

Welcome!

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



Seek Christ in each. Serve God in all.

**SUNDAY, DECEMBER 21, 2025
FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT: LOVE
KIDS' CHURCH CHRISTMAS PROGRAM
CHRISTMAS FUND SPECIAL OFFERING**



*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 *Good King Wenceslas* John Mason Neale, words
Thomas Helmore, music

WELCOME Cynthia Matlock, *Liturgist*
*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.*

TOLLING OF THE BELL

LIGHTING OF THE CANDLES

INTROIT *Christmas Time Is Here* Vince Guaraldi

***GATHERING HYMN** *Come, O Long-Expected Jesus* Charles Wesley
No. 122 – *New Century Hymnal*

***RAISING OF 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.

AT THE ADVENT WREATH

Remembering Christmas Traditions

Peter Kalulu

Lighting the Fourth Candle: LOVE

1 John 4:9-11

Words are spoken, scripture read, and the fourth candle is kindled.

Then, all pray together:

O God, we thank you that Jesus showed your love for every person — babies and children, old people and young, sick people and those who were strong, rich people and those who were poor. Come to us in this Advent season, and give us love in our hearts for all people. Amen.

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

Rev. David Denoon, *Pastor*

We Lift Our Joys and Concerns to God

Prayer of the Day

Prayer of Our Savior

Our Father, who art in heaven: hallowed be thy name; thy kingdom come; they 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; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory for ever. Amen.

WE SHARE OUR BLESSINGS WITH OTHERS

Opportunities to Give and Gather

**Song of Praise*

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.**

**Prayer of Dedication* (Unison)

**Our hearts are united here in love, as we anticipate your coming
Light that will set this world right. Our gifts to your work are
our own beacon of divine love. We give them freely with
compassion, for your love has conquered the world. Let your
face shine, mighty God, that everyone may be saved. Amen.**

MESSAGE OF THE DAY

"Dreams of Angels"

Matthew 1:18-2:14, 19-23

Performed by Kids' Church

with Anne Gerst and the Oikos Jazz Ensemble

Songs and Carols in the Program

"There's a Song in the Air"

Josiah Holland / Karl Harrington

There's a song in the air! There's a star in the sky!
There's a mother's deep prayer and a baby's low cry!
And the star rains its fire while the beautiful sing,
For the manger of Bethlehem cradles a King!

"Joseph! Joseph!"

Cliff Aerie

"O Little Town of Bethlehem"

Phillips Brooks

O little town of Bethlehem, how still we see thee lie!
Above thy deep and dreamless sleep the silent stars go by;
Yet in thy dark streets shineth the everlasting light,
The hopes and fears of all the years are met in thee tonight.

"We Three Kings of Orient Are"

John H. Hopkins, Jr.

We three kings of Orient are; bearing gifts we traverse afar,
field and fountain, moor and mountain, following yonder star.
O star of wonder, star of light, star with royal beauty bright,
westward leading, still proceeding, guide us to thy perfect light.

"A Child Is Born"

Thad Jones / Eric Wilder

"We Wish You a Merry Christmas"

English carol

We wish you a merry Christmas... and a happy New Year!
Good tidings we bring to you and your kin,
Good tidings of Christmas and a happy New Year.
We wish you a merry Christmas... and a happy New Year!

***PARTING HYMN**

Who Would Think That What Was Needed

John Bell &

No. 153 – *New Century Hymnal*

Graham Maule

***BENEDICTION**

Christmas Poem, 1903

Catherine Twining Moody

*PARTING WORDS

Liturgist: Our worship has ended.

People: Let our service begin.

POSTLUDE

Joy to the World!

Isaac Watts

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.

We want to acknowledge the wonderful teamwork of this morning's **Kids' Church participants** – children, youth, and adults. Designers of the program included Johari Hunt, Noel Burke, Cliff Aerie, and Dave Denoon. We are grateful to Anne Gerst and Mark Cereghino for their music leadership. Thanks, to Phil Shoulberg for handling the photography, and to all the other grandparents and parents who made this presentation possible. Most of all, Christmas blessings to our Kids' Church participants – Phoenix Hill and Laine Gomez for their acting skills, and all of you who have rehearsed for today: Jack Barton; Ruby and Gabriel Cohen; Ellie and Wren Fisher; Anna, Evan, and Maggie Galloway; Lauren and Laine Gomez; Phoenix and Trina Hill; Cameron and Cooper Mockabee; Oliver and Lillian Moore; Warner and Benton Prange; and Frank Schubert.

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

The Oikos Jazz Ensemble is an outreach of our Ministry of Imagination, Creativity, and the Arts (MICA). MICA takes part in Sunday morning jazz worship, six times a year, and conducts two seasonal programs – Jazz Noel (this afternoon at 2:30!!!) 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 thus designated),
- 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)

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### **Connecting Remotely to Worship**

To view worship livestream and 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).)

### **Cookie Sunday, Today**

After worship today, please plan to stay for our annual Cookie Sunday Fellowship, with homemade goodies prepared by the Lady Elect Guild. What a delicious way to end the morning!

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

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 times of need. Please give generously. Special Offering Envelopes are available from the First Friends in the Narthex, or donate at our website – [FirstChurchWG.org/donate](http://FirstChurchWG.org/donate) – selecting “Christmas Fund...” from the pulldown menu.

### **Jazz Noel: 15th Annual Performance – “Seeking the Light” Today at 2:30PM**

Joining the Oikos Ensemble, Logos Readers, and a special guest, 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 Service will begin at 4:30PM. Featuring a live Nativity tableau, the service will also include a collection of material and monetary gifts for Gateway 180. The second service, at 9:00PM, is a Service of Lessons and Carols. Hope to see you at either or both!

### **Kwanzaa Celebration, December 28**

Join us on Sunday, December 28th for a Kwanzaa Celebration and music to bring our hearts and spirits into the New Year! This service features a Christmas Carol Sing led by Leon Burke and Cliff Aerie, and a Kwanzaa observance including West African drummer Baba Kunama Mtendaji.

### **First Church T-Shirts**

Looking for a last-minute Christmas present for yourself or someone else who loves First Church? Our adult size tees are \$15, youth sizes are \$10. Order yours from our website's Donate page.

### **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)

### **Uganda Water Project Update**

Read about the Field for Humanity Uganda Water Project in the December 11 edition of Covenant News, our weekly newsletter - <https://conta.cc/4rXmrao>

### **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 21**

**Fourth Sunday of Advent**  
**Christmas Fund Special 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**  
~~9:30AM~~ Yoga with Jeanene CANCELLED  
**4:30PM** Christmas Eve Family Worship Service  
**9:00PM** Christmas Eve Candlelight Worship  
**10:00PM** Wassail Bowl Reception

### **Thursday, December 25**

**Christmas Day**  
**OFFICE CLOSED THRU JANUARY 5**

### **Sunday, December 28**

**Fourth Day of Christmas**  
**Third Day of Kwanzaa**  
**9:45AM** Nursery Care Available  
**10:00AM** Worship  
**11:05AM** Coffee Fellowship



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## Contact Information

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**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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