

What is an Open & Affirming Church?

Several years ago, we conducted a long-term strategic planning process that included writing a mission statement, a values statement, and an identity statement. At that time we talked about what it meant to be a welcoming congregation, and in our identity statement we proclaimed that we were diverse in a number of respects – in other words, we were open.

We said that we did not deny access on the basis of, among other things, sexual orientation. Beyond that, however, we realize much more can be done to proactively include persons of all sexual orientations and gender identities in the life of our congregation – to be affirming.

As a way now to welcome people more intentionally and proactively, the Board of Webster Groves Christian Church has asked a team of members to explore the prospect of formally becoming an Open & Affirming congregation, as officially recognized within the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ).

We would be among other Disciple of Christ churches in the area who have officially decided to become Open & Affirming congregations, including Compton Heights Christian Church, Memorial Blvd Christian Church and Community Christian Church.

A member of this team will soon be contacting you for the purpose of sharing what this means, describing the work of the project team and, most importantly, to hear your thoughts on the subject.

Meanwhile, we remember that God's welcome is extravagant and a witness to justice.

Deb Trautman

WGCC MISSION STATEMENT

Believing that God's Spirit is present in all people, we are called to share the Good News of God's grace we know through Jesus Christ, and we are sent to love and serve the world.

OUR STATED VALUES

Grace free of judgment

Freedom of belief

Inclusivity

Compassionate service

WGCC IDENTITY STATEMENT

Webster Groves Christian Church is diverse in age, race, ability, gender identity, sexual orientation, biblical interpretation, and political persuasion. We celebrate and honor the diversity of God's creation and pray to be the body of Christ by striving to love as God loves.

Our eyes, our socks and our prayers: the March focus for Disciples women

March 6 marks the beginning of Lent. A good time to increase our Bible study and devotion time. We should examine our faith and how we can better serve others. The Disciples women service project for the month is to collect men's socks and underwear to be given to Memorial Blvd. Christian Church. They have an outreach program that is in need of these items. Please bring them to your group meeting.

Thursday, March 7, will be our general meeting and luncheon. Come to the business meeting at 11 and stay for the sack lunch at noon. Dr. Julie DeKinder will talk on eyes and aging. Something we can all relate to.

The group meetings for March:

Thursday, March 14, Lydia Group: 9:30 am; Karen Miers' house

Thursday, March 14, Martha group: 12:30 pm: Heritage Room (WGCC), Jane Martin and Bev Richmond hosting

Thursday, March 21, Tabitha group: 7 pm; Heritage Room (WGCC), Denise Pahl hosting

The sewing group is in full force. They meet at Peggy Eskridge's house on March 21. Peggy has some pretty quilts started. The completed quilts will be given to Nurses for Newborns. If you are interested in joining the group, contact Peggy for directions to her home.

The card making group will NOT meet in March. The group has opted to attend the Women's Interfaith conference on March 28, from 9 am to 2 pm instead. The conference will be held at St. Stanislaus Polish Heritage Center and will include lunch. Reservations (\$12) are due by March 18. If you are interested in attending, contact Sally Smith or Marilyn Combs. This is the 39th year for this event. They have been wonderful learning experiences. Please try to attend.

- Sally Smith



Each week in Lent, your donation can make a huge difference.

As a part of the Lenten season, in which each of us spends time in reflection and preparation before the Easter Celebration, we also remember Jesus' sacrifice. For each week in Lent, I encourage each of you to plan to make a donation to Project NOW as part of your personal reflection during this season. You can donate one item each week or multiple. Let your heart guide your donations. Donations can be delivered to the church office.

-Julie DeKinder

Week 1: Small unisex birthday toys/trinkets.

Did you know project NOW includes a birthday bag with small gifts for all children in the program around their birthday?

Week 2: Individual pudding cups

Week 3: Children's books!

Did you know NOW provides books to the family members each month?

Week 4: Fruit cups and applesauce cups

Week 5: Children's socks and underwear

Week 6: Canned meat: tuna and chicken

Lent marks a time of reflection

Lent is a season of 40 days, not counting Sundays, which begins on Ash Wednesday and ends on Holy Saturday. Lent comes from the Anglo-Saxon word *lencten*, which means "spring." The 40 days represent the time Jesus spent in the wilderness, enduring the temptation of Satan and preparing to begin his ministry.

Lent is a time of repentance, fasting and preparation for the coming of Easter. It is a time of self-examination and reflection. In the early church, Lent was a time to prepare new converts for baptism. Today, Christians focus on their relationship with God, often choosing to give up something or to volunteer and give of themselves for others.

Sundays in Lent are not counted in the 40 days because each Sunday represents a "mini-Easter" and the reverent spirit of Lent is tempered with joyful anticipation of the Resurrection.

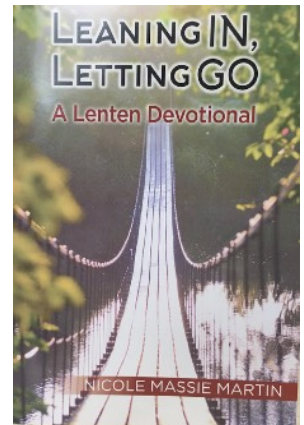
In an effort to slow down during worship, we will silently pray The Lord's Prayer. A different version will be printed in each Sunday's bulletin allowing us to really reflect on the meaning of Christ's words. - Carole Hughes

- **March 6:** Ash Wednesday - 7 pm in Love Chapel
- **April 14:** Palm Sunday - 10:30 am in the Sanctuary
- **April 18:** Maundy Thursday - 6 pm dinner and 7 pm worship at Centennial Christian Church, 4950 Fountain Ave, St. Louis, 63113
- **April 18-19:** Prayer Vigil
- **April 19:** Good Friday - Stations of the Cross will be available in the Sanctuary for meditation
- **April 21:** Easter - 10:30 am in the Sanctuary

Sometimes, you need to let go to lean in closer to God.

In this daily devotional for the Lenten season, bestselling author Nicole Massie Martin takes us on a hope-filled journey of letting go of all that keeps us from experiencing the joy of resurrection. Daily reflections and prayers invite us to lean into God's grace and let go of our own agendas and practices that hold us back from the abundant life God calls us to enjoy and share with the world. Whether this is your first Lenten journey or one of many, *Leaning In, Letting Go* inspires lasting change for all your journeys to come. *Leaning In, Letting Go* helps you: Lean into God's grace and let go of our sense of control Lean into God's perspective and let go of our own preconceptions Lean into God's healing and let go of our pain Explore God and ourselves with greater clarity *Leaning In, Letting Go* includes 40 days of scripture readings, reflections, and prayers, beginning with Ash Wednesday and continuing through the Easter season. Purchase copies for yourself and your entire congregation and prepare for a season of powerful spiritual growth.

Nicole Massie Martin is the founder and executive director of Soulfire International Ministries (www.sfministries.org). She teaches at Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary and serves with American Bible Society. She is a graduate of Vanderbilt University, Princeton Theological Seminary, and Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary. In 2017, she was named one of the "Top 40 Under 40" by the Charlotte Business Journal. She is married to her best friend, Dr. Mark Martin, and they have two beautiful daughters.



Copies of the devotional book are available in the