

Welcome!

First Congregational Church
of Webster Groves United Church of Christ

Seek Christ in each. Serve God in all.



DECEMBER 19, 2021

FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT: LOVE
CHRISTMAS PROGRAM FOR ALL AGES



*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

WELCOME

Joan Musbach, *Announcer*

TOLLING OF THE BELL

LIGHTING OF THE CANDLES

PRELUDE

Let All Mortal Flesh Keep Silence
Cliff Aerie, saxophone

4th Century hymn

***RAISING OF THE COVENANT**

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.

***GATHERING HYMN**

Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus
No. 103, *Pilgrim Hymnal*

Charles Wesley

Come, thou long-expected Jesus, born to set thy people free;
From our fears and sins release us; let us find our rest in thee.

Israel's strength and consolation, hope of all the earth thou art;
Dear desire of every nation, joy of every longing heart.

Born thy people to deliver, born a child, thou camest to reign!
Born to rule on earth forever, come, be known to us again.

By thine own eternal Spirit rule in all our hearts alone;
By thine all-sufficient merit raise us to thy glorious throne.

AT THE ADVENT WREATH

FOURTH CANDLE: LOVE

One Family's Traditions

The Cooper Family

Wreath Ritual (Responsive – One; **Many**)

The first three Advent candles are lighted.

Relatives. friends. Pets. Plants. Time. Gifts. Service.

These are a few things to engage and express our love.

Pungent animal smells. Straw mattress. Young, unwed parents. Traveling visitors.

These are a few things that welcome the arrival of Love.

Apathy. Ignorance. Greed. Self-reliance. Exploitation. Violence.

These are a few things that threaten love in action.

Life. Justice. Peace. Wholeness. Creation. Us. You. Me.

These are a few things that Love embraces unconditionally.

The fourth Advent candle is lighted.

Good news, great joy, all the people!
We are love-ready and empowered!

THE WORD SHARED

Joan Musbach

From the Prophets

Micah 5:2-5a New Revised Standard Version, ad.

The prophet Micah, who preached as the northern kingdom of Israel was being overrun by Assyrian might, visualized his native Israel and Judah to the south reunited by a divine ruler appointed by God. These words spoke hope to captive peoples aching for their homeland. Later generations, restored to Judea, Samaria, and the Galilee, would take these words to predict a Messiah (Christ) who would liberate them from foreign colonizers. Christian interpreters have used these words since the beginning, to refer to our Messiah Jesus. The voice of God speaks through the prophet's words:

You, O Bethlehem of Ephrathah,
who are one of the little clans of Judah,
from you shall come forth for me
one who is to rule in Israel,
whose origin is from of old,
from ancient days.

Therefore my chosen ruler shall give the exiles up until the time
when "she who is in labor" has brought forth;
then the displaced kindred of the ruler shall return
to the people of Israel.

And that ruler shall stand and feed a flock in YHWH's strength,
in the majesty of the name of our God YHWH.
And they shall live secure, for now the ruler shall be great
to the ends of the earth;
and the ruler shall be the one of peace.

Response.

Hear what the Spirit is saying to the people.
Thanks be to God.

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

We Lift Our Joys and Concerns to God

Prayer of the Day

Prayer of Our Savior (Unison)

**Our Father, who art in heaven: hallowed be thy name; thy kingdom come;
they 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; and lead us not
into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom and the
power and the glory for ever. Amen.**

INTERLUDE

The Wexford Carol

Traditional English

Cliff Aerie, saxophone; Leon Burke III, piano

MESSAGE OF THE DAY

*The First Christmas
and the Donkey Who Was Also There*

At this time, the children in the Congregation are invited to move in front of the first row of pews, where bean bag chairs provide superior viewing. For those who want it, popcorn will be available to eat.

Our scene is set by a Narrator (Halley Kim) sharing the story of Jesus' nativity. As we are drawn back to First Century Palestine we meet the angel Gabriel (Andrea Welnick), Mary of Nazareth (Nina Thompson), the Donkey (B.J. Kaul), Mary's kinswoman Elizabeth (Kedra Tolson), Mary's fiancé Joseph (Maggie Hill), an Innkeeper (David Denoon), and a Midwife (Halley again). A delightful and familiar plotline unfolds and hilarity ensues as a sacred moment comes once more to light for us.

