

Welcome!

First Congregational Church
of Webster Groves United Church of Christ



Seek Christ in each. Serve God in all.

DECEMBER 3, 2023
FIRST SUNDAY OF ADVENT
SACRAMENT OF CHRIST'S TABLE



*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 blessing of our congregation.*

*No matter who you are
or where you are on life's journey,
you are welcome here.*

Through these beloved connections, hope can have a place to make its home in us.

Thanks be to God. Amen.

**Singing God's Glory* *Glory to God in the Highest* Tune: GLORIA (HAAS)

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

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

To God be glory forever!

Next, the Song Leader directs the congregation in harmonizing the following:

Alleluia! Amen! Alleluia! Amen!

AT THE JESSE TREE

Johari Hunt, *Coordinator of Faith Formation*
with Pastor Dave Denoon

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 Gospels

Mark 13:24-37

Pew Bible, p. 925

Response.

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

People: Thanks be to God. Amen.

MESSAGE OF THE DAY

Wakefulness

Rev. David Denoon, *Pastor*

WE GIVE OF OURSELVES

Opportunities for Giving and Gathering

**Song of Praise*

Doxology (alternate)

Tune: OLD 100TH

Praise God from whom all blessings flow!

Praise Christ, the Word in flesh born low!

Praise Holy Spirit ever more;

One God Triune whom we adore! Amen.

SACRAMENT OF CHRIST'S TABLE

**Invitation*

**Prayers of Petition and Intercession*

**Sanctus (Unison)*

Holy, holy, holy God of love and majesty. The whole universe speaks of your glory, O God most high. Blessed is the one who comes in the name of our God. Hosanna in the highest!

Fraction (Responsive)

We cannot take bread and forget those who are hungry. Your world is one world and we are stewards of its nourishment.

God, put our prosperity at the service of the poor.

We cannot drink of the fruit of the vine and forget those who are thirsty. The ground and the rootless, the earth and its weary people cry out for justice.

God, put our fullness at the service of the empty.

We cannot hear your words of peace and forget the world at war, or, if not at war, then preparing for it.

Show us quickly, God, how to turn weapons into welcome signs and the lust for power into a desire for peace.

As but one manifestation of your Church in the world, we cannot celebrate the feast of your family and forget our divisions. We are one in spirit, but not in fact. History and hurt still dismember us.

God, heal your church in every brokenness.

Consecration

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.

Elevation

Distribution

Communion is served in the pews, first the bread and then the cup.

The bread is gluten-free. Wine is white; grape juice is red. Each is consumed at the indication of the Pastor unless this presents a hardship for the individual.

Communion Anthem

The Evening of the Year

Louis Vierne

Noel Burke, viola; Leon Burke, piano

**Prayer of Thankfulness (Unison)*

We give you thanks, gracious God, that you come to us in bread and cup, and in the love of this gathered community. God of our hope, we are deeply thankful that you hear our prayers and bless us with healing of body, mind, and spirit. We humbly ask your assistance as we seek health and wholeness for ourselves and for all for whom we have prayed; in Christ's name. Amen.

***PARTING HYMN**

Star-Child

Shirley Erena Murray

Star-Child, earth-Child, go-between of God,
Love Child, Christ Child, heaven's lightning rod,

Refrain.

This year, this year, let the day arrive

when Christmas comes to everyone, everyone alive.

Street child, beat child, no place left to go,
Hurt child, used child, no one wants to know, *Refrain.*

Grown child, old child, mem'ry full of years,
Sad child, lost child, story told in tears, *Refrain.*

Spared child, spoiled child, having, wanting more,
Wise child, faith child, knowing joy in store, *Refrain.*

Hope-for-peace Child, God's stupendous sign,
Down-to-earth Child, Star of stars that shine, *Refrain.*

***BENEDICTION**

***PARTING WORDS**

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

POSTLUDE

From Heaven Above to Earth I Come Johann Gottfried Walther

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).

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.



Sound System Update

I want to update everyone on what is happening with the sound system in the sanctuary. Some of you may have noticed that for the past two Sundays I've been using my "outdoor" system in the sanctuary. This is because the main system went down prior to service on November 19th. I have gotten the system back online, per se, and intend to give it an overhaul after the first of the year. For now it will be operational as it was in the past. So, aside from the main system working again in the sanctuary, the headsets and audio feed in the office and Narthex are functioning, too. I appreciate everyone's patience and will keep you apprised with updates

Sincerely,
Mark Metcalf, AV Director

Outdoor Christmas Tree Decorating Party TODAY After Worship!

