

Welcome!

First Congregational Church
of Webster Groves United Church of Christ



Seek Christ in each. Serve God in all.

MARCH 3, 2024

THIRD SUNDAY IN LENT
UCC WOMEN'S WEEK

For God's
foolishness
is wiser
than
human
wisdom,
and God's
weakness
is stronger
than
human
strength.

1 CORINTHIANS 1:25, NRSV

*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

Softly and Tenderly

Dale Wood

WELCOME

Jennifer Jones, *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

CALL TO WORSHIP (Responsive – Leader; People)

The holy One our God is great.

God calls us to greatness.

The holy One our God is just.

God calls us to walk justly.

The holy One our God is righteous.

God calls us to walk uprightly.

The holy One our God is peace.

God calls us to live in peace.

The holy One our God is a God of unity.

God calls us to oneness and equality through faith in Christ.

The holy One our God is love.

**God calls us to love one another. Come, let us worship our true
and living 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**

God of Grace and God of Glory
No. 435, vv. 1,3,5 – *New Century Hymnal*

H. E. Fosdick

***RITUAL OF APPROACH**

Invitation to Confession

The Invitation includes a series of brief silences for bringing to mind our faults.

Prayer of Confession (Responsive – Liturgist; People)

Holy Savior, help us.

Holy Mother, hold us.

Holy Healer, mend us.

Holy Potter, mold us.

Holy Midwife, deliver us.

Holy Wisdom, guide us.

Holy Spring of Living Water, cleanse us.

Holy Mercy, forgive us.

Help us to demonstrate your love in all that we do and say. Mold us and shape us into the loving brothers and sisters you want us to be.

Amen! Amen! And Amen!

Silence for Personal Confessions

Assurance of Pardon

Siblings in Christ, as a body of believers, we know God hears our faintest cry. God hears our earnest plea. God hears our solemn petition. The God we serve is a loving God! The God we serve is a forgiving God!

All praise, glory and honor be unto our God! Amen!

***SINGING GOD'S GLORY**

Sing Amen

S. C. Molefe

No. 760 – *New Century Hymnal*

THE WORD SHARED

From the Epistles

1 Corinthians 1:18-25

Pew Bible, p. 1038

From the Gospels

John 2:13-22

p. 967

Response

Hear what the Spirit is saying to the people.

Thanks be to God.

MESSAGE OF THE DAY

"The Outlaw God"

Rev. David Denoon, *Pastor*

WE SHARE OUR BLESSINGS WITH OTHERS

Invitation

Offertory

**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)*

Gracious God, you are a well that does not run dry. You never tire of giving good gifts to your children. And in response, we bring our offerings to be used to support our faith community and to participate in heaven's love and justice work. Bless and multiply these gifts today, and use them for your glory. Amen.

SACRAMENT OF CHRIST'S TABLE

Invitation

Prayer of Thanksgiving

Prayer of Our Savior

tr. Denoon

Our Mother in heaven, make your name holy. Reveal your love, and teach us your way. Make earth alike with heaven. Provide bread for today, so that we do not worry about tomorrow. And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. Keep us from things that would keep us from you, but deliver us from the evil one. For here is your love: where power and glory are shared, now and forever. Amen.

Sharing the Story

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 after Communion (Unison)

God, our fountain of life, once again you have been faithful to feed us at the feast of love. Though we will surely gather again to celebrate Christ's Table, we know that your gift of Jesus is enough, once and for all. Your forgiveness, your mercy, and your presence know no end. So we step away from communion refreshed and reminded that your cup is always full and always available. Amen.

*CLOSING HYMN

There Is a Line of Women

John Bell

Tune: CLIMBING VINE

Charlene Nafziger

There is a line of women extending back to Eve,
Whose role in shaping hist'ry God only could conceive.
And though, through endless ages their witness was repressed,
God valued and encouraged them through whom the world was blest.
So sing a song of Sarah, to laughter she gave birth;
And sing a song of Tamar who stood for women's worth;
And sing a song of Hannah who bargained with her Lord;
And sing a song of Mary who bore and bred God's Word.

There is a line of women who took on pow'ful men,
Defying laws and scruples to let life live again.
And though, despite their triumph, their stories stayed untold
God kept their number growing creative, strong, and bold.
So sing a song of Shiphrah with Puah at her hand,
Engaged to kill male children they foiled the king's command.
And sing a song of Rahab who sheltered spies and lied;
And sing a song of Esther, preventing genocide.

