

# FIRST UNITED CHURCH OF OAK PARK

December 24, 2025

5 p.m. Family Service & Pageant



*Living God's All-Inclusive Love*

**Bold text indicates congregation participation**

\*Indication to stand in body or spirit

# PREPARING FOR WORSHIP

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## CHRISTMAS EVE: WHAT CAN'T WAIT

### PRELUDE

Bobby Nguyen

*Noël X* by Louis Claude Daquin

### WELCOME

Evelyn Tsan, Sarah Stroupe,  
Emerson Devore, Stella Severson

*Tonight, we will sing familiar carols, hear beautiful music, watch the Christmas story play out in front of us, and open our hearts to love's work in and among us. If you would like something to help you worship this evening, in the front left corner of the sanctuary you'll find bags and worship supplies like children's bulletins, focus toys, and books. If you have been here before, find your bag on the rack and take the supplies you need. If you're a visitor, there are bags without names on them next to the rack. Fill it with the supplies you'd like and return it after the service.*

### POEM – WHAT CAN'T WAIT

Betsy Samore, Deacon

Prayer by Sarah Are | A Sanctified Art LLC | [sanctifiedart.org](http://sanctifiedart.org)

### THE ADVENT WREATH

The Saliny- Bracco Family

### ADVENT CANDLE RESPONSE

*Now We Light a Candle (Crahham)*

**Now we light a candle**

**Warmth in every heart**

**Word made flesh among us**

**Never to depart**

**May this candle never dim**

**May its light still grow**

**As we learn to share this**

**Warmth we've come to know.**

## \*WE PREPARE OUR HEARTS

Our Youth

One: If you are like Joseph, and you are seeking truth,

**All: There is room here for you.**

One: If you are like Mary, and you are seeking rest,

**All: There is a seat here for you.**

One: If you are like the wise men, and you are looking for a sign,

**All: These candles are here for you.**

One: If you are like the angels, and you cannot help but sing,

**All: There is a melody here for you.**

One: Come in. You are in God's house.

Love was born tonight, and there is love here for you.

**All: Let us worship the God of love.**

## \*CAROL

*Hark! the Herald Angels Sing* (Blue hymnal no. 31)

**Hark! The herald angels sing, "Glory to the newborn King.**

**Peace on earth, and mercy mild, God and sinners reconciled!"**

**Joyful, all ye nations, rise, join the triumph of the skies;**

**With the angelic host proclaim, "Christ is born in Bethlehem!"**

**Hark! The herald angels sing, "Glory to the newborn King!"**

**Christ, by highest heaven adored, Christ, the everlasting Lord!**

**Late in time behold Him come, Offspring of the virgin's womb.**

**Veiled in flesh the Godhead see; Hail the incarnate Deity,**

**Pleased in flesh with us to dwell, Jesus, our Emmanuel.**

**Hark! The herald angels sing, "Glory to the newborn King!"**

**Hail the heaven-born Prince of Peace! Hail the sun of righteousness!**

**Light and life to all He brings, risen with healing in His wings.**

**Mild He lays His glory by, born that we no more may die,**

**Born to raise us from the earth, born to give us second birth.**

**Hark! The herald angels sing, "Glory to the newborn King!"**

## PRAYER OF ILLUMINATION

Pastor Phil Price

Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Parent, Prince of Peace—

We are leaning forward. We are craning our necks, straining to hear a murmur of the angels' song, or an echo of a gloria. We always long for you, but on this night, on this holy Christmas Eve, we long for you to feel as close as possible.

So as we prepare to hear this ancient story once again, we ask that you would awaken something new in us. Awaken in us a sense of awe. Awaken in us a feeling of wonder. Awaken our hearts and pull us into the narrative, that we might hear the truths in this ancient Word as if it were the first time.

We know that you are still speaking. So speak to us again this night.

