

Welcome!

First Congregational Church
of Webster Groves United Church of Christ



Seek Christ in each. Serve God in all.

MARCH 24, 2024

PALM SUNDAY OF THE PASSION



Palm 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 the Congregation standing, in body or in spirit.*

PRELUDE *Prelude on St. Theodulph* G. F. Kaufmann

WELCOME Joan Musbach, *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

OPENING WORDS

From the Gospels Mark 11:1-11 Kids Church participants
*When the reading concludes, any children who wish to distribute palm fronds to the
Congregation are invited forward.*

***HYMN** *All Glory, Laud, and Honor* Theodulph of Orleans
No. [155 – Pilgrim Hymnal](#)

***BLESSING OF PALMS** (Responsive – Leaders; **People**)

O Sovereign Jesus Christ,

We expect you.

Humble and riding on a donkey,

We greet you.

Acclaimed by crowds and caroled by children,

We cheer you.

Moving from the peace of the countryside to the corridors of power,

We salute you, Christ our Savior.

You are giving the beast of burden a new dignity; you are giving majesty a new
face; you are giving those who long for redemption a new song to sing.

With them, with heart and voice, we shout, “Hosanna!”

Everyone repeats, “Hosanna!”

O God, here with us now, bless these palms we wave.

**We pray that as we carry them in Christ’s name, so we
may ever acknowledge Christ in the way that leads to
eternal life. All praise to you, O God, in Christ who lives
and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God for ever
and ever. Amen.**

*When this ritual is concluded, the young people may proceed to Kids’ Church,
or return to their places in the sanctuary.*

***WORDS OF APPROACH** (Responsive)

Psalm 118:1, 19-29

Give thanks to the HOLY ONE because God is good,

because God’s faithful love lasts forever.

Open for me the gates of righteousness so I may enter them and give thanks to

the LIVING GOD!

This is the gate to the HOLY PRESENCE; the righteous shall enter through it.

I thank you because you have answered me, and you have become my salvation. The stone that the builders rejected has become the chief cornerstone!

This is OUR GOD's doing; it is thrilling to our senses!

This is the day has sprung forth from the FONT OF CREATION; for today, let us rejoice and be glad!

Ah, HOLY ONE, help, save us! Ah, HOLY ONE, haste, deliver us!

Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the MOST HIGH GOD. We bless all of you from the house of the HOLY ONE.

The FAITHFUL ONE is God and has given us light!

Bind the festal offering with ropes of branches up to the horns of the altar.

You are my God, and I will give thanks to you! You are my God; I will exalt you!

Give thanks to the HOLY ONE.

Our God is good, whose faithful love lasts forever.

*RAISING THE COVENANT (Unison)

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.

ANTHEM

All Glory, Laud, and Honor

arr. Lloyd Larson

MESSAGE OF THE DAY

"The Passion according to Mark"

Mark 14-15

Trigger Warning

Although this morning's worship is intended for all, today's Message of the Day, "The Passion According to Mark" (chapters 14-15), may be inappropriate for more sensitive or impressionable listeners, because of its depictions of violence and trauma. Your discretion is advised.

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

We Share Our 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* (Responsive)

O God, let our gifts shout Hosanna.

Let us as givers resist any temptations to self-righteousness or self-protection.

And let us be part of Christ's holy parade.

Amen.

***PARTING HYMN**

When I Survey the Wondrous Cross
No. 177 – *Pilgrim Hymnal*

Isaac Watts

***BENEDICTION**

***PARTING WORDS**

Liturgist: Our worship has ended.

People: Let our service begin.

POSTLUDE

Sing Praise to God Who Reigns Above

arr. Hal Hopson

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 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 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 QR code.

Volunteer Opportunities

Signup forms to serve as worship leaders and/or Kids Church helpers are at
Liturgists - bit.ly/Liturgists-2024 | **Kids Church** - bit.ly/FCCWG-Kids-2024

“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 for more than fifteen local charities and covenanted ministries. “Gala of Grace: A Night of Giving & Gratitude” is your opportunity to attend a dazzling event featuring a multi-course dinner, with music by artists Jared Cohen, Jonathan Brader, and the Oikos Ensemble, plus 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.

