](mailto:areese@firstunitedoakpark.com)) for more information.



## FIRST UNITED CHURCH OF OAK PARK

*an open community united in love & justice*

[www.firstunitedoakpark.com](http://www.firstunitedoakpark.com) | [facebook.com/firstunitedoakpark](https://facebook.com/firstunitedoakpark)

Lead Pastor John Edgerton – [jedgerton@firstunitedoakpark.com](mailto:jedgerton@firstunitedoakpark.com)

Associate Pastor Lydia Mulkey – [lmulkey@firstunitedoakpark.com](mailto:lmulkey@firstunitedoakpark.com)

Associate Pastor Alicia Reese – [areese@firstunitedoakpark.com](mailto:areese@firstunitedoakpark.com)