



FIRST
UNITED
CHURCH OF
OAK PARK

Sunday, July 12, 2026

www.firstunitedoakpark.com

facebook.com/firstunitedoakpark | Instagram [@firstunitedoakpark](https://instagram.com/firstunitedoakpark)

Seventh Sunday after Pentecost

10:00 A.M. Worship

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

Prelude

Bobby Nguyen

Etude No. 2 by Philip Glass

Welcome

Rev. Michael Jones

*Call To Worship

Elaine Labuz

Let us prepare our hearts for God's holy work.

Let us ready ourselves for Divine disruption.

As the earth longs to flourish and the people dream of rest,

God has promised to show us the way.

Setting down our egos, taking up our faith,

We seek the seeds of transformation.

Wisdom is here, alive and among us. Let us receive her truth.

*Passing the Peace

The peace of Christ be with you.

And also with you.

*Opening Hymn #285 (Blue hymnal)

God, You Spin the Whirling Planets

Prayer for Wholeness

God of rebirth, renewal, and restoration - we acknowledge how easy it is to get stuck in our ways. While we wish for radical change in the world, we still struggle to discern what change is needed from us. We turn to you for guidance. Release us from that which holds us back in mind, body, and spirit, that we might move together in the direction of freedom. Help us to be the seeds that grow into the fullness that you desire for us. Amen.

Assurance of Love

Hear the Good News: The Holy One receives and responds to our prayers and offers the promise of renewed life and the power of community. Through Christ, we participate as witnesses, agents, and recipients of transformation for the glory of God and by the grace of God. **Thanks be to God: Amen.**

Gloria #756 (Black hymnal)

Gloria, gloria, in excelsis Deo!

Gloria, gloria, alleluia, alleluia!

Invitation to the Children

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

Elaine Labuz

Isaiah 55:10-13

For as the rain and the snow come down from heaven and do not return there until they have watered the earth, making it bring forth and sprout, giving seed to the sower and bread to the eater, so shall my word be that goes out from my mouth; it shall not return to me empty, but it shall accomplish that which I purpose and succeed in the thing for which I sent it. For you shall go out in joy and be led back in peace; the mountains and the hills before you shall burst into song, and all the trees of the field shall clap their hands. Instead of the thorn shall come up the cypress; instead of the brier shall come up the myrtle, and it shall be to the Lord for a memorial, for an everlasting sign that shall not be cut off.

Gospel Reading Matthew 13:1-9, 18-23

That same day Jesus went out of the house and sat beside the sea. Such great crowds gathered around him that he got into a boat and sat there, while the whole crowd stood on the beach. And he told them many things in parables, saying: "Listen! A sower went out to sow. And as he sowed, some seeds fell on a path, and the birds came and ate them up. Other seeds fell on rocky ground, where they did not have much soil, and they sprang up quickly, since they had no depth of soil. But when the sun rose, they were scorched, and since they had no root, they withered away. Other seeds fell among thorns, and the thorns grew up and choked them. Other seeds fell on good soil and brought forth grain, some a hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty. If you have ears, hear!"

"Hear, then, the parable of the sower. When anyone hears the word of the kingdom and does not understand it, the evil one comes and snatches away what is sown in the heart; this is what was sown on the path. As for what was sown on rocky ground, this is the one who hears the word and immediately receives it with joy, yet such a person has no root but endures only for a while, and when trouble or persecution arises on account of the word, that person immediately falls away. As for what was sown among thorns, this is the one who hears the word, but the cares of this age and the lure of wealth choke the word, and it yields nothing. But as for what was sown on good soil, this is the one who hears the word and understands it, who indeed bears fruit and yields in one case a hundredfold, in another sixty, and in another thirty."

The word of God for the people of God. **Thanks be to God.**

*Hymn of Illumination

(Tune: AR HYD Y NOS, same as Blue Hymnal #544 "Day Is Done")

Once a Farmer Went Out Sowing Text by Carolyn Winfrey Gillette

"Once a farmer went out sowing," Jesus began.

"Soon the tender plants were growing There on his land.

Every day he labored, tending, Weeding, working, hope unbending.

So his care was never-ending For what he'd planned."

**God of love, when he was sleeping, His harvest grew.
Even with his faithful keeping, Life came from you.
You awakened seeds he'd sown there;
You gave strength to what was grown there.
He was never all alone there; He looked to you.**

**Long ago our church was planted Here in this place.
Those who loved you worked and tended In your embrace.
Here they built a place of worship, Labored well in faith and friendship,
Preached and served in times of hardship, All by your grace.**

**In our joyful celebration, God, this is true:
You sustain this congregation; Life comes from you.
In the times we pray and gather, When we risk for things that matter,
As we love and serve our neighbor, We trust in you.**

Sermon

Michael Jones, Mark Breen (FUSH Advisor), Megan Sullivan (Adult Leader on FUSH Mission Trip), Romy Auch (FUSH Mission Trip Participant)

Sermon Response #369 (Blue hymnal)

I'm Gonna Live So God Can Use Me

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.

