

# Welcome!

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



*Seek Christ in each. Serve God in all.*

**SUNDAY, DECEMBER 7, 2025  
SECOND SUNDAY OF ADVENT: PEACE  
SACRAMENT OF CHRIST'S TABLE**



*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

*People, Look East!*  
Chancel Choir

Eleanor Farjeon

*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

Mark Edwards, *Liturgist*

### LIGHTING OF THE CANDLES

### TOLLING OF THE BELL

### \*GATHERING HYMN

*O Come, O Come, Emmanuel*  
No. 116, vv. 1,5,7 – *New Century Hymnal*

Advent vespers

### \*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.**

### RITUAL OF APPROACH

*Remembrance of Family Traditions*

*First Candle: HOPE*

Danny Smith

*Second Candle: PEACE*

Anne Gerst

(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. But who is telling the story changes how we hear it, how we imagine it, how we experience it. We light the candle of hope because hope creates a path for a new, unknown story to unfold.**

*The candle of Hope is lighted, and a spoken ritual follows, ending with these words:*

Jesus, like Malachi, John, and other prophets before him, calls us in the loudest of cries to peace.

**Today, we also light the candle of peace because peace requires us to pay attention to the needs of those around us.**

*The candle of Peace is lighted.*

*Prayer (Unison)*

**God of promises, your vision for peace stretches our imaginations, pushing us beyond platitudes and stirring up the fire of justice in our hearts. Show us our place and our purpose in leveling mountains and raising valleys, in straightening roads and clearing pathways. We pray as people of anticipation, who long for peace with anxious energy as we await the arrival of Christ among us. Amen.**

**NOT FOR CHILDREN ONLY**

Johari Hunt, *Coordinator of Faith Formation*

**THE WORD SHARED**

*From the Epistles*

Romans 15:4-13

Pew Bible, p. 1035

*From the Gospels*

Matthew 3:1-12

p. 878

*Response.*

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

**People: Thanks be to God.**

**MESSAGE OF THE DAY**

*"Our Migrant God"*

Rev. David Denoon, *Pastor*

**WE SHARE OUR GIFTS WITH OTHERS**

*Opportunities to Give and Gather*

\**Response*

*Doxology for Advent*

Tune: OLD 100TH

(words by Paula Meador Testerman)

**O Glorious God, to you we bring  
Praise, treasures, lives as offering;  
Spirit of peace, within us dwell;  
Come, Jesus, our Emmanuel. Amen.**

**SACRAMENT OF CHRIST'S TABLE**

\**Invitation (including Prayers of Joy and Concern)*

\**Sursum Corda*

God be with you.

**And also with you.**

Lift up your hearts.

**We lift our hearts to God.**

Let us give thanks to our Sovereign God.

**It is right to give God thanks and praise.**

*Prayer of Thanksgiving*

*Sanctus*

**Holy, holy, holy God of love and majesty, the whole universe  
speaks of your glory, O God most high. Blessed is the One who  
comes in the name of our God. Hosanna in the highest!**

*Fraction*

We cannot take bread and forget those who are hungry. Your world is one world and we are stewards of its nourishment.

**God, put our prosperity at the service of the poor.**

We cannot drink of the fruit of the vine and forget those who are thirsty. The ground and the rootless, the earth and its weary people cry out for justice.

**God, put our fullness at the service of the empty.**

We cannot hear your words of peace and forget the world at war, or, if not at war, then preparing for it.

**Show us quickly, God, how to turn weapons into welcome signs and the lust for power into a desire for peace.**

We cannot celebrate the feast of your family and forget our divisions. We are one in spirit, but not in fact. History and hurt still dismember us.

**God, heal your church in every brokenness.**

*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.**

*Consecration*

*Distribution*

*Communion is served in the pews, first the bread and then the cup.  
The bread is gluten-free. Wine is white; grape juice is red.  
Each is consumed at the indication of the Pastor,  
unless this presents a hardship for the individual.*

*\*Prayer after Communion (Unison)*

**Creator of all good things, you have fed us with the bread of life and cup of blessing, small in their presentation, yet magnificent in our holy imagination. May the peace of Christ's table accompany us on our journeys from here. Amen.**

**\*PARTING HYMN**

*There's a Voice in the Wilderness  
No. 120 – New Century Hymnal*

J. L. Milligan

**\*BENEDICTION**

**\*PARTING WORDS (Responsive)**

Our worship has ended.  
**Let our service begin.**

**POSTLUDE**

*Air on the G String*

J. S. Bach

*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.*

~~~~~

**Connecting Remotely to Worship**

To view 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**
- 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](http://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](http://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. 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](http://bit.ly/Liturgist-2025)

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

### **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](http://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.

### **Give Out Your Care Bags!**

Given the recent inclement weather, people are in need of your generosity. If you took a Care Bag with you on Nov. 16, now is the time to give them out. If you choose to go to a shelter, please call first to get permission to give out bags. Contact Jan Barnes for more information.

### **Success! Kitchen Repainted**

Kudos to Bob Borutta, Neil Hoffsten, Keith Moore, and Phil Shoulberg. We got the kitchen done in a day! Huge thanks to Adrianna Hoepfer who gave exemplary help, but had to leave early because of icy streets.

### **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>

### **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. 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**

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

### **Christmas Fund and Veterans of the Cross Special Offering, December 21**

The Christmas Fund has been caring for active and retired clergy and lay employees of the United Church of Christ for over 100 years. This year, your care and compassion will be especially appreciated by those servants of the church who are facing a time of need. Please, plan to give generously, on Sunday, December 21 (Watch for envelopes, Dec 14 & 21, or donate at our website.) Thank you!

### **Pastoral Relations Committee meets, today!**

If you have a word of encouragement or concern about the Pastor or the Church, please share it with Sharon Love, Annie Sampath, Jared Cohen, Emily Polaske, Dana Romeis, Dan Claggett, or Chris von Weise, before 11:30am today.

### **December Meal-a-Month 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, December 7**

**Second Sunday of Advent: Peace**

**Sacrament of Christ's Table**

**9:00AM** Brown Baggers

**9:15AM** Chancel Choir Warmup

**9:45AM** Nursery Care Available

**10:00AM** Worship

**10:15AM** Kids' Church

**11:05AM** Coffee Fellowship

**11:05AM** Outdoor Christmas Party - Jubilee Garden

**11:30AM** Pastoral Relations Committee

**1:30PM** Yankee Swap

### **Monday, December 8**

**7:00PM** Three Ministries - Hybrid

### **Tuesday, December 9**

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

### **Thursday, December 11**

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

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

### **Friday, December 12**

**9:00AM** Hanging of the Greens Setup

### **Sunday, December 14**

**Third Sunday of Advent: Joy**

**Hanging of the Greens**

**9:00AM** Choirs prepare for worship

**9:45AM** Nursery Care Available

**10AM** Worship

**11:05AM** Sweet & Savory Snacks Potluck



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  
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@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.

## Follow us on

Facebook

@FirstChurchWG

Instagram

@WebsterGroves\_FirstChurch

YouTube

@1stChurchWG