

FIRST UNITED CHURCH OF OAK PARK

January 25, 2026



Living God's All-Inclusive Love

Third Sunday After Epiphany

11 a.m. Worship

Bold text indicates congregation participation

*Indication to stand in body or spirit

Prelude

Bobby Nguyen

Ballo del Granduca by J. P. Sweelinck

Welcome

Pastor Michael Jones

***Call To Worship**

Dale Sorenson

Come, people of God—the dawn is breaking! A new day rises where sorrow had settled in.

The dawn is breaking—and we rise with it.

Where burdens have bent us low, the Holy One draws near, steadyng our steps.

The Holy One draws near—and we gather our courage.

Where yokes have weighed on shoulders and spirits, God is loosening what has held us down.

What held us down is lifting—and we move toward freedom.

Come, all who yearn for justice; all who hope for healing; all who hunger for joy.

We come to the dawning way, we come to the hopeful way, we come to the way God makes glorious.

***Passing the Peace**

***Opening Hymn**

Arise, Your Light Is Come (Black hymnal no. 164)

Arise, your light is come! The Spirit's call obey;

Show forth the glory of your God which shines on you today!

Arise, your light is come! Fling wide the prison door;

Proclaim the captive's liberty, good tidings to the poor.

Arise, your light is come! All you in sorrow born,

Bind up the broken-hearted ones and comfort those who mourn.

Arise, your light is come! The mountains burst in song!

Rise up like eagles on the wing; God's power will make us strong.

Prayer for Wholeness

Pastor Michael

Holy One, Your light dawns where our shadows are deepest. You are never far; your presence remains with us. Awaken us to the glimmers of your glory breaking into our world's weariness. Shine upon the paths we walk—paths obstructed by fear, uncertainty, and the heavy burdens our communities carry. We confess the weight we carry—worries we rehearse, the fears we nurture, the habits that hold us tight, patterns we cling to, the moments we turn from compassion, the truths we avoid. Unbind what tightens around our hearts. Lift what has grown too heavy. Make room in us for generosity, justice, and the courage to begin again. Amen.

Time for silent prayer.

Assurance of Love

Hear the good news of the Gospel: God's mercy draws near. God's compassion reaches out. God's grace opens a way forward. The light of God shines both on us and from within us. In this promise, receive your freedom. In this grace, begin again.
Amen.

Invitation to the Children

Pastor Lydia Mulkey

Musical Response

This Little Light of Mine (Black hymnal no. 524 v.1)

**This little light of mine, I'm gonna let it shine.
This little light of mine, I'm gonna let it shine.
This little light of mine, I'm gonna let it shine.
Let it shine, let it shine, let it shine.**

Time For Sharing

Pastor Lydia

*Hymn of Illumination

You Are Salt for the Earth, O People (Black hymnal no. 181)

You are salt for the earth, O people: salt for the reign of God!

Share the flavor of life, O people: life in the City of God!

Refrain: Bring forth the reign of mercy, bring forth the reign of peace;

Bring for the reign of justice, bring forth the City of God!

You are a light on the hill, O people: light for the City of God!

Shine so holy and bright, O people: shine for the City of God! R/

You are a seed of the Word, O people: bing forth the reign of God!

Seeds of mercy and seeds of justice, grow in the City of God! R/

We are a blessed and a pilgrim people: bound for the reign of God!

Love our journey and love our homeland: love is the City of God! R/

Scripture Readings

Dale Sorenson

Isaiah 9:1-4

Matthew 4:12-23

Sermon

Pastor Michael

*Sermon Response

Sanctuary Band

We are traveling companions, journeying as one,

Moving ever forward, our faces to the sun,

In the family of God, a place for everyone,

Together we are community, traveling, journeying as one.

Fourth Sunday Offering

Lauren Hamilton

Benefitting Lighthouse Foundation

Invitation to the Offering

Pastor Lydia

Offertory

Sanctuary Band

Welcome by Mark Miller

Let's walk together for a while and ask where we begin
To build a world where love can grow, and hope can enter in.
To be the hands of healing and to plant the seeds of peace,

Refrain: Singing welcome, welcome to this place
You're invited to come and know God's grace.
All are welcome, the love of God to share,
'Cause all of us are welcome here; all are welcome in this place.

