

FIRST UNITED CHURCH OF OAK PARK
July 27, 2025



Living God’s All-Inclusive Love

PREPARING FOR WORSHIP

PRELUDE

Bobby Nguyen

Estampie Retrove from Robertsbridge Codex (14th Century, Anonymous)

WELCOME

Pastor Lydia Mulkey

*CALL TO WORSHIP

Ally Vertigan

In possibility, wonder, and mystery, **we gather.**

In grief, burnout, and apathy, **we gather.**

With community, creativity, and intention, **we gather.**

With anger, questions, and heartbreak, **we gather.**

There is room for you here. Let's gather in community and in the presence of the Divine.

*PASSING THE PEACE

*OPENING HYMN

O God, Our Help in Ages Past (Black hymnal no. 25, vv. 1-3, 6)

O God, our help in ages past, our hope for years to come,

Our shelter from the stormy blast, and our eternal home:

Under the shadow of your throne your saints have dwelt secure;

Sufficient is your arm alone, and our defense is sure.

Before the hills in order stood or earth received its frame,

From everlasting you are God, to endless years the same.

O God, our help in ages past, our hope for years to come,

Still be our God while troubles last, and our eternal home!

PRAYER FOR WHOLENESS

Pastor Phil Price

When we feel overwhelmed by the enormity of the world's suffering, may we remember to be where we are -- **these people, this community, this heart in this chest, this ground under our feet.**

Help us to do whatever we can with whatever we have, right where we are. Cast out our fear.

Give us the courage to meet this moment with integrity, bravery, and compassion.

Time for silent prayer.

ASSURANCE OF LOVE

Community organizer and contemplative, Rosemarie Freeney Harding, said, “There is no scarcity. There is no shortage. No lack of love, of compassion, of joy in the world. There is enough. There is more than enough. Only fear and greed make us think otherwise.” There is enough and you are enough. May God’s perfect love cast out all your fear! **Amen!**

INVITATION TO THE CHILDREN

Pastor Lydia

MUSICAL RESPONSE

This Little Light of Mine (Band version; Congregation joins on bold)

This little light of mine, I'm gonna let it shine. (x3)

Let it shine, let it shine, let it shine.

Hide it under a bushel, NO! **I'm gonna let it shine. (x3)**

Let it shine, let it shine, let it shine.

Jesus gave me the light, **I'm gonna let it shine. (x3)**

Let it shine, let it shine, let it shine.

Everywhere that I may go, **I'm gonna let it shine. (x3)**

Let it shine, let it shine, let it shine.

This little light of mine, I'm gonna let it shine. (x3)

Let it shine, let it shine, let it shine.

LISTENING FOR GOD’S WORD TO US

TIME FOR SHARING

Pastor Lydia

*HYMN OF ILLUMINATION

I Would Be True (Black hymnal no. 492 vv. 1&2)

I would be true, for there are those who trust me; I would be pure, for there are those who care;

**I would be strong, for there is much to suffer; I would be brave, for there is much to dare,
I would be brave for there is much to dare.**

I would be friend of all, the foe, the friendless; I would be giving, and forget the gift;

I would be humble, for I know my weakness; I would look up, and laugh, and love, and live.

I would look up, and laugh, and love, and live.

SCRIPTURE READING – 1 SAMUEL 25:2-39

SERMON – ABIGAIL AND THE FOOL

Pastor Lydia

*SERMON RESPONSE

Teach Us Your Ways

Teach us Your ways, teach us Your ways/As we learn from one another

Learn to love each other/Teach us Your ways.

Hallelujah, hallelujah/Let us learn from one another

Learn to love each other/Teach us Your ways.

RESPONDING TO GOD'S WORD

FOURTH SUNDAY OFFERING

Tammy Meyer

Benefitting First United Nursery School Tuition Assistance Fund

CALL TO THE OFFERING

Pastor Phil

OFFERTORY

Sanctuary Band

Down to the River to Pray

As I went down in the river to pray, studyin' about that good ol' way

And who shall wear the starry crown, good Lord show me the way!

O sisters let's go down, let's go down, come on down

O sisters let's go down, down in the river to pray

As I went down in the river to pray, studyin' about that good ol' way
And who shall wear the robe & crown, good Lord show me the way!
O brothers let's go down, let's go down, come on down
O brothers let's go down, down in the river to pray

As I went down in the river to pray, studyin' about that good ol' way
And who shall wear the starry crown, good Lord show me the way!
O fathers let's go down, let's go down, come on down
O fathers let's go down, down in the river to pray

As I went down in the river to pray, studyin' about that good ol' way
And who shall wear the robe & crown, good Lord show me the way
O mothers let's go down, come on down, don't you wanna go down?
O mothers let's go down, down in the river to pray

As I went down in the river to pray, studyin' about that good ol' way
And who shall wear the starry crown, good Lord show me the way
O sinners let's go down, let's go down, come on down
O sinners let's go down, down in the river to pray

*DOXOLOGY

**Praise God, from whom all blessings flow,/Praise Christ, all people here below,
Praise Holy Spirit, evermore,/Praise Triune God, whom we adore. Amen.**

ORDINATION OF DEACONS AND ELDERS

There are a variety of gifts, but it is the same Spirit who gives them.

