

Welcome!

First Congregational Church
of Webster Groves United Church of Christ



Seek Christ in each. Serve God in all.

JANUARY 7, 2024
EPIPHANY



*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

In the Bleak Midwinter

arr. Burke

WELCOME

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.

TOLLING OF THE BELL

LIGHTING OF THE CANDLES

OPENING WORDS

From the Gospels

Matthew 2:1-12

Pew Bible, p. 878

*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

Arise, Your Light Is Come
No. 164 – *New Century Hymnal*

Ruth Duck

*PRAYER OF APPROACH (Unison)

O God, you made all nations out of one blood, and by a star in the East you revealed to all nations the One whose name is Emmanuel. Enable us who know that you are with us to proclaim Christ's unsearchable riches, so that all may come to your Light and bow before the brightness of your Child's rising. This we pray in the name of Jesus our Emmanuel, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, now and for ever. Amen.

SINGING GOD'S GLORY

Gloria in Excelsis Deo

Tune: GLORIA, refrain

NOT FOR CHILDREN ONLY

Johari Hunt, *Coordinator of Faith Formation*

The children are invited forward for a time of enrichment. Afterward, they may take part in a quiet activity with Mr. Johari, or return to their seats.

THE WORD SHARED

From the Prophets

Isaiah 60:1-6

Pew Bible, p. 676

Response.

Hear what the Spirit is saying to the people.

Thanks be to God.

MESSAGE OF THE DAY

"Was It Magic?"

Rev. David Denoon, *Pastor*

OFFERING OF OURSELVES

Opportunities to Give and Gather

**Song of Praise*

Christmas Doxology

Tune: OLD 100TH

**Praise God with songs that never cease!
Praise God who fills the earth with peace!
Praise God for love and joy within!
The Holy Child is born again. Amen.**

**Prayer of Dedication (Unison)*

**God of promises fulfilled, in the fullness of time we now enjoy
your greatest gift, the Child of your love. Like the magi of old we
have seen the brilliance of your Light — this humble Child — and
lay our offerings at your feet. By these presents may your
church grow wise and strong in your love. With your Spirit
receive and consecrate our gifts, for we present them to the
glory of the Sun of righteousness. Amen.**

SACRAMENT OF CHRIST'S TABLE

**Introduction (including Joys and Concerns)*

**Sursum Corda*

God be with you.

And also with you.

Lift up your hearts.

We lift our hearts to God.

Let us give thanks to our Sovereign God.

**Because, O God, you have made yourself manifest in
Christ Jesus, the one begotten from the heart of your love,
Word of truth, Light of light, we give you thanks and
praise.**

**Prayer of Remembrance (and Gloria)*

As sages from the East offered you their best,

**So may we honor you, O Christ, with our highest visions
and finest energies.**

As you turned the water to wine at Cana,

**So come to your church now, and teach us to change
human tears to joyful song.**

As you were baptized to fulfill all righteousness,

So may your church humbly do your will.

As you gave light to those who followed you on earth,

**So be our light as we follow you on city streets or country
roads. Be revealed among us in power, in word, in
sacrament, and in places where we live and work. Glory be
to you, O Christ, now and for ever. Amen.**

Prayer of Consecration

Prayer of Our Savior (Unison)

**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.

Fraction

Communion

*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.*

**Prayer of Thanksgiving*

We give you thanks, gracious God, that you come to us in bread and cup, in the brilliance of your Incarnation, and in the love of this gathered community. Now, send us forth from this table a nourished and empowered people that we may live your love, speak your peace, and sing your hope. Amen.

***PARTING HYMN**

I Am the Light of the World
based on a sermon of Howard Thurman
No. 584, vv. 1,4 – *New Century Hymnal*

Jim Strathdee

***BENEDICTION**

For the Time Being: Conclusion
(Responsive – **People**; Minister)

W. H. Auden

He is the Way.

Follow Him through the Land of Unlikeness;
You will see rare beasts, and have unique adventures.

