

# Welcome!

First Congregational Church  
of Webster Groves United Church of Christ



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

**MAY 12, 2024**

**SEVENTH SUNDAY OF EASTER  
FESTIVAL OF THE CHRISTIAN HOME  
MOTHER'S DAY**



**God  
gave us  
eternal life;  
and this life  
is in  
that Child.**

1 John 5:12

*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 Andante* W. A. Mozart

**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**

**INTROIT** *Ode to Joy* L. von Beethoven  
Laine Gomez, cello

**CALL TO WORSHIP** From Job 38 and 42  
(Responsive – Liturgist; **People**)

When Job complained to God that he was being cruelly treated even though he was righteous, God replied,

**“Where were you when I created the earth? Who held back the sea when it burst forth from my womb, when I created clouds as the earth’s raiment and thick darkness as its swaddling clothes?”**

Then Job answered, “I know that you can do all things: you have only to think something, and it is done... I take back all that I said.

**“Formerly I knew you only by word of mouth, but now I see you with my own eyes.”**

Here we now gather as the offspring of the God who birthed us and offers us new life over and over.

**In Christ our resurrected sibling we have seen and come to know our God. With rejoicing, let us worship.**

**\*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.**

**\*GATHERING HYMN** *Womb of Life and Source of Being* Ruth Duck  
No. 274, vv. 1,4 – *New Century Hymnal*  
(alternate tune: RAQUEL)

**\*RITUAL OF APPROACH**

*\*Invitation*

*\*Silence for Personal Confession*

*\*Prayer of Confession* (Unison)

**God our Mother, here are we, children of your Spirit and your world.  
We marvel at the love we have known and are coming to know.  
Beloved of you as we are, we should have no problem telling others**

**about your love, and certainly no trouble showing it. But, like children with their earthly parents, we have often avoided the Spirit's good and failed to share our Mother's love. To take up the work again, we depend upon your grace and faith in us. Thank you for the assurance of forgiveness you have given in Christ Jesus. We will persevere. Lead on, Lover and Redeemer! Amen.**

*\*Singing God's Glory*

*Halle-halleluja!*

Trad. Caribbean

No. 236 – *New Century Hymnal*

**NOT FOR CHILDREN ONLY**

Johari Hunt, *Coordinator of Faith Formation*

*Kids' Church participants will begin with a time of song.*

*Afterward, children who have not been singing will be invited forward for a story.*

*Story of the Day*

*Oh No, the Aunts Are Here!*

Adam Rex, Lian Chao

*After the story, children may proceed to Kids' Church, or return to their seats.*

**SHARING THE WORD**

*From the Epistles*

1 John 5:6-12

Pew Bible, p. 1113

*Response.*

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

**People: Thanks be to God.**

**ANTHEM**

*The 23rd Psalm (dedicated to my mother)*

Bobby McFerrin

**MESSAGE OF THE DAY**

*"Mother Christ"*

Rev. David Denoon, *Pastor*

**PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE**

*Preparation*

*Nothing Can Trouble*

Jacques Berthier

No. 772 – *New Century Hymnal*

*We Lift Our Joys and Concerns to God*

*Prayer of the Day*

*Prayer of Our Savior*

adapt. 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.**

**WE SHARE OUR GIFTS WITH OTHERS**

*Opportunities to Give and Gather*

*\*Song of Praise*

*Doxology with Alleluias*

LASST UNS ERFREUEN

**Praise God from whom all blessings flow!**

**Praise God, all creatures here below!**

**Alleluia! Alleluia!**

**Praise God above, you heavenly host –**

**Creator, Christ, and Holy Ghost!**

**Alleluia! Alleluia!**

**Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!**

*\*Prayer of Dedication (Unison)*

**Great Parent God, never fully known, we your children rejoice to gather near you. We come bearing gifts, so that all your children may be blessed by word and deed of your beloved faithful. In Christ's name, we ask your blessing upon them. Amen.**

**\*PARTING HYMN**

*Mothering God, You Gave Me Birth*  
No. 467 – *New Century Hymnal*  
(alternate tune: MARYTON)

Jean Janzen

**\*BENEDICTION**

**\*PARTING WORDS**

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

**POSTLUDE**

*Postlude in G Minor*

J. S. Bach

*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.*

### **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.

Go to [bit.ly/FCCWG-YT](https://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**

**Liturgists** - [bit.ly/Liturgists-2024](https://bit.ly/Liturgists-2024) | **Kids Church** - [bit.ly/FCCWG-Kids-2024](https://bit.ly/FCCWG-Kids-2024)

**Martin Mills' eyedrops (through May 14)** – [bit.ly/Martin01](https://bit.ly/Martin01)

### **The Annual Lady Elect Spring Potluck – Tuesday Evening May 28th**

We will gather at 6:00 pm in the Inglis Room for a social time with dinner to follow at 6:30. Please RSVP with Faye Dyer and indicate if you will be bringing a main dish, salad, or dessert. Beverages will be provided.

