

Welcome!

First Congregational Church
of Webster Groves United Church of Christ



Seek Christ in each. Serve God in all.

OCTOBER 1, 2023

WORLD COMMUNION SUNDAY

BLESSING OF THE ANIMALS

 UNITED CHURCH
OF CHRIST
NEIGHBORS IN NEED 2023
ucc.org/nin



Behold!

*"God saw everything God made
and behold, it was very good."*

Genesis 1:31

Artist: Alexis
Age: 15
Congregation: Trinity United Church of Christ, St. Louis MO

***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

Liturgist

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

TOLLING OF THE BELL

*GATHERING HYMN

All Things Bright and Beautiful

C. F. Alexander

Refrain

All things bright and beautiful, all creatures great and small,
All things wise and wonderful, the Lord God made them all.

Each little flower that opens, each little bird that sings,
God made their glowing colors, and made their tiny wings. *Refrain*

The purple-headed mountains, the river running by,
the sunset and the morning that brightens up the sky. *Refrain*

The cold wind in the winter, the pleasant summer sun,
the ripe fruits in the garden: God made them every one. *Refrain*

God gave us eyes to see them, and lips that we might tell
how great is God Almighty, who has made all things well. *Refrain*

*CIRCLES OF PRAISE (Responsive – Leader; **People**)

based on Psalm 148

All dogs and cats, large and small:

Praise our God!

All rabbits, hamsters, and guinea pigs:

Praise our God!

All goldfish, guppies, and swimming creatures:

Praise our God!

All robins, wrens, and singing birds:

Praise our God!

All bats, squirrels, and raccoons:

Praise our God!

All horses, cows, and sheep:

Praise our God!

All lizards, snakes and creeping things:

Praise our God!

Every animal in the sky, the sea, and the forest:

Praise our 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.

RITUAL OF APPROACH

Thanksgiving and Confession (Responsive)

For all the animals in the whole wide world,

We thank you, God!

For all the fun and friendship we have with animals,

We thank you, God!

Sovereign God, for all the times we have hurt or neglected animals,

We are sorry.

Sovereign God, for all the times we have used poisons that have killed animals,

We are sorry.

Sovereign God, for all the times we have destroyed the homes of animals in the forests, oceans, or fields,

We are sorry.

Silence for Personal Confession

Words of Assurance (Responsive)

For all our sins against the creatures of Earth, God forgives us and calls upon us to honor and protect all God's animals. May the animals of Earth be our companions in life and lead us to celebrate your place in the circle of life.

Amen! Amen! Shalom! Shalom!

THE WORD SHARED

From the Law

Numbers 22:22-31

New Revised Standard, alt.

Response

Hear what the Spirit is saying to the people.

Thanks be to God.

MESSAGE OF THE DAY

"If I Could Talk to Animals"

Rev. David Denoon, *Pastor*

RITUAL FOR BLESSING OF THE ANIMALS

Reading

from a Sermon of Francis of Assisi

Blessing of Each Pet

The Pastor will be stationed near the lectern, for the blessing of each pet.

Please go there whenever you feel ready, either with your pet or something representing them.

SACRAMENT OF CHRIST'S TABLE

We Share Our Joys and Concerns

Invitation

Prayer of Consecration

Prayer of Our Savior (Unison)

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 that we absorb from 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 forever. Amen.

Communion

Bread and cup are provided at each table. Please consume them at the indication of the Pastor, unless this presents a hardship for you. Bread is gluten-free, and cups are filled with grape juice.

**Blessing (Responsive)*

Having been nourished here in God's Spirit, Christ now calls you to be disciples – to serve others with love and compassion, and to serve Earth by caring for its creatures. Will you care for all creation?

We will care for all creation, including all God's beloved people and animals! We will celebrate the circle of life with them!

***ENDING SONG**

A Place in the Choir

Bill Staines

Refrain

All God's critters got a place in the choir
Some sing low, some sing higher
Some sing out loud on the telephone wire
And some just clap their hands, or paws
Or anything they got.

Listen to the bass, it's the one on the bottom
Where the bullfrog croaks and the hippopotamus
Moans and groans with a big to-do
The old cow just goes MOOOOO
The dog and the cat pick up the middle
While the honeybee hums and the cricket fiddles
The donkey brays and the pony neighs
And the old coyote howls.

Refrain

Listen to the top where the little birds sing
On the melody with the high note ringing
The hoot owl hollers over everything
And the jaybird disagrees
Singin' in the night-time, singin' in the day
Little duck quacks, and he's on his way
The possum ain't got much to say
And the porcupine talks to himself.

Refrain

It's a simple song of livin' sung everywhere

By the ox and the fox and the grizzly bear
Grumpy alligator and the hawks above
Sly raccoon and the turtle dove.

