

Welcome!

First Congregational Church of Webster Groves
United Church of Christ



Seek Christ in each. Serve God in all.

MARCH 23, 2025

THIRD SUNDAY IN LENT

AMISTAD SUNDAY

For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, declares the LORD. For as the heavens are higher than the earth,

SO ARE MY WAYS HIGHER THAN YOUR WAYS AND MY THOUGHTS THAN YOUR THOUGHTS.

I S A I A H 55 : 8 - 9

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 in E Minor* J. S. Bach
*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 Nancy Rudolph, *Liturgist*

TOLLING OF THE BELL

LIGHTING OF THE CANDLES

CALL TO WORSHIP (Responsive – Liturgist; **People**) from Isaiah 55
God is near. Seek the HOLY ONE in places like this.

**Let the corrupt forsake their ways when they are here,
and forget their unrighteous thoughts. Instead, let
everyone come for mercy and abundant pardon.**

“For my thoughts are not your thoughts, nor are your ways my ways,” says
the HOLY ONE.

**“For as the skies are higher than the ground, so are my
ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your
thoughts.**

“Everyone who thirsts, here is water; and you that have no money, come,
buy and eat!

**“Incline your ear, and come to me; listen, so that you may
live. I will make with you an everlasting covenant: my
steadfast and sure love.”**

***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.**

***GATHERING HYMN** *Guide Me, O My Great Redeemer* William Williams
No. 18 – *New Century Hymnal*

***RITUAL OF APPROACH**

**Invitation to Confession*

Lord, I am not worthy to have you come under my roof.

But only say the word, and your servant will be healed.

**Corporate Confession* (Unison) based on Psalm 63
O God, you are our God. We thirst and faint, as we seek you

from a dry and weary world. In your sanctuary we know your power and glory, your steadfast love better than life itself. O how you have helped us – upholding us in times of weakness! Yet sin has carried us away from your grace and joy. Here, contrite and sorrowful for our broken ways, we turn back to seek your love. Welcome us back into your arms and refresh us with your love, we pray in Jesus’ name. Amen.

**Silent Confession*

**Words of Assurance (Responsive)*

Hear these words of comfort: In the shadow of God’s wings we can sing for joy. God forgives our sin, refreshing us like deer at a spring.

Our souls are satisfied as with a rich feast. Our mouths praise God with joyful lips. Thanks be to God! Amen.

**Song of Praise*

Sing Amen

S. C. Molefe

No. 760 – *New Century Hymnal*

NOT FOR CHILDREN ONLY

Johari Hunt, *Coordinator of Faith Formation*

THE WORD SHARED

From the Gospels

Luke 13:1–9

Pew Bible, p. 950

Response.

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

People: Thanks be to God.

ANTHEM

Dust I Am
Chancel Choir

Miller / Thompson

MESSAGE OF THE DAY “*Controversies with the Christ: Pilate*”

or

“*See the Point*”

Rev. David Denoon

Pastor

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

Preparation for Prayer

Spirit of the Living God

Iverson / Aerie

Spirit of the living God, breathe afresh in me,

Spirit of the living God, breathe afresh in me.

Melt me, mold me, fill me, use me.

Spirit of the living God, breathe afresh in me.

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 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.**

**Prayer of Dedication* (Unison)

God of plenty, because of your grace we cannot be bound any longer to any earthly thing – not to infirmity, not to abundance. For freedom you have set us free. As a sign of our thanksgiving, we part with this wealth. By your grace and our own gifts, bless your church. Let true liberty come to all your people; in Jesus' name. Amen.

***PARTING HYMN**

There's a Wideness in God's Mercy
No. 23 – *New Century Hymnal*

F. W. Faber

***BENEDICTION**

***PARTING WORDS**

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

POSTLUDE

Menuet sur le nom d'Haydn
Neil Hoffsten, piano

Maurice Ravel

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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**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.*

**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](https://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 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**.



Please be sure to sign up for **Text Reminders and Alerts** from First Church! From your cell phone's texting app, **send the message "YES" to 87447**

### Lenten Study Sundays Continue!

**Bread of Life** is our Lenten devotional series for 2025. It serves as curriculum for Kids Church. Adult discussions begin 15 minutes after the end of the Postlude, in the library. *Bread of Life* highlights how Jesus fed people—not just their bodies but their souls—with good news, redemption, and stories of God's kin(g)dom. From wedding feasts to eating with tax collectors to feeding thousands, people left Jesus' presence with full hearts and bellies. **Get your copy of Bread of Life today, from the rack on the Narthex table.**

### Help Room at the Inn – Today!

Room at the Inn (RATI) is hosting a Trivia Night fundraiser and has asked for our help! The event is sold out but they are looking for donations of gift cards for the auction. The gift cards should be \$20 or more, and can come from any appropriate location. **Julie McHugh will collect any donations TODAY after church in Memorial Hall and deliver them to RATI.** Thanks for your support of this important ministry!

