

# FIRST UNITED CHURCH OF OAK PARK

December 24, 2025

8 p.m. Lessons & Carols



*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

Sanctuary Handbells

*A Christmas Medley* by Keller  
*Carol of the Bells* arr. Sherman

### WELCOME

Pastor Phil Price

### POEM -- *WHAT CAN'T WAIT*

Walter Miller, Deacon

Prayer by Sarah Are | A Sanctified Art LLC | sanctified art.org

### THE ADVENT WREATH

The Hayter-Gierl Family

### ADVENT CANDLE RESPONSE

*Now We Light a Candle* (CRANHAM)

**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

Pastor Lydia Mulkey

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

*Angels We Have Heard on High* (Blue hymnal no. 23)

**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.**

**Shepherds, why this jubilee? Why your joyous strains prolong?**

**What the gladsome tidings be which inspire your heavenly song?**

**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.**

WHAT ARE YOU HERE FOR? BY QUINN CALDWELL

Pastor Lydia

LISTENING FOR GOD'S WORD TO US

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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!**

Refrain: **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! R/**

**Yea, Lord, we greet Thee, Born this happy morning,**

**Jesus, to thee be all glory given;**

**Word of the Father, Now in flesh appearing! R/**

## FIRST LESSON – ISAIAH 9:2-7

### CAROL

*The First Nowell*, (Blue hymnal no. 56, vv. 1-4)

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

Refrain: **Nowell, Nowell, Nowell, Nowell, Born is the King of Israel.**

**They looked up and saw a star  
Shining in the east beyond them far,  
And to the earth it gave great light,  
And so it continued both day and night. R/**

**And by the light of that same star,  
Three wise men came from country far;  
To seek for a king was their intent,  
And to follow the star wherever it went. R/**

**This star drew nigh to the northwest;  
O'er Bethlehem it took its rest;  
And there it did both stop and stay,  
Right over the place where Jesus lay. R/**

## SECOND LESSON – LUKE 1:26-38

### \*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 God-head 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!"**

### THIRD LESSON – LUKE 2:1-7

#### CHRISTMAS REFLECTION

Pastor Phil

#### \*CAROL

*Go Tell It on the Mountain* (Blue hymnal no. 29)

Refrain: **Go, tell it on the mountain Over the hills and everywhere;  
Go, tell it on the mountain that Jesus Christ is born!**

**While shepherds kept their watching O'er silent flocks by night,  
Behold throughout the heavens There shone a holy light. R/**

**The shepherds feared and trembled When lo! Above the earth,  
Rang out the angel chorus that hailed our Savior's birth. R/**

**Down in a lowly manger the humble Christ was born,  
And God sent us salvation that blessed Christmas morn. R/**

### FOURTH LESSON – LUKE 2:8-16

Ally Vertigan

## CAROL

*What Child Is This* (Blue hymnal no. 53)

**What Child is this, who, laid to rest, on Mary's lap is sleeping?**

**Whom angels greet with anthems sweet while shepherds watch are keeping?**

Refrain: **This, this is Christ the King, whom shepherds guard and angels sing;**

**Haste, haste to bring Him laud, the Babe, the Son of Mary!**

**Why lies He in such mean estate where ox and ass are feeding?**

**Good Christian, fear; for sinners here the silent Word is pleading. R/**

**So bring Him incense, gold and myrrh; come, one and all, to own Him.**

**The King of kings salvation brings; let loving hearts enthrone him. R/**

## RESPONDING TO GOD'S WORD

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### CALL TO THE CHRISTMAS OFFERING

Pauline Coffman

### OFFERTORY

Sanctuary Choir & Sanctuary Handbells

*Noel, Noel* by Carl Schalk

### FIFTH LESSON – MATTHEW 2:1-12

Susan Swords Steffen

## CAROL

*We Three Kings* (Blue hymnal no 66 v. 1)

**We three kings of Orient are, bearing gifts we traverse afar,  
Field and fountain, moor and mountain, following yonder star.**

**O, star of wonder, star of night, star with royal beauty bright;  
Westward leading, still proceeding, guide us to thy perfect light.**

### PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

Pastor Lydia

### INVITATION TO JOIN THE CIRCLE

# GOING FORTH IN DEDICATION AND SERVICE

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## \*LIGHTING OF CANDLES

### \*CAROL

#### *Silent Night*

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*

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 the world! 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.

Christ rules the world with truth and grace, And makes the nations prove  
The glories of God's righteousness  
And wonders of God's love, And wonders of God's love,  
And wonders, wonders of God's love.

## \*CHARGE & BENEDICTION

Pastor Phil

## POSTLUDE

Handbell Choir

*Go Tell It on the Mountain* by Geschke

## 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

# 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](mailto:lmulkey@firstunitedoakpark.com)) for info.

## 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. The nursery will not be open during this service.

## 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. Contact Lydia Mulkey ([lmulkey@firstunitedoakpark.com](mailto:lmulkey@firstunitedoakpark.com)) to learn more.

## 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. Contact Lydia Mulkey ([lmulkey@firstunitedoakpark.com](mailto:lmulkey@firstunitedoakpark.com)) for more information.



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*Living God's All-Inclusive Love*

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