

# FIRST UNITED CHURCH OF OAK PARK



*Living God's All-Inclusive Love*

April 12, 2026

# Second Sunday of Easter

11:00 A.M. Worship

**Bold text indicates congregation participation**

\*Indication to stand in body or spirit

Prelude

Bobby Nguyen

*Sun by Hania Rani*

Welcome

Lydia Mulkey

\*Call To Worship

Craig Bechtel

Do not look for signs of life amidst the halls of cruelty—

**the Living are walking around in the Garden of Life—**

pulling weeds of despair, tending to the ways of thriving.

Christ is Living! Magdalene saw the stone rolled away herself!

**Even in despair the Holy Spirit surprises us with a jolt of Hope!**

Can you feel it? Wild possibility—brimming and unfurling?

Alleluja, the Ways of Life expand beyond systems of evil!

**Resurrected Christ—inspire our compassion for the world.**

**We will shake off our grave clothes and speak the words of New Life.**

\*Passing the Peace

The peace of the Risen Christ be with you.

**And also with you.**

\*Opening Hymn #243 (Black hymnal)

*Alleluia! Alleluia! Hearts to Heaven*

*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

**O Living Love, may we, in the wake of Easter, ride a wave of irrepressible hope. May the love that you have placed within us rise from deep within, giving us purpose and peace. Forgive us for the times we have sought to speak words that do not bring life into this world. In the name of Living Christ we pray, Amen.**

## Assurance of Love

Lydia Mulkey

Beloved, the Redeemer of our souls meets us in our doubts, uncertainty, and questions. When we call, God responds. When we do not call, God remains present with us. Receive the grace of God to trust the Holy One with our struggles, pain, and brokenness. Have life in the name of the One who came to us, comes to us, and will come to us again and again.

## Musical Response #236 (Black hymnal)

*Halleluja*

## 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 #249 (Black hymnal)

*Peace I Leave with You, My Friends*

## Old Testament/Hebrew Bible Reading

Craig Bechtel

### Psalm 16:1, 5-11

Protect me, O God, for in you I take refuge. The Lord is my chosen portion and my cup; you hold my lot. The boundary lines have fallen for me in pleasant places; I have a goodly heritage. I bless the Lord, who gives me counsel; in the night also my heart instructs me. I keep the Lord always before me; because he is at my right hand, I shall not be moved. Therefore my heart is glad, and my soul rejoices; my body also rests secure. For you do not give me up to Sheol or let your faithful one see the Pit. You show me the path of life. In your presence there is fullness of joy; in your right hand are pleasures forevermore.

# Gospel Reading

## John 20:19-31

When it was evening on that day, the first day of the week, and the doors were locked where the disciples were, for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you." After he said this, he showed them his hands and his side. Then the disciples rejoiced when they saw the Lord. Jesus said to them again, "Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, so I send you." When he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them, "Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained."

But Thomas (who was called the Twin), one of the twelve, was not with them when Jesus came. So the other disciples told him, "We have seen the Lord." But he said to them, "Unless I see the mark of the nails in his hands and put my finger in the mark of the nails and my hand in his side, I will not believe." A week later his disciples were again in the house, and Thomas was with them. Although the doors were shut, Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you." Then he said to Thomas, "Put your finger here and see my hands. Reach out your hand and put it in my side. Do not doubt but believe." Thomas answered him, "My Lord and my God!" Jesus said to him, "Have you believed because you have seen me? Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have come to believe." Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of his disciples that are not written in this book. But these are written so that you may continue to believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that through believing you may have life in his name.

## Sermon

Michael Jones

## Sermon Response

Sanctuary Band

*"We Belong to Each Other"*, music by Annie Schlaefer,  
words by Nikita Gill

**Every one, oh every one, oh every one of these people are ours,  
Just like we are theirs.**

**We belong to them and they belong to us.**

# 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

*For the Beauty of the Earth* by John Rutter

For the beauty of the earth, for the beauty of the skies  
For the love which from our birth over and around us lies.  
Lord of all, to thee we raise, this our joyful hymn of praise.

For the beauty of each hour of the day and of the night,  
Hill and vale, and tree and flower, sun and moon and stars of light  
Lord of all, to thee we raise, this our joyful hymn of praise.

For the joy of human love, brother, sister, parent, child,  
Friends on earth, and friends above, for all gentle thoughts and mild.  
Lord of all, to thee we raise, this our joyful hymn of praise.

For each perfect gift of thine to our race so freely given,  
Graces human and divine, flow'rs of the earth and buds of heav'n  
Lord of all, to thee we raise, this our joyful hymn of praise.

