

# Welcome!

First Congregational Church  
of Webster Groves United Church of Christ



*Seek Christ in each. Serve God in all.*

**FEBRUARY 11, 2024**  
**TRANSFIGURATION SUNDAY**  
**SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY SUNDAY**  
**SCOUT SUNDAY**

*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** *Majesty of Christ Asking that His Father Glorify Him* Olivier Messiaen

**WELCOME** Roger Barnes, *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 THE BELL** Phoenix Hill, *Scout*

**LIGHTING THE CANDLES** Jackie Hunt, *First Class Scout*

**CALL TO WORSHIP** (Responsive – Leader; **People**) Psalm 50  
The Mighty One, God most holy, speaks and summons the earth from the rising of  
the sun to its setting.

**Our God comes and does not keep silence, with a devouring fire  
before and a mighty tempest all around.**

God calls to the skies above and to the earth below, “Gather to me my faithful ones,  
who made a covenant with me!”

**The heavens declare with us the righteous judgment of 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.**

**\*GATHERING HYMN** *Transfigure Me* Christopher Grundy  
(video used with permission of the artist)

*Refrain*

Transfigure me so that I might be more like Jesus, more like Jesus.  
Transfigure me so that I might be more like Jesus, Jesus my Light!

*Bridge*

Take me up to the mountain. Shine your light down on me,  
‘til the person you have always intended is the person everybody can see.

**\*PRAYER OF APPROACH** (Unison) Philip O’Halloran, *Life Scout, Troop Guide*  
**O Holy One, on mountaintops and valley floors you reveal to us the light  
of your love. Our hearts’ desire is to bask in the glory of the divine  
presence; with each encounter we are changed and transformed. Draw us  
nearer, that we might receive a double portion of your Holy Spirit. Help  
us, O holy One, to live our lives as a reflection of your glory. May we walk  
among our brothers and sisters as a blessing, bearing light into dark  
places, bearing hope to displace despair, and bearing love that casts out  
hate. Our world is hurting and we need the followers of Jesus to follow  
more closely. Maybe then we will hear your voice speaking to us and  
saying, ... “listen to my Child, the Beloved!” Amen.**

**NOT FOR CHILDREN ONLY** Johari Hunt, *Coordinator of Faith Formation*  
*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*

Thérèse Schuster, *Life Scout, Senior Patrol Leader*  
Mark 9:2-9  
Pew Bible, p. 919

*Response.*

Hear what the Spirit is saying to the people.

**Thanks be to God.**

**ANTHEM**

*Be Thou My Vision*

Mark A. Miller

Be thou my vision, O Lord of my heart;  
naught be all else to me, save that thou art;  
thou my best thought by day or by night  
waking or sleeping, thy presence my light.

Be thou my wisdom, and thou my true Word;  
thou ever with me and I with thee, Lord;  
thou and thou only, first in my heart,  
great God of heaven, my treasure thou art.

Great God of heaven, my victory won,  
may I reach heaven's joys, O bright heaven's Sun!  
Heart of my own heart whatever befall,  
still be my vision, O Ruler of all.

**MESSAGE OF THE DAY**

*"What Do You Say?"*

Rev. David Denoon, *Pastor*

**PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE**

*We Lift Up Our Joys and Concerns*

*Prayer of the Day*

*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.**

**WE SHARE OUR BLESSINGS WITH OTHERS**

*Opportunities to Give and Gather*

*Presentation of Scouting Charter for 2024*

Betsy O'Halloran, *Committee Chair*

*\*Song of Praise*

*Doxology*

Tune: OLD 100<sup>TH</sup>

**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)*

Phoenix Hill

**Creator God who makes us many and makes us one, here we combine our many gifts into one. With our Scouts and their Leaders who appreciate the wonders of creation and the blessedness of being your children, we renew our pledge. Bless all these gifts, we pray, that they may pass into your creation, to the end that all the world may become one in you, in Christ's name. Amen.**

**\*PARTING HYMN**

*The Vast Expanse of Time and Space*  
(see pp. 10-11)

Barbara Hamm

**\*BENEDICTION**

*Prayer for the Church*  
video by The Work of the People

M. L. King, Jr.

Lord, we thank you for your church, founded upon your Word, that challenges us to do more than sing and pray, but go out and work as though the very answer to our prayers depended on us and not on you. Help us to realize that humanity was created to shine like the stars and live on through all eternity. Keep us, we pray, in perfect peace. Help us to walk together, pray together, sing together, and live together until that day when all God's children – Black, White, Red, Brown, and Yellow – will rejoice in one common band of humanity in the reign of our Lord and of our God, we pray. Amen.

