

Welcome!

First Congregational Church of Webster Groves
United Church of Christ



Seek Christ in each. Serve God in all.

SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 30, 2025
FIRST SUNDAY OF ADVENT: HOPE
BLUE CHRISTMAS



*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

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

Jane Porchey, *Liturgist*

LIGHTING THE CANDLES

TOLLING THE BELL

CALL TO WORSHIP †

We gather together in this place:

prophets and dreamers, singers and poets,
we who dare to imagine a world renewed;
we who dare to dream God's dream.

We proclaim expectation with Isaiah!
God's redemption is near!

Through tears and through trials,
we hold fast to our hope.

Do not fear, for God is faithful.

Our redemption rises with the dawn.
Come and worship, all you who dream and wait.
We have come to wonder and praise.

*GATHERING HYMN

O Come, O Come, Emmanuel
No. 116, vv. 1,4,7 – *New Century Hymnal*

The "O" Antiphons

AT THE ADVENT WREATH

Reflection on Family Traditions

First Candle: HOPE

Danny Smith

Responsive Reading (Responsive – Leader; **People**) †

The birth of Jesus has been told and retold a thousand times and in a thousand ways.

Its impact cannot be contained in any one perspective.
The element of the story we focus on changes how we hear it, how we imagine it, and how we experience it.

(Guided meditation.)

... Now, just like then, exhausted expectant parents, far from home, are searching for safe spaces to settle. What must that be like for displaced families today?

Now, as then, faithful families trust that somehow, each seemingly impossible situation will work out.

Mary and Joseph held on to hope when their options seemed to be in short supply. It was a hope that things would get better.

We light the candle of hope because hope creates a path for a new, unknown story to unfold.

NOT FOR CHILDREN ONLY

Special Music

Johari Hunt, *Coordinator of Faith Formation*
Blue Christmas Jay Johnson / Billy Hayes
Martin Mills, solo

The children are invited forward for a time of enrichment. Afterward, they may go to Kids' Church or return to their seats.

THE WORD SHARED

From the Prophets

From the Gospels

Isaiah 2:1-5

Matthew 24:36-44

Pew Bible, p. 618

p. 903

Response.

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

People: Thanks be to God. Amen.

ANTHEM

Are You Lonesome...
Martin Mills, solo

Roy Turk / Lou Handman

MESSAGE OF THE DAY

"Hope Is Invisible"

Rev. David Denoon, *Pastor*

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

Prayer for Healing (Unison)

God of the watching ones, the waiting ones, the slow and suffering ones, the angels in heaven, the child in the womb: Give us your benediction, your good word for our souls, that we might rest and rise in the kindness of your company. Forgive our impatience, our indifference, our ignorance, our reluctance to perceive your message, our refusal to receive your blessing. Grant in this time that we may find ourselves approaching your light, apprehending your truth, rejoicing in our reunion with you, experiencing in our redemption by you. Amen.

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.

Ritual Action

For this portion of the service, worshipers may either

- remain in their seats in quiet meditation; or*
- receive an anointing with healing balm and a blessing from the Pastor or other clergy.*

Prayer

God of compassion and love, we offer you all our suffering and pain. Give us strength to bear our weakness, healing even when there is no cure, peace in the midst of turmoil, and love to fill the spaces in our lives. Glory to you, O God, from whom all love flows. Glory to Jesus who showed his love through suffering. Glory to the Holy Spirit who brings light to the darkest places. Amen.

WE SHARE OUR GIFTS WITH OTHERS

Opportunities for Giving and Gathering

**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.

***HYMN OF PARTING**

Come, O Long-Expected Jesus
No. 122, vv. 1,2,4 – *New Century Hymnal*

Charles Wesley

***BENEDICTION**

***PARTING WORDS**

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

POSTLUDE

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.

† Today’s “Call to Worship” and Advent Wreath ritual are taken from the curriculum and worship resource, *Dreaming God’s Dream*, by Illustrated Ministry © 2025.

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**Connecting Remotely to Worship**

Worship today is not being live streamed or recorded. To view other worship videos online, go to [YouTube.com/@1stChurchWG](https://www.youtube.com/@1stChurchWG)

**Wifi Connection**

Please connect to the network **first\_church\_guest** using the passcode **firstguest**

**Hearing-Assisted System**

To take advantage of our hearing-assisted system, download the **Listen Everywhere** app from the App Store or Google Store. If your phone is incompatible with the **Listen** system, we also have stand-alone receivers. Please see Mark Metcalf at the A/V station for assistance.

