

Welcome!

First Congregational Church
of Webster Groves United Church of Christ

Seek Christ in each. Serve God in all.

AUGUST 27, 2023



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

Linda Kopetti, *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.

LIGHTING OF THE CANDLES

TOLLING OF THE BELL

CALL TO WORSHIP (Responsive – Liturgist; People)

based on Psalm 124

If it had not been our God who took our side –
Let all the people say it:

If it had not been for our God who took our side,

When our enemies attacked us, they would have swallowed us up alive; so great was their anger kindled against us.

If it had not been for our God who took our side,

Then the flood would have swept us away, the torrent and all the raging waters would have gone over us.

Blessed be our God who has not given us as prey to their teeth.

We have escaped like a bird from the snare of fowlers;

The snare is broken, and we have escaped.

If it had not been our God who took our side...

If it had not been our God who took our side!

Our help is in the name of our God.

And our praise is for the One who made heaven and earth!

*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

Guide Me, O Thou Great Jehovah
No. 93 – *Pilgrim Hymnal*

William Williams

Guide me, O thou great Jehovah,
Pilgrim through this barren land;
I am weak, but thou art mighty;
Hold me with thy powerful hand;
Bread of heaven, bread of heaven,
Feed me till I want no more,
Feed me till I want no more.

Open now the crystal fountain,
Whence the healing stream doth flow;
Let the fire and cloudy pillar
Lead me all my journey through;
Strong Deliverer, strong Deliverer,
Be thou still my strength and shield,
Be thou still my strength and shield.

When I tread the verge of Jordan,
Bid my anxious fears subside;
Death of death, and hell's destruction,
Land me safe on Canaan's side;
Songs of praises, songs of praises,
I will ever give to thee,
I will ever give to thee.

RITUAL OF APPROACH

We Bring Our Stories Before God

Prayer of Confession Together (Unison)

How is it that we pass you by so easily, God of wonders? Your handiwork is all around us, but we can act as if the fact that we see it every day makes it somehow insignificant. Or we imagine that our troubles and our worries, our struggles and our fears deserve more attention than the beauty and majesty of the great and the small. If we would but sense your brilliance, we could know awe and worship you as you deserve. So, we come to you seeking mercy and grace. Renew us and our muted senses in your love. Amen.

Silence for Personal Confessions

Assurance of Pardon

**Singing God's Glory*

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

Rev. Cliff Aerie

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 Epistles

Romans 12:1-8

Pew Bible, p. 1033

From the Gospels

Matthew 16:13-20

p. 893

Response:

Hear what the Spirit is saying to the people.

Thanks be to God.

MESSAGE OF THE DAY

"A Mixed Message"

Rev. David Denoon, *Pastor*

INTERLUDE

Loves Me Like a Rock

Paul Simon, alt.

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

We Share Our Joys and Concerns

Prayer of the Day

Prayer of Our Savior

Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kin-dom 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 kin-dom, and the power, and the glory forever. Amen.

WE OFFER OF OURSELVES

Opportunities to Give and Gather

**Song of Praise*

Doxology

**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*

God, you are our Maker, you are our Mother, building and guiding us so that we may be reconcilers in your world. Cause your Church always to form the structure in which your praise is heard and your justice begins. Send your Spirit upon us and our gifts, so that, gifts and all, we are consecrated to your will and your work in Jesus' name. Amen.

PARTING HYMN

I'm Gonna Live

Spiritual

I'm gonna live so God can use me
Anywhere, Lord, anytime!
I'm gonna live so God can use me
Anywhere, Lord, anytime!
I'm gonna work so God can use me...
I'm gonna pray so God can use me...
I'm gonna sing so God can use me...

BENEDICTION

PARTING WORDS

Liturgist: Our worship has ended.

All: 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.

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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](http://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

## Music Seminar with Dr. Burke – TODAY!

After worship, grab a snack in Memorial Hall, and then come back to the sanctuary to meet with our Music Director, Dr. Leon Burke, who will be available to answer your music questions – anything that's on your mind, whether it has to do with church or secular music, instrumental or vocal. This is your monthly chance to tap his brain.

## The New Covenant News

Starting next week, your electronic and print connections to First Church will be changing. There will no longer be a monthly (or bi-monthly or seasonal) *Covenant News*. Instead, the eNews and this bulletin will become *The Covenant News* – a weekly newsletter/reporter including not only the announcements and updates you're used to seeing but also reports from Staff as well as church Officers and Ministries. Midweek, the electronic *Covenant News* will include a link to the most recently submitted report. On Sundays, a new Leadership Report will be inserted in the print version. Those who do not receive email and who cannot attend worship weekly will receive *The Covenant News* weekly through the mail.

