

Welcome!

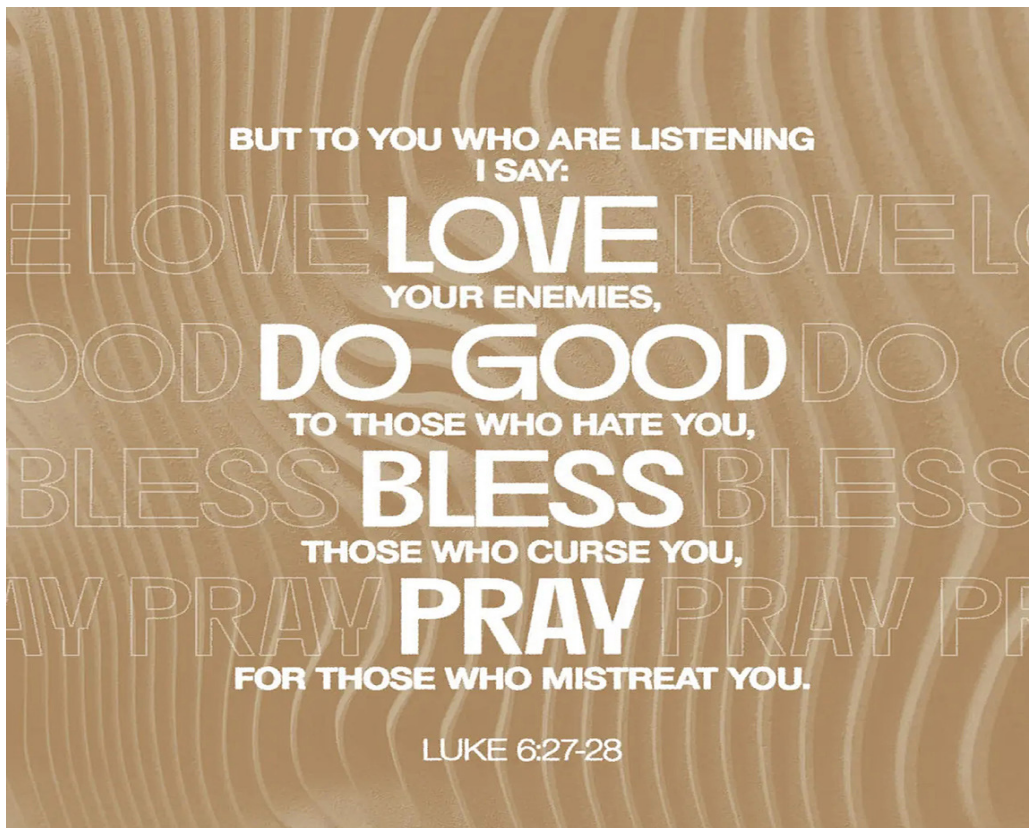
First Congregational Church of Webster Groves
United Church of Christ



Seek Christ in each. Serve God in all.

FEBRUARY 23, 2025

SEMINARY / CHURCH VOCATIONS 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

Adagio
Leon Burke, III, piano

Joseph Bologne
Chevalier de Saint-Georges
“The Black Mozart”

*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

Phil Shoulberg, *Liturgist*

TOLLING OF THE BELL

LIGHTING OF THE CANDLES

OPENING WORDS (Responsive – Liturgist; **People**)

from Luke 6

Love your enemies, and do good to those who hate you. Bless those who curse you, and pray for those who abuse you.

**If you love those who love you, what credit is that to you?
Even sinners love those who love them. If you do good
only to those who do good to you, what credit is that to
you? For even sinners do the same.**

Love your enemies, do good, and lend, expecting nothing in return. Your reward will be great, and you will be children of the Most High... who is kind even to the ungrateful and the cruel.

Be merciful exactly as your God and Parent is merciful.”

Holy word. Holy wisdom.

Thanks be to God.

*GATHERING HYMN

Forgive Our Sins as We Forgive

John M. C. Crum

Tune: AZMON

“Forgive our sins as we forgive,” you taught us, Lord, to pray;
but you alone can grant us grace to live the way we pray.

How can your pardon reach and bless the unforgiving heart
that broods on wrongs and will not let old bitterness depart?

In blazing light your cross reveals the truth we dimly knew:
what trivial debts are owed to us, how great our debt to you!

Lord, cleanse the depths within our souls, and bid resentment cease;
then, bound to all in bonds of love, our lives will spread your peace.

RITUAL OF APPROACH

Introduction (Guided Meditation)

Rev. David Denoon, *Pastor*

Prayer of Confession (Unison)

**God, dear God – above, around, within – we don’t want to dwell
in the depths of fear and anger. We long to be free from such
things. Transform our inward selves – our hearts, our minds,
our spirits – and raise them up like new plants spring from**

seeds. Affirm for us the power of Christ's resurrection and the promise of our own. Forgive us, and make us new. We pray in Jesus' name. Amen.

Words of Assurance

**Singing God's Glory* *Glory to God in the Highest* Tune: GLORIA (HAAS)

The congregation repeats each line of the following after the Minister:

Glory to God! Glory to God! Glory in the highest!