Please, follow the musicians' directions when it is time to sing, or sing along as you like.

Carol

The Angel Gabriel from Heaven Came
Carolers

S. Baring-Gould

The angel Gabriel from heaven came,
with wings as drifted snow, with eyes as flame;
"All hail," was spoke to meek and lowly Mary,
"most highly favored maiden." Gloria!

"I come from heav'n to tell the Lord's decree:
a blessed virgin mother you shall be.
Your Son shall be Immanuel, by seers foretold,
most highly favored maiden." Gloria!

Then gentle Mary meekly bowed her head;
"To me be as it pleases God," she said.
"My soul shall laud and magnify the holy Name."
Most highly favored maiden, Gloria!

Carol

In the Bleak Midwinter
Cliff Aerie, saxophone; Leon Burke III, piano

Gustav Holst

Carol

Good Christian Friends, Rejoice!
Carolers

14th Century Hymn

Good Christian friends, rejoice with heart and soul and voice;
Now give heed to what we say: Jesus Christ is born today;
Ox and ass before him bow, asleep within the manger now.
Christ is born today, Christ is born today.

Carol

O Little Town of Bethlehem
Carolers, with Cliff and Leon

Phillips Brooks

O little town of Bethlehem, how still we see thee lie!
Above thy deep and dreamless sleep the silent stars go by.

Yet in thy dark streets shineth the everlasting Light.
The hopes and fears of all the years are met in thee, tonight.

For Christ is born of Mary, and gathered all above
While mortals sleep, the angels keep their watch of wond'ring love.
The morning stars together proclaim thy holy birth
And praises sing to as voices ring with peace to all the earth.

Carol *What Child Is This?* William C. Dix
Carolers

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?
This, this is Christ the King whom shepherds guard and angels sing!
Haste, haste to bring him laud, the babe, the son of Mary!

Carol *Joy to the World!* Isaac Watts
Carolers and Congregation

Joy to the world! The Lord is come! Let earth its praises bring!
Let every heart prepare Christ room, and heaven and nature sing,
And heaven and nature sing, and heaven, and heaven and nature sing!

Carol *We Wish You a Merry Christmas* Traditional
We wish you a merry Christmas (3 times)
And a happy New Year!
Good tidings we bring to you and your kin,
Glad tidings of Christmas and a happy New Year!

***ACKNOWLEDGMENTS AND BENEDICTION**

POSTLUDE *Lovely Child, Holy Child* David N. Johnson
Cliff Aerie, saxophone; Leon Burke III, piano

