

Welcome!

First Congregational Church
of Webster Groves United Church of Christ



Seek Christ in each. Serve God in all.

SEPTEMBER 29, 2024
BLESSING OF THE ANIMALS
ALL AGES AND ALL SPECIES WORSHIP



*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

WELCOME

Jenny 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

***GATHERING HYMN** *All Things Bright and Beautiful* C. F. Alexander

Refrain

All things bright and beautiful, all creatures great and small,
All things wise and wonderful, the Lord God made them all.

Each little flower that opens, each little bird that sings,
God made their glowing colors, and made their tiny wings.

Refrain

The purple-headed mountains, the river running by,
the sunset and the morning that brightens up the sky.

Refrain

The cold wind in the winter, the pleasant summer sun,
the ripe fruits in the garden: God made them every one.

Refrain

God gave us eyes to see them, and lips that we might tell
how great is God Almighty, who has made all things well.

Refrain

***CIRCLES OF PRAISE** (Responsive – Liturgist; **People**)

based on Psalm 148

All dogs and cats, large and small:

Praise our God!

All rabbits, hamsters, and guinea pigs:

Praise our God!

All goldfish, guppies, and swimming creatures:

Praise our God!

All robins, wrens, and singing birds:

Praise our God!

All bats, squirrels, and raccoons:

Praise our God!

All horses, cows, and sheep:

Praise our God!

All lizards, snakes and creeping things:

Praise our God!

Every animal in the sky, the sea, and the forest:

Praise our God!

***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.

RITUAL OF APPROACH

**Thanksgiving and Confession*

For all the animals in the whole wide world,

We thank you, God!

For all the fun and friendship we have with animals,

We thank you, God!

Sovereign God, for all the times we have hurt or neglected animals,

We are sorry.

Sovereign God, for all the times we have used poisons that have killed animals,

We are sorry.

Sovereign God, for all the times we have destroyed the homes of animals in the forests, oceans, or fields,

We are sorry.

**Moment of Silence*

**Words of Assurance*

May the animals of Earth be our companions in life and lead us to celebrate our place in the circle of life.

Amen! Amen! Shalom! Shalom!

THE WORD SHARED

From the Law

Genesis 1:20-22, 24-28

Common English Bible

Response.

Reader: Holy word, holy Wisdom.

People: Thanks be to God.

READING

All Praise Be Yours

Francis of Assisi

RITUAL FOR BLESSING OF PEOPLE AND ANIMALS

We Lift Our Joys and Concerns to God

Prayer of the Day

Prayer of Our Savior (Unison)

New Zealand Prayer Book

Eternal Spirit, Earth-maker, Pain-bearer, Life-giver, Source of all that is and that shall be, Father and Mother of us all, Loving God, in whom is heaven: The hallowing of your name echo through the universe! The way of your justice be followed by the peoples of the world! Your heavenly will be done by all created beings! Your commonwealth of peace and freedom sustain our hope and come on earth. With the bread we need for today, feed

us. In the hurts that we absorb from another, forgive us. In times of temptation and test, strengthen us. From trials too great to endure, spare us. From the grip of all that is evil, free us. For you reign in the glory of the power that is love, now and forever. Amen.

Blessing of Each Pet

You are encouraged to go with your animal(s) to meet the Pastor and receive a blessing and a token. If you do not have your animal with you, a photo or an indication that you are holding them in your heart is just as acceptable!

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.**

**Declaration of Dedication*

Christ calls us to be disciples – to serve others with love and compassion, and to serve Earth by caring for its creatures. Will you care for all creation?

We will care for all creation, including all God's beloved people and animals! We will celebrate the circle of life with them!

***SONG OF BLESSING**

A Place in the Choir

Bill Staines

Refrain

All God's critters got a place in the choir
Some sing low, some sing higher
Some sing out loud on the telephone wire
And some just clap their hands, or paws
Or anything they got.

Listen to the bass, it's the one on the bottom
Where the bullfrog croaks and the hippopotamus
Moans and groans with a big to-do
The old cow just goes MOOOOO

The dog and the cat pick up the middle
While the honeybee hums and the cricket fiddles
The donkey brays and the pony neighs
And the old coyote howls.

Refrain

Listen to the top where the little birds sing
On the melody with the high note ringing
The hoot owl hollers over everything
And the jaybird disagrees

Singin' in the night-time, singin' in the day
Little duck quacks, and he's on his way

The possum ain't got much to say
And the porcupine talks to himself.

Refrain

It's a simple song of livin' sung everywhere
By the ox and the fox and the grizzly bear
Grumpy alligator and the hawks above
Sly raccoon and the turtle dove.

Refrain (twice)

***BENEDICTION AND COMMISSION (Responsive)**

May the Spirit of God, who is above all and in all and through all, fill you with the knowledge of God's presence in Earth and the presence of the Holy Spirit within you. Go in peace, serving God and loving all creatures!

We go in peace, serving Christ and loving our animal kin.

***PARTING WORDS**

Liturgist: Our worship has ended.

People: **Let our service begin.**

***POSTLUDE**

Hound Dog

Jerry Leiber/Mike Stoller

Sung by Martin Mills

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.