There is a line of women who stood by Jesus' side,
Who housed him while he ministered and held him when he died.
And though they claimed he'd risen, their news was deemed suspect
Till Jesus stood among them, his womanly elect.
So sing a song of anna who saw Christ's infant face;
And sing a song of Martha who gave him food and space;
And sing of all the Marys who heeded his requests,
And now at heaven's banquet are Jesus' fondest guests.

*BENEDICTION

*PARTING WORDS

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

POSTLUDE

Chorale in E

Caesar Franck

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.

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, **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>

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 Giving Tree

We're excited about the *Gala of Grace: A Night of Giving & Gratitude*. We hope that you are planning to be part of this exciting event on April 6.

This year, we will have the Giving Tree. Yes, it's a tree with gifts that you can purchase. Right now, we are looking for folks who would like to contribute a gift or service that can be sold on the Giving Tree. For example, if you love to bake, perhaps you can bake something or if you are handy around the house, you may want to donate a couple of hours of service. These items will be bought from the Giving Tree at the Gala, and the recipients will let you know when they would like their gift. Please see Nancy Rudolph or Jeanene Harris with your contribution.

Thank you and we look forward to seeing you.

“Gala of Grace” — A Night of Giving and Gratitude Saturday, April 6th

Please be sure to pick up an invitation this morning and register for this exciting upcoming event where we will raise money to support local 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 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.

Quilt Auction a Success!

Thank to everyone that helped to make the quilt auction event happen! We raised \$4,016 and have four quilts left to sell at a future date. It was an interesting undertaking and I think we created a conducive setting. Best to you all and thanks again.

- Laura Cooper

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 RinneMarch 14
Kitty Pearl.....March 18
Jim Harris.....March 21
Amy Byrne.....March 26

Peter Kalulu and Lawrence Katumba Coming April 7 to Adult Ed at 11:20 in Memorial Hall

Public Health program. They are both from Uganda and plan to return to their country to implement their training. Peter is from northern Uganda and promotes global health equity and accessibility for vulnerable populations. He strives to provide clean and safe water, and good sanitation to rural communities.

Lawrence comes from Kampala, the capital city of Uganda. He is a Ugandan health worker specializing in emergency medicine. At Washington University, he specialized in epidemiology and biostatistics. Before coming to Wash University, he joined Peter and the team to improve rural communities' health by providing clean and safe water, and a project on reducing malnutrition, through food banks in Uganda.

Come to learn about their projects and their plans when they return to their country. They are truly remarkable men and how lucky we are to have them part of our congregation during their Washington University study.

What's Happening at First Church

Sunday, March 3

**Third Sunday in Lent / UCC Women's Sunday
Sacrament of Christ's Table / All Ages Worship**

9:00AM Brown Baggers

9:45AM Nursery Care

10:00AM All Ages Worship

11:05AM Coffee Fellowship

11:20AM Lenten Study - Memorial Hall

Monday, March 4

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

Tuesday, March 5

10:30AM Staff Meeting – Church Office

6:30PM Practicing Our Faith – Parlor

Wednesday, March 6

9:30AM Yoga – Inglis Room

6:00PM Bridge Club – Inglis Room

Thursday, March 7

6:00PM Canterbury Bells rehearsal - Sanctuary

7:30PM Chancel Choir rehearsal - Music Room

Sunday, March 10

**Fourth Sunday in Lent
Daylight Saving Time Begins**

9:00AM Brown Baggers

9:45AM Nursery Care

10:00AM Worship

10:15AM Kids' Church

11:05AM Coffee Fellowship

11:20AM Lenten Study - Memorial Hall

Monday, March 11

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

7:00PM Three Ministries (Hybrid)



FROM THE PASTOR

"This Is My Body"

While they were eating, he took a loaf of bread, and after blessing it he broke it, gave it to them, and said, "Take; this is my body." (Mark 14:22)

This passage, taken from the last meal Jesus ate which Christians remember was Passover seder, drips with poignancy as the rabbi speaks a symbolic farewell to his disciples. But this otherwise mundane act affirms the solidarity of our God with us.

The Lenten Devotional booklet, *This Is My Body*, which we are studying now, offers the observation, "Sometimes the weakness of our flesh is also a kind of wisdom. Sometimes the brokenness of our bodies is also a kind of blessedness." Here, at the table of the Last Supper, the Child of God acknowledges the way in which his own body is about to be broken.

