

Welcome!

First Congregational Church
of Webster Groves United Church of Christ



Seek Christ in each. Serve God in all.

JULY 23, 2023

EIGHTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST



*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 *Meditation* Samuel Coleridge Taylor

WELCOME Jane Porchey, *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**) based in Romans 8

All who are led by the Spirit of God are children of God.

When we cry, “Abba! Father!” it is that very Spirit bearing witness with our spirit that we are children of God.

If we are children, then we must be heirs – heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ.

The creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the children of God.

So, here we gather for worship.

One with the Spirit and one with each other, for praise of God.

***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** *Come, Ye Thankful People* Henry Alford
No. 461, vv. 1,2 – *Pilgrim Hymnal*

The Pilgrim Hymnal is a red volume in the rack underneath the pew directly in front of you.

RITUAL OF APPROACH

Invitation (Responsive)

If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves.

But if we confess our sin, God, who is faithful and just, will forgive our sin and cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

Prayer of Confession (Unison)

You who bring all things into existence, we greet you as members of your creation and children of your love. In our worship today, we are reminded of our connection with all creation, especially the land and how we take it for granted.

Forgive us our lack of mindfulness toward the care of the earth, as well as of the water and the air and all who live in them. Remind us that you have bestowed us with consciences and that we ought to use them, out of love for you and respect for all you've made. Amen.

Silence for Personal Confessions

Words of Assurance (Responsive)

based on Romans 8

My siblings, we are debtors – not to mortality, but to the eternal Spirit who makes us one with God.

Our confessions and our sincere hearts cause us to hope for redemption in this lifetime, for in Christ our sins are forgiven. 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!

NOT FOR CHILDREN ONLY

Halley Kim, *Pastoral Assistant*

The children are invited forward for a time of enrichment.

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

ANTHEM

Hell Is a Human Invention

Amanda Udis-Kessler

THE WORD SHARED

From the Gospels

Matthew 13:24-30

Pew Bible, p. 889

Response.

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

People: Thanks be to God.

MESSAGE OF THE DAY

Rev. David Denoon, *Pastor*

"Tossing Around the Parable: Wheat and Tares"

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

We Lift Our Joys and Concerns to God

Prayer of the Day

Prayer of Our Savior

New Zealand Prayer Book

Eternal Spirit, Earth-maker, Pain-bearer, Life-giver, Source of all that is and that shall be, Father and Mother of us all, Loving God, in whom is heaven: The hallowing of your name echo through the universe! The way of your justice be followed by the peoples of the world! Your heavenly will be done by all created beings! Your commonwealth of peace and freedom sustain our hope and come on earth. With the bread we need for today, feed us. In the hurts we absorb from one another, forgive us. In

times of temptation and test, strengthen us. From trials too great to endure, spare us. From the grip of all that is evil, free us. For you reign in the glory of the power that is love, now and for ever. 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! Amen.**

**Prayer of Dedication (Unison)*

**Creator of every good gift and God of harvest, here are our gifts;
what we have given is our harvest. Receive all that we offer in
the Spirit to which we aspire. Amen.**

***PARTING HYMN**

Come to Tend God's Garden

J. A. Dalles

Come to tend God's garden, seeds of hope to sow,
planting fields of justice, watching mercy grow!
In an arid wasteland spread a verdant heath!
In a land of tumult, cultivate God's peace!
Come to tend God's garden, seeds of hope to sow,
planting fields of justice, watching mercy grow!

As we tend God's garden, from its furrows rise
stems of fresh beginnings, stretching toward the skies:
Graciousness our meadow, joyfulness our root,
unity our foliage, righteousness our fruit!
Come to tend God's garden, seeds of hope to sow,
planting fields of justice, watching mercy grow!

May God's garden flourish, may our toil succeed,
may God bless our actions, every word and deed!
Serving Christ each season with God's diagram
charted by the Spirit for the task at hand!
Come to tend God's garden, seeds of hope to sow,
planting fields of justice, watching mercy grow!

***BENEDICTION**

***PARTING WORDS**

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

POSTLUDE

Come Holy Ghost, God and Lord

Robert J. Powell

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.

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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.

### Aid for First Congregational Church of Spencer, Massachusetts

Roger Barnes is collecting donations for the First Congregational Church of Spencer, Massachusetts. Their church burned in a horrific fire on June 2nd, leaving only a protective tarp to cover the ashes.

The church was formed in 1744 with the signing of their Covenant by eight members. In 1772, a larger church replaced the original building. This larger church burned on January 1, 1862, and a new structure was built and dedicated in 1863. Many changes and improvements had been made over the years. After 160 years of serving the town, it was this church building that was destroyed by the fire on June 2. The Rev. Dr. Bruce MacLeod is the interim pastor for both this church and their neighbor, the First Congregational Church of Leicester. For now, the members of the Spencer church are worshipping at the Leicester church.

It is important to offer our hand in support of churches that need help, especially those that share our heritage. (On a personal level, Roger reports that he has some Barnes ancestors buried in the Spencer churchyard.) Roger says, "It would be awesome to show our love to this church in need. Thanks for helping."

Please direct your donation to aid the Spencer church, either

- with a check payable to *FCCWG*, including "*Spencer church*" on the memo line, or
- by taking advantage of the **Special Projects Fund** found on the dropdown list, on the Donate page of our website ([firstchurchwg.org/donate](http://firstchurchwg.org/donate)); be sure to include *Spencer church* in the Note there.

### **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.

### **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.

### **VIEWS OF GOD**

**Interfaith Partnership of Greater St. Louis is pleased to invite you to a Zoom webinar - Tuesday, July 25, beginning at 7:00 p.m.**

Three panelists will discuss their views of God.

- Sister Carla Mae Streeter of Catholic Christianity
- Rabbi Elizabeth Hersh of Reform Judaism
- Swami Nishpapananda of the Hindu Vedanta Society

This program (Meeting ID 878 6025 6823 + Passcode 176867) is free, but donations to Interfaith Partnership are always appreciated and can be made at [interfaithstl.org](http://interfaithstl.org) or by mailing a check to 9450 Clayton Road, St. Louis, MO 63124.

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

### **Sunday, July 23**

**9:45AM** Nursery Care

**10:00AM** Worship

**10:15AM** Kids Church

**11:05AM** Coffee Fellowship

**11:20AM** Reflection on the Message of the Day

### **Monday, July 24**

**7:00PM** Peace & Justice Team (Zoom)

### **Sunday, July 30**

**9:45AM** Nursery Care

**10:00AM** Worship

**10:15AM** Kids Church

**11:05AM** Coffee Fellowship

**11:20AM** Music Seminar with Dr. Burke

### **Tuesday, August 1**

**1:00PM** Communications Team – Church Office

**7:00PM** Pastoral Relations Committee

### **Wednesday, August 2**

**9:30AM** Yoga with Jeanene – Inglis Room

**10:30AM** Staff Meeting – Church Office

**6:00PM** Bridge Club – Inglis Room



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[www.FirstChurchWG.org](http://www.FirstChurchWG.org)

## Contact Information

Moderator – Doug Barton  
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*Seek Christ in each. Serve God in all.*

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

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

