

# Welcome!

First Congregational Church of Webster Groves  
United Church of Christ



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

MAY 17, 2026  
JAZZ WORSHIP  
SEVENTH SUNDAY OF EASTER  
SUNDAY AFTER ASCENSION DAY

*That they may be*



John 17:20-26

*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** *The Preacher* Horace Silver  
*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 OF THE CANDLES**

**INTROIT** *As One* Cliff Aerie

The world can no longer be a place where fear and hatred abound.  
If love is our guide, peace shall reside and unity bind us as one.

The world can no longer be defaced and scarred by garbage and greed.  
Let's clean up this mess, ease the distress, embracing our planet as one.

The world God gave us should be a place where no one wanders alone.  
Let's open the door, strangers no more, together and living as one.

**\*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** *Awake, Awake to Love and Work* G. A. Studdert-Kennedy  
No. 89 – *New Century Hymnal*

**RITUAL OF APPROACH** (Responsive)

**\*Invitation** (Responsive) 1 John 1:8-9

If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us.

**But if we confess our sin, God who is faithful and just will forgive us our sin and cleanse us of all unrighteousness.**

**\*Prayer of Confession** (Unison)

**God of Many Names, forgive us for our actions that hurt others, ourselves, and you. But more often than not, it's our inactions that injure your people and the world. We are stymied by insular thinking, feeling chronically overwhelmed, sensing deeply a certain helplessness, and sometimes plain selfishness. Help us find the will, the energy, the time, and the desire to practice what we preach. Make us to be bearers of your name who don't simply profess to love our neighbors, but who demonstrably follow your command to do so. Align our faith with our lives. Shape us to be people who continually create a Kin-dom of Heaven. Amen.**

**\*Silence for Personal Confessions**

**\*Words of Assurance** (Responsive) Romans 5:1-2  
Since we are justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Savior Jesus Christ.

**Through Jesus Christ we have obtained access to this grace to which we hold fast, and we rejoice in our hope of sharing the glory of God.**

\*Singing God's Glory

Halleluja  
No. 236 – New Century Hymnal

Trad. Caribbean

**NOT FOR CHILDREN ONLY**

Cliff Aerie, *Director, MICA*  
including *Rainbow Connection*, by Kenneth Ascher and Paul Williams

**THE WORD SHARED**

*From Christian History*

Acts 1:6-14

Pew Bible, p. 991

*From the Gospels*

John 17:1-11

p. 985

*Response.*

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

**People: Thanks be to God.**

**ANTHEM**

*The Blue-Green Hills of Earth*  
from The Paul Winter Consort's *Missa Gaia*

Kim Oler

For the earth forever turning; for the skies, for ev'ry sea;  
for our lives, for all we cherish, sing we our joyful song of peace.

For the mountains, hills, and pastures in their silent majesty;  
for the stars, for all the heavens, sing we our joyful song of peace.

For the sun, for rain and thunder, for the seasons' harmony,  
for our lives, for all creation, sing we our joyful praise to Thee.

For the world we raise our voices, for the home that gives us birth;  
in our joy we sing returning home to our blue-green hills of earth.

**MESSAGE OF THE DAY**

*"The Oneness at Hand"*

Rev. David Denoon, *Pastor*

**PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE**

*Preparation*

*Lead Me, Guide Me*

Doris Akers

**Lead me, guide me, along the way, for if you lead me, I cannot stray.**

**Lord, let me walk each day with thee. Lead me, O Lord, lead me.**

*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*

*New Zealand Prayer Book*

**Eternal Spirit, Earth-maker, Pain-bearer, Life-giver, Source of all  
that is and that shall be, Father and Mother of us all, Loving God,  
in whom is heaven: The hallowing of your name echo through the  
universe! The way of your justice be followed by the peoples of the  
world! Your heavenly will be done by all created beings! Your  
commonwealth of peace and freedom sustain our hope and come  
on earth. With the bread we need for today, feed us. In the hurts  
we absorb from one another, forgive us. In times of temptation  
and test, strengthen us. From trials too great to endure, spare us.  
From the grip of all that is evil, free us. For you reign in the glory of  
the power that is love, now and for ever. Amen.**

**WE SHARE OUR BLESSINGS WITH OTHERS**

*Opportunities to Give and Gather*

\*Song of Praise

*Doxology with Alleluias*

Tune: LASST UNS ERFREUEN

**Praise God from whom all blessings flow**

**Praise God, all creatures here below! Alleluia! Alleluia!**

**Praise God, above, you heavenly host,  
Creator, Christ, and Holy Ghost! Alleluia! Alleluia!  
Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!**

