

Welcome!

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



Seek Christ in each. Serve God in all.

**SUNDAY, JANUARY 4, 2026
FEAST OF THE EPIPHANY (OBSERVED)
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 *O Christ, Thou Art the Beauteous Day* J. S. Bach

WELCOME Jane Porchey, *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 THE BELL

LIGHTING THE CANDLES

CALL TO WORSHIP (Responsive – Liturgist; **People**) Isaiah 60:1-6

Arise, shine; for your light has come, and glory from your God has risen upon you.

For darkness shall cover the earth, and thick darkness the peoples; but our God will arise upon us, and God's glory will appear over us.

Lift up your eyes and look around; the nations all gather together, they come to you – so many children from far away and carried on their nurses' arms.

**We see and are radiant; our hearts thrill and rejoice,
because abundance is revealed all around us and among us.**

A multitude of camels have arrived, the young camels of Midian and Ephah, and all those from Sheba...

with gold and frankincense, proclaiming God's praise.

***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.

***GATHERING HYMN** *Go, Tell It on the Mountain* Spiritual
No. 154, *New Century Hymnal*

***RITUAL OF APPROACH** (Unison)

**Prayer of Approach* (Unison)

O God, you made all nations out of one blood, and by a star in the East you revealed to all peoples the One whose name is Emmanuel. Enable us who know that you are with us to proclaim Christ's unsearchable riches, so that all may come to your Light and bow before the brightness of your Child's rising. This we pray in the name of Jesus our Emmanuel, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, now and for ever. Amen.

**Singing God's Glory* Tune: GLORIA (refrain)
Gloria in excelsis Deo! Gloria in excelsis Deo!

NOT FOR CHILDREN ONLY

Johari Hunt, *Coordinator of Faith Formation*

THE WORD SHARED

From the Gospels

Matthew 2:13-18

Pew Bible, p. 878

Response.

Hear what the Spirit is saying to the people.

Thanks be to God.

MESSAGE OF THE DAY

“The Parts We Prefer to Skip (but Seriously Cannot)” Rev. David Denoon, *Pastor*

ANTHEM

Take Us Home by Another Way
(video)

Christopher Grundy

WE SHARE OUR BLESSINGS WITH OTHERS

Opportunities to Give and Gather

**Song of Praise*

Doxology for Christmas

Tune: OLD 100TH

**Praise God with songs that never cease!
Praise God who fills the earth with peace!
Praise God for love and joy within!
The Holy Child is born again. Amen.**

**Prayer of Dedication (Unison)*

**God of promises fulfilled, in the fullness of time we now enjoy
your greatest gift, the Child of your love. Like the magi of old we
have seen the brilliance of your Light — this humble Child. With
our gifts of love and labor may your church grow wise and
strong in your love. With your Spirit receive and consecrate our
gifts, for we present them to the glory of the Sun of
righteousness. Amen.**

SACRAMENT OF CHRIST’S TABLE

**Introduction (including Joys and Concerns)*

**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.

**Because, O God, you have made yourself manifest in
Christ Jesus, the one begotten from the heart of your love,
Word of truth, Light of light, we give you thanks and
praise.**

**Prayer of Remembrance*

As sages from the East offered you their best,

**So may we honor you, O Christ, with our highest visions
and finest energies.**

As you turned the water to wine at Cana,

**So come to your church now, and teach us to change
human tears to joyful song.**

As you were baptized to fulfill all righteousness,
So may your church humbly do your will.
As you gave light to those who followed you on earth,
So be our light as we follow you on city streets or country roads. Be revealed among us in power, in word, in sacrament, and in places where we live and work. Glory be to you, O Christ, now and for ever. Amen.

Consecration

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.

Fraction

Communion

*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*

We give you thanks, gracious God, that you come to us in bread and cup, in the brilliance of your Incarnation, and in the love of this gathered community. Now, send us forth from this table a nourished and empowered people that we may live your love, speak your peace, and sing your hope. Amen.

