



FIRST UNITED CHURCH OF OAK PARK

Sunday, August 23, 2026

www.firstunitedoakpark.com

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Thirteenth Sunday after Pentecost

10:00 A.M. Worship

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

Prelude

Vivian Johnson

Prelude #4 in em Op. 87 by Dimitri Shostakovich

Welcome

Rev. Michael Jones

*Call To Worship

Marteki Reed

Believers, Skeptics, Heretics, and Seekers:

We gather together with questions and convictions,

tussling and wrestling with the mysteries of faith

The Spirit delights in our discernment of Wisdom.

God has given us agency, creativity, and imagination.

We are set free to pursue a multitude of truths.

Let us discover what it is we believe.

*Passing the Peace

The peace of Christ be with you.

And also with you.

*Opening Hymn #460 (Blue hymnal)

Holy God, We Praise Your Name

Prayer for Wholeness

Mysterious One, we hope to hold with care the tensions of our traditions.

Help us to honor the best of what we have inherited. And to release what

conforms to harm and destruction. So few of us have felt the freedom to

question what we are taught. So few of us have been encouraged to respect

our own thoughts, intuition, or experiences. Bless our searching and our

seeking that we may exercise our own muscles of faith. Amen.

Assurance of Love

Hear the good news: We come as those who have beliefs, views, and certainties about the world around us, and God welcomes us as we are. God is not dependent on our pronouncements but forgives and gives grace freely to all. **Amen.**

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.'**

Invitation to the Children

Gathering Response #524 v.1 (Black hymnal)

This Little Light of Mine

Backpack Blessing

The pitter-patter of nervous feet shuffling to classrooms: some in shiny new clothes, some in old ones too small; some with a box of 100 crayons, some with empty backpacks. All are anxious, excited, scared and hopeful. They yearn for friends, approval, good grades and time to play.

May all students be blessed with enough and know that they are enough.

Marking dates on the calendar, scratching supplies off the shopping list: they hold little hands by the bus stop or wait in the carpool line; they wave goodbye and watch their hearts scuttle through heavy doors. Deep breaths to wade through the worries: Will my child be safe? Will they be loved? Will they follow instructions?

May all parents find peace in you. Setting their fears aside, may they rest in the safety of your love.

Hanging fresh posters on the walls and cleaning out cubbies: they review lesson plans and check the policy boxes, memorizing new names and faces,

wondering who will delight and who will cause trouble. They already feel tired, knowing the weight of the load and the weight of expectations.

May all educators be blessed with the right resources, finding nourishment and joy in their callings.

For our students, parents, caregivers, teachers, counselors, administrators and coaches – for all who feel the eagerness and anticipation of this season – may they be blessed with the gifts of your love, grace, peace and patience. May we bless our educational communities as we offer our support and service and uplift the power of learning for all. **Amen.**

Baptisms of Theo Dennis James & Silas William James

Community Covenant

In this act of surpassing grace, we witness the power of God. In baptism, we become newly aware of God’s abundant love and mercy. God calls each of us wherever we are, whoever we are, to share in the joy of God’s presence in a community of faith. As people who strive to follow Jesus Christ more closely each day, we welcome you, Theo and Silas, to our common journey. Trusting God, we offer you our support and care.

***Hymn of Illumination #325 (Black hymnal)**

Child of Blessing, Child of Promise

Responsive Psalm Psalm -- 138 (adapted)

Marteki Reed

I give you thanks, O God, with my whole heart; before the gods I sing your praise; I bow down toward your holy temple and give thanks to your name for your steadfast love and your faithfulness, for you have exalted your name and your word above everything.

On the day I called, you answered me; you increased my strength of soul.

All the rulers of the earth shall praise you, O God, for they have heard the words of your mouth.

They shall sing of the ways of the Holy One, for great is the glory of God.

For though the God is high, God regards the lowly, but the haughty are perceived from far away. Though I walk in the midst of trouble, you preserve me against the wrath of my enemies; you stretch out your hand, and your right hand delivers me.

**God will fulfill purpose for me; your steadfast love, O God, endures forever.
Do not forsake the work of your hands.**

New Testament Reading Romans 12:1-3

I appeal to you therefore, brothers and sisters, on the basis of God's mercy, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your reasonable act of worship. Do not be conformed to this age, but be transformed by the renewing of the mind, so that you may discern what is the will of God—what is good and acceptable and perfect. For by the grace given to me I say to everyone among you not to think of yourself more highly than you ought to think but to think with sober judgment, each according to the measure of faith that God has assigned.

Gospel Reading Matthew 16:13-20

Now when Jesus came into the district of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, "Who do people say that the Son of Man is?" And they said, "Some say John the Baptist but others Elijah and still others Jeremiah or one of the prophets." He said to them, "But who do you say that I am?" Simon Peter answered, "You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God." And Jesus answered him, "Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah! For flesh and blood has not revealed this to you but my Father in heaven. And I tell you, you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not prevail against it. I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven." Then he sternly ordered the disciples not to tell anyone that he was the Messiah.

