



# Covenant News

## May & June 2022

### FROM THE PASTOR

#### **God's New Normal**

I am about to do a new thing;  
now it springs forth, do you not perceive it?  
I will make a way in the wilderness  
and rivers in the desert. (Isaiah 43:19, NRSV)

As you, surely, have already discerned from the Report of the Historian and other annual reports, the past twelve months might best be characterized as us trying to recapture a sense of normalcy. It's been challenging.

Our Congregation has said farewell to ten members, due to their deaths. Our pews still aren't as well filled as they were before we stopped worshiping in the sanctuary, in March 2020. And as a result, we are relearning what it means to be... us. And, certainly, nothing feels normal yet.

Furthermore, whatever normal will eventually feel like, it most assuredly won't be the "normal" we experienced before March 2020!

This is not to say that our faith community has never experienced transition to this extent before, but most times, the change has been gradual. We would hardly notice it until we looked back and realized how different we had become.

Now, there are gaps in pews because some still can't come back yet. There are other gaps because of life or location changes, and these simply won't be back. And then there are our beloved dead.

At the same time, very gratifyingly, our online (YouTube) presence has allowed for the curious to watch us worshiping before they might come and try us out in person. Then, when they have come in person they have often stayed and stayed. This past Sunday, April 24, there were 66 people in worship. Of the adults, eleven were newcomers, and five of them had never worshiped with us before. The remaining seven have been with us repeatedly. Had you been attending that service as your first since 2020, not only would you have experienced a smaller group in the sanctuary than before, but many of those you were missing would have been replaced by ten newcomers.

I can't imagine a metaphor for this. It's not a time capsule or time machine. We weren't asleep for any of it, so we aren't some collective Rip Van Winkle. It's just how the world is turning. It's how our appearance is changing.

I have been inspired by the new ways we are finding to be together, especially on Sunday mornings, but we also have First Saturday Collections and other opportunities for being together for our benefit and for the benefit of others.

Our voice has shifted. The Sundays in Lent, this year, we featured stories of and about women, using a Womanist lectionary and an adaptation of the Prayer of Our Savior which many have asked to keep in rotation with other versions (though we will still be saying "Our Father..." in that cycle). Imagery of the Christ was viewed through a feminine lens. It was a refreshing time.

Things are definitely different now. We've said goodbye to some, often with tears. But the good news of resurrection is apparent among us, too.

I look forward to this new normal God is leading us into!

Peace



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## WORSHIP NOTES FOR MAY & JUNE 2022

*This schedule is subject to change, as need may arise.*

*All worship services will be offered in person and live streamed ([bit.ly/FCCWG-YT](http://bit.ly/FCCWG-YT)).*

SUNDAY, MAY 1, 10:00 AM — *Third Sunday of Easter; Sacrament of Christ's Table; All-Ages Worship; Annual Congregational Meeting.* Inspired by the *Women's Lectionary for the Whole Church, Year W*, by Wilda C. Gafney (New York: Church Publishing, 2021), the worship planning team decided to press on with a series of readings from the book of Deuteronomy, highlighted in the Easter portions for Year W. The emphasis of this series of readings is God's covenant with Israel. We are a covenant-based community too. So, we're taking some time to focus on the Hebrew covenant and our own expression of God's promises. The series title is ***Resurrection and Covenant***.

In **Deuteronomy 5:1-22** we begin with the Ten Commandments. This reading will be supplemented by Paul's wisdom, who observes that "love is the fulfilling of the Law" (last verse of Romans 13:8-10). **Resurrection and Covenant 1: "Head and Heart and Faith."**

SUNDAY, MAY 8, 10:00 AM — *Fourth Sunday of Easter (Good Shepherd), Mothers Day.* **Resurrection and Covenant 2: *To Proclaim the Love of Christ*** (Deuteronomy 18:15-22; Luke 7:18-23) In today's scriptures, we are reminded of the skill set of a prophet (Deuteronomy). We are also reminded of how, according to Luke, Jesus pleaded his own case for prophethood to John the Baptist. Central to both these situations is a deep understanding of what the love of God can do. And we may infer a question: *Are we expected to be prophetic, too?*

SUNDAY, MAY 15, 10:00 AM — *Fifth Sunday of Easter; Mental Health Sunday.* **Resurrection and Covenant 3: "To Discern the Will of God."** (Deuteronomy 28:1-14; 2 Corinthians 4:13-15) If one does the will of God, there are benefits to be realized, says the author of Deuteronomy. But the sophisticated believer doesn't necessarily believe that God operates by intruding upon creation in this way. *How is God active in the world? And how shall we keep faith with such a mysterious Creator?*