***PARTING HYMN**

I Am the Light of the World insp. by Howard Thurman
584, vv. 1,4 – *New Century Hymnal*

***BENEDICTION**

Response
**O star of wonder, star of night,
Star with royal beauty bright,
Westward leading, still proceeding,
Guide us to thy perfect light!**

***WORDS OF PARTING**

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

POSTLUDE

Psalm 19: The Heavens Declare the Glory of God B. Marcello
*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 Anthem is new music and video by the Rev. Dr. Christopher Grundy, Professor of Worship and Preaching at Eden Theological Seminary. The refrain is sung by Prof. Grundy and his sons, Gabriel, Liam, and Ross. The video may be viewed at bit.ly/Grundy-AnotherWay

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.)

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

Slideshow Presenter – bit.ly/Slideshow-2025 • **A/V Volunteer** – bit.ly/SE-Corner

Adult Education, January 11

All About Gateway Open & Affirming (GONA)

What is Gateway Open & Affirming (GONA), and why is it important that our church is a part of it? After worship on January 11, we will hear information about GONA. Background information about GONA can be accessed at bit.ly/FCCGONA. Barbara Biedenstein, who serves as the GONA coach for the United Church of Christ in the area, will present. Barb is a lifelong member of Kirkwood UCC and was part of the task force that led their GONA process 19 years ago. Please join us in the **Inglis Room on 1/11/26 at 11:20AM**.

Personal Hygiene & Food Drive for WRHM for MLK Weekend, January 18

In recognition of the MLK, Jr., holiday and honoring its tradition of conducting a Day of Service, on **Sunday, January 18, 2026**, First Church will be holding a Collection Drive for Webster Rock Hill Ministries. Items sought include personal hygiene items and non-perishable food items. For more information and a complete list of items needed, please visit bit.ly/FCCMLK26.

Save The Date – St. Pat’s Dinner, February 28

Samuel UCC will be hosting a St. Patrick’s dinner on February 28, 2026, from 4-7PM. All money goes to the UCC Habitat Build. A suggested donation of \$20 or more is suggested.

Lost-and-Found Items

There are several items still in our office that have not been claimed. These items include a walking cane, two sets of eyeglasses, a black women’s overshirt, and more. Please claim these items if they are yours. In late January, we will donate these items to Webster-Rock Hill Ministries.

Poinsettias

Did you enjoy the Christmas Eve services’ poinsettias? If you are interested in helping us recoup their cost, please donate to the Flower Fund at firstchurchwg.org/donate.

January Meal-a-Month Shopping List

Boxed Whole Grain Pasta • Canned Green Vegetable (low or no salt)
Canned Fruit in own juices • Powdered Milk, shelf stable milk, soy milk
Cold Cereal (no sugar) • Plain Oatmeal (no sugar) • Sugar free juices in plastic bottles

January Birthdays

Helen Moody - January 1
Mike Lenard - January 1
Faye Dyer - January 7
Coco Denoon - January 7
Erin Prange - January 8
Maggie Galloway - December 8
Roger Barnes - January 11
Kin Lavender - January 12
Richard Smith - January 14
Ryder Hoepfer - January 14
Bob Hill - January 16
Charlie Schoenherr - January 22
Jan Barnes - January 23
Jacquie Bryant - January 26
Mark Metcalf - January 26
Ashley Merideth - January 26
George Conlee - January 28
David von Weise - January 28

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, January 4

Feast of the Epiphany (Celebrated)

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 (featuring King Cakes!)

Monday, January 5

9:00AM Office Re-opens after the Holiday Season

Tuesday, January 6

Epiphany

1:00PM Communications Committee – Church Office

Wednesday, January 7

9:30AM Yoga with Jeanene – Inglis Room

10:30AM Staff Meeting – Church Office

Thursday, January 8

6:00PM Canterbury Bells – Sanctuary

7:30PM Chancel Choir – Sanctuary

Sunday, January 11

9:45AM Nursery Care Available

10:00AM Worship

10:15AM Kids' Church

11:05AM Coffee Fellowship

11:20AM Adult Ed: "Gateway ONA" – Inglis Room



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Contact Information

Moderator – Chris von Weise
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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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