

# Welcome!

First Congregational Church of Webster Groves  
United Church of Christ

*Seek Christ in each. Serve God in all.*

November 1, 2002

Twenty-Second Sunday after Pentecost  
Remembrance Sunday



**We remember...**

*We respond to God's call by welcoming everyone  
regardless of ability, age, ethnicity, race, gender identity,  
sexual orientation or socio-economic background.*

*To proclaim in word and deed the love of Christ, we affirm that  
all may share in the full life, ministry, fellowship, responsibilities  
and blessing of our congregation.*

*No matter who you are or where you are on life's journey,  
you are welcome here.*

## ORDER OF WORSHIP

PRELUDE

*Abide with Me*

arr. Diane Bish

TOLLING THE BELL

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

Roger Barnes, *Announcer*

Hello and welcome to worship with the First Congregational Church of Webster Groves. We are a member church of the United Church of Christ, located near St. Louis, Missouri. I'm your announcer, Roger Barnes. Leading worship with me today will be Student Ministers Merrimon Boyd and Elston McCowan, Music Director Leon Burke III, Linda Kopetti, and Pastor Dave Denoon.

This is our worship for Sunday, November 1, 2020 – our Remembrance Sunday which in the Christian calendar is called “All Saints Day.” We will be celebrating all saints and all souls, as we remember the lives and ministries of church members and friends who have died in the last twelve months.

But before we begin, I want to remind you of the theme of this year's invitation to generosity. Our Stewardship Committee is picking up on our denomination's stewardship theme, “Beloved, Love One Another.” As Pastor Dave introduced, last Sunday, we are highlighting the Three Great Loves enumerated at the 2017 General Synod of the United Church of Christ – love of neighbor, love of children, and love of creation.

*Stewardship Moment*

*(Text unavailable)*

*Stewardship Anthem*

*I Will Sing of Your Love, Love, Love*

Christopher Grundy

Performed by Leon Burke III and Roger Barnes

To prepare for worship, I invite you to center yourself by taking a deep breath and exhaling, close your eyes and greet God's Spirit here with me and there with you.

Let our worship begin with the bringing of the light and the raising of our Covenant.

LIGHTING THE CANDLES

RAISING THE COVENANT (Unison)

*Covenant of 1977*

**We who are called of God into this Christian community covenant together: to seek to know the will of God, to experience the joy and struggle of discipleship, to proclaim in word and deed the love of Christ, and to work for peace and justice among all people. We trust God's promise of grace and forgiveness and the presence of the Holy Spirit in our trials and rejoicing.**

HYMN OF THE DAY

*For All the Saints*

No. 299, vv. 1,2,5  
*New Century Hymnal*

**PRAYER OF APPROACH (Unison)**

Merrimon Boyd, *Student Minister*

**God of our lives and beyond our lives, God of those in this place whom we see and those in our hearts whom we do not see, allow more and more thoughts of *your* thinking to come into our hearts, day by day, till there shall be at last an open road between you and us, and your angels may go up and down among us, so that we may be in your heaven even while we are here on your earth. Amen.**

**NOT FOR CHILDREN ONLY**

*Granddad and Piggy Banks*  
(Text unavailable)

Linda Kopetti, *Volunteer*

**THE WORD SHARED**

Merrimon Boyd

*From the New Testament*

Revelation 7:9-17

(New Revised Standard Version, adapted for inclusivity)

I looked, and there was a great multitude that no one could count, from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, robed in white, with palm branches in their hands. They cried out in a loud voice, saying,

“Salvation belongs to our God who is seated on the throne, and to the Lamb!”

And all the angels stood around the throne and around the elders and the four living creatures, and they fell on their faces before the throne and worshiped God, singing,

“Amen!

Blessing and glory and wisdom  
and thanksgiving and honor  
and power and might  
be to our God forever and ever!

Amen.”

Then one of the elders addressed me, saying, “Who are these, robed in white, and where have they come from?”

I said to him, “Sovereign one, you are the one that knows.”

Then the elder said to me, “These are they who have come out of the great ordeal; they have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.

For this reason they are before the throne of God,  
and worship God day and night within the temple.

And the one who is seated on the throne will shelter them.