SUNDAY, MAY 22, 10:00 AM — *Sixth Sunday of Easter; Worship Outdoors.* **Resurrection and Covenant 4: "The Joy and Struggle of Discipleship."** (Deuteronomy 28:58-68; Romans 6:5-11; John 11:17-27) This portion from Deuteronomy includes a litany of unpleasant outcomes for those who fail to keep God's commandments. The readings from Romans and John invoke the potential for newness of life with the Messiah. But again, we are faced with the conflict between our worldview and that of biblical authors. *What shall keep the biblical witness alive and well for us who are separated from it by so many millennia?*

SUNDAY, MAY 29, 10:00 AM — *Seventh Sunday of Easter (Ascension); Sunday of Memorial Day Weekend; Music by Oikos Jazz Ensemble.* **Resurrection and Covenant 5: "An All-Embracing Covenant."** (Luke 24:46-53; Deuteronomy 29:10-15; 1 Peter 1:3-9) On the Sunday just after the fortieth day of Easter, when we recall Luke's account of Jesus disappearing into heaven, we also bring forward one last portion of Deuteronomy. In it God affirms that the Covenant with Israel is not only for Israel. The first letter of Peter picks up this theme with a chord of faithfulness being the root of human salvation. We are prompted to wonder, *What will make our lives complete? Where is our faith taking us?*

SUNDAY, JUNE 5, 10:00 AM — *Pentecost Sunday; Confirmation Sunday; Sacrament of Christ's Table; All-Ages Worship; Strengthen the Church Special Offering.* (Acts 2:1-8, 11b-21; Romans 8:14-17, 22-27; John 14:8-17) For months, seven young people of our Congregation have been considering together with their mentors what it means to be Christian and a member of the Church. Today, we invite them to come among us and be confirmed in this religion in which they have been brought up. By way of a message of the day, Pastor Dave talks our Kids Church members through the ritual he'll be doing with the confirmands (and the grownups can listen in, too!).

SUNDAY, JUNE 12, 10:00 AM — *Trinity Sunday.* (Romans 5:1-5; John 16:12-15) The divine dance, the economy of our God — these are metaphors we use to explain the Trinity, but no explanation is really quite adequate. **Message of the Day: "Appreciate the Mystery."**

SUNDAY, JUNE 19, 10:00 AM — *Second Sunday after Pentecost; Fathers Day; Juneteenth.* (1 Samuel 1:19-28; Psalm 69:10-20, 30-33; Acts 2:43-47; Matthew 15:29-39) With Pastor Dave Denoon away for vacation, this worship service will include a Message of the Day by the Rev. **Merrimon Boyd**.

SUNDAY, JUNE 26, 10:00 AM — *Third Sunday after Pentecost; Open and Affirming Sunday; Sunday of Pride Weekend.* (Galatians 5:1, 13-25; Luke 9:51-62) Like one emerging from a closet and calling for others to accept them, Jesus strode on and invited others. "I have decided to follow Jesus... no turning back!" goes the spiritual. "Forward ever, backward never," declared the late Ghanaian President Kwame Nkrumah, as his country emerged from British colonization. Explore with Pastor Dave the challenges and benefits of **"Resolute Faith."**

## MODERATOR'S CORNER

Here I am again, proclaiming Spring my favorite season of the year! It seems that the tulips in front of the church have never been lovelier or lasted longer than this year. But I am old enough and self-aware enough to know that come Fall, I will proclaim that my favorite season of the year, and there are few weather days that surpass setting by the fire with a good book or a jigsaw puzzle on the afternoon of a heavy, wet snow decorating the trees and shrubs! The result of all this self-awareness is that I know I will not choose to live in a climate without seasons.

I recently attended an OASIS class on Christianity in the Fourth Century and learned that is when the seasons of the Christian religion were promulgated. My life activities are informed by the seasons of the church as well as the seasons of the year. We have come through the season of Lent climaxing with the passion of Christ and celebrating Easter. As you read this we will be in Eastertide, celebrating seven Sundays of Easter and ending with Pentecost Sunday on June 5. Hopefully you notice that the paraments on the altar change with the liturgical season. I never paid much attention to Pentecost Sunday until we installed the marvelous hanging for the center of the sanctuary. Now I love coming to worship knowing it will be there on Pentecost Sunday. This year we will also witness the confirmation of young women who have participated in the current confirmation class.