Let's talk together of a time when we will share a feast,
Where pride and power kneel to serve the lonely and the least,
And joy will set the table as we join our hands to pray. R/

Let's dream together of the day when earth and heaven are one,
A city built of love and light, the new Jerusalem,
Where our mourning turns to dancing, every creature lifts its voice! R/

*Doxology

Praise God, from Whom All Blessings Flow

Praise God from whom all blessings flow/Praise Christ all people here below

Praise Holy Spirit evermore/Praise Triune God whom we adore.

Prayers of the People & the Lord's Prayer

Pastor Lydia

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.**

*Closing Hymn

This Little Light of Mine

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

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

The light that shines is the light of love, lights the darkness from above.
Shines on me and shines on you, shows what the power of love can do.

Shine my light both far and near, shine my light both bright and clear.
Where there's a dark corner in this land, Gonna let my little light shine.

Everywhere that I may go, I'm gonna let it shine. Everywhere that I may go, I'm gonna let it shine

Everywhere that I may go, I'm gonna let it shine, let it shine, let it shine, let it shine.

Monday, He gave me the gift of love, Tuesday, peace came from above,
Wednesday, He told me to have more faith, Thursday, He gave me a little more grace.
Friday, He told me to watch and pray, Saturday He told me just what to say.
Sunday gave me the power divine, to let my little light shine.

Jesus gave me the light, I'm gonna let it shine. Jesus gave me the light, I'm gonna let it shine

Jesus gave me the light, I'm gonna let it shine, let it shine, let it shine, let it shine.

Some say, "The time's too late, this old world's in a sorry state."

Some say, "Turn around and hide." But we have the power to change the tide.

Little white dove flying in the blue, gonna show what the power of love can do.

The real power is yours and mine, so let your little light shine.

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

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

***Invitation to Join the Circle**

Pastor Lydia

***Blessing**

Pastor Michael

***Benediction Response**

Go now in light, go now in light

May the love of God surround you

Everywhere, everywhere you may go.

Postlude

Bobby Nguyen

Cannonade by Claude-Bénigne Balbastre

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.

Let's Gather Again: Small Group Sign Up Now Open

Small Groups are returning for a six-week journey of faith and fellowship.

Meet new people, deepen connections, and discover fresh insights about faith by hearing each other's stories. Groups will meet once a week, beginning the week of February 15 running through the week of March 22.



Parents' Night Out, January 30

Drop your children at First United for a fun night of games, dinner and a movie while you enjoy a child-free night out. Use the QR code to get the full details (time, cost, etc.) and to register your kids!



Faith in Action Invites You to Palestine Culture Day

The Oak Park Public Library will host Palestine Culture Day on February 1 from 12:30-4:15 p.m. Visit the library for food, music, arts and more. This event is sponsored by the Oak Park River Forest High School MENA chapter.

Adult Ed Speaker Series Next Week

Immigration is in our news and daily conversation. On February 1, Sam Cole, Senior Immigration and Litigation Supervising Attorney for ACLU-IL, will share his perspective about the state of immigration in our state. We meet in Centennial Hall at 9:45 a.m.

Consecration Sunday and Potluck, February 15

This year's Stewardship Season will wrap up with a celebratory worship service followed by a potluck lunch in Centennial Hall on February 15. Watch your mail for your pledge mailing and return your card when you are able!

Ash Wednesday, February 18

Lent comes early this year. Gather in the Sanctuary at 6:30 p.m. on February 18 for a family-friendly worship service for Ash Wednesday.

Save the Date: Pastor Michael's Installation on February 22

Pastor Michael will be officially installed as the Lead Pastor of First United on February 22 at 3 p.m. in a special worship service in the Sanctuary with representatives from our denominations. A reception will follow in the lounge.

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 from 7:30 to 8:30 p.m. during the season and is welcoming new members! You don't have to commit to sing every week. Our Handbell Choir rings a few times per year and rehearses on Wednesday from 6:30 - 7:30 p.m. 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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