

Welcome!

First Congregational Church
of Webster Groves United Church of Christ

Seek Christ in each. Serve God in all.

DECEMBER 22, 2024

FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT

“CHRISTMAS FUND” SPECIAL OFFERING



NOVEL

*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 *Let All Mortal Flesh Keep Silence* Traditional French Carol
*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 Mark Edwards, *Liturgist*
Opportunities to Give and Gather

**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.

TOLLING OF THE BELL

LIGHTING OF THE CANDLES

*CALL TO WORSHIP

Awake! Awake, and greet this new day—just three more days to Christmas.
Christmastime is near, happiness and cheer. Fun for all that children call their favorite time of year.

Rejoice! Rejoice, and sing carols of joy—Christmas music fills our hearts with love.

We gather as God’s children, filled with the wonder of the season, deeply aware that Christmas resounds with God’s loving embrace.

Love is our song and love our prayer, and love our endless story.

May God fill our worship with the blessing of music to celebrate, songs that make us smile and fill our hearts with joyful thanksgiving.

***GATHERING HYMN** *Awake, Awake, and Greet the New Morn* Marty Haugen
No. 107, vv. 1-3 – *New Century Hymnal*

AT THE ADVENT WREATH
Reflection on Family Traditions

Fourth Candle: LOVE
Charlie Schoenherr

Responsive Reading

In the gospel of John, the author testifies, “God so loved the world as to give God’s only Child, so that everyone with faith in that Child may not perish but have eternal life.”

And Jesus said, over and over again, “Love one another. Love your neighbor as yourself. Love your enemies.”

The apostle Paul said, “Love is patient; love is kind. It does not insist on its own way. Love never ends.”

John the divine said, “God is love.”

Prayer

God, thank you for loving us, and for sending us Jesus to teach us about your love. Help us to remember that your love will never come to an end. Strengthen us to love others as you love us. Amen.

**Singing God's Love Awake, Awake, and Greet the New Morn* Marty Haugen
No. 107, v. 4 – *New Century Hymnal*

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

Rev. David Denoon, *Pastor*

We Lift Our Joys and Concerns to God

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.

TODAY'S INTERGENERATIONAL STORY

"A Kid's Jazz Noel"

Setting the Stage *Christmastime Is Here* Vince Guaraldi

Children's Christmas Caroling

Santa Claus Is Coming to Town

Rudolph, the Red-Nosed Reindeer

Jingle Bells

Christmas Nativity through Artistry, Story and Song

The Congregation is invited to join in singing the following carols:

1. Gabriel, Mary & Joseph *Mary, Mary, What You Gonna Name that Baby?*

Refrain:

Mary, Mary, what you gonna name that baby?

What you gonna call that holy baby?

We, like our sheep, need someone to guide us,

Why don't you call him Shepherd?

Sh! Let's all call him Shepherd!

Refrain

Hungry and poor, we need someone to save us,

Why don't you call him Savior?

Sh! Let's all call him Savior!

Refrain

2. Journey to Bethlehem *O Little Town of Bethlehem*

O little town of Bethlehem how still we see thee lie.

Above thy deep and dreamless sleep the silent stars go by.

Yet in thy dark streets shineth the everlasting light.

The hopes and fears of all the years are met in thee tonight.

For Christ is born of Mary and gathered all above,
While mortals sleep, the angels keep their watch of wondering love.
O morning stars, together proclaim the holy birth,
And praises sing to God the King and peace to all on earth!

3. A Stable Birth

Away in a Manger

Away in a manger, no crib for a bed
The little Lord Jesus laid down His sweet head.
The stars in the bright sky looked down where He lay
The little Lord Jesus asleep on the hay.

The cattle are lowing the Baby awakes
But little Lord Jesus no crying He makes.
I love You, Lord Jesus, look down from the sky
And stay by my side until morning is nigh.

4. Shepherds' Surprise

Hark! The Herald Angels Sing

Hark the herald angels sing: "Glory to the newborn King!
Peace on earth and mercy mild, God and sinners reconciled."
Joyful, all ye nations rise. Join the triumph of the skies.
With the angelic host proclaim: "Christ is born in Bethlehem!"
Hark! The herald angels sing: "Glory to the newborn King!"

5. Journey of the Magi

We Three Kings

We three kings of Orient are;
Bearing gifts we traverse afar,
Field and fountain, moor and mountain,
Following yonder star.
O star of wonder, star of night,
Star with royal beauty bright,
Westward leading, still proceeding,
Guide us to thy perfect light.

6. A Pastoral Reflection

***CHRISTMAS JOY**

Joy to the World

Isaac Watts

***BENEDICTION**

***PARTING WORDS**

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

POSTLUDE

We Wish You a Merry Christmas

Traditional

+ + + + + + + +

*You are invited to join the children for hot chocolate & Christmas cookies
in Memorial Hall.*

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The art images are from *The Nativity*, illustrated by Julie Vivas. The children's narrative is adapted from *The Nelson Children's Bible*.

