

FIRST UNITED CHURCH OF OAK PARK

March 1, 2026



Living God's All-Inclusive Love

Second Sunday of Lent

11:00 A.M. Worship

Bold text indicates congregation participation

*Indication to stand in body or spirit

Prelude

Bobby Nguyen

Ich ruf zu dir, Herr Jesu Christ by J. S. Bach

Welcome

Lydia Mulkey

*Call To Worship

Walter Miller

Where should I look for help in my need?

To majestic mountain peaks that probe our skies, or to giants of industry that clog our land?

To satellites that circle our world, or to computers that store our knowledge?

The answer to my problems and the fulfillment of my needs will come from God,

From the one who created skies and mountains and the people who dwell in their midst.

God is great and knows every desire. God's watchful eye is upon us night and day.

We can make no move without God's knowledge.

God's concern for us is constant, and God's love for us is eternal.

And thus, the Lord will keep you, shielding you from the forces of evil as a shade tree shields you from the rays of the blazing sun.

God cares for you and will fight with you against the enemies of your soul.

Whether you are coming or going, God knows the course you take and will go before you.

*Passing the Peace

*Opening Hymn

Let Us Talents and Tongues Employ (Black hymnal no. 347)

Online worshippers: the words to hymns listed in the hymnal are available as a supplement at the end of this bulletin.

Prayer for Wholeness

Michael Jones

Midwifing Spirit, you are tenacious and tender enough to hold the complexity of life in your embrace— fragility & fortitude, life & death, undoing & becoming, fear & courage, movement & rest. You are with us where we are. Hear us as we admit the realities of our lives to you now.

Kyrie

(Black hymnal no. 751)

Kyrie eleison. Kyrie eleison. Kyrie eleison.

Assurance of Love

Whatever you have prayed in the quiet of this moment has been heard and held in the attentive and loving care of the Divine. You are loved just as you are, just where you are, and just because you are. Be at peace. **Amen.**

Invitation to the Children

Michael Jones

Musical Response

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

Time for Sharing

Michael Jones

*Hymn of Illumination

Like a Mother Who Has Borne Us (Black hymnal no. 583)

Scripture Reading

Walter Miller

John 3:1-17

Now there was a Pharisee named Nicodemus, a leader of the Jews. He came to Jesus by night and said to him, “Rabbi, we know that you are a teacher who has come from God, for no one can do these signs that you do unless God is with that person.” Jesus answered him, “Very truly, I tell you, no one can see the kingdom of God without being born from above.” Nicodemus said to him, “How can anyone be born after having grown old? Can one enter a second time into the mother’s womb and be born?” Jesus answered, “Very truly, I tell you, no one can enter the kingdom of God without being born of water and Spirit. What is born of the flesh is

flesh, and what is born of the Spirit is spirit. Do not be astonished that I said to you, 'You must be born from above.' The wind blows where it chooses, and you hear the sound of it, but you do not know where it comes from or where it goes. So it is with everyone who is born of the Spirit." Nicodemus said to him, "How can these things be?" Jesus answered him, "Are you the teacher of Israel, and yet you do not understand these things?"

"Very truly, I tell you, we speak of what we know and testify to what we have seen, yet you do not receive our testimony. If I have told you about earthly things and you do not believe, how can you believe if I tell you about heavenly things? No one has ascended into heaven except the one who descended from heaven, the Son of Man. And just as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted up, that whoever believes in him may have eternal life.

"For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life. Indeed, God did not send the Son into the world to condemn the world but in order that the world might be saved through him."

Sermon – Starting Over

Lydia Mulkey

Sermon Response

Loosen By Aly Halpert

Loosen, loosen, baby

You don't have to carry

The weight of the world in your muscles and bones

Let go, let go, let go

Holy breath, and holy name

Will you ease, will you ease this pain?

Invitation to the Offering and Communion

Michael Jones &

Lydia Mulkey

This month, members from First United's Council are serving Communion.

Communion Music

Sanctuary Choir

Every Valley by John Ness Beck

Ev'ry valley shall be exalted, and ev'ry mountain made low;
and the crooked made straight, and the rough places plain.
And the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, revealed,
And all flesh shall see it together;
For the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it.

*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

Michael Jones

**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

Standing at the Future's Threshold (Black hymnal no. 538)

*Blessing

Lydia Mulkey

Postlude

Bobby Nguyen

Chaconne in G Minor by Louis Couperin

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Call to worship adapted from Leslie F. Brandt's paraphrase of Psalm 121 found in
Psalms Now

Prayer for Wholeness adapted from *Enfleshed: Liturgy that Matters* written by Rev. Molly
Bolton

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.

Open Sanctuary in Lent, Wednesdays

Take a midday break on Wednesdays in Lent. The Sanctuary will be open from noon to 1 p.m. every Wednesday for prayer, meditation, and reflection. Spiritual practice guides will be available and meditative music will play in the background.

Adult Ed Speaker Series Next Week

On March 8, Amy Totsch, Lead Organizer for United Power for Action and Justice, will join us to discuss United Power's recent activities. United Power, an organization committed to identifying and working toward solutions to problems in our community, is a First United mission partner.

Get Your Assignment for Dinners for 8 or 9

If you signed up for Dinners for 8 or 9, please stop by the table in the lounge to pick up your dinner assignment and further instructions.

Prime Time Lunch, March 5

Bring your own brown bag lunch and spend some time getting to know Michael at Prime Time's winter gathering. Join us in Centennial Hall on March 5 at 1 p.m.

Family Day of Service: Feed My Starving Children, March 7

Mark your calendars for our next Family Day of Service on March 7. Use the QR for more information and to register.



