

Welcome!

First Congregational Church
of Webster Groves United Church of Christ



Seek Christ in each. Serve God in all.

DECEMBER 31, 2023

NEW YEAR'S EVE

VENERATION OF THE HOLY FAMILY

SIXTH DAY OF KWANZA'A: KU'UMBA (CREATIVITY)



*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.*

Order of Worship

An asterisk () indicates that worshipers are invited to stand in body or in spirit.*

PRELUDE *Meditation* Clif Hardin

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS Jane Porchey, *Liturgist*
*At this time, we invite you to complete an entry in the Friendship Booklet
and to silence the ringer on any cellular device you may have with you.*

BELLS CHIME

LIGHTING THE CANDLES

CALL TO WORSHIP (Responsive) Based on Psalm 148

Hallelujah!

Hallelujah!

Hallelujah from the heavens! Hallelujah on the heights!

Hallelujah, all the angels! Hallelujah, starry warriors!

Hallelujah, sun and moon! Hallelujah, stars of light!

**Hallelujah, you highest heavens and waters above the
heavens!**

Let all creation praise the name of the MIGHTY GOD, who commanded and
they were created.

**They are established forever and ever with boundaries
that cannot be crossed.**

Praise the Creator of All from the earth: sea monsters and all watery deeps,
fire and hail, snow and frost, swirling wind speaking God's word,
mountains and hills, fruit trees and evergreens, animals wild and tame,
creeping this and winged birds, peoples and all those in charge of them,
young people and old together!

Let all these praise the name of the Eternal: Hallelujah!

***SINGING GOD'S GLORY** *Hallelu - hallelujah* Traditional
(Praise ye the Lord!)

***GATHERING HYMN** *All Beautiful the March of Days* Frances W. Wile

All beautiful the March of days, as seasons come and go;
The hand that shaped the rose has formed the crystal of the snow,
Has sent the silver frost of heaven, the flowing waters sealed,
And laid a silent loveliness on hill and wood and field.

O'er brilliant fields of sparkling snow the radiant morns unfold;
The solemn splendors of the night burn brightly through the cold.
Life mounts in every pulsing vein, love deepens round the hearth,
And clearer sounds the angel hymn, "Good will to all on earth."

O you from whose unfathomed law the year in beauty flows,
Yourself the splendid vision seen in crystal and in rose,
The passing days with grace declare, and passing nights proclaim,
In ever-changing words of light, the wonder of your name.

THE WORD SHARED

*From the Writings
From the Gospels*

Ecclesiastes 3:1-13
Luke 2:22-41

NRSV, ad.
The Women's Lectionary

Response

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

People: Thanks be to God.

ANTHEM

Goodness of God
Joyce Haynes-McCowan, vocalist

CeCe Winans

MESSAGE OF THE DAY

At the Kinara
(A Communitarian Message)

Rev. Elston McCowan and
Rev. David Denoon, *Pastor*

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

We Lift Our Joys and Concerns to God

Prayer of the Day

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.

WE SHARE OUR BLESSINGS WITH OTHERS

Opportunities Arising

**Singing God's Praise*

Doxology

Tune: OLD 100TH

O Glorious God, to you we bring
Praise, treasures, lives as offering;
Spirit of Joy, within us dwell;
Come, Jesus, our Emmanuel. Amen.

**Raising the Covenant* (Unison)

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.

***PARTING HYMN**

Turn, Turn, Turn
Led by Joyce Haynes-McCowan

Pete Seeger

Refrain

To everything – turn, turn, turn
There is a season – turn, turn, turn
And a time to every purpose
Under heaven.

***BENEDICTION**

Rev. McCowan

POSTLUDE

Go, Tell It on the Mountain

arr. Charles Callahan

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.

Peace & Justice Team TODAY, after worship

For the last two years, First Church has conducted a Day of Service for the Martin Luther King, Jr., Holiday. The MLK Holiday will take place on January 15, 2024. At their next meeting, P&J will be considering whether to host another such event and, among other things, will discuss similar outreach events ("First Saturdays"). *If you would like to know more about how the Day of Service has taken shape in the past, or you have an interest in prompting positive social change in other ways, please consider attending **the next Peace & Justice Team meeting on Sunday, December 31, at 11:20am** in Memorial Hall.*

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.