**\*PARTING WORDS**

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

**POSTLUDE**

*Fugue in G Minor*

J. S. Bach

**Cover art** is taken from *The Saint John's Bible*, a project of Saint John's Abbey and Saint John's University, Collegeville, Minnesota. The artistic director is Welsh calligrapher Donald Jackson. To learn more about this living document and epic work of art, visit [SaintJohnsBible.org](http://SaintJohnsBible.org)

**The cross image gracing the sanctuary vault** is a depiction of the three basic strokes in Japanese *sumi-e* painting, representing reality (vertical), time (horizontal), and movement (circle). They closely resemble the Celtic cross in which the lines and circle are associated with heaven (vertical), earth (horizontal), and eternity (circle). *Sumi-e* painter Chiura Obata was a member of First Church, from 1943 to 1945, and planners of our Jubilee in 2016 commissioned this work as an expression of our commitment to justice and freedom. It was crafted by Kem Williams and made possible by a grant from the Dr. Rodney M. Coe Memorial Fund.

**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 at 10am  
Go to [bit.ly/FCCWG-YT](http://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.



### **Learn about our newest sign-up method – Google Sheets!**

Ashley Merideth will be leading a training session on the use of the app, Google Sheets, on Sunday, February 18th after worship. We are planning this as a hybrid session, so that not only can people attend in person, but they also might Zoom in to attend, and we can record the session so that others who may need the information can access it.

In addition to the schedules for Liturgists and Kids Church (see next announcement), Google Sheets is used to organize volunteers for a variety of events, such as First Saturday collections.

***If you are all set technologically, good for you!  
If not, please plan to join Ashley on February 18th!***

(A Zoom link and meeting ID will be provided in the next editions of *Covenant News* and the bulletin.)

### **Volunteer Opportunities**

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

**Liturgists** - [bit.ly/Liturgists-2024](http://bit.ly/Liturgists-2024)

**Kids Church** - [bit.ly/FCCWG-Kids-2024](http://bit.ly/FCCWG-Kids-2024)

### **Ash Wednesday**

**Wednesday, February 14 at 7:00pm**

**in the Jubilee Garden with Sts. Clare & Francis Church**

This brief but meaningful service around an open fire will include the burning of last year's palms from Palm Sunday and the imposition of ashes. Afterward, enjoy hot chocolate together with other worshipers. (That may seem a little out of character for the holy day, but Pastors Maggie and Dave hope that it may affirm our unity for the Lenten journey.)

### **Lent Devotional Study – “This Is My Body” After Worship (about 11:30am) during Lent and in Kids Church**

The Pastor and the Coordinator of Faith Formation announce a devotional study for all ages during Lent, starting Sunday, February 18 and continuing through Palm Sunday, March 24. The devotional booklets, *This Is My Body* by Illustrated Ministry, are designed for home use (one for adults and the other for families) and group discussion. Participants will explore how Jesus lived in his body on earth and invite us to take care of – and embrace the goodness of – our own bodies.

Each week highlights a different story from Jesus' life and connects it to shared human experiences – like growing up, taking naps, or even drinking water. By engaging with these stories through a broad lens of embodiment, *This Is My Body* seeks to inspire curiosity, wonder, and awe. Adult discussions will take place on Sundays during Coffee Fellowship; young people will talk about *This Is My Body* in Kids Church.

The booklets for adults or families are NOW AVAILABLE FOR FREE in print or PDF format. Print copies may be found on the large narthex table. The download link for the Families booklet is <https://bit.ly/FCCWG-Lent01>. The download link for the Adult booklet is <https://bit.ly/FCCWG-02Lent>

### **Peace & Justice Team – TODAY at 11:20 AM**

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.