**We are listening. We are ready. Amen.**

## LISTENING FOR GOD'S WORD TO US

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*As we hear the Christmas story, please remain seated for all hymns.*

## SONG OF ILLUMINATION

*O Little Town of Bethlehem* (Blue hymnal No. 44 vv.1, 2, &4)

**O little town of Bethlehem, how still we see thee lie!**

**Above thy deep and dreamless sleep the silent stars go by.**

**Yet in thy dark streets shineth the everlasting light;**

**the hopes and fears of all the years are met in Thee tonight.**

**For Christ is born of Mary; and gathered all above,**

**While mortals sleep, the angels keep their watch of wondering love.**

**O morning stars, together proclaim the holy birth,**

**And praises sing to God the King, and peace to all on earth.**

**O holy Child of Bethlehem, descend to us, we pray;**

**Cast out our sin and enter in, be born in us today.**

**We hear the Christmas angels the great glad tidings tell;**

**O come to us, abide with us, our Lord Emmanuel!**

THE ANNOUNCEMENT – LUKE 1:26-32 Owen Parker & Stella Severson

## SPECIAL MUSIC

Erika Morrison

*Don't Save It All for Christmas Day* by Peter Rizzo, Ric Wake & Celine Dion

## THE BIRTH – LUKE 2:1-7

Steven Stroupe

### CAROL

*Away in a Manger* (Blue hymnal no. 25 vv. 1&3)

**Away in a manger, no crib for His bed,  
The little Lord Jesus laid down His sweet head.  
The stars in the sky looked down where He lay,  
The little Lord Jesus, asleep on the hay.**

**Be near me, Lord Jesus; I ask thee to stay  
Close by me forever and love me, I pray.  
Bless all the dear children in Thy tender care,  
And fit us for heaven to live with Thee there.**

## THE ANGELS TELL THE NEWS – LUKE 2:8-14

Wesley Tsan  
& Owen Parker

CAROL– *Angels We Have Heard on High* (Blue hymnal no. 23 vv. 1&3)

**Angels we have heard on high,  
Sweetly singing o'er the plains,  
And the mountains in reply  
Echoing their joyous strains.  
Gloria in excelsis Deo!  
Gloria in excelsis Deo!**

**Come to Bethlehem and see  
Him whose birth the angels sing;  
Come, adore on bended knee,  
Christ the Lord, the newborn King.  
Gloria in excelsis Deo!/Gloria in excelsis Deo!**

## SHEPHERDS JOURNEY— LUKE 2:15-18

Marlowe Devore

CAROL— *The First Nowell* (Blue hymnal no. 56, v.1)

**The first Nowell the angel did say  
Was to certain poor shepherds in fields as they lay;  
In fields where they lay keeping their sheep,  
On a cold winter's night that was so deep.  
Nowell, Nowell, Nowell, Nowell, Born is the king of Israel.**

## THE WILD STAR — MATTHEW 2: 1-11

Evelyn Tsan & Sarah Stroupe

CAROL— *O Come, All Ye Faithful* (Blue hymnal no. 41, vv. 1, 3 & 2)

**O come, all ye faithful, joyful and triumphant,  
O come ye, O come ye to Bethlehem!  
Come, and behold him, born the King of angels!  
O come, let us adore him, O come, let us adore him,  
O come, let us adore him, Christ, the Lord!**

**Sing, choirs of angels, sing in exultation!  
Sing, all ye citizens of heaven above!  
Glory to God, all Glory in the highest!  
O come, let us adore him, O come, let us adore him,  
O come, let us adore him, Christ, the Lord!**

**Yea, Lord, we greet Thee, born this happy morning;  
Jesus, to Thee be all glory given;  
Word of the Father, now in flesh appearing!  
O come, let us adore him, O come, let us adore him,  
O come, let us adore him, Christ, the Lord!**

# RESPONDING TO GOD'S WORD

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CALL TO THE OFFERING

Wesley Tsan

OFFERTORY

Erika Morrison

*Mary, Did You Know* by Mark Lowry and Buddy Greene

PASTORAL PRAYER

Pastor Phil

INVITATION TO JOIN THE CIRCLE

Pastor Lydia

MUSIC FOR JOINING THE CIRCLE

Bobby Nguyen

## WE GO OUT TO SERVE

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THE GIFT – JOHN 1:1-5; 14

Pastor Lydia & Locklin Bell

\*CAROL

*Silent Night, Holy Night* (Blue hymnal no. 60, vv. 1-3)

