



FIRST UNITED CHURCH OF OAK PARK

Sunday, September 6, 2026

www.firstunitedoakpark.com

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Fifteenth Sunday after Pentecost

10:00 A.M. Worship

Bold text indicates congregation participation – *Indication to stand in body or spirit

Prelude

Bobb Nguyen

Arabesque by Louis Vierne

Welcome

Rev. Lydia Mulkey

*Call To Worship

Mark Breen

Wherever there is love, there is the presence of God.

Love is intimate and personal but also collective.

Love is communal resistance to practices of evil.

Under systems that destroy, holy is the uprising of the faithful.

The love of God is not passive; neither is it neutral.

Love despises abuse of power. Love practices solidarity with the suffering.

The healing of the world depends on love.

Courageous love. Fierce love. Tender love.

Let us worship together that we may learn the ways of love.

*Passing the Peace

The peace of Christ be with you.

And also with you.

*Opening Hymn #349 (Black hymnal)

I Come with Joy

Prayer for Wholeness

Lydia Mulkey

Holy One - we acknowledge how vulnerable we are. We are shaped and influenced by so many forces, some chosen, many not. At times, we lose ourselves. We choose ego or arrogance over connection and humility. We live out of a fear of scarcity rather than a spirit of generosity. We get distracted by the voices of empire. And still, we long to live in the direction of love.

Assurance of Love

Beloved, Love knows your name. Love longs to be expressed through you. Love forgives you. Love heals you. Love pursues you. You need only surrender to Love. **Thanks be to God: Amen.**

Invitation to the Children

Lydia Mulkey

Gathering Response #526 (Black hymnal)

Siyahmb' ekukhanyen' kwenkos'

Time for Sharing

Lydia Mulkey

*Hymn of Illumination #331 (Black hymnal)

Come, My Way, My Truth, My Life

Gospel Reading – Matthew 18:18-20

Mark Breen

“Truly I tell you, whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven. Again, truly I tell you, if two of you agree on earth about anything you ask, it will be done for you by my Father in heaven. For where two or three are gathered in my name, I am there among them.”

Epistle Reading – Romans 13:8-10

Owe no one anything, except to love one another, for the one who loves another has fulfilled the law. The commandments, “You shall not commit adultery; you shall not murder; you shall not steal; you shall not covet,” and any other commandment, are summed up in this word, “You shall love your neighbor as yourself.” Love does no wrong to a neighbor; therefore, love is the fulfilling of the law.

The word of God for the people of God. **Thanks be to God.**

Sermon

Lydia Mulkey

Sermon Response

God Calls You Good by Paul M. Vasile

**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. God calls me good, beloved child."**

Invitation to Holy Communion and the Offering

First United Church welcomes all to come forward when an usher invites your pew for Communion. You are welcome to bring your offerings and/or pink prayer request cards and place them in the offering plates on the pedestals. Bread, crackers that are free of gluten and the nine major allergens, and grape juice are available. Feel free to take your time in receiving the bread and the cup. You may eat and drink as soon as you receive the elements or take them with you to the pew. Please return to your pew by the outside aisles.

*If you are unable to come forward, an usher will bring Communion to you and will also ; be willing to bring forward your offering and/or pink prayer request card.
Online worshipers can give by going to firstunitedoakpark.com/give; you can share a prayer request in the live chat, and please join in Communion.*

Offertory

Laura Loveless & Lydia Mulkey

Flower Duet from Lakme by Leo Delibes

*Doxology

**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

Lydia Mulkey

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.

*Closing Hymn #527 (Black hymnal)

We Offer Christ

*Blessing

Lydia Mulkey

*Blessing Response

Go Now in Peace (Sleeth)

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

Postlude

Bobby Nguyen

Voluntary on Old Hundredth by Henry Purcell

Today's Liturgist: Mark Breen, 1st United member since 2018, is married to Sara Stevenson, member since 1987. Mark was raised Catholic and worked as a youth minister at Ascension Catholic Church in the late 1990's for 6 years. Mark is currently finishing Philip Pullman's "The Book of Dust" trilogy as his summer reading.

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-Call to Worship, Prayer for Wholeness, and Assurance of Love from www.enfleshed.com.

-Sermon Response: "God Calls You Good" ©2017 Paul Vasile www.paulvasile.com.

From the Deacons

As a reminder, you can report care concerns for yourself or others at any time by emailing the Deacons (deacons@firstunitedoakpark.com), using the Google form accessible by link in the eblast (or this QR code), or picking up a paper form at the Welcome Desk.



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.

Labor Day Holiday, September 7

First United will be closed tomorrow, September 7, in observance of Labor Day.

Come join the First United Sanctuary Choir!

The first rehearsal of the year is Wednesday, September 9, from 7:30 - 8:30 pm. Our repertoire ranges from Bach and Mendelssohn to contemporary composers living in the Chicago area. Join us for fellowship, laughter and worship through the blessings of music. Contact Music Director Sally Sloane (708-822-0655; ssloane@firstunitedoakpark.com).

Next Sunday is Gathering Day!

September 13 marks the start of a new program year with our annual Gathering Day celebration. Here's the full schedule:

- 9:30 a.m. - Confirmation parent/student orientation in the Chapel
- 9:45 a.m. – Church School parents and kids meet in Centennial Hall
- 11 a.m. – Worship!
- 12 p.m. – Root beer floats on the front lawn

Youth Membership/Confirmation (FKA Quest) Begins September 13

High School youth in grades 9 and 10 are invited to spend the year exploring their faith to discern whether to confirm membership here at First United and how to live into that membership. There will be an initial meeting for parents and youth on September 13 at 9:30 a.m. in the Chapel. RSVP to Mark Breen (mark.2.breen@gmail.com).

