

Welcome!

First Congregational Church of Webster Groves
United Church of Christ



Seek Christ in each. Serve God in all.

OCTOBER 4, 2026

ALL AGES AND ALL SPECIES WORSHIP

WORLD COMMUNION SUNDAY

“NEIGHBORS IN NEED” 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

Bist du bei mir

G.H. Stolzel

*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

Andrea Welnick, *Liturgist*

TOLLING OF THE BELLS

*GATHERING HYMN

All Things Bright and Beautiful

C. F. Alexander

Refrain

All things bright and beautiful, all creatures great and small,
All things wise and wonderful, the Lord God made them all.

Each little flower that opens, each little bird that sings,
God made their glowing colors, and made their tiny wings. *Refrain*

The purple-headed mountains, the river running by,
the sunset and the morning that brightens up the sky. *Refrain*

The cold wind in the winter, the pleasant summer sun,
the ripe fruits in the garden: God made them every one. *Refrain*

God gave us eyes to see them, and lips that we might tell
how great is God Almighty, who has made all things well. *Refrain*

*CIRCLES OF PRAISE (Responsive – Leader; People)

based on Psalm 148

All dogs and cats, large and small: **Praise our God!**

All rabbits, hamsters, and guinea pigs: **Praise our God!**

All goldfish, guppies, and swimming creatures: **Praise our God!**

All robins, wrens, and singing birds: **Praise our God!**

All bats, squirrels, and raccoons: **Praise our God!**

All horses, cows, and sheep: **Praise our God!**

All lizards, snakes and creeping things: **Praise our God!**

Every animal in the sky, the sea, and the forest: **Praise our 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.**

RITUAL OF APPROACH

Thanksgiving and Confession (Responsive)

For all the animals in the whole wide world,

We thank you, God!

For all the fun and friendship we have with animals,

We thank you, God!

Sovereign God, for all the times we have hurt or neglected animals,

We are sorry.

Sovereign God, for all the times we have used poisons that have killed animals,

We are sorry.

Sovereign God, for all the times we have destroyed the homes of animals
in the forests, oceans, or fields,

We are sorry.

Silence for Personal Confession

Words of Assurance (Responsive)

For all our sins against the creatures of Earth, God forgives us and calls upon us
to honor and protect all God's animals. May the animals of Earth be our
companions in life and lead us to celebrate your place in the circle of life.

Amen! Amen! Shalom! Shalom!

THE WORD SHARED

From the Law

Numbers 22:22-31

New Revised Standard, alt.

Response

Hear what the Spirit is saying to the people.

Thanks be to God.

MESSAGE OF THE DAY

"Soft! Soft!"

Rev. David Denoon, *Pastor*

RITUAL FOR BLESSING OF THE ANIMALS

Reading

from a Sermon of Francis of Assisi

Blessing of Each Pet

*The Pastor will be stationed near the lectern, for the blessing of each pet. Please go
there whenever you feel ready, either with your pet or something representing them.*

SACRAMENT OF CHRIST'S TABLE

We Share Our Joys and Concerns

*When you speak a prayer request aloud, please bear in mind the privacy
of those for whom you are praying, because this worship is being recorded for upload.*

Invitation

Prayer of Consecration

Prayer of Our Savior (Unison)

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 that we absorb from 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 forever. Amen.**

Communion

Bread and cup are provided at each table.

Please consume them at the indication of the Pastor.

Bread is gluten-free, and cups are filled with grape juice.

**Blessing (Responsive)*

Having been nourished here in God's Spirit, Christ now calls you to be disciples –
to serve others with love and compassion, and to serve Earth by caring for its
creatures. Will you care for all creation?

We will care for all creation, including all God's beloved people and animals! We will celebrate the circle of life with them!

***ENDING SONG**

A Place in the Choir

Bill Staines

Refrain

All God's critters got a place in the choir.
Some sing low, some sing higher, some sing out loud on the telephone wire
And some just clap their hands, or paws or anything they got.

Listen to the bass, it's the one on the bottom
Where the bullfrog croaks and the hippopotamus
Moans and groans with a big to-do, while the old cow just goes MOOOOO
The dog and the cat pick up the middle
While the honeybee hums and the cricket fiddles
The donkey brays and the pony neighs, and the old coyote howls. *Refrain*

Listen to the top where the little birds sing
On the melody with the high note ringing
The hoot owl hollers over everything, and the jaybird disagrees.
Singin' in the night-time, singin' in the day
Little duck quacks, and he's on his way
The possum ain't got much to say, and the porcupine talks to himself. *Refrain*

It's a simple song of livin' sung everywhere
By the ox and the fox and the grizzly bear
Grumpy alligator and the hawks above, sly raccoon and the turtle dove.
Refrain, twice

***BENEDICTION (Responsive)**

May the Spirit of God, who is above all and in all and through all, fill you with the knowledge of God's presence in Earth and the presence of the Holy Spirit within you. Go in peace, serving God and loving all creatures!

We go in peace, serving Christ and loving our animal kin.

***PARTING WORDS (Responsive)**

Our worship has ended.
Let our service begin.

POSTLUDE

How Much Is That Doggie

Bob Merrill

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

History of Nazism with Dr. Mark Ruff, Part 2

Dr. Mark Ruff is a professor of Modern European History at SLU. He will give the second in a series of three presentations on Nazism, its relationship to German churches, and parallels with the current situation in the U.S. Talks begin at 11:35 in the **Kishlar Room**.