What a joy it was to celebrate Passion week and Easter in our sanctuary this year. After two years of being prevented from doing so by the Coronavirus, we were back together. A heart-felt thank you goes to the entire worship team, Oikos Ensemble, volunteers and musicians for three extraordinary opportunities to worship. I have always believed it a bit fraudulent to celebrate Easter without observing at least one of the services detailing the passion of Christ that made the joy of Easter possible. This year both services were very special. With an excellent script and fine acting, we experienced the drama of the women who may well have been at the table with Jesus on the night in which he was betrayed. The Good Friday Blues brought a large and diverse audience together for outstanding music and drama. These were the best two services of their type that I can remember in our church.

Easter Sunday was a delight from beginning to end. Well over one hundred congregants gathered in the sanctuary, and others online, for excellent music before the service. After Leon Burke's convincing performance as Lazarus at the Maundy Thursday service, it was a relief to hear him sing "The trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised..." The worship service that followed included more music, this time by both the bell and vocal choirs as well as the reception of new members. We are delighted to welcome Ruth and Robert Oleson and Annie Sampath into our Christian community. (Meet them on page 15!) And just in case this was not enough of a joyous celebration of our first Easter together since 2019, Lady Elect hosted a large gathering in Memorial Hall with an extraordinary array of coffee cakes. Again, to all those who made this possible, Thank You!

The month of May will bring new opportunities for worship, service and socializing. The pages of this Covenant News will inform you of the plans for worship, the opportunities to hear great music, both in worship and in concert, and details of ways you can serve others. Open the E-News that comes to you in your email each week to keep informed about all this and more on a weekly basis. Also, take advantage of the "Donate" option at the end of each. Please do your part in making the work of First Congregational Church possible.

Which brings us to the "business" of the church. At a meeting of the congregation on May 1 new officers and ministry members were elected to serve for the church year of 2022-2023. We serve you. We serve in many ways: paying the bills, facilitating worship, organizing fund raising for benevolent purposes, providing religious education for children and adults, planning social interaction among members and friends, raising and managing money to support the work of the church, keeping the building attractive and in good repair. These are only some of the more obvious ways of service. This is a lot! And those who serve need your help and support. So when asked to help, say "yes." We are all part of this Christian community.

With Joy and Gratitude in being able to serve,  
Joan Musbach, Moderator

## FROM THE TREASURER

Below are the preliminary church operating results for March 2022:

Statement of Financial Activities				
	2022	2021	Full Year Budget	Change to Prior Year
				Higher/ (Lower)
Income				
Pledges and Gifts	\$ 134,168	\$ 149,170	\$ 315,000	\$ (15,001)
Transfer from Endowment	40,000	30,000	299,000	10,000
Benevolence	14,774	21,520	15,000	(6,745)
Use of Space and Miscellaneous	9,198	5,233	47,115	3,966
Interest Income	4,309	4,430	11,000	(120)
<b>Total Revenue</b>	<b>202,450</b>	<b>210,352</b>	<b>687,115</b>	<b>(7,901)</b>
Expenses				(Higher)/ Lower
Human Resources Expense	\$ 113,721	\$ 102,058	\$ 458,354	(11,663)
Facilities and Finance Expense	\$ 42,919	\$ 32,672	\$ 163,375	(10,247)
Benevolence Expense	\$ 3,750	\$ 3,850	\$ 32,000	100
Christian Education Ministry Expense	\$ 730	\$ 45	\$ 4,100	(685)
Parish Life Ministry Expense	\$ 2,601	\$ 1,109	\$ 11,400	(1,492)
Executive Ministry Expense	\$ 390	\$ -	\$ 17,200	(390)
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>164,111</b>	<b>139,734</b>	<b>686,429</b>	<b>(24,377)</b>
<b>Net Increase (Decrease) in Net Assets</b>	<b>\$ 38,339</b>	<b>\$ 70,618</b>	<b>\$ 686</b>	<b>\$ (32,278)</b>

Statement of Financial Position			
	2022	2021	Variance
Cash and cash equivalents	\$ 204,182	\$ 219,607	\$ (15,426)
Pledges receivable	205,925	186,808	19,117
Property and equipment	28,006	29,596	(1,590)
Minister housing long term receivable	60,000	60,000	-
<b>Total Assets</b>	<b>\$ 498,113</b>	<b>\$ 496,011</b>	<b>\$ 2,101</b>
Unrestricted Designated Funds	36,948	34,327	2,621
Restricted funds for:			
Funds in Endowment Trust	51,334	45,815	5,519
Churchyard	36,506	34,007	2,499
Kishlar/Dickens Room Maintenance	49,046	58,096	(9,050)
Temporarily restricted funds for pledges	205,925	186,808	19,117
Memorial Funds	55,071	63,252	(8,180)
Long term liabilities	60,000	60,000	-
Unrestricted Net Assets	3,283	13,707	(10,424)
<b>Total Liabilities and Net Assets</b>	<b>\$ 498,113</b>	<b>\$ 496,011</b>	<b>\$ 2,101</b>

If you have any other questions or want further detail, please let me know.