Special thanks to:

- The children of **Kid's Church** for their enthusiastic participation
- **Anne Gerst** (choral direction) and **Mark Cereghino** (piano accompaniment) for their leadership with the children.
- **The Logos Readers:** Jan Barnes, Annie Sampath, Nick Suber, Doug Barton
- **Noel Burke** and **Johari Hunt** for their Kid's Church leadership
- **Andrew Kremer** and **Mark Metcalf** for their skillful audio engineering

Our thanks as well, to the members of the Oikos Jazz Ensemble for their participation in the leadership of worship today. They are **Kim Fuller-Barnes**, vocals; **Carolbeth True**, piano; **Tim Osiek**, trumpet; **Glen Smith**, bass; **David True**, percussion; and Rev. **Cliff Aerie**, saxophone.

The Oikos Jazz Ensemble is an outreach of our Ministry of Imagination, Creativity, and the Arts (MICA). MICA takes part in Sunday morning jazz worship, six times a year, and conducts two seasonal programs – Jazz Noel and Good Friday Blues – in addition to other occasional performances. **MICA is seeking sponsors for Jazz Noel 2024 now!** (It's scheduled for December 22 at 3:00pm.) If you would like to support MICA with a gift separate from your annual pledge to the church, please do so with

- a cash offering (in an envelope on which you have written, "MICA"),
- a check made payable to the church with "MICA" written in the memo line, or

an electronic contribution on the Donate page of our website (find "MICA" in the pull-down menu.

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### **The Globe is lighted today**

in loving memory of **Bob & Doris Lance**,  
with prayers for world peace,  
from their Family.

**Lighting the Globe** is a tradition we use to celebrate gifts and blessings. If you would like to dedicate a lighting, please make a contribution in any amount and include a note describing your celebration or memory. Donations received are combined with the Minister's Discretionary Fund, benefiting members and friends in need. Thank you!

### **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

### **Connecting Remotely to Worship**

Sunday worship each week is streamed live on YouTube. Past worship and program videos are also available for viewing. Go to [bit.ly/FCCWG-YT](https://bit.ly/FCCWG-YT)

### **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 to 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.**

### **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 (and Pledge!) to First Congregational Church**

Treasurer Jennifer Jones and the members of the Stewardship Committee encourage members and friends who have made a pledge for this year, please to be sure and complete your pledge by December 31. Ways to give:

- Place a donation in the **brass offering plate** on the little table in the Narthex.
- Send a check made payable to FCCWG at:  
**First Congregational Church**  
**10 W. Lockwood Ave.**  
**Webster Groves, MO 63119**
- Visit **FirstChurchWG.org/donate**
- Scan the **QR code** at right



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

### **Cookies Needed for Christmas Eve!**

The Parish Life Ministry welcomes your homemade cookies for the Wassail Bowl reception after the Christmas Eve 9:00 PM service. Thank you!

### **Jazz Noel – TODAY 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!

### **Readers, Ushers and Servers Sought for Lessons & Carols Service**

Our annual Candlelight Service of Lessons & Carols, at 9:00PM on Christmas Eve, employs the talents of many church members and friends. If you would like to take part in that worship service as a reader of scripture, as an usher, or as a server at the Wassail Bowl Reception that follows it (or some combination of the three), please contact the Pastor or go to

[bit.ly/Eve24-Signups](http://bit.ly/Eve24-Signups)

*Thank you!*

## 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 22**

**Fourth Sunday of Advent: Love**

**"Christmas Fund" Special Offering**

**9:45AM** Nursery Care Available

**10:00AM Worship** – "A Kid's Jazz Noel"

**11:05AM** Coffee Fellowship – Memorial Hall

**3:00PM "Jazz Noel"** with the Oikos Ensemble and  
the Terra Nova Early Music Consort

**Tuesday, December 24**

**Christmas Eve**

**4:30PM Worship for Families** with Living Nativity

**9:00PM Candlelight Worship** with Lessons & Carols

*The Church Office will be closed, December 25, 2024 – January 1, 2025*

**Sunday, December 29**

**Sunday after Christmas**

**Fourth Day of Kwanzaa: Ujamaa (Cooperative Economics)**

**9:45AM** Nursery Care Available

**10:00AM Worship (Christmas Carol Sing)**

**10:15AM** Kids' Church

**11:05AM** Coffee Fellowship – Memorial Hall



10 West Lockwood Avenue  
Webster Groves, MO 63119  
314-962-0475  
www.FirstChurchWG.org

## Contact Information

Moderator – Doug Barton  
iyell4@aol.com

Pastor – Rev. Dave Denoon  
DDenoon@FirstChurchWG.org

Office Administrator – Debbie Tolstoi  
Admin@FirstChurchWG.org

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>

