



# the MESSENGERbell

## October 2022

### CAPITAL CAMPAIGN UPDATE

Even before I started here at First United, I was told that the church needed to complete a Capital Campaign. The immediate need was to retire debt that was incurred replacing our slate roof. But I saw right away that the members of First United have a vision for our future that goes far beyond the roof. Improved accessibility and sustainability, a deepening of community, transformative justice work, and an overall expansion of programs following a pandemic that has left us all spiritually hungry—these are just some of the themes that have emerged from our work. Looking back over the work we've done, I'm pretty chuffed!

#### What we've done:

- Engaged the services of consultant Latz & Company to guide our process.
- Reflected on who we are as a community resulting in a refreshing of our Covenant and Purpose. The process started with a small task force, was expanded with small group meetings open to the entire church membership, and culminated in the adoption of refreshed language in October 2021.
- Engaged well over 100 members of the church to collect hundreds of actionable ideas.
- Titrated those hundreds of ideas into coherent categories that we call "Vision Pillars". These are the biggest areas of importance for us as a church.
- Rolled out the draft Vision Pillars to teams, the Council, and Deacons to reflect upon and refine where we are now and where we want to go.

#### What's next:

- A rigorous process to assess what an ambitious (but attainable!) goal might be. Our consultants Latz & Company will be critical partners in this, offering us best practices used by churches and non-profits completing capital campaigns.
- Once we have a sense of an achievable Capital Campaign Goal, we will use the Vision Pillars to develop a comprehensive, specific capital plan. This will mean moving from big categories like "make our building more sustainable" to something much more specific. Think "the following 37 single pane windows will be retrofitted to be double glazed." That kind of specific.

We will continue to invite congregational participation at every stage as we must continue to decide, "does a Capital Campaign help us follow God's calling for this community?" I'm excited by the work we have done, and there is much still to do.

John Edgerton, Lead Pastor



moving from

WORDS TO WITNESS IN OUR  
RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD.

moving from

INDIVIDUALISM TO INTIMATE  
FELLOWSHIP IN OUR RELATIONSHIP  
WITH OTHER MEMBERS OF THE  
CHURCH COMMUNITY.

moving from

CHARITY TO CHANGING  
STRUCTURES IN OUR RELATIONSHIP  
WITH THE WORLD.

A few highlights from this month's Messenger Bell: Alicia's ordination invitation, page 2; City Voices concert, page 3; a joint young adult ministry with First United and Fair Oaks, page 4; Kate Ott comes to First United, page 5; PAL note writers, page 7.



FIRST  
UNITED  
CHURCH OF  
OAK PARK

# Preaching Schedule for October

October 9	Lindsey Braun
Guest Preacher	
October 16	John Edgerton
October 23	John Edgerton
October 30	Alicia Reese

All services are at 11 a.m. on Sundays unless otherwise noted. Worship is also livestreamed and the videos remain on the YouTube channel so that you may view them at a later time even if you can't be with us on Sunday.

[CLICK HERE TO JOIN ON YOUTUBE](#)



# Ways to Serve in Worship

Looking for a way to expand your worship experience? There are so many ways to serve in worship! Adults and youth can serve as ushers/greeters, volunteer liturgists, and members of our Sanctuary Choir, while our children are welcome to serve as acolytes.

- Sign up to serve as a volunteer liturgist [here](#).
- Sign up to serve as an acolyte [here](#).
- For more information about ushers, contact John ([jedgerton@firstunited.com](mailto:jedgerton@firstunited.com))
- For more information about singing with the Sanctuary Choir, contact Bill ([bill@firstunitedoakpark.com](mailto:bill@firstunitedoakpark.com)).



## From the Council Moderator

Greetings on behalf of your Council! My name is Marteki Reed, and I've been remiss in providing reports since stepping into the role of Moderator this July. Here's a summary of major activities that the Council has taken part in during July, August, and September.

