

Welcome!

First Congregational Church
of Webster Groves United Church of Christ

Seek Christ in each. Serve God in all.

DECEMBER 1, 2024

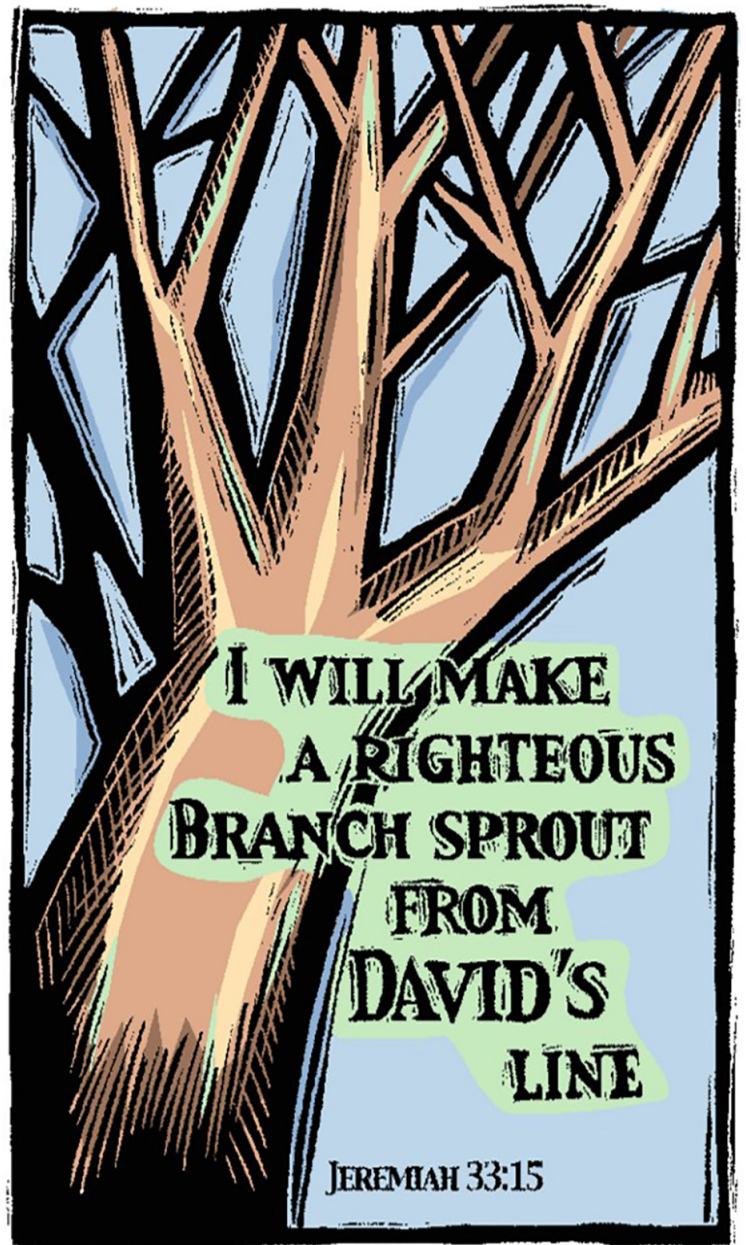
FIRST SUNDAY OF ADVENT



*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 *Body and Soul* Johnny Green
Jared Cohen, piano

*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.*

WELCOME Jennifer Jones, *Liturgist*

LIGHTING THE CANDLES

TOLLING THE BELL

OPENING WORDS

***GATHERING HYMN** *O Come, O Come, Emmanuel* The "O" Antiphons
No. 116, vv. 1,4,7 – *New Century Hymnal*

AT THE ADVENT WREATH
Reflection on Family Traditions

First Candle: HOPE
Ashley Merideth

Responsive Reading

from Jeremiah 33

"The days are surely coming," says the HOLY ONE, "when I will fulfill the promise I made to the house of Israel and the house of Judah:

In those days and at that time I will cause a righteous Branch to spring up for David; and that Branch shall execute justice and righteousness in the land.

In those days Judah will be saved and Jerusalem will live in safety.

And this is the name by which the Branch will be called: "The HOLY ONE is our righteousness."

Prayer

God our hope, your Spirit fills the universe with life, and your "righteous Branch" will mean great changes for us and for our world. Re-mold us gently, and help us to place our Christmas hopes into your hands. For we pray in the name of the one nurtured in Mary's womb, Jesus Christ. Amen.

AT THE JESSE TREE

Rev. David Denoon, *Pastor*

*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 Gospels

Luke 21:25-36

Pew Bible, p. 960

Response.

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

People: Thanks be to God. Amen.

MESSAGE OF THE DAY

Redemption

Rev. Denoon

WE SHARE OUR BLESSINGS WITH OTHERS

Opportunities for Giving and Gathering

**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.

SACRAMENT OF CHRIST'S TABLE

**Invitation*

**Prayers of Joy and Concern*

**Sanctus*

Holy, holy, holy God of love and majesty. The whole universe speaks of your glory, O God most high. Blessed is the one who comes in the name of our God. Hosanna in the highest!

