

An abstract graphic design featuring overlapping circles in shades of blue, purple, and pink. The background transitions from dark blue at the top to bright yellow and orange at the bottom, creating a rainbow-like effect. The text is centered within the design.

FIRST UNITED CHURCH OF OAK PARK

SACRED HEALING

PREPARING FOR WORSHIP

PRELUDE

Bobby Nguyen

Arabesque, op. 31 no. 15 by Louis Vierne

WELCOME

Beth Dickerson

*CALL TO WORSHIP

Walter Miller

For the healing of the nations,
God, we pray with one accord,
For a just and equal sharing
of the things the earth affords.
To a life of love in action,
Help us rise and pledge our word.

Lead us forward into freedom,
from despair our fears release.
That redeemed from war and hatred,
all may come and go in peace.
Show us how through care and goodness,
dread will die and hope increase.

*PASSING THE PEACE

May the peace of Christ be with you.
And also with you.

*OPENING HYMN

Sanctuary Choir
& Congregation

For the Healing of the Nations (Black hymnal no. 576)
For the healing of the nations, God, we pray with one accord;
for a just and equal sharing of the things that earth affords;
to a life of love in action help us rise and pledge our word.

Lead us forward into freedom; from despair your world release,
that, redeemed from war and hatred, all may come and go in peace.
Show us how through care and goodness fear will die and hope increase.

**All that kills abundant living, let it from the earth be banned;
pride of status, race, or schooling, dogmas that obscure your plan.
In our common quest for justice may we hallow life's brief span.**

**You, Creator God, have written your great name on humankind;
for our growing in your likeness bring the life of Christ to mind,
that by our response and service earth its destiny may find.**

PRAYER FOR WHOLENESS

Linda Sandman, Deacon

I Need a Sense of Peace by Kenneth G. Phifer

Give me peace, O God, a central peace.

Let me know that at the heart of turbulence there is a final calm that comes from faith in you, the core of life.

When I leave my private place of prayer, let me go with the assurance that carry within me that central peace that no agitation can shake.

Give me a standing place in life where from I may be able to look steadily upon my world without panic.

I see the divisions among human beings and hear the shouts of hatred and anger.

Keep me from giving into the mad idea that peace among your children is impossible.

Keep me from being content with things as they are.

Out of my central peace, let there ripple forth concern and compassion, indignation at injustice, and a willingness to give of myself in the spirit of Christ.

Time for Silent Prayer

ASSURANCE OF LOVE

The Kingdom of God

The kingdom of God is justice and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit.

Come, Lord, and open in us the gates of your kingdom.

LISTENING FOR GOD'S WORD TO US

TIME FOR SHARING

Caden Eckert, WMA

*SONG OF ILLUMINATION

Sanctuary Choir
& Congregation

There's a Sweet, Sweet Spirit (Black hymnal no. 293)

**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.**

**There are blessings you cannot receive
till you know that Spirit's fullness and believe;
you're the one to profit when you say,
"I am going to stay with Jesus all the way." R/**

SCRIPTURE READING – MATTHEW 11:28 – 30 &
JAMES 5:13-15

Jackie Eckholm
& Beth Dickerson

SERMON

Beth Dickerson

SERMON RESPONSE

Sanctuary Choir
& Congregation

O Christ the Healer, We Have Come

(Black hymnal no. 175, vv. 1&4)

**O Christ, the healer, we have come to pray for health, to plead for friends.
How can we fail to be restored when reached by love that never ends?**

**Grant that we all, made one in faith, in your community may find.
The wholeness that, enriching us, shall reach and prosper humankind.**

RESPONDING TO GOD'S WORD

CALL TO THE OFFERING

Beth Dickerson

Pink prayer cards will not be read during worship today, but will be prayed over by our staff.

INVITATION TO ANOINTING

Jackie Eckholm, Deacon

During the offering, Deacons will be available to anoint parishioners at various stations around the church. Anointing is voluntary. Members of the Worship, Music, and the Arts Committee will, at the same time, bless parishioners with a short prayer. Please raise your hand if you would like a Deacon to come to you and anoint you as you remain in your seat.

CHORAL ANTHEM

Sanctuary Choir

Hold On by Sally Ann Morris

When pain or sorrow is too much to bear;
when your heart feels numb, unable to care,
when faith seems so pointless that you cannot pray,
when no one knows quite what to say,

(refrain) then hold on to find a way to get through
and when your hope is gone and you can't hold on,
we will hold on to you.