## \*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 Lydia Mulkey

**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 #531 (Black hymnal)

*God, Speak to Me, That I May Speak*

## \*Blessing

Michael Jones

## \*Blessing Response

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

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

**Everywhere, everywhere you may go.**

## Postlude

Bobby Nguyen

*Passacaglia by George F. Handel*

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  - Call to Worship is adapted from [www.enfleshed.com](http://www.enfleshed.com).
  - Prayer of Wholeness adapted from a prayer written by John Ballenger, and posted on Preacher Musings. <http://preachermusings.wordpress.com/>
  - The Assurance of Love was written by the Rev. Dr. Cheryl A. Lindsay, Minister for Worship and Theology for the United Church of Christ.
  - Call to Worship, Prayer for Wholeness, and Assurance of Love, adapted from text written by Rev. Dr. Cheryl A. Lindsay, Minister for Worship and Theology for the United Church of Christ.
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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](http://firstunitedoakpark.com/calendar). Follow us on Facebook ([facebook.com/firstunitedoakpark](https://facebook.com/firstunitedoakpark)) for our weekly newsletter and lots more.*

## Adult Ed Next Week

Next week, we start a two-part series in which Art Spooner will take us “In Quest of Quest -- Adult Version.” We will be introduced to the Quest journey that our teens experience and have a chance to learn more about our church and our faith traditions.

## One Earth Film Festival Begins April 22

Faith in Action invites you to celebrate the 15th Anniversary of One Earth Film Festival with this year’s theme, GenWe: All Together Now. Running April 22-27, 2026, the festival features inspiring films that spark conversation, connection, and collective action for our planet. Visit [oneearthfilmfest.org](http://oneearthfilmfest.org) for more information.

## Save the Date: Baby Shower!

Please join us on May 3 at 2:30 p.m. in Centennial Hall to honor Pastor Lydia and her wife Sam as well as First United member Vivian Gama who are expecting little ones this summer. Cake and punch will be served. Use the QR codes to access the baby registries and keep watching for more information!



Lydia & Sam



Vivian

## Upcoming Worship Highlights – May 3

May 3 will be a busy but exciting day in worship. Our Church School kids will be leading prayer, reading the Psalm, and serving communion. In addition, we will welcome The Voices at BGSU, a diverse choir from Bowling Green State University whose repertoire focuses on traditional spirituals.

# 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! Kids are welcome to use our Pray-ground throughout worship or take an activity bag to the pews. 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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# Hymn Supplement: April 12, 2026

## Processional Hymn – *Alleluia! Alleluia! Hearts to Heaven*

Alleluia! Alleluia! Hearts to heaven and voices raise;  
Sing to God a hymn of gladness, sing to God a hymn of praise.  
Jesus on the cross as Savior for the world's salvation bled;  
But the crucified Redeemer now is risen from the dead!

Now the iron bars are broken, Christ from death to life is born;  
Glorious life, and life immortal on this holy Easter morn;  
Christ has triumphed, and we conquer by God's liberating deed;  
Now the Christ with us abiding to eternal life shall lead.

Christ is risen, we are risen; shed upon us heavenly grace,  
Rain and dew, and gleams of glory from the brightness of your face;  
That we, with our hearts in heaven, here on earth may fruitful be,  
And by angel hands be gathered, and be yours eternally.

Alleluia! Alleluia! Glory to the God of joy;  
Alleluia to the Savior who came death's bonds to destroy;  
Alleluia to the Spirit, Fount of love and sanctity;  
Alleluia! Alleluia! To the Triune Majesty.

## Hymn of Illumination – *Peace I Leave with You, My Friends*

Refrain: Peace I leave with you, my friends, shalom my peace, in all you do.  
Peace I leave with you, my friends. I give to you so you can give to others, too.

To share God's love is why I came, to show God's kindness without end.  
Go now, my friends, and do the same, until I come again. R/

Take my hand and be at peace; the spirit of our love I send.  
And with this love you will be free, until I come again. R/

With this love now all will know that loneliness is at an end.  
Rejoice, my friends, although I go, for I will come again. R/

## Closing Hymn – *God, Speak to Me, That I May Speak*

God, speak to me that I may speak in living echoes of your tone;  
As you have sought so let me seek your erring children lost and lone.

O lead me, God, that I may lead some wanderers along life's way;  
O feed me so that I may feed your hungry ones without delay.

O fill me with your fullness, God, your overflowing love to know;  
In glowing word and kindling thought, your love to tell, your praise to show.

O use me, God, use even me just as you will, and when and where,  
Until your blessed face I see, your rest, your joy, your glory share.