

Welcome!

First Congregational Church
of Webster Groves United Church of Christ



Seek Christ in each. Serve God in all.

FEBRUARY 25, 2024

**SECOND SUNDAY IN LENT
CHURCH VOCATIONS SUNDAY
SEMINARY 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 *When I Survey the Wondrous Cross* Hal Hopson

WELCOME Ernestine Carter, *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

LIGHTING THE CANDLES

CALL TO WORSHIP (Responsive – Leader; **People**)

Come, all you who are weary and are carrying heavy burdens,

In God's house, you will find rest.

Take the yoke of Christ upon you, and learn from him;

**For Christ is gentle and humble in heart. We will find rest
for our souls.**

For his yoke is easy, and his burden is light.

**Under this light and easy yoke there is rest for the weary
and sleep for the exhausted.**

Come and worship. Find warmth and care under the wide wings of our
Mother God.

We are a people in need of a soft place to land.

Come and worship. Be filled and restored by the healing breath of God's
Spirit.

Amen. Let us worship together!

***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**

I Have Decided to Follow Jesus

Sadhu Sundar Singh
based on an Indian folk song

I have decided to follow Jesus (3 times)

No turning back, no turning back.

Though none go with me, still I will follow (3 times)

No turning back, no turning back.

The road behind me, the cross before me (3 times)

No turning back, no turning back.

***RITUAL OF APPROACH**

Invitation

Corporate Prayer of Confession (Unison)

Creator God, we delight in the universe you created. Each insect, plant, animal, bird, and fish proves your glory and creative power. But people have not cared well for this world, and the destruction continues. We consume more than we need. We purchase goods obtained through the destruction of forests and displacement of others. We waste gas, water, and food. We resist measures to change our habits or consumption. We choose profits over people. We ignore rising seas, even as they endanger the lives of coastal dwellers. We enjoy cheap fashion, fast food, and disposable containers. We do not hold our leaders accountable for taking action. In the face of a world in crisis, we repent. We would turn from our wasteful ways and start again. Have mercy on us, and on our planet. Amen.

Silence for Personal Confession

Words of Assurance (Responsive)

Like the growth of a forest rising from ashes, our world is made to renew life.

When we repent for our sin, God is faithful to heal, to mend, to restore.

Receive God's pardon and be at peace.

Amen.

Singing God's Glory

Sing Amen!

S. C. Molefe

No. 760 – *New Century Hymnal*

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 Epistles

Romans 4:13-25

Pew Bible, p. 1027

From the Gospels

Mark 8:31-38

p. 919

Response.

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

People: Thanks be to God.

ANTHEM

Come, My Way, My Truth, My Life

R. Vaughan Williams

MESSAGE OF THE DAY

"Trusting that Christ CAN"

Rev. David Denoon, *Pastor*

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

Joys and Concerns

Prayer of the Day

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 SHARE OUR BLESSINGS WITH OTHERS

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)

Holy God, we bring you our offerings and gifts. We desire that our faith community would be a place of safe refuge for all who need rest and restoration. We pray that our gifts might be stewarded with wisdom and that many may be blessed in your name. May the Spirit of Christ inspire us to keep giving throughout this season of Lent. Amen.

***PARTING HYMN**

Lift High the Cross

Kitchin / Newbolt

No. 198, vv. 1,3,5 – *New Century Hymnal*

***BENEDICTION**

***PARTING WORDS**

Liturgist: Our worship has ended.

People: **Let our service begin.**

POSTLUDE

What a Friend We Have In Jesus

Robert Thompson

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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 at 10am

Go to 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.

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!**

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.

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

Lent Devotional Study – “This Is My Body” – After Worship (about 11:20am)

We are happy to announce a devotional study for all ages during Lent, **from Sunday, February 18 and continuing through Palm Sunday, March 24.**

Each week highlights a different story from Jesus’ life and connects it to shared human experiences – like growing up, taking naps, or drinking water. By engaging with these stories through a broad lens of embodiment, **This Is My Body** seeks to inspire curiosity, wonder, and awe.

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>

Chicago United Eden — CUE Seminaries of the United Church of Christ

An offering will be collected on TODAY, to benefit the UCC Seminaries of the Midwest - Chicago, United of the Twin Cities, and Eden.

One of the first recipients of offerings from First Church was Chicago Theological Seminary. In 1927, we added Eden, and in 1957 the Twins Cities seminary. If you would like to contribute to the theological education of future UCC clergy, please give to the CUE fund either

- by writing a check payable to FCCWG with the letters "CUE" in the memo line, or
- by using the handy pulldown menu at our website's Donate page.

To learn more about the CUE seminaries, please visit the CUE webpage at <https://www.cueseminaries.org/>.

Thank you!

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.

Time to Order Easter Flowers!

During Easter we enjoy having our sanctuary beautifully decorated with a variety of beautiful spring flowers. You are invited to make a contribution to defray this expense. A donation of \$20.00 is suggested. You may also like to designate your contribution in celebration, honor or memory. We hold many in our hearts especially during the Easter season as we celebrate the hope and joy of the season. This is a lovely way to show those feelings.

The flowers will be available for pickup after Easter Sunday. Come early for flower selection! (Or you may donate a flower to one of our home bound members.)

Order your flowers online at <http://tinyurl.com/fccwg-easter-flowers> or pick up a form in the narthex.