Thanks

Jennifer Jones, Treasurer



## FROM THE PASTORAL ASSISTANT

### SPRING HAS SPRUNG AND THERE ARE KIDS AND YOUTH ACTIVITIES COMING UP!



On June 12th we will have our second annual Caring Parade! Kids will decorate the participating cars during Kids Church that morning, and at 2pm we will depart from the east parking lot to spread joy to our isolated and homebound members. The event was a big hit last year — for the participants as well as the recipients! Please contact Halley Kim if you are willing to drive your car in the parade or assist with the planning process.

Confirmation is wrapping up! You don't want to miss Coffee Hour on May 15th because Halley and Dave will have to do the dreaded "one chip challenge" — eat an incredibly spicy chip -- when the youth hit their donation goals for the St. Louis Area Food Bank! (\$250 for Halley to do the challenge, \$500 for Dave to do it!) On May 16th the students will present their individual faith projects at the "iConfirm" service, and

then on June 5th they will formally confirm their baptism vows during worship. Be sure to attend worship that day to congratulate and welcome them!

Lastly June 25th will be a youth hangout and game night at Ashley Merideth's home! (If you haven't met Ashley yet, she is one of our wonderful Kids Church volunteers). We will gather at 7pm for board games at 5154 Christy Ave, St. Louis, MO 63116. We will have a bunch of games available, but feel free to bring any you want, and friends too! Halley will bring the snacks!

Halley Kim

## WHAT THE HECK IS THE ENNEAGRAM?!

I'm so glad you asked. The Enneagram is a modern personality typing system derived from ancient wisdom. It's a tool for personal growth as well as relational growth. If you're familiar with Myers Briggs or Strength Finders, it's sort of like that. However, the Enneagram is primarily about your motivations, not your behaviors. There are nine basic types within the Enneagram. Here is a very basic teaser for each type from The Enneagram Institute:

1. The Reformer: Principled, Purposeful, Self-Controlled, Critical & Perfectionistic
2. The Helper: Caring, Interpersonal, Generous, People-Pleasing & Possessive
3. The Achiever: Excelling, Pragmatic, Adaptive, Competitive & Image-Conscious
4. The Individualist: Sensitive, Expressive, Dramatic, Self-Absorbed & Temperamental
5. The Investigator: Cerebral, Perceptive, Innovative, Secretive & Isolated
6. The Loyalist: Security-Oriented, Engaging, Responsible, Anxious & Suspicious
7. The Enthusiast: Fun-Loving, Spontaneous, Versatile, Distractible & Scattered
8. The Challenger: Powerful, Self-Confident, Decisive, Willful & Confrontational
9. The Peacemaker: Easygoing, Self-Effacing, Reassuring, Stubborn & Complacent

Hmmm...are you a 2 or a 7? A 1 or a 5? What about your spouse? Your kids? Your parents?

Well, come to the Enneagram Workshop on May 21st at 9am to get more information! It's four hours of content for the bargain price of \$20!

Our speaker, Elisabeth Wurm, will go over the three "centers of intelligence" (gut, heart, head) which divides the types into three triads, and then she will cover each distinct type. Proof of vaccination required; light refreshments provided. Register at <https://tinyurl.com/enneagram-registrations>. If you have any questions, contact Halley Kim.



## MICA NEWS



**Jazz for the Journey begins—Sunday June 5th at 5:00 pm**  
Memorial Hall “Coffee House”

**Jazz for the Journey** is an interfaith meditative experience exploring the adventurous landscape of the soul through the transformative spirit of jazz, storytelling and the arts. All are welcome to this free creative experience featuring the Oikos Ensemble. We'll gather in a coffee house setting with free beverages and goodies provided by the MICA planning team.

The Oikos Ensemble will feature vocalist Kim Fuller, trumpeter Tim Osiek, pianist Carolbeth True, bassist Glen Smith and drummer David True. People from all different ethnic and religious backgrounds have experienced our jazz ministry: Jazz Noel, Good Friday Blues, Global Village Jazz concerts and interfaith jazz worship in more than 300 communities of faith around the country.

While **Jazz for the Journey** is not a worship service per se, it offers a unique opportunity to experience the artistry of musicians as they soulfully share their deepest connections through their music. Each gathering will explore a significant life theme and offer creative reflection from a variety of spiritual traditions. This is a perfect opportunity to invite friends and family to an innovative program encouraging one's spiritual journey.

A free-will offering will be received to further the ministry of MICA.

