



FIRST UNITED CHURCH OF OAK PARK

Sunday, July 26, 2026

www.firstunitedoakpark.com

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Ninth Sunday after Pentecost

10:00 A.M. Worship

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

Prelude

Bobby Nguyen

Prélude by Nadia Boulanger

Welcome

Rev. Ally Vertigan

*Call To Worship

Joanne Despotes

We are people who grow, who search, who live with patience, shaped into living parables:

We are people of a seed-planting, fish-catching, bread-baking God.

We are planted and we are gathered up. We are mixed, kneaded and left to rest. A longing God looks for us.

In Jesus' stories of the cosmos, we become innovative stewards of creation.

As beloved co-creators with an eternal God, how will our lives tell the story of God's love?

We will think, pray, take action, and praise. The living God is among us!

*Passing the Peace

The peace of Christ be with you.

And also with you.

*Opening Hymn *Be Now My Vision* (black hymnal #451)

Prayer for Wholeness *inspired by Psalm 119*

Tender God, we strive to live out your promises of love and grace in our day to day. Sometimes, we lose track and fall off course. We become weighed down with heaviness, convinced we must hold all of life's struggles alone. It is easy to lose focus on love when the world around is stressful or overwhelming, when we feel scared or alone. Turn your spirit toward us and be gracious to us, as you have been with your people since the beginning of

time. Keep our way forward steady according to your promises. Search our hearts, knowing God.

Assurance of Love

Beloved companions on the journey, hear the good news: through the spirit of the living God, made known to us through the life and teachings of Jesus Christ, we are redeemed. We are set free and made new!

God's face shines on all of creation! Amen.

Musical Response #756 (Black hymnal)

Gloria, gloria, in excelsis Deo!

Gloria, gloria, alleluia, alleluia!

Invitation to the Children & Gathering of Community Fridge Donations

Gathering Response #524 v.1 (Black hymnal)

This Little Light of Mine

Time for Sharing

Musical Response #524 v.2 (Black hymnal)

This Little Light of Mine

Everywhere I go...

Hebrew Bible / Old Testament Reading

Joanne Despotes

1 Kings 3:5-12

At Gibeon the Lord appeared to Solomon in a dream by night, and God said, "Ask what I should give you." And Solomon said, "You have shown great and steadfast love to your servant my father David because he walked before you in faithfulness, in righteousness, and in uprightness of heart toward you, and you have kept for him this great and steadfast love and have given him a son to sit on his throne today. And now, O Lord my God, you have made your servant king in place of my father David, although I am only a little child; I do not know how to go out or come in. And your servant is in the midst of the people whom you have chosen, a great people so numerous they cannot be numbered or counted. Give your servant,

therefore, an understanding mind to govern your people, able to discern between good and evil, for who can govern this great people of yours?"

It pleased the Lord that Solomon had asked this. God said to him, "Because you have asked this and have not asked for yourself long life or riches or for the life of your enemies but have asked for yourself understanding to discern what is right, I now do according to your word. Indeed, I give you a wise and discerning mind; no one like you has been before you, and no one like you shall arise after you."

Responsive Gospel Reading

Matthew 13:31-33, 44-52

He put before them another parable:

"The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed that someone took and sowed in his field;

it is the smallest of all the seeds, but when it has grown, it is the greatest of shrubs and becomes a tree, so that the birds of the air come and make nests in its branches." He told them another parable:

"The kingdom of heaven is like yeast

that a woman took and mixed in with three measures of flour until all of it was leavened.

"The kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field,

which a man found and reburied; then in his joy he goes and sells all that he has and buys that field.

"Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant in search of fine pearls;

on finding one pearl of great value, he went and sold all that he had and bought it.

"Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a net that was thrown into the sea and caught fish of every kind;

when it was full, they drew it ashore, sat down, and put the good into baskets but threw out the bad. So it will be at the end of the age. The angels will come out and separate the evil from the righteous and throw them into the furnace of fire, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. Have you understood all this?"

They answered, "Yes."

And he said to them, "Therefore every scribe who has become a disciple in the kingdom of heaven is like the master of a household who brings out of his treasure what is new and what is old."

*Hymn of Illumination *When Love Is Found* (black hymnal #362)

Sermon

Sermon Response

Sanctuary Band

Hold On by Heidi Ann Wilson

Hold on. Hold on, my dear ones, here comes the dawn.

Hold on. Hold on, my dear ones, here comes the dawn.

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 middle 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

Amy Cardin

First United Nursery School

Offertory

Sanctuary Band

We Are Sending You Light by Melanie DeMore

Chorus: **We are sending you light to heal you, to hold you.**

We are sending you light to hold you in love.

No matter where you go, no matter where you've been, you'll never walk alone. I feel you deep within. *Chorus*

No matter what you feel, or what you choose to show, I'm always there for you, so I want you to know. *Chorus*

I walk the path with you. Go slow, dear one, don't hurry. I'll go just like you go. There is no need to worry. *Chorus 2X*

*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

Sanctuary Band

The Future Is Calling by Sarina Patridge

**The future is calling, is calling for healing
Can you hear it? Can you hear it? (echo)
The future is calling, is calling for healing
And the people will sing along
And the singing will keep us strong.**

*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

Tico-Tico no Fubá by Zequinha de Abreu

Today's Liturgist: Bio: Joanne Despotes, a member since 1979, has been in many leadership roles and currently helps at the welcome desk during the week. As a research RN, she helped test the first drug proven effective in treating HIV.

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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.

About The Songs This Week

Hold On and *The Future is Coming* are both part of the Singing Resistance movement. All three composers are involved with singing as resistance. If you are interested in exploring community singing with others each month, contact Laurie Jolicoeur. First United hosts community singing on the 2nd Sunday each month from 3-4:30pm in the chapel. The next event is Sunday, August 9, 3-4:30pm. All are welcome.

Singing Resistance is a movement grounded in love, nonviolence, and solidarity. We teach songs that are simple, taught by ear, and are relevant to these times. We are building a radically welcoming community of singers -providing space and tools for all who wish to join us in peaceful protest, including those who are new to social movements and activism. We raise our voices for solace, strength, adn solidarity in the face of rising authoritarianism.

Listening Assistance Training Today After Worship

Are you someone who uses, would like to use, or would like to learn more about the new Listening Assistance System at First United? Pete Todd will do a training in the Sanctuary after worship to explain the system, demonstrate its use, and answer questions.

Quest Returns This Fall!

This fall First United will be offering a Confirmation class for the program year! If you know a youth or are a youth entering ninth grade or any high school student not yet confirmed who is interested, please contact the church office. More information will be shared in the coming months.

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.



FIRST UNITED CHURCH OF OAK PARK

Living God's All-Inclusive Love

www.firstunitedoakpark.com | 708-386-5215

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