

Welcome!

First Congregational Church of Webster Groves
United Church of Christ



Seek Christ in each. Serve God in all.

SUNDAY, JANUARY 18, 2026
MLK DAY OF SERVICE WEEKEND
JAZZ WORSHIP



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

Cedar's Blues

Cedar Walton

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

Sharon Love, *Liturgist*

TOLLING THE BELL

LIGHTING THE CANDLES

CALL TO WORSHIP

*His Name Was Martin
with A Call to Unity*

Dr. Billy Taylor

Quotations from *Letter from the Birmingham City Jail* by Martin Luther King, Jr.
Litany by W.B. McClain and L.H. Stookey, U.S.A., 20th Century

We remember the conviction of Martin Luther King, Jr. that “freedom is never voluntarily given by the oppressor; it must be demanded by the oppressed.”

Therefore, let us pray for courage and determination by those who are oppressed...

We remember Martin’s warning that “*a negative peace which is the absence of tension*” is less than “*a positive peace which is the presence of justice.*”

Therefore, let us pray that those who work for peace in our world may cry out first for justice...

We remember Martin’s insight that “*injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere. We are caught in an inescapable network of mutuality tied in a single garment of destiny. Whatever affects one directly affects all indirectly.*”

We remember Martin’s “hope that dark clouds of racial prejudice will soon pass away and the deep fog of misunderstanding will be lifted from our fear-drenched communities, and in some not too distant tomorrow, the radiant stars of love and brotherhood will shine over our great nation with all their scintillating beauty.”

Therefore, in faith, let us commend ourselves and our work for justice to the goodness of Almighty God!

*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.

*GATHERING HYMN

*Precious Lord, Take My Hand
No. 472 – New Century Hymnal*

Thomas A. Dorsey

***RITUAL OF APPROACH**

**Prayer of Confession (Litany)*

After each petition, the Congregation prays:
God, have mercy.

**Silence for Personal Confession*

**Words of Assurance (Responsive)*

If we genuinely and sincerely regret our sins and repent of them, the almighty God has mercy on us, forgives us our sins, and leads us unto eternal life.

Thanks be to God! Amen.

**Singing God's Glory* *Glory to God in the Highest* Tune: GLORIA (HAAS)

The congregation repeats each line of the following after the Minister:

Glory to God! Glory to God! Glory in the highest!

To God be glory forever!

Next, the Minister leads the congregation in harmonizing the following:

Alleluia! Amen! Alleluia! Amen!

NOT FOR CHILDREN ONLY

Rev. Cliff Aerie, *Director of MICA*

THE WORD SHARED

From the Gospels

John 1:29-42

Pew Bible, p. 966

Response

Hear what the Spirit is saying to the people.

Thanks be to God.

ANTHEM

King for a Day

Jason Shelton

MESSAGE OF THE DAY

"Getting Free"

Rev. David Denoon, *Pastor*

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

Preparation for Prayer

Breathe on Me, Breath of God

Edwin Hatch

Breathe on me, breath of God, fill me with life anew

That I may love the way you love and do what you would do.

We Lift Our Joys and Concerns to God

When you speak a prayer request aloud, please bear in mind the privacy of those for whom you are praying, as this worship is being live-streamed.

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.

WE SHARE OUR BLESSINGS WITH OTHERS

Opportunities to Give and Gather

**Song of Praise*

Doxology

Thomas Ken

Praise God from whom all blessings flow.

Praise God, all creatures here below.

Praise God above, you heavenly host –

Creator, Christ, and Holy Ghost. Amen.

**Prayer of Dedication (Unison)*

Great is your faithfulness, O God! Countless gifts you have given – including the ones Dr. King prayed that all your children might enjoy: fruitful labor, beloved community, and a sense of prosperity such as only you can provide. With humbleness before your abundance, we offer gifts of money, time, community, and labor, and pray your blessing upon them, that they may further establish the majesty found in Jesus' name. Amen.

***PARTING HYMN**

Lift Every Voice and Sing
No. 593 – *New Century Hymnal*

James Weldon Johnson

***BENEDICTION**

***WORDS OF PARTING**

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

POSTLUDE

I Wish I Knew How It Would Feel to Be Free

Dr. Billy Taylor

Today's cover art, is "The Thankful Poor," an 1894 painting by Henry Ossawa Tanner. Mr. Tanner, who was a native of Philadelphia, spent most of his adult life in Paris, France, as part of the African-American expatriate community there.

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 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)

The cross image now gracing the sanctuary vault is our "Sumi Cross." It was the symbol used for our 150th anniversary celebration and is a depiction of the three basic strokes in Japanese *sumi-e* painting. According to painter Chiura Obata, the brush strokes used in *sumi-e* represent physical reality (vertical), the passage of time (horizontal), and movement (circle). They closely resemble the Celtic cross in which the lines and circle are associated heaven (vertical), earth (horizontal), and eternity (circle). The Sumi Cross honors the membership of Mr. Obata and his family at First Church, from 1943 to 1945, when our Congregation participated in a faith-filled effort to relocate Japanese-American families from Western internment camps to Midwest homes.

The Sumi Cross installation was crafted by metal-worker Kem Williams and made possible by a grant from the Dr. Rodney M. Coe Memorial Fund.

