



the MESSENGERbell

November 2021

So Good To Be Together Again

If you have not already heard, I am pleased to share that starting on November 7, our worship services will transition to indoors. We will continue to offer a livestreamed, online way to attend this service as well. This will be on our Youtube channel, just as it has been. For those who will be attending online, we ask that you please register via Realm for our services—you can find a link to register on page 2. The primary reason for this is to be able to inform people if we later learn that a person who attended is now COVID positive. We are, of course, going to maintain precautions intended to limit any spread of COVID—masking, distancing, and implementing mitigations around singing and communion. In the case of singing, we will continue to enjoy choral music from our fully-vaccinated choir and musical staff. For congregational singing we will be singing our closing hymns all together. We will also continue to offer morning programming for all ages. Adult Ed classes will continue and are being held in Centennial Hall, church school will be held weekly as well, and other programs will be offered, too. More details about all of that will best be found in your weekly e-blast.

I am hopeful that in the coming months vaccines will become readily available for all age-groups, including young children. This, in turn, will hopefully prevent any further dangerous surges of infection. This pandemic has taught me to be present each day, and I am so grateful for the chance to gather indoors again. I do so love the pace and energy of a Sunday at church—children's voices around every corner, conversations between members catching up on life, the organ booming out to the glory of God, the choir rehearsing in the sanctuary, the sunlight through the windows. I am looking forward to this so much.

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: November Education offerings, page 2; Moderator's Report, page 3; gratitude from the Housing Justice Team, page 3; community holiday events, page 4; FUSH Cookie Bake, page 6; even more holiday events, page 6.



FIRST
UNITED
CHURCH OF
OAK PARK

Worshipping Indoors!

Sundays at 11 a.m.

For those who prefer to worship virtually, we will livestream the service on the First United YouTube channel.

[CLICK HERE TO JOIN ON YOUTUBE](#)

November 7 John Edgerton
All Saints Sunday

November 14 John Edgerton

November 21 Lydia Mulkey

November 28
Advent I
Communion Sunday
Fourth Sunday Offering

Register for Indoor Worship

Click [this link](#) to register for indoor worship. If you would like to register for multiple weeks at once, please log into your Realm account. On the left-hand side, click the Community section and then navigate to Events. If you are using the Connect App, go directly to the Events page from the buttons at the bottom of the app. For more information on setting up Realm or Connect, please [click here](#).

First United Nursery Open Starting Nov. 7

The First United Nursery will be open for youngest children starting November 7. The nursery will open at 9:30 a.m. and remain open until 12:15 p.m. Our caregivers will be masked, and we will collect and sanitize all toys used during the session. Children are always welcome (and encouraged!) to be with us in worship, but we also offer the nursery for parents who wish to attend Parenting Conversations or Adult Education, or who need a respite during worship.



Adult Education: Anti-Racism Lessons From South Africa

- Nov. 7- Black South African Perspective
- Nov. 14 - South African and Global History
- Nov. 21 - Successful Anti-Apartheid Movement

Join Dr. Oliver Lawrence, leader in the South African anti-apartheid movement, for this three-part series in Centennial Hall @ 9:45 a.m.



- **November 7: Raising Holy Troublemakers** with Rev. Lydia Mulkey, Associate Pastor of Christian Education
- **November 21: A Faithful and Anti-Racist Thanksgiving** with Rev. Samantha Houser, Associate Conference Minister, UCC South Dakota
- **December 5: Santa, Shopping, and Baby Jesus: Making Christmas Mean Something** with Rev. Lydia Mulkey, Associate Pastor of Christian Education

With the return of Indoor worship, our Parenting Conversations will now meet in the conference room. The time remains the same.

Chapel Prayer Returns

Chapel Prayer returns to the Chapel on November 7 for anyone seeking space for quiet prayer and conversation. Deacons will be available for approximately a half hour following worship for private prayer and counsel.



Chapel Prayer
With the Deacons

Moderator's Report

Greetings with highlights of meetings convened by your Church Council in October.

Congregational Meeting

Thanks to the many Church members who attended the Congregational Meeting on October 10, we had a quorum to amend the Church's Constitution with the statements of our purpose and covenant that many had a hand in refreshing.

An overview of the operating budget for Fiscal Year 2022 was presented by Susan Macaulay, chair of the Finance Team, and the congregation's approval of the budget followed.

In recognition of Pastor Appreciation Month, Marteki Reed, Vice-Moderator, and Len Palombi, Co-Chair of the Board of Deacons, conveyed thanks to John Edgerton, Lydia Mulkey, Alicia Reese, and Beth Dickerson, and we enjoyed watching them open and display gifts of beautiful quilts handmade by Joan Lennie, Teri Omert, Kathy Pederson, Weeks Ringle, Priscilla and Don Sibley, and Pam Wiese.

In closing, we thanked God for the gifts of our wonderful ministry team with the hymn "Now Thank We All Our God," offered (via recording) by our Church Choir.

Council Meetings

The Council met in special session with the Rev. Ally Vertigan, who is pursuing Board Certification with the Association of Professional Chaplains. Ally is an ordained pastor with the UCC, currently a staff chaplain at Rush Oak Park Hospital, and an active member of our Church. The Council was pleased to endorse Ally's application.

At our monthly meeting on October 19, the Council began its consideration of a proposal by the Leo Latz team for capital campaign preparation. The Council provided feedback to the team and will discuss an updated proposal at its next meeting.

John and Lydia reported on the protocols for returning to indoor worship and Church school as hoped on November 7 (assuming continued decline in COVID numbers).

Last, but not least, the Council recognized John's impressive progress on goals for this past year, applauded his dedication and perseverance, and looked ahead to goals for the coming year.