*\*Prayer of Dedication (Unison)*

**Our praises we lift to you more than just in sound, O God. In the  
silent gifts of spirit and substance our worship takes form as well.  
Receive and bless all the offerings we make before you this day, in  
Christ's name. Amen.**

**\*PARTING HYMN**

*Canticle of the Turning*

Rory Cooney

Tune: STAR OF COUNTY DOWN

My soul cries out with a joyful shout that the God of my heart is great,  
and my spirit sings of the wondrous things that you bring to the ones who wait.  
You fixed your sight on your servant's plight, and my weakness you did not spurn,  
so from east to west shall my heart be blest. Could the world be about to turn?

*Refrain*

My heart will sing of the day you bring. Let the fires of your justice burn.  
Wipe away all tears, for the dawn draws near,  
and the world is about to turn.

Though the nations rage from age to age, we remember who holds us fast:  
God's mercy must deliver us from the conqueror's crushing grasp.  
This saving word that our forebears heard is the promise which holds us bound,  
till the spear and rod can be crushed by God, who is turning the world around.

*Refrain*

**\*BENEDICTION**

**\*PARTING WORDS**

Liturgist: Our worship has ended.

**People: Let our service begin.**

**POSTLUDE**

*Summertime*

George and Ira Gershwin

Words adapted by Cliff Aerie

Summertime, and the livin' is easy,  
Fish are jumpin' and the birds fly so high  
Sun is shining and the flowers are blooming  
So, hush little baby, don't you cry.

On autumn mornings you've gotta rise up singing  
Each day a blessing when you look to the sky  
All the colors of creation surround you  
So, hush little darlin', don't you cry.

On winter evenings when the moon has risen  
Stars are twinklin' looking mighty fine  
We're like children caught up in the wonder  
So, sing O my children, don't you cry.

Springtime blessings fill the heart with wonder  
Filled with greening the earth comes to bud  
With the promise of eternal creation  
So, sing all you people, of God's glorious love.



**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 Vittetoe**, 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)

## **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

### **The Success of Gala 2026!**

M and guests of First Church were very generous in support of our partner agencies, at this year's Gala of Grace! (We're still doing event math, but we'll have the amount soon.) See Phil Shoulberg's amazing event photos in the latest Covenant News - <https://conta.cc/4eO12fG>.

### **Adult Ed, Today: “Navigating the Complexities of Elder Care”**

After worship, a representative from Provident Health will present on navigating the complexities of elder care. Special focus on transitional care for seniors.

### **Dyer Farewell and Card Shower, May 24**

Long-time members, Faye & Marshall Dyer, are moving to Massachusetts. Their last Sunday in church will be May 24. There will be a special recognition during worship and special treats in Memorial Hall for Coffee Fellowship. You are invited and encouraged to share your blessings and well-wishes for them with cards or notes as they start this new chapter in their lives.

**Please come to church on May 24, and bring that card or note for them with you.** (If you will be absent that day, send or drop off your card at the office by Thursday, May 21!)

### **Strengthen the Church, May 24**

The Strengthen the Church Offering furthers the work of the UCC as we work together to strengthen and renew existing congregations, fund leadership development, and provide exciting new programs for youth and young adults. Go to [UCC.org/STC](http://UCC.org/STC) to learn more. *Please, plan to give generously, Sunday, May 24!*

### **Sonya Vann Ordination, May 24**

Sonya Vann, who served as Sabbatical Pastor during Pastor Dave Denoon's time away in the summer of 2017, will be ordained on Pentecost Sunday, May 24, at 3:00 PM at Kindred UCC, 2200 Bellevue Ave., Maplewood, Missouri.

### **Memorial Day Office Closure, May 25**

The office will be closed in observance of Memorial Day on Monday, May 25.

### **Lady Elect Potluck, May 26**

You are cordially invited to the Lady Elect End-of-Year Potluck Dinner in the Inglis Room on Tuesday, May 26th, at 6:00. Jan Barnes will be doing a storytelling presentation. If interested, please text Marilyn at (314) 894-2046 and let her know whether you are bringing an appetizer, main dish, side dish, or dessert. Be sure to leave your name in the text.

### **Journeyman Spring Final Meeting, May 28**

The Journeyman final spring meeting will be Thursday, May 28 at 9:00AM in the Parlor.