All women are invited!

## Submitting Covenant News/Bulletin Articles, Information, Images and Reports!

If you would like something included in one of the issues for the *Covenant News* weekly email and for the bulletin, please email it to Debbie by the 20th of the month prior to the month in which you want your item included. Alternatively, for *Covenant News* the same week, please be sure to email us by Tuesday afternoons.

## Webster Rock Hill Ministries Trivia Night – Friday, June 14 Memorial Hall – Doors open at 6:15 & the Game begins at 7:00

\$30 per person or \$240 per table of 8

To Register: Call WRHM office 314-961-5082 and ask for Janice or Derek  
Prepayment is required for reservation.

\*Please bring canned goods to help the Ministries\*

## Habitat for Humanity Update

Sunday June 2 is the day for the dedication of five new Habitat homes in the Lookaway Summit neighborhood. First Church volunteers worked on these homes last August. Watch this space for details. The published date for our 2024 First Church Habitat Workday is wrong. **The accurate date is Saturday, October 26.** There are still openings. Sign-up sheet is hanging in the office. We will be working with a group from Peace UCC.

## New Display Case Exhibit

Take time on your way to Memorial Hall to enjoy the new display in the display case. Charlie Schoenherr had shared items from his school lunch box collection and Kathy Hill has shared her bird collection. Together they provide a “breath of Spring” for us all to enjoy. Thank you Charlie and Kathy for sharing. If you would like to share something for a new display later this year, please see or contact Joan Musbach.

## Paul Davis's Books Available in the Holaday Library

A selection of Paul's books are now available from the Holaday Library, for you to add to your personal library. Titles include **A Bright Defiance** (poetry) and **Sermons Through Time** (compilation of sermons curated for the church's 125<sup>th</sup> anniversary, and Paul's 25<sup>th</sup> as Senior Pastor) as well as his last chapbook, **Streams the Color of Ale**. Paul was a wonderful poet and a gifted and insightful preacher. Don't miss this opportunity to enrich your spiritual life, or to give as a gift!

## May Meal-a-Month Shopping List

Canned Chicken • Canned Green Vegetable (low or no salt)

Canned Fruit in own juices

Powdered Milk, shelf stable milk, soy milk

Pudding or Jell-O (fat free/sugar free)

Shampoo/Conditioner • Soap • Deodorant

## May Birthdays

Dana Romeis	May 1	Kay Roush	May 12
Cathy Buerk	May 3	Peter Bakker-Arkema	May 17
Mark Edwards	May 3	Jean Gray	May 19
Melissa Hill	May 3	Sophia Monaco	May 23
Thomas Welnick	May 8	Linda Kopetti	May 24
Garie Perry	May 9	Mark Thompson	May 26
Drue Hood	May 10	Trevor Zink	May 28

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

**Sunday, May 12**  
**Seventh Sunday of Easter**  
**Mother's Day**  
**Festival of the Christian Home**

**9:45AM** Nursery Care Available

**10:00AM** Worship

**10:15AM** Kids' Church

**11:05AM** Coffee Fellowship

**Monday, May 13**

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

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

**Tuesday, May 14**

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

**Wednesday, May 15**

**9:30AM** Yoga with Jeanene – Inglis Room

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

**6:00PM** Bridge Club – Inglis Room

**Thursday, May 16**

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

**Sunday, May 19**

**Pentecost**

**“Strengthen the Church” Special Offering**

**9:45AM** Nursery Care Available

**10:00AM** Worship

**10:15AM** Kids' Church

**11:05AM** Annual Congregational Meeting

**11:20AM** Coffee Fellowship

**4:00PM** Baptism / Confirmation Class (Zoom)





## **PASTOR'S REPORT "Recovery Mode"**

(Instead of my usual monthly "From the Pastor,"  
this month I am submitting my 2024 annual report to you.)

Last year, I concluded my report with a section titled, "I am thankful and encouraged." I remain so, I look forward to the coming year(s), and I hope that you do too. For me, this is because, as I prepare for my second sabbatical, I find myself reflecting on the unexpected recovery we are experiencing and how it assures me that I can afford to step aside for a few months, to restore.

Think about this: In the twelve months just past we bade farewell to only two members by death and two by letter of transfer, while we've welcomed eleven new members and two members have renewed their memberships. How can one not be encouraged by such news!

I have a hunch about that, really. In 1977 – within living memory for many of us – First Church counted 1,430 "active" members, an active member being someone "who actively participates in the spiritual and financial life of the church" (Bylaws, Article I, Section 1, Paragraph A) and who is not affiliated with another congregation. We are now at one-tenth that number, or 143, not including associate members (individuals who *are* affiliated with another church – I count 17; the Membership Committee's number is closer to 30). Even as we recover from covid with the rest of the world and we feel a certain Spirit of life among us, there are some who remember 1977 and earlier. It might feel to some as if what I am identifying as a recovery mode is actually just a blip in an irreversible decline.