Fraction

We cannot take bread and forget those who are hungry. Your world is one world and we are stewards of its nourishment.

God, put our prosperity at the service of the poor.

We cannot drink of the fruit of the vine and forget those who are thirsty. The ground and the rootless, the earth and its weary people cry out for justice.

God, put our fullness at the service of the empty.

We cannot hear your words of peace and forget the world at war, or, if not at war, then preparing for it.

Show us quickly, God, how to turn weapons into welcome signs and the lust for power into a desire for peace.

As but one manifestation of your Church in the world, we cannot celebrate the feast of your family and forget our divisions. We are one in spirit, but not in fact. History and hurt still dismember us.

God, heal your church in every brokenness.

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.

Consecration

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 of Thankfulness (Unison)*

We give you thanks, gracious God, that you come to us in bread and cup, and in the love of this gathered community. And now, send us

forth from this table a nourished and empowered people that we may live your love, speak your peace, and sing your hope. Amen.

***PARTING HYMN**

Come, O Long-Expected Jesus

Charles Wesley

Come, O long-expected Jesus, born to set all people free;
from our fears and sins release us; grant us your true liberty.

Israel's strength and consolation, hope to all the earth impart;
Dear desire of every nation, enter every longing heart.

By your own eternal spirit, come to claim us as your own;
By your all-sufficient merit, let us share your cross and crown.

***BENEDICTION**

***PARTING WORDS**

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

POSTLUDE

Christmastime Is Here
Jared Cohen, piano

Vince Guaraldi

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New Members Class Forming

*If you would like to know more about First Congregational Church, an **Inquirers Class** is forming. Please contact the Pastor, if you're interested in participating.*

WiFi Connection

first_church_guest | passcode: firstguest

Assistive Listening Systems Available

If you have an in-ear listening device connected to your mobile phone, such as hearing aids and stage monitors, you can listen to what's going on in the sanctuary without wearing a separate hearing device. Simply download the **LISTEN WiFi App** from the App Store or the Google Play Store and connect to the special wifi connection **fccwg1** + password "**firstchurch**". *If you need help connecting, please see one of A/V Techs at the table in the southeast corner of the sanctuary.*

Headsets connected to our historic listening system are available from the Narthex table.

Connecting Remotely to Worship

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.

**Hanging of the Greens
December 8**

It's time to get ready for our annual Hanging of the Greens service on Sunday, December 8th. The sign-up sheets will be available in the Narthex, today through December 1st. We will need:

Wreath Bearers • Candle Bearers • Creche Bearers • Poinsettia Bearers

Don't miss being a part of our beautiful service to prepare our Sanctuary for Christmas.

Sweet & Savory Potluck December 8, after worship

Our annual Sweet and Savory Snacks Potluck (Snack-luck!) will follow Hanging of the Greens. Please bring your favorite holiday treats to the kitchen before worship, plated and ready to serve.

How to Donate (and Pledge!) to First Congregational Church

To make a pledge for 2025, please take advantage of one of the pledge forms available on the Narthex Table, or go to our website's Donate page – FirstChurchWG.org/donate – by navigating there in your web browser or by using the QR code.

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 FirstChurchWG.org/donate to make an electronic contribution
- Scan the QR code.



Poinsettia Sponsorships Available!

Part of our Hanging of the Greens service is decorating our sanctuary with an abundance of beautiful poinsettias. If you would like to sponsor one of the poinsettias, we are asking for a donation of \$20.00 per plant. You may dedicate your donation in celebration, honor or memory of a loved one or special occasion. A list of the dedications will be included in the Christmas Eve service bulletins. ***Poinsettia order forms are available from the table in the Narthex.***

Jazz Noel 2024 Sunday, December 22 at 3:00PM

This year's Jazz Noel features not only the music of the Oikos Ensemble but also of the Terra Nova Early Music Consort, a recorder ensemble. Please plan to attend this joyous celebration of Christmas music old and new. And bring a friend or two!

Christmas Bags/Baskets for Webster Rock Hill Ministries

As we prepare for the holiday season, Webster Rock Hill Ministries invites us to join them in donating Christmas Baskets to families in need. Christmas Baskets will be distributed on December 15. See the meal items list below. Monetary donations are also greatly appreciated and instrumental in ensuring that every family in our community has food on the table, this Thanksgiving. Please feel free to contact WRHM at 314-961-5082 with any questions.

Green Beans • French Fried Onions • Cream of Mushroom Soup
Cranberry Sauce • Mashed Potato Mix • Macaroni and Cheese
Stuffing Mix • Rice • Jell-O Mix • Canned Fruit • Marshmallows
Gravy (canned or mix) • Canned Sweet Potatoes
Ready-made Pie Crust • Apple or Pumpkin Pie Filling

Please bring your bags of Christmas items to the church no later than Sunday, December 15 and leave them by the "Sharing Our Bounty" Crates in the Narthex.