Rev. Cliff Aerie

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## GATHER ON THE GREEN – COMMUNITY EVENT

To the Citizens of Webster Groves:  
Come listen, learn & celebrate as we “Gather On The Green”  
A Revival in Words & Music of the True Character & Positive Values  
That Make Our Community Extraordinary!

Saturday, June 18

Eden Seminary Green Space

2 pm - 4 pm

FREE & OPEN to ONE & ALL

This first-ever program is created and presented as a partnership between every day citizens, clergy leadership & local live music artists

Bring your lawn chairs, blankets and coolers, spread out on the Green Space & and connect as one community!

## May 2022

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<b>1</b> Sacrament of Christ's Table 9:00 AM Brown Baggers 9:45 AM Nursery Care Available 10:00 AM Worship 10:15 AM Kids' Church 11:05 AM Annual Congregational Meeting 11:20 AM Coffee Fellowship 4:00 PM Benefit for Krakow Jazz Academy	<b>2</b> 7:00 PM Scout Troop 301B and Troop 301G	<b>3</b> 10:30 AM Staff Meeting 1:00 PM Communications Team	<b>4</b> 9:30 AM Yoga with Jeanene 6:00 PM Bridge Club	<b>5</b> 6:00 PM Canterbury Bells - Practice 7:30 PM Chancel Choir - Practice	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b> 6:00 PM Piano Recital
<b>8</b> Mother's Day 9:45 AM Nursery Care Available 10:00 AM Worship 10:15 AM Kids' Church 11:05 AM Coffee Fellowship 3:00 PM Emmanuel Sikora, Piano Concert	<b>9</b> 7:00 PM Scout Troop 301B and Troop 301G 7:00 PM Three Ministries	<b>10</b> 10:30 AM Staff Meeting 6:30 PM Confirmation Class 6:30 PM Practicing Our Faith	<b>11</b> 9:30 AM Yoga with Jeanene 6:00 PM Bridge Club 7:00 PM Executive Ministry	<b>12</b> 6:00 PM Canterbury Bells - Practice 7:30 PM Chancel Choir - Practice	<b>13</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>15</b> 9:45 AM Nursery Care Available 10:00 AM Worship 10:15 AM Kids' Church 11:05 AM Coffee Fellowship	<b>16</b> 7:00 PM iConfirm Service for confirmands and loved ones 7:00 PM Scout Troop 301B and Troop 301G	<b>17</b> 10:30 AM Staff Meeting	<b>18</b> 9:30 AM Yoga with Jeanene - Inglis Room 6:00 PM - 9:30 PM Bridge Club - Inglis Room	<b>19</b> 7:30 PM Chancel Choir - Practice	<b>20</b>	<b>21</b> 9:00 AM Enneagram Workshop - Memorial Hall
<b>22</b> 9:45 AM Nursery Care Available 10:00 AM Worship 10:15 AM Kids' Church 11:05 AM Coffee Fellowship 3:00 PM Installation: Rev. Tracey Harris at St. John's UCC, Manchester	<b>23</b> 7:00 PM Peace and Justice Coalescence 7:00 PM Scout Troop 301B and Troop 301G	<b>24</b> 10:30 AM Staff Meeting 7:00 PM Lady Elect	<b>25</b> Dickens Room 9:30 AM Yoga with Jeanene 6:00 PM Bridge Club	<b>26</b> 8:30 AM Journeymen 7:30 PM Chancel Choir - Practice	<b>27</b>	<b>28</b>
<b>29</b> 9:45 AM Nursery Care Available 10:00 AM Worship - with Oikos Ensemble 10:15 AM Kids' Church 11:05 AM Coffee Fellowship	<b>30</b> Memorial Day Office Closed	<b>31</b> 10:30 AM Staff Meeting				