### Lady Elect Meeting – Tuesday, March 25

You are cordially invited to the March Lady Elect meeting, featuring Joan Musbach's presentation on the Marquis de Lafayette. The meeting is hosted by Diane Weber and Rosemary Hensley and will take place on Tuesday, March 25, at 11:00AM. Participants should bring a sack lunch. RSVP by contacting Marilyn Barton.

### Gala of Grace – Saturday, March 29

Registration for the Gala is now open! Register at [bit.ly/Gala-2025](https://bit.ly/Gala-2025) or scan this QR Code:



### Please give generously to One Great Hour of Sharing, March 30

When you give to One Great Hour of Sharing, you are light for people in need. You offer light when disaster strikes, and when chronic conditions threaten families and communities. You are light not just in the immediate future, but also for the long haul. When you give, you restore not only structures, but also transform lives. Your gift ensures that no matter how difficult the situation, light shines. Be the light. Give to One Great Hour of Sharing. **Envelopes for making your generous donation are available now from the tables in the Narthex.**

### **St. Louis Black History Tour – Saturday, April 5, 9:45am - 2:00pm**

Father Gerry Kleba is a life-long St. Louisan. As a priest, he has served African-American communities, typically with a focus on justice and equity issues. Based on his experiences, he has developed a bus tour of St. Louis sites crucial to understanding African-American history. Register at [bit.ly/Black-STL-Tour](http://bit.ly/Black-STL-Tour). **An FCC congregational group will leave FCCWG at 9:00 AM that day. Bring \$10 cash and, if staying for the post-tour discussion, your own lunch and beverages.**

### **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.

### **Passion Readers Sought – Sunday, April 13**

For Palm Sunday of the Passion, April 13, our worship will include not only the blessing of palms, but also a complete reading of the Passion according to Luke. If you are interested in reading, please contact the Pastor.

### **Easter Egg Hunt – Friday, April 19**

Please meet in Memorial Hall at 10AM for this beloved hour-long, indoor egg hunt!

### **Easter Coffee Cake Reminder – Sunday, April 20**

Please bring your coffee cakes the morning of Easter, April 20! The Lady Elect Guild request that all cakes be brought to the Kitchen, plated and ready to serve. Also, please be respectful of potential allergies and do not include nuts or nut by-products in your cakes (and clearly label cakes if they have nuts).

### **Consider Sponsoring Easter Flowers!**

For Easter our sanctuary is decorated with a variety of beautiful spring flowers. You are invited to make a contribution to defray this expense. A donation of \$20.00 is suggested. You may also designate your contribution in celebration, honor or memory of a loved one or event. Flowers you have sponsored will be available to take home after Easter worship. **Order flowers online at [bit.ly/Easter-Flower](http://bit.ly/Easter-Flower) or pick up a form in the narthex.**

### **Meal-A-Month**

#### **March Shopping List**

Canned Ham • Macaroni and Cheese • Canned Green Vegetable (low or no salt)  
Canned Fruit in own juices  
Powdered Milk, shelf stable milk, soy milk  
Toothbrushes • Toothpaste • Dental Floss

### **March Birthdays**

|                       |          |
|-----------------------|----------|
| Elle Polaske          | March 5  |
| Emery “Birdie” Fisher | March 9  |
| Kris Rinne            | March 14 |
| Kitty Pearl           | March 18 |
| Lauren Gomez          | March 20 |
| Jim Harris            | March 21 |
| Casen Hood            | March 21 |
| Amy Byrne             | March 26 |

## What's Going on at First Church

For a complete schedule of all church events, observances, and building use, please visit our online calendar at [FirstChurchWG.org/Calendar](http://FirstChurchWG.org/Calendar)

### Sunday, March 23

**Third Sunday in Lent**

**Amistad Sunday**

**9:45AM** Nursery Care Available

**10:00AM** Worship

**10:15AM** Kids' Church

**11:05AM** Coffee Fellowship

**11:20AM** Lenten Study - Library

### Monday, March 24

**7:00PM** Scout Troops 301 – Dickens Room

### Tuesday, March 25

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

(Staff might not be immediately available from 10:30 to 12:00)

### Wednesday, March 26

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

**6:00PM** - Bridge Club – Inglis Room

### Thursday, March 27

**All Day** - Gala of Grace set-up

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

**7:30PM** Chancel Choir - Sanctuary

### Saturday, March 29

**5:15PM - 9:30PM** Benevolence Event (Gala of Grace)

### Sunday, March 30

**Fourth Sunday in Lent**

**“One Great Hour of Sharing” Special Offering**

**9:45AM** Nursery Care Available

**10:00AM** Worship

**10:15AM** Kids' Church

**11:05AM** Coffee Fellowship

**11:20AM** Lenten Study - Library

**11:30AM** Pastoral Relations Committee - Parlor



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

## Contact Information

Moderator – Doug Barton  
iyell4@aol.com

Pastor – Rev. David Denoon  
DDenoon@FirstChurchWG.org

Office Administrator – Adam Levin  
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 Custodian –  
Onyeka Igboanuzue

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

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@FirstChurchWG

Instagram

@webstergroves\_firstchurch

YouTube

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