They will hunger no more,  
and thirst no more;  
the sun will not strike them,  
nor any scorching heat;

for the Lamb at the center of the throne will be their shepherd,  
and the Lamb will guide them to springs of the water of life,  
and God will wipe away every tear from their eyes.”

*Pause.*

Hear what the Spirit is saying to the people.

**Thanks be to God.**

**ANTHEM**

*Deep River*  
Performed by Leon Burke III

Spiritual

**MESSAGE OF THE DAY**

*“Remembering”*

Rev. David Denoon, *Pastor*

The death of a loved one causes us to reflect. It’s an existential moment, literally, for us to ponder the values and the understandings that we’ve gained from those whom we love and will not see again... at least not with our eyes.

But a similar moment happens for the community in which one has lived, especially the faith community (I think). And so, I invite you now to reflect with me upon the lives of six members of our community whose earthly lives ended during the past twelve months.

*Kenneth Wood Shoulberg*

July 27, 1920 – December 26, 2019 (joined 1940s)

The church is a place, a center, for transformation. For Ken, I think it was a place of acceptance and embrace. Probably the first memory that I have of Ken was meeting him at Manor Grove. June his wife had moved there, not long before I came to First Church. She had developed dementia and was no longer able to live unassisted. Every day, he would go to be with her.

Theirs was no longer the life of activity and engagement that they had enjoyed for so long. He was accepting that this was his role now, helping June to embrace this new place where she was safe and secure. After her death, Ken moved to Cape Albeon and found his life renewed with music, playing piano again in earnest with others singing along.

But it wasn’t just the embracing of their aging selves which Ken or June experienced, or which the church taught them. Places of acceptance and embrace are sanctuaries for us, and our sanctuaries need to be open and embracing of everyone who comes to them.

Ken and June made their own home such a place, naturally, automatically, and they (along with others) assured that this church would be so, too. Their love and acceptance of their son Jim who died with AIDS would come to be echoed and reflected in the minds and hearts of the other parishioners here, implicitly when not explicitly. And in 2008 First Church made it explicit, became what we call, Open and Affirming.

Some people consider the church foremost to be God’s house where we rejoice and seek communion with our Creator, Redeemer and Sustainer. But what we are reminded of, by a life lived over the period of a century in the Church is the truth of

ourselves as a *faith community*, a people and an institution among whom faith is the quality first and foremost on which we all rely – the faith of God, in God, and *keeping faith* together and with one another. Here, we are building together a community we and others can trust and be justified in trusting.

And that's what Ken has put me to mind of.

*Susan Marie Hunt*

January 16, 1950 - January 29, 2020 (joined 1997)

I'm going to quote Jan Barnes for this one. She actually had the opportunity to work with Susan when they were both on staff here.

Susan and I were soul sisters from the beginning of her time at First Church. She never failed to support my ministries, to lend me her ear when I needed to rant, to make me feel as if I had a purpose and a place at First Church and in the larger church. Which is not to say that she didn't call me and all the staff to account from time to time. She had an expectation of good, decent and timely work from all of us.

She expected respect for her time and work as well. She was hospitable and helpful to all who came to the office to visit or get work done for their committees, even at times when I could see the "bless your heart" look on her face!

One thing she did for me, which I remember every Sunday that I preach... I had a paperback book about 12" x 15", and on every page, front and back, was a pastoral prayer for every Sunday and just about every occasion that could come up. Probably 80 or 90 pages. I would copy the page I was going to use each Sunday, scribble notes on it, and off I would go to preach and pray! One week, Susan took the book, copied each page, front and back, slipped each page into a plastic sleeve and put them all together in a three-ring binder with the cover of the book gracing the front. That task made my Sunday much easier, and even now I think of Susan when I pull out a prayer to use. She surely didn't have to do such a thing, but she did. It helps me remember that we can find things to do and offer that are not necessary, maybe not all that important at the time, but that in the long run make a difference we cannot predict or expect.

Susan was the sister I never had, but if I had the opportunity to choose, she was the one I would have chosen.

*Allen Spencer Boston*

July 20, 1941 — February 28, 2020 (joined, 1954)

The most serious conversation I ever had with him was about our denomination and whether or not it will have what it takes to survive the 21<sup>st</sup> century. We reflected about how the national setting likes to think of itself as a firebrand, prophetic voice, but how the local church needs to be able to nurture and educate and foster and heal, and that can mean you need to turn down the intensity somewhat. He didn't seem to think that the national church got that.