Bible Group Returns September 20

Beginning September 20, the Bible Group will resume weekly meetings at 9:45 a.m. in the conference room. Pastor Michael will lead the discussion of Galatians, one of apostle Paul's more famous epistles.

Adult Ed Speaker Series Kicks Off September 20

Dr. Kevin Schultz, Chair of the History Department at UIC, will discuss his book *Why Everyone Hates White Liberals (Including White Liberals)*. In the first of this two-part series, he'll explore the evolution, uses, and abuses of the word "liberal." Meet in Centennial Hall at 9:45 a.m.

FUSH/FUJI Begins September 20

All First United junior (6-8) and senior (9-12) high kids and parents are invited to a cookout to kick off the FUJI and FUSH program years! We'll enjoy food and fun from 5-7 p.m. and talk about what the year ahead looks like. Please use the QR code to register!



Community Fridge Collection Next Week in Worship

On the second Sunday of each month, we will collect food for the Community Fridge project. Please consider bringing one of the following items: canned meat, canned soup/chili, cooking oil, rice, instant oatmeal, jelly, dried beans, cereal, pasta sauce. For more information, contact Mary Colley (danmaryp@gmail.com).

Welcome Desk Volunteer Opportunity

We are still looking for volunteers to staff the Welcome Desk during the week. Specifically we need volunteers for Wednesday from noon to 2:30 p.m.; Thursday 9:30 a.m. to noon; both shifts on Friday. The job is to answer the phone and the door and assist visitors as needed. Training will be provided. Contact Joanne Despotes (708-209-1377; jdespotes@gmail.com).

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. Visit our website to read our land acknowledgment and open and affirming statement.

Interested in learning more about First United Church? Look for members wearing gold buttons, talk to one of the pastors, or watch for the next Newcomers class.

Assistive Listening System If you are in need of assistance in hearing during the worship service, please speak with one of the greeters.

Adult Education Adult Education takes a variety of forms. 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! Enjoy the Pray-ground throughout worship or take an activity bag to the pews. Childcare is available for children five and under in our nursery. Ask a greeter for directions.

Church School Church School is for children ages birth through 8th grade. We tell stories of the Bible using a lens of love and justice with singing, praying, and creating. Church School meets Sundays at 9:45 a.m., September through May.

Music Ministries Interested in singing or ringing with our choirs? We rehearse on Wednesdays September through May. Contact Music Director Sally Sloane for more information.

Youth Programs The junior and senior high youth groups meet on Sunday evenings from 5 – 7 p.m. here at the church, September through mid-May.

Transportation Assistance In need of a ride to church? Call or email: 708-334-2512 / FUCOP848@gmail.com.



FIRST UNITED CHURCH OF OAK PARK

Living God's All-Inclusive Love

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Lead Pastor:	Michael Jones – mjones@firstunitedoakpark.com
Associate Pastor:	Lydia Mulkey – lmulkey@firstunitedoakpark.com
Church Administrator:	Heather Vanderberg – hvanderberg@firstunitedoakpark.com
Financial Administrator:	Patricia Morales – pmorales@firstunitedoakpark.com
Music Director:	Sally Sloane – ssloane@firstunitedoakpark.com
Organist:	Bobby Nguyen – bnguyen@firstunitedoakpark.com

Hymn Supplement: September 6, 2026

Opening Hymn – I Come with Joy

I come with joy, a child of God, forgiven, loved, and free,
The life of Jesus to recall, in love laid down for me,
In love laid down for me.

I come with Christians far and near to find, as all are fed,
The new community of love in Christ's communion bread,
In Christ's communion bread.

As Christ breaks bread, and bids us share, each proud division ends.
The love that made us, makes us one, and strangers now are friends,
And strangers now are friends.

And, thus, we met, and better know the Presence, ever near,
And join our hearts and sing with joy that Christ is risen here,
That Christ is risen here.

Together met, together bound, in friendship we will stay,
And go with joy to love the world and live the way we pray,
And live the way we pray.

Gathering Response – *Siyahmb' ekukhanyen' kwenkos'*

Siyahamb' ekukhanye' kwenkos', siyahmb' ekuhanyen' kwenkkos'

We are marking in the light of God. We are marching in the light of God.

Hymn of Illumination – *Come My Way, My Truth, My Life*

Come, my Way, my Truth, my Life: such a way as give us breath;
Such a truth as ends all strife; such a life as conquers death.

Come my Light, my Feast, my Strength: such a light as shows a feast;
Such a fest as mends in length; such a strength as makes a guest.

Come my Joy, my Love my Heart: such a joy as none can move;
Such a love as none can part; such a heart as joys in love.

[over for closing hymn]

Closing Hymn – We Offer Christ

We offer Christ to all the world around us,
Born into faith, released from pride and shame;
Embraced by love, we show how love has found us;
At peace with God our Savior's name.

We offer Christ from all our best traditions,
By grace alone, amazed and strangely warmed,
Created equal, stirred by freedom-visions,
Self-critical, prepared to be reformed.

We offer Christ the barrier-bestrider,
Whose fullness far exceeds our local view,
Whose spirit, breathing deep in every culture,
Brings Christ to us, the same, yet strangely new.

We offer Christ, and God beloved, our Saviour
Now offers us, born of the Spirit's kiss,
To love creation and creation's Lover,
With skill, compassion, justice, care and peace.