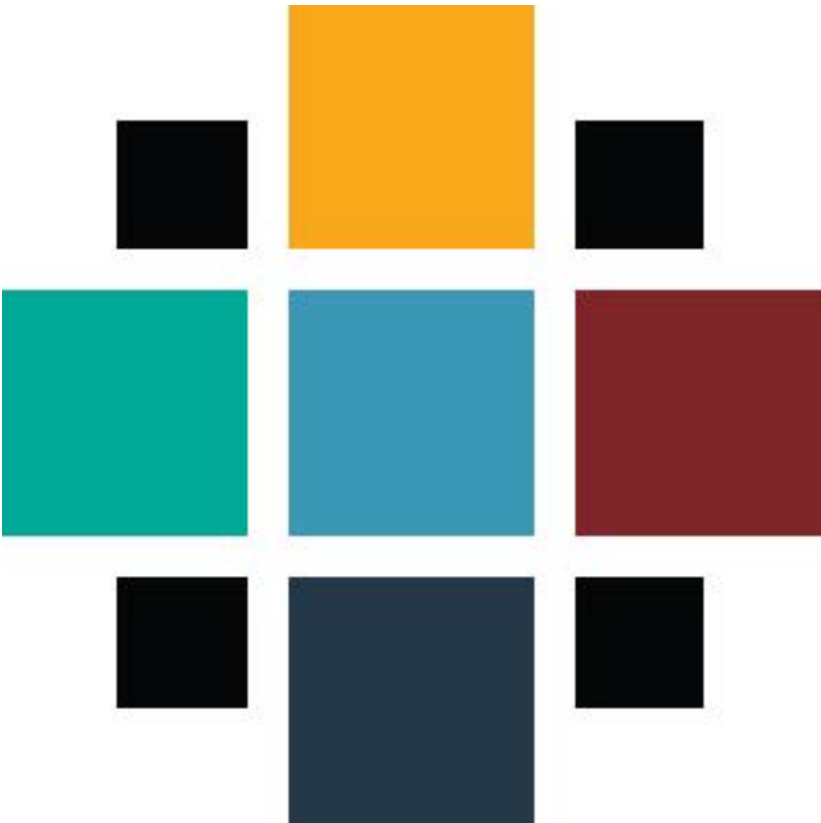


FIRST UNITED CHURCH OF OAK PARK  
February 22, 2026



Living God's All-Inclusive Love

# First Sunday of Lent

11:00 A.M. Worship

**Bold text indicates congregation participation**

\*Indication to stand in body or spirit

Prelude

Bobby Nguyen

*Adagio cantabile from Sonata No. 8 by Ludwig van Beethoven*

Welcome

Michael Jones

\*Call To Worship

Joanne Despotes

The dust that shapes the journey, the cross that guides it, the color that surrounds it, and the wilderness that invites it.

**This is Lent, and into its wilderness God calls us.**

It is God who sustains, not the temptations of this world.

**We follow the path of Christ, our savior and brother.**

These times are troubling. This journey: it is hard.

**We follow the one who ventured into the abyss of life and stood against the darkness.**

We follow the one who gave all for the story of love.

**The Lenten journey calls us!**

\*Passing the Peace

\*Opening Hymn

*Let Me Enter God's Own Dwelling* (Black hymnal no. 67)

*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 & Lydia Mulkey

**God of Lent, we journey together into the wilderness again. We now bring our hearts to you, setting them down before you in hopes that you will mend them. As you hear our faltering words, we pray you would answer us with your forgiving love. Deliver us from the temptations of this world and the tests that we impose upon ourselves. Draw us closer to you in these forty days of Lent. Amen.**

## Kyrie

(Black hymnal no. 751)

**Kyrie eleison. Kyrie eleison. Kyrie eleison.**

## Assurance of Love

The good news is the same in every season of the church year. There is love, hope, and peace in the story of Jesus, the Christ, who leads us to Jerusalem. May we live these forty days of Lent knowing that we are loved and a part of God's movement of a just world for all.

