

Welcome!

First Congregational Church of Webster Groves
United Church of Christ



Seek Christ in each. Serve God in all.

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 14, 2025
HANGING OF THE GREENS
THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT: JOY



*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 "Pastoral Symphony" from *Messiah* G. F. Handel
*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 Linda Kopetti, *Liturgist*

TOLLING OF THE BELL

LIGHTING OF THE CANDLES

SHARING THE WORD Rev. David Denoon, *Pastor*
From the Gospels Luke 1:46b-55 Pew Bible, p. 932
Response.

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

People: Thanks be to God.

***GATHERING HYMN** *My Soul Gives Glory to My God* Miriam Terese Winter
No. 119, vv. 1,4,5 – *New Century Hymnal*

***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.**

AT THE ADVENT WREATH

Remembering Christmas Traditions

Cynthia Matlock

Lighting the Third Advent Candle: JOY

Responsive – Reader; **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 first candle is lighted.

**We light the candle of peace because peace requires us to pay
attention to the needs of those around us.**

The second candle is lighted.

A moment of contemplation ends with these words:

... Our world needs to experience joy like that, this season, not to hide from
what is wrong, but to strengthen God's people so that they may bear a
world that is not right.

**Today, we also light the candle of joy because joy sustains
us in the midst of uncertainty.**

The third candle is lighted.

HANGING OF THE GREENS

*If you are participating in decoration,
then when you are directed by the Reader, please exit your pew by the nearest
diagonal aisle and exit the sanctuary by the nearest door.
Please, do not exit by the center aisle or center doors.*

<i>Bells</i>	<i>Christmas Bells</i> Read by Mark Edwards	Henry Wadsworth Longfellow
<i>Handbell Anthem</i>	<i>Grazioso</i> Canterbury Bells	Arnold B. Sherman
<i>Wreaths</i>	<i>Legend of the Cedars</i> Read by Johari Hunt	Anonymous
<i>Anthem</i>	<i>Bright, Bright the Holly Berries</i> Chancel Choir	Alfred Burt
<i>Candles</i>	<i>Significance of Candles</i> Read by Andrea Welnick	Anonymous
<i>Anthem</i>	<i>Candlelight Carol</i> Chancel Choir	John Rutter
<i>Crèche</i>	<i>Legend of the Crèche</i> Read by Laurel Hayes	Anonymous
<i>Anthem</i>	<i>Joseph Dearest, Joseph Mine</i> Anne Gerst, soprano; Noel Burke, viola; Leon Burke, piano	German carol
	<i>The Baby Jesus figurine is carried forward by Laine Gomez and Phoenix Hill, lead performers in next Sunday's Kids' Church presentation, "Dreams of Angels."</i>	
<i>Poinsettias</i>	<i>The Legend of the Poinsettia</i> <i>and Natural History of the Cuetlaxochitl</i> Read by Cliff Aerie	D. Denoon and T. Harris
<i>Anthem</i>	<i>Still, Still, Still</i> Chancel Choir	Austrian carol
<i>Christmas Tree</i>	<i>Legends of the Christmas Tree</i> Read by Joan Musbach	Anonymous
<i>Anthem</i>	<i>People, Look East!</i> Chancel Choir	Eleanor Farjeon

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

We Lift Our Joys and Concerns

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.

CONCLUSION

Reading

Significance of the Season

*Acclamation

Joy to the World!

Isaac Watts

**Joy to the World! The Lord is come;
let earth receive her King!**

**Let every heart prepare him room
and heav'n and nature sing,
and heav'n and nature sing,
and heav'n, and heav'n and nature sing!**

*Words of Parting

Liturgist: Our worship has ended.

People: **Let our service begin.**

POSTLUDE

Toccata

Flor Peeters

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 an attendant 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**.



**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).)

### **Sweet & Savory Snacks Potluck, Today**

After worship today, 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.

### **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.) Avoid nuts!** Also, feel free to attach your recipe!

### **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! **Remember, NO NUTS!**

### **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, today and Dec. 21, or donate at our website – [FirstChurchWG.org/donate](http://FirstChurchWG.org/donate) – selecting “Christmas Fund...” from the pulldown menu. Thank you!

### **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!

### **Christmas Eve Services, December 24**

First Church will have two services on Christmas Eve. The Family Christmas Eve Service will begin at 4:30PM. Featuring a live Nativity tableau, the service will also see material and monetary gifts for Gateway 180 collected. The second service, at 9:00PM, is entitled “A Service of Nine Lessons and Carols.” Hope to see you at either or both!

### **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](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.

### **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.

### **Thank you, from St. John UCC The Beloved Community**

About 15 First Church worshipers went from Webster Groves to the College Hill neighborhood in St. Louis, for "Jesus Has Left the Building" on November 16. This week we received the following greeting from St. John Pastor Michelle Higgins:

**Thank you for coming to worship and fellowship  
with the Beloved Community at Saint John's UCC.**

**We are always so happy to connect with sibling congregations.**

**Please come on through anytime!**

**Peace & Grace, Rev. Michelle**

### **Uganda Water Project Update**

On November 9th our church presented a faux check to Peter Kalulu, payable to Field for Humanity. With the cooperation of FCCWG and the Rotary Club, **Field of Humanity will now be able to provide approximately 52,000 men, women, and children with clean drinking water. We are now halfway to completing Peter's goal.** Thanks, to every person in our church who has donated, and to Peter for his devotion to improving the health of his people. Donations will continue to be collected during 2026. *Read more about the Water Project in the latest edition of Covenant News, our weekly newsletter - <https://conta.cc/4rXmrao>*

### **Yankee Swap Success**

The Yankee Swap was a huge success. Participants collected \$244 for Webster Rock Hill Ministries, to be used for personal hygiene items like toilet paper, soap, toothpaste, deodorant, and other items that can't be purchased with food stamps. Thank you to all who felt the holiday spirit and gave so generously!

– Jane Porchey and Rosemary Hensley, Members of the WRHM Executive Board

### **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>

### **Office Closure**

The First Church office will be closed, beginning Christmas Day and re-opening on Monday, January 5.

### **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, IV - 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  
Ellie Fisher – December 21  
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 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

#### **Monday, December 15**

**7:00PM** Executive Ministry (Zoom)

#### **Tuesday, December 16**

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

#### **Wednesday, December 17**

**9:30AM** Yoga with Jeanene - Inglis Room

#### **Thursday, December 18**

**4:00PM** Rehearsal: "Dreams of Angels"

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

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

#### **Saturday, December 20**

**10:00AM** Setup & Rehearsal: Jazz Noel

**12:00PM** Rehearsal: Logos Readers

**2:00PM** Rehearsal: "Dreams of Angels"

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

**Christmas Offering**

**9:00AM** Worship Rehearsals

**9:45AM** Nursery Care Available

**10:00AM** **Worship:** "Dreams of Angels"  
with Kids' Church and the Oikos Ensemble

**11:05AM** Coffee Fellowship  
(Lady Elect Christmas Cookies)

**2:30PM** Jazz Noel

#### **Wednesday, December 24**

**Christmas Eve**

**4:30PM** Family Service

**9:00PM** Service of Lessons and Carols



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