

Welcome!

**First Congregational Church of Webster Groves
United Church of Christ**



Seek Christ in each. Serve God in all.

MAY 25, 2025

SIXTH SUNDAY OF EASTER

MEMORIAL DAY WEEKEND

JAZZ WORSHIP



*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.*

ASSEMBLING

PRELUDE

Song for My Father

Horace Silver

*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

Ashley Merideth, *Liturgist*

TOLLING OF THE BELL

LIGHTING OF THE CANDLES

INTROIT

Come Sunday

Duke Ellington

ACKNOWLEDGING GOD'S BLESSINGS

*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

Immortal, Invisible

Walter C. Smith

No. 1, vv. 1,2,4 – *New Century Hymnal*

RITUAL OF APPROACH

Introduction

Silence for Personal Confession

Prayer for Peace (Litany)

Psalm 67

Response.

**O God, show kindness to us and bless us,
and make your face shine on us!**

Song of Praise

Wellspring

Cliff Aerie

EMBRACING THE PEACE OF CHRIST

NOT FOR CHILDREN ONLY

You've Got a Friend

Carole King

*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

John 14:27-29

Pew Bible, p. 983

Response.

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

People: Thanks be to God.

HAVING AND INTERPRETING VISIONS**WORD OF THE DAY** †*From Christian History*

Acts 16:9-15

Pew Bible, p. 1009

*Response.*Reader: Hear what the Spirit is saying to the people.**People: Thanks be to God.****REFLECTION***A Pastoral History, Part 4:
“Who Are We Becoming?”*Rev. David Denoon, *Pastor***PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE***Preparation**The Creator Has a Master Plan*

Leon Thomas

*We Lift Our Joys and Concerns**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.

MAKING ALL THINGS NEW**WE SHARE OUR GIFTS WITH OTHERS***Opportunities to Give and Gather**Contemplation**Throw It Away*

Abbey Lincoln

INTO THE WORLD***COMMISSION AND BENEDICTION*****PARTING WORDS**Liturgist: Our worship has ended.**People: Let our service begin.****POSTLUDE***Dreams and Visions*

Aerie / Bakriges

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.

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

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

The Oïkos Jazz Ensemble is an outreach of our Ministry of Imagination, Creativity, and the Arts (MICA). MICA takes part in Sunday morning jazz worship, seven times a year, and conducts two seasonal programs – Jazz Noel and Good Friday Blues – in addition to other occasional performances. If you would like to support MICA with a gift separate from your contribution 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).

Words to the songs in today's worship:

Come Sunday

Duke Ellington

O dear God above, God almighty God of love,
please look down and see my people through.

I believe that God put sun and moon up in the sky.
I don't mind the grey skies, 'cause they're just clouds passing by.

Often we feel weary, but God knows our every care.
Go to God in secret who will hear our every prayer.

Wellspring

Cliff Aerie

I'll sing you a song from the depths of my soul
to bless you and lead you wherever you go.

It comes from the well of my being deep inside, a spirit to clear all illusion.
Open up your heart, open up your mind, a wellspring to ease your confusion.

You've Got a Friend

Carole King

When you're down and troubled and you need some lovin' care,
and nothin', nothin' is goin' right.

Close your eyes and think of me and soon I will be there
To brighten up even your darkest night

Refrain

You just call out my name, and you know, wherever I am
I'll come runnin' to see you again

Winter, spring, summer or fall all you have to do is call
And I'll be there. You've got a friend.

If the sky above you grows dark and full of clouds
And that old north wind begins to blow

Keep your head together and call my name out loud
Soon you'll hear me knockin' at your door

Refrain

Now, ain't it good to know that you've got a friend when people can be so cold?
They'll hurt you, yes, and desert you and take your soul if you let them

Oh, but don't you let them

Refrain

Search for Peace

McCoy Tyner (music), Cliff Aerie (words)

Seeking a new horizon, Searching for unity,
All I see is set in confusion, Love an illusion. How can it be?

Hoping to find an answer, Yearning for sanity,
But the world seems bent on destruction, lost in seduction. Why must it be?

Searching for peace in the chaos and the strife
Hoping for peace to bring meaning to life
How can I make any difference at all?
I'm just one voice feeling small.

Yet when it all seems hopeless, your gentle voice I hear:
"Take my hand, we'll do it together, make the world better. Peace is so near."

The Creator Has a Master Plan

Leon Thomas (music), Cliff Aerie (words)

There was a time when peace was on the earth
And joy and happiness did reign and each one knew their worth
In my heart how I yearn for the Spirit's return
And I cry as time flies.