## **We are Hiring!**

Our growingly diverse, progressive Christian community is seeking a **Coordinator of Faith Formation** (invitation at [bit.ly/FCCWG-CFF-Invite](http://bit.ly/FCCWG-CFF-Invite)). 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.

If you know someone who would be particularly well-suited to this job in our community, please forward this information to them!!

Interested individuals should introduce themselves via email 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."

## **Vanessa Kersting in Concert Sunday, September 17 at 3:00pm**

Pop Christian recording artist Vanessa Kersting will perform a live concert in our sanctuary on Sunday, September 17, at 3:00pm. Vanessa is a singer-songwriter from Australia, now living in the U.S. where she is building on her successful hit career, when she lived Down Under.

You can give Vanessa's music a listen in a number of ways –

- Her website: <http://vanessakersting.com/>
- YouTube (<https://www.youtube.com/user/VanessaKersting>)
- Spotify (<https://open.spotify.com/track/6N1ZZUYCdLVisrFsP2IQGY>)

You will find her music uplifting and affirming and spirit-centered.

Tell your friends - especially your young friends - that a new voice is here, singing music they'll want to listen to and sing along with! Admission is free (suggested donation \$5). Register at <https://firstchurchwg.org/the-arts/vanessa-kersting-in-concert/> to attend.

## **Kids Church Needs Your help!**

Kids' Church is developing a rotation of volunteers, to assist Noel Burke, our Christian Education Support Staff, and Nursery Attendant Corina Dickie. Ideally, there are TWO volunteers every Sunday, to conduct Kids' Church effectively (at least until a Coordinator of Faith Formation is in place). You can sign up at: <https://tinyurl.com/fccwg-kids-church> Thanks for considering giving of your time and skills, to benefit our children!

## **Webster Rock Hill Ministries – Donation Update**

First Church began donating jelly and bread in the beginning of June to supplement the WRHM Food Bank's shelves. That has become so popular WRHM wants the PBJ and bread donations to continue.

Additionally, the Ministries is now distributing fresh fruit and veggies once a month, including carrots, cucumbers and lettuces. To fully enjoy these, the families will need salad dressing. (Ranch is the most popular dressing with kids.)

You can bring your donations of peanut butter, jelly, bread, and ranch dressing to the church and place them in the "Sharing Our Bounty" crates in the narthex. Thank you for your generosity!

### **Annual Vehicle Fair, September 30 – Attend and/or Volunteer!**

Saturday, September 30<sup>th</sup>, is our annual Vehicle Fair from 9 until 12. Please join us in welcoming the community for this perpetually fun event! If you would like to volunteer to help with the event, please see Chris von Weise during coffee hour or email her at [chrisonyz@gmail.com](mailto:chrisonyz@gmail.com)

### **Peace & Justice Team Meets, Tomorrow Evening**

All members and friends of First Church are encouraged to attend the monthly meetings of our Peace & Justice Team (P&J – not to be confused with WRHM's PBJ effort mentioned above). P&J considers a wide variety of social and environmental justice issues that are before us, every day. They also are the organizers of our First Saturday collections. If you have an issue that you are especially concerned about, and want to discuss how the church might address it, or if you would just like to connect with others who have a heart like yours, please consider attending. P&J meetings take place on Zoom at 7:00pm, on 4th Mondays.

The next P&J meeting will be on Monday, August 28. To attend, use the Zoom meeting ID 843 4458 5205.

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

#### **Sunday, August 27**

**9:45AM** Nursery Care

**10:00AM** Worship

**10:15AM** Kids Church

**11:05AM** Coffee Fellowship

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

#### **Monday, August 28**

**7:00PM** Peace and Justice Team – Zoom ID 843 4458 5205

**7:00PM** Scout Troop 301G & 301B – Dickens Room

#### **Tuesday, August 29**

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

#### **Wednesday, August 30**

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

**6:00PM** Bridge Club – Inglis Room

#### **Thursday, August 31**

**6:00PM** Canterbury Bells – Sanctuary

**7:30PM** Chancel Choir –Sanctuary

#### **Sunday, September 3**

##### **Sacrament of Christ's Table**

**9:00AM** Brown Baggers – Memorial Hall

**9:45AM** Nursery Care

**10:00AM** Worship (All Ages)

**11:05AM** Coffee Fellowship



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## Contact Information

Moderator – Doug Barton  
iyell4@aol.com

Pastor – Rev. David A. Denoon  
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Office Administrator – Debbie Tolstoi  
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Director of Music & Organist – Dr. Leon Burke  
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Custodian – Mark Metcalf

Weekend & Events Custodians –  
Kayla Skiles & Onyeka Igboanuzue

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

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

