

Covenant News

February & March 2023

Inside this issue:

| | |
|-----------------------------------|----|
| February & March Worship Notes | 2 |
| Lenten Study | 3 |
| Gateway ONA Convocation | 4 |
| The Case for Sharing Stories | 4 |
| Moderator's Corner | 6 |
| Stewardship Report | 7 |
| Treasurer's Reports | 8 |
| Event Coordinator | 9 |
| New Members | 9 |
| Church Clean Out Sale | 10 |
| 2023 Benevolence Trivia Event | 10 |
| About Gateway 180 | 10 |
| About Brown Baggers | 10 |
| From the Music Director | 11 |
| Church History | 12 |
| Lady Elect | 12 |
| OGHS | 13 |
| Birthdays | 13 |
| Meal-A-Months' | 13 |
| Missing Someone? | 13 |
| February Calendar | 14 |
| March Calendar | 15 |

FROM THE PASTOR

Wonderfully Made

I praise you, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made. Wonderful are your works! (Psalm 139:14)

Life is hard enough for young people nowadays. Well, it's always been pretty challenging. When most of you who are reading this were children and youth, there were the same challenges associated with self-identity and differentiating. Your bodies were changing, and abiding those changes was difficult. In many ways, you wanted to be the same as everybody else, but you also knew you were different, and some of the differences you would hide out of shame.

Today, we at First Church endeavor to prevent shame, and to celebrate our young people's differences and affirm them. Some call themselves "gender non-conforming" or "non-binary," and ask to be referred to by the pronoun, *they*. Some whom we had assumed were boys turn out to be girls, and vice versa. Some are trying on identities; some are discovering them; some are remaining just as we had imagined they were. And we grownups are trying to keep up, to make their transitions into adulthood as smooth as possible.

There are traditionalists, however, insisting that our children and youth shall be limited to only two categories – male and female. They further insist that the familiar binary shall be determined by the gender that was assigned to our young people at birth. These same traditionalists will require the children's parents and caregivers to be party to that preservation. On January 23, in fact, traditionalists in the Missouri legislature went so far as to draft nine bills intended to codify their misgivings.

Life is hard enough for young people nowadays, not to have to put up with fear-based foolishness. Meanwhile, our culture is beset with violence, including two mass murders in California that occurred on Lunar New Year's Day and shootings in the Central High School for Visual and Performing Arts in St. Louis just before Thanksgiving. My own otherwise bucolic suburban neighborhood lately is receiving regular reports of hoodlums burglarizing cars and even stealing them. There is such disregard for life, liberty, and property!

Still, our holiest writings remind us of God's loving purposes and brilliant power. Let us, an Open and Affirming people, be engaged in those purposes and power – facing our cultural demons and facing them down, to build a true and loving culture of God.

Peace.

Pastor Dave Dawson



WORSHIP NOTES FOR FEBRUARY & MARCH 2023

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

All worship services noted below will be offered in person and live streamed (bit.ly/FCCWG-YT), at 10:00 am on Sundays.

FEBRUARY 5 — FIFTH SUNDAY AFTER THE EPIPHANY; SACRAMENT OF CHRIST'S TABLE; ALL AGES WORSHIP. Scriptures: Isaiah 58:1-12; Matthew 5:13-16. On this first Sunday of Black History Month, in a creative setting for delivering the Message of the Day, I will concentrate on interpreting the metaphors of salt and light (Matthew) for what it means to be faithful.

Music during the month of February will largely be drawn from African American traditions, including choral selections from Robert Ray's *Gospel Mass*. The Chancel Choir would welcome your participation.

FEBRUARY 12 — SIXTH SUNDAY AFTER THE EPIPHANY; RELIGION & SCIENCE SUNDAY; SCOUTING SUNDAY. Scriptures: Sirach (a book from the Apocrypha) 15:15-20; Psalm 119:1-8; 1 Corinthians 3:5-9. We mark again our historic commitment to Scouting, as Troop 301's units G and B take their part in worship leadership. Meanwhile, using an interpretive practice called "form criticism" – which combines the best of science and reason with faith and belief – I will compare and contrast the 1 Corinthians passage with similar-seeming teachings of Jesus and offer some conclusions. Special video presentation of a song parody of Lennon & McCartney's *Yesterday*, by Anglican Bishop N. T. Wright and Geneticist Francis Collins, titled, *Genesis*.

After worship, the Parish Life Ministry invites you to celebrate Valentines Day a little early with our annual **Chocolate Sunday reception**.

FEBRUARY 19 — CELEBRATION OF THE TRANSFIGURATION; SEMINARY AND CHURCH VOCATIONS SUNDAY (OFFERING FOR CUE SEMINARIES). Scriptures: Psalm 8:3-5; Luke 1:46-49. Student Minister Gabriel Requadt brings the Message of the Day.

A special offering will be collected to benefit the UCC seminaries of the Midwest – Chicago Theological Seminary, United Theological Seminary of the Twin Cities, and Eden Theological Seminary. Envelopes for the "CUE" offering will be included in the morning's bulletin; if you would like to make a contribution but will not be in attendance, please send your donation to the office ahead of February 19 (checks payable to FCCWG with "CUE" in the memo line, or use our electronic option by contributing at our website's Donate page).