To God be glory forever!

Next, the Minister leads the congregation in harmonizing the following:

Alleluia! Amen! Alleluia! Amen!

NOT FOR CHILDREN ONLY

Johari Hunt, *Coordinator of Faith Formation*

THE WORD SHARED

From the Gospels

Luke 6:37-38

Pew Bible, p. 939

Response.

Hear what the Spirit is saying to the people.

Thanks be to God.

BELL ANTHEM

Adoration
Canterbury Bells

Florence Price
arr. Charles Peery

MESSAGE OF THE DAY

"The Pinnacle"

Rev. Denoon

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

Preparation for Prayer

Breathe on Me, Breath of God

Edwin Hatch

Breathe on me, breath of God, fill me with life anew

That I may love the way you love and do what you would do.

We Lift Our Joys and Concerns to God

Prayer of the Day

Prayer of Our Savior

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 OFFER OF OURSELVES

Opportunities to Give and Gather

**Song of Praise*

Doxology

Thomas Ken

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 (Unison)*

You our God have blessed the poor, the hungry, the downcast,

and the marginalized, but voices still cry out for justice. Feebly we try to answer their call. Bless us by our gifts, that all your children may know your love and justice in Jesus' name. Amen.

RECEPTION OF NEW MEMBERS

New Member Candidates Introduced

Preface

**Affirmation of Faith* (Responsive) based on *Our Creed*, 1901

Do you believe in the kinship of all people as children of God? **I do.**

Do you believe that Jesus Christ is the Way and the Truth and the Life?

I do.

Do you believe in the clean heart, the unworldly life, and the service of love as Jesus taught and exemplified, and do you accept Christ's Spirit and Christ's teaching? **I do.**

**Questions of the Candidates*

**Raising the Covenant* (Unison)

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.

**Welcome to the Church* (Unison)

We as members of this church, gladly welcome you to be a part with us in the hopes, the labors, and the joys of our mutual ministry. We promise to walk with you in Christian love and sympathy, and to promote, as far as in us lies, your growth in the Christian life.

***BENEDICTION**

***PARTING WORDS**

Liturgist: Our worship is ended.

People: Let our service begin.

POSTLUDE

Rabbit Foot
Anne Gerst, piano

Florence Price

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### **Connecting Remotely to Worship**

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

### **Wifi Connection**

Recent challenges with our internet service have prompted us to revise connection protocols. Please connect to the network, **first\_church\_guest** using the passcode **firstguest**

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

If you would like to support First Church with a monetary gift, here are a few ways to do that:

- Take advantage of the brass offering plate on the small 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**.



### **Donation Drive! Period and Diaper Supplies TODAY, 9am - 12 noon**

The Peace & Justice Team is trying something new for their latest donation drive – conducting it on a SUNDAY. Donations will be accepted in the Narthex prior to the worship service and from 9am to noon in front of the Memorial Hall external doors (drive-thru).

### **Today is CUE Sunday – Please give generously**

This week, we celebrate and support the work of the CUE Seminaries – Chicago Theological Seminary, United Seminary of the Twin Cities, and Eden Theological Seminary. These three historic, Midwestern institutions were founded for and by the merging entities of the United Church of Christ, to educate clergy and other church workers according to our traditions.

An envelope for contributing to the CUE fund is included in today's bulletin. We encourage you to use it, to give generously for the sake of a well-educated, progressive Christian clergy! The seminaries are also one of the dropdown menu items at our website's Donation page.

### **Lady Elect Meeting – This Tuesday, February 25th, 11am**

You are cordially invited to the February meeting of Lady Elect, which will focus on Book & Media Reviews. The meeting will take place in the Inglis Room on Tuesday, February 25th at 11:00. Members and guests can share a brief summary of a book, film, or other form of media for the group. Bring a lunch. Please RSVP via email to Marilynb665@gmail.com.

### **Seeking Weekend & Events Custodian**

Our 10 West Lockwood enterprise is seeking an additional Weekend & Events Custodian. This is a “gig” job, usually four hours at a time, providing assistance and housekeeping for groups taking advantage of our facility for parties and other gatherings. If you know someone interested in occasional extra income, please have them contact the Pastor.

### **Sunday Morning Volunteer Opportunities**

Please, consider serving as

- **Liturgist** (conducting different portions of worship and reading scripture); sign up at [bit.ly/Liturgist-2025](https://bit.ly/Liturgist-2025), and/or
- **Slideshow Presenter** (advancing the slides displayed in worship); sign up at [bit.ly/Slideshow-2025](https://bit.ly/Slideshow-2025), and/or
- **A/V Assistant** (working closely with Mark Metcalf, coordinating the sound in the sanctuary and the live stream of the service online); sign up at [bit.ly/Audio-Video-2025](https://bit.ly/Audio-Video-2025)

Contact the Pastor, to volunteer or to learn more about these jobs.

