

Welcome!

First Congregational Church of Webster Groves
United Church of Christ



Seek Christ in each. Serve God in all.

MAY 18, 2025

FIFTH SUNDAY OF EASTER

MENTAL HEALTH SUNDAY

NEW MEMBERS RECEIVED



Welcoming • Inclusive
Supportive • Engaged

*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.*

An asterisk () indicates the Congregation standing, in body or in spirit.*

WELCOME Joan Musbach, *Liturgist*

LIGHTING OF THE CANDLES

God calls us to love our neighbors as ourselves;
the one who is weak and the one who is strong,
the one who is happy and the one who is sad,
the one who is enjoying mental wellness today
and the one who is struggling with mental illness today,
the one whom we understand and the one we don't,
the one who is embraced and the one who is shunned,
the one who is like us and the one who is different.
Come, let us worship together!
We come, trusting God's abundant love!

*GATHERING HYMN *Love Divine, All Loves Excelling* C. Wesley
No. 43, vv. 1,4 – *New Century Hymnal*

Introduction

We acknowledge that we are often uninformed about issues concerning substance abuse and mental illness, and how they impact persons and their families.

At times, because of our lack of knowledge and understanding, we find ourselves separated from our siblings with serious mental illness and substance abuse, as well as their families.

We hope that God will help us all dispel ignorance and misinformation about substance abuse and the serious mental illnesses such as major depression, bipolar disorder, schizophrenia, panic disorder, post traumatic stress disorder, and obsessive compulsive disorder.

We pray that troubled minds and hearts, and broken lives and relationships might be healed.

We pray that the cloud of stigma, labels, exclusion and marginalization might be dispelled for the sake of those touched by mental illness and substance abuse.

We pray that we may be containers of hope for persons and families living with mental health challenges. We pray also for

better treatment, for steadier recovery, and for greater opportunity to work and serve.

We live with gratitude for compassionate, dedicated caregivers and mental health professionals, for new discoveries in brain research and better medications.

ALL, TOGETHER: O GOD, WE SEEK THE POWER OF YOUR SPIRIT, THAT WE MAY LIVE IN FULLER UNION WITH YOU, OURSELVES, AND THOSE LIVING WITH MENTAL HEALTH ISSUES. GRANT THAT WE MAY GAIN COURAGE TO LOVE AND UNDERSTAND EACH OTHER, AS YOU LOVE AND UNDERSTAND US. AMEN.

Song of Praise

Halleluja
No. 236 – *New Century Hymnal*

trad. Caribbean

NOT FOR CHILDREN ONLY

Johari Hunt, *Coordinator of Faith Formation*

*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 Christian History

Acts 11:1-18

Pew Bible, p. 1003

Response.

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

People: Thanks be to God.

ANTHEM

The Day of Resurrection
Canterbury Bells

arr. Lloyd Larson

MESSAGE OF THE DAY

A Pastoral History
Part 3: "Who Are We Today?"

Rev. David Denoon, *Pastor*

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

Preparation for Prayer

Lead Me, Guide Me

Doris Akers

**Lead me, guide me, along the way, for if you lead me, I cannot stray.
Lord, let me walk each day with thee. Lead me, O Lord, lead me.**

We Lift Our Joys and Concerns

Prayer of the Day

Prayer of Our Savior (Unison)

O 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 GIFTS WITH OTHERS

Opportunities to Give and Gather

**Song of Praise*

Doxology (with Alleluias) Tune: LASST UNS ERFREUEN

**Praise God, from whom all blessings flow,
Praise God, all creatures here below! Alleluia! Alleluia!**

**Praise God above, you heavenly host –
Creator, Christ, and Holy Ghost! Alleluia, Alleluia!
Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia!**

**Prayer of Dedication (Unison)*

Faithful God, you teach us to love. receive and bless all these gifts so that, strengthened by them, your Church may offer to the world the salvation that comes through your love, in Jesus' name. Amen.

RECEPTION OF NEW MEMBERS

New Member Candidates Introduced

Preface

Affirmation of Faith (Pastor; **Congregation)*

based on Our Creed, 1900

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)*

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.

**Welcome to the Church*

Chris von Weise, Moderator

Congregational Response

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.