FEBRUARY 26 — FIRST SUNDAY IN LENT. Some worshipers may have a sense of déjà vu, this Lent, as we again approach the season accompanied by the wisdom of New Testament scholar Amy-Jill Levine. I will be offering a new sermon series based on her book, ***Entering the Passion of Jesus: A Beginner's Guide to Holy Week***. This was a volume we tried to explore together in Lent 2020. The first two sessions were very well-attended, but in-person discussion was interrupted by the onset of the covid pandemic. So, we're trying again! (***Please note: Copies of Dr. Levine's book are available from the office, at a price of \$10 each.***)

Each week, Dr. Levine provides a Jewish academic's insights to the last week of Jesus' life. She points out how each day of that week had a certain risk associated with it. In Week 1 we look anew at the first day of Jesus' final week and the "Triumphal Entry into Jerusalem." What was Jesus trying to say about himself? What do we say about ourselves, even implicitly, when we follow and praise him? Scriptures: Zechariah 9:9-11; Matthew 21:1-11. Message of the Day: ***"Risking Reputation"***

MARCH 5 — SECOND SUNDAY IN LENT; UCC WOMEN'S WEEK; SACRAMENT OF CHRIST'S TABLE; ALL AGES WORSHIP. Scriptures: Isaiah 56:6-8; Mark 11:15-19. For ages Christians have told the story of "the cleansing of the Temple" as if all it is about is Jesus being outraged over the corruption of temple authorities, money-changing and overcharging pilgrims. Prof. Levine suggests that his outrage was instead aimed at the people's hypocrisy. Is it all right for us to be outraged? When are we justified in our own anger? Message of the Day: ***"Risking Righteous Anger"***

MARCH 12 — THIRD SUNDAY IN LENT; AMISTAD SUNDAY; DAYLIGHT SAVING TIME BEGINS. Scriptures: Mark 12:41-44. Challengers ask Jesus about paying taxes. A scribe asks Jesus if he knows the greatest commandment. Then, a widow places two almost worthless coins in the Temple treasury. This entire day at the Temple provided Jesus an opportunity to talk about values and human dignity. What must his disciples and others listening to him have been thinking? Message of the Day: ***"Risking Challenge"***

MARCH 19 — FOURTH SUNDAY IN LENT; “ONE GREAT HOUR OF SHARING” SPECIAL OFFERING. Scripture: Matthew 26:6-13. The Oikos Jazz Ensemble joins us for an exploration of the meaning of Jesus’ anointing by an unnamed woman. This story unfolds in a different way in each of the Gospels. But in each case, someone objects, concerned about the woman’s intention. Also, however, in each case Jesus says that the anointing doesn’t mean what they think it means. This will be a Sunday when I am away, so Pastoral Assistant Halley Kim will offer the message and lead discussion with Student Minister Gabriel Requadt. Message of the Day: **“Risking Rejection”**

MARCH 26 — FIFTH SUNDAY IN LENT. Scriptures: Exodus 12:21-28; John 13:5-9; Mark 14:66-72. Prof. Levine brings us to the table of Jesus, specifically, the table of the Last Supper (which she turns a bit on its head, referring to it as “The First Supper”). Jesus confronts his disciples with the reality of what’s coming – his betrayal, arrest, trial, torture, and execution. What seemed to them to begin as a pleasant, holiday gathering turns into a (spiritual) nightmare. Message of the Day: **“Risking the Loss of Friends”**

APRIL 2 — PALM SUNDAY OF THE PASSION OF CHRIST; SACRAMENT OF CHRIST’S TABLE; ALL AGES WORSHIP. Once the palms have been blessed and communion served, using our imaginations we will go to Gethsemane and recollect in story and song the things that happened there. As Jesus prayed in that garden, “Take this cup away,” we reflect on times we may have wished we would not have to face. Theme of the Day: **“Risking Temptation”**

FRIDAY, APRIL 7, 7:00 PM — GOOD FRIDAY “BLUES.”

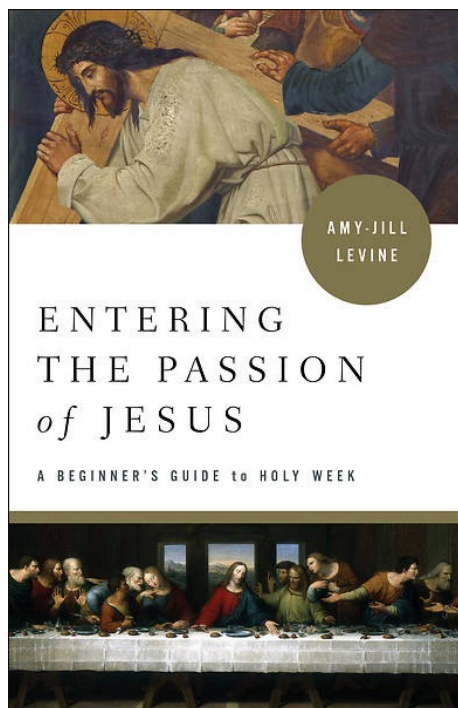
APRIL 9 — EASTER: CELEBRATION OF THE RESURRECTION

ENTERING THE PASSION OF JESUS: A BEGINNER’S GUIDE TO HOLY WEEK

By Amy-Jill Levine

A Lenten Study

Sunday mornings after worship in Memorial Hall



Author, professor, and biblical scholar Amy-Jill Levine, University Professor of New Testament and Jewish Studies at Vanderbilt Divinity School and College of Arts and Science, delves into the history and literature surrounding the last days of Jesus’ life. Levine sets the narrative in historical context and analyzes the risks and motives of the story’s characters.

Pastor Dave Denoon will lead discussion about this innovative and helpful exploration of the last days of Jesus’ earthly life. Each session features a brief video by Dr. Levine and lively conversation, on Sundays in the Inglis Room after worship.

Copies of *Entering the Passion of Jesus* are available from the office, at a price of \$10 each.