He would know. In the 1980s Al served on a committee that sought to get the denomination's offices moved from New York to St. Louis. We lost the bid to Cleveland

but not for any failure on the team's part to demonstrate the rightness of our hometown. But he learned indelibly that – for all our attempts to stand the moral high ground – church leaders could be just as encumbered as others by spiritual faults and failings. All of us are prone to the same challenges, all of us given to cracking and breaking and letting the treasure out, even if those same cracks are how the light sometimes gets in.

Still, this was his church, his faith, and Allen showed his loyalty to his God and to us his spiritual sisters and brothers.

*Marshall Frederick Brooks*

April 3, 1923 – May 12, 2020 (joined, 1984)

Blood may be thicker than water, but God's Spirit is stronger than anything. It unites even you and me who, as far as I know, are unrelated except as humankind. Marshall's powerful sense of justice and duty, to God, yes, to country, certainly, but to our siblings near and far, all God's children – *that*, my siblings here and observing from afar, *is perhaps the most profound knowledge and understanding he had about his pride and faith and love.*

Before Bonnie and Marshall moved to the Springdale community, I had many occasions to sit with Marshall. As his pastor, I cherished these moments. They could sound to some of you who walked in on us as though we were discussing politics rather than religion. And Marshall was an opinionated man, maybe sometimes of an opinion different from yours about how the world ought to turn. But he knew, this religion he was practicing is not something to be left in a sanctuary. It is not something that transforms individuals and fits *them* for heaven, but leaves the world intact with systems that divide and oppress. It is something for us to use alongside all those lessons he and Bonnie had been teaching in classrooms and on rostrums – math and science, literature and the arts, applied sciences and trades, economics and civics, citizenship and responsibility. Everything we do must be impacted by the scriptures and doctrines we study and hold dear.

Who you believe affects what you do.

*The Rev. Jack Lamar Newsome*

May 26, 1932 – May 23, 2020 (Joan joined, 2019)

From a young age, Jack had a thirst for knowledge and a strong desire to make the world a better place. An early supporter of the civil rights movement, Jack used his career as a minister to preach a gospel of acceptance and peace. Following his retirement and during his ongoing evolution on faith and spirituality, Jack never stopped connecting with people, employing his unique sense of humor and respect for all humanity to make fast friends wherever life took him.

Jack's work fulfilled two of his greatest passions — connecting with people and helping those in need. From visiting and counseling inmates in nearby prisons to mentoring at-risk youth in his retirement, Jack was the embodiment of living one's values. Perhaps most amazingly, he did it all with warmth and a natural grace, even in the face of often difficult circumstances.

We would all be well-served to remember how Jack lived his life as we go through these trying times. For daily reminders, we can look to the things big and small that brought Jack joy — a jogger striding down the road, a golden retriever dozing peacefully in a sunny backyard or a family seated around the table for a meal (preferably one with multiple dessert options).

*George W. Krewson*

June 28, 1930 – September 30, 2020 (joined, 2014)

George Krewson and his second wife Barbara were members of our church for only six years.

He and his first wife, Mary, joined Immanuel United Church of Christ in Ferguson, Missouri, in the 1960s, after making their home in Hazelwood. When in 2010 he and his second wife Barbara moved to a retirement community in Webster Groves, they established Associate Membership here while retaining their memberships at Immanuel as well. It was there that his funeral was conducted, on October 6, presided by Immanuel's pastor, the Rev. Dr. Jimmy R. Watson.

Pastor Jimmy read a wonderfully detailed obituary that had been lovingly composed by family members. It described George's life as a small business owner and as a devoted father, grandfather, and great-grandfather who attended to the fine and intimate concerns of relationship. Quoting Henri Nouwen, Pastor Jimmy observed that the little things are the big things. By focusing on whomever he was with, by arranging for moments that were special between himself and the family member or group, even to the point of taking each grandchild on a special long-distance trip when they turned twelve years old, George was bonded with each and every member of his family in a unique way.