Dinner tickets for \$35 (soft drinks) or \$45 (beer & wine) may be purchased after worship at the table in the narthex. Cash, check, and cards are accepted. *Childcare is available, upon reservation.* Tickets are also available online at FirstChurchWG.org/donate

See our TEMPTATIONS by visiting bit.ly/FCCWG-Tempation1 or bit.ly/FCCWG-Temptation2.

Lady Elect to meet on March 26 at 12:00 Noon

The next gathering of the Lady Elect will feature a program about handmade Guatemalan baskets. Alexandra Wechsler helps employ Guatemalan women in making these beautiful, unique baskets. The baskets are woven from recycled plastic threads. Come, hear her story. Bring a sack lunch and join the Lady Elect at noon in the Inglis Room. All women of the church are welcome to attend. To RSVP, or for more information, please contact Faye Dyer.

Coffee Cakes Needed for Easter Sunday!

Before worship, please bring a favorite coffee cake to share for Coffee Fellowship. Continuing our annual Easter tradition, Parish Life Ministry requests that the cakes be **pre-plated and ready-to-serve!**

This Easter, we are initiating a request that the coffee cakes be nut-free. If your cake includes nuts, please be sure to label it very clearly!

First Church's Holy Week Schedule

Thursday, March 28, 7:00pm – Union worship for Maundy Thursday
with Sts. Clare & Francis Ecumenical Catholic Communion (Wm. E. Sample Chapel)

Friday, March 29, 7:00pm – Good Friday Blues with the Oikos Ensemble and Logos Readers

Sunday, March 31, 9:45am – *Concert: Music for the Resurrection*
featuring Canterbury Bells, conducted by Leon Burke, and
Metropolitan Brass Works, led by Tom Bruce

10:00am – *Festival Worship and Kids Church*

11:15am – *Coffee Fellowship* with homemade coffee cakes

Annual Reports Due on April 15

If you are the chair of one of the ministries, employees, or groups, please submit your reports to Debbie by April 15. For those new to Annual Report writing, the period we need is from May of 2023 through April of 2024.

Church Historian • Treasurer • Moderator • Endowment Counselors • Communications Team
First Friends • Parish Life Ministry • Membership • Habitat for Humanity • Benevolence
Holiday Library • Facility and Finance Ministry • Christian Ed Ministry
Coordinator of Faith Formation • Music Director • Ministry of Imagination, Creativity and the Arts
Brown Baggers • Peace and Justice • Lady Elect Guild • Journeymen
Stillpoint Multi-faith Campus Ministry at Webster University • Pastor

Calling All Puzzlers

If you like jigsaw puzzles, there will be a storage tub full of them in the office. The tub will be located under the desk by the door leading to the kitchen. Help yourself and return when it's finished. If you have puzzles to donate, just drop them off in the tub. We've discovered there are many puzzlers in our church. Enjoy!

March Meal-a-Month 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 Byrne..... March 26

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

Peter and Lawrence are both from Uganda and will be returning to their country in May to put their studies into practice. 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. The two of them met just prior to moving to the States, and they will be teaming up to improve rural communities' health by providing clean and safe water, and a project on reducing malnutrition through food banks in Uganda. Come, 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 24

Palm Sunday of the Passion

9:45AM Nursery Care

10:00AM Worship with the Oikos Ensemble

10:15AM Kids' Church

11:05AM Coffee Fellowship

11:20AM Lenten Study - Memorial Hall

Monday, March 25

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

Tuesday, March 26

10:30AM Staff Meeting – Church Office

12:00PM Lady Elect – Inglis Room

Wednesday, March 27

9:30AM Yoga – Inglis Room

6:00PM Bridge Club – Inglis Room

Thursday, March 28

6:00PM Canterbury Bells & Chancel Choir rehearsals – Sanctuary

7:00PM Maundy Thursday Worship – Sample Chapel

Friday, March 29 – Good Friday

7:00PM Good Friday Blues: Jazz Lament – Sanctuary

Sunday, March 31

Easter Sunday / Resurrection Day

9:45AM Nursery Care

10:00AM Worship

10:15AM Kids' Church

11:15AM Coffee Fellowship



Jazz Belongs in Church – Part #2

In the previous article I shared my first attempt at leading jazz in worship—with a dramatic negative response by many in the congregation. Times have changed and many congregations today have regular jazz services. One of the reasons why jazz has faced controversy and rejection in the church for many years is quite simple. People don't understand the music.