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-2026

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

Personal Hygiene & Food Drive for WRHM for MLK Weekend, Today

In recognition of the MLK, Jr., holiday and honoring its tradition of conducting a Day of Service, First Church is conducting a Collection Drive for Webster Rock Hill Ministries. Items sought include personal hygiene items and non-perishable food items. **If you forgot to bring your donation with you to church, today, we will still be accepting contributions until 12PM.** For more information and a complete list of items needed, please visit bit.ly/FCCMLK26.

Holiday Closing, January 19; Early Closing, January 26

The Church Office will be closed tomorrow, in observance of Martin Luther King, Jr. Day.

The Church Office will close at 1PM on Monday, January 26.

Heritage Sunday, January 25

In the true spirit of our Congregational Heritage, we will celebrate with a classic Potluck. Bring your favorite main dish or side dish casserole, salad or dessert to share. This is the time to resurrect a 9 x13 size recipe that you do not usually prepare. **A signup sheet IS NOW**

AVAILABLE in the office to spread out the available selections. The event will also include a brief presentation relating to ensuring our future as we celebrate our past. Mark your calendar for another enjoyable morning dining together.

Lady Elect Chair Yoga Event, January 27

You are cordially invited to the January 27th (11:30) Lady Elect meeting, featuring Chair Yoga with Jeanene Harris. Wear comfy clothing and bring a sack lunch to eat after the workout. To RSVP, just text Marilyn at (314) 894-2046. Include your name.

Creating Pathways to Local Homeownership for Working Families, February 1

Our Adult Education session on Sunday, **February 1**, starting at **11:20** in **Inglis Room**, will focus on the **Webster Groves Community Land Trust**, a new community-governed nonprofit organization that helps create pathways to local homeownership for working families.

Acting Executive Director Farrell Carfield will explain how a community land trust balances the opportunity to build equity and wealth with keeping homes affordable and diverse for future generations. Learn more at www.webstergrovesclt.org.

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 to Webster-Rock Hill Ministries.

Rainbow Bench Progress Continues!

We now have **254 pounds** of caps toward our final goal of 400 lbs! We need 146 pounds to reach our goal. Sharon Love is projecting that we will reach our goal by Summer of this year. We have St. Paul UCC and Compton Heights Christian Church collecting caps also.

Church Merch Still Available!

We still have some First Church merch! Adult sized tees are \$15, youth sizes are \$10. You can buy your shirt at the website’s donate page, and pick it up in the office.

NAACP Blood Drive, January 31

The St. Louis City Branch of the NAACP will host the 1st Dr. Charles Drew Blood Drive on Saturday, January 31, from 9:00AM to 2:00PM, at the St. Louis City NAACP Building, located at 4811 Delmar Blvd., St. Louis, MO 63108. For more information, please contact Rev. Elston McCowan at elston1024@gmail.com, or visit www.StLouisNAACP.org

Authentic Selves Exhibit, January 24 – February 8

Authentic Selves, an exhibit of 20 portraits and stories of trans and nonbinary people, is being offered through the Family Diversity Project, January 24 - February 8, at Parkway United Church of Christ, 2841 N. Ballas Rd. 63131. Opening reception, January 24, 7 – 8:30PM. RSVP for the reception to <https://PUCC.onechurchsoftware.com/public/events/16902>

Amplify the Arch Conference, February 8

Sisters of the Abbey of the Glittering Arch will host a one-day conference, **Amplify the Arch** at the Renaissance Airport Hotel, 9801 Natural Bridge Rd, St. Louis, MO 63134. This free event by and for Queer youth will include workshops, vendors, drag performers, and more. The point of the event is to connect people in an authentic way through community and connection.

Pastor Dave Denoon will be away, January 19-26, and will return to the office on January 27. Should you become aware of a pastoral need while he is away, please contact the office.

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	Ryder Hoeper - January 14
Mike Lenard - January 1	Bob Hill - January 16
Faye Dyer - January 7	Charlie Schoenherr - January 22
Coco Denoon - January 7	Jan Barnes - January 23
Maggie Galloway - January 7	Jacque Bryant - January 26
Erin Prange - January 8	Mark Metcalf - January 26
Roger Barnes - January 11	Ashley Merideth - January 26
Kin Lavender - January 12	George Conlee - January 28
Richard Smith - January 14	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 18

Martin Luther King, Jr., Day of Service Weekend

Jazz Worship

9:15AM Chancel Choir Warmup

9:45AM Nursery Care Available

10:00AM Jazz Worship

10:15AM Kids' Church

11:05AM Coffee Fellowship - Memorial Hall

Monday, January 19

MLK Day - Office Closed

Tuesday, January 20

10:30AM Staff Meeting - Church Office

Wednesday, January 21

9:30AM Yoga with Jeanene - Inglis Room

Thursday, January 22

6:00PM Canterbury Bells - Sanctuary

7:30PM Chancel Choir - Sanctuary

Sunday, January 25

Heritage Sunday (160th Anniversary)

9:45AM Nursery Care Available

10:00AM Worship w/ Rev. Jan Barnes

10:15AM Kids' Church

11:05AM Midwinter Potluck - Memorial Hall



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
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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.

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