There is a place where love will always shine
And rainbows are the shadows of a love that's so divine
And the glow of that love would light the sky up above
It's free, just come with me.

The Creator has a master plan—peace and happiness throughout the land
The Creator has a master plan—for every woman and every man
The Creator has a master plan—peace and happiness throughout the land
The Creator has a master plan—to live as neighbors, hand in hand
The Creator makes but one demand—to live as neighbors, hand in hand
The Creator makes but one demand—to live as neighbors, hand in hand
The power of love, the power of love...

Throw It Away

Abbey Lincoln

I think about the life I live – a figure made of clay
And think about the things I lost – the things I gave away
And when I'm in a certain mood, I search the house and look
One night I found these magic words in a magic book

Throw it away, throw it away
Give your love, live your life, each and every day
And keep your hand wide open. Let the sun shine through
'Cause you can never lose a thing, if it belongs to you.

There's a natural obligation to what we hold and claim
Professing and belonging, acknowledging a name
And the hands unclenched, unopened, all the joy that they bring
So leave your hands wide open if you need anything

Dreams and Visions (Dedicated to Coretta Scott King)

Chris Bakriges (music), Cliff Aerie (words)

Dream. Dream a world that's just and fair.

Free from hatred and fear.

Safe without want or care.

Love will be our guide – overcoming greed and pride.

Unity – dreams and visions set us free.

Dare. Dare to lift your voices high.

Speaking truth from your heart.

Now is the time to start.

Hope points to the way – visions of a brand new day.

Unity – dreams and visions set us free.

Ah... visions and dreams.

Ah... visions and dreams.

Start now! Right now!

Start now! Right now!

Sing. Sing a song to change the world.

Sing it out in the night.

Sing'til you get it right.

Grace abides in you – ready to transform, make new.

Unity – dreams and visions set us free.

The Oïkos Ensemble
Jazz Ministry at First Church

The first performance of the The Oïkos Ensemble at First Church was on March 3, 2011 while I was consulting with the Missouri Mid-South Conference as Artist in Residence. The members of Oïkos at that time were Chris Bakriges (piano), Arianna Aerie (vocal), Dave Troncoso (bass) and Kevin Gianino (drums). We were invited back a second time in the summer of 2012.

After the success of the initial *Jazz Noel* concert, we moved the venue to our church in December 2012. It featured vocalist Kim Massie, Arianna, Dave and Kevin with trumpeter Danny Campbell. It also marked the debut of Carolbeth True as the regular pianist for Oïkos! Our guest vocalist for *Jazz Noel* 2013 was Kim Fuller Barnes, who has become our regular vocalist ever since. During the next few years Glen Smith joined us as bassist and David True as drummer. Trumpeter Tim Osiek has appeared with the band on many occasions and is now performs with us regularly.

In May 2017 a three-way covenant between the Conference, our church, and me was established making MICA (Ministry of Imagination, Creativity and the Arts) an official ministry of our church. While many creative endeavors have been launched by MICA, our most popular and consistent outreach has been the music of Oïkos.

Today, Oïkos shares its jazz ministry at First Church with 7 Sunday morning services each year. *Jazz Noel* continues to be hosted at our church every Advent. *Good Friday Blues* is now in its 7th season. We've also performed many sacred jazz concerts as part of the *Earth Walk* and *Jazz for the Journey* concert series.

This morning's worship highlights a diversity of the band's offerings. Our jazz roots run deep in *Song for My Father* by Horace Silver and Duke Ellington's *Come Sunday*. I've added lyrics to McCoy Tyner's jazz classic *Search for Peace* and embellished lyrics to *The Creator Has a Master Plan* by Leon Thomas. We also perform newer jazz compositions like Abbey Lincoln's *Throw it Away* and adapt pop tunes like *You've Got a Friend* by Carole King. *Wellspring* (inspired by my encounter with a Chinese sage in the mountains of Taiwan) and *Dreams and Visions* are original compositions.

Oïkos thanks you for inviting us to be part of this church's ministry. We look forward to continuing to offer inspirational music in the years ahead.