**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 so:

- Take advantage of the brass offering plate on the small table in the Narthex
- Send a check made payable to **First Congregational Church, 10 W. Lockwood Ave., Webster Groves, MO 63119**
- Visit **[FirstChurchWG.org/donate](https://www.FirstChurchWG.org/donate)**
- Scan the **QR** code.



**New Members Received**

We welcomed several new members into our Congregation on Sunday, November 23! They were each introduced by their sponsors. To read what the sponsors said about them, go to [FirstChurchWG.org/covenant-news/our-newest-members](https://www.FirstChurchWG.org/covenant-news/our-newest-members)

### **Can You Offer a Ride?**

If you can provide transportation to either of our newly non-driving church members, some Sunday soon, please find their **signup sheets on clipboards in the office** to volunteer a ride.

### **Let Breeze Serve as Your Church Directory**

**Access the church directory or check on your donations on the Breeze app!**

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 Office Administrator Adam Levin at [admin@firstchurchwg.org](mailto:admin@firstchurchwg.org).)

### **November Treasurer's Report**

Read Treasurer Jenny Jones' report through October 31 at [bit.ly/2025-Oct-Treasurer](https://bit.ly/2025-Oct-Treasurer).

The report is a MS Word document. If you need a different format, please contact the office.

### **First Church Merch**

Consider giving the gift of First Church for Christmas!

Adult size tees are \$15, youth sizes are \$10. "Davis Stained-Glass Window" stickers are \$5 each.

Contact the office, or a staff member, to get yours.

### **Sunday Volunteers**

Please consider signing up for one or more of the following opportunities, by going to the links next to the volunteer roles (top of next page). Worship staff will provide training as needed!

**Liturgist** – [bit.ly/Liturgist-2025](https://bit.ly/Liturgist-2025)

**Slideshow Presenter** – [bit.ly/Slideshow-2025](https://bit.ly/Slideshow-2025) • **A/V Volunteer** – [bit.ly/SE-Corner](https://bit.ly/SE-Corner)

### **F&F Workday, December 1**

Several members of the Facility & Finance Ministry are going to paint the kitchen walls on **Monday, December 1. If you would like to join us, we start at 9:00 AM.** For more information, contact Phil Shoulberg.

### **Pecans!**

Pecans are here! You can purchase yours in person, today in the Narthex. Or, if you would like to reserve some for yourself, please go to [bit.ly/FCCPecans](https://bit.ly/FCCPecans) to place your order. We'll accept payment at pick-up. FYI: Each one-pound bag of Mascot Mammoth Pecans costs \$15. Proceeds go to the Minister's Discretionary Fund, offering assistance to people in need.

### **Webster Rock Hill Ministries Food Donations Needed**

SNAP may be up and running again, but there will still be families needing assistance. If you can donate proteins especially – peanut butter (and jelly), cans of chicken, tuna, salmon and ham – it would be really helpful. A list of dinner items is available from the long Narthex Table. Deposit your donations in the "Sharing Our Bounty" shelves. Rosemary Hensley has more information.

### **Bottle Caps / Rainbow Bench Update**

As you may be aware, we need 400 lbs of these to make our Rainbow Bench. We've received over 200 lbs, but there's a "lotta" caps left to go! If everyone participates, we can reach our goal. There's a deposit box in the Narthex. Cap specs at <https://bit.ly/BottlesFCC>

### **Scout Troop 301 Rummage Sale, December 6**

The rummage sale will be December 6 from 8AM until noon. The sale will take place in the northeast corner of the east parking lot. If you would like to donate items, please bring them to the classroom off of the Dickens Room and Scouts will move them to their locker. Donated items should be in good condition (no electronics or liquids).

### **Christmas Tree Decoration, December 7**

Our Christmas Tree will be in the garden on December 7, waiting to be decorated. As always, we hope you will bring a natural ornament that maybe the birds will like (strings of popcorn & cranberries, pinecones with peanut butter etc.) or an outdoor ornament that will liven up our tree. We may have a fire and hot chocolate or even a surprise. Hope to see you after church!

