FIRST UNITED CHURCH OF OAK PARK

March 15, 2026

Living God's All-Inclusive Love

Fourth Sunday in Lent

11:00 A.M. Worship

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

Prelude — Bobby Nguyen

Toccata per l'Elevazione by Girolamo Frescobaldi

Welcome — Lydia Mulkey

*Call To Worship — Mark Breen

God Who Sees All, we come to worship in this Season of Lent, open to all you will reveal.

Open our eyes to your grace and mercy, Loving One. We want to see your love.

Justice-Making God, reveal all that harms and perpetuates systems of hatred and violence in our world.

Open our eyes to your redeeming love, Nurturing God. We want to see your plans for a new way.

God of All Light, shine your love down on us, so we may see the paths of hope you have prepared for us.

Open our eyes to your healing presence, God of Hope. We want to see your creation as you long for it to be.

*Passing the Peace

*Opening Hymn #202 (Black hymnal)

O God How Have We Wandered

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

Prayer for Wholeness — Lydia Mulkey

Holy Presence, we are here, gathered as a community that wants to see. We ask for your forgiveness for the times we have chosen to see only what looks good or makes us happy. We know that you call us to see not only joy in the world, but also pain and suffering. We want to

see the poor and the ostracized in our society. We want to see those living in fear and being persecuted for the color of their skin. We want to see all that are crying out for mercy because we know that the more we see, the more we will feel the call to act to bring about a just world for all. Amen.

Kyrie (Black hymnal no. 751)

Kyrie eleison. Kyrie eleison. Kyrie eleison.

Assurance of Love — Michael Jones

God's love for us is as bright as the brightest light and is showing new realities to us every day. New mercies are granted daily, and every day we have an opportunity to be changed forever and for good. This is the Good News of the Gospel of Jesus, the Christ. Amen.

Invitation to the Children — Lydia Mulkey

Musical Response #524 v.1 (Black hymnal)

This Little Light of Mine

Time for Sharing — Lydia Mulkey

*Hymn of Illumination #547 (Black hymnal)

Amazing Grace

Hebrew Bible/Old Testament Reading — Mark Breen

1 Samuel 16:1, 4-7

The Lord said to Samuel, "How long will you grieve over Saul? I have rejected him from being king over Israel. Fill your horn with oil and set out; I will send you to Jesse the Bethlehemite, for I have provided for myself a king among his sons." Samuel did what the Lord commanded and came to Bethlehem. The elders of the city came to meet him trembling and said, "Do you come peaceably?" He said, "Peaceably. I have come to sacrifice to the Lord; sanctify yourselves and come with me to the sacrifice." And he sanctified Jesse and his sons and invited them to

the sacrifice. When they came, he looked on Eliab and thought, “Surely his anointed is now before the Lord.” But the Lord said to Samuel, “Do not look on his appearance or on the height of his stature, because I have rejected him, for the Lord does not see as mortals see; they look on the outward appearance, but the Lord looks on the heart.”

New Testament Reading

Mark Breen

Ephesians 5:8-10

...for once you were darkness, but now in the Lord you are light. Walk as children of light, for the fruit of the light is found in all that is good and right and true. Try to find out what is pleasing to the Lord.

Gospel Reading

Mark Breen

John 9:1-12, 24-26, adapted

As he walked along, he saw a man blind from birth. His disciples asked him, “Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?” Jesus answered, “Neither this man nor his parents sinned; he was born blind so that God’s works might be revealed in him. We must work the works of him who sent me while it is day; night is coming, when no one can work. As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world.” When he had said this, he spat on the ground and made mud with the saliva and spread the mud on the man’s eyes, saying to him, “Go, wash in the pool of Siloam” (which means Sent). Then he went and washed and came back able to see. The neighbors and those who had seen him before as a beggar began to ask, “Is this not the man who used to sit and beg?” Some were saying, “It is he.” Others were saying, “No, but it is someone like him.” He kept saying, “I am he.” But they kept asking him, “Then how were your eyes opened?” He answered, “The man called Jesus made mud, spread it on my eyes, and said to me, ‘Go to Siloam and wash.’ Then I went and washed and received my sight.” They said to him, “Where is he?” He said, “I do not know.”
[The Pharisees] called the man who had been blind, and they said to him, “Give glory to God! We know that this man is a sinner.” He answered, “I do not know whether he is a sinner. One thing I do know, that though I was blind, now I see.”

