

FIRST UNITED CHURCH OF OAK PARK

December 14, 2025



Desert Blooms by Lauren Wright Pitman | Inspired by Isaiah 35:1-10 | Acrylic on canvas
A Sanctified Art LLC | sanctifiedart.org

Living God's All-Inclusive Love

PREPARING FOR WORSHIP

PRELUDE

Bobby Nguyen

Nun komm, der Heiden Heiland BWV 659 by J. S. Bach

WELCOME

Pastor Phil Price

O COME, O COME, EMMANUEL

**O come, O come, Emmanuel, and with your captive children dwell.
Give comfort to all exiles here, until the son of God appear.
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to you as Love to dwell.**

POETRY PRAYER – *DELIGHT CAN'T WAIT*

Laurie Jolicoeur

Prayer by Sarah Are | A Sanctified Art LLC | sanctifiedart.org

*CALL TO WORSHIP

Pastor Lydia Mulkey

When the sun rises, what shall we sing?

"My soul magnifies the Lord."

And when chaos and violence echo on the screen?

"My soul magnifies the Lord."

For our God is a God of justice and peace.

"My soul magnifies the Lord."

So when all is wrong, or all is right,

"My soul magnifies the Lord."

Yes, when all is wrong, or all is right,

We will sing with joy and delight,

Of the God of justice and love and peace.

"My soul magnifies the Lord."

*PASSING THE PEACE

ADVENT WREATH

Kristin Gehring and Walter Miller

WE SING IN THE LIGHT

Now We Light a Candle Tune: CRANHAM

**Now we light a candle, warmth in every heart.
Joy for new beginnings; joy for each new start.
May this candle never dim, may its light still grow,
As we learn to share this joy we've come to know.**

PRAYER FOR WHOLENESS

Pastor Phil

In front of God and this church, I confess—
I am quick to complain, quick to criticize and conform.
I am quick to forget, quick to doubt and deny.
Instead of singing praise, I often stay silent.
**May the God of shepherds and kings,
The God of starlight and new life,
Offer you grace and show you the way home.**
Amen.

**In front of God and this church, we confess—
We are quick to complain, quick to criticize and conform.
We are quick to forget, quick to doubt and deny.
Instead of singing praise, we often stay silent.**
May the God of shepherds and kings,
The God of starlight and new life,
Offer you grace and show you the way home.
Amen.

Time for silent prayer

MUSICAL ASSURANCE OF LOVE

O Little Town of Bethlehem (Black hymnal no. 133 v. 3)
**How silently, how silently, the wondrous gift is given!
So God imparts to human hearts the glorious love of heaven.
No one discerns God's coming, but in this world of sin,
Where yearning souls long to be whole, the dear Christ enters in.**

INVITATION TO THE CHILDREN

Pastor Lydia

MUSICAL RESPONSE

This Little Light of Mine

This little light of mine, I'm gonna let it shine. (x3)

Let it shine, let it shine, let it shine.

LISTENING FOR GOD'S WORD TO US

Time for Sharing

Pastor Lydia

*HYMN OF ILLUMINATION

The Angel Gabriel from Heaven Came (Blue Hymnal no. 16)

The angel Gabriel from heaven came, his wings as drifted snow, his eyes as flame;

"All hail," said he, "O lowly maiden Mary," most highly favored lady, Gloria!

"For know a blessed mother you shall be, all generations praise continually,

Your Son shall be Emmanuel, by seers foretold." Most highly favored lady, Gloria!

Then gentle Mary meekly bowed her head, "To me be as it pleases God," she said,

"My soul shall laud and magnify God's holy name." Most highly favored lady, Gloria!

Of her, Emmanuel, the Christ, was born in Bethlehem, all on a Christmas morn,

And Christian folk throughout the world will ever say: most highly favored lady, Gloria!

SCRIPTURE – ISAIAH 35:1-10, LUKE 1:46B-55

Pastor Phil

SERMON – DELIGHT CAN'T WAIT

Pastor Phil

*SERMON RESPONSE

It Came Upon the Midnight Clear (Black hymnal no. 131 v. 3)

And you, beneath life's crushing load, whose forms are bending low,

Who toil along the climbing way, with painful steps and slow,

Look now, for glad and golden hours come swiftly on the wing;

O rest beside the weary road, and hear the angels sing!

RESPONDING TO GOD'S WORD

CALL TO THE OFFERING

Pastor Lydia

OFFERTORY

Sanctuary Choir

There Shall a Star Come Out of Jacob by Felix Mendelssohn

There shall a star come out of Jacob, and a sceptre shall rise out of Israel.