## Invitation to the Children

Lydia Mulkey

## Musical Response

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

## Time for Sharing

Lydia Mulkey

## Litany for Black History Month

O God, you have ignited the sparks within us into a blazing demand for freedom, equality, and justice.

**This quest cost Harriet Tubman sleepless nights.**

As she led people to freedom.

**It was an equality that Rosa Parks and civil rights activists fought for and gave their lives for.**

It was justice that Martin Luther King, Jr. stood for, as thousands stood with him at the Lincoln Memorial. O God, you have seen our tears. You have been pained by the evil of human hearts.

**Yet, you loved humanity enough that you sent your only Son to identify with the outcast, marginalized, and rejected.**

As the cries of Jesus pierced your heart, so have the cries of your people.

**Cries from different cultures and in different languages.**

# \*Hymn of Illumination

*Lift Every Voice and Sing* (Black hymnal no. 593)

## Scripture Reading

Joanne Despotes

### Psalm 32

Happy are those whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered. Happy are those to whom the Lord imputes no iniquity and in whose spirit there is no deceit. While I kept silent, my body wasted away through my groaning all day long. For day and night your hand was heavy upon me; my strength was dried up as by the heat of summer. Then I acknowledged my sin to you, and I did not hide my iniquity; I said, "I will confess my transgressions to the Lord," and you forgave the guilt of my sin. Therefore let all who are faithful offer prayer to you; at a time of distress, the rush of mighty waters shall not reach them. You are a hiding place for me; you preserve me from trouble; you surround me with glad cries of deliverance. I will instruct you and teach you the way you should go; I will counsel you with my eye upon you. Do not be like a horse or a mule, without understanding, whose temper must be curbed with bit and bridle, else it will not stay near you. Many are the torments of the wicked, but steadfast love surrounds those who trust in the Lord. Be glad in the Lord and rejoice, O righteous, and shout for joy, all you upright in heart.

## New Testament Scripture Reading

### Matthew 4:1-11

Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tested by the devil. He fasted forty days and forty nights, and afterward he was famished. The tempter came and said to him, "If you are the Son of God, command these stones to become loaves of bread." But he answered, "It is written, 'One does not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God.' " Then the devil took him to the holy city and placed him on the pinnacle of the temple, saying to him, "If you are the Son of God, throw yourself down, for it is written, 'He will command his angels concerning you,' and 'On their hands they will bear you up, so that you will not dash your foot against a stone.' " Jesus said to him, "Again it is written, 'Do not put the Lord your God to the test.' " Again, the devil took him to a very high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory, and he said to him,

“All these I will give you, if you will fall down and worship me.” <sup>1</sup>Then Jesus said to him, “Away with you, Satan! for it is written, ‘Worship the Lord your God, and serve only him.’ ” Then the devil left him, and suddenly angels came and waited on him.

## Anthem

Sanctuary Band

*Jesus on the Mainline*

## 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

Lydia Mulkey

## Offertory

*Beautiful Things* by Michael Gungor

Sanctuary Band

You make beautiful things

You make beautiful things out of the dust

You make beautiful things

You make beautiful things out of us.

## \*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

*Forty Days and Forty Nights* (Black hymnal no. 205)

## Benediction

## Response

**Go now in peace, go now in peace.**

**May the love of God surround you.**

**Everywhere, everywhere you may go.**

## Postlude

Bobby Nguyen

*Electric Counterpoint III* by Steve Reich

# 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](http://firstunitedoakpark.com/calendar). Follow us on Facebook ([facebook.com/firstunitedoakpark](https://facebook.com/firstunitedoakpark)) for our weekly newsletter and lots more.*

## **Michael Jones' Installation Today at 3 p.m.**

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 Centennial Hall.

## **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 1, Former Village President, Anan Abu-Taleb**, will discuss "The Crisis in the West Bank and Gaza." As a native of the West Bank with close relatives still living there, Mr. Abu-Taleb can speak to the current conditions.

## **Sign up for Dinners for Eight or Nine**

Dinners for Eight or Nine returns on Saturday, March 7. Get more details and sign up in the lounge before or after worship.

