

# The Fourth Sunday in Lent

March 30, 2025 • 10:00 AM



a just  
world  
for all  
ucc.org

*an Open & Affirming congregation*

## OUR GUIDING PRINCIPLES

*Adopted by the Council - 2020*

The Guiding Principles of First Congregational Church of St. Louis describe the values that guide our church and its members throughout our faith journey. We will...

### Practice Extravagant Welcome

- Invite and honor the contributions of every member, quirks and all.
- Be grateful for the gifts and time that each of us dedicate to FCC.

### Demonstrate Faithful Leadership

- Value people and our faith community over money and material things.
- Share concerns with the appropriate person and keep discussions and comments of others confidential.
- Celebrate successes, own mistakes, and fail faithfully together and in community.

### Engage in Inclusive Decision-Making

- Be thoughtful, respectful, and transparent in our decision making.
- Value building consensus and move forward faithfully once a decision is reached.
- Listen to one another and debate with respect; honor the contributions of every member.

**Overall, we will be guided by FCC's mission to**

**Know God's Word,  
Do God's Work,  
and Live God's Love.**



## WELCOME

**to First Congregational Church of St. Louis!**

*an Open & Affirming congregation  
of the United Church of Christ*

**If you are visiting with us**, we invite you to share your contact information on a Connect Card, found in each pew. You may give your card to an usher or place it in an offering box at either entrance to the sanctuary. You may also scan the QR code on the card to access the digital version.

**Restrooms on the main level** are located at the back of the sanctuary and down the hall on the right side.

**Changing tables** are located in the Nursery, two of the main floor restrooms, and by the restroom at the back of the sanctuary.

**Offering Boxes** are located at each sanctuary entrance.

**Children** are always welcome in worship, either in the pews or at the Playground at the front of the sanctuary. Except for the first Sunday of the month (Communion) we have Sunday school for elementary-aged children downstairs in the Purple Room during worship.

**\*An asterisk** is an invitation to rise, in body or spirit.

**Bolded text** is an invitation for the congregation to read or sing in unison.

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**Sunday March 30, 2025**

*The Fourth Sunday in Lent*

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**Today we will receive the One Great Hour of Sharing offering** - One of four special mission offerings of the United Church of Christ. This Lenten Offering supports partners worldwide with ministries that fund health, education and agricultural development, emergency relief, refugee ministries, and both international and domestic disaster response.

Imagine the light we can be in the world when we join together with other people of faith who are giving to the same cause. For over 75 years, OGHS has allowed followers of Christ to generously share out of their bounty with those who may need some assistance. OGHS is one way we can heed Jesus' call to "be the light" - When we participate in OGHS, we shed light in places where circumstances make it difficult to imagine a future with hope. We create possibility for people forced to flee their homes in search of safety and new promise. We support life-giving recovery efforts when disasters devastate communities and overturn lives. We empower partners around the globe in their labors to build sustainable futures. We plant seeds of peace where war has wrought despair and destruction.

**If you would like to make a gift to OGHS**, please use an offering envelope and mark it "special offering". Make all checks out to First Congregational Church with OGHS in the memo line. Place your offering in an offering box, or you may give online through our website.

**Prelude**

"Canticle"

*Charles Callahan*

Ann Homann, *English Horn*

**\*Call to the People**

Leader: We come to you, O God, to thank you for what is good.

**People: We come to you, O God, to cry out for what is wrong.**

Leader: We come to you, O God, to ask for help and restoration.

**People: We come to you, O God, with aching hearts and glad souls.**

Leader: Let us worship God.

**\*Hymn**

#202 "O God, How We Have Wandered"

*New Century Hymnal*

*Tune: PASSION CHORALE*

**\*Passing of the Peace**



## Announcements

Valerie Jackson  
Chair, Worship & Education

### Anthem

#### “The House of the Lord” Ann Homann, Oboe

Steve Sandberg

*I may wander into the darkness, yet I will fear no evil  
for the Lord is the strength of my life.  
Though danger gather 'round me,  
though war should arise against me, in this I will not be afraid.  
One thing I desire, one thing do I seek,  
that I may know the beauty of God and live forever in the house of the Lord.  
The Lord is my strength, my light and salvation.  
In the day of trouble He shall hide me in His temple.  
He will deliver me and set me upon a rock.  
He will lift me up above all my enemies; therefore I will sing my praises to the Lord.*

### A Story for the Ages

Luke 15:1-3, 11-32  
NRSV Updated Ed.