With might destroying princes and cities,

There shall a star come out of Jacob, with might destroying princes and cities!

As bright the star of morning gleams,

So Jesus sheddeth glorious beams of light and consolation.

Thy Word, O Lord,

Radiance darting, truth imparting, gives salvation;

Thine be praise and adoration!

*DOXOLOGY

Praise God, from whom all blessings flow, Praise Christ, all people here below,

Praise Holy Spirit, evermore, Praise Triune God, whom we adore. Amen.

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE & THE LORD'S PRAYER

Pastor Phil

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.

GOING FORTH IN DEDICATION & SERVICE

*CLOSING HYMN

Canticle of the Turning

My soul cries out with a joyful shout that the God of my heart is great,

And my spirit sings of the wondrous things that you bring to the ones who wait.

You fixed your sight on your servant's plight, and my weakness you did not spurn,

So from east to west shall my name be blest. Could the world be about to turn?

Refrain: My heart shall sing of the day you bring. Let the fires of your justice burn.

Wipe away all tears, for the dawn draws near, and the world is about to turn.

**Though I am small, my God, my all, you work great things in me,
And your mercy will last from the depths of the past to the end of the age to be.
Your very name puts the proud to shame, and to those who would for you yearn,
You will show your might, put the strong to flight, for the world is about to turn. R/**

**From the halls of power to the fortress tower, not a stone will be left on stone.
Let the king beware for your justice tears every tyrant from his throne.
The hungry poor shall weep no more, for the food they can never earn;
there are tables spread; every mouth be fed, for the world is about to turn. R/**

**Though the nations rage from age to age, we remember who holds us fast:
God's mercy must deliver us from the conqueror's crushing grasp.
This saving word that our forebears heard is the promise which holds us bound,
till the spear and rod can be crushed by God, who is turning the world around. R/**

INVITATION TO JOIN THE CIRCLE

Pastor Lydia

***BLESSING**

Pastor Phil

***BENEDICTION RESPONSE**

Go Now in Peace

**Go now in peace, go now in peace
May the love of God surround you
Everywhere, everywhere you may go.**

POSTLUDE

Bobby Nguyen

Wachet auf, ruft uns die Stimme BWV 645 by J. S. Bach

EVENTS AND UPDATES

Below is a sampling of the news and events at First United. We invite you to subscribe to receive our monthly "Messenger Bell" newsletter and our weekly "News & Events" eblast by visiting firstunitedoakpark.com.

Alternative Christmas Store Continues

This is it! Your final opportunity to shop with purpose this Christmas season. Stop by the lounge after worship to purchase locally made and fair trade goods.

Poinsettias for Christmas Eve

Honor a loved one this Christmas Eve with a poinsettia dedication. Use the QR code or pick up a form at the Welcome Desk to dedicate a poinsettia. \$25 per plant (payable by check or cash). Last day to order is December 21.



Christmas Pageant Sign-up Ends Today

Today is the last day to sign up for the Christmas pageant. Use the QR code to sign up and select your children's roles. Plan to stay after worship on December 21 for rehearsal and arrive in costume for the Family Service on Christmas Eve by 4:45.

Blue Christmas, December 17

Blue Christmas worship recognizes that there is a sad side to the Christmas season. Recognize and honor these feelings at a brief worship service in the Chapel at 6 p.m. followed by a soup supper in the lounge at 6:30.

Adult Education Next Sunday

Next Sunday we welcome leaders of two organizations fighting hunger in our area—Jennie Hull of Beyond Hunger and Karen McMillin of Community Fridge. Current politics put their organizations—and part of our church's mission—in a precarious state. 9:45 a.m. in Centennial Hall

Christmas Sock & Backpack Drive.

Faith in Action invites you to bring new socks and/or new or gently-used backpacks to worship on Christmas Eve to support Guiding Light of Hope, Inc. and ShowerUp Chicago, organizations that distribute supplies to those in need at the Blue Line Forest Park station on Thursday evenings. For more information contact Tara Dull (tdull@sbcglobal.net).

Christmas Eve Services, December 24

Celebrate the birth of Jesus on Christmas Eve! The 5 p.m. service is a family-focused service with the annual Christmas pageant. The 8 p.m. candlelight services follows a traditional lessons and carols format with a Christmas message from Pastor Phil.

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. Contact Lydia Mulkey (lmulkey@firstunitedoakpark.com).

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 8th 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. Contact Lydia Mulkey (lmulkey@firstunitedoakpark.com).

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. Contact Sally Sloane (ssloane@firstunitedoakpark.com).

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. Contact Lydia Mulkey (lmulkey@firstunitedoakpark.com).



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Living God's All-Inclusive Love

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