The Parish Life Ministry of First Congregational Church presents “Gala of Grace” — A Night of Giving and Gratitude Saturday, April 6th

Please join us in our effort to raise over \$20,000 dollars for local Webster and greater St. Louis charities and ministries. "Gala of Grace: A Night of Giving & Gratitude" is your opportunity to attend a dazzling event featuring a multi-course dinner, live music from three renowned artists, and a live auction hosted by the legendary Rod Cooper. Don't miss this once in a lifetime event to treat yourself, while helping those in need. *Invitations have been emailed and there are some available in the Narthex.*

March Shopping List

Canned Ham • Macaroni and Cheese • Canned Green Vegetable (low or no salt)
Canned Fruit in own juices • Powdered Milk, shelf stable milk, soy milk
Toothbrushes • Toothpaste • Dental Floss

March Birthdays

Kristin Rinne.....March 14
Kitty Pearl.....March 18
Jim Harris.....March 21
Amy ByrneMarch 26

What's Happening at First Church

Sunday, February 25

Second Sunday in Lent

Church Vocations and Seminary Sunday

Special Offering for CUE Seminaries

9:45AM Nursery Care

10:00AM Worship

10:15AM Kids' Church

11:05AM Coffee Fellowship

11:20AM Lenten Study - Memorial Hall

Monday, February 26

7:00PM Executive Ministry (Zoom)

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

Tuesday, February 27

10:30AM Staff Meeting – Church Office

12:00PM Lady Elect – Inglis Room

Wednesday, February 28

9:30AM Yoga – Inglis Room

6:00PM Bridge Club – Inglis Room

Sunday, March 3

Third Sunday in Lent

9:45AM Nursery Care

10:00AM Worship

10:15AM Kids' Church

11:05AM Coffee Fellowship

11:20AM Lenten Study - Memorial Hall

11:30AM Google Sheets training - Inglis Room



Jazz Belongs in Church — Part I

For the past eight years I have been a contributing writer for *Worship Music & Ministry* a journal produced by the UCC Musicians Association. My three times a year column is about jazz and the church, providing a context for jazz in worship while offering ideas and resources for church music ministries wishing to include jazz in their liturgical life.

This article was published several years ago. I thought you might like insight into my jazz ministry at our church. The following is part one of that extended essay.

One Church's Response to Jazz in Worship

It was 1971. I was home from college on break and chatting with my pastor about my first semester attending a church-related college. Pastor Bert, my spiritual mentor, had been instrumental in helping me realize that God just might be nudging me to a “call to ministry.” It was an exciting time in my young life.

After a long conversation he agreed to let me lead a jazz quartet in Sunday morning worship—at both services. Our church dated back to 1812 and was a unique blend of old-time traditionalists and younger families committed to progressive outreach in the community. It was a busy and vital congregation. The high school youth group numbered 40 to 60 on any given Sunday. It was also the time of Viet Nam, social unrest, riots in the street, and hippies espousing sex, drugs and rock ‘n’ roll. And so, yes, my hair was on the long side.

Sunday morning came and the band started the prelude: Miles Davis’ “All Blues.” After only a few brief moments the first person stood up to leave, followed by another and yet another. In all, at least thirty people walked out of the first service. The second, larger-attended service had just as many, if not more, follow suit. The fallout in the congregation was cataclysmic, and the repercussions lasted for weeks (long after I had returned to college).

Pastor Bert, and his staff, came under fire by those who felt these “hippies” had played “the devil’s music” in church. How could he allow such un-Christian music in the sanctuary to defile worship? Two days after the “devil’s music service” I was invited to attend the Tuesday morning meeting of staff and I feared I would be on the hot seat. But Pastor Bert, to his credit and my relief, justified using jazz as an appropriate way to worship God. Even though he was not a jazz fan he admitted the music was performed joyfully, and didn’t the Psalmist say that we’re supposed to “make a joyful noise unto the Lord,” (Psalm 100:1). It wasn’t just noise, like so many complained, it was “joyful noise” in the form of a music called jazz. Even though the

pastoral staff affirmed the playing of jazz in the worship service, it took a lot of pastoral care and leadership to weather the “crisis.”

In the weeks following, Pastor Bert held his ground, explaining to the congregation the need for experiencing new forms of worship, even jazz. The key to it all, he said again and again, was the spiritual intent of worship. If it was based in praise to God and love for each other, surely God smiled upon us. The furor did not die down immediately but the edginess was reduced and I was still welcomed by the members of the church even though many disagreed with my music. Christian love prevailed.

Fast forward to 2008. Thirty-seven years later I was invited back to my old church by Pastor Tom, a huge jazz fan. The congregation’s response this time? Smiles, hand clapping, swaying bodies and, at the conclusion, a standing ovation and countless accolades. Pastor Bert, long since retired, was seated in the congregation and gave me a big hug afterward. Both he and I knew that the wheels of the Church turn slowly.

So what changed? Had my saxophone playing gotten that much better, or had enough time passed for the congregation to become culturally “hip”? Perhaps a little of both, but the truth is far deeper. In part two I will share a brief history of jazz, its place in worship, and the birth of the Oikos Ensemble and our creative music ministry.

Cliff Aerie
Ministry of Imagination, Creativity and the Art (MICA)

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From the Music Director

Our Music Department is busy preparing for Easter! Be on the lookout for brass this Easter – The Municipal Brass Works lead by Tom Bruce will enliven our worship which will include an anthem for Brass, Bells, and Choir! Please come early because we will have an extended prelude (recital!) on Easter Sunday. Music will begin between 9:30 and 9:45. For those of you who will want to sing the Halleluiah Chorus at the postlude, we will make sure First Friends will have plenty of copies to give you before the service so that there is not a line for music when it is time to sing. I have some surprises in store for the congregation too!

Oh well, back to work...

Leon



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