A Brief History of Jazz in Just Seven Sentences (177 words)

Jazz and the church have been inexorably linked since the first African slaves were allowed into their masters' sanctuary and encouraged to embrace the religion of their oppressors. In the decades that followed, the work songs and rhythmic melodies originally sung in the fields became the musical sustenance for their spiritual life. From this, gospel music emerged and sang of a heavenly sanctuary, the sweet by-and-by, and the hope of spiritual freedom. Emancipation promised freedom, yet in reality produced violent prejudice, and somehow even in the midst of Jim Crow oppression, the music continued.

The blues grew out of the daily trials and heartaches of a people trying to survive bigotry and hatred. Throughout the years this music took many twists and turns, moved from the sanctuary into the street, onto the nightclub and performance stage, and evolved into something commonly labeled jazz. Swing bands became popular, small bebop combos emerged, song stylists interpreted the standards, and jazz took on many forms: from straight-ahead to avant-garde, cool to funk, ballads to hip-hop. Both performers and audiences diversified.

Understanding Jazz Today

Today, the music is so broadly expansive that the very word "jazz" is inadequate to define the genre. The late Dr. Billy Taylor, jazz pianist and educator, called jazz "America's classical music." In 1987 the U.S. House of Representatives designated jazz as "a rare and valuable national American treasure." But just mention the word jazz, and just about everyone has a different opinion about what it means. What designates jazz as jazz? The great trumpeter, Louis Armstrong once said, "Man, if you have to ask what it is, you'll never know." The grand lady of jazz, Ella Fitzgerald said, "Forgive me if I don't have the words. Maybe I can sing it and you'll understand." Or in the words of the great American philosopher, Yogi Berra, "Anyone who understands jazz knows that you can't understand it. It's too complicated. That's what's so simple about it."

Yogi's assessment is right on. Jazz is way beyond understanding. It's far too complicated. That is precisely what's so simple about it. It's like trying to comprehend God. We can't begin to understand God because God is far too complicated, and yet there is a spiritual simplicity that dwells within the

landscape of the human soul that connects us with the divine. John Coltrane, the most eloquent of all saxophonists said, “My music is the spiritual expression of what I am: my faith, my knowledge, my being.” Jazz can be, and I maintain is, a spiritual art form that opens musicians and worshippers to the indwelling Spirit.

Jazz Unlocks the Stirrings of the Soul

Louis Armstrong once said, “My whole life, my whole soul, my whole spirit is to blow that horn . . . What we play is life.” It was the simple, yet profound act of placing the trumpet to his lips and blowing—inhabiting his horn with his breath, his soul, his life. And that of course was why he did it. To play life! Armstrong lived his passion. His music became a framework for his existence, and even more so, a deep connection with his Muse, the creative force (Spirit) that urged him to explore the infinite possibilities of living life with creative purpose through his horn.

If each one of us could only discover what it is that stirs our soul, makes our heart sing, urges us to action, and then live that discovery with passion, joy and commitment! I contend that worship should be a time when we stir up the soul, sing from the depths of our heart, and poise ourselves for a life of dedicated action. Jazz has the power to inspire us to explore the inner landscape of the soul, delve into the heart of our spiritual essence, and urge us forward in faithful committed action.

In the final installment of this trilogy, I’ll share how the Oikos Ensemble came into being and how jazz in worship has touched the hearts and souls of many people in the church pew. Until next time . . .

~Cliff Aerie

Bylaws Revision in Process

Realizing that portions of our Bylaws have become outdated since the last revision in 2015, the Executive Ministry authorized a Bylaws Revision Committee to begin the updating process.

Chaired by Joan Musbach, Immediate Past Moderator, the committee is meeting every other week. Other members of the committee are: Rev. David Denoon, George Conlee, Doug Barton, Dan Claggett, Mark Edwards and Jane Porchey. When Doug and Dave are unable to attend, they are kept informed of the committee’s work through emails. Mark, Jane and Joan bring the perspective of past moderators who experienced issues with inconsistencies and lack of clarity in the current Bylaws. The committee is working to address those issues. George brings his attention to detail to the committee and Dan brings his legal skills to the discussion. As you might suspect, the work proceeds slowly. We hope to have a revised document to show the membership this summer.



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