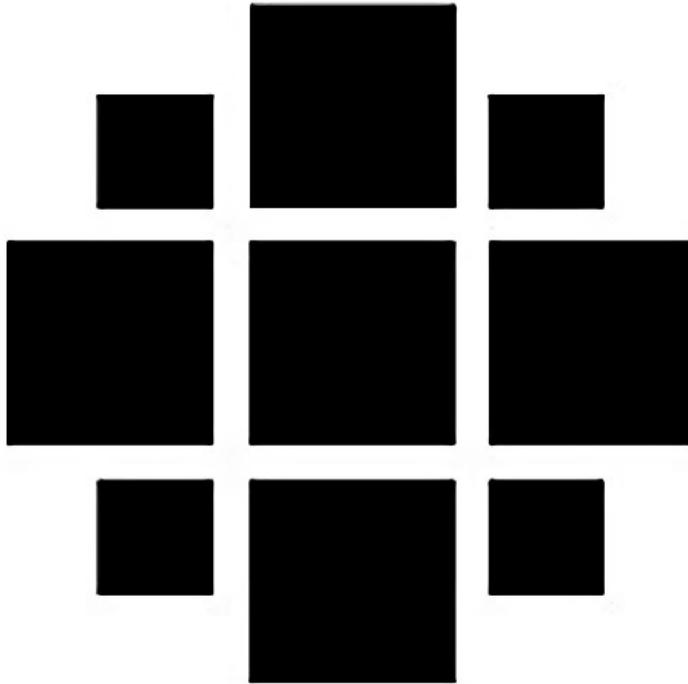


FIRST UNITED CHURCH OF OAK PARK

November 19, 2023



If you must look back, do so forgivingly. If you must look forward, do so prayerfully. However, the wisest thing you can do is to be present in the present...*Gratefully.* – *Maya Angelou*

PREPARING FOR WORSHIP

PRELUDE

Bobby Nguyen

Blessed Assurance by Gerald Near

WELCOME

Lydia Mulkey

SPECIAL MUSIC

Come, Ye Thankful People, Come
by Henry Alford & Joel Raney

The Church School
& Sanctuary Choir

*CALL TO WORSHIP

Zoie Segbawu

(adapted from *A Blessing for When You Are Weary*)

When our strength is melting away and our hope is hidden behind a wall,

Oh God, we cry out to You: Show us again how this works—how you bring dry bones to life.

We are tired. Each breath is shallow. Only the merest ember is left burning.

Breathe on me, God.

Breathe life into my tired body and heavy limbs.

Breathe comfort into my heart and soul.

Blessed are we: the weary, weak, and sore who turn our gaze to seek the One who truly sees and knows us.

Blessed are we who discover we are loved and held in arms that are strong enough to hold that which we cannot.

*OPENING HYMN

Sanctuary Choir
& Congregation

Come Thou Fount (Blue hymnal no. 356)

Come, Thou Fount of every blessing,

Tune my heart to sing Thy grace;

Streams of mercy, never ceasing,

Call for songs of loudest praise.

Teach me some melodious sonnet,

Sung by flaming tongues above;

Praise the mount! I'm fixed upon it,

Mount of God's unchanging love!

Here I raise my Ebenezer,

Hither by Thy help I'm come;

And I hope, by Thy good pleasure,

Safely to arrive at home.

Jesus sought me when a stranger,

Wandering from the fold of God;

He, to rescue me from danger,

Interposed His precious blood.

**O to grace how great a debtor
Daily I'm constrained to be!
Let that grace now, like a fetter,**

**Bind my wandering heart to Thee:
Prone to wander, Lord, I feel it,
Prone to leave the God I love;
Here's my heart, O take and seal it,
Seal it for Thy courts above.**

PRAYER FOR WHOLENESS

Laurie Jolicoeur

(adapted from A Prayer for Hope Amid Despair)

Oh God, here we are again. Hopeless. Overwhelmed. Angry. The world is so broken. People are so cruel. The vulnerable are once again dying, ignored, oppressed. We want to have hope, but it feels futile. What good is hope if nothing seems to change?

