

Welcome!

First Congregational Church
of Webster Groves United Church of Christ



Seek Christ in each. Serve God in all.

DECEMBER 18, 2022

FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT: LOVE
"THE CHRISTMAS FUND" SPECIAL OFFERING

*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 blessings
of our congregation.*

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



Order of Worship

An asterisk () indicates the Congregation standing, in body or in spirit.*

PRELUDE *Christmastime Is Here* Vince Guaraldi

WELCOME The Cohen Family

LIGHTING OF THE CANDLES

TOLLING OF THE BELL

INTROIT *I Wonder as I Wander* Appalachian carol

***GATHERING HYMN** *In the Bleak Midwinter* Christina Rossetti
No. 128, *New Century Hymnal*

***RAISING THE COVENANT** *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.

RITUAL OF APPROACH *Fourth Candle: LOVE*

We Bring Our Stories Before God The Cohen Family

Prayer of Confession (Unison)

God, sometimes midwinters find us. Sometimes they are long and relentless. Assure our weary hearts that spring will come again. Be with us when we are weighed down by sadness, anger, or shame. Neither life nor faith is tidy, though we confess that, often, we try to hide that truth. It can be difficult to love ourselves well. We can be slow to receive love from other people, not wanting to be a hindrance, even if our interior world is bleak. Remind us of your grace, and help us love ourselves and others as you do. Amen.

Silence for Personal Confession

Words of Assurance

***Response**

Doxology

Tune: OLD 100TH

(Words by Paula Meador Testerman)

O Glorious God, to you we bring
Praise, treasures, lives as offering;
Spirit of love, within us dwell;
Come, Jesus, our Emmanuel. Amen.

NOT FOR CHILDREN ONLY

Rev. David Denoon, *Pastor*

The children are invited forward for a time of enrichment.

Afterward, they may proceed to Kids' Church, or return to their seats.

THE WORD SHARED
From the Gospels

Luke 2:1-7
John 1:14

Gabriel Requadt, *Student Minister*
Pew Bible, p. 933
p. 966

Response.

Reader: Hear what the Spirit is saying to the people.

People: Thanks be to God.

ANTHEM

O Holy Night
Mark Cereghino, tenor

Adolphe Adam

MESSAGE OF THE DAY

“Incarnate God, Incarnate Faith”

Halley Kim,
Pastoral Assistant

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

We Raise Our Joys and Concerns

Prayer of the Day

Prayer of Our Savior (Unison)

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.

***PARTING HYMN**

The First Nowell
No. 139, *New Century Hymnal*

English carol

OPPORTUNITIES ARISING

***BENEDICTION**

Halley Kim

POSTLUDE

Have Yourself a Merry Little Christmas

Martin & Blane

During the Postlude, we encourage you to greet those around you, or to remain at your seat to enjoy the music until it has ended. In the spirit of diversity, please be attentive to the possibility that one who is seated may be meditating. When you are ready, please join other worshipers for refreshments in Memorial Hall.

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Many thanks to the Oïkos Jazz Ensemble for their gifts of music, this morning. Band members are Kim Fuller Barnes (vocal), Carolbeth True (piano), Glenn Smith (bass), David True (drums), and Rev. Cliff Aerie (sax). **Join Oïkos again, this afternoon at 3:00pm**, when they and the Logos Readers present *Jazz Noel: The Return of the Light*.

Oïkos and Logos are manifestations of First Church’s Ministry of Imagination, Creativity, and the Arts.

How to Donate to First Congregational Church



You may leave a donation in the offering plate in the Narthex, OR
Send a check made payable to FCCWG at:

First Congregational Church
10 W. Lockwood Ave.
Webster Groves, MO 63119

Visit <http://firstchurchwg.org/donate> to make an electronic contribution, or scan the accompanying QR code.

Connecting Remotely to Worship

If you're joining us remotely, Sunday worship each week is streamed live on YouTube, starting at 10am (bit.ly/FCCWG-YT).

Wi-Fi Info

Recommended: fccwg1, fccwg2 or fccwg3
Password for all: firstchurch.

Finding Your Way at First Church

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

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.

Jazz Noel

Today at 3:00 pm

Jazz Noel is a modern-day reimagining of the Christmas story through creative storytelling and the improvisational spirit of jazz featuring the music of the **Oikos Ensemble**. Our storytellers will be the **Logos Interpretive Readers**.

This year's theme, "**The Return of the Light**," will share the Christmas story within the context of the Winter Solstice. Throughout history, indigenous people created rituals as a celebration of hope. Even in the diminished sunlight of winter, the sun will return. Light will outshine the darkness of the world, and new life (rebirth) is possible. The story of Jesus' birth is a holy affirmation that the "Light of the World" is born among us, and that the power of light will overcome the darkness.

The Oikos Ensemble is a national jazz ministry under the direction of its founder and saxophonist, the Rev. Cliff Aerie. The band features some of St. Louis' most talented jazz musicians. Oikos has performed at more than 300 faith-based communities around the country.

Celebrate the Joy of the Christmas Season

Since 2011, there have been 21 **Jazz Noel** concerts in eight different churches in St. Louis, Kansas City, Belleville, IL and Cleveland, OH. Jazz Noel has been performed for more than 4,000 people raising nearly \$10,000 for community service organizations. **Jazz Noel** is free and open to the public. A free-will offering will be received to benefit [Webster-Rock Hill Ministries](#).