David Piston

Now all the tax collectors and sinners were coming near to listen to Jesus. And the Pharisees and the scribes were grumbling and saying, “This fellow welcomes sinners and eats with them.”

Then Jesus said, “There was a man who had two sons. The younger of them said to his father, ‘Father, give me the share of the wealth that will belong to me.’ So he divided his assets between them. A few days later the younger son gathered all he had and traveled to a distant region, and there he squandered his wealth in dissolute living. When he had spent everything, a severe famine took place throughout that region, and he began to be in need. So he went and hired himself out to one of the citizens of that region, who sent him to his fields to feed the pigs. He would gladly have filled his stomach with the pods that the pigs were eating, and no one gave him anything. But when he came to his senses he said, ‘How many of my father’s hired hands have bread enough and to spare, but here I am dying of hunger! I will get up and go to my father, and I will say to him, “Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you; I am no longer worthy to be called your son; treat me like one of your hired hands.” ’ So he set off and went to his father. But while he was still far off, his father saw him and was filled with compassion; he ran and put his arms around him and kissed him. Then the son said to him, ‘Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you; I am no longer worthy to be called your son.’ But the father said to his slaves, ‘Quickly, bring out a robe—the best one—and put it on him; put a ring on his finger and sandals on his feet. And get the fatted calf and kill it, and let us eat and celebrate, for this son of mine was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found!’ And they began to celebrate.

“Now his elder son was in the field, and as he came and approached the house, he heard music and dancing. He called one of the slaves and asked what was going on. He replied, ‘Your brother has come, and your father has killed the fatted calf because he has got him back safe and sound.’ Then he became angry and refused to go in. His father came out and began to plead with him. But he answered his father, ‘Listen! For all these years I have been working like a slave for you, and I have never disobeyed your command, yet you have never given me even a young goat so that I might celebrate with my friends. But when this son of yours came back, who has devoured your assets with prostitutes, you killed the fatted calf for him!’ Then the father said to him, ‘Son, you are always with me, and all that is mine is yours. But we had to celebrate and rejoice, because this brother of yours was dead and has come to life; he was lost and has been found.’ ”



## Prayers for the Community

*The Lord's Prayer (unison)*

**Our Mother, 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.  
And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.  
For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory forever. Amen.**

**Anthem**      “Lord, Make Me an Instrument of Thy Peace”      *Michael Graham*  
Ann Homann, Oboe

*Lord, make me an instrument of Thy peace.  
Where there is hatred let me sow love,  
where there is injury, pardon, where there's despair, hope.  
Lord, make me an instrument of Thy peace.  
Where there is doubt, faith, where there is darkness, light, where there is sadness, joy.  
O Divine Master, grant that I may not so much seek to be consoled, as to console,  
to be understood, as to understand, to be loved, as to love.  
For it is in giving that we receive. It is in pardoning that we are pardoned.  
It is in dying that we are born to eternal life. Amen.*

## Blessing

Leader: As you leave this place, trust that you are made in the image of God.

**People: So, as we leave this place we will move through this world  
with an open heart, with a curious mind,  
and with the confidence that we do not go alone.  
With the help of the Holy we will do our best  
to believe that good news, and go in peace.**

**Choral Blessing**      “Jesus Walked      *African American Spiritual*  
This Lonesome Valley”

**Thank you to those serving this morning:**

**Ushers:** Mary Lou Mellish, Chrissy Paterson

**Announcements:** Valerie Jackson

**Scripture:** David Piston



## **Women of Wydown Lunch - Today after Worship**

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All women are invited to join the Women of Wydown, a monthly gathering for fellowship and connection. Gatherings are after worship (about 11:30 AM), with a church member graciously hosting in their home or other venue of their choice. Bring your own lunch, and the host will provide beverages and dessert. Marty Black is hosting today's WOW lunch at her home (8289 Tulane, U City, 63132; c: 715-853-9101). The next WOW lunch is April 13. Pick up a flyer at either entrance to the sanctuary for the rest of the 2025 schedule.