### **Yankee Swap, December 7**

On **Sunday, December 7, from 1:15 to 5:00**, there will be a potluck meal and a swapping of gifts.

Who? YOU!

Where? Mike Lenard's home

When? 1:15 to 5:00, December 7

What? Yankee Swap

Please bring the following:

1. a dish (main dish, salad, or dessert) for the table.
2. a homemade/handmade gift (one per person) (unwrapped) for the gift exchange.
3. a donation for Webster Rock Hill Ministries.

**RSVP before December 4** to Garie Perry (314-698-2614), or Jane Porchey (314-961-0283). Mike's address is: 1467 Heritage Valley Drive, High Ridge. (Detour directions in the office!).

### **Hanging of the Greens & Potluck, December 14**

This year's Hanging of the Greens worship will take place on **Sunday, December 14**. Afterwards come down to Memorial Hall for our **Sweet and Savory Potluck!** Bring your favorite sweet or savory dish and drop it off in Memorial Hall before church. Looking forward to a wonderful ending to the Hanging of the Greens.

### **Lady Elect Cookie Exchange, December 16**

You are cordially invited to the annual Christmas Cookie Exchange at Pat Doyle-Grace's home (114 Glen Road, Webster Groves) on Tuesday, December 16th, at 4:00PM. You will need to bag up four cookies for each guest. **Please RSVP by texting Marilyn at (314)894-2046. (When you text, include your name.)** She will let you know how many bags you need by Friday, December 12th. Avoid nuts. Also, feel free to attach your recipe to your cookie bags.

### **Jazz Noel: 15th Annual Performance – “Seeking the Light” Sunday, December 21, 2:30PM**

Joining the *Oikos Ensemble* will be award-winning artist Michael Anderson who will paint on canvas during the concert, interpreting our theme, **Seeking the Light**. Our program will include actors portraying the tale of four shepherds who encountered the angelic proclamation. **And the Terra Nova Early Music Consort returns with a pre-concert at 2:30PM.** Jazz Noel is offered free to the public. If you would like to support this year's Jazz Noel with a monetary donation, please go the [FirstChurchWG.org/Donate](http://FirstChurchWG.org/Donate), and select “MICA” from the dropdown menu. Or write a check payable to FCCWG with “MICA” in the memo line. Thanks!

### **Cookie Sunday, December 21**

On Sunday December 21 will be Cookie Sunday. Bring your favorite cookies plated and ready to serve. What a delicious way to end the morning!

### **December Shopping List**

Canned Ham • Brown Rice • Instant Mashed Potatoes • Canned Green Vegetable (low/no salt)  
Canned Fruit in own juices • Powdered Milk, shelf stable milk, soy milk  
Baby Fruits • Baby Vegetables • Baby Cereal • Toilet Paper

### **December Birthdays**

Edward Hoganson - December 1  
Merrimon Boyd - December 3  
Tom Waltz - December 6  
Earl Rinne - December 12  
Nannelle Griffith - December 13  
Dan Claggett - December 14  
Esmeralda Castelblanco - Dec. 14  
Rebecca Novak - December 16  
Terri Thompson - December 26  
Neil Hoffsten - December 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](http://FirstChurchWG.org/Calendar)**

#### **Sunday, November 30**

**Advent 1 / Blue Christmas**

**9:45AM** Nursery Care Available

**10:00AM** Worship

**10:15AM** Kids' Church

**11:05AM** Coffee Fellowship

#### **Tuesday, December 2**

**1:00PM** Communications Committee  
- Church Office

#### **Wednesday, December 3**

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

#### **Thursday, December 4**

**6:00PM** Canterbury Bells - Sanctuary  
**7:30PM** Chancel Choir - Sanctuary

#### **Saturday, December 6**

**6:30AM - 12:30PM** Scouts Rummage  
Sale - Parking Lot / Dickens Room

#### **Sunday, December 7**

**Advent 2**

**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

**11:05AM - 12:00PM**

Outdoor Christmas Party  
- Jubilee Garden

**11:30AM**

Pastoral Relations Committee  
**1:30PM** Yankee Swap



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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Events Coordinator – Alicia McMinn  
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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@FirstChurchWG.org

**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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