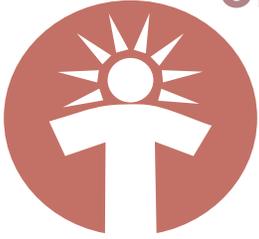


Welcome!

First Congregational Church
of Webster Groves United Church of Christ



Seek Christ in each. Serve God in all.

JULY 16, 2023

**SEVENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST
SACRAMENT OF BAPTISM**



*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 that worshipers are invited to stand in body or in spirit.*

PRELUDE

WELCOME

Gabriel Requadt, *Liturgist*

At this time, we invite you to complete an entry in the Friendship Booklet in your pew and to silence the ringer on any cellular device you may have with you.

TOLLING THE BELL

LIGHTING OF THE CANDLES

CALL TO WORSHIP (Responsive – Leader; **People**)

Isaiah 55:10-13

God says: As the rain and snow come down from the sky and do not return there until they have watered the earth, making it bring forth and sprout, giving seed to the sower and bread to the eater,

so shall my word be that goes out from my mouth; it shall not return to me empty, but it shall accomplish that which I purpose, and succeed in the thing for which I sent it.

*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.

*GATHERING HYMN

Bring Forth the Kin-dom

Marty Haugen, ad.

You are a seed of the word, O people: bring forth the Kin-dom of God!
Seeds of mercy and seeds of justice, grow in the Kin-dom of God.
Bring forth the Kin-dom of mercy; bring forth the Kin-dom of peace;
Bring forth the Kin-dom of justice; bring forth the Kin-dom of God!

We are a blessed and a pilgrim people: bound for the Kin-dom of God!
Love our journey and love our homeland: love is the Kin-dom of God!
Bring forth the Kin-dom of mercy; bring forth the Kin-dom of peace;
Bring forth the Kin-dom of justice; bring forth the Kin-dom of God!

RITUAL OF APPROACH

Invitation (Responsive)

Jesus, I am not worthy to have you come under my roof.

But only say the word and your servant will be healed.

Prayer of Confession (Unison)

God our Redeemer, the words of our mouths often lead to hurt and harm. We tear down when we could build up. We speak of

death and destruction when the power of life resides in our tongues. We say what is unnecessary and unhelpful while hesitating to offer encouragement and hope. Transform our speech as you write your word into our hearts. Stir us to speak life, joy, and love in all things. Amen.

Silence for Personal Confessions

Words of Assurance (Responsive)

In Romans 8:1 we see, “There is... no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.” God does not shame or condemn; rather, the One who is holy makes us holy, restored, and whole. Receive the grace of God as it is freely given. Be empowered by the one who observes you and declares you good. Know that you are loved, forgiven, and transformed in Jesus Christ.

Through Christ we have obtained access to the grace in which we dwell. Thanks be to God. Amen.

**Singing God’s Glory* *Glory to God in the Highest* Peruvian melody

The congregation repeats each line of the following after the Minister:

Glory to God! Glory to God! Glory in the highest!

To God be glory forever!

Next, the Minister leads the congregation in harmonizing the following:

Alleluia! Amen! Alleluia! Amen!

SACRAMENT OF BAPTISM

Emery Wren Fisher

Welcome (Responsive)

People were bringing children to Jesus that he might touch them; and the disciples rebuked them. But when Jesus saw it, he was indignant, and said to them,

“Let the children come to me, do not hinder them; for to such belongs the realm of God. Truly I say to you, whoever does not receive the realm of God like a child shall not enter it.”

Address

Congregational Response

This is the water of baptism. Out of this water we rise with new life, forgiven of sin and one in Christ, members of Christ’s body.

Questions of the Parents

**Congregational Assent*

We promise our love, support, and care.