God, give me a new heart to love what You love. Give me a new spirit to be faithful as You are faithful. Give me fresh eyes to see how You see. I want to be a person who is not mired in inaction in the face of despair, but who works to realize Your vision for the world. Who participates in unleashing Your kin-dom of peace and gentleness and justice and love.

May we be your Easter people, marked by bright hope in the midst of the darkest hours.

MUSICAL ASSURANCE

God Calls You Good by Paul M. Vasile

Sanctuary Choir
& Congregation

**God calls you good, beloved child.
You are a treasure deeply prized.
And you can say to ev'ry doubting voice:
"God calls you good, beloved child.
God calls you good, beloved child."**

**God calls me good, beloved child.
I am a treasure deeply prized.
And I can say to ev'ry doubting voice:
"God calls me good, beloved child.
God calls me good, beloved child."**

LISTENING FOR GOD'S WORD TO US

TIME FOR SHARING -- GRATITUDE

Lydia Mulkey

*SONG OF ILLUMINATION

The Summons

Sanctuary Choir
& Congregation

**“Will you come and follow me if I but call your name?
Will you go where you don’t know and never be the same?
Will you let my love be shown; will you let my name be known;
will you let my life be grown in you and you in me?”**

**“Will you leave yourself behind if I but call your name?
Will you care for cruel and kind and never be the same?
Will you risk the hostile stare should your life attract or scare?
Will you let me answer prayer in you and you in me?”**

**“Will you let the blinded see if I but call your name?
Will you set the prisoners free and never be the same?
Will you kiss the leper clean, and do such as this unseen,
and admit to what I mean in you and you in me?”**

**“Will you love the ‘you’ you hide if I but call your name?
Will you quell the fear inside and never be the same?
Will you use the faith you’ve found to reshape the world around,
though my sight and touch and sound in you and you in me?”**

**Lord, your summons echoes true when you but call my name.
Let me turn and follow you and never be the same.
In your company I’ll go where your love and footsteps show.
Thus I’ll move and live and grow in you and you in me.**

SCRIPTURE READINGS -- PROVERBS 3:21-24 & PSALM 55:4-8

This is the Word of God for the people of God.

Thanks be to God.

FAREWELL REFLECTIONS

Beth Dickerson
Alicia Reese

MUSICAL RESPONSE

Jesus Calls Us, Over the Tumult (Black hymnal no. 172, v. 1)

**Jesus calls us, o’er the tumult of our life’s wild, restless sea;
Day by day that voice still calls us, saying, “Christian, follow me.”**

RESPONDING TO GOD'S WORD

4TH SUNDAY OFFERING (ON 3RD SUNDAY)

Audrey Todd

Beyond Hunger

CALL TO THE OFFERING

Lydia Mulkey

OFFERTORY

Sanctuary Choir

Be Still and Know by John Bell

*DOXOLOGY

Sanctuary Choir

Praise God, from Whom All Blessings Flow
(Old Hundredth)

& Congregation

Praise God, from whom all blessings flow;

Praise Christ, all people here below;

Praise Holy Spirit evermore;

Praise Triune God, whom we adore. Amen.

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.

TIME OF FAREWELL AND RELEASE

GREETING

Marteki Reese, Council Moderator

VOWS OF RELEASE

Please see the insert in your bulletin

ANOINTING & PRAYER

Jackie Eckholm & Linda Sandman,
deacon co-chairs

GOING FORTH IN DEDICATION AND SERVICE

*CLOSING HYMN

Sanctuary Choir
& Congregation

I, the Lord of Sea and Sky (Here I Am, Lord)

I, the Lord of sea and sky, I have heard my people cry.

All who dwell in dark and sin my hand will save.

I, who made the stars of night, I will make their darkness bright.