But something is definitely happening to the good, right now. And I choose to identify it as a renewal of our faith community. In this renewal, we find ourselves "on message." The electronic signboard promotes our congregation as Open and Affirming; a banner at the corner of Elm & Lockwood calls for "A Just World for All." I was recently presented a Citizen of the Year award by the area Chamber of Commerce for my work (with you!) to demand positive change and to correct historic and present-day wrongs. People are paying attention. Every Sunday, we welcome newcomers who have gotten word about us as a sanctuary for vulnerable people and who experience not only our warmth but our sense of purpose.

Yes, we show up for our wider community, and we are showing up for each other. I am not saying that previous generations of First Church members failed to do this, but often these were individual efforts. No such thing arises anymore. If a call goes out of a need among us or around us, Google Sheet signups are struck up and filled in! First Church is clearly a community in which each of us and all of us are seeking (and hopefully able) to do the most good we can. What's left is to be learning more about each other and to appreciate one another more fully. And I'm not just referring to Coffee Fellowship. Take other church members out for a favorite beverage, one-on-one. Tell each other stories about yourselves. Then, follow up and check in. Our community deserves disciples who are considering together what it means to be human and Christian and for one another.

What will the numbers in the Membership report tell us about ourselves, twelve months from now? How strongly will our recovery continue?

I am thankful and encouraged.

### **Acknowledgments**

It is a delight to be the leader of a staff team like ours – Music Director **Leon Burke**, Office Administrator **Debbie Tolstoi**, Coordinator of Faith Formation **Johari Hunt**, Events Coordinator **Alicia McMinn**, Building Manager **Chip Isringhaus**, and our new Custodian and A/V Technician **Mark Metcalf**. There's also Assistant Christian Education Staff **Noel Burke** and Nursery Attendant **Carina Dickie**, whose time among us is drawing to a close, and our Weekend and Events Custodians **Kayla Stiles** and **Onyeka Igboanuzue**. I never cease to be proud as head of staff to such a skilled and capable group!

Thanks, also, to **Coco** and **Gwen** for their patience with me and my schedule. I am so looking forward to these next few months, home and abroad with you two!

Peace.

Pastor Dave Denoon

### **WORSHIP NOTES FOR UPCOMING SUNDAYS**

*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](http://bit.ly/FCCWG-YT)), at 10:00am on Sundays.*

**SUNDAY, MAY 19** – Pentecost; “Strengthen the Church” Special Offering.

Liturgist: Rebecca Novak

Scriptures: Acts 2:1-21; John 15:26-27, 16:4b-15

Familiar hymns may draw us into the Spirit, or sacred moments of prayer or contemplation. Despite those occasions, the question, “What is the Holy Spirit?” might come up. Even if you’ve been a church member your entire life, the Holy Spirit of God may be an abstract concept to you. In light of the day’s observance the pastor considers the closing line of our Covenant, which refers to “the presence of the Holy Spirit in our trials and rejoicing.”

Message of the Day: “**Holy Spirit, Come**”

**SUNDAY, MAY 26** – Trinity Sunday; Jazz Worship.

Liturgist: Linda Kopetti

Scriptures: Isaiah 6:1-8; John 3:1-17

Pastor Dave Denoon and MICA Director Cliff Aerie are preparing a very special worship setting, for considering the Three Persons of our one God. “Persons” is actually a translation of a Greek term which can also mean “Faces” or “Aspects.” Through hymns and contemplation, we will venture into the depths of the Three-in-One.

**SUNDAY, JUNE 2** – Special Service for Confirmation and Baptism; Sacrament of Christ’s Table.

Liturgist: Jane Porchey

Scriptures: 1 Samuel 3:1-10; Psalm 139:1-6, 13-18; 2 Corinthians 4:5-12

For the past few months, a group including three youth and an adult have been exploring their faith and have decided either to be confirmed (1) or baptized (3). Their journey culminates here on this remarkable day of celebration. A fourth baptism of a little child will also be part of the service. As a Benediction, Pastor Dave Denoon will bid farewell for the time of his sabbatical, and Sabbatical Pastor Marty Black will be welcomed into her role. You will certainly want to be in attendance for this beautiful and wide-ranging event.





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314-962-0475  
[www.FirstChurchWG.org](http://www.FirstChurchWG.org)

## Contact Information

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Coordinator of Faith Formation – Johari Hunt  
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Custodian & AV Tech – Mark Metcalf

Weekend & Events Custodians –  
Kayla Skiles & Onyeka Igboanuzue

Assistant Custodian – Gus McLean

Director of Ministry of Imagination, Creativity  
and the Arts (MICA) – Rev. Cliff Aerie  
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