Lady Elect Cookie Exchange

You are cordially invited to attend the Lady Elect Christmas Cookie Exchange at the home of Pat Doyle-Grace on Tuesday, December 10th, at 4:00. Participants are asked to bag 3-4 cookies per attendee in plastic bags. Please label whether your cookies contain nuts. It would also be nice if you could bring copies of your cookie recipe to share with others.

To RSVP, please text Marilyn Barton at (314) 894-2046 by December 5th.

Send a Card to a Political Prisoner

Every year, Amnesty International's **Write for Rights campaign** brings together people from around the world to fight injustice and support others whose human rights are under threat. Over the past few years our Writers have made a real difference to people's lives. From Zimbabwe to Guatemala to Kyrgyzstan, activists have been freed and justice has been served.

This year's campaign features people from around the world who are all connected because their human rights have been violated. By writing letters, signing petitions and sharing stories, you can demand justice calling decision makers to do the right thing.

On December 1 and 15, watch for Laurel Hayes's table in the Narthex, and join this year's campaign to make the world a more just and compassionate place. If you can't be at church either of those Sundays, follow this link to participate from home: www.amnesty.org/en/get-involved/write-for-rights

Pastoral Relations Committee Tuesday, December 3

Confidentiality, acceptance, and trust: these are the primary values of the Pastoral Relations Committee (PRC). Our PRC is composed of church members given the responsibility of fostering a healthy relationship between the pastor and church members.

The Committee meets bi-monthly (next time on December 3) and seeks to maintain open communication between pastor, staff, and congregants; it is not a personnel or policy-making committee.

We encourage all members and friends to discuss with PRC members their concerns and views, whether positive or negative, about what is going on in the life of the church and bring to light any issues that ought to be discussed. The discussions of the committee are confidential, thus allowing members the freedom to express varying views.

Current members include **Sharon Love, Emily Polaske, Jared Cohen, Annie Sampath, Patrick Byrne, Pat Doyle-Grace**, and ex-officio members Moderator Doug Barton and Pastor David Denoon.

December Birthdays

Thomas Waltz	December 6
Earl Rinne	December 12
Nannelle Griffith	December 13
Daniel Claggett	December 14
Rebecca Novak	December 16
Terri Thompson	December 26
Neil Hoffsten	December 27

What's Going on at First Church

Sunday, December 1

First Sunday of Advent

Sacrament of Christ's Table

9:00AM Brown Baggers

9:45AM Nursery Care Available

10:00AM Worship

10:15AM Kids' Church

11:05AM Coffee Fellowship – Memorial Hall, as well as...

Christmas Tree Decorating Party – Jubilee Garden

1:00PM Yankee Swap – Lenards' House

Monday, December 2

7:00PM Scout Troop 301 – Dickens Room

Tuesday, December 3

1:00PM Communications Team Meeting – Church Office

7:00PM Pastoral Relations Committee – Zoom

Wednesday, December 4

9:30AM NO Yoga with Jeanene – Inglis Room

10:30AM Staff Meeting – Church Office

6:00PM Bridge Club – Inglis Room

Thursday, December 5

6:00PM Canterbury Bells – Sanctuary

7:30PM Chancel Choir – Sanctuary

Sunday, December 8

Hanging of the Greens

9:45AM Nursery Care Available

10:00AM Worship

10:15AM Kids' Church

11:05AM Coffee Fellowship – Memorial Hall

Sweet & Savory Snacks – Potluck



10 West Lockwood Avenue
Webster Groves, MO 63119
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Contact Information

Moderator – Doug Barton
iyell4@aol.com

Pastor – Rev. Dave Denoon
DDenoon@FirstChurchWG.org

Office Administrator – Debbie Tolstoi
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Coordinator of Faith Formation – Johari Hunt
Johari.Hunt@FirstChurchWG.org

Director of Music & Organist – Dr. Leon Burke
Leon.Burke@FirstChurchWG.org

Facilities Manager – Chip Isringhaus
ctil234@FirstChurchWG.org

Events Coordinator – Alicia McMinn
Events@FirstChurchWG.org

Custodian & AV Tech – Mark Metcalf
mark.metcalf@firstchurchwg.org

Weekend & Events Custodians –
Onyeka Igboanuzue

Assistant Custodian – Gus McLean

Director of Ministry of Imagination, Creativity
and the Arts (MICA) – Rev. Cliff Aerie
cliff.aerie@gmail.com

Chaplain, Stillpoint Campus Ministry
Webster University – Rev. Dr. Laurel Hayes
laurel.hayes@sbcglobal.net

Director, Center for Counseling & Healing
Rev. Linda E. Smith, BCRN, HTCP/I
lesrhs@sbcglobal.net

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.

Follow us on

Facebook

@FirstChurchWG

Instagram

@webstergroves_firstchurch

YouTube

<https://bit.ly/FCCWG-YT>