He is the Truth.

Seek Him in the Kingdom of Anxiety;
You will come to a great city that has expected your return for years.

He is the Life.

Love Him in the World of the Flesh;
And at your marriage all its occasions shall dance for joy.

DISMISSAL

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

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.



“Day” of Service – Monday, January 15

First Church will conduct a Day of Service for the Martin Luther King, Jr., holiday. The Peace & Justice Team will host this event on Monday, January 15. We will be collecting non-perishable food items for Webster Rock Hill Ministries! **Donations will be accepted from 9am to 12pm** at the doors under the awning facing the east parking lot.

Volunteers are needed, between 8:30am and 12:30pm

Volunteer for the Day of Service

(receiving and/or sorting and/or delivering food to WRHM)

bit.ly/MLK-2024-Signup

More Volunteer Opportunities

Signups to serve as worship leaders and/or Kids Church helpers are at

Liturgists - bit.ly/Liturgists-2024

Kids Church - bit.ly/FCCWG-Kids-2024

Next Lady Elect Meeting

Tuesday, January 23 – Inglis Room

This will be a noon meeting so bring a sack lunch. Beverages and dessert will be provided. This meeting features our Book /Media Reviews. Each of us will have an opportunity to briefly share what we have been reading or watching recently. Please RSVP to Faye Dyer at southernillinoisdyer@gmail.com **All women of the church are welcome to attend!**

Stacks of Wax Seeking Crafters!

Over a span of decades, candles - lots of them! - have accumulated in our Office Storage. These pillars and columns and tapers, in stearic and beeswax, are in a limited variety of colors: white mostly, but also purple and pink. If you are a crafter who creates candles or you're looking for a light source for an upcoming blackout, oh golly, can we help you! Please contact the Pastor, to learn more.

Consider Handbells

Music Director Leon Burke says, “People sure seemed to enjoy ringing the hand chimes, this past Sunday at the start of service! Would you like to experience that gratification over and over again? Then, join the Canterbury Bells! **Rehearsals are on Thursdays at 6:00pm in the Sanctuary.** Come, be a ding-a-ling with me!”

Church Merch – Stained Glass Window Stickers

There are still some stickers remaining, after our initial public offering at Christmastime! **Round stickers depicting the "Paul Davis Window"** over the chancel in the sanctuary are available from the office for purchase. Terrific as a gift or to put on your own water bottle, computer, or any other surface you decide to decorate with a reminder of your beloved sacred space, they are three inches in diameter and \$5 in cost.

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 [FirstChurchWG.org/donate#pledge](https://www.FirstChurchWG.org/donate#pledge) for an online commitment form. Or contact the office for a paper form.

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

Discount Tickets to Big Muddy Evolution January 11

The Big Muddy Dance Company's Executive Director (and church member) Erin Prange has let us know of a special promotional code for First Church members and friends, for a discount to The Big Muddy's upcoming main stage production of Evolution, at COCA on January 11-14. Please visit <https://www.thebigmuddydanceco.org/evolution> and enter the promo code FCCWG24 for 20% off tickets.

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** by the 20th of the month prior to the month in which you want your item included.

January Birthdays

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

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. If you would like to share, please contact Joan Musbach.

January Meal-a-Month 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)

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. Where is he going? What is he doing? Find out, January 28!

Link to the Pastor's blog post at <http://tinyurl.com/fccwg-pastor>, to learn about developments regarding our last Heritage Sunday topic!

What's Happening at First Church

Today, January 7

Epiphany (observed)

Sacrament of Christ's Table

All Ages Worship

9:00AM Brown Baggers

9:45AM Nursery Care

10:00AM Worship (All Ages)

11:05AM Coffee Fellowship

Monday, January 8

7:00PM Three Ministries (Hybrid)

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

Wednesday, January 10

9:30AM Yoga with Jeanene – Inglis Room

6:00PM Bridge Club – Inglis Room

Thursday, January 11

6:00PM Canterbury Bells – Sanctuary

7:30PM Chancel Choir – Music Room

Sunday, January 14

9:45AM Nursery Care

10:00AM Jazz Worship

10:15AM Kids' Church

11:05AM Coffee Fellowship



10 West Lockwood Avenue
Webster Groves, MO 63119
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Contact Information

Moderator – Doug Barton
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Kayla Skiles & Onyeka Igboanuzue

Assistant Custodian – Gus McLean

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Seek Christ in each. Serve God in all.