(For those of you thinking you’ve seen this promotion before, you’re right. This book discussion was offered in Lent 2020 also.

Unfortunately, after the second session, we lost the “community

discussion” aspect because Covid struck and our leaders weren’t quite able technology-wise to facilitate discussion online. We’re happy to try again now! You can even join the discussion by Zoom, if you have to be out of the room – <http://bit.ly/FCCWG-Bible>)

GATEWAY ONA ANNUAL CONVOCATION

Saturday, March 4, 9:00 AM – 4:00 PM

Parkway United Church of Christ, 2841 N. Ballas Rd. and online

Open and Affirming (ONA) is the United Church of Christ's (UCC) designation for congregations and other settings of the UCC which make a public covenant of welcome into their full life and ministry to persons of all sexual orientations, gender identities, and gender expressions.

Annually, Gateway ONA – an organization consisting of delegates from the ONA churches across the St. Louis area – hosts a convocation with vibrant worship, a featured speaker, workshops, a variety of displays from area ministries, and a bookshop. It all makes for a fascinating and informative day.

The next Convocation will be March 4, 2023, at Parkway UCC. It will be offered as a hybrid event with both in-person and virtual attendance available. As of this writing, the Convocation Planning Team continues to meet regularly and is working on securing worship & workshop leaders. **The Keynote Speaker will be Kim Brennan of Transparent.**

If you would like to attend Gateway ONA's Annual Convocation as a representative from First Church, please contact the office for a registration form.



WHY WE SHARE OUR STORIES BEFORE GOD

A Message from Pastor Dave and Pastoral Assistant Halley

Liturgist/Storytellers encouraged...

Dave

Not long after the death of Marilyn Davis, who recruited announcers and liturgists for a decade or more, Pastoral Assistant Halley Kim was handed the Liturgist-recruitment reins. This was because of her role as “stories before God” correspondent. She has been the primary staff member working with liturgists in designing the time of confession in our worship service (Ritual of Approach). The heart of this article is our invitation to

you to volunteer, some Sunday soon, to serve as a liturgist. And, although storytelling is not required as part of that role, we encourage you to consider it. Here's why.

Halley and I developed and started this practice of ours, after reading two enlightening works by the Rev. Molly Baskette – *Real Good Church: How our church came back from the dead, and yours can, too* (Cleveland: Pilgrim Press, 2014) and *Standing Naked Before God: The Art of Public Confession* (2015). As I mentioned in a sermon, about a year ago, Rev. Baskette wrote these books upon the phenomenal success of her pastorate at First Congregational Church, Somerville, Massachusetts, in which she took that community from 35 adults and 6 children on a Sunday to about 130 weekly adults year-round and close to 100 children.

The single most effective adjustment Somerville made to their life together was what Rev. Baskette calls, “public confession,” in which individuals leading worship prepare the congregation for their unison confession, by confessing themselves. Our church has approached this process as a congregation with measurable success, but also some shyness and guardedness.

Continued



Still, newcomers especially have been moved by stories they have heard, and not a few of our new members have professed that these confessions have motivated them to want to join the church (and a couple of them have told their own stories!).

Halley has composed the next few paragraphs, to share why she also finds this new practice of ours to be so important and vital.

Halley

I deeply appreciate that progressive Christianity is gentle and kind. We do not hammer people over the head here with the toxic idea that they are unworthy or depraved. And thank goodness! As a former evangelical, I've had quite enough of being told how wretched I am. No, I am not wretched; I am beloved. I am created in the image of God, as are you.

We are complex beings, though. Humanity is capable of immense good and terrible evil. Or, in a more likely point of view, as I've joked, anyone who is married or has children has surely had to apologize for *something!*

I'm also aware of the truth of an observation Rev. Baskette made in her book, *Standing Naked Before God*:

One reason some fundamentalist sects have grown, sometimes exponentially, when kinder, easier churches have declined and died, is because they have asked their followers to do hard things... For decades in the mainline Protestant church we have settled for something less than total truthfulness.

We have not asked each other to do hard things, like give generously, or serve sacrificially, or reveal our wounds. But if we don't ask each other, and ourselves, to do these hard things, we will never find out what we're made of.

She's right. In the evangelical world I was constantly challenged, told to interrogate my motives and to consider how I might have missed the mark. This was all done to excess, and with the harmful premise that *of course* I was perpetuating sinful patterns in my life and relationships because I was inherently bad. We, on the other hand, are not going to communicate to our people that either we or they are inherently bad, not now, not ever.

Still, I think it's helpful to share with others and before God some of the self-reflection we have done, what we have at times found to have been wrong with us and how we have, with God's help or by God's grace, made it right.

Maybe you've slipped up interpersonally, or by unintentional participation in a societal ill (i.e. racism, misogyny, etc.), or even internally engaged in derogatory self-talk. You might have been stressed, or triggered, or needed education around a certain topic, but you realized, this was not a referendum on *who you were*. And, because impact matters more than intent, you worked toward repairing what was wrong. Others deserve to know and to learn from you, and you will benefit by the vulnerability you will have risked and the authentic self you will have presented.

I hope you will tell your story, give it a try. Tell your story to deepen our community and make it more genuine. Tell your story to insist that church be a safe place to bring your full self. Tell your story because it communicates to newcomers that we don't take ourselves too seriously. Tell your story because honesty about our shadowy stuff is what returns us to glorious light.

To volunteer to be a liturgist, either as a storyteller or not, please contact Halley at halley.kim@firstchurchwg.org. For inspiration about what to tell as your story, flip back to "Worship Notes" and see what the subject matter for your Sunday will be.

