

Welcome!

First Congregational Church
of Webster Groves United Church of Christ



Seek Christ in each. Serve God in all.

SEPTEMBER 24, 2023

**“THE
LAST
WILL BE
FIRST,
AND THE
FIRST
LAST.”**

MATTHEW 20:16, ESV



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

Morning Has Broken
Canterbury Bells

Traditional Irish
arr. Michael W. Joy

WELCOME

Joan Musbach, *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 OF THE BELL

LIGHTING OF THE CANDLES

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

based on Psalm 145

Let us extol our God and the One who rules over us.

Great is our God and greatly to be praised.

The holy One is gracious and merciful, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love.

Our mouths will speak the praise of the holy One. Let all creation bless God's holy name for ever and ever.

*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

God of Grace

H. E. Fosdick

No. 436, vv. 1,3,5 – *New Century Hymnal*

RITUAL OF APPROACH

Invitation (Responsive)

based on Philippians 1:21-24

To us as the body of Christ, living is blessing and dying also is gain.

We are hard pressed between being heaven-focused only so that we are with Christ, which seems preferable...

Or to remain in the flesh – earth-focused – which is more necessary for us with one another. If we are to live an earthly existence, that means fruitful labor for us.

So, let us confess the unfruitful ways of our earthly selves and thus live harmoniously as spiritual selves also.

Prayer of Confession (Unison)

Merciful God, the times in which we live abound with voices and opinions that seem unwilling to compromise their positions or expectations. What are you thinking, through all this? What does it mean for us to be faithful? Is compromise defeat, or is it the opening of one heart to another? We long for certainty. We ache to know your truth. But the paths down which you guide us

seem anything but certain. And the faith you demand seems futile to us when it does not lead us where we had hoped to go. Be patient with us, we pray, and love us. Shed your grace. Enlighten our hearts. We want to follow your will, to live in your hope. And toward these goals, in Christ's name we pray. Amen.

Silence for Personal Confessions

Words of Assurance (Responsive)

based on Philippians 1:25-26

Let us be convinced of this: that in God's grace we will remain and continue with one another for our mutual progress and joy in faith.

And that we will share abundantly in our life in Christ Jesus whenever we are together. Amen.

**Singing God's Glory*

Glory to God in the Highest

Peruvian melody

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

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

To God be glory forever!

Next, the Leader conducts the congregation in harmonizing the following:

Alleluia! Amen! Alleluia! Amen!

NOT FOR CHILDREN ONLY

Rev. David Denoon, *Pastor*

Children are invited forward for a time of enrichment.

Afterward, children may attend Kids Church or return to their seats.

THE WORD SHARED

From the Gospels

Matthew 20:1-16

Pew Bible, p. 897

Response.

Hear what the Spirit is saying to the people.

Thanks be to God.

ANTHEM

God's Got the Whole World
Chancel Choir

Traditional
arr. Mark Miller

MESSAGE OF THE DAY "Acceptance and Embrace in the Kin-dom of God" Rev. Denoon

INTERLUDE

Trumpetings
Canterbury Bells

Michael W. Joy

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

Joys and Concerns

Prayer of the Day

Prayer of Our Savior (Unison)

suggested by prayers of Mary Baker Eddy

Our Father-Mother God, all-harmonious and adorable One: Thy kingdom is come, thou art ever-present. Enable us to know – as in heaven, so on earth – you are omnipotent, supreme. Give us grace for today; feed the famished affections; and cause your love to be reflected in ours. Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from sin, disease, and death. For you are infinite, all-Power, all Life, Truth, and Love, over all, and All. Amen.

WE SHARE OUR BLESSINGS WITH OTHERS

Opportunities to Give and Gather

**Song of Praise*

Doxology

Tune: OLD HUNDREDTH

**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)

You give to us so abundantly, most merciful God, not because we have earned it but because you love so deeply. Let these gifts be reflections of your love, to continue the work of the church in Jesus' name. Amen.

***PARTING HYMN**

There's a Wideness in God's Mercy
No. 23 – *New Century Hymnal*

F. W. Faber

***BENEDICTION**

***PARTING WORDS**

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

POSTLUDE

Allemande from *French Suites*

J. S. Bach

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)).