Who will bear my light to them? Whom shall I send?

Refrain:

Here I am, Lord. Is it I, Lord? I have heard you calling in the night.

I will go, Lord, if you lead me. I will hold your people in my heart.

I, the Lord of snow and rain, I have borne my people's pain.

I have wept for love of them. They turn away.

I will break their hearts of stone, give them hearts for love alone.

I will speak my word to them. Whom shall I send? R/

I, the Lord of wind and flame, I will tend the poor and lame.

I will set a feast for them. My hand will save.

Finest bread I will provide till their hearts be satisfied.

I will give my life to them. Whom shall I send? R/

*BLESSING FOR HELLOS AND GOODBYES

Alicia Reese

*BENEDICTION RESPONSE

Sanctuary Choir
& Congregation

Go Now in Peace

POSTLUDE

Bobby Nguyen

Voluntary on the Old 100th by Henry Purcell

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. Follow us on Facebook (facebook.com/firstunitedoakpark) for our weekly newsletter and lots more.

Adult Ed Next Sunday: Bible Group Only

Next Sunday, Nov 26, Rev. Charles Morris will start a four-Sunday Advent series with the Bible Group. The first session will be on Matthew 24:36-51: *For Pete's sake, WHO is in charge of the second coming?* Bible Group meets in the Conference Room, 9:45-10:45 a.m. There will be no Speaker Series.

Thanksgiving Closure, November 22-24

Please note that the church building will be closed November 22-24 to allow staff to prepare for and enjoy the Thanksgiving holiday. See you in worship on Sunday!

Dinner & a Movie, December 1

Dinner & a Movie is meeting early in December for a showing of "Women Talking." In 2010, the women of an isolated religious community grapple with reconciling a brutal reality with their faith. Dinner at 6:00 (\$5 donation); movie at 6:30 (free). Signup using Signup Genius (available in the eblast) or email Ron Haas (haas.inchicago@comcast.com).

MIDPOINT Christmas Party & White Elephant, December 2

Gather at 1033 Claremont, Oak Park at 7 p.m. for an evening of holiday celebration with MIDPOINT. Bring a treat to share, your favorite beverage, and a silly white elephant gift. Contact Barbara Metric (barbarametric@comcast.net) if you have questions.

Alternative Christmas Store Starts December 3

Shop the Alternative Christmas Store this holiday season! At the store you can choose a gift or make a donation that helps bring genuine and lasting change to those who need it most. All items purchased benefit our local mission partners and/or support international fair trade. We also offer a way to donate directly to some of our Faith in Action Mission Partners. Shopping dates are December 3, 10, and 17 before and after worship.

Sing We Joyous, December 9 & 10

The Oriana Singers, City Voices, and Pro Musica Youth Chorus will ring in the season with the holiday spectacular "Sing We Joyous," now in its 18th year. Performances are December 9 at 7:30 p.m. and December 10 at 4 p.m. at First United. Tickets are \$30; 18 and under free. Visit oriana.org to purchase tickets and 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.

LEARNING MORE ABOUT FIRST UNITED

Interested in learning more about First United Church? Look for members wearing gold buttons, talk to Pastor Lydia, or join us for a Newcomers class held three times per year. Next class to be held late winter or early spring.

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. Weekly Bible study and Speaker Series meet during Sunday education hour at 9:45 a.m.

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., 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) to learn more.

MUSIC MINISTRIES

Are you interested in singing in worship with our Sanctuary Choir? Rehearsals are Wednesday evenings from 7:00 to 8:30 p.m., September through May. 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 p.m. here at the church, September through mid-May. Contact Alicia Reese (areese@firstunitedoakpark.com) for more information.



FIRST UNITED CHURCH OF OAK PARK

an open community united in love & justice

www.firstunitedoakpark.com | facebook.com/firstunitedoakpark

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Associate Pastor Alicia Reese – areese@firstunitedoakpark.com