***PARTING HYMN**

*Blest Be the Tie that Binds
No. 393 – New Century Hymnal*

John Fawcett

***BENEDICTION**

***PARTING WORDS**

Liturgist: Our worship has ended.

People: **Let our service begin.**

***POSTLUDE**

All Glory Be to God on High

F. W. Zachau

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.

This morning's Call to Worship and Litany for Confession were taken from *Widen the Welcome: UCC for Mental Health – Resource Guide for Mental Health Sunday*, a publication of the Mental Health Network of the United Church of Christ. Go to mhn-ucc.org to learn more.

† Artworks featured onscreen in "The Word Shared" are from **Art in the Christian Tradition**, a project of the Vanderbilt Divinity Library, Nashville, TN.

Newcomers Orientation

If you are interested to know more about us, we conduct Newcomers Orientations seasonally. To find out when the next Orientation is being scheduled, please see the Pastor. Thank you!

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

Wifi Connection

Please connect to the network **first_church_guest** using the passcode **firstguest**

"Listen Everywhere" Hearing-Assisted System Active!

The **Listen Everywhere** system is our new accommodation for people who need assisted-listening. **Listen Everywhere** can be downloaded to your phone and can be used with or without hearing aids. If your phone is incompatible with the **Listen** system, we also have stand-alone units available. Please see Mark Metcalf, this Sunday, to get started using the **Listen** system, or email him at markmetcalf@firstchurchwg.org.

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**.



Let Breeze Serve as Your Church Directory

If you would like to access the church directory, change your listing there, or check on your donations, Breeze is the app for you!

Here are a few simple steps to access info from and about the church on your personal device:

1. Download the Breeze app via the App Store (iPhone) or Google Play store (Android)
2. The app will ask you to provide your Church ID, which is: **fccwgstlmo**
3. Use your Username and Password to log into the app! (If you don't know your Username, contact the Church Office.)

Video Screens for the Sanctuary

There are three cardboard cutouts mounted on the north and south walls of the sanctuary, where it was originally suggested new monitors ought to go. If you have thoughts about their proper placement, please send contact the Pastor at DDenoon@FirstChurchWG.org

Recently, thanks to donations to the "Wish Upon a Cloud" fund, we were able to purchase three 86-inch diagonal screens. The plan is to have all three installed by the first of June. **If you would like to contribute additional funds for this project**, please either use the "Wish Upon a Cloud" selection in our website's Donate page dropdown menu, or contact Adam Levin at Admin@FirstChurchWG.org

Revised Annual Reports Now Available

Our hardworking staff and officers put together informative reports on the state of First Congregational from 2024 to 2025. Unfortunately, departing Moderator Doug Barton's 2024 report was included, rather than the report for 2025. To see what he actually wrote for this year, get a new copy – online or in print. Paper copies are available from the Narthex table, or go to bit.ly/2025-FCCWG-Reports

Do You Have a Story to Tell?

Stories Before God – We began telling these again (about how we found a way with God), during Lent. If you want to know more “Stories Before God,” go to bit.ly/FCCWG-B4God. If you would like to share a “Story Before God,” please go to bit.ly/Stories-2025 to sign up.

Summer of Conversations – The purpose of the Summer of Conversations is to get better acquainted with others in your church. The program includes Congregation leaders and others visiting with as many as ten people, in one-on-one, 30-minute sessions that happen from June through September. The Pastor spoke about the value of such time together in a sermon, “Reintroduction,” in May 2021 (watch an excerpt at bit.ly/FCCWG-Convos).

THIS TUESDAY, MAY 20, FROM 6:00 TO 8:30PM, there will be a required training for “conversation initiators.” Please, contact the Pastor if you would like to participate. If you are satisfied simply being chosen as someone's one-on-one conversation participant, just wait a while, and someone will call. (If you prefer not to participate at all in the “Summer of Conversations,” that's OK too. Just let the Pastor know you don't wish to be included.)