Stay Safe from Gift Card Scammers!

It may seem unnecessary for us to say this, but it's gotta be said: **The Pastor will never ask you for gift cards in any amount, by text or email!** Two church members, this week, reported that they had received text messages from him requesting four \$100 gift cards each. Fortunately, both of them contacted Pastor Dave before making purchases.

There's Still Time to Submit Your 2024 Pledge!

The Stewardship Committee reminds members and friends of the church that, if you haven't had the chance yet to make your financial commitment to First Church for 2024, promises of generosity are still being accepted! You can go to our website's Donate page where you will find a commitment form. Or contact the office for a paper form.

Your gifts support all our outreach and programs, making possible some truly transformative ministry! **Because of YOU our church changes lives!**

Pastoral Sabbatical to take place Summer 2024

Presentation on January 28 (Heritage Sunday) after worship

Pastor Dave Denoon has been discussing his scheduled sabbatical for 2024 with members of the Executive Ministry and Pastoral Relations Committee, for a few months now. It will take place during the summer of 2024. The pastor will be offering a presentation about his upcoming time away on Sunday, January 28, 2024, after worship, as part of our Heritage Sunday observance.

His Terms of Call (the document detailing conditions of his pastorate) require a sabbatical, every seventh year, for the sake of spiritual refreshment. During his last sabbatical (2017), the pastor traveled to West Africa thanks to a grant from the Lilly Endowment. Unfortunately, that funding is provided literally "once in a lifetime." So, this time, the sabbatical will be self-generated by the church and him. **Where is he going? What is he doing? Find out, January 28!**

Submitting Covenant News Articles, Information, Images and Reports

If you would like something included in one of the issues for email and for the bulletin, please email it to Debbie at admin@firstchurchwg.org by the 20th of the month prior to the month in which you want your item included.

January Birthdays

Helen Moody	January 1
Coco Denoon	January 7
Faye Dyer	January 7
Erin Prange	January 8
Roger Barnes	January 11
Kin Lavender	January 12
Richard Smith	January 14
Bob Hill	January 16
Jan Barnes	January 23
Jacquie Bryant	January 26
Ashley Merideth	January 26
Mark Metcalf	January 26

January Shopping List

Boxed Whole Grain Pasta • Canned Green Vegetable (low or no salt)
Canned Fruit in own juices • Sugar free juices in plastic bottles
Powdered Milk, shelf stable milk, soy milk
Cold Cereal (no sugar) • Plain Oatmeal (no sugar)

What's Happening at First Church

Sunday, December 31

New Year's Eve

Holy Family

Kwanza'a, Day 6 – Ku'umba (Creativity)

9:45AM Nursery Care

10:00AM Worship (All Ages)

11:05AM Coffee Fellowship

11:20AM Peace & Justice Team (Memorial Hall)

OFFICE CLOSED thru Monday, January 1, 2024

The staff will return on Tuesday, January 2.

Tuesday, January 2

1:00PM Communications Team – Church Office

6:30PM Practicing Our Faith – Parlor

Wednesday, January 3

9:30AM Yoga with Jeanene – Inglis Room

6:00PM Bridge Club – Inglis Room

Thursday, January 4

6:00PM Canterbury Bells – Sanctuary

7:30PM Chancel Choir – Music Room

Sunday, January 7

Epiphany

Sacrament of Christ's Table

9:00AM Brown Baggers

9:45AM Nursery Care

10:00AM Worship (All Ages)

11:05AM Coffee Fellowship



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Contact Information

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Weekend & Events Custodians –
Kayla Skiles & Onyeka Igboanuzue

Assistant Custodian – Gus McLean

Director of Ministry of Imagination, Creativity
and the Arts (MICA) – Rev. Cliff Aerie
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Chaplain, Stillpoint Campus Ministry
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