**Affirmation of Faith*

Do you believe in God? **I believe in God.**

Do you believe in Jesus Christ? **I believe in Jesus Christ.**

Do you believe in the Holy Spirit? **I believe in the Holy Spirit.**

Prayer of Baptism

Christ be with you. **And also with you.**

Act of Baptism

Hymn

Jesus Loves Me
No. 327 – *New Century Hymnal*

Warner / McGuire

Presentation of Gifts

Prayer for the Baptized

THE WORD SHARED

From the Gospels

Matthew 13:1-9

Pew Bible, p. 889

Response.

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

People: Thanks be to God.

MESSAGE OF THE DAY

“Tossing Around the Parable”

Rev. Denoon

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

We Lift Our Joys and Concerns to God

Prayer of the Day

Prayer of Our Savior

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.

WE SHARE OUR BLESSINGS WITH OTHERS

Opportunities to Give and Gather

**Song of Praise*

Doxology

Tune: OLD 100TH

**Praise God from whom all blessings flow!
Praise God, all creatures here below!
Praise God, above, you heavenly host,
Creator, Christ, and Holy Ghost!**

**Prayer of Dedication (Unison)*

O God, we want to show you that in us you have planted good seed. Your word springs up and grows full to blossoming and planting anew. The gifts we offer cultivate the garden of your growing Kin-dom. Bless them to your work and will, in Jesus' name. Amen.

***PARTING HYMN**

Almighty God, Your Word Is Cast
No. 318, vv. 1,3,4 – *New Century Hymnal*

J. Cawood

Almighty God, your Word is cast like seed into the ground;
Now let the dew of heaven descend and righteous fruits abound.

Let not the world's deceitful cares the rising plant destroy,
But let it yield a hundredfold the fruits of peace and joy.

So when the precious seed is sown, your quickening grace bestow,
That all whose souls the truth receive its saving power may know.

***BENEDICTION**

***PARTING WORDS**

Liturgist: Our worship has ended.
People: Let our service begin.

POSTLUDE

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.

BAPTIZED THIS MORNING is Emery Wren Fisher, sister of Ellie and daughter of Mandi and Rich. We are joined virtually by her godparents, Derek & Tessa Heiser. We also welcome the Rev. Scott Matheney, chaplain of Elmhurst University, the alma mater of Emery's parents. Rev. Matheney also was the clergy who married Mandi and Rich and who performed Ellie's baptism. We rejoice with them and all their loved ones gathered here today, whether in person or virtually.

We also welcome today our guest organist/accompanist **Jocelyn Rugaber**. Jocelyn is an accomplished local musical artist and a member of Kirkwood United Methodist Church. She holds a Bachelor's Degree in Music Education and Piano Performance from DePauw University and a Master's Degree in Piano Pedagogy and Performance from Webster University.

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**Wi-Fi Info**

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

**Connecting Remotely to Worship**

If you need to join us remotely, Sunday worship each week is streamed live on YouTube, starting at 10am ([bit.ly/FCCWG-YT](https://bit.ly/FCCWG-YT)).

**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.



**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.

### **We Hold in Our Prayers**

- Our members who are homebound, in assisted living, or skilled care – Sharon Beal, Becky Scott, 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 Scott
- People with mental illnesses, and those who love and care for them
- Peace with justice

### **We are Hiring!**

Pastoral Assistant Halley Kim's departure this month creates the need for a Coordinator of Faith Formation. We are particularly interested in applicants who have a strong background in religious education in a progressive theological setting, preferably including collaborative partnerships and team building.

Interested individuals should introduce themselves at [personnel@firstchurchwg.org](mailto:personnel@firstchurchwg.org) and detail why their candidacy should be of particular interest to our Christian Education Ministry. A résumé (Word or PDF) should be attached. All applications should be sent to: [personnel@firstchurchwg.org](mailto:personnel@firstchurchwg.org) with the subject "CFF Recruitment." Telephone inquiries will not be accepted.

### **Technology Advances at First Church! New Phones and Door Entry System**

A new, secure door entry system was installed a couple of weeks ago. Also, a new office phone system is in place, including new extension numbers (see back page), and the staff are still learning! Please be patient, as they iron out the wrinkles.