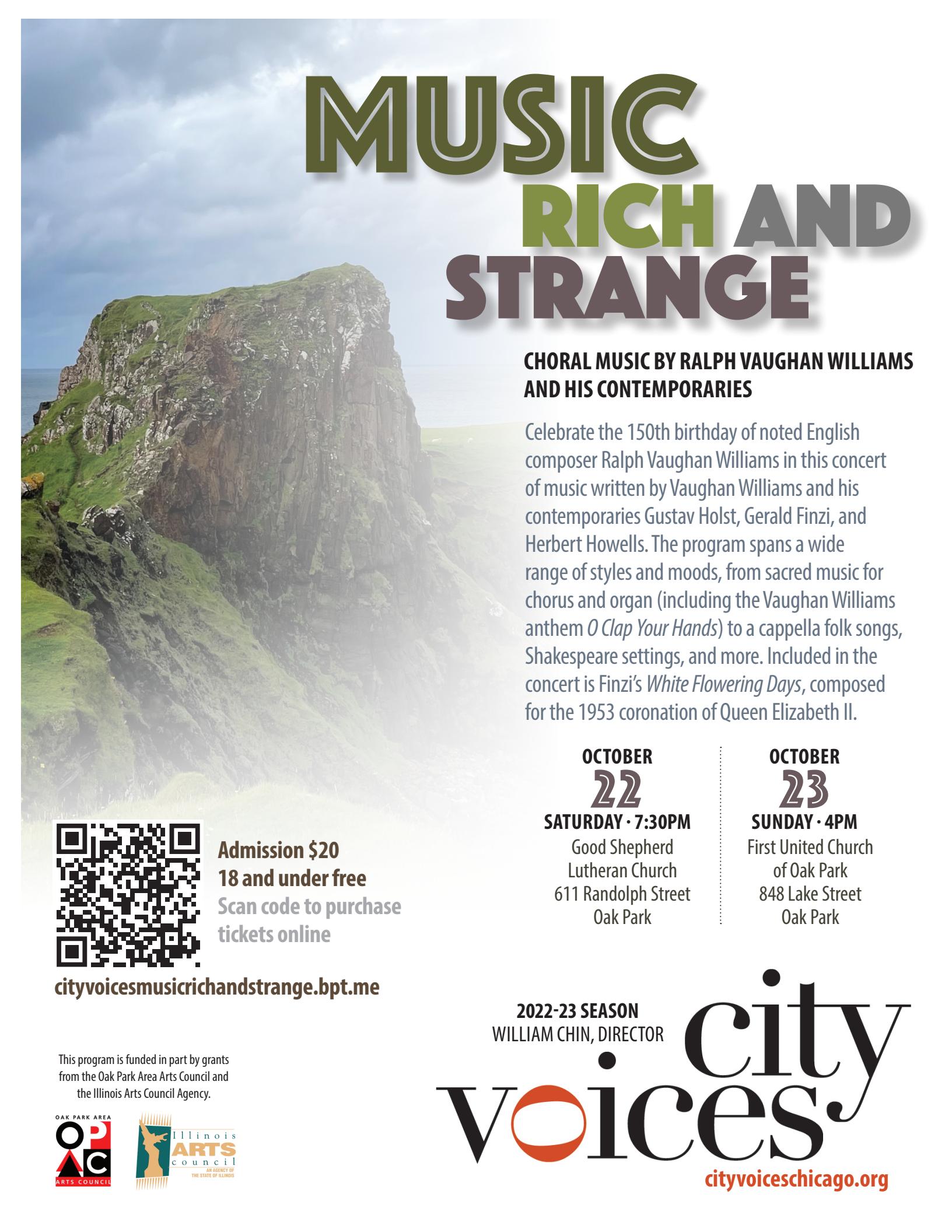
### Lenten Theme Reflections

Since this spring, we as a congregation have explored the impact of our Fasting from Whiteness Lenten theme. Council has agreed to provide a way for folks to explore this impact through a survey that asks the same questions that were explored during the in-person sessions. In addition, after feedback from the congregation we have added a question about what comes next: how we could take on more active anti-racism work in our church life, should we take on more active work, etc. If you haven't filled out the survey and wish to, the link to it is available [here](#) and also in the email with the subject "Online Opportunity for Lenten Debrief and Feedback" that was sent on August 8.