Sallie Smylie
Moderator, Church Council

We Did It – Again!!

It is with equal amounts of awe and grateful thanks that the Housing Justice Team is delighted to report that you have met the challenge! First United has once again successfully provided needed household goods and supplies (or the cash to buy these items) to furnish five homes for people or families moving from the streets, shelters, or The Write Inn to permanent housing complete with new fluffy towels, a fully-equipped kitchen, personal items such as toothpaste, shampoo and hand lotion, as well as a TV (and, yes, cleaning equipment and supplies) and tons of other wonderful things. Families will be able to go to sleep at night in beds with clean sheets and get up in the morning to make coffee and have mugs to put it in.

Thanks be to God for the ability and generosity of our congregation to help our neighbors in need and for this wonderful opportunity to live into our pledge to move from Words to Witness and from Charity to Change.



PEACE CORNER: THE UCC AND PEACE

The Just Peace Church vision is a hallmark of the United Church of Christ's theological identity. For 30 years, the [Just Peace Church Pronouncement](#) has inspired a grassroots movement of UCC congregations committed to corporately naming and boldly proclaiming a public identity as a justice-doing, peace-seeking church. The Just Peace Pronouncement articulated the UCC position on war and peace that is distinct from other approaches such as crusade, pacifism, or "just war." Grounded in UCC polity and covenantal theology, the position focuses attention on alleviating systemic injustice of all types using non-violence, and calls us to offer the message, grounded in the hope of reconciliation in Jesus, that "peace is possible."



November Fourth Sunday Offering: Beyond Hunger

Each month, all undesignated money donated on the fourth Sunday goes to a specific beneficiary supported by First United. This month's Fourth Sunday Offering on November 28 will go to Beyond Hunger, which is housed in the church building itself and provides hunger relief in our community, giving assistance to 15,000 families each year. Besides food, the agency offers nutrition and health education, healthy cooking classes, and counseling for clients about benefits. You can learn more about Beyond Hunger, one of First United's mission partners, at the group's [website](#).



Holiday Food and Gift Basket Returns for 2021!

- Pick up your gift tag starting November 14.
- Go shopping!
- Return all gifts to church by December 5.

Gift tags will be available in the lounge starting November 14. Look for Sher Watts Spooner by the small Christmas tree.



Community of Congregations

Multi-Faith Thanksgiving Service

Sunday, November 21 @ 7 p.m.
Grace Episcopal Church
924 Lake Street

Please join us as we welcome Dr. David Ansel, author and health care advocate, who will share the work of West Side United.

Masks are required for in-person attendance.

Zoom attendance also available.
See communityofcongregations.org for more information





Thanks to
everyone who
made this year's

Church School Halloween a
fantastic event!



The Children's Ministry of
First United Church of Oak Park
Invites you to...

The Advent Event

December 4th from 9:00-11:00AM
in the Lounge at First United

Journey through our craft and activity stations.
Make an Advent wreath, Christmas ornaments, a peg
people nativity set, and take fun holiday pictures in
the photo booth!

Free to the whole community!

2021 FUSH Cookie Bake

Save yourself some holiday work and order your Christmas cookies from our 2021 FUSH Cookie Bake! There are four varieties to choose from as well as an option for an assorted box. Cookies are \$7.50 per box and the proceeds go to scholarships and cost reductions for our Youth Summer Service Trip. Orders are due by November 26. [Click here](#) to place your order today!



Save the Date!

December 11 @ 7:30 p.m.
December 12 @ 4 p.m.



Dinner & a Movie

Our next Dinner and a Movie will be Friday, November 12 and will feature the film "Testament of Youth." In this adaptation of her World War I memoir, smart and ambitious Vera Brittain breaks free of her conservative home life to attend Oxford University, but news of war soon brings her studies and a blossoming romance to a halt. Our COVID protocols still prevent us from enjoying dinner together, but we hope you will still join us for the feature film! The doors will open around 6:30 and we'll start at 7 p.m. Notify Liz Swan (708-567-3490 or easwan@gmail.com) to sign up.



The Prayers of God's People

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

For the wider world:

- Peace, justice, equality, and reconciliation
- Those who are suffering or in need

For those in our midst:

- Nadia Alsaad recovering from emergency back surgery
- Bill Chin and family grieving his mother and brother
- Clara Kearley and family mourning the death of her two brothers, Alejandro and Rafael
- Lee and Mary Lou Anderson as they grieve several good camping friends

For the joys in our lives:

- Wonderful folks in our congregation who are willing to share their musical talents with us in worship
- Ted Despotes continues to recover at home
- Evan Saliny received good news from the Mayo Clinic
- Resuming in-person, livestreamed worship

Prayer Shawl Ministry

Due to vacation time and the holidays, please see below for an updated/altered version of our schedule for the next few months:

- November 14
- November 29
- December 13

All meetings are at 10 a.m. We will resume our regular meetings on the second and fourth Mondays on January 10, 2022.

Follow this link to join us:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85035296628>

First United welcomes your legacy gift through your will or by listing the church as a beneficiary of your IRA, life insurance, or pension plan. When you make such a gift, please let the church know. We want to thank you. Your gift helps build our endowments and fund our ministry and mission for the future.

Questions? Contact Gene or Ann Armstrong (geneann1113@yahoo.com or 708-657-4484) or any of the pastors at 708-386-5215.



*Leave a
Legacy*

Planned Giving at First United

CHECK OUT OUR RECENT EVOTIONALS

[Click here to read online](#)

October 5	The Need for Community	Beth Dickerson
October 12	A Real Pickle	John Edgerton
October 19	In the Image of God	Lydia Mulkey
October 26	New Magnificat Just Dropped	John Edgerton



**FIRST UNITED CHURCH
OF OAK PARK**

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