

Welcome!

First Congregational Church
of Webster Groves United Church of Christ



Seek Christ in each. Serve God in all.

JANUARY 21, 2024
SUNDAY IN THE WEEK OF PRAYER
FOR CHRISTIAN UNITY

**“You shall love the Lord your God
...and your neighbor as yourself”**

(Luke 10:27)



*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 *Bells from Little Suite* Roy Harris

WELCOME Mark Edwards, *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.

TOLLING OF THE BELL

LIGHTING OF THE CANDLES

***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**

In Unity We Lift Our Song

Ken Medema

In unity we lift our song of grateful adoration,
For brothers brave and sisters strong. What cause for celebration!
For those whose faithfulness has kept us through distress,
Who've shared with us our plight, who've held us in the night—
The blessed congregation.

Four sacred scriptures handed down, a blessed trust and treasure,
Which give us hope when hope is gone and make us weep with pleasure.
And when our eyes grow blind and death is close behind,
We shall recite them still, whose words our hearts can fill
With hope beyond all measure.

For God our way, our bread, our rest, of all these gifts the Giver.
Our strength, our guide, our nurturing breast whose hand will yet deliver.
Who keeps us till the day when night shall pass away,
When hate and fear are gone and all our work is done,
And we shall sing forever.

***RITUAL OF APPROACH**

**Prayer of Confession (Litany)*

Silence follows each petition, then the words:

Pastor: Merciful God,

People: forgive and heal us.

**Prayer of Confession (conclusion)*

The final petition is this:

God, Father of our Lord Jesus Christ whom you sent in the fullness of time to redeem all creation, we ask you to have mercy on us, forgive us our sins and transform us by your Holy Spirit.

Glory to God, whom we praise with one voice.

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

The congregation repeats each line of the following after the leader(s):

Glory to God! Glory to God! Glory in the highest!
To God be glory forever!

Next, the leader(s) direct the congregation in harmonizing the following:

Alleluia! Amen! Alleluia! Amen!

NOT FOR CHILDREN ONLY

Johari Hunt, *Coordinator of Faith Formation*

The children are invited forward for a time of enrichment.

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

THE WORD SHARED

From the Gospels

Luke 10:25-37

Pew Bible, p. 946

Response

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

People: Thanks be to God.

BELL ANTHEM

O Love That Will Not Let Me Go

arr. Lloyd Larson

(Tune: ST. MARGARET, by Albert L. Peace)

MESSAGE OF THE DAY

"You Shall Love!"

Rev. David Denoon, *Pastor*

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

We Lift Our Joys and Concerns

Prayer of the Day (Litany)

Response.

Fill us with your love! Make us one in you.

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.

WE OFFER OF OURSELVES

Opportunities to Give and Gather

**Song of Praise*

Doxology

Tune: OLD 100TH

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)*

Wellspring of life and living, we offer you our gifts for the refreshment of your world. May all our offerings of spirit and substance combine for the sake of your grace and good will, in Christ's name. Amen.

***HYMN OF PARTING**

O Christ, the Great Foundation
No. 387, vv. 1,2,4 – *New Century Hymnal*

T. Tingfang Lew
tr. F. W. Price

***BENEDICTION**

***PARTING WORDS**

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

POSTLUDE

March

William Stickles

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.

Today is **Ecumenical Sunday** in the United Church of Christ. This is the day in the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity (January 18–25) when all the world's Christians are invited to pray for the solidarity of those who claim Christ as Savior and Guide. Our Prayers of Confession and of the Day, as well as our scripture today, are taken from the guide provided by the Graymoor Ecumenical and Interreligious Institute (geii.org/week_of_prayer_for_christian_unity). These prayers and scripture will be repeated at St. John Bosco Roman Catholic Church (12934 Marine Ave., Creve Coeur) at 7:00pm. You are encouraged to attend.

The cross image now gracing the sanctuary vault is a depiction of the three basic strokes in Japanese *sumi-e* painting. According to painter Chiura Obata, the brush strokes used in *sumi-e* represent physical reality (vertical), the passage of time (horizontal), and movement (circle). They closely resemble the Celtic cross in which the lines and circle are associated heaven (vertical), earth (horizontal), and eternity (circle). The intersection of these meanings led planners of our 150th Jubilee in 2016 to adopt the Sumi Cross as our historic symbol.

Sumi-e was originally popularized in the U.S. by Chiura Obata, an instructor at the University of California – Berkeley. Similarly, his wife Haruko introduced *ikebana*, a Japanese style of floral design, to America. In 1943, Chiura and Haruko joined First Church. They and their adult children had been displaced from their West Coast home by federal mandate, during World War II. First Church, like many Congregational churches, sheltered the Obatas for the duration of the war, providing them a home and work. Their son Gyo Obata, who died in 2022 at age 99, would become one of the founders of the architectural firm, HOK.

Books by and about the Obatas are available from the church's Holaday Library.

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 meets, TODAY

The next P&J meeting will take place after worship, this Sunday, in Memorial Hall. 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.

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

This 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. **All women of the church are welcome to attend!**

Midwinter Potluck
Sunday, January 28, after worship

As part of our annual Heritage Sunday observance, the Midwinter Potluck will take place on **Sunday, January 28** after the service. Parish Life Ministry will provide a variety of main dishes (pasta, jambalaya, smoked meat). Please bring a **plated** side dish, salad or dessert. You can drop off your side, salad, or dessert to the kitchen before the service.