Ballot Forum, Today at 3:00PM

The League of Women Voters will moderate a **Forum discussing upcoming Ballot Initiatives**, amendments, etc., for the November 3 election. The forum will start at **3PM** in the sanctuary at Webster Groves Presbyterian Church (45 W. Lockwood).

Bible Journey Restarts, October 14

Bible Journey is a gathering on Wednesdays at 7:00 PM, with the goal of exploring the entire Bible, from beginning to end. Bible Journey Guides are available from the Narthex Table. Our next series, on Exodus and Leviticus, begins with a kickoff gathering, October 14.

Christian Education Parents Survey

Christian Education Ministry seeks to continue to refine the knowledge we instill in the next generation. Parents, if you have a moment, please complete a survey about our programming. A link to the survey is in this week's Covenant News - <https://conta.cc/4rLsTSf>

Serving Meals at St. Patrick Center, October 7

St. Patrick Center offers ministries to the unhoused in the area, including housing, health services, employment, and more. **We plan to bring dinner to the residents of the Center (around 25 people), this Wednesday, October 7.** You are invited to stay and share the meal afterwards. If you are interested, **please contact Pat Doyle-Grace or K Wentzien. They will be carpooling down to St. Patrick.**

Don't Miss Sunday, October 11

You won't want to miss Sunday, October 11 at First Church! **Canterbury Bells** and the **Chancel Choir** will be performing. Our friend **Halley Kim** will be leading worship. And special guest **folk musician Jim Ford** will offer a taste of the "Songs of Hope and Warning" concert on October 16.

And we'll decide on the 2027 Budget proposed by the Budget Committee and recommended by the Executive Ministry. Pick up a copy from the Narthex table. You can attend the **Congregational Budget Meeting** in person or virtually. Those attending virtually, keep watching our live stream. Instructions for virtual voting will be provided during the meeting.

"Songs of Hope and Warning" Benefit Concert, October 16

First Church will host a concert in our sanctuary this Friday, October 16 at 7PM, featuring nationally known folk artists Charlie King and Rick Burkhardt with special guests Good Trouble. Proceeds will go to Habitat for Humanity. Purchase tickets at the door, or at www.habitatstl.org/charlie-king-benefit-concert

"Jesus Has Left the Building," October 18

Our next "Jesus Has Left the Building" event will take place at 10AM on October 18. This will include an **abbreviated worship service**, followed by three activities to choose from. One activity will be gardening with **Seed St. Louis**. There will also be a devotional **Labyrinth Walk at the Mercy Center** and a **meal prep** operation taking place here. If you are interested in gardening with Seed, please take a moment to sign a waiver available from the big Narthex table.

Save the Date! CPR and First Aid Training, Sunday, November 8

The Webster Groves Fire Department will offer CPR and First Aid Training on November 8th following worship. This basic class will not provide certification but offers helpful skills. First Friends team members are encouraged to participate, but the class is open to everyone. As it will last 2 hours, we suggest you bring a sack lunch or snack to eat between worship and the class. Please reach out to Sharon Love (314-691-0631) if you are interested in attending.

More in This Week's "Covenant News"

There are still more announcements in this week's Covenant News – <https://conta.cc/4rLsTSf>

Connecting Remotely to Worship

To view worship livestream and videos online, go to YouTube.com/@1stChurchWG

Wifi Available

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.

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: (next page)

- 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.



Sunday Volunteers – Sign up, today!

Liturgist – bit.ly/Liturgist-2026

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

October Birthdays

Joyce Haynes McCowan - Oct 3
Kathy Weyhrich - Oct 3
Gabriel Cohen - Oct 5
Patrick Byrne - Oct 7
Wayne Dierker - Oct 9
Rod Cooper - Oct 10
Margaret Gustafson - Oct 15
Emily Polaske - Oct 16
Marilyn Claggett - Oct 18
Wally Polaske - Oct 20
Elston McCowan - Oct 24
Braeden Hood - Oct 29
David Denoon - Oct 30

October Meal-a-Month Shopping List

Canned Chicken & Dumplings (low salt) • Canned Green Vegetable (low or no salt)
Canned Fruit in own juices • Powdered Milk, shelf stable milk, soy milk
Whole Wheat Flour • Peanut Butter • Real Fruit Jelly • Dried Fruits

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

Sunday, October 4

World Communion Sunday • Blessing of the Animals • “Neighbors in Need” Offering

9:00AM Brown Baggers

9:45AM Nursery Care Available

10:00AM Worship – Outdoors (West Parking Lot)

11:05AM Coffee Fellowship

11:35AM Adult Ed: History of Nazism with Prof. Mark Ruff - Kishlar

3:00PM Ballot Issues Forum - WG Presbyterian Church

Tuesday, October 6

1:00PM Communications Committee - Church Office

Wednesday, October 7

10:30AM Staff Meeting - Church Office

Thursday, October 8

6:00PM Canterbury Bells - Sanctuary

7:30PM Chancel Choir - Sanctuary

Sunday, October 11

9:45AM Nursery Care Available

10:00AM Worship

10:15AM Kids' Church

11:05AM Congregational Budget Meeting

11:15AM Coffee Fellowship

11:35AM Adult Ed: History of Nazism with Prof. Mark Ruff - Kishlar



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Contact Information

Moderator – Chris von Weise
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Custodian – Stuart Chase

Lead A/V Technician – 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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