### **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.

### **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.



### **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

### **Lady Elect Kicks Off New Program Year with a Potluck**

Lady elect will hold its first meeting of the new program year, this Tuesday, September 26. This is always a potluck. Happy hour starts at 6 PM with potluck at 6:30. Monthly programs and dates will be discussed and planned. All the women of the church are invited! Please RSVP to Faye Dyer

### **Journeyman to Meet on Thursday, September 28 9:00 am in the Parlor**

**Our topic will be the old grade-school classic:**

***What I Did On My Summer Vacation***

Be prepared to talk a few minutes about the past four months. If you have any “show-and-tell” that would be good, too. All men invited! Just come to the meeting. If anyone needs a ride, let me know. See you then. John Paci

### **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)

### **"Not for Children Only" Volunteers**

Youth and adult members and friends of the church are encouraged to contact the Pastor about leading an upcoming "Not for Children Only" message time in worship. If you have a favorite story to read/share with our young people, or if you are particularly skilled at this kind of interaction, it would be great to add your voice to our set of NFCO message-givers!

### **CROP Walk to End Hunger Sunday, October 1**

The 2023 CROP Walk is on Sunday, October 1, stepping off from Eden Seminary at 5 PM. In the past, there have been 1- & 3-mile loops. Walkers of all ages are welcome, as are strollers and wagons.

Use the following link to go to our church's sign-up page. <https://tinyurl.com/2023-crop-walk>  
Seventy-five percent (75%) of the money raised will go to the relief and development work of Church World Service; 25% will go to local organizations, including Webster-Rock Hill Ministries.

Donations can be made through FCCWG's CROP Walk page at

<https://tinyurl.com/2023-crop-walk>

or by placing a check in the offering plate (made out to the church, and with “CWS/CROP” in the memo line).

**Adult Education – Sunday, October 22**  
**after worship in Memorial Hall**  
**“Peace Place Plans”**

Our next Adult Education session will focus on Peace Place, a proposed effort to develop affordable housing for seniors in the heart of Webster Groves. Peace United Church of Christ is working with the Housing Authority of St. Louis County to convert 204 E. Lockwood Ave. into Peace Place. (The church recently moved from that address to the campus of Eden Theological Seminary.)

Pastor Wendy Bruner and a member of the Peace UCC Governing Body will explain:

- how they decided to take on this project rather than just selling their prior home;
- the steps they're following to develop their plans, find partners, and get approvals;
- the architectural renderings of what the new facility will look like;
- what they have learned about affordable housing in Webster Groves (and beyond); and
- how their project might inform and facilitate more affordable housing efforts in Webster Groves.

There will be plenty of opportunity for attendees to ask questions and to find out how they could help the development of additional affordable housing in our City.

**Webster Rock Hill Ministries Holiday Programs**

WRHM has announced the start of their holiday programs and they hope that we will support these programs for the 2023 season. They are looking for baskets for **Thanksgiving** and gifts for **Christmas**. They have made several program changes for those who have contributed in past years. You can find the information on the table in the Narthex.

**“First Saturday” Drive-Thru Collection – Book Drive**  
**10:00 AM to Noon on October 7**

Please generously donate new and gently used books for all ages! Do not donate: water-damaged books, heavily marked up books, activity books, coloring books, holiday books, or religious books.

Volunteer! We collected fully a TON of books, last year, and are seeking ambitious volunteers to work a shift from 8:30am until 12:30pm or any portion thereof. Follow this link to sign up!  
<https://tinyurl.com/fccwg-books>

**September Meal-a-Month**

Beef Stew • Canned Carrots (low or no salt)  
Canned Fruit in own juices • Cornbread Mix (no eggs)  
Powdered Milk • Shelf Stable Milk • Soy Milk  
Toothbrushes • Toothpaste • Dental Floss

## September Birthdays

|                        |    |                |    |
|------------------------|----|----------------|----|
| Laura Cooper           | 3  | Elaine Coe     | 22 |
| Bob Moody              | 4  | Jane Porchey   | 24 |
| Bob Borutta            | 5  | Phil Roush     | 25 |
| Doug Miller            | 6  | BJ Kaul        | 25 |
| Jeff McCoy             | 7  | Kedra Tolson   | 26 |
| Nancy Rudolph          | 13 | Janice Aerie   | 28 |
| Megan Miller (Christy) | 13 | Lynn Hoganson  | 28 |
| Chip Isringhaus        | 14 | Jennifer Gomez | 28 |
| Mark Cereghino         | 20 | Beatrice Byrne | 29 |
| Debra Tolstoi          | 20 |                |    |

