

FIRST UNITED CHURCH OF OAK PARK

January 11, 2026



Living God's All-Inclusive Love

Bold text indicates congregation participation

**Indication to stand in body or spirit*

PREPARING FOR WORSHIP

PRELUDE

Bobby Nguyen

WELCOME

Pastor Phil Price

***CALL TO WORSHIP**

Don Sibley

Worship is to be a moment of breakthrough. A moment when the light of clarity breaks through shadows of indecision.

Worship is the place of seeing new horizons. The place where we see beyond today's to-do list into vast areas of untapped possibility.

Worship is where we allow the world's problems to dance with God's vision of wholeness and peace.

Worship is being in a place that knows that there is no separation between heaven and earth. Let us worship God!

***PASSING THE PEACE**

***OPENING HYMN**

Guide Me, O My Great Redeemer (Black hymnal no. 18)

Guide me, O my great Redeemer, pilgrim through this barren land;

I am weak, but you are mighty; hold me with your powerful hand.

Bread of heaven, bread of heaven, feed me till I want no more, feed me till I want no more.

Open now the crystal fountain, where the healing waters flow.

Let the fire and cloudy pillar lead me all my journey through.

Strong deliverer, strong deliverer, ever be my strength and shield, ever be my strength and shield.

When I reach the River Jordan, bid my anxious fears subside.

Death of death, and hell's destruction, land me safe on heaven's side.

Songs of praises, songs of praises I will ever sing to you, I will ever sing to you.

PRAYER FOR WHOLENESS

Pastor Phil

God of Grace and God of Glory, on Thy people pour Thy power. May we open to your grace and your power. May they fill our lives so that we shine with your glory and act in your power. Heal us, teach us, call us, send us so that your will may be done on earth as it is in heaven. We confess that at times we choose to see oncoming storms instead of ever-present opportunities. Forgive us, we pray. We confess that sometimes we are quick to despair and slow to hope. Forgive us, we pray. We confess that sometimes we sink into cynicism instead of acting in love. Forgive us, we pray. Fill us with You so that we express Your reign among us. Amen.

Time for silent prayer.

ASSURANCE OF LOVE

You are loved! You are healed! You are forgiven! Live, love, and laugh as free people of God!

INVITATION TO THE CHILDREN

Pastor Lydia Mulkey

MUSICAL RESPONSE

This Little Light of Mine (Black hymnal no. 524 v.1)

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.

LISTENING FOR GOD'S WORD TO US

TIME FOR SHARING

Pastor Lydia

*HYMN OF ILLUMINATION

Rejoice, Give Thanks and Sing (Black Hymnal no. 303)

Rejoice, give thanks and sing; your Sovereign God adore!

For Christ has robbed death's sting and triumphs evermore.

Lift up your heart, lift up your voice! Rejoice, again I say, rejoice.

Our Savior Jesus reigns, the God of truth and love;

The Lamb who purged our stains is crowned with power above.

Lift up your heart, lift up your voice! Rejoice, again I say, rejoice.

**Christ Jesus cannot fail to rule both earth and heaven;
The keys of death and hell are to the Savior given.
Lift up your heart, lift up your voice! Rejoice, again I say, rejoice.**

**Rejoice in glorious hope, for Christ the Judge shall come,
And take the faithful up to their eternal home.
We soon shall hear a heavenly voice above the trumpet's sound, "Rejoice!"**

SCRIPTURE READING – PHILIPPIANS 4:1-13

Don Sibley

SERMON – SOME THINGS THAT NEED TO BE SAID

Pastor Phil

***SERMON RESPONSE**

They Stand Among Us (Tune: Fairest Lord Jesus; Blue hymnal no. 115)

**They stand among us
Joining us in praying
Thy will be done
On earth, as in heav'n.
We stand for justice,
We stand for kindness,
We stand for truth and boundless joy!**

LITURGY OF FAREWELL & VOWS OF RELEASE

Representative: Our church family is constantly changing. People come and go. Babies are born. Children grow up. People commit themselves to one another. Loved ones and friends among us come to the end of their lives. Individuals move into our community and church life. Others leave us, moving away to new places, new experiences, and new opportunities. It is important and right that we recognize these times of passage, of endings and beginnings. Today we share the time of farewell with a friend who is leaving.