### Capital Campaign Update

Our consultants, Latz and Company, have conducted four Vision-to-Action Meetings with over 40 attendees. They have received 267 written recommendations, have identified emerging capital campaign case themes, have conducted three focus groups, and are having ongoing one-on-one conversations with many church members. The preliminary case elements and categories are

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# MUSIC RICH AND STRANGE

**CHORAL MUSIC BY RALPH VAUGHAN WILLIAMS  
AND HIS CONTEMPORARIES**

Celebrate the 150th birthday of noted English composer Ralph Vaughan Williams in this concert of music written by Vaughan Williams and his contemporaries Gustav Holst, Gerald Finzi, and Herbert Howells. The program spans a wide range of styles and moods, from sacred music for chorus and organ (including the Vaughan Williams anthem *O Clap Your Hands*) to a cappella folk songs, Shakespeare settings, and more. Included in the concert is Finzi's *White Flowering Days*, composed for the 1953 coronation of Queen Elizabeth II.

**OCTOBER  
22**  
**SATURDAY · 7:30PM**

Good Shepherd  
Lutheran Church  
611 Randolph Street  
Oak Park

**OCTOBER  
23**  
**SUNDAY · 4PM**  
First United Church  
of Oak Park  
848 Lake Street  
Oak Park



**Admission \$20  
18 and under free  
Scan code to purchase  
tickets online**

[cityvoicesmusicrichandstrange.bpt.me](http://cityvoicesmusicrichandstrange.bpt.me)

This program is funded in part by grants from the Oak Park Area Arts Council and the Illinois Arts Council Agency.



**2022-23 SEASON  
WILLIAM CHIN, DIRECTOR**

**city  
voices**  
[cityvoiceschicago.org](http://cityvoiceschicago.org)

*Continued from page 2.*

identified, and Latz is working hard to condense and summarize the recommendations based on the focus group and individual discussions. A case narrative is being drafted by John Edgerton for “Who We Are and Where God is Calling Us to Go Next” and centering on four core aspects: The Church Experience, Community of Care, Social Justice, and Financial Stability. Council is starting to be briefed on the aggregate prospect research conducted without sharing any individual or household financial specifics. In the September 2022 meeting, Council approved the sharing of some individual donor information on a limited, confidential basis with five named members of the church for the purpose of evaluating Latz’s outside-database-sourced research when it comes to the likelihood of contributing to a capital campaign at certain levels.

#### Key Points in July and September Council Meetings

##### **Election of Moderator and Clerk**

On July 19, Council held an election for Moderator and Clerk. The term ends June 2023 or until their successors have been elected. Marteki Reed was elected as Moderator and Tim Dull was elected again as Clerk.

##### **Alicia Reese Call**

With only the Council and John Edgerton present in an executive session, Marteki described the process for calling Alicia Reese as a pastor, which includes holding a congregational meeting and a vote on the Terms of Call. Council passed a motion calling for a congregational meeting to be held in August before Alicia’s Presbytery examination in September. The meeting occurred on August 14 when Alicia was called by the congregation, and she passed her examination on September 20. Saturday, November 19 is scheduled to be the date for Alicia’s ordination and installation at the church.

##### **Search for a New Organist**

Like many other things these days, the market for church organists is very tight! We are currently on our third candidate for a replacement church organist. Our first candidate needed to back out of the process due to a new but likely long-term health issue for a family member, and our second candidate took another position that was more in line with her strengths. We will keep you up to date with how the organist search progresses.

##### **Illinois Alliance to Prevent Gun Violence**

In our September 2022 meeting, Faith in Action brought

a motion that First United Church of Oak Park become a member of the newly formed Illinois Alliance to Prevent Gun violence — a nonpartisan collection of organizations, community groups, and institutions working together to prevent gun violence in Illinois. The motion passed unanimously.

Marteki Reed, Moderator

## First United and Fair Oaks Young Adult Ministry

First United is partnering with Fair Oaks Presbyterian this year for a new kind of fellowship opportunity for the young adults who are a part of our communities.