### **Upcoming Lady Elect Meeting – February 27 at Noon in the Inglis Room**

Our speaker will be Judy Burla, a travel planner who has many tips for ease in travel. Please bring a sack lunch and join us. Dessert and beverage will be provided. **RSVP to Faye Dyer. All women of the church are invited to attend!**

**Quilt Auction! Saturday, February 17, 2024**

**Doors open at noon. The auction will begin at 1:00 PM in Memorial Hall**

- Fourteen antique and vintage quilts will be auctioned, and the proceeds will benefit local charities through the First Church Benevolence Fund.
- A certified quilt appraiser has authenticated their provenance and quality.
- Each lovingly cared for quilt is hand pieced, hand quilted and in excellent condition.
- Details about their history and construction will be available on our website at [firstchurchwg.org/quilts](http://firstchurchwg.org/quilts).
- The quilts were donated by member and quilt collector, the late Marj Courtney.

For more information, contact Laura Cooper.

**St. Pat’s Dinner to Benefit Habitat for Humanity**

**March 9 from 4:00 to 7:30 PM at Samuel UCC, 320 N. Forsyth Blvd., Clayton**

For 30 years, Samuel and our United Churches of Christ have built houses with Habitat for Humanity St. Louis. For more than a dozen years, Samuel has hosted the St. Pat’s Dinner to help raise funds. **Tickets:** A suggested donation of \$20 or more for adults and \$6 for children

**EVERY CENTER YOU GIVE goes to support the UCC Habitat Build.** All meat and other foods are given by the Kern Meat Company and others.

Call (314) 727-9540 or (314) 374-4183 for tickets or reservations.

**The Parish Life Ministry of First Congregational Church presents**

**“An Evening to Remember”**

**Saturday, April 6th**

Please join us in our effort to raise over \$20,000 dollars for local charities and ministries in need. Do you remember the exciting feeling of dressing up for a party, date, or special occasion? Here’s your opportunity to attend this formal event featuring a multi-course dinner, live music, live auction, and fellowship. **SAVE the DATE. Details to follow.**

**February Shopping List**

- Canned Tuna, packed in Water • Tuna Helper • Canned Carrots (low or no salt)
- Canned Fruit in own juices • Powdered Milk, shelf stable milk, soy milk
- Diapers • Diaper Wipes • Formula with Iron

**February Birthdays**

Charlie Brader.....	5
Mary Edwards.....	6
K Wentzien.....	6
Chris von Weise.....	8
Kathy Hill.....	11
Phoenix Hill.....	14
Doug Barton.....	15
Erick Falconer.....	16
Pat Doyle-Grace.....	20
Martin Mills.....	21

## **What's Happening at First Church**

### **Sunday, February 11**

#### **Transfiguration Sunday**

**Science & Technology Sunday, Scout Sunday, Chocolate Sunday**

**9:45AM** Nursery Care

**10:00AM** Worship

**10:15AM** Kids' Church

**11:05AM** Coffee Fellowship

**11:20AM** Peace & Justice Team – Memorial Hall

### **Monday, February 12**

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

**7:00PM** Three Ministries (Hybrid)

### **Tuesday, February 13**

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

### **Wednesday, February 14**

#### **Ash Wednesday, Valentine's Day**

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

**6:00PM** Bridge Club – Inglis Room

### **Thursday, February 15**

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

**7:30PM** Chancel Choir rehearsal – Music Room

### **Saturday, February 17**

**12:00PM** Quilt Auction – Memorial Hall (Doors open at noon. Auction at 1:00PM)

### **Sunday, February 18**

#### **First Sunday in Lent**

**9:45AM** Nursery Care

**10:00AM** Worship

**10:15AM** Kids' Church

**11:05AM** Coffee Fellowship – Memorial Hall

**11:20AM** Lenten Study: "This Is My Body" – Memorial Hall

**11:30AM** Google Sheets Training with Ashley Merideth – Inglis Room

### **Monday, February 19**

**OFFICE CLOSED – President's Day**

**7:00PM** ~~NO~~ Scout Troops B & G

# The Vast Expanse of Time and Space

♩=94

1. The vast ex - pance of time and space out -  
2. What puls - ing forc - es formed the stars and  
3. New u - ni - vers - es may ap - pear to

runs the reach of hu - man mind. Not  
led their fier - y cos - mic dance? Then  
which my life and death give birth. The

years, but e - ons, mark this place, this  
earth and Sat - urn, Ve - nus, Mars— what  
self - same pow'r that brought me here gives

earth, the home of hu - man - kind. What  
plucked them out of ran - dom chance? What  
life to all— and gives it worth. Though