Offertory

You've Got a Friend by Carole King

Eloise Nelson

*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 #540 (Black hymnal)

We Plant a Grain of Mustard Seed

*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

Sortie by Everett Titcomb

Today's Liturgist: Following the death of her husband, Elaine Labuz moved to Oak Park to live near family. She was drawn to First United by its practices of affirmation and inclusion.

Copyrights: Hymns, anthems, & music for choir, handbells, piano, organ, and sanctuary band used and broadcast with permission under ONE LICENSE A-714599 or CCLI License 1298520. All rights reserved.

-Call to Worship and Prayer for Wholeness adapted from www.enfleshed.com.

-Assurance of Love adapted from UCC Worship Ways, written by Rev. Dr. Cheryl A. Lindsay, Minister for Worship and Theology for the United Church of Christ.

-Hymn of Illumination Text: Copyright © 2010 by Carolyn Winfrey Gillette. All rights reserved.

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.

Stay and Play After Worship

Join the Children's Ministry Team after worship on the lawn for water play, games, and hot dogs!

Ordination of Deacons and Elders, July 19

On July 19, we will ordain our Deacons and Elders.

Food Drive for Community Fridge – Next Two Sundays

Faith in Action will collect nonperishable foods for The Community Fridge Project during the offering on Sundays July 19 and 26. Items of particular need include: canned meat meals such as chili or SpaghettiOs, cooking oil, canned tuna or chicken, jelly, dried beans (not black beans), cereal, and spaghetti sauce. For more information, contact Mary Colley (danmaryp@gmail.com).

No Outdoor Worship in July

We will not have outdoor worship in July. Watch upcoming eblasts for information about our August outdoor worship that will include a blessing of the animals.

PrimeTime Picnic, July 23

Join us for a picnic lunch on the church lawn at 1 p.m. on Thursday, July 23! Bring your own lunch and a lawn chair if you wish to. (A limited number of chairs will be provided.) RSVP to Janet Haisman (jhaisman59@gmail.com) by Monday, July 20.

Listening Assistance Training, July 26

Are you someone who uses, would like to use, or would like to learn more about the new Listening Assistance System at First United? On Sunday, July 26, Pete Todd will do a training after worship in the Sanctuary 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

facebook.com/firstunitedoakpark | [Instagram @firstunitedoakpark](https://instagram.com/firstunitedoakpark)

| | |
|--------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Lead Pastor: | Michael Jones – mjones@firstunitedoakpark.com |
| Associate Pastor: | Lydia Mulkey – lmulkey@firstunitedoakpark.com |
| Church Administrator: | Heather Vanderberg – hvanderberg@firstunitedoakpark.com |
| Financial Administrator: | Patricia Morales – pmorales@firstunitedoakpark.com |
| Music Director: | Sally Sloane – ssloane@firstunitedoakpark.com |
| Organist: | Bobby Nguyen – bnguyen@firstunitedoakpark.com |

Hymn Supplement: July 12, 2026

Opening Hymn – God, You Spin the Whirling Planets

God, you spin the whirling planets, fill the seas and spread the plain,
Mold the mountains, fashion blossoms, call forth sunshine, wind, and rain.
We, created in your image, would a true reflection be
Of your justice, grace, and mercy and the truth that makes us free.

You have called us to be faithful in our life and ministry.
We respond in grateful worship joined in one community.
When we blur your gracious image, focus us and make us whole.
Healed and strengthened as your people, we move onward toward your goal.

God, your word is still creating, calling us to life made new,
Now reveal to us fresh vistas where there's work to dare and do.
Keep us clear of all distortion. Polish us with living care.
Thus, new creatures in your image, we'll proclaim Christ everywhere

Musical Response After the Invitation – This Little Light of Mine

This little light of mine, I'm gonna let it shine
This little light of mine, I'm gonna let it shine
This little light of mine, I'm gonna let it shine
Let it shine. Let it shine. Let it shine.

Sermon Response – I'm Gonna Live So God Can Use Me

I'm gonna live so God can use me anywhere, Lord anytime!
I'm gonna live so God can use me anywhere, Lord, anytime!

Closing Hymn – *We Plant a Grain of Mustard Seed*

We plant a grain of mustard seed, and in our faith we find
The proof of God is love, indeed, which blossoms from its kind;
The proof of God is love, indeed, which blossoms from its kind,

Our actions, more than words, define how love's example feeds
A greater love, for love divine bursts forth from smallest seeds;
A greater love, for love divine bursts forth from smallest seeds.

When stooped to lend a helping hand, we find a touch that heals,
For love invested will expand to bear the fruit love yields;
For love invested will expand to bear the fruit love yields.

Make love our purpose, love our aim, for love endures all things,
And choosing love our lives will claim the peace forgiveness brings;
And choosing love our lives will claim the peace forgiveness brings.