MODERATOR'S CORNER

For this edition of the *Covenant News* I want to assure you that your elected ministry members and the staff of First Congregational Church share your concerns about the financial stability and longevity of our Christian community.

Ministries and staff are engaged in following the paths outlined for us by the **Strategic Planning Committee**. As you recall, a group of twelve church members, ably chaired by our Treasurer, Jenny Jones, and Moderator, Mark Edwards, convened in January of 2019. The work of this group, casually referred to as StratCom, has been reported to the membership in the Annual Reports. The goal of the Committee was to “draft and implement a plan to restore the financial health of the church consistent with the church’s mission.” They addressed the issues of

- » Increasing revenue from church members
- » Examining the church facility and property as a financial resource
- » Determining “who we are” and “what we want to be” as a church.

Significant time was devoted to vision and mission statements so that any action taken in furtherance of the goal to sustain our financial future will not conflict with the essential identity of our church.

We have a long-range plan. By definition this is Long-Range! We have three assets:

Our Members, Our Endowment and Our Property.

Our Members

We annually engage in a Stewardship Campaign, this year chaired by Jane Porchey, to maximize the resources available to us through our members. See the Stewardship report in this issue of the *Covenant News*. The good news is that the Stewardship campaign resulted in securing the amount budgeted for pledged income in the 2023 budget. We must, and do, continue to rely on the support of the members of our Christian community. We are also aware that we want to grow that community. Our professional staff and ministries are experimenting with innovative ways to increase our visibility and be attractive to individuals and families looking for a faith community. Our online presence is essential to our outreach, but has required the addition of both staff and equipment. Supporting new initiatives requires us all to be patient and open-minded as we find our way forward.

Our Endowment

Our Endowment Counselors, chaired by Sue Stepleton, meet quarterly with our financial advisors from Moneta to review the health of the Endowment. Keenly aware of our need to tap the Endowment for operating expenses in excess of the advised percentage, the Endowment Counselors are engaged in a continuing campaign to encourage members and friends to provide for our Endowment in their estate plans. We all need to continue the obligation assumed by our predecessors, to ensure the longevity of our Christian community. This is an act of faith, but then, we are a “faith community.” The recent declines in the stock market have been costly to us. Our advisors are being prudent and vigilant, but growth of our Endowment is of necessity, long-range.

Continued

Our Real Estate

StratCom engaged in extensive work analyzing use of church space, prioritizing our space needs, analyzing space suitable for one-time and recurring rental, and researching the Webster Groves zoning regulations that govern how we can use the land we own. Efforts to achieve sustainability through sale of property or involvement in outside entities for adaptive reuse proved unrealistic because of the zoning restrictions as well as complications from losing ownership of any part of the property, which would negatively impact the operations of the rest of the property.

Therefore, we have turned to launching our own endeavor to realize increased income from our property by forming *10 West Lockwood* to foster greater use and thus revenue, from our property. This is progressing. Jenny Jones, Mark Edwards and I are overseeing this endeavor. *10 West Lockwood* was launched with the help of a marketing firm. That cost was paid for by a member donation. We have now transitioned to hiring our own in-house *10 West Lockwood* Coordinator, Alicia McMinn, who began work on January 17. Alicia will handle the renting of our spaces with a focus on procedures consistent with a business-like approach. In its initial year, *10 West Lockwood* generated over \$18,000 in income to the church.

There are no “quick-fixes.” Our financial stability and continuation of our extensive and vibrant programming requires the support of all of us in both money and time. That we will survive and thrive is an act of faith. We are “called.”

Joan Musbach
Moderator

2023 STEWARDSHIP REPORT

The official Stewardship Campaign ended in November and resulted in \$301,226 pledged for the 2023. Here are some of the details:

- There are 12 pledge units we didn't have in 2022 that pledged this year.
- 23 pledges for 2023 were an increase from 2022
- Only 5 pledges decreased
- 67 households/units pledged for 2023, 4 more than last year.

If you thought it was too late to send in a pledge card either by mail, in person or online, please know that it is never too late! Pledges are a necessity in planning for church programming each year.

Your Stewardship Committee is grateful for your support and sends a sincere thank you to each of you!

Cathy Buerk, B.J. Kaul, Sharon Love, John Paci, Jane Porchey, Liu Lin Thio, Tom Waltz

TREASURER'S REPORT

Below are the year to date church operating results through December 2022:

Statement of Financial Activities

| | 2022 | 2021 | Full Year Budget | Change to Prior Year | Change to Budget |
|--|-------------------|------------------|---------------------|-------------------------|---------------------|
| Income | | | | Higher/ (Lower) Income | |
| Pledges and Gifts | \$ 371,249 | \$ 369,528 | \$ 315,000 | \$ 1,721 | \$ 56,249 |
| Transfer from Endowment | 175,000 | 150,000 | 299,000 | 25,000 | (124,000) |
| Benevolence | 22,572 | 23,527 | 15,000 | (954) | 7,572 |
| CARES Act PPP | - | 62,300 | - | (62,300) | - |
| Use of Space and Miscellaneous | 69,778 | 41,645 | 47,115 | 28,133 | 22,663 |
| Interest Income | 28,009 | 20,655 | 11,000 | 7,354 | 17,009 |
| Total Revenue | 666,608 | 667,654 | 687,115 | (1,046) | (20,507) |
| Expenses | | | | (Higher)/ Lower Expense | |
| Human Resources Expense | \$ 459,424 | \$ 431,581 | \$ 458,354 | (27,844) | (1,070) |
| Facilities and Finance Expense | \$ 156,490 | \$ 161,375 | \$ 163,375 | 4,885 | 6,885 |
| Benevolence Expense | \$ 36,600 | \$ 38,565 | \$ 32,000 | 1,965 | (4,600) |
| Christian Education Ministry Expense | \$ 2,885 | \$ 3,244 | \$ 4,100 | 359 | 1,215 |
| Parish Life Ministry Expense | \$ 9,744 | \$ 8,550 | \$ 11,400 | (1,194) | 1,656 |
| Executive Ministry Expense | \$ 4,854 | \$ 2,486 | \$ 17,200 | (2,368) | 12,346 |
| Total Expenses | 669,997 | 645,800 | 686,429 | (24,197) | 16,432 |
| Net Increase (Decrease) in Net Assets | \$ (3,389) | \$ 21,854 | \$ 686 | \$ (25,243) | \$ (4,075) |