## June 2022

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
			1 9:30 AM Yoga with Jeanene 6:00 PM Bridge Club	2 7:30 PM Chancel Choir - Practice	3	4 9:00 AM - 12:00 PM "First Saturday" Collection Event 10:00 AM Confirmation Rehearsal 3:00 PM Concert: Christina Harnisch, Piano
5 Confirmation Sunday Pentecost Sacrament of Christ's Table 9:00 AM Brown Baggers 9:45 AM Nursery Care Available 10:00 AM Worship 11:05 AM Coffee Fellowship 5:00 PM Jazz for the Journey	6 7:00 PM Scout Troop 301B and Troop 301G	7 10:30 AM Staff Meeting 1:00 PM Communications Team 6:30 PM Pastoral Relations Committee	8 9:30 AM Yoga with Jeanene 6:00 PM Bridge Club	9	10	11 7:00 PM Artists Presentation Society 75th Anniversary Gala Concert
12 Trinity Sunday 9:45 AM Nursery Care Available 10:00 AM Worship 10:15 AM Kids' Church 11:05 AM Coffee Fellowship 4:00 PM Benefit for Krakow Jazz Academy II	13 7:00 PM Three Ministries (Zoom) 7:00 PM Missouri Chamber Music Festival	14 10:30 AM Staff Meeting	15 9:30 AM Yoga with Jeanene 6:00 PM Bridge Club	16 5:30 PM Missouri Chamber Music Festival	17	18 2:00 PM Gather on the Green at Eden Seminary 7:00 PM Missouri Chamber Music Festival
19 Father's Day Juneteenth 9:45 AM Nursery Care Available 10:00 AM Worship 10:15 AM Kids' Church 11:05 AM Coffee Fellowship	20 Juneteenth (observed) Office Closed 7:00 PM Executive Ministry	21 First Day of Summer 10:30 AM Staff Meeting	22 9:30 AM Yoga with Jeanene 6:00 PM Bridge Club	23	24 6:00 PM Webster Rock Hill Ministries Trivia Night	25
26 9:45 AM Nursery Care Available 10:00 AM Worship 10:15 AM Kids' Church 11:05 AM Coffee Fellowship	27 7:00 PM Peace and Justice Coalescence	28 10:30 AM Staff Meeting	29 9:30 AM Yoga with Jeanene 6:00 PM Bridge Club Inglis Room	30		

## FIRST SATURDAYS DRIVE THROUGH COLLECTIONS

The first four First Saturday drive through collections have been a success! In January, First Church's Volunteers collected six full carloads of food and personal care items for Webster Rock Hill Ministries. In February we collected underwear and socks for the Walbridge Academy in North St. Louis, and on March 5, we collected two trunk loads of period supplies and nearly \$100 in cash donations for St. Louis Alliance for Period Supplies. Most recently, in April we collected items for Nurses for Newborns and arguably received our biggest haul yet — the conference room was overflowing with Pack n' Plays, diapers, and baby items!

We will not have a May collection due to a plant sale in our parking lot, but will resume in June. On June 4th we will have a food drive as summer is a particularly trying time for families who are food insecure.

We will continue this new tradition on the first Saturday of each month (unless the weather throws a major curve ball). Information regarding the First Saturday of April will be available in our eNews. Please volunteer your time at a First Saturday drive, and contribute to the collections as well! Watch the bulletins and eNews for information about our June 4th collection.




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## ROOM AT THE INN UPDATE

After “sheltering in place” during COVID, Room At The Inn (RATI) is planning to continue having clients stay at the shelter going forward, instead of at different churches. The shelter has been rearranged/updated so each family has their own room with twin size mattresses in bedframes and a tv. Additional refrigeration in the kitchen, washers & dryers, a preschool room, therapy rooms, a children's library and a teen room were also added! The clients have experienced many benefits “sheltering in place”.

Clients are sleeping better and experiencing less stress since they have their own rooms and beds, making it easier to work on solutions to their problems. It's much easier for clients to get to work and school since they are not restricted by time. Children participate in tutoring after school and all clients receive therapy in the evening.

Ways that we at 1st Church can continue to support RATI:

RATI is asking for a monthly donation to help cover expenses of an innkeeper and food. Some of this will be covered by funds raised during our annual Auction.

Church members can also help by volunteering at the shelter. They need people to drive, tutor a child, be a reading buddy, answer phones, assist with building maintenance, help with lawncare – trimming and raking, make a donation from their wish list, provide an evening meal once a month, lead a craft night or volunteer for the annual golf tournament.

Cindy Warren is the Volunteer Coordinator at RATI and can be contacted @ 314-209-9181 or [cwarren@roomstl.org](mailto:cwarren@roomstl.org) to answer any questions about volunteering. More information can be found on their website at [roomstl.org](http://roomstl.org)

## FROM THE MUSIC DIRECTOR



As the regular season winds down May is busy with music! On May 1, join us for a benefit concert: BLUE NOTE! Celebrating America's Premier Jazz Label, Sunday, May 1, 4:00 PM with 17 musicians performing. There is a 3:00 PM lecture by Paul DeMarinis on the BLUE NOTE legacy. This a benefit for the 2022 International Summer Jazz Academy in Krakow and for Ukrainian student scholarships. Admission is \$10 adults, \$5 students. If you are unable to attend and wish to make a donation, please see me. On June 12, a second benefit concert featuring the music of Thelonious Monk and John Coltrane will be offered — again in our sanctuary at 4:00 PM for the same admission prices.

Take Mom to a concert on May 8th (Mother's Day) at 3:00 PM!