## What's Happening at First Church

### Sunday, September 24

- 9:45AM** Nursery Care
- 10:00AM** Worship
- 10:15AM** Kids' Church
- 11:05AM** Coffee Fellowship
- 11:20AM** Music Seminar with Dr. Burke

### Monday, September 25

- 7:00PM** Scout Troops 301G and 301B
- 7:00PM** Peace and Justice Team – (Zoom)

### Tuesday, September 26

- 10:30AM** Staff Meeting – Church Office
- 6:00PM** Lady Elect Potluck – Inglis Room

### Wednesday, September 27

- 9:30AM** Yoga with Jeanene – Inglis Room
- 6:00PM** Bridge Club – Inglis Room

### Thursday, September 28

- 6:00PM** Canterbury Bells – Sanctuary
- 7:30PM** Chancel Choir –Sanctuary

### Sunday, October 1

#### *Sacrament of Christ's Table / World Communion Sunday*

- 9:00AM** Brown Baggers
- 9:45AM** Nursery Care
- 10:00AM** **Worship (Pet Blessing, Outdoor Service)**
- 10:15AM** Kids' Church
- 11:05AM** Coffee Fellowship
- 5:00PM** St. Louis Area CROP Walk to End Hunger (at Eden Seminary)
- 7:00PM** Festival of Psalms (at Eden Seminary)

### Tuesday, October 3

- 6:30PM** Practicing Our Faith - Parlor
- 7:00PM** Pastoral Relations Committee

### Saturday, October 7

- 10:00AM** – Noon First Saturday Drive-Thru Collection (Book Drive)



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

## Contact Information

Moderator – Doug Barton  
iyell4@aol.com

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

Office Administrator – Debbie Tolstoi  
Admin@FirstChurchWG.org

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

Facilities Manager – Chip Isringhaus  
cti1234@FirstChurchWG.org

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  
Webster University – Rev. Dr. Laurel Hayes  
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Director, Center for Counseling & Healing  
Rev. Linda E. Smith, BCRN, HTCP/I  
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***Seek Christ in each. Serve God in all.***

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Facebook

[www.facebook.com/FirstChurchWG/](http://www.facebook.com/FirstChurchWG/)

Instagram

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

YouTube

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





# Covenant News

September 21–27, 2023

## FROM THE PASTOR

### *Because of You*

Live your life... so that... you are  
standing firm in one spirit,  
striving side by side

with one mind for the faith of the Good News. (Philippians 1:27)

During the last year, we have taken up the practice of telling “Our Stories Before God,” a feature of our Ritual of Approach which can remind us of mistakes or missteps and guide us into confession. These are often moving reminders of the many ways in which our God changes lives for the better, often in and through our church. I am thankful for how this practice has brought our hearts and lives closer together. This has helped us to be living and working “firm in one spirit, striving side by side.”

There is a lot of faith-filled living and working to do. The church happens because of personal skill and initiative, and because we have recognized needs and had the audacity to try to answer them. And the church happens with the generous financial support of our people. *Because of you, our church changes lives.*

Gifts to our congregation grow from our appreciation of the lives we touch. Generosity to the church in all its forms comes as an expression of gratitude to God for this beloved community. I hope that you will join me in making a commitment to First Church to give in 2024 in the many ways you are blessed to do.

As you consider ways for you to support the congregation, during much of October and November we all will be asked to think in a particular and prayerful way about the choices we make with our money in support of the church. This period of study and reflection will begin with the acceptance of a budget for next year on October 15 and culminate on Consecration Sunday, November 12. I hope that you will be able to be with us, throughout this time, to hear each other’s stories about our changing lives at First Church and to consider together how our gifts can have positive effects both within and beyond our walls.

God has done and continues to do remarkable things through us and with us – and things that matter in our wider community, too. Gifts to our congregation make this possible. Please, be watching for commitment cards in the mail and online, for your estimate of giving for 2024.

Thank you for walking alongside me as a part of First Congregational Church.

Peace.