Statement of Financial Position

| | 2022 | 2021 | Variance |
|--|-------------------|-------------------|--------------------|
| Cash and cash equivalents | \$ 189,418 | \$ 186,225 | \$ 3,193 |
| Pledges receivable | - | 12,920 | (12,920) |
| Property and equipment | 26,946 | 28,404 | (1,457) |
| Minister housing long term receivable | 60,000 | 60,000 | - |
| Total Assets | \$ 276,364 | \$ 287,549 | \$ (11,185) |
| Unrestricted Designated Funds | 40,516 | 6,732 | 33,784 |
| Restricted funds for: | | | |
| Funds in Endowment Trust | 51,334 | 45,815 | 5,519 |
| Churchyard | 38,370 | 36,259 | 2,111 |
| Kishlar/Dickens Room Maintenance | 49,046 | 53,946 | (4,900) |
| Temporarily restricted funds for pledges | - | 45,900 | (45,900) |
| Memorial Funds | 75,383 | 73,926 | 1,457 |
| Long term liabilities | 60,000 | 60,000 | - |
| Unrestricted Net Assets | (38,285) | (35,029) | (3,256) |
| Total Liabilities and Net Assets | \$ 276,364 | \$ 287,549 | \$ (11,185) |

Continued

Items to note include:

- With substantial collections in December 2022, the church ended the year with a decrease in net assets of \$3,389.
- The church did not need to draw the budgeted amount from the Endowment, leaving \$124,000 in the Endowment Fund.
- The church had \$189k in cash and short term investments at 12/31/22. Based on a cashflow forecast, the Endowment transfers will be stopped in February and March as there is enough cash for operations.

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

Thanks

Jennifer Jones, Treasurer

WELCOME OUR NEW EVENT COORDINATOR!

Alicia McMinn, is a St. Louis native who graduated from University of Missouri - St. Louis with Bachelor of Science Degree. She's worked as personal trainer for the last ten years and runs a small meal prep business.

She attended St. Elizabeth of Hungary K-8 and Lindbergh High School. She's an avid baker and has a tuxedo cat named Bianca.

NEW MEMBERS RECEIVED, JANUARY 29

Three new members were added to our Congregation on Heritage Sunday, January 29. They included:

Ashley Merideth – A teacher at St. Louis's Central High School for Visual and Performing Arts, Ashley is a "military brat" and a member of a large and musical family. She was attracted to First Church because of our progressive theology, commitment to social justice, and very welcoming community. She joined by Affirmation of Faith.

Andrea & Mark Metcalf – Andrea is the daughter of a retired Presbyterian minister and grew up for a great part in the that church across the street from us. She has fond memories of her childhood in Webster Groves and was pleased to find us – a church accepting and affirming all people – not far from the home where she and her husband live but which isn't a church where her father had been on staff! Andrea is on staff at Hixson Middle School and has a lot of experience leadership of Sunday schools and youth.

Mark Metcalf has been working at First Church for the past 12 months as our A/V Specialist and recently added to those duties the role of Custodian. Although he has a strong background in media, Mark also has operated businesses with a focus on building maintenance and housekeeping. In his free time, Mark enjoys production of musician-friends' work and HOCKEY!

Both the Metcalfs joined by letter of transfer from Second Presbyterian Church in St. Louis.

THE GREAT CHURCH CLEAN OUT SALE – APRIL 14 & 15

Members of First Church are actively involved in preparations for this great event. The goals are:

- to make unused spaces ready to show and rent to possible tenants
- to put items now in disparate places in appropriate areas for use
- to be aware of what we have that can be useful
- to put the remainder up for sale in a massive “recycling” event

The cleaning out and sorting of materials in the music spaces is about two-thirds completed. Stored furniture has been identified for sale. Several men of the church began moving large items to the stage for sale and will be continuing this process. Parish Life and Christian Education are separating items for future use from items that can be sold. Items for use will be consolidated into appropriate spaces. The furnishings of the areas used by AA have been ungraded. Preparation for the sale will continue through February and March.

Beginning April 11, members are invited to donate items to the sale. Bring these to Memorial Hall and place on the sale tables.

Members of Lady Elect have committed to assisting with the set up, April 11 - 14. Additional help will be welcomed as well as help from individuals experienced in pricing items for sale.

For more information or to offer assistance, contact Bob Borutta, Phil Shoulberg or Joan Musbach.

ANNOUNCING THE 2023 BENEVOLENCE GIVING CAMPAIGN

It is time for our annual giving campaign to fund our Benevolence Fund. This is a long and strong First Church tradition. Because of the pandemic, this campaign has been virtual for the last two years. For 2023 your Benevolence Giving Committee will be combining the best of our virtual efforts with a new in-person event.