On January 29, 2024, this church called Rev. Philip Price to serve as its Interim Pastor.

Pastor Phil: I thank First United Church of Oak Park and its members and friends, for the love, kindness, and support shown to me these last two years. I ask forgiveness for the mistakes I have made. I am grateful for the ways my leadership has been accepted. As I leave, I carry with me all that I have learned here.

We receive your thankfulness, offer forgiveness, and accept that you now leave to minister elsewhere. We express our gratitude for your time among us. We ask your forgiveness for our mistakes. Your influence on our faith and faithfulness will not leave us at your departure.

Pastor Phil: *I forgive you and accept your gratitude, trusting that our time together and our parting are pleasing to God.*

Vows of Release

All who are able may stand for these or similar words.

Representative: Do you, the members and friends of First United Church of Oak Park, release Rev. Philip Price from the duties of being your Pastor?

We do, with the help of God.

Representative: Do you offer your encouragement for his ministry as it unfolds in new ways?

We do, with the help of God.

Representative: Do you, Pastor Phil, release this local church from turning to you and depending on you?

Pastor Phil: *I do, with the help of God.*

Representative: Do you offer your encouragement for the continued ministry here and on the relationship with another who will come to serve?

Pastor Phil: *I do, with the help of God.*

Witness of Association

Representative: On behalf of the Presbytery of Chicago and the Chicago Metropolitan Association of the Illinois Conference and the United Church of Christ, I witness to the words spoken: words of thankfulness, forgiveness, and release. The member churches of our Presbytery and Association hold each of you in prayer. We pledge our support in the transitions signified in this service.

Thanks be to God.

Pastor Lydia: Let us pray. O God, we give thanks for remembered time when we, together, have shared the life of faith. We thank you for the moments we have shared with Pastor Phil, in learning, in service. We pray that Pastor Phil will be aware of your Spirit's guidance as he moves to a new and unknown place, in the name of Jesus the Savior. **Amen.**

RESPONDING TO GOD'S WORD

INVITATION TO THE OFFERING

Pastor Lydia

OFFERTORY

Sanctuary Choir

Lift High the Cross arr. Carl Schalk

Refrain: Lift high the cross, the love of Christ proclaim
Till all the world adore that sacred name.

Come, Christians, follow where our savior trod,
Our lamb victorious, Christ, the child of God. R/

Each servant of the Crucified
Bear on their brows the seal of One who died. R/

Our Lord, once lifted on the glorious tree,
Your death has brought us life eternally. R/

So shall our song of triumph ever be:
Praise to the Crucified for victory! R/

*DOXOLOGY

Praise God, from Whom All Blessings Flow

**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

Pastor Lydia

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

God of Change and Glory (Black hymnal no. 177)

**God of change and glory, God of time and space,
When we fear the future, give to us your grace.
In the midst of changing ways give us still the grace to praise.**

**Refrain: Many gifts, one Spirit, one love known in many ways.
In our difference is blessing, from diversity we praise
One Giver, one Word, one Spirit, one God
Known in many ways, hallowing our days.
For the Giver, for the gifts praise, praise, praise.**

**God of many colors, God of many signs,
You have made us different, blessing many kinds.
As the old ways disappear, let your love cast out our fear. R/**

**Freshness of the morning, newness of each night,
You are still creating endless love and light.
This we see, as shadows part, many gifts from one great heart. R/**

*INVITATION TO JOIN THE CIRCLE

Pastor Lydia

*BLESSING

Pastor Phil

*BENEDICTION RESPONSE

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

POSTLUDE

Bobby Nguyen

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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