### **Rev. Marty Black, May 31**

On May 31, Rev. Marty Black returns to the pulpit. She served as our 2024 Sabbatical Pastor, and we are always happy to welcome her back!

### **National Gun Violence Awareness Day, June 7**

On June 7th, members and friends of First Church are invited to wear orange and take part with other local churches in a community march along Lockwood Avenue (check-in 1PM; step-off 1:45PM at WG Presbyterian Church; march ends at Emmanuel Episcopal). A rally at Emmanuel will begin at 2:30PM. **We are collecting used T-shirts in a variety of sizes in the Narthex** to be displayed along Lockwood to honor and remember the lives lost to gun violence in St. Louis this year. Questions or suggestions? Please contact Esmeralda Castelblanco or Annie Sampath.

### **A Black History Tour of St. Louis – Documentary Film, June 14**

*A Black History of St. Louis*, directed by Tony West, and written and presented by Fr. Gerry Kleba, admission is free. Watch on the big screen in **Memorial Hall, Sunday, June 14, at 3:00PM** (runtime 85 min.). Q&A afterward with Fr. Kleba. [www.ABlackHistoryTour.com](http://www.ABlackHistoryTour.com)

### **Red Cross Blood Drive, June 15**

Johari is spearheading another blood drive at First Church from 9AM to 1PM on Monday, June 15. Sign up in this week's Covenant News.

### **Habitat for Humanity Workday, October 3**

We need four workers for our fall workday on October 3. A sign-up sheet is in the office.

### **Read More in Covenant News**

See this week's Covenant News at <https://conta.cc/4eO12fG> for even more announcements.

### **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](http://FirstChurchWG.org/donate)
- Scan the **QR** code.



### **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](http://bit.ly/Liturgist-2026)

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

### **Lost and Found**

Numerous items are waiting in the office for their owners. Please pick them up ASAP if they are yours. Contact Adam with any questions about the lost and found.

### May Meal-A-Month Shopping List

Canned Chicken • Canned Green Vegetable (low or no salt) • Canned Fruit in own juices  
Powdered Milk, shelf stable milk, soy milk • Pudding or Jello (fat free/sugar free)  
Shampoo/Conditioner • Soap • Deodorant

### What's Going on at First Church

For a complete schedule of church events, observances, and building use,  
please visit our online calendar at  
[FirstChurchWG.org/Calendar](http://FirstChurchWG.org/Calendar)

#### Sunday, May 17

**Seventh Sunday of Easter / Jazz Worshi**

**9:15AM** Chancel Choir Warmup

**9:45AM** Nursery Care Available

**10:00AM** Worship

**10:15AM** Kids' Church

**11:05AM** Coffee Fellowship

**11:20AM** Adult Ed: "Navigating the Complexit  
of Senior Care" – Kishlar Room

#### Monday, May 18

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

#### Tuesday, May 19

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

#### Wednesday, May 20

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

#### Sunday, May 24

**Pentecost / All-Ages Worship**

**"Strengthen the Church" Offering**

**Memorial Day Weekend**

**9:45AM** Nursery Care Available

**10:00AM** Worship

**10:15AM** Kids' Church

**11:05AM** Coffee Fellowship

#### Monday, May 25

**Memorial Day - Office Closed**

### May Birthdays

Dana Romeis – May 1

Cathy Buerk – May 3

Mark Edwards – May 3

Melissa Hill – May 3

Adrianna Hoeper – May 4

Tracey Harris – May 8

Warner Prange – May 8

Thomas Welnick – May 8

Garie Perry – May 9

Drue Hood – May 10

Alayna Hoganson – May 12

Kay Roush – May 12

Peter Bakker-Arkema – May 17

Jean Gray – May 19

Ruby Cohen – May 21

Mila Falconer – May 23

Sophia Monaco – May 23

Linda Kopetti – May 24

Leo Gomez – May 27

### Attending from Home or Away

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

Take advantage of our hearing-assisted system! Simply 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.



10 West Lockwood Avenue  
Webster Groves, MO 63119  
314-962-0475  
www.FirstChurchWG.org

## Contact Information

Moderator – Chris von Weise  
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Weekend & Events Custodian –  
Onyeka Igboanuzue

Director of Ministry of Imagination, Creativity  
and the Arts (MICA) – Rev. Cliff Aerie  
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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.

## Follow us on

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