Sermon

Michael Jones

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

Michael Jones

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

Offertory

Sanctuary Choir

Hymn of Promise by Natalie Sleeth

In the bulb there is a flower; in the seed, an apple tree;
In cocoons, a hidden promise: butterflies will soon be free!
In the cold and snow of winter, there's a spring that waits to be,
Unrevealed until its season, something God alone can see.

There's a song in every silence, seeking word and melody;
There's a dawn in every darkness, bringing hope to you and me.
From the past will come the future; what it holds, a mystery,
Unrevealed until its season, something God alone can see.

Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia, alleluia, alleluia, alleluia,
Alleluia, alleluia at the last, a victory,
Unrevealed until its season, something God alone can see.

*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 #469 (Black hymnal)

O Grant Us Light

*Blessing Michael Jones

Postlude Bobby Nguyen

Prelude in G Minor by J. S. Bach, arr. Max Reger

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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
The Sanctuary will be open from noon to 1 p.m. every Wednesday for prayer, meditation, and reflection. Come when you can and stay as long as you'd like.

Order Easter Lilies
Donate an Easter lily to honor a loved one this Easter. Orders due March 26. Use the QR code or pick up a paper form from the welcome desk.

Memorial Service for Marilyn Kauffmann
There will be a memorial service celebrating the life of Marilyn Kauffmann on Saturday, March 21 at 2 p.m. A cookie reception will follow in the lounge.

Adult Ed Speaker Series Next Week
Next week, Prof. Tracy McKenzie begins a two-week session with "Thinking Christianly about American Civil Religion: Reassessing the Gettysburg Address." Meet in Centennial Hall at 9:45 a.m.

FUYA Meets After Worship Next Week
FUYA is the First United Young Adult group that meets on the last Sunday of each month directly after church. To connect with other young adults at First United, please reach out to Lura Honderich (Lura.honderich@gmail.com) for more information.

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. Main dish provided; bring a beverage and a side or dessert to share. Text Barbara Metric (708-834-8072) with any questions.

Bread Baking for Maundy Thursday, April 1
Gather in the kitchen the day before Maundy Thursday to bake bread for the table service. No experience necessary! RSVP using the Maundy Thursday QR code.

Maundy Thursday Worship, April 2
On April 2 at 6:30 p.m. we will gather in Centennial Hall to share a meal just as Jesus did with his disciples. Following our meal, we will journey through the tunnel to continue worship in the Sanctuary in the Tenebrae style. Can you help with the table service? Use the QR Code to sign up.

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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Choir Director:	Sally Sloane – ssloane@firstunitedoakpark.com
Organist:	Bobby Nguyen – bnguyen@firstunitedoakpark.com

Hymn Supplement: March 15, 2026 (Lent 4)

Opening Hymn – *O God How Have We Wandered*

O God, how have we wandered and hidden from your face;
In foolishness have squandered your legacy of grace.
But how, in exile dwelling, we turn with fear and shame,
As distant but compelling, you call us each by name.

And now at length discerning the evil that we do,
By faith we are returning with hope and trust in you.
In haste you come to meet us, and home rejoicing bring,
In gladness there to greet us with calf and rope and ring.

O God of all the living, both banished and restored,
Compassionate, forgiving, our peace and hope assured.
Grant now that our transgressing, our faithlessness may cease.
Stretch out your hand in blessing, in pardon, and in peace.

Hymn of Illumination – *Amazing Grace*

Amazing grace, how sweet the sound, that saved a wretch like me!
I once was lost, but now am found, was blind but now I see.

'Twas grace that taught my heart to fear, and grace my fears relieved;
How precious did that grace appear the hour I first believed!

Though many dangers, toils, and snare, I have already come;
'Tis grace has brought me safe thus far, and grace will lead me home.

My God has promised good to me, whose word my hope secures;
God will my shield and portion be as long as life endures.

When we've been there ten thousand years, bright shining as the sun,
We've no less days to sing God's praise than when we'd first begun.

Closing Hymn – *O Grant Us Light*

O God grant us light, that we may know wisdom that you alone can give,
That truth may guide us as we go, and virtue bless the lives we live.

O grant us light that we may find where error lurks in human lore,
And turn to you our seeking minds, and love your holy Word the more.

O grant us light, that we may learn how dead is life from you apart,
How sure is joy for all who turn to you and undivided heart.

O grant us light, when soon or late, all earthly scenes shall pass away,
In you to find the open gate, to deathless home and endless day.