During the month of February, members and friends of First Congregational will receive a letter that asks them to continue making a personal contribution to our fund for benevolent giving. We know that many of you support various charitable causes on your own, but we ask you to support the efforts of your church as well.

The Online Giving Store will continue. In February members and friends will be asked to contribute to the Store's inventory. All items will be available for purchase online beginning March 1. The Store will close at 5:00 p.m. on March 10.

On March 11 we will gather for a Benevolence Giving In-Person Event – **A Not-So-Trivial Trivia Night!** Helping worthy causes is not trivial, but we can have fun doing so at a Trivia Night. Tickets will be \$25 per person in advance and \$30 at the door. Reserve a table for 8 and pay only \$175! Small silent and oral auctions will enliven the evening. Members and friends are encouraged to create tables of eight, bringing your own food and beverages, but in order to “sweeten” the event, the members of Lady Elect will provide a **Dessert Buffet** at intermission.

For more information or to offer assistance, contact Kay Roush, Jeanene Harris, Jane Porchey or Joan Musbach. Individuals with Trivia Night experience are particularly needed.

BENEVOLENCE MISSION PARTNER

GATEWAY 180 AND BROWN BAGGERS

Gateway 180: Homelessness Reversed is located at 1000 N 19th Street, St. Louis. As noted by the descriptive name, it is an emergency shelter providing nurturing and supportive temporary housing for homeless women, children, and families. The 90-year-old building has 171 beds, and with the community's continued support the effort is to improve the facility and quality of support, care, and training, for the purpose of getting these homeless folks with jobs and back into their own apartments.

Brown Baggers is made up of our own church volunteers, is directly connected to the support of Gateway 180. Our Brown Bagger volunteers (currently Pat Doyle Grace, Dana Romeis, BJ Kaul, Chris von Weise, Elaine Coe, Marshall, and Faye Dyer) meet on the First Sunday of the month at 9:00 am in Memorial Hall. The volunteers make up 60 bags containing fruit, cookies, and a drink. The sandwich ingredients (bologna, cheese, and bread) are bought in bulk and delivered to Gateway 180 along with the filled bags. The Gateway staff assemble the sandwiches and add them to the bags when needed, providing fresher sandwiches.

The history of the once-called Sandwich Makers to now-called Brown Baggers is that it was a service originally begun by Joy Bennett in her selfless commitment to help the homeless. Isn't it wonderful how one person's vision and the volunteering of many, along with our Benevolence Fund can assist, for years, the plight and misfortune of others.

Both outreach programs are supported by our Benevolence Fund.

FROM THE MUSIC DIRECTOR



February is Black History Month! My intention for this post-Christmas season is to have at least one musical selection from the African American tradition or from an African American composer at every service.

Lent begins on February 22 and your music department will be choosing more austere music during this time. We will also be busily preparing for Easter when we will "pull out all the stops."

Do make plans to hear **Scott Kennebeck in recital** in our sanctuary on March 19 celebrating St. Patrick's Day with mostly Irish songs. Scott's sweet tenor voice makes him an ideal "Irish Tenor." For even more authenticity, he will bring a program of favorites that famous Irish tenor, John McCormack, might have performed. An afternoon of Irish ballades, songs and other delights await you at 3pm in the sanctuary on March 19.

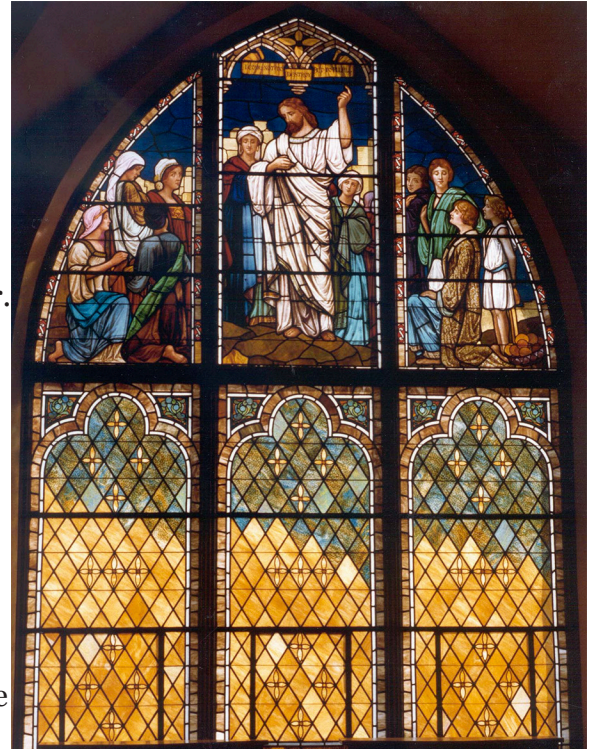
Leon Burke, Music Director

A GLIMPSE INTO OUR CHURCH HISTORY

SANCTUARY BACKGROUND

Our founding members, in 1866, first met in Chapel Grove Seminary, a private school building on Lockwood. Services were moved, when more space was needed, to the new public school building, later named Bristol School. In 1870 our permanent church home was built on our present site. The auditorium was used not only for worship but also Sabbath School classes. Then in 1892-1893 a bigger sanctuary was built with pews set on the diagonal. A window was installed on the east wall in memory of Mr. and Mrs. Robert Studley, two of our founding members.