Combining fellowship and competition, the young adults from each church will form a team to represent their church in a seven-round series of events to occur monthly until the end of the program year! There will be childcare opportunities for some of these activities, but not all. Some may also have fun opportunities for kids to join!

Contact Alicia Reese for more information.

## Tournament of Church Champions



### Young Adult Edition

**Round 1:** Saturday, November 5, 2022  
KICKBALL (plan B = Bowling)

**Round 2:** Friday, December 2, 2022  
TRIVIA NIGHT

**Round 3:** Saturday January 7, 2023  
PICKLEBALL

**Round 4:** Friday, February 3, 2023  
BOWLING (alternate = Game Night)

**Round 5:** Saturday, March 4, 2023  
COOKING CHALLENGE

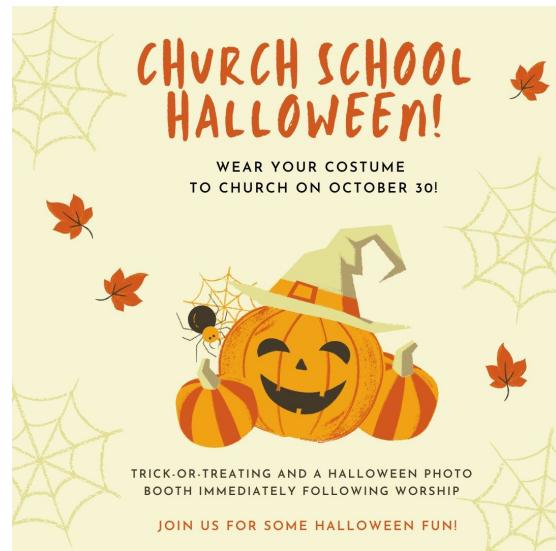
**Round 6:** Saturday, April 1, 2023 (No Joke!)  
YARD GAMES (plan B = BINGO)

**Final Round!** Saturday, May 6, 2023  
SOFTBALL



May the "best" church win!

*It's all made up, the points don't matter,  
and having a good time makes you a winner!  
But a trophy and bragging rights will be involved.*



## Author Kate Ott Comes to First United

Kate Ott, author of *Sex and Faith: Talking with your Child from Birth to Adolescence*, is coming to First United on Sunday, November 6.

- 4:00-5:30 pm - Parenting conversation (parents of all ages of children are welcome and encouraged to attend this event!)
- 5:30-7:00 pm - Workshop with FUJI & FUSH Youth

Self-professed aspiring perfectionist, multitasker and technophile, Kate Ott is an author, professor, and parent. She and her husband parent two children. She has been welcomed into the spaces of Sunday school participants and youth groups around the country where she has been invited to share wisdom and guidance as these children and young people make sense of this world.



Regarding her motivation, Kate says, "My faith grounds me in a deep belief in practicing hospitality, sharing responsibility for our neighbor, and loving God's creation. I believe that the moral choices we make affect who we are and show who we want to become. I wake up in the middle of the night wondering how privilege is constructed and how this sustains systemic injustice. I am passionate about the intersections of health, education, and the environment and try to pay particular attention to issues of gender, race, class, and sexuality in my work."

Kate is a bolicited Midwest-Northeasterner. Her favorite place is, "anywhere with my two kids and partner, floating in the middle of a freshwater lake, in front of the wood burning stove on a snowy day, and in a classroom (broadly defined) having transformative conversations."

Click [here](#) to RSVP for this event on Realm. We hope you will join us in welcoming Kate to First United and that you will take advantage of her presence and expertise when she is here on November 6<sup>th</sup>!

## October 4<sup>th</sup> Sunday Offering Benefits New Moms

“Changing the future for young moms in Chicago,” is what New Moms, Inc. is all about. New Moms has locations in both Chicago and Oak Park, serving families in the city and the near west suburbs. The organization partners with young moms who are experiencing poverty, helping them as they set and accomplish their goals, harnessing their strength to build strong families and thriving futures.