Gather in the Jubilee Garden after worship today, to decorate our outdoor Christmas Tree. There will be a bonfire, caroling, treats and beverages! *Sponsored by Parish Life Ministry*

Family Concert, THIS AFTERNOON at 2:30PM

The Xylem Wind Collective will perform on today at 2:30pm, in the sanctuary a free, family friendly, hour-long concert with narrator Leon Burke, featuring the stories of *Hansel and Gretel* and *The Unhappy Aardvark*, as well as other fun pieces.

Hanging of the Greens

It's time to get ready for our annual Hanging of the Greens service on Sunday, December 10th. Look for the sign-up sheets in the Narthex on December 3rd. We will need Wreath Bearers, Candle Bearers, Creche Bearers and Poinsettia Bearers. *Don't miss being a part of our beautiful Christmas Service!*

Contact Carolyn Woodsmall at 314-440-2530 for additional information or to sign-up by phone.

Information Needed to Keep Children Safe and Healthy

For parents who have children attending Kid's Church please follow this link, <https://tinyurl.com/fccwg-kids> to fill out a dietary and allergy form for each child attending. Thank you!

Christmas Shopping Starts Here at First Church!

- 1) We have plenty of wonderful **pecans** left for \$14 per bag. Not only do they make great presents, pecan pie and other yummy recipes, but the profits from the pecan sales will also be used to increase the Minister's Discretionary Fund. This will allow Pastor Dave to help our members and our neighbors in need.
- 2) We have lots of **Poinsettias** that can go home with you after worship on Christmas Eve. If you don't want to take them home, you may donate the poinsettia to one of our home bound members. Please take an order form from the table in the narthex. They will be \$20 each. You may also order online at <https://tinyurl.com/fccwg-poinsettias>
- 3) Show your pride in First Church by wearing one of our lovely **Tee-Shirts**. There are a limited amounts left in a variety of sizes. These cotton shirts are only \$15.00.

Please contact Debbie in the office if you are interested in any of the above items!

A Big Thanks to Jan & Helpers!

Thank you to all who donated blankets and to those that helped package them up for Roger and Jan Barnes to distribute. Many people will be a little warmer this winter. Thanks to Jan Barnes for initiating this project!

Pastoral Relations Committee meets, December 5

The Pastoral Relations Committee (PRC) meets next on Tuesday, December 5. 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. Not a personnel or policy-making committee, their discussions are confidential and wide-ranging.

Current PRC 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.

The Lady Elect Christmas Gathering Tuesday, December 12th

The gathering will be at Pat Doyle-Graces home in Webster Groves. It will be an evening meeting 4 to 7 PM. As part of the festivities, we will have a Cookie Exchange. Please bag your cookies about 3-4 per bag. Also, bring an extra container to take your cookies home with you. For more information or to RSVP, email Faye Dyer at southernillinoisdyer@gmail.com. All women of the church are welcome to attend.

Fun Collections Needed

Do you have a collection you would like to share in the Display Case in 2024? We have had very positive responses to the collections recently displayed and would like to continue with more. Past displays have included a large and very fun *I Love Lucy* collection, train sets, and other fun collections. If you would like to share one of yours, please contact Joan Musbach.

CONFIRMATION / BAPTISM CLASS Forming

We have learned that there are some youth in the church who would like to do an exploration about faith. Starting in January, Pastor Dave will be offering a Confirmation / Baptism Class for young people in high school and up (including adults who are simply young-at-heart). The class will run through the first Sunday of June, when participants will be invited to affirm their faith. ***If you would like to enroll in this (mostly Zoom) class, please contact the Pastor and let him know!***