Follow us on

Facebook

www.facebook.com/FirstChurchWG/

Instagram

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

YouTube

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





WORSHIP NOTES

*This schedule is subject to change, as need may arise.
All worship services noted below will be offered in person and live streamed
(bit.ly/FCCWG-YT), at 10:00am on Sundays.*

SUNDAY, JANUARY 7, 10:00 AM – **Observance:** FEAST OF THE EPIPHANY (observed); SACRAMENT OF CHRIST’S TABLE; ALL AGES WORSHIP. **Scriptures:** Isaiah 60:1-6; Psalm 72; Ephesians 3:1-12; Matthew 2:1-12. On this day we remember Matthew’s birth-of-Jesus story – the arrival of the Magi in Bethlehem, the revelation of Good News to all the world, and the revolution introduced in the person of a toddler Messiah. **Message of the Day:** *“Was It Magic?”*

SUNDAY, JANUARY 14, 10:00 AM – **Observances:** SECOND SUNDAY AFTER THE EPIPHANY; SUNDAY OF MLK HOLIDAY WEEKEND. **Music:** Chancel Choir performs with the Oikos Jazz Ensemble. **Liturgist:** Joan Musbach. **Scriptures:** 1 Samuel 3:1-20; Psalm 139:1-6, 13-18; 1 Corinthians 6:12-20; John 1:43-51. This Sunday includes readings about the youngest Judge ever to be commissioned by God (Samuel) and probably the youngest of Jesus’ disciples to be called (Philip and Nathanael). The latter tale ends with Jesus comparing himself to the Ladder in Jacob’s dream (Genesis 28:10-17). The gospel reading becomes a foreshadowing of Jesus’ explanation of himself in John 10 as a “gate” (compare John 10:7, 9 and Genesis 28:17). **Message of the Day:** *“Jesus the Ladder”*

SUNDAY, JANUARY 21, 10:00 AM – ECUMENICAL SUNDAY (WEEK OF PRAYER FOR CHRISTIAN UNITY). **Music:** Canterbury Bells. **Liturgist:** Mark Edwards. The World Council of Churches and the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity Joint Commission on the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity has named the theme for the 2024 Week’s observance: *“You Shall Love!”*

Luke 10:25-37 tells the story of how Jesus was asked by an expert in the Law, “What must I do to inherit everlasting life?” Jesus replied, “What is written in the Law?” The expert: “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your strength, and with all your mind; and your neighbor as yourself.” Then Jesus said, “You have given the right answer; do this, and you will live.” The expert’s further question, “And who is my neighbor?” led Jesus to tell the parable of the Good Samaritan.

On this Ecumenical Sunday, we pray for unity of purpose and message with our fellow Christians in proclaiming Good News, a message echoed in the calls for justice and righteousness from all the Abrahamic traditions.

SUNDAY, JANUARY 28, 10:00 AM – HERITAGE SUNDAY (158TH ANNIVERSARY); HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICE SUNDAY (UCC). **Music:** Chancel Choir. **Liturgist:** Laurel Hayes. **Scriptures:** Psalm 111; Mark 1:21-28. Mark says that Jesus taught “as one with authority and not like the scribes.” What exactly was meant by this, and how might we – who are often skeptical of traditional ways of interpreting and practicing faith – emulate this sort of ministry toward others? **Message of the Day:** *“Genuine Authority”*

Worship will be followed by our annual Midwinter Potluck. Watch the *Covenant News* and bulletin for more information.