Refrain, twice

***BENEDICTION** (Responsive)

May the Spirit of God, who is above all and in all and through all, fill you with the knowledge of God's presence in Earth and the presence of the Holy Spirit within you. Go in peace, serving God and loving all creatures!

We go in peace, serving Christ and loving our animal kin.

***PARTING WORDS** (Responsive)

Our worship has ended.
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](https://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.



**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.

**"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!

## **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

## **CROP Walk to End Hunger TODAY!**

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. 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).

## **"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>

## **Adult Education – Sunday, October 22 — "Peace Place Plans" after worship in Memorial Hall**

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.

## **Peace & Justice Team meets, Monday**

All members and friends of First Church are encouraged to attend the monthly meetings of our Peace & Justice Team (P&J). P&J considers a wide variety of social and environmental justice issues that are before us, every day. P&J also organizes 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. But this past Monday's meeting had to be rescheduled; it will take place tomorrow evening, October 2. Please use the meeting ID 843 4458 5205.

## **October Shopping List**

Canned Chicken & Dumplings (low salt) • Canned Green Vegetable (low or no salt)  
Canned Fruit in own juices • Powdered Milk, shelf stable milk, soy milk  
Whole Wheat Flour • Peanut Butter • Real Fruit Jelly • Dried Fruits

## Pastoral Relations Committee – meets, October 3

The next meeting of the Pastoral Relations Committee (PRC) will take place on Tuesday, October 3. Although everyone in our faith community is encouraged to express concerns or praise directly to the pastor or other staff member, sometimes this is not possible. The PRC seeks to maintain open communication between pastor, staff, and congregants. Although not a personnel or policy-making committee, their discussions are confidential and wide-ranging. Current members include Jared Cohen, Annie Sampath, Liu Lin Thio, Patrick Byrne, Jane Porchey, and Pat Doyle-Grace (Look for the PRC gold hearts on their name badges!). Ex-officio members are Moderator Doug Barton and Pastor David Denoon.

## October Birthdays

|                      |            |                  |            |
|----------------------|------------|------------------|------------|
| Joyce Haynes-McCowan | October 3  | Marilyn Claggett | October 18 |
| Kathy Weyhrich       | October 3  | Judy James       | October 19 |
| Linda Smith          | October 5  | Elston McCowan   | October 24 |
| Patrick Byrne        | October 7  | Carol Mallette   | October 26 |
| Rod Cooper           | October 10 | Dave Denoon      | October 30 |
| Emily Polaske        | October 16 |                  |            |

## What's Happening at First Church

### Sunday, October 1

*World Communion Sunday*

*Blessing of the Animals*

*"Neighbors in Need" Special Offering*

**9:00AM** Brown Baggers

**9:45AM** Nursery Care

**10:00AM** Worship (Pet Blessing, Outdoor Service)

**11:05AM** Coffee Fellowship

**4:30PM** CROP Walk Registration (Eden Seminary)

**5:00PM** CROP Walk begins (Eden Seminary)

**7:00PM** Festival of Psalms (Eden Seminary)

### Monday, October 2

**7:00PM** Scout Troops 301G and 301B

**7:00PM** Peace and Justice Team – (Zoom)

### Tuesday, October 3

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

**6:30PM** Practicing Our Faith – Parlor

**7:00PM** Pastoral Relations Committee

### Wednesday, October 4

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

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

**6:00PM** Bridge Club – Inglis Room

### Thursday, October 5

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

**7:30PM** Chancel Choir –Sanctuary

### Saturday, October 7

**9:00AM** First Saturday Drive-Thru Book Collection

### Sunday, October 8

**9:45AM** Nursery Care

**10:00AM** Worship (*Klezundheit!* Klezmer Band)

**10:15AM** Kids' Church

**11:05AM** Coffee Fellowship

## "What Would You Do?"

### A public meeting with Webster Groves Clergy

At Old Community Baptist Church (238 W. Kirkham Ave., Webster Groves) at 6:30 PM on Tuesday, October 24, Webster Clergy will offer a presentation entitled, "What Would You Do?" They will address everything from historic neighborhoods being leveled to removing racial covenants from residential deeds, and even a story that may be familiar to you, presented by Pastor Dave Denoon. Please, consider attending this important, provocative, and instructive meeting.



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

## Contact Information

Moderator – Doug Barton  
iyell4@aol.com

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Custodian – Mark Metcalf

Weekend & Events Custodians –  
Kayla Skiles & Onyeka Igboanuzue

Assistant Custodian – Gus McLean

Director of Ministry of Imagination, Creativity  
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*Seek Christ in each. Serve God in all.*

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