## **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](mailto:haas.inchicago@comcast.net)).

# 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 8<sup>th</sup> 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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|                          |                                                                                                                 |
|--------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
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| Associate Pastor:        | Lydia Mulkey – <a href="mailto:lmulkey@firstunitedoakpark.com">lmulkey@firstunitedoakpark.com</a>               |
| Church Administrator:    | Heather Vanderberg – <a href="mailto:hvanderberg@firstunitedoakpark.com">hvanderberg@firstunitedoakpark.com</a> |
| Financial Administrator: | Patricia Morales – <a href="mailto:pmorales@firstunitedoakpark.com">pmorales@firstunitedoakpark.com</a>         |
| Choir Director:          | Sally Sloane – <a href="mailto:ssloane@firstunitedoakpark.com">ssloane@firstunitedoakpark.com</a>               |
| Organist:                | Bobby Nguyen – <a href="mailto:bnguyen@firstunitedoakpark.com">bnguyen@firstunitedoakpark.com</a>               |



## \*Opening Hymn

*Let Me Enter God's Own Dwelling* (Black hymnal no. 67)

Let me enter God's own dwelling, open wide the lovely door!  
Here, all earthly powers excelling, God receives the sick and poor.  
Joy, my heart in this dear place: here I see God face to face.

I have come to church to meet you: condescend to come to me!  
Anxious, needy, I entreat you, come inside, and welcome be—  
Here at home, within my breast-- I, your temple, richly blessed.

Make my mind and body holy, sanctify my ears and lips.  
Lift my spirit, poor and lowly, all bright vanities eclipse.  
Take my praise, however flawed, as an offering, worthy God.

In this hour of Gospel sowing, let my earth be fruitful ground.  
Intellectual light bestowing, raise my green faith, sweet and sound.  
Let me prove a stalk of wheat, when your harvest is complete.

Reinforce me, weak and failing, making sure your precious word—  
(Thieves and evil unavailing)— lives within my heart secured.  
Shining word, my starrng guide, planted for me, deep inside.

Let me hear when you command me, let me leap to do your will.  
When I wander, reprimand me, comfort me when I lie ill.  
In the hour of silent dread, feed me with your heavenly bread.

## \*Hymn of Illumination

*Lift Every Voice and Sing* (Black hymnal no. 593)

Lift every voice and sing, till earth and heave ring, right with the harmonies of liberty;  
Let our rejoicing rise, high as the listening skies, let it resounds loud as the rolling sea.  
Sing a song full of the faith that the harsh past has taught us.  
Sing a song full of the hope that the present has brought us;  
Facing the rising sun of our new day begun, let us march on till victory is won.

Stoney the road we trod, bitter the chastening rod, felt in the days when hope unborn has died;

Yet with a steady beat, have not our weary feet, come to the place for which our people sighted?

We have come over a way that with tears has been watered,  
We have come, treading our path through the blood of the slaughtered,  
Out from the gloomy past, till now we stand at last where the white gleam of our bright star is case.

God of our weary years, God of our silent tears, God who has brought us thus far on the way;  
God, who by your might, led us into the light, keep us forever in the path, we pray.  
Lest our feet stray from the places, our God, where we met you,  
Lest our hearts, drunk with the wine of the world, forget you;  
Shadowed beneath your hand, may we forever stand, true to our God, true to our native land.

## \*Closing Hymn

*Forty Days and Forty Nights* (Black hymnal no. 205)

Forty day and forty nights you were fasting in the wild;  
Forty days and forty nights tempted, and yet undefiled.

Shall we not your sorrow share and from worldly joys abstain,  
Fasting with unceasing prayer, strong with you to suffer pain?

Then if Satan on us press, flesh or spirit to assail,  
Victor in the wilderness, grant that we no faint or fail!

So shall we have peace divine: holier gladness our shall be;  
'Round us, too, shall angels shine, such as served you faithfully.

Keep, O keep us, Savior dear, ever constant by your side;  
That with you we may appear at the eternal Eastertide.