There are different ways of serving God, but the same God is served.

God works through each person in a unique way, but it is a common purpose that is accomplished.

The Spirit's presence is shown in some way in each person for the good of all.

Christ is like a single body, which has many parts.

It is still one body.

If one part of the body suffers, all the other parts suffer with it; if one part is praised, all the other parts share its happiness.

All of us are Christ's body, and each one is a part of it.

CONGREGATIONAL COVENANT

We accept these elders and deacons as chosen by God through the voice of this congregation to lead us in the way of Jesus Christ. We promise to pray for them, to

encourage them, to respect their decisions, and to follow as they guide us, serving Jesus Christ, who alone is Head of the Church.

THE LORD'S PRAYER

Our Creator, our Mother, and 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 & SERVICE

*CLOSING HYMN

I Thank You Jesus (Black hymnal no. 41)

I thank you, Jesus, thank you, Jesus, thank you, Jesus, my Savior God,
For you brought me, yes, you brought me from a mighty, a mighty long way, a mighty long way.

Thank you, Jesus, thank you, Jesus, thank you, Jesus, my Savior God,
For you brought me, yes, you brought me from a mighty, a mighty long way, a mighty long way.

Been my father, been my mother, been my sister, my brother, too,
For you brought me, yes, you brought me from a mighty, a mighty long way, a mighty long way.

Been my father, been my mother, been my sister, my brother, too,
For you brought me, yes, you brought me from a mighty, a mighty long way, a mighty long way.

INVITATION TO JOIN THE CIRCLE

Pastor Lydia

*BLESSING

Pastor Lydia

*BENEDICTION RESPONSE

Go Now in Peace

Go now in peace, go now in peace/May the love of God surround you
Everywhere, everywhere you may go.

POSTLUDE

Bobby Nguyen

God of Grace by Paul Manz

EVENTS AND UPDATES

Below is a sampling of the news and events at First United. We invite you to subscribe to receive our monthly “Messenger Bell” newsletter and our weekly “News & Events” eblast by visiting firstunitedoakpark.com.

A Note on This Week’s Music

The song “Down to the River to Pray,” popularized in the movie “O, Brother Where Art Thou?”, was first published in *Slave Songs of the United States* in 1867. The song is seen as a song with deep spiritual meaning and a song associated with the Underground Railroad. The phrase “in the river to pray” refers to the fact that slaves walked *in the river* to throw off the dogs used to hunt them. The use of “starry crown” refers to the fact that slaves used the stars to navigate at night. Finally, the phrase “Good Lord, show us the way” is a prayer that they will be led to the path to freedom, the Underground Railroad. The lyrics for “Down to the River to Pray” are infused with spiritual symbolism. Rivers are often seen as places of purification and spiritual cleansing. The song invites sisters, brothers, fathers, mothers, and sinners to join in an inclusive and communal ritual of purification and a quest for spiritual clarity. The repetitive line “Let’s go down, come on down” reminds us that faith and salvation are not solitary endeavors but shared, communal journeys. And that anyone, regardless of their past or station in life, can seek redemption and salvation.

Fourth Sunday: FUNS Tuition Assistance Program

First United Nursery School’s literacy-rich, play-based curriculum supports children’s curiosity, creativity, initiative and confidence. Through the tuition assistance program, all children have an opportunity to benefit from our incredible school, regardless of the family’s ability to pay. Indicate “4th Sunday Offering” on your check or envelope, or select “4th Sunday” from the drop-down menu at firstunitedoakpark.com/give.

Annual Congregational Meeting, August 3

Please stay after worship on Sunday, August 3, for the Annual Congregational Meeting, when we will receive reports on the past year from our various teams. The written annual report will be available in the eblast before the meeting and printed copies will be available on the day of. We will meet in the Sanctuary after worship and will begin as soon as we have a quorum.

Chicago Sky Game on August 3

Join us for the August 3 Chicago Sky game against the Phoenix Mercury. We’ll meet at First United at 3:30 p.m. and then carpool together to Wintrust Arena for the 5 p.m. game. Use the QR code to get more information and reserve your tickets.



WELCOME TO FIRST UNITED!

We are a union church of the Presbyterian Church (USA) and the United Church of Christ, dedicated to sharing Christ's radically inclusive love. We welcome all, regardless of who you love, where you've come from, what religious background you have, or where you are on your faith journey. As a More Light/Open and Affirming congregation, we are committed to the full inclusion of LGBTQ+ people in membership and 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. Contact Lydia Mulkey (lmulkey@firstunitedoakpark.com).

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 at 9:45 a.m. September through May.

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).

MUSIC MINISTRIES

Our Sanctuary Choir leads worship most Sundays and rehearses on Wednesday evenings from 7:30 to 8:30 p.m. during the season. Our Handbell Choir rings a few times per year and rehearses on Wednesday evenings from 6:30 to 7:30 p.m. Both programs run September through May. Contact Sally Sloane (ssloane@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 Lydia Mulkey (lmulkey@firstunitedoakpark.com).



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