What's Happening at First Church

Sunday, December 3

First Sunday of Advent: Hope

Sacrament of Christ's Table

9:00AM Brown Baggers

9:45AM Nursery Care

10:00AM Worship

10:15AM Kids Church

11:05AM Coffee Fellowship

11:05AM Christmas Tree Decorating Party – Jubilee Garden

2:30PM Xylem Wind Collective Family Concert: Hansel and Gretel – Sanctuary

Monday, December 4

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

Tuesday, December 5

1:00PM Communications Team - Church Office

6:30PM Practicing Our Faith – Parlor

7:00PM Pastoral Relations Committee – Zoom

Wednesday, December 6

~~**9:30AM** NO Yoga with Jeanene – Inglis Room~~

6:00PM Bridge Club – Inglis Room

Thursday, December 7

9:00AM Journeymen – Parlor

6:00PM Canterbury Bells – Sanctuary

7:30PM Chancel Choir – Music Room

Sunday, December 10

Second Sunday of Advent: Peace

9:45AM Nursery Care

10:00AM Worship (Hanging of the Greens)

11:05AM Coffee Fellowship

December Birthdays

Tom Waltz	December 6
Earl Rinne	December 12
Nannelle Griffith	December 13
Dan Claggett	December 14
Rebecca Novak	December 16
Janet Fales	December 24
Terri Thompson	December 26

December Meal-a-Month Shopping List

Canned Ham • Brown Rice • Instant Mashed Potatoes
Canned Green Vegetable (low or no salt) • Canned Fruit in own juices
Powdered Milk, shelf stable milk, soy milk
Baby Fruits • Baby Vegetables • Baby Cereal



Covenant News

December 2023

Coordinator of Faith Formation Report for December 2023

Fall greetings!

Thank you, First Congregational community, for the warm reception, generous smiles, and kind words. As your new Coordinator of Faith Formation, I look forward to working with y'all throughout this busy upcoming holiday season as we are called back into the church and into community. I anticipate celebrating Hanging of the Greens, Kwanza'a, Hanukkah, Christmas, and all the other winter celebrations with y'all.

Christian Education Ministry is looking for youth volunteers to sign up for the Christmas Eve Family service as readers and performers sign up at <https://tinyurl.com/fccwg-christmas>. Any kids who are interested in practicing, performing, or presenting their musical talents to the church are enthusiastically invited to join music rehearsal with Dr. Leon (leon.burke@firstchurchwg.org) as we prepare for Hanging of the Greens and those two services on Christmas Eve.

Looking for a family friendly event? Put the Xylem Wind Collective on your calendar for December 3 at 2:30pm in the sanctuary for an hour-long concert with narration (by Dr. Leon) of *Hansel and Gretel* as well as *The Unhappy Aardvark* and more.

I would like to remind congregants with little people who attend Kids' Church to fill out the online allergy form <https://tinyurl.com/fccwg-kids> for the Christian Education Ministry.

Thank you,
Johari Hunt

Covenant News

If you would like an event, article, photo or information included in future issues of the *Covenant News*, please send them to Debbie in the office by the 20th of the previous month.



“Follow That Star,” this year’s Jazz Noel theme, follows the journey of the Magi to Bethlehem after witnessing a celestial event that became the catalyst for their arduous quest to unravel the mystery they beheld. Through jazz, poetry, and storytelling we’ll hear the biblical narrative and imaginative reflections as the Magi seek to understand the outcome of their pilgrimage.

Jazz Noel had its first performance in 2011 and has become an annual concert event, interrupted only by the pandemic. Each performance highlights aspects of the Christmas story and how the ancient narrative impacts our world today.

I have the privilege of directing the Oikos Ensemble – Kim Fuller Barnes, Carolbeth True, Glen Smith, David True, and trumpeter Tim Osiek who performs with us on special occasions. This year we have two additional vocalists joining the band. Jordyn Patterson and Arianna Aerie lend their beautiful voices to the group. Our Logos Readers feature Jan Barnes, Terri Thompson, Nina Thompson, Sharon Love, Laurel Hayes, and Andrea Welnick. Pastor Dave will share excerpts from works by T. S. Eliot, Frederick Buechner, and Christina Rossetti. This year’s Jazz Noel promises to be the best ever.

As we approached this year’s performance there was concern that financial challenges might make this our final Jazz Noel. But you, the members and friends of this church have responded so positively to our request for donations that I’m happy to report that Jazz Noel, with God’s blessing, will continue next year. **Thank you for your generous support.**

I hope you will invite friends and neighbors to this year’s performance as we all seek to follow the adventurous “star” that leads us to deepen our faith through mission outreach and joyful ministry.