Through New Moms’ Housing, Job Training, and Family Support programs, young moms increase their potential for economic mobility, housing stability, and family well-being – leading to stronger connections to self, community, and others.

A teen and young adult moms faces disruption of education and an increased risk of ongoing poverty for themselves and their families. In January of 2022, New Moms launched the Academic Coaching pilot program, providing coaching and support for young moms pursuing postsecondary degrees. Currently in Illinois, only 8% of single mother students complete an Associate degree within 6 years. This program aims to radically improve the success of the 25 young moms enrolled in Academic Coaching and in an Associate degree program. Chapin Hall is evaluating the program. Stay tuned to hear about the successes.

In summer 2022, New Moms’ Job Training program, which includes their social-enterprise home fragrance company, Bright Endeavors, moved to a new location in East Garfield Park at 627 N Albany. The grand opening celebration will be held on October 14 - follow New Moms on Facebook and Instagram for more info about this event, or go to [newmoms.org](http://newmoms.org) to sign up for the monthly newsletter to get updates!

On October 23, please give generously in our offering which benefits New Moms, Inc. Our support of this unique organization is a prime example of our mission dollars helping us move from charity to changing structures.



## October Peace Corner Dr. Martin Luther King's Six Principles of Nonviolence

**PRINCIPLE ONE:** Nonviolence Is a Way of Life for Courageous People.

- It is not a method for cowards; it does resist.
- It is active, nonviolent resistance to evil.
- It is aggressive spiritually, mentally, and emotionally.

**PRINCIPLE TWO:** Nonviolence Seeks to Win Friendship and Understanding.

- The outcome of nonviolence is the creation of the Beloved Community.
- The end result of nonviolence is redemption and reconciliation

**PRINCIPLE THREE:** Nonviolence Seeks to Defeat Injustice, or Evil, Not People.

- Nonviolence recognizes that evildoers are also victims and are not evil people.
- The nonviolent resister seeks to defeat evil not persons victimized by evil.

**PRINCIPLE FOUR:** Nonviolence Holds That Unearned, Voluntary Suffering for a Just Cause Can Educate and Transform People and Societies.

- Nonviolence is a willingness to accept suffering without retaliation; to accept blows without striking back.
- Nonviolence is a willingness to accept violence if necessary but never inflict it.
- Nonviolence holds that unearned suffering for a cause is redemptive and has tremendous educational and transforming possibilities.

**PRINCIPLE FIVE:** Nonviolence Chooses Love Instead of Hate.

- Nonviolence resists violence of the spirit as well as the body.
- Nonviolent love is spontaneous, unselfish, and creative.

**PRINCIPLE SIX:** Nonviolence Believes That the Universe Is on the Side of Justice.

- The nonviolent resister has deep faith that justice will eventually win.
- Nonviolence believes that God is a God of justice.

## PAL Note Writers

Many years ago, a few members of the church thought it would be nice to send valentines to the church staff. This was such a kind gesture that was greatly appreciated, that this small act of kindness quickly turned into a ministry of love and care where notes were written and mailed to folks to express gratitude for something they had done recently or to convey condolences following a death or difficult situation, as well as notes of joy regarding happy occasions like the birth of a child, an anniversary, or other celebratory event.

This beautiful ministry of PAL notes has been going on for decades! Thousands of notes have been sent to hundreds of people. Perhaps you yourself have written or received one. And it is such a wonderful thing to receive. We are so grateful to all those who are a part of this ministry! And if you are ever interested in becoming a PAL note writer, please let me know ([areese@firstunitedoakpark.com](mailto:areese@firstunitedoakpark.com)). And if you get a chance, the next time you see one, thank our PAL note writers!

- Antia Mae Callahan
- Brenda Matson
- Chris Davis
- Claudette Zobel
- Cynthia Collazo
- Joanne Despotes
- Karla Hayter
- Lee Anderson
- Marsha Hubbuch
- Rick Ashton
- Ruth Ashman
- Sara Stevenson
- Shannon Saliny

If you are eager to hear the entire, wonderful story of how this ministry was born, please reach out to Chris Davis!