### **Uganda Water Project Donation Instructions**

Here's how to donate to new member Peter Kalulu's Uganda Water Project, which provides clean water and other public health benefits to villages across northwest Uganda:

- I. Visit <https://firstchurchwg.org/donate/>

2. Click the triangle at the end of the line labeled "Give To Church General Offering (40302)"
3. From that dropdown menu, select "Give To Special Projects Fund (31125)"
4. Fill out the rest of your donation details and submit.
5. Make sure to fill in the Amount box above the dropdown menu.

Thank you for your generosity!

### **AN AUCTION FOR HUMANITY – February 22-March 9**

The title only looks like a misprint! A UCC-sponsored online auction to benefit Habitat for Humanity St. Louis will run from **February 22 to March 9**. In addition, Samuel UCC's traditional St. Patrick's Dinner will be held on **Saturday, March 8**. Mark your calendar! You can support **An AUCCtion for Humanity** by asking businesses and friends for items. You can also help with administrative tasks from home. Please email Kirkwood UCC member Bob Steen at [AUCction4Humanity@outlook.com](mailto:AUCction4Humanity@outlook.com).

### **Chili Benefit Supper for Refugee Family – Saturday, March 1**

Community activist and Peace UCC member Elizabeth Hobbs is hosting a Chili Supper Benefit for an Afghan family seeking to afford an apartment in St. Louis. The supper – suggested donation of \$10 per person – will take place between 5:30 and 7:30PM at Schroer Commons, Eden Seminary Campus (475 E Lockwood Ave, Webster Groves, MO 63119).

### **Girl Scout Cookies! – Sunday, March 2**

looking to replenish your girl scout cookie supplies? Support our local Girl Scout 231 Clark School Daisy Troop March 2nd in Memorial Hall after church from 11 to 12!

This Troop is all 1st graders and features our very own Ellie amongst its members!

- To purchase cookies from Ellington Heiser-Fisher, visit <https://digitalcookie.girlscouts.org/scout/ellington107143>
- To purchase cookies from Elle Polaske, visit <https://digitalcookie.girlscouts.org/scout/elle664189>

### **Gala of Grace Returns – Saturday, March 29**

This year's Gala features a formal catered meal, music by the Oikos Ensemble and Dr. Jared Cohen, and an auction facilitated by the legendary Rod Cooper! Proceeds benefit more than 15 organizations in the St. Louis area. Registration is now open! To register for the Gala, please:

- Visit <https://tinyurl.com/4223mfp8> and fill out the registration form.
- Then, either visit <https://firstchurchwg.org/donate/> and pay using the **"Give to Benevolence – Giving (40202)"** option in the dropdown menu
- OR pay at the door the day of the event!

Don't forget about the Giving Tree 2025: The Giving Tree offers a wide variety of exciting items that include handy services, unusual and fine gifts, yummy food and rides to/from the airport. Last year over 45 "ornaments" were available during the Gala of Grace. Please be thinking what YOU can offer to hang on the Giving Tree. **Contact Nancy Rudolph or Laura Cooper with your Giving Tree gifts.**

### **American Red Cross Blood Drive Monday, April 7, 2-6pm**

Led by our very own Johari Hunt, this charitable blood drive will take place on the afternoon of Monday, April 7th. Come to Fellowship Hall between 2 and 6 to donate. Donors must be age 17 or older, must weigh at least 110 pounds, and be in good health.

## **February Birthdays**

|                 |             |
|-----------------|-------------|
| Charlie Brader  | February 5  |
| Sandy Hoffsten  | February 5  |
| Mary Edwards    | February 6  |
| K Wentzien      | February 6  |
| Elyse von Weise | February 8  |
| Kathy Hill      | February 11 |
| Phoenix Hill    | February 14 |
| Doug Barton     | February 15 |
| Erick Falconer  | February 16 |
| Pat Doyle-Grace | February 20 |
| Martin Mills    | February 21 |

## **What's Going on at First Church**

### **Sunday, February 23**

- Seminary / Church Vocations Sunday**
- 9:00AM – 12:00PM Diaper/Period Supplies Drive**
- 9:45AM Nursery Care Available**
- 10:00AM Worship**
- 10:15AM Kids' Church**
- 11:05AM Coffee Fellowship**

### **Monday, February 24**

- 7:00PM Scout Troops 301 - Dickens Room**
- 7:00PM Executive Ministries (Zoom)**

### **Tuesday, February 25**

- 10:30AM Staff Meeting - Church Office**
- 11:00AM Lady Elect - Inglis Room**

### **Wednesday, February 26**

- 9:30AM Yoga with Jeanene - Inglis Room**
- 6:00PM Bridge Club - Inglis Room**

### **Thursday, February 27**

- 9:00AM Journeymen - Parlor**
- 6:00PM Canterbury Bells - Sanctuary**
- 7:30PM Chancel Choir - Sanctuary**

### **Sunday, March 2**

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



10 West Lockwood Avenue  
Webster Groves, MO 63119  
314-962-0475  
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## Contact Information

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Onyeka Igboanuzue

Director of Ministry of Imagination, Creativity  
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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.

## Follow us on

Facebook

@FirstChurchWG

Instagram

@webstergroves\_firstchurch

YouTube

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