Pastoral Relations Committee Meeting, May 18

The Pastoral Relations Committee, which meets once every two months with the Pastor to discuss matters of joy or concern in our life together, will gather today! If you'd like more information about the committee's work, or if you have a matter you would like for them to talk about, please don't hesitate to contact one of them - **Sharon Love, Annie Sampath, Jared Cohen, Emily Polaske, Dana Romeis, Dan Claggett, Moderator Chris von Weise**, and, of course, **Pastor Dave**.

Cards for Jean Gray's 100th Birthday, May 19

Laura Cooper writes that her mother, Jean Gray, turns 100 on May 19th! There will be a small family gathering, but the family is asking church members to send Jean a card or note. Please write in a dark pen so she can easily read. Her address is: **505 Couch Ave., Apt. 2111, Kirkwood, MO 63122**. Thank you!

Lady Elect Potluck, May 27

Our Lady Elect End of Year Potluck will be on Tuesday evening, May 27th. We'll gather in the Inglis Room at 6:00 for social time, followed by dinner at 6:30. RSVP marilynb665@gmail.com. Or you can also text (314) 894-2046 with your name and your food item. All are welcome!

Update on Eritrean Family

It has been several months since the Congregation received an update on Ertra and her two children, Sara and Abraham. To learn more, visit bit.ly/Eritrea-Friends. The family will be visiting us at Coffee Fellowship sometime in June.

Strengthen the Church, June 8

The annual “Strengthen the Church” special offering takes place on Pentecost. The offering furthers the work of our regional conferences and the national UCC. Envelopes for STC will be available from the Narthex table, starting on June 1, or give via our Donate page.

Camp MoVal Summer Offerings – Register Today!

Missouri Mid-South Conference Outdoor Ministries have announced the summer programs being offered at Camp MoVal. To register, go to MissouriMidSouth/camp-moval. Also, please remember that the Christian Education Ministry offers scholarships for all our Kids Church and Youth campers. Ask Johari Hunt for more information.

Webster Rock Hill Ministries Trivia Night, June 20

WRHM will host a trivia fundraiser, Friday, June 20, at 7:00PM, here in the First Church Memorial Hall. Registration is \$30 per person + a dry or canned good donation. Call 314-961-5082, or email WRHM@WRHM.org, to register or for more information.

Meal-A-Month May Shopping List

Canned Chicken • Canned Green Vegetable (low or no salt)
Canned Fruit in own juices
Powdered Milk, shelf stable milk, soy milk
Pudding or Jello (fat free/sugar free)
Shampoo/Conditioner • Soap • Deodorant

May Birthdays

Dana Romeis	May 1	Drue Hood	May 10
Cathy Buerk	May 3	Kay Roush	May 12
Mark Edwards	May 3	Peter Bakker-Arkema	May 17
Melissa Hill	May 3	Jean Gray (turning 100)	May 19
Adrianna Hoeper	May 4	Mila Falconer	May 23
Warner Prange	May 8	Sophia Monaco	May 23
Thomas Welnick	May 8	Linda Kopetti	May 24
Garie Perry	May 9	Leo Gomez	May 27

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

Sunday, May 18

Fifth Sunday of Easter

Mental Health Sunday

New Members Received

9:45AM Nursery Care Available

10:00AM Worship

10:15AM Kids' Church

11:05AM Coffee Fellowship

11:30AM Pastoral Relations Committee

Monday, May 19

7:00PM Scout Troop 301 - Dickens Room

7:00PM Executive Ministry (Zoom)

Tuesday, May 20

10:30AM Staff Meeting - Church Office

6:00PM Summer of Conversations Training

Wednesday, May 21

9:30AM Yoga w/ Jeanene - Inglis Room

Sunday, May 25

Sixth Sunday of Easter

Memorial Day Weekend

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
www.FirstChurchWG.org

Contact Information

Moderator – Chris von Weise
chrisvonyz@gmail.com

Pastor – Rev. David Denoon
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Office Administrator – Adam Levin
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Coordinator of Faith Formation – Johari Hunt
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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 and Stuart Chase

Director of Ministry of Imagination, Creativity
and the Arts (MICA) – Rev. Cliff Aerie
Cliff.Aerie@FirstChurchWG.org

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.

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YouTube
[bit.ly/FCCWG-YT](https://www.youtube.com/bit.ly/FCCWG-YT)