DISMISSAL Joan Musbach

~~~~~

Sunday worship each week is shared in person for those who wish to attend  
and streamed live on YouTube, starting at 10:00am ([bit.ly/FCCWG-YT](https://bit.ly/FCCWG-YT)).

***Please wear a mask in the Sanctuary and in the halls. Masking and distancing are  
optional in Memorial Hall.***

**Thank you to this Week's First Friends Hospitality Team**  
Jacquie Bryant, Liu Lin Theo, Rosemary Hensley, Tom Waltz, Sharon Love, and Carolyn Woodsmall

**Electronic Device Users**

If you wish to access our wi-fi, our network connections are: fccwg1, fccwg2  
or fccwg3. The password for each is firstchurch.

## Finding Your Way at First Church

**The Nursery:** The Nursery is attended today. The Nursery is located through the double doors at the end of the Narthex (foyer), turn left. Nursery/Toddler Room is on your right (Dutch doors).

**Restrooms:** Family restrooms are located to the right of the Narthex (foyer) as you go to the Library (look for the blue library banner) and to the left of the Narthex just before the double doors.

## We Hold in Our Prayers

- Our residents in assisted living and skilled care – Sharon Beal, Joyce Berger, Shirley Chase, Paul Davis, Margery Gable, Charles Griffith, Bill & Shirley Moore
- All people who are living with dementia, their families, and their caregivers
- People we love who are living with cancer – Bill Barrett, Margaret Gustafson, Herb Niemeyer
- Health concerns in the Hayes family
- All those the world regards as disabled – especially David & Becky Scott
- People with mental illnesses, as well as the people who love and care for them
- People who are alone or ill due to Covid-19
- Those whose employment and businesses are at risk
- First responders and their loved ones
- For our governmental leaders, and for healing for our country and all its people
- Peace with justice

## Care Calendar

Please sign up to provide a meal to the Prange family during this joyous and busy time! Go to <https://www.carecalendar.org/> and use the **login 301383** and the **security code 8159** to sign up. Thank you for supporting the Pranges!

Our dear Herb Niemeyer is home from the hospital and rehab! Please consider providing dinner for him and Marilyn while he is regaining his strength. Sign up at <https://www.carecalendar.org/> and use the **login: 301680** and the **security code: 8940**. Please be careful to abide by Herb's dietary restrictions (denoted on the calendar). The calendar starts Dec 1st and runs through Jan. 1st with meals needed on Wednesdays and Saturdays. Thank you for caring for Herb and Marilyn during this tough time!

## Volunteers Sought for Sunday Live Streaming

Lead Audio-Visual Technician Mark Metcalf is seeking volunteers of any experience level (he will train you), to work with him adjusting cameras and other recording devices on Sunday mornings. Interested individuals should pay a visit to Mark in the A/V corner of the sanctuary, or contact Mark ([link](#)) at your earliest convenience.

## Planning for an MLK Day of Service

The Pastor's cover article for the December-January Covenant News included an invitation to church members and friends who want to join him in preparing a Day of Service to be observed on the Martin Luther King Holiday, January 17, 2022. Please plan to meet him on Zoom, Monday, December 20 at 7:00PM, for an organizational discussion - <http://bit.ly/FCCWG-Giving>. Please see the Pastor's cover article for more information.

## December Meal-a-Month

Canned Ham • Brown Rice • Instant Mashed Potatoes  
Canned Green Vegetable (low or no salt) • Baby Fruits • Baby Vegetables • Baby Cereal  
Canned Fruit in own juices  
Powdered Milk, shelf stable milk, soy milk

## What's Going on at First Church this Week

### Sunday, December 19

9:00 AM Nursery Care  
10:00 AM Worship  
11:05 AM Cookies and Coffee Fellowship  
**JAZZ NOEL HAS BEEN CANCELED**

### Monday, December 20

4:00 PM Executive Ministry - (Zoom)  
7:00 PM Day of Service Strategy Meeting

### Tuesday, December 21

10:30 AM Staff Meeting

### Wednesday, December 22

**No Yoga in December 6:00 PM - 9:30 PM**  
Bridge Club - Inglis Room

### Friday, December 24

**Christmas Eve**  
4:30 PM Family Worship  
9:00 PM Candlelight Worship  
10:00 PM Wassail Bowl

### Saturday, December 25

**Christmas Day**

### Sunday, December 26

**First Day of Kwanza'a**  
9:00 AM Nursery Care  
10:00 AM Worship  
11:05 AM Coffee Fellowship

## How to Donate to First Congregational Church

You may leave a donation in the offering plate in the Narthex.

Send a check made out to FCCWG at:

First Congregational Church

United Church of Christ

10 W. Lockwood Ave.

Webster Groves, MO 63119

or visit <http://firstchurchwg.org/donate> to make an electronic contribution

## December Birthdays

Gabriel Kim December 3

Tom Waltz December 6

David Brader December 10

Dennis Barnes December 11

Earl Rinne December 12

Nannelle Griffith December 13

Dan Claggett December 14

Amanda McCoy December 16

Janet Fales December 24

Darrell Lakies December 26

Terri Thompson December 26

Tabitha Kim December 27

Henry Breitenbach December 28



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

## Contact Information

Moderator – Joan Musbach  
[JWMusbach@gmail.com](mailto:JWMusbach@gmail.com)

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

Pastoral Assistant – Halley Kim  
[Halley.Kim@FirstChurchWG.org](mailto:Halley.Kim@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 of Ministry of Imagination, Creativity  
and the Arts (MICA) – Rev. Cliff Aerie  
[cliff.aerie@gmail.com](mailto:cliff.aerie@gmail.com)

Chaplain, Stillpoint Campus Ministry  
Webster University – Rev. Dr. Laurel Hayes  
[laurel.hayes@sbcglobal.net](mailto:laurel.hayes@sbcglobal.net)

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

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

## Follow us on

Facebook

[www.facebook.com/FirstChurchWG/](http://www.facebook.com/FirstChurchWG/)

Instagram

<https://www.instagram.com/firstchurchwg/>

YouTube

<http://bit.ly/FCCWG-YT>