I listened and watched with admiration, as Jimmy spoke, Barb read from Ecclesiastes, a grandson led the twenty-third Psalm. Little things gave testimony to the grand nature of George's spirit.

The past year has been dominated by all sorts of controversies and campaigns, but mostly by a plague, a pandemic, which has affirmed for all the world's people our undeniable connectedness. We went from the teeming numbers at Ken Shoulberg's and Allen Boston's memorial services, to a simple graveside remembrance for Marshall Brooks, to a live stream from Immanuel UCC honoring George Krewson, to the Zoom meeting with just a few Christ Lutheran members and friends attending Susan Hunt's memorial, and the gathering for Jack Newsome is awaiting a day when the danger of the virus is sufficiently passed that family, friends, and adoring colleagues may finally gather in person together at his former church in Champaign, Illinois.

All of this, because of how we are one, for good and literally for ill, in this existential moment... reflecting. May the blessings of these lives carry us forward until at the last we may all gather together at Christ's table beyond life and time, once again one in a world without end. Amen.

## WE SHARE OUR BLESSINGS WITH OTHERS

Roger Barnes

### *Invitation*

The Church is the body of Christ in the world, no matter the denomination. We are here for the sake of love – love of neighbor, love of children, love of creation.

This is your invitation, to serve and support our ministries of love in a monetary way. While the health crisis continues, until a vaccine is found, we won't be passing plates or collecting in person. If you are able financially, and you would like to support First Church with a monetary donation, please either send a check to

First Congregational Church  
10 West Lockwood Avenue  
Webster Groves, Missouri 63119

or go to our website – [FirstChurchWG.org](http://FirstChurchWG.org) – and to our “Donate” page.

Today is also the day when we invite members and friends to take part in the UCC churchwide offering for Neighbors in Need. Neighbors in Need provides support to many of our homeland ministries, such as the Council on American Indian Ministries and our national Justice and Witness Ministries. Please, consider giving generously to today's special offering. Send a check to the church, with the letters “N I N” in the memo line. You'll also find “Neighbors in Need” as a selection of the Donate Menu on our website. Thank you.

### *Prayer of Dedication (Unison)*

I invite you to pray with me:

**God of those who have gone before us, and our God, from generation to generation we thank you and count your praises — for lives committed into your hand, for souls entrusted to you. Your compassion never fails; your loving kindness never ceases. Receive our gifts and bless them to your work in Christ's name, we pray. Amen.**

## RITUAL FOR VIRTUAL COMMUNION

### *Invitation*

Rev. Denoon

We enter now a time of sharing, however remote from one another we may be. As I have done here with one of the church's settings for communion, I invite you at home to set a place for yourselves with a favorite bread and drink... just enough to taste.

### *Marking Today's Joys and Concerns*

Elston McCowan, *Student Minister*

As we begin our memorial meal, let us remember first those living whom we hold in our hearts with this day.

- people we love who are living with cancer — especially Bob, Jaymie, and Peter
- Becky and David, and all those the world regards as disabled
- Dave as he recovers from surgery
- all those who are living with dementia; and their caregivers
- peace with justice
- people with mental illness

- this faith community, as we seek new staff to lead our ministries for children and youth
- Phil and Diane, and all those with COVID-19
- Laurel's mother
- Bruce, job-hunting
- Debbie, with emphysema
- The families of our recently deceased members
- Our nation, for the elections
- People with mental illness, their family, friends, caregivers, and roommates
- First responders, frontline workers, teachers and their loved ones

All these, your living beloved, O God, we lift before you. Surround them with your love and tender care. Though absent from our table, their lives are dear to us, and we wish for them the spiritual sustenance we will share. Amen.

*Prayer of Thanksgiving*

Since you have called us, since you have kept a place for us, since your face lights up when we sit at your table, gracious God, we cannot help but praise you.