Cliff Aerie
MICA

The Christmas Fund for the Veterans of the Cross & the Emergency Fund Collection will be December 24, 2023, 10am

“Grace upon Grace.” John 1:16

The Christmas Fund has been caring for active and retired clergy and lay employees of the United Church of Christ for over 100 years, providing emergency grants, supplementation of small annuities and health premiums, and Christmas “Thank You” gift checks each December to our lower-income retirees.

United Church of Christ congregations and members have blessed the Christmas Fund with their generosity for many years. This year, your care and compassion will be especially appreciated by those servants of the church who are facing a time of need. Thank you!



“YOU HAVE STOOD BY ME”

Among the many letters and notes the Pension Boards receives from recipients of gifts made possible by contributions to the Christmas Fund were these words from a retired clergywoman in Kentucky:

“Each year in the face of your unwavering faithfulness it becomes harder to know how to thank you! In such an unpredictable time with not only aging, but Covid and violent world events, faithfulness and something I can count on that brings concrete relief to ease the burden is a blessing.

“You have stood by me and given me financial help when I needed it. It has allowed me to live in a sustainable way where I, too, can show the faithfulness of God to my neighbor and the world. Thank you from the heart!”

Last year, because of your gifts, the Christmas Fund provided over \$1.3 million in pension and health benefits supplementation, emergency grants, and thank-you checks to retired servants of the church and their families. Every cent of that money came from the pockets of people like you. Please give as generously as you are able this year!

In 2022, gifts to the Christmas Fund enabled:

- Monthly pension supplementation for 218 retired clergy and lay employees (\$1,042,726)
- Health benefits supplementation for 86 retired clergy and lay employees (\$181,389)
- Emergency grants for 55 individuals and families (\$138,022)
- Christmas “Thank You” gift checks to 479 retired clergy and lay employees (\$278,500)

THE CHRISTMAS FUND

For the Veterans of the Cross and the Emergency Fund
Give online at www.christmasfund.org.



Guns to Gardens

Saturday, December 9, 2023
from 10:30am - 1:30pm

Webster Groves Presbyterian Church
45 W. Lockwood Ave, 63119
(enter parking lot on Lockwood and follow the signs)

NOTE: Please only bring guns to be surrendered.
All guns should be unloaded and in the trunk of the vehicle.
Guns will be dismantled on site while you wait.

What is Guns to Gardens?

After the shooting at the Sandy Hook School in Dec. 2012, Mennonite pastor Mike Martin felt a call to become a blacksmith and forge unwanted guns into garden tools. He founded RAWtools as a network of blacksmiths across the nation. Soon he was joined by theologian Shane Claiborne and by New Mexicans to Prevent Gun Violence who christened the project "Guns to Gardens." It began to grow.

After a mass shooting in a nearby grocery store in 2021, Community United Church of Christ in Boulder, CO, offered a "Gun Safe Surrender" event in their parking lot. Dozens of **firearms were surrendered and turned into garden tools**. The idea of churches offering this **healing, spiritual, and practical service** was born. In March 2022 the Denver Broncos football team hosted a Guns to Gardens event at their stadium in Mile High, CO, transforming 189 guns. That June 11, on a single day, churches and others across the USA dismantled over 1,000 guns.

For more information or to volunteer, contact:

Rev. Travis Winckler
travis.winckler@secondchurch.net

Julie Burchett
burchett.juliekay@gmail.com

**Download a flier about this event from <https://bit.ly/G2G-STL>
To make a donation to support the event, use the QR code at right**



The Monday Club of Webster Groves 37 S. Maple St., Webster Groves, MO 63119

Faces Not Forgotten: Memory Quilts



Public
Reception:
Monday
Dec. 4
7 - 9 pm
Artist's talk:
7:30 pm



Gun violence prevention through art and awareness

For more information/donations: christine.ilewski@gmail.com

Open by Appointment Nov. 12- Dec. 18, 2023 email: Ann Shuck
ashuck47@icloud.com



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Contact Information

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Custodian & AV Tech – 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
laurel.hayes@sbcglobal.net

Director, Center for Counseling & Healing
Rev. Linda E. Smith, BCRN, HTCP/I
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