WORDS and MUSIC: Barbara Hamm © 2020

CHRYSALIS  
L.M.D.



quan - tum par - ti - cles e - merged in  
pow'r brought forth this u - ni - verse a -  
oth - er worlds and won - ders wait, though

light - years far be - yond our ken? What  
mong the man - y that could be, caused  
time and space may cease to be, God's

strands of mat - ter first con - verged, in  
form and sub - stance to dis - perse, e -  
love for me will not a - bate, for

time be - com - ing rock and wren?  
volv - ing in - to you and me?  
it en - folds e - ter - ni - ty.



## Moderator's Corner, February 2024

When I write a Moderator's Corner, I have a secret fear of misinterpreting something I share from the Bible. With current and retired ministers and devoted Christians in our midst, I squint and hold my breath like an archer drawing their bow as I click *Send*, delivering my work to Debbie Tolstoi. I fear recoil, or worse, a volley of arrows in return following its publishing. With that said, the topic for today begins in Leviticus 25 (New International Version):

**25** The LORD said to Moses at Mount Sinai, <sup>2</sup> "Speak to the Israelites and say to them: 'When you enter the land I am going to give you, the land itself must observe a sabbath to the LORD. <sup>3</sup> For six years sow your fields, and for six years prune your vineyards and gather their crops. <sup>4</sup> But in the seventh year the land is to have a year of sabbath rest, a sabbath to the LORD. Do not sow your fields or prune your vineyards.'

According to my research, this is an early reference to a Sabbatical (Shmita) Year, the seventh year, when the land is left fallow so it can rest and rejuvenate. The work done in agrarian society is forbidden. In preparation for Shmita, families would budget food and resources in the years preceding. The people may use the food that grows on their land during the Sabbatical Year to provide for those that rely on them. This is a time that requires caring for your community in ways that might not be as necessary during a typical year.

Pastor Dave begins his own sabbatical this June, which will run through the summer. This will be his final sabbatical as Pastor of our congregation, as he plans to retire in five years. To prepare for this sabbatical season, we have budgeted money to afford a Sabbatical Minister, formed a Sabbatical Committee to make preparations, and we are blessed with the support and guidance from Rev. Damien Lake of the Missouri Mid-South Conference.

Rev. Lake provided a book suggestion for the committee that I now want to pass on to you, *Planning Sabbaticals: A Guide for Congregations and their Pastors* by Robert C. Saler. This is a very short read and is available online through the St. Louis County Library system for free as an ebook using the digital app, *Hoopla*. Your local librarian can help you get connected.

My past experience of a sabbatical was the one we all experienced seven years ago. During that sabbatical period, the journey of immersion, study and restoration that Pastor Dave was living in Africa was closely related to the work our congregation was doing with our Sabbatical Pastor, Sonya Vann.

Reading Saler's book, two key points helped me think differently about sabbaticals. First, what a pastor does with their time on sabbatical is for *their own* renewal, not ours. Sabbatical experiences vary greatly in nature. This is a time for Pastor Dave to reconnect with himself.

Second, the congregation's sabbatical time is determined by the congregation and should support their own renewal. Our renewal period may be unrelated to what Pastor Dave is doing and that is ok. According to Saler, our congregation's sabbatical time will have been successful if our activities are "encouraging leadership among congregation members while also creating space for reflection."

I want to encourage you to think and talk with members about what you would like this sabbatical time to be for us and for you. When the sabbatical period has ended, I hope we can come together re-energized, rejuvenated, and ready to do the Lord's work.

God Bless,

Doug Barton, Moderator



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