## Zoom Links for Recurring Virtual Groups

### Fostering Connection and Support

FCS meets weekly on Zoom for a time of informal connection and support. This is a drop-in group. Come when you'd like, stay as long as you can. Here's the link to join whenever you are able: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/88937766305>

### Prayer Shawl Ministry

Prayer Shawl Ministry meets on the second and fourth Monday from 10-11 a.m. Please join us if you are able. If the day and time do not work for you, please reach out to Alicia Reese ([areese@firstunitedoakpark.com](mailto:areese@firstunitedoakpark.com)). Use this link to join: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85035296628>

## Dinner and a Movie, October 14

This month's Dinner and a Movie features a showing of "If Beale Street Could Talk" from Academy Award Winner Barry Jenkins, adapted from James Baldwin's acclaimed novel. This timeless love story is set in early 1970s Harlem. Newly engaged 19-year-old Tish and her fiance Fonny have a beautiful future ahead. But their plans are derailed when Fonny is arrested for a crime he did not commit. Now the pair and their families must fight for justice in the name of love and the promise of the American dream in this moving, dramatic film. Dinner at 6:00 (\$5 donation); movie at 6:30 (free). Call Liz Swan (708) 567-3490 to RSVP.



## Adult Ed Update

We have one remaining session of our October adult ed program, "The Church in Prison" with Dr. Ken Sawyer this Sunday, October 9. Dr. Sawyer will continue his discussion of his ongoing work with seminarians at Statesville Prison and Logan Correctional Center.

We are in the planning stages for November programming, working with our own Alicia Reese to develop a program on anti-racism loosely based on "Do the Work" by W. Kamau Bell and Kate Schatz.

# The Prayers of God's People

We lift up the prayers that have been shared in worship.

## For the wider world:

- Peace and justice for women in Iran, Yemen, and Palestine
- All those impacted by hurricane Ian
- Recovery from climate disasters in Pakistan and Haiti
- All those struggling with finding safe and secure housing
- All those living with uncertainty
- All our leaders, bless them with patience, courage, and wisdom
- For those who are lonely and/or suffering with depression
- War torn places, may there be peace
- Silence of guns and so that justice can speak
- All those who are grieving
- Following the death of Queen Elizabeth

## For those in our midst:

- The family and loved ones of Dirk Beadleston, mourning his death
- Jerry Sebesta as his recovery process continues (Oak Trace in Downers Grove)
- Janet Guevara mourning the death of her friend, Jo, and for all of Jo's loved ones.
- Barbara Ballinger regaining strength and recovering (British Home Rehabilitation)
- Grandma Julie recovering from COVID
- Scott & Milica Logan caring for Scott's mom who is entering hospice
- The family and loved ones of Ginger Privet mourning her death
- Loved ones battling cancer, struggling with addiction
- The family of Benjamin DeVeau who died of ALS
- Loved ones healing from or preparing for surgery
- Youth and young adults in seasons of transition or discernment
- Dennis, Dave, Benjamin, Brigitte, Kathy, Tamera, Keith, Margot

## For the joys in our lives:

- The rhythm of the seasons
- Our 3<sup>rd</sup> – 5<sup>th</sup> graders receiving their bibles
- The Fall Fellowship Fair
- Those who are a part of the Planned Giving, Kindred Spirits group at First United
- Beautiful dahlias
- New and visiting folks in worship
- Having the choir singing in worship again
- Church school in full swing again
- A full slate of advisors for our youth groups
- Celebrating Michael Surratt's ministry and official retirement
- Seeing members in person in worship that we haven't seen for a while
- The presence of grandchildren
- Rain and all the growth it brings
- Celebrating wedding, anniversaries and birthdays!



## CHECK OUT OUR RECENT EVOTIONALS

[Click here to read online](#)

Sept. 13	I <3 Organized Religion	John Edgerton
Sept. 21	Attitude of Gratitude	Michael Surratt
Sept. 27	The Realm of God is Like a Renaissance Fair	John Edgerton
Oct. 4	Insomnia Blessing	Alicia Reese



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