## **Red Gate Gallery Exhibitions**

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**SISU II** - Closes April 6

**Young Hearts, Run Free** - curated by Dail Chambers, runs April 18 - June 14.

Opening Reception, 11:30 - 1:30, Sunday, May 4th and STAR WARS Concert 1:30 - 2

Closing Reception, 6 - 7 pm, Saturday, June 14

**Forgotten** - curated by Bill Russell, runs June 27 - August 22

Opening Reception, 6 - 8 pm, Saturday, June 28

Closing Reception, 6 - 7 pm, Friday, August 22

## **Women's Book Group - Wednesday April 2, 1:00 PM**

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The women's book group meets the first Wednesday of the month in the Gathering Space. The book for April is [A Single Thread](#) by Tracy Chevalier. Join them at 1:00 to socialize and 1:30 to discuss the book. And in May they will discuss [The Women](#) by Kristin Hannah.

## **FCC Annual Fundraiser - Saturday May 3, 6 PM**

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Please plan to join us for the First Congregational Annual Fundraiser on Saturday May 3, 2025, at 6:00 PM. Our Worship & Education Ministry Team is hosting a Church Family Feud & Auction Fun-raiser that is sure to be a good time! Tickets will be \$35/person or plan for a table of 8. Sign up info to come.

**Wanted - Auction items!** The fundraiser will include silent and live auctions, and we are accepting auction donations - Week or weekend get-aways, tickets to shows, concerts, entertainment, and sport events, lessons, Share a Talent, Golf Day or other shared skill (pickleball?), house party or event, corporate or vendor donations (hairstylist, chiropractor, etc), gift baskets, art, etc. Please contact Sheila Merrell or the church office by April 15th if you have something to donate.

# Holy Week Schedule

## Palm Sunday - April 13

*Wave your palm branches high as we begin Holy Week with a pageant written by Joyce Haynes McCowan.*

10 AM - Worship Service & Pageant  
Coffee Hour after Worship

11:30 AM - Women of Wydown Lunch

## Good Friday - April 18

*Experience the sorrow of Jesus' crucifixion.*

7 PM - Good Friday Service

## Easter Sunday - April 20

*Celebrate the resurrection with joyful worship, Coffee Hour, and an Easter Egg Hunt! Bring your own basket or we will provide bags.*

10 AM - Worship Service  
Easter Egg Hunt and Coffee Hour  
after Worship

## This Week at FCC

### Sunday - March 30

10 AM - Worship Service  
Children's Sunday School  
11:15 AM - FCC Staff Team Meeting  
11:30 AM - Women of Wydown Lunch  
7:30 PM - AA Meeting

### Monday - March 31 Church Office Closed

7 PM - Alliance Philharmonia  
Orchestra Rehearsal

### Tuesday - April 1

10 AM - Sacred Studies & Fellowship  
7 PM - CHARIS Chorus Rehearsal

### Wednesday - April 2

8 AM - Wydown Men's Club  
1 PM - Women's Book Group

### Thursday - April 3

7 PM - Chancel Choir Rehearsal

### Friday - April 4

12 PM - Heartland Assoc. of Jungian  
Analysts Training

### Saturday - April 5

8 AM - Heartland Assoc. of Jungian  
Analysts Training  
6 PM - Ignite Theatre Trivia Night

### Sunday - April 6

10 AM - Worship Service (Communion)  
11:15 AM - Staff Team Meeting  
7:30 PM - AA Meeting

## Help us fill our Easter eggs!

Our Membership & Fellowship Ministry Team requests donations to fill our Easter eggs. Please drop your donations by the church office by Palm Sunday. (Please make sure any candy is individually wrapped.)

Coins  
Candy  
Trinkets  
Stickers  
Fidgets  
Small Toys



FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH OF ST. LOUIS  
UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST



## Our Ministry Team

**Bert Merrell**, Sunday Sexton

**LaBar Verner**, Custodian

**Mehran Moslehikhah**, Maintenance

**Tim Clark**

Minister of Music

(tclark@firstcongregational.org)

**Joyce Haynes McCowan** (MDiv)

Minister of Faith Formation

(jhaynesmccowan@firstcongregational.org)

**Hannah Rice** (MDiv)

Minister of Administration and Membership

(hrice@firstcongregational.org)

**Rev. Mia White** (MDiv, MATS, CSD)

Senior Minister

(revmia@firstcongregational.org)



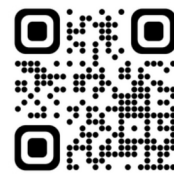
Online  
Giving



FCC News



Website



Calendar



Worship  
Volunteers

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