Composer and pianist Emmanuel Sikora will be performing in our sanctuary. The Washington Post describes his music as "an appealing melding of the romantic and the contemporary, unselfconscious and unpretentious." His work has been performed by internationally known soloists including concert pianist David Rubinstein and mezzo-soprano Jacqueline Horner-Kwiatek, and ensembles including the L'viv Philharmonic, Syracuse University Orchestra, and Ukrainian Festival Orchestra. His program will feature his own compositions, Peruvian music, and Dream Sequence by Samuel Adler.

The Canterbury Bells will make their last outing of the season on May 15 and as of the writing of this article, our worship on May 22 will include a steel drum band! Oikos will return for our worship on May 29.

Christina Harnisch, at long last, will present her exciting recital featuring music by Chopin, Mendelssohn, and Debussy and female composer counterparts who lived during those composers' lifetimes on June 4. On June 5 we celebrate Pentecost and Confirmation in worship. This will be the Chancel Choir's last appearance during the "regular season." Later that day join MICA as they present Jazz for the Journey in Memorial Hall at 4pm.

I would like to extend an invitation to anyone in the congregation to lead hymn singing during worship this summer. This would include learning the hymns with me during the week and standing at a microphone and leading hymn singing during worship. This would require an hour to meet with me to rehearse the week before your Sunday. Leave a note in my mailbox or find me after church some Sunday to indicate your interest.

It is truly a crescendo of musical activity this May here at First Church!

Leon Burke

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**LADY ELECT — END OF YEAR POTLUCK**  
**MAY 24 IN THE INGLIS ROOM**  
**6:00 PM**

*All are welcome!*

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## THE STORY OF LITURGICAL ART IN OUR WORSHIP SERVICES

The Monday Morning Men made it possible for liturgical art to be hung from the highest point of our sanctuary. By removing speakers that had been suspended from the ceiling, the support apparatus, weighing 75 pounds, was adapted for the hanging of art pieces. It is lowered and raised by a system of pulleys. Beginning on Pentecost Sunday, May 2007, the first display of liturgical art featured an explosion of color above us. Inspired by the story in Acts about wind and fire of the Holy Spirit, the art works invite us to encounter God's spirit among us. The illusion of fire was created by using 'flames' of many colors made of sheer fabric. This was accomplished believing that the power of all art forms engage our senses and enhance our worship of God.

In 2008 our church and St. John's UCC were awarded a Worship Renewal Grant that funded exploration of the use of visual art in our worship spaces. The first project was to create a paper lace cut banner to celebrate World Communion Sunday/Harvest in October. Many members from both churches participated in hand cutting the designs. The delicate looking white paper hanging abounds with symbols of communion and harvest.

Also hung is a wreath during the Christmas season, a white gossamer cross with gold lettering at Easter time, and streamers of many hands at Rally Day. The latest piece of art is a Sumi Cross created for our 150th anniversary.





## UPDATE ON REFUGEE FAMILY

The seven members of the community support group for the refugee family continue to attempt to meet needs as they arise and hopefully get ahead of others. We have helped our new friend set up her first bank account, receive her fair share of a tax refund, set up her computer and make sure that she knows how to use it, provided transportation for the kids to get vaccinations, secured dental appointments for the children, and every week two of us work with her to improve her command of the English language. This last piece is a high priority as her ability to find a job and support herself and her children depend on it. Helping her achieve independence and self confidence is really our end goal.

On April 19 most of us attended an open house at the International Institute to learn more about them as well as other partners who are welcoming refugees in many different ways.

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## BENEVOLENCE REPORT 2022

THANK YOU to our very generous 2022 donors! You made it possible for First Congregational Church of Webster Groves to continue its long tradition of benevolence giving.

Benevolence Giving has been a part of our church since its founding. In 2009 when the budget for Benevolence was reduced, our members came up with a new way to raise funds to distribute to partner agencies. This began the annual Benevolence Auction Dinners. The first Auction Dinner included a dinner, silent auction and oral auction. We have held some variation of these dinners each year since then. As many of you know, it takes an incredible number of volunteers to make these successful. And we are grateful for their work.

In 2022, we again had to continue our efforts to raise money for Benevolence with Covid pandemic in mind. The Giving Together Pandemic Style campaign ran March 6-18 with the Giving Store, the online purchase of items and a solicitation for giving. **In total, we raised \$21,545.** The Benevolence Committee will meet shortly to distribute funds.