Rev. Cliff Aerie
Director of MICA (Ministry of Imagination, Creativity and the Arts)
May 25, 2025

The Pastor mentions many organizations of the church, in addition to MICA, in which you may want to get involved. They are listed here, in no particular order, with brief descriptions and contact persons:

Lady Elect Guild – This women’s organization, taking its name from a reference to the Church in 2 John 1, is a historic outreach of the church, meeting monthly on fourth Tuesdays, from September through May. (Marilyn Barton)

Peace and Justice Team – Arising out of our congregational concern for justice and peace, this group organizes quarterly drives for basic needs, provides direction for our prophetic ministries, and serves as our connection with Churches Together for Justice and Metropolitan Congregations United. (Doug Miller)

First Friends – Our hospitality ministry consists of six teams of six members each and a collection of ready substitutes. (Sharon Love)

Brown Baggers – Church members assembling lunches in Memorial Hall before worship on first Sundays year-round, for Gateway 180. (Faye Dyer)

Chancel Choir – The name of the group is self-explanatory. Our choir provides vocal music, two Sundays a month, September through May. Rehearsals are Thursdays at 7:30pm in the Sanctuary. (Leon Burke)

Canterbury Bells – First Church’s Bell Choir performs on third Sundays and rehearses on Thursday evenings at 6:00pm in the Sanctuary, September through May. (Leon Burke)

Logos Readers – Individuals wanting to be considered for performing readers theater and staged reading during worship services should contact the Pastor or Cliff Aerie.

Liturgists – This team of worship leaders is organized by Andrea Welnick. Sign up for an upcoming Sunday at bit.ly/Liturgist-2025

Audio-Visual Assistants – A/V volunteers work with Mark Metcalf at his booth in the southeast corner of the Sanctuary. Sign up for an upcoming Sunday at bit.ly/FCCWG-AVsignup

Slideshow Presenters – A new community of volunteers, slideshow presenters operate our PowerPoint presentations, each Sunday (soon to be in the southwest corner of the Sanctuary). Sign up for an upcoming Sunday at bit.ly/Slideshow-2025 (Pastor Dave)

The Bible Through-and-Through – (Soon to come) A reading of the Bible from cover-to-cover, in Jewish order for the Hebrew Scriptures and in historic order of the New Testament. Watch for an announcement soon.

Occasional or Seasonal Groups

Gala of Grace Planners (Rebecca Novak)

Children’s Music and Other Performance (Johari Hunt and Anne Gerst)

Habitat for Humanity (Phil Shoulberg)

Summer of Conversations Initiators (Pastor Dave Denoon)

Book Study Groups (Pastor Dave Denoon)

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

Seeking Sunday Drivers

Helen Moody is no longer driving, but she would still like to attend worship regularly. If you can be available, some Sunday in the not-too-distant future to pick her up from Sunrise Senior Living on your way to church, or to drop her off on your way home, or both, it would be greatly appreciated! A signup sheet that looks exactly like the accompanying chart has been placed among the clipboards in the office (near the member mailboxes).

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

Relief from the May 16 Tornado

St. Louis Magazine has compiled a list of resources to help victims at bit.ly/STL-Tornado. The City of St. Louis offers a similar list at its website. And the group Action St. Louis has created a list of items needed (and not needed); please see the image after this article, or go to ActionSTL.org/tornado where in addition to finding out how to make material donations you also can volunteer.

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. 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.)

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!

Eritrean Family, June 8

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 on June 8 to do henna hand painting. Donations for Ertra's dental work are welcome but not expected.

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.

Food For International Students at Webster University

Most of us look forward to long, summer days for swimming, family gatherings and picnics in a favorite park. But the international students at Webster University face the hard reality of limited food supplies. Their student loans cover tuition and books, but very little is left over for living expenses; and because there are very few summer jobs on campus, they cannot easily find work to help make ends meet. Learn how to help at bit.ly/WebsterU-Food

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.

Rainbow Bench to be installed soon

Gateway ONA is a consortium of 25 metro area UCC congregations serving as a resource for churches who seek to embrace the diversity of all sexual orientations and gender identities. Over the past several years, the organization has promoted rainbow colored benches to demonstrate a continued outreach and support of the LGBTQ community. We are hoping to have a bench of our own! Learn more at bit.ly/ONA-Bench

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 Hoepfer	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 25

**Sixth Sunday of Easter
Weekend of Memorial Day**

9:45AM Nursery Care Available

10:00AM Worship

10:15AM Kids' Church

11:05AM Coffee Fellowship

Monday, May 26

Memorial Day – OFFICE CLOSED

Tuesday, May 27

4:30-8:30PM Lady Elect - Inglis Room

Wednesday, May 28

10:30AM Staff Meeting - Church Office

9:30AM Yoga w/ Jeanene - Inglis Room

Sunday, June 1

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



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Contact Information

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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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[@WebsterGroves_FirstChurch](https://www.instagram.com/WebsterGroves_FirstChurch)

YouTube
bit.ly/FCCWG-YT