If God is silent when you need to hear
that you're not alone, that comfort is near;
if you are abandoned when you need a friend,
when all good things come to an end, (refrain)

And when it looks like there's no end in sight,
know all that is wrong can still be made right.
You're never alone; God has promised to be
with us even when we can't see, (refrain)

PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING

Pedro Garcia-Alonso, WMA

Life will break you. Nobody can protect you from that, and being alone won't either, for solitude will also break you with its yearning.

You have to love. You have to feel. It is the reason you are here on earth.

You have to risk your heart. You are here to be swallowed up.
And when it happens that you are broken, or betrayed, or left, or hurt, or
death brushed too near, let yourself sit by an apple tree and listen to the
apples falling all around you in heaps, wasting their sweetness.
Tell yourself that you have tasted as many as you could.

– from *The Painted Drum* by Louise Erdrich

GOING FORTH IN DEDICATION AND SERVICE

INVITATION TO JOIN THE CIRCLE

Beth Dickerson

*CLOSING HYMN

Sanctuary Choir
& Congregation

What a Covenant (Black hymnal no. 471)

What a covenant, what a joy divine, leaning on the everlasting arms.

What a blessedness, what a peace is mine, leaning on the everlasting arms.

Refrain: Leaning, leaning, safe and secure from all alarms;

leaning, leaning, leaning on the everlasting arms.

Oh, how sweet to walk in this pilgrim way, leaning on the everlasting arms.

**Oh, how bright the path grows from day to day, leaning on the everlasting
arms. R/**

What have I to dread, what have I to fear, leaning on the everlasting arms?

I have blessed peace with my Savior near, leaning on the everlasting arms. R/

*BLESSING

Linda Sandman

*RESPONSE

Sanctuary Choir
& Congregation

God Be with You (Black hymnal no. 81, v. 1)

God be with you till we meet again; / By good counsel guide, uphold you,

With a shepherd's care enfold you: / God be with you till we meet again.

Refrain: Till we meet, till we meet, till we meet at Jesus' feet;

Till we meet, till we meet, God be with you till we meet again.

POSTLUDE

Bobby Nguyen

Wie schön leuchtet der Morgenstern by Johann Pachelbel

During worship today, we welcome the input and assistance of our Deacons and the Worship, Music, and the Arts Committee. The Deacons have been reflecting for the past several months on their role in caring for the congregation and how the ritual of anointing can be a helpful blessing and means to offer a healing touch. Worship, Music, and the Arts has been focusing on enriching our worship experience as they focus on filling our spiritual needs. This has been and will continue to be a rich collaboration. Our thanks to the members of these two ministry teams.

Our **Deacons** are: Linda Sandman, co-chair; Jackie Eckholm, co-chair; Robert Auch, Chris Davis, Karla Hayter, Meghan Premo-Hopkins, Don Sibley, Walter Miller; John Lurain, Council liaison, and Beth Dickerson, temporary staff liaison.

WMA members are: Laurie Jolicoeur, chair; Caden Eckert, Pedro Garcia-Alonso, Cate Readling; Paul Dickerson, Council liaison, and Bill Chin, staff liaison.

NEWS AND EVENTS

Worship Talk-Back

Pick up a Sundae in the lounge and then join Rev. Beth Dickerson in the Conference Room to talk about today's worship. What resonated with you? What was less successful? Let's talk about it!

Budget Task Force Now Forming

Council is looking for three volunteers to serve on a task force charged with reviewing the church's budget and making recommendations to council. There is a strong preference for people who are NOT finance-minded, but are focused on the programs and values of the church. Speak with Marteki Reed for more information.

Passing of Rosemary Irmis

We are sad to announce the passing of First United member Rosemary Irmis. Rosemary will be interred at Mt. Emblem Cember in Elmhurst on January 15 at 10 a.m. All are welcome. Please hold Rosemary's family and friends in your prayers.

Adult Ed Next Sunday: The Quest for Peace and Justice in Palestine/Israel

Join Adult Ed in Centennial Hall at 9:45 a.m. for the third installment of our 4-part January series. Next Sunday we'll meet Dr. Arie Zmora, a native of Israel, who directed Middle East exchange programs funded by the US Department of State, in which Israeli, Palestinian, Jordanian, and Lebanese partners participated. In Centennial Hall at 9:45 a.m.

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

Pastor Lydia Mulkey – lmulkey@firstunitedoakpark.com