### **Reminders**

**Check Request Forms** – There are check request forms in the office. Checks cannot be created without one of these forms. (The forms can be found on the 10 West Lockwood/Seminarian door in the office.)

**Facility Maintenance Repair Request Forms** – Chip keeps a very full schedule for repairs. Except in case of emergency, please fill out a maintenance request form. He will get your project on his schedule as soon as he can. (The forms can be found on the 10 West Lockwood/Seminarian door in the office.)

**Event Diagrams** – If you are having an event at the church and need the room set up in a certain configuration, please draw a diagram (it doesn't have to be beautiful) and leave it with any special instructions in Chip's mailbox.

**eNews** – We try very hard to send the eNews out on Wednesday afternoons. Occasionally we have to wait until Thursdays. If you have any information that you would like to see in the eNews, please email Debbie on by noon on Wednesdays. Anything that misses the deadline will have to wait until the following edition, and/or be included in the worship bulletin.

**Covenant News** – The drop-dead deadline for the Covenant News is always 10 days prior to the last day of the month in which it is published, or the 20th. Please be sure to email articles, images or information to Debbie.

**Name Tags** – Please remember to wear your name tags on Sundays. This helps newcomers and seasoned members alike put names with faces.

### **Habitat Workday**

We have a work date! On Saturday August 26th, we will combine forces with future homeowners and a group from Emmanuel UCC to work at the Lookaway Build site which is near the Chain of Rocks bridge. This is a full day (8:00 AM to 3:00PM) commitment, and I promise you will find it rewarding. Call Phil Shoulberg if you have questions. Sign up sheet is in the office.

### **What's Going on at First Church**

#### **Sunday, July 16**

**9:45AM** Nursery Care

**10:00AM** Worship

**10:15AM** Kids Church

**11:05AM** Coffee Fellowship & Potluck for Halley Kim

#### **Tuesday, July 18**

**10:30AM** Staff Meeting (Office)

#### **Wednesday, July 19**

**9:30AM** Yoga w/Jeanene (Inglis)

**6:00PM** Bridge Club (Inglis)

#### **Sunday, July 23**

**9:45AM** Nursery Care

**10:00AM** Worship

**10:15AM** Kids Church

**11:05AM** Coffee Fellowship

COVER ART: *The Sower* by Charles McCollough is from *The Art of Parables: Reinterpreting the Teaching Stories of Jesus in Word & Scripture* - Kelowna, BC, Canada: Wood Lake Publishing © 2008



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

## Contact Information

Moderator – Doug Barton  
[iyell4@aol.com](mailto:iyell4@aol.com)

Pastor – Rev. David A. Denoon  
[DDenoon@FirstChurchWG.org](mailto:DDenoon@FirstChurchWG.org) – ext 111

Pastoral Assistant – Halley Kim  
[Halley.Kim@FirstChurchWG.org](mailto:Halley.Kim@FirstChurchWG.org) – ext 112

Office Administrator – Debbie Tolstoi  
[Admin@FirstChurchWG.org](mailto:Admin@FirstChurchWG.org) – ext 115

Director of Music & Organist – Dr. Leon Burke  
[Leon.Burke@FirstChurchWG.org](mailto:Leon.Burke@FirstChurchWG.org) – ext 117

Facilities Manager – Chip Isringhaus  
[cti1234@FirstChurchWG.org](mailto:cti1234@FirstChurchWG.org) – ext 114

Events Coordinator – Alicia McMinn  
[Events@FirstChurchWG.org](mailto:Events@FirstChurchWG.org) – ext 116

Custodian & AV Specialist – Mark Metcalf  
[Mark.Metcalf@FirstChurchWG.org](mailto:Mark.Metcalf@FirstChurchWG.org)

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](mailto:cliff.aerie@gmail.com)

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

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

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

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