March Dinner and a Movie, March 13

The March Dinner and a Movie gathering will feature a showing of "Ugly Stepsister." Dinner is at 6 p.m. (\$5 donation); movie at 6:30 p.m. RSVP using the button in the eblast or email Ron Haas (haas.inchicago@comcast.net).

Songs for These Times: A Community Song Circle, March 15

All are welcome to this easy-to-join group sing focused on the pleasure and power of raising voices in community. March 15 from 3:30 to 4:30 in the First United chapel. Contact Laurie Jolicoeur (magistra.jolicoeur@gmail.com) for more information.

Save the Date: MIDPOINT Game Night, March 21

MIDPOINT invites you to a game night and dinner on Saturday, March 21 at 6:30 p.m. at the O'Shea residence. Text Barbara Metric (708-834-8072) with any questions.

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 one of the pastors, or join us for a Newcomers class held three times per year.

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.

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.

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.



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Organist:	Bobby Nguyen – bnguyen@firstunitedoakpark.com

Hymn Supplement for Worship, March 1, 2026

Opening Hymn: *Let Us Talents and Tongues Employ*

Let us talents and tongues employ, reaching out with a shout of joy:
Bread is broken, the wine is poured, Christ is spoken and seen and heard.
Jesus lives again, earth can breathe again, pass the Word around: loaves abound!

Christ is able to make us one, at his table he set the tone,
Teaching people to live to bless, love in word and in deed express.
Jesus lives again, earth can breathe again, pass the Word around: loaves abound!

Jesus call us in, sends us out bearing fruit in a world of doubt,
Gives us love to tell, bread to share: God (Immanuel) everywhere!
Jesus lives again, earth can breathe again, pass the Word around: loaves abound!

Hymn of Illumination: *Like a Mother Who Has Borne Us*

Like a mother who has borne us, hoed us close in her delight,
Fed us freely from her body, God has called us into life.

Like a father who has taught us, grasped our hand and been our guide,
Lifted us and healed our sorrows, God has walked with us in life.

Though as children we have wandered, placed our trust in power and might,
Left behind our brothers, sisters, God still call us into life.

When we offer food and comfort, grasp our neighbor's hand in love,
Tread the path of peace and justice, God will walk with us in life.

Closing Hymn: *Standing at the Future's Threshold*

Standing at the future's threshold, grateful for God's guiding hand,
Asking no protected stronghold, called to be a pilgrim band,
Seeking ever for new vision of the Gospel for our day,
We move forward in God's mission with our faith to show the way

Midst the teeming cities' millions, witness to God's boundless love,
Reaching for each system's lost ones, seeking justice with each move;
Grant us courage, strength and patience to contend with vicious power,
Lead us forward in the faith that gives us hope in testing's hour.

Open-hearted in exchanges with the faithful not our own,
Trusting God's way with these strangers not to leave the truth unknown,
Joining them in shared endeavor where we have Christ's clear command,
We have faith that calls us ever toward this good earth's promised land.

Building justice as the bulwark of the peace that God would give,
Making sacrifice the hallmark of the life we're called to live:
Grant us, God, to bear our witness to this peace in Christ, and move
Forward with our faith's own access to the life of hope and love.

Jesus Christ, eternal Savior, Source of life and truth and grace,
We would ask no special favor, with the lowliest seek our place,
Know the inasmuch of serving, have your cross as our command:
Lead us in this faith unswerving forward as your pilgrim band.

Hymn of Illumination (two pages)

Dream God's Dream

Bryan Sirchio
www.sirchio.com

Chorus

Dream God's Dream! Ho - ly Spir - it help us
dream of a world where there is
jus - tice and where ev - 'ry - one is free to
build and grow and love and to sim - ply have e -
- nough the world will change when we dream God's
Dream.

Verses on the next page

Dream God's Dream, p.2

C G D C

Verses I'm dream - ing of a world where the
I'm dream - ing of the call God is
I'm dream - ing of the way that I

G D C

col - or of one's skin will mean less than what's with -
of - fer - ing to me; how to use my en - er -
want my life to go. I've got hopes and I've got

Em⁷ D C G

in the per - son's heart. A
gy and my best gifts to
goals I'd like to meet. I'm

D C G

world where wa - ter's clean and where air is safe to
do the work of Christ, to say God, please use my
reach - ing for the stars, but I won't for - get the

D Em⁷ D/F#

breathe. And ev' - ry chi - ld born has e -
life to spread your heal - ing love and to
scars of Christ who died to show that the

Em⁷ G D.S. al Coda ⊕ D C G D C G D

nough to eat. dream.
live your Truth.
Dream's for all.

Closing Hymn: *God, Whose Giving Knows No Ending*

God, whose giving knows no ending, from your rich and endless store,
Nature's wonder, Jesus' wisdom, costly cross, grave's shattered door:
Gifted by you, we turn to you offering up ourselves in praise;
Thankful song shall rise forever, gracious donor of our days.

Skills and time are ours for serving, that your will on earth be done:
All at peace in health and freedom, races joined, the Church made one.
No direct our daily labor, lest we strive for self alone;
Born with talents make us servants fit to answer at your throne.

Treasure, too, you have entrusted, gain through powers your grace conferred;
Ours to use for home and kindred, and to spread the gospel Word.
Open wide our hands in sharing as we heed Christ's ageless call,
Healing, teaching, and reclaiming, honoring you by loving all.

Lend your joy to all our giving, let it light our pilgrim way;
From the night of anxious keeping, loose us into generous day.
Then when years on earth are over, and we've lived our human span,
God, fulfill beyond our dreaming, all our stewardship began.