And he will, thereafter, only be experienced bearing the wounds he received in earthly life. Even Paul, who will only ever know Christ spiritually, will be confronted by his Savior demanding, "Why do you persecute me?" (Acts 9:4) Paul would not remember the Christ asking, "Why do you persecute the church?" We may therefore presume that Jesus so identifies with those who are suffering, he takes the pain personally (cf. Matthew 25:41-43).

This month, as we recall the institution of the sacrament of Christ's Table and all the events that ensued, as we collect the offering for "One Great Hour of Sharing" on March 10 and prepare for our "Gala of Grace" on April 6, I hope that all of us may be re-membering Christ's manifestation among us and seeking by God's grace to embody Christ for others.

For we are a Resurrection People, renewed even in our weakness and our brokenness for the sake of others and for our world.

Peace.

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

WORSHIP NOTES FOR MARCH 2024

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, except Maundy Thursday and Good Friday.

— Prayers and other parts of the liturgy during the season of Lent will pick up on the theme for each week in our Lenten study, *This Is My Body*. —

SUNDAY, MARCH 3 – *Third Sunday in Lent; UCC Women’s Week; Sacrament of Christ’s Table; All Ages Worship.*

– Focus of *This Is My Body*: the significance of water. –

Scriptures for March 3: 1 Corinthians 1:18-25; John 2:13-22. Jesus speaks what sounds like foolishness to those who confront him for upsetting the business of the Temple. Paul observes that “God’s foolishness is wiser than human wisdom.” Let’s consider what sort of foolishness the Spirit is inviting us to participate in. Message of the Day: **“The Outlaw God”**

SUNDAY, MARCH 10 – *Fourth Sunday in Lent; “One Great Hour of Sharing” Special Offering (benefits Church World Service).*

– Focus of *This Is My Body*: how different people’s behaviors can be. –

Scriptures for March 10: Ephesians 2:1-10; John 3:14-21. As Daylight Saving Time begins again, and we draw together offerings to benefit Church World Service, we cross some pretty familiar ground, scripture-wise. The reading from John includes that familiar passage beginning with “For God so loved the world...” The words from Ephesians consider us once “dead through our trespasses, made... alive together with Christ.” Familiar and formulaic-sounding, perhaps, these passages also abound with promise for who we may become, if we are just willing to risk our dignity as Jesus did. Message of the Day: **“Positively Vulnerable”**

SUNDAY, MARCH 17 – *Fifth Sunday in Lent; St. Patrick’s Day; Jazz Worship.*

– Focus of *This Is My Body*: “hangry” versus compassionate. –

Scriptures for March 17: Jeremiah 31:31-34; Hebrews 5:5-10; John 12:20-33. The Oikos Ensemble joins us as we consider the underlying reality (glory) of our existence, and what this can mean for our interaction with the world we can perceive with our senses. Message of the Day: **“A Sixth Sense”**

SUNDAY, MARCH 24 – *Palm/Passion Sunday*

– Focus of *This Is My Body*: being present, blessed and broken (Weeks 6 & 7). –

Scriptures for March 24: Psalm 118:1-2, 19-29; Mark 11:1-11; Mark 14-15. After a jubilant opening, Jesus’ pilgrimage to Jerusalem went sour, and then things got as bad as they could go. After our own rejoicing with children and the blessing of palms, four worship leaders recall for us the events of Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday of Holy Week. Message of the Day: **“The Passion According to Mark”**

MAUNDY THURSDAY, MARCH 28, 7:00PM in the William E. Sample Chapel with Sts. Clare & Francis Ecumenical Catholic Communion – A service of footwashing, anointing, and communion.

GOOD FRIDAY, MARCH 29, 7:00PM – *Good Friday Blues: Jazz Lament.*

Christian churches across America have difficulty with lament. It doesn’t “sell” the way that exuberance does. The Oikos Ensemble and friends return to our familiar setting for lament. Using Tenebrae (the Service of Shadows) as the motif, we will reflect on the conditions that led to Jesus’ crucifixion compared with conditions of suffering and pain in our own times.

SUNDAY, MARCH 31 – *Easter/Resurrection Sunday*

Scriptures for March 31: Psalm 118:1-2, 14-24; 1 Corinthians 15:1-11; Mark 16:1-8. The lament ends: our prayers are answered. Christ is risen! This service will include a brass



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