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.



Help End Hunger at Home and Abroad

**WALK. GIVE. CHANGE THE WORLD – 2024 CROP HUNGER WALK
ENDING HUNGER ONE STEP AT A TIME**

TODAY, September 29 at 2:00PM (1:30PM Registration)

Join the CROP (Communities Responding to Overcome Poverty) Walk, stepping off at 2 PM on Sunday, September 29 from Eden Seminary – or sponsor our church's team. 75% of the funds raised go to the relief and development work of Church World Service; 25% stay in St. Louis with groups like Webster-Rock Hill Ministries. For more information, to sign up, or to sponsor someone online, go to: <https://tinyurl.com/crop-walk-fccwg>

First Saturday Drive Through Collection

October 5, 2024, 9-12 am

We will be conducting a collection for Walbridge STEAM Academy located in the Walnut Park East neighborhood of St. Louis. Walbridge creates a safe haven and quality education to meet each students' academic and emotional needs, and also collects and distributes essential items for families in a severely financially challenged community. We will be collecting the following for them: Diapers of all sizes • Underwear & clothing, sizes 3T to Adult XL • Coats, gloves, etc. for cold weather, and • Non-perishable food. (All clothing needs to be NEW IN-PACKAGE, please.) The signup list for volunteers to help with the collection will be available soon. ***If you are able to contribute, please give generously, as the need is great!***

October Birthdays

Joyce Haynes-McCowan	October 3
Kathy Weyhrich	October 3
Linda Smith	October 5
Patrick Byrne	October 7
Rod Cooper	October 10
Emily Polaske	October 16
Marilyn Claggett	October 18
Judy James	October 19
Elston McCowan	October 24
Braeden Hood	October 29
David Denoon	October 30

Gateway ONA's Annual Drag Queen Bingo

October 12, 2024

Doors open at 6:00PM and the Games start at 6:30PM

Drag Queen Bingo, benefiting Gateway Open and Affirming (ONA) ministries, is an annual event we have often hosted at First Church. GONA invites us to **donate items (especially themed collections of items)** that can go into the silent auction portion of the event. Income from the silent auction will go to scholarships to help local people in the LGBTQIA+ community to attend General Synod, next July in Kansas City. Please go to www.gatewayona.com for more information, to make a donation, or to register. Registration is \$25 (this covers our transaction fees), and each participant will receive five (5) Bingo cards by email. You should receive a confirmation email that your registration was successful, but please check your spam folder, just in case!

October Shopping List

Canned Chicken & Dumplings (low salt) • Canned Green Vegetable (low or no salt)
Canned Fruit in own juices
Powdered Milk, shelf stable milk, soy milk
Whole Wheat Flour • Peanut Butter • Real Fruit Jelly • Dried Fruits

What's Happening at First Church

Sunday, September 29

9:45AM Nursery Care Available
10:00AM **OUTDOOR WORSHIP with Pet Blessing**
10:15AM Kids' Church
11:05AM Coffee Fellowship
2:00PM CROP Walk - Eden Seminary - Registration at 1:00PM

Monday, September 30

7:00PM Scout Troops 301 – Dickens Room

Tuesday, October 1

1:00PM Communications Team – Church Office

Wednesday, October 2

9:30AM ~~NO~~ Yoga with Jeanene – Inglis Room
10:30PM Staff Meeting – Church Office
6:00PM Bridge Club – Inglis Room

Thursday, October 3

6:00PM Canterbury Bells – Sanctuary
7:30PM Chancel Choir – Choir Room

Saturday, October 5

9:00AM - Noon First Saturday Drive-Thru Collection for Walbridge School
Elm Parking lot

Sunday, October 6

Sacrament of Christ's Table
World Communion Sunday
9:45AM Nursery Care Available
10:00AM **WORSHIP**
10:15AM Kids' Church
11:05AM Coffee Fellowship



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Contact Information

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Director, Center for Counseling & Healing
Rev. Linda E. Smith, BCRN, HTCP/I
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THE VISION of First Congregational Church of Webster Groves, United Church of Christ, is to be a dynamic Christian community expressing God's love, hope, joy, and peace for all people.

OUR MISSION is to provide:

- Worship that praises God
 - ◊ Shows commitment to the teachings of Jesus
 - ◊ Celebrates the Holy Spirit in ways that express the diversity of our experiences
 - ◊ Encourages spiritual growth and commitment
- Educational activities that promote faith and intellectual growth for children and for adults.
- Advocacy and care for those in need in our community and throughout the world.
- Community that seeks justice, loves kindness, and walks humbly.
- Hope, love, and encouragement to all who seek our support.
- Grace and forgiveness for ourselves and all who seek the ministries we share in worship, music, and fellowship with others on life's journey.

Strategic Planning Committee – 13 November, 2019
Approved by Executive Ministry - 25 November, 2019

Follow us on

Facebook

www.facebook.com/FirstChurchWG/

Instagram

<https://www.instagram.com/firstchurchwg/>

YouTube

<https://tinyurl.com/fccwg-yt>