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!

Covenant News Articles, Information, Images and Reports Due ASAP!

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.

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.

January Birthdays

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

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 Relations Committee meets, February 6

"Confidence, Acceptance, and Trust" are bywords for the Pastoral Relations Committee (PRC). Their next meeting will take place on Tuesday, February 6.

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 of the Pastoral Relations Committee include **Jared Cohen, Annie Sampath, Patrick Byrne, Pat Doyle-Grace, Emily Polaske, and Sharon Love (Look for the PRC gold hearts on their name badges!)**. Ex-officio members are Moderator Doug Barton and Pastor David Denoon.

What's Happening at First Church

Sunday, January 21

9:45AM Nursery Care

10:00AM Worship

10:15 AM Kids' Church

11:05AM Coffee Fellowship

11:20AM Peace & Justice Team

Monday, January 22

7:00PM Executive Ministry (Zoom)

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

Tuesday, January 23

12:00PM Lady Elect – Inglis Room

Wednesday, January 24

9:30AM Yoga with Jeanene – Inglis Room

6:00PM Bridge Club – Inglis Room

Thursday, January 25

6:00PM Canterbury Bells – Sanctuary

7:30PM Chancel Choir – Music Room

Sunday, January 28

Heritage Sunday

9:45AM Nursery Care

10:00AM Worship

11:05AM Winter Potluck

11:20AM Adult Ed: "My Coming Sabbatical"
with Pastor Dave Denoon



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Contact Information

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

YouTube

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





FROM THE PASTOR

The Faces Change, Our Passions Don't

To everything there is a season, and a time for every matter under heaven... a time to weep, and a time to laugh... a time to mourn, and a time to dance... a time to keep and a time to throw away... (from Ecclesiastes 3)

We read Ecclesiastes 3 at memorial services and at the turning of the year. As I gaze at the calendar for this year, there are a number of matters that stand out to me –

I'll be doing lots of travel.

(college visits with Gwen and Coco, check-ins with my dad, and sabbatical journeys)

Lent and Easter come early.

(Ash Wednesday is on February 14, Easter on March 31)

A new sabbatical experience is in the offing.

(during the summer)

and

We get to work on a long-range (5-year) plan together.

(discerning who we are called to be and what we are called to do according to God's grace)

These are the “seasons” of my new year. That last one may have taken you a bit by surprise. Allow me to explain.

Every January I have served here as Pastor, I've been aware how different this church has been than it was, the year before. Rare has been the year that the number of funerals I've led was less than ten, and equally as rare the year when we received more than that number. In 2022 and 2023, that latter trend changed. Attendance and new members increased, and in 2023 I actually conducted less funerals than the number of new members received. What this means to me is that, for the first time in any pastorate I've ever served, the church is skewing a bit younger, now, than it has in the past.

Although some of the faces have changed, our passions – for building an uplifting faith community and reaching beyond our walls for the benefit of our wider society – have remained the same. So, as I approach my upcoming sabbatical, I have asked that the church consider seriously who we are and the kind of community God is making of us. In light of this, when I return from sabbatical, let us develop a five-year plan in order to fulfill those impressions of ourselves.

Let us commit to redoubling our efforts to declare Good News and to become truly the very people we say we are!

Peace.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "PASTOR DAVE DEATON". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

More about the Quilt Auction

Saturday, February 17, 2024

Doors open at noon. Auction begins at 1:00 pm

Vintage and antique quilts will be auctioned with proceeds going to local charities. These quilts have been in the possession of Marj Courtney, a long-time member of First Congregational Church. Each quilt has a description of type and origin with great detail.

A quilt appraiser has authenticated their provenance and quality, noting that a couple of them are “museum quality”.

It’s amazing to see beautiful quilts from the 1920s, 1930s, 1940s & 1950s that are lovingly cared for and ready for new homes. The story of the quilts began when Marjorie Courtney became the caretaker of her family’s precious heirlooms.

When Marj passed away in 2023 at the age of 96, she stipulated that the quilts go to First Congregational Church of Webster Groves where she had been a member for several years. Marj’s daughter Gale says “My mother’s dedication to quilting was a combination of her strong commitment to preserving her family’s legacy and her personal love of sewing. She was proud to take ownership of the quilts, partial-completed quilts, and quilt pieces. She spent decades finishing the quilts.” She also said that her mother recognized many of the pieces from her own childhood. “My mother was very concerned about what would happen to the quilts when she died. As she was very devoted to her church, I think she would be very pleased to know that they will go to owners that cherish them and the church will benefit”.

In keeping with Marj’s spirit, it was decided that the best use of the quilts would be to auction them off with the proceeds going to local charities. Church members who know Marj by her quiet nature and kindness to all believe that she would be thrilled to know that these quilts will benefit others.

Each year, the Benevolence Committee of First Congregational Church raised funds to be distributed to local charities.

Through its Benevolence Committee, over \$33,000 is distributed each year to organizations benefiting women and children’s groups as well as providing food to the surrounding area. This auction will enhance giving to these organizations.

Submitted by Jeanene Harris