We Hold in Our Prayers

- Our members who are homebound, in assisted living, or skilled care – Sharon Beal, Joyce Berger, Paul Davis, Margery Gable, Shirley Moore, Kitty Pearl, Jan Ver Hagen, Joan Whitford
- All people who are living with dementia, their families, and their caregivers
- People we love who are living with cancer – Margaret Gustafson
- Leo Gomez
- David & Becky Scott
- People with mental illnesses, and those who love and care for them
- Peace with justice

About the Christmas Fund for the Veterans of the Cross and the Emergency Fund

“Overwhelmed with joy!” Matthew 2:10

The Christmas Fund has been caring for active and retired clergy and lay employees of the United Church of Christ for over 100 years, providing emergency grants, supplementation of small annuities and health premiums, and Christmas “Thank You” gift checks each December to our lower-income retirees.

We have been giving annually to the Christmas Fund for many years. This year, your care and compassion will be especially appreciated by those servants of the church who are facing a time of need. Special envelopes will be included in this Sunday's bulletin, or send a check payable to the church with "Christmas Fund" on the memo line (You can also contribute at the Donate page of our website at <https://firstchurchwg.org/donate/>). Thank you!

Santa's Jubilee Today at 11:20am

ONE MORE TRY: The visit from Santa that was scheduled for December 4 and then the 11th had to be delayed until this Sunday. Watch for him and his train ride near the Jubilee Garden!

There are still Poinsettias Available!

We have ordered a limited number of poinsettias that you may sponsor. Pick them up, any time after the late service on Christmas Eve or by contacting the office to arrange a time, or you may donate the poinsettia to one of our homebound members. Plants are \$20 each. Order forms are available from the table in the narthex. You may also order online at <https://tinyurl.com/fcc-poinsettias>.

Holiday Worship Services at First Church

Saturday, December 24, 4:30 pm — Family Christmas Eve. This brief worship service features many of the readings you'll have heard in the morning but with a Live Nativity tableau, including one of our newest additions as the Baby Jesus! “Gifts for the Manger” will be collected during the service – infant and family needs to be presented to local charities, along with cash offerings. Singing of “Silent Night” ends the service, with battery-powered candles for the children to hold.

Saturday, December 24, 9:00 pm — A Service of Nine Lessons and Carols. This very special nighttime service incorporates voices and instruments performing readings and music that may be familiar or new, to celebrate of the birth of the Messiah and the mystery of the Incarnation. ***This service will be followed with our Christmas Wassail Bowl reception.***

There will be no services conducted at First Church on Christmas Day, Sunday, December 25.

Sunday, January 1, 2023, 10:00 am – New Year's Day; Seventh Day of Kwanza'a – Imani (Faith); Feast of the Holy Name of Jesus; All Ages Worship; Sacrament of Christ's Table; **Holiday Hymn Sing. Scriptures:** Ecclesiastes 3:1-13; Psalm 8; Revelation 21:1-6a; Matthew 25:31-46. This very special, all-ages worship service, conducted in Memorial Hall, includes a recognition of the communitarian values of the season of Kwanza'a and a Christmas/New Year Holiday Hymn Sing.

Camp MoVal Registration

Camp MoVal is accepting early registrations now, for 2023 campers! First Church covers half the registration fee for our young people who go! Learn about Camp MoVal's programming at <https://www.campmoval.org/> Or, if you already know the program you want to sign up for, click on the following link: <https://tinyurl.com/moval-2023> for the registration form. To take advantage of the church subsidy, use the sponsorship code "FirstChurchI" when registering.

First Congregational Tee-Shirts might just make a great Stocking Suffer!

There are still plenty of tee shirts in the church office. Please come up and buy one! There are still a few on the desk by the kitchen door that have been ordered and awaiting pick up. The shirts are heavy duty 100% cotton and cost \$15 each. We have a variety of sizes. Email Debbie at admin@fdirstchurchwg.org with questions.

There are still Poinsettias Available!

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What's Going on at First Church

Sunday, December 18

9:45 AM Nursery Care

10:00 AM Worship (the Oikos Jazz Ensemble)

10:15 AM Kids' Church

11:05 AM Coffee Fellowship with cookies and Santa

3:00 PM *Jazz Noel*

Monday, December 19

7:00 PM Executive Ministry (Zoom)

7:00 PM Scout Troops 301B & G

Tuesday, December 20

10:30 AM Staff Meeting

Wednesday, December 21

9:30 AM Yoga - Inglis Room

Saturday, December 24

4:30 PM Family Christmas Eve Worship

9:00 PM Festival of Lessons and Carols

10:05 PM Wassail Bowl Reception

Sunday, December 25

Christmas Day (no worship services)

Monday, December 26 - Monday, January 2

Office Closed

Sunday, January 1

New Year's Day

Sacrament of Christ's Table

9:45 AM Nursery Care

10:00 AM All-ages Worship in Memorial Hall

11:05 AM Coffee Fellowship

Tuesday, January 3

2:00 PM Memorial Service: Rev. Barney
Kitchen



10 West Lockwood Avenue
Webster Groves, MO 63119
314-962-0475
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Contact Information

Moderator – Joan Musbach
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Pastor – Rev. David A. Denoon
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Weekend & Events Custodian – Kayla Skiles

Assistant Custodian – Gus McLean

Director of Ministry of Imagination, Creativity
and the Arts (MICA) – Rev. Cliff Aerie
cliff.aerie@gmail.com

Chaplain, Stillpoint Campus Ministry
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