When deep down, despite contradictions, we know, we sense, we believe that life is good; when one of your words rings truer than ever before, when in one unexpected moment we are given a glimpse of your holy dominion, we cannot help but offer a prayer. Hear our heartfelt thanksgiving which joins the thankful prayers of your Church throughout the world and the Church on the other side of time. And hear especially our thankful prayers for those who have joined you so recently:

Kenneth Wood Shoulberg

Susan Marie Hunt

Allen Spencer Boston

Marshall Frederick Brooks

The Rev. Jack Newsome

George W. Krewson

*Sanctus*

With these whose names we have lifted to you from our hearts, and with all the company of heaven, we speak your everlasting praise:

**Holy, holy, holy God of love and majesty, the whole universe speaks of your glory, O God Most High. Blessed is the one who comes in the name of our God. Hosanna in the highest!**

*Words of Institution*

And now, lest we believe that our praise alone fulfills your purpose, we set our wisdom, our will, our words aside, emptying our hearts. We yearn for

the healing, the holding, the accepting, the forgiving which Christ alone can offer... and fall silent, to remember the one who came because words were not enough.

*Silence.*

Merciful God, let your Spirit rest on us, converting us from the patterns of this passing world, until we conform to the shape of the one whose food we now share. Amen.

Among friends gathered round a table, Jesus took bread, and broke it, and said, "This is my body – broken for you."

*The bread is broken.*

Later he took a cup and said, "This is the new relationship with God made possible because of my death. Take this, all of you, to remember me."

*The cup is filled.*

And let us pray as Christ our Savior has taught:

**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 sins, as we forgive those who sin against us. Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil; for thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory forever. Amen.**

As Christ has promised we shall do with all the saints, when all of us finally live beyond time, we share this bread – the bread of heaven.

The one who redeemed us and called us by name now meets us in this cup.

*Prayer after Communion (Unison)*

**Almighty God, we give you thanks for the gift of our Savior's presence in the simplicity and splendor of this holy meal. Unite us with all who are fed by Christ's body and blood that we may faithfully proclaim the good news of your love and that your universal church may be a rainbow of hope in an uncertain world; through Jesus Christ our Redeemer. Amen.**

POSTLUDE

*For All the Saints*

arr. Hal Hopson

BENEDICTION

"When Great Souls Die"

Maya Angelou

from *Ailey, Baldwin, Floyd, Killens and Mayfield*

When great souls die,  
the air around us becomes  
light, rare, sterile.  
We breathe, briefly.  
Our eyes, briefly,

see with  
a hurtful clarity.  
Our memory, suddenly sharpened,  
examines,  
gnaws on kind words  
unsaid, promised walks never taken...

And when great souls die,  
after a period peace blooms,  
slowly and always  
irregularly. Spaces fill  
with a kind of  
soothing electric vibration.  
Our senses, restored, never  
to be the same, whisper to us.  
They existed.  
We can be. Be and be  
better. For they existed.

**DISMISSAL**

Roger Barnes

That's our worship for this week at First Church. We're glad you could worship  
with us.  
Our worship has ended. Let our service begin.



10 West Lockwood Avenue  
Webster Groves, MO 63119  
314-962-0475  
[www.FirstChurchWG.org](http://www.FirstChurchWG.org)

## Contact Information

Moderator  
Mark Edwards  
[marke@wustl.edu](mailto:marke@wustl.edu)

Pastor  
Rev. David A. Denoon  
[DDenoon@FirstChurchWG.org](mailto:DDenoon@FirstChurchWG.org)

Office Administrator  
Debbie Tolstoi  
[Admin@FirstChurchWG.org](mailto:Admin@FirstChurchWG.org)

Director of Music & Organist  
Dr. Leon Burke  
[Leon.Burke@FirstChurchWG.org](mailto:Leon.Burke@FirstChurchWG.org)

Facilities Manager  
Chip Isringhaus  
[cti1234@FirstChurchWG.org](mailto:cti1234@FirstChurchWG.org)

Custodian  
Darrell Lakies

Assistant Custodian  
Gus McLean

Director, Center for Counseling & Healing  
Rev. Linda E. Smith, BCRN, HTCP/I  
[lesrhs@sbcglobal.net](mailto:lesrhs@sbcglobal.net)

Director of MICA  
Rev. Cliff Aerie  
[cliff.aerie@gmail.com](mailto:cliff.aerie@gmail.com)

Student Minister  
Merrimon Boyd  
[merrimon.boyd@gmail.com](mailto:merrimon.boyd@gmail.com)

Student Minister  
Elston McCowan  
[emccowan@eden.edu](mailto:emccowan@eden.edu)

*Seek Christ in each. Serve God in all.*

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