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

Sermon

Sermon Response #316 (Black hymnal)

We Limit Not the Truth of God

Invitation to the Offering

During the offering all are welcome to use the two center aisles to bring offerings to the offering plates and/or pink prayer cards to the basket at the front of the sanctuary on the communion table or at the back of the sanctuary on the table behind the center pew. Prayer requests will be lifted up during the Prayers of the People. If you are unable to move to an offering plate, please ask a neighbor in the pew to take it or lift a hand, and we will make sure there is someone to bring it forward for you.

Fourth Sunday Offering

Marilyn McKenna

The Fourth Sunday Offering will benefit Chicago Religious Leadership Network on Latin America.

Offertory

Sandy Jefferson

I'll Fly Away by Alfred E. Brumley

*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

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 #537 (Black hymnal)

Christian, Rise and Act Your Creed

*Blessing

*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

Processional March by Alexander Guilmant

Today's Liturgist: Marteki Reed descends from a family with deep roots in Ghana. The first educated/ordained minister in the Evangelical Presbyterian Church of Ghana -- and founder of its first seminary -- was her maternal great-grandfather.

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-Call to Worship and Prayer for Wholeness from www.enfleshed.com.

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

-Backpack Blessing written by Elizabeth H. Doolin, associate pastor at Brownson Memorial Presbyterian Church in Southern Pines, North Carolina.

Save the Dates

Please mark your calendar with these dates and watch the eblast for more information. The eblast is published on Thursday afternoons. To get on the list, please send an email to office@firstunitedoakpark.com

Prime Time Breakfast - August 27 at 9 a.m. at Al's Grill in Oak Park
RSVP before August 24 to jhaisman59@gmail.com

Church School Carnival - August 30 after worship on the Church lawn

BUILD: Austin Peace Ride – September 5 at 10 a.m. to gather with First United Friends at Columbus Park golf course entrance OR meet at BUILD at 10:30

Labor Day Holiday; Church Closed – Monday, September 7

First Day of Church School – September 13 at 9:45 a.m.
Register using the link in the eblast.

Gathering Day – September 13

Worship returns to 11 a.m.; root beer float celebration after worship

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.



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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: August 23, 2026

Opening Hymn – Holy God, We Praise Your Name

Holy God, we praise your name; Lord of all, we bow before You;
All on earth your scepter claim, all in heaven above adore you.
Infinite your vast domain, everlasting is your reign.

Hark, the glad celestial hymn angel choirs above are raising;
Cherubim and seraphim, in unceasing chorus praising,
Fill the heavens with sweet accord: Holy, holy, holy Lord.

All apostles join the strain as your sacred name they hallow;
Prophets swell the glad refrain, and the blessed martyrs follow,
And from morn to set of sun, through the church the song goes on.

Holy Father, Holy Son, Holy Spirit: three we name you,
While in essence only one; undivided God we claim you,
And adoring bend the knee while we own the mystery.

Gathering Response – *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.

Hymn of Illumination – *Child of Blessing, Child of Promise*

Child of blessing, child of promise, baptized with the Spirit's sign;
With this water God has sealed you unto love and grace divine.

Child of love, our love's expression, love's creation, loved indeed!
Fresh from God, refresh our spirits, into joy and laughter lead.

Child of joy, our dearest treasure, God's you are, from God you came.
Back to God we humbly give you; live as one who bears Chris's name.

Child of God your loving Parent, learn to know whose child you are.
Grow to laugh and sing and worship, trust and love God more than all.

{Over}

Sermon Response – *We Limit Not the Truth of God*

We limit not the truth of God to our poor reach of mind,
To notions of our day and place, crude, partial, and confined;
No, let a new and better hope within our hearts be stirred:
O God, grant yet more light and truth to break forth from your Word.

Who dares to bind to one's own sense the oracles of heaven,
For all the nations, tongues, and climes and all the ages given?
That universe, how much unknown! That ocean unexplored!
O God, grant yet more light and truth to break forth from your Word.

External God, Incarnate Word, Spirit of flame and dove:
Enlarge, expand all living souls to comprehend your love;
And help us all to seek your will with wiser powers conferred:
O God, grant yet more light and truth to break forth from your Word.

Closing Hymn – *Christian, Rise and Act Your Creed*

Christian, rise and act your creed; let your prayer be in your deed;
Seek the right, perform the true, raise your work and life anew.

Hearts around you sink with care; you can help their load to bear;
You can bring inspiring light, strengthen them to do the right.

Offer others hope and joy, and God's worship your employ;
Giving thanks in humble zeal, learning all God's will to feel.

Come then, law divine, and reign: faith that doubt assails in vain,
Perfect love