**Silent night, holy night! All is calm, all is bright,**

**Round yon virgin mother and child!**

**Holy Infant, so tender and mild,**

**Sleep in heavenly peace, sleep in heavenly peace.**

**Silent night, holy night! Shepherds quake at the sight,**

**Glories stream from heaven afar,**

**Heavenly hosts sing: "Alleluia;**

**Christ the Savior is born, Christ the Savior is born."**

**Silent night, holy night! Son of God, love's pure light**

**Radiant beams from Thy holy face,**

**With the dawn of redeeming grace,**

**Jesus, Lord, at Thy birth, Jesus, Lord, at Thy birth.**

**\*CAROL**

*Joy to the World*, (Blue hymnal no. 40, vv.1-2)

**Joy to the world! The Lord is come:**

**Let earth receive her King;**

**Let every heart prepare Him room,**

**And heaven and nature sing, and heaven and nature sing,**

**And heaven, and heaven and nature sing.**

**Joy to the earth! The Savior reigns!**

**Let us our songs employ;**

**While fields and floods, rocks, hills, and plains**

**Repeat the sounding joy, repeat the sounding joy,**

**Repeat, repeat the sounding joy.**

**\*CHARGE AND BENEDICTION**

Pastor Lydia & Our Youngest

**SENDING MUSIC**

Bobby Nguyen

*Sleigh Ride* by Leroy Anderson

*As you leave, please deposit your candles in the baskets by the entrances.*



## ABOUT THE BULLETIN ART

God Couldn't Wait by Lisle Gwynn Garrity

Inspired by Luke 2:1-14, (15-20)

*Graphic Image*

### *What If God Had Waited – by Lisle Gwynn Garrity*

What if God had waited  
For Mary to be wed,  
For Herod to relent,  
For a legitimate birthing bed?  
What if God had waited  
Until the powerful promoted peace,  
And the politicians agreed?  
What if God had waited  
For a plan with no risk of failure,  
For a place that felt safe and secure?

What if God had waited  
For the anxious to find rest,  
For the cynic to know hope,  
For the brokenhearted to be whole?  
For the wars to cease,  
For the violence to end,  
For the fears to pass,

For the weapons to be banned?  
What if God had waited  
For the earth to heal,  
For the laws to change,  
For every life to matter the same,  
For the addict to be freed from shame,  
For the refugees to not be blamed?  
What if God had waited  
Until all was calm,  
All was bright,  
For a future that might  
Never come?  
What if God had waited?  
But God couldn't wait.  
God couldn't wait to be love known in  
flesh and bone—  
And neither should we.

# Poinsettias

This Advent and Christmas season we honor and remember friends and loved ones in many ways. The individuals and families below have done so with a gift of poinsettias to decorate the First United Sanctuary.

## **Dedicated To**

John M. and C. Sue Buchanan

In memory of Marilyn Kauffman  
In memory of Leann Despotes

In honor of Judy Eckholm

In memory of Bob Haisman

In memory of Nancy Hoey Hanson

In honor of Herta Lisich

In memory of Thomas & Corrina  
Powers

In memory of dear cousin Drew

The Saliny/Bracco Family

In honor of our grandchildren

Philip and Virginia Wheelock

In memory of Harry & Pennie  
Saunders

In memory of Marilyn Hopper

Andrew & Barbara Sorenson  
Charles & Leona Summers

For Peace within us and on earth

## **Given By**

Susan Buchanan

Ted & Joanne Despotes

Jackie Eckholm

Janet Haisman

David L. Hanson

Dan and Karen Pietrini

Bunny Powers

The Ricordati-Kluskens Family

Shannon Saliny & Patrick Bracco

Susan & Stevan Saliny

Linda Sandman and Rich Wheelock

Harry Saunders Jr.

The Severson Family

Dale Sorenson & Carol Summers

Mark Breen & Sara Stevenson

# sticky church

December 28

11 a.m. in Centennial Hall

A First United Tradition

Worship around the breakfast table with French toast casserole (and LOTS of syrup). It's a great service for kids of ALL ages!

Able to help with the service?  
Use the QR code to sign up.



Please note that Church School and Adult Ed will not meet on December 28.

# 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 Pastor Lydia, 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

Are you interested in singing in worship with our Sanctuary Choir? Rehearsals are Wednesday evenings from 7:00 to 8:30 p.m., September through May.

## 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.



## FIRST UNITED CHURCH OF OAK PARK

*Living God's All-Inclusive Love*

[www.firstunitedoakpark.com](http://www.firstunitedoakpark.com) | [facebook.com/firstunitedoakpark](https://facebook.com/firstunitedoakpark) | 708-386-5215

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