In 1922 a narthex was added and the sanctuary rearranged with a center aisle. Brides seemed to like this arrangement so much more than the old configuration! An art glass window depicting Jesus delivering the Sermon on the Mount, replaced the first window. It was presented in memory of Edward Studley Hart, nephew of the Robert Studleys. Mr. Hart, who served as the third mayor of Webster Groves, had been a member of the church from early youth, holding, over time, almost every church office. He once pledged five years of service as church custodian and at times even slept in the pews all night - perhaps so he could have the church warm and ready for Sunday worshipers in the winter. This window, restored in 1993-4 by his descendants, forms the upper part of the window on the south wall of our present sanctuary. Church members as indicated on the adjacent plaques gave the lower part of the window plus the two rose windows and the lancet windows, designed by Robert Frei of Kirkwood. The lancet windows are arranged in sets of three symbols signifying the sacraments of communion and baptism. The north rose window overlooking Lockwood is illuminated at night for the whole community to enjoy.



A portion of a window from our earliest church structure was rescued from the 1992 demolition done in preparation for the building of our present sanctuary. It was reframed and hung in the narthex in 1996. The pulpit, chancel back, the large brass cross, narthex doors, the four center light fixtures, communion table and baptismal font all came from the former sanctuary. Newer are the pews, organ, piano and world globe.

LADY ELECT

Lady Elect has decided to meet in the daytime for a majority of their meetings but also depending on the program. Daytime meetings will be lunch meetings (BYO) at noon with hostesses providing desserts and drinks.

- February 21 at noon: Karaoke in the Parlor
- March 28 at noon: Joan Musbach's safari trip in the Parlor
- In April Lady Elect will help with the "Great Church Clean Out and Sale" (scheduled for April 14 and 15).
- May 23 at 6:30 pm: End-of-year potluck in Memorial Hall

All are welcome!

One Great HOUR OF SHARING

One Great Hour of Sharing (OGHS) special mission offering of the United Church of Christ involves you in disaster, refugee/immigration, and development ministries throughout the world. When a disaster strikes or people are displaced or made refugees by violence or extreme poverty, you are part of the immediate response and of the long-term recovery.

Through OGHS you engage in holistic development programs including health care, education, agriculture, food sustainability, micro-financing and women's empowerment. Because the UCC relates in mutual partnership to churches and organizations through Global Ministries and worldwide response & recovery networks, your contributions to One Great Hour of Sharing put you in the right place at the right time for the relief, accompaniment and recovery of the most vulnerable. You meet immediate needs and you address the underlying causes that create those needs in the first place.

Please give generously to OGHS on Sunday, March 19!

FEBRUARY Birthdays

| | |
|-----------------|-------------|
| Charlie Brader | February 5 |
| Mary Edwards | February 6 |
| K Wentzien | February 6 |
| Elyse von Weise | February 8 |
| Kathy Hill | February 11 |
| Maggie Hill | February 14 |
| Doug Barton | February 15 |
| Erick Falconer | February 16 |
| Pat Doyle-Grace | February 20 |
| Martin Mills | February 21 |
| Sam Craig | February 26 |

MARCH Birthdays

| | |
|-------------|----------|
| Kris Rinne | March 14 |
| Kitty Pearl | March 18 |
| Jim Harris | March 21 |
| Amy Byrne | March 26 |

MEAL-A-MONTH

FEBRUARY SHOPPING LIST


Canned Tuna, packed in Water • Tuna Helper
Canned Carrots (low or no salt)
Canned Fruit in Own Juices • Powdered Milk,
Shelf Stable Milk • Soy Milk
Diapers • Diaper Wipes • Formula with Iron


MARCH SHOPPING LIST

Canned Ham • Macaroni and Cheese
Canned Green Vegetable (low or no salt)
Canned Fruit in own juices
Powdered Milk, Shelf Stable Milk, Soy Milk
Toothbrushes • Tooth Paste • Dental Floss

MISSING SOMEONE?

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

| Sunday | Monday | Tuesday | Wednesday | Thursday | Friday | Saturday |
|--|--|--|--|---|-----------|-----------|
|  | | | 1 9:30am Yoga with Jeanene - Inglis Room 6:00pm Bridge Club - Inglis Room 7:00pm Adult Confirmation Class (Zoom) | 2 Groundhog Day 6:00pm - 7:00pm Canterbury Bells 7:30pm - 8:30pm Chancel Choir | 3 | 4 |
| 5 Sacrament of Christ's Table 9:00am Brown Baggers 9:45am Nursery Care Available 10:00am Worship 11:05am Coffee Fellowship 11:20am Adult Education: Dementia and Brain Health with ACM Care | 6 7:00pm - 8:00pm Scout Troop 301B & 301G- Dickens Room | 7 10:30am Staff Meeting 1:00pm Communications Team - Church Office 6:30pm Pastoral Relations Committee | 8 9:30am Yoga with Jeanene - Inglis Room 6:00pm - 9:30pm Bridge Club - Inglis Room 7:00pm Adult Confirmation Class (Zoom) | 9 6:00pm - 7:00pm Canterbury Bells 7:30pm - 8:30pm Chancel Choir | 10 | 11 |
| 12 Scouting Sunday Science & Religion Sunday 9:45am am Nursery Care Available 10:00am Worship 10:15am Kids' Church 11:05am Coffee Fellowship | 13 7:00pm - 8:00pm Scout Troop 301B & 301G- Dickens Room 7:00pm Three Ministries (Hybrid) | 14 Valentine's Day 10:30am Staff Meeting 6:30pm Practicing Our Faith - Parlor | 15 9:30am Yoga with Jeanene - Inglis Room 6:00pm - 9:30pm Bridge Club - Inglis Room 7:00pm Adult Confirmation Class (Zoom) | 16 6:00pm - 7:00pm Canterbury Bells 7:30pm - 8:30pm Chancel Choir | 17 | 18 |
| 19 CUE Seminaries Special Offering Transfiguration Sunday 9:45am Nursery Care Available 10:00am Worship 10:15am Kids' Church 11:05am Coffee Fellowship | 20 Presidents' Day 7:00pm Executive Ministry (Zoom) 7:00pm - 8:00pm Scout Troop 301B & 301G- Dickens Room | 21 10:30am Staff Meeting 12:00pm Lady Elect - Parlor | 22 Ash Wednesday 9:30am Yoga with Jeanene - Inglis Room 6:00pm - 9:30pm Bridge Club - Inglis Room 7:00pm Adult Confirmation Class (Zoom) | 23 6:00pm - 7:00pm Canterbury Bells 7:30pm - 8:30pm Chancel Choir | 24 | 25 |
| 26 9:45am Nursery Care Available 10:00am Worship 10:15am Kids' Church 11:05am Coffee Fellowship 11:20am Lent Bible Study | 27 7:00pm - 8:00pm Scout Troop 301B & 301G- Dickens Room | 28 10:30am Staff Meeting | | | | |

| Sunday | Monday | Tuesday | Wednesday | Thursday | Friday | Saturday |
|---|--|--|---|---|---------------------------------|--|
|  | | | 1 9:30am Yoga with Jeanene - Inglis Room 6:00pm Bridge Club - Inglis Room 7:00pm Adult Confirmation Class (Zoom) | 2 6:00pm - 7:00pm Canterbury Bells 7:30pm - 8:30pm Chancel Choir | 3 World Day of Prayer | 4 9:00am - 4:00pm ONA Annual Convocation (at Parkway UCC) |
| 5 Sacrament of Christ's Table 9:00am Brown Baggers 9:45am Nursery Care Available 10:00am Worship 10:15am Kids' Church 11:05am Coffee Fellowship 11:20am Lent Bible Study | 6 7:00pm - 8:00pm Scout Troop 301B & 301G- Dickens Room | 7 10:30am Staff Meeting 1:00pm Communications Team - Church Office | 8 9:30am Yoga with Jeanene - Inglis Room 6:00pm Bridge Club - Inglis Room | 9 6:00pm - 7:00pm Canterbury Bells 7:30pm - 8:30pm Chancel Choir | 10 | 11 Benevolence Trivia Event - Memorial Hall |
| 12 Daylight-Saving Time Begins 9:45am Nursery Care Available 10:00am Worship 10:15am Kids' Church 11:05am Coffee Fellowship 11:20am Lent Bible Study | 13 7:00pm - 8:00pm Scout Troop 301B & 301G- Dickens Room 7:00pm Three Ministries (Hybrid) | 14 10:30am Staff Meeting 6:30pm Practicing Our Faith - Parlor | 15 9:30am Yoga with Jeanene - Inglis Room 6:00pm Bridge Club - Inglis Room | 16 6:00pm - 7:00pm Canterbury Bells 7:30pm - 8:30pm Chancel Choir | 17 St. Patrick's Day | 18 |
| 19 OGHS Special Offering 9:45am Nursery Care Available 10:00am Worship 10:15am Kids' Church 11:05am Coffee Fellowship 11:20am Lent Bible Study 3:00pm Scott Kennebeck, Irish Tenor in Concert | 20 First Day of Spring 7:00pm Executive Ministry (Zoom) 7:00pm - 8:00pm Scout Troop 301B & 301G- Dickens Room | 21 10:30am Staff Meeting 12:00pm Lady Elect - Parlor | 22 9:30am Yoga with Jeanene - Inglis Room 6:00pm Bridge Club - Inglis Room | 23 6:00pm - 7:00pm Canterbury Bells 7:30pm - 8:30pm Chancel Choir | 24 | 25 |
| 26 11:15am Nursery Care Available 10:00am Worship 10:15am Kids' Church 11:05am Coffee Fellowship 11:20am Lent Bible Study | 27 7:00pm - 8:00pm Scout Troop 301B & 301G- Dickens Room | 28 10:30am Staff Meeting | 29 9:30am Yoga with Jeanene - Inglis Room 6:00pm Bridge Club - Inglis Room | 30 6:00pm - 7:00pm Canterbury Bells 7:30pm - 8:30pm Chancel Choir | 31 | |



10 West Lockwood Avenue
Webster Groves, MO 63119
314-962-0475
www.FirstChurchWG.org

Contact Info

Moderator – Joan Musbach
JWMusbach@gmail.com

Pastor – Rev. David A. Denoon
DDenoon@FirstChurchWG.org

Pastoral Assistant – Halley Kim
Halley.Kim@FirstChurchWG.org

Office Administrator – Debbie Tolstoi
Admin@FirstChurchWG.org

Director of Music & Organist – Dr. Leon Burke
Leon.Burke@FirstChurchWG.org

Facilities Manager – Chip Isringhaus
ctil234@FirstChurchWG.org

Student Minister – Gabriel Requadt
erequadt@eden.edu

Custodian – Mark Metcalf

Weekend & Events Custodians –
Dianna Konopka and 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
Webster University – Rev. Dr. Laurel Hayes
laurel.hayes@sbcglobal.net

Director, Center for Counseling & Healing
Rev. Linda E. Smith, BCRN, HTCP/I
lesrhs@sbcglobal.net

Seek Christ in each. Serve God in all.

Follow us on

Facebook – www.facebook.com/FirstChurchWG/

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

YouTube – <http://bit.ly/FCCWG-YT>