Our Church's Wider Mission  
 UCC St. Louis Association  
 Beyond Housing  
 Camp MoVal  
 Care and Counseling  
 CHADS Coalition for Mental Health  
 Emmaus Homes  
 Gateway 180  
 Gateway ONA Coalition  
 Habitat for Humanity Local 760

Interfaith Partnership of Greater St. Louis  
 Lydia's House  
 Minister's Discretionary Fund  
 Prevent Ed (Nat Council Alcohol STL)  
 Operation Food Search  
 Room at The Inn  
 Shepherd's Center  
 Unleashing Potential  
 Webster Rock Hill Ministries

Members of the Benevolence Auction Committee include Jane Porchey and Jeanene Harris, Co-Chairs, Joan Musbach and Kay Roush.

Members of the Benevolence Awards Committee include Jeanene Harris, Chair, Cathy Buerk, Pastor Dave Denoon (ex officio), Mary Edwards, Jane Porchey, and K Wentzien.

Jeanene Harris, Co-Chair



## MAY



Dana L. Romeis	May 01
Paul Davis	May 02
Cathy Buerk	May 03
Mark Edwards	May 03
Tracey Harris	May 08
Warner Prange	May 08
Thomas Welnick	May 08
Garie Perry	May 09
Drue Hood	May 10
Kay Roush	May 12
Jessica Shannon	May 12
Peter Bakker-Arkema	May 17
Jean Gray	May 19
Margery Gable (99!)	May 22
Sophia Monaco	May 23
Linda Kopetti	May 24
Mark Thompson	May 26
Leo Gomez	May 27
Trevor Zink	May 28

## MEAL A MONTH SHOPPING LISTS

### May Shopping List

Canned Chicken  
 Canned Green Vegetable  
 (low or no salt)  
 Canned Fruit in own juices  
 Powdered Milk, shelf stable milk, soy milk  
 Pudding or Jello (fat free/sugar free)  
 Shampoo/Conditioner  
 Soap  
 Deodorant

### June Shopping List

Boxed Whole Wheat Pasta  
 Pasta Sauce (Low salt and sugar)  
 Canned Mixed Vegetables (low or no salt)  
 Canned Fruit in own juices  
 Powdered Milk, shelf stable milk, soy milk  
 Baby Fruits  
 Baby Vegetables  
 Baby Cereal

## JUNE



Donna Hull	June 01
Jennifer Jones	June 03
Nolan Breitenbach	June 04
Leon Burke	June 04
Christina Hood	June 05
Michael Monaco	June 08
Lauren Bakker-Arkema	June 11
Suzie Barnes	June 11
Ginnie Conlee	June 16
Laszlo Kopetti	June 17
Cliff Aerie	June 19
Gus McLean	June 23
Abigail Monaco	June 23
Rosemary Hensley	June 27
Theo Ferguson	June 28
Ron Gomez	June 29
Jane Bolliger	June 30

## MISSING SOMEONE?

Have you been missing someone for a while from worship and other church events? Please, let Pastor Dave Denoon or Mary Edwards, know. Either will be happy to follow up for you.

## **NEW MEMBERS WELCOMED**

On Easter Sunday, April 17, we welcomed three new members into our Congregation – Annie Sampath and Bob & Ruth Oleson. They were introduced to the community by their sponsors – Laura Cooper and Andrea Welnick, respectively.

### **ANNIE SAMPATH (as introduced by Laura Cooper)**

Annie is the daughter of the Rev. N.V. and Mary John, Syrian Christians who moved from India to study and work at Eden and who were members of First Church when they did. Annie was involved with the Youth Fellowship here at that time, also. Annie is married to Vembakkam “Sam” Sampath, and they have two adult children. Annie has an M.B.A. in Finance and is a health care auditor. She has been working with our church’s Refugee Relief group, who are sponsoring a family from Eritrea through the International Institute.

Annie joined the church by letter of transfer from Ivy Chapel United Church of Christ in Chesterfield.

### **REV. ROBERT & RUTH OLESON (as introduced by Andrea Welnick)**

Bob and Ruth lived in the area, some decades ago, when Annie, Andrea, and their children all were in Youth Fellowship together. Ruth and Bob met when he was attending Eden Seminary and she was in nursing school. They have served churches in a variety of places. Along the way, Bob was at a church in Carbondale, Illinois, when Ruth decided (at age 50) to pursue a Ph.D. in English. They moved to Webster Groves for their retirement, a few years ago. They live in the Bethesda Orchard community, here. When asked, “Why did you choose First Congregational?” Ruth replied, “From the very first time that we came to worship here, we felt enfolded into a family. That is how we knew we were home.”

The Olesons joined by letter of transfer from St. Paul United Church of Christ in Pekin, Illinois, where Bob served as pastor for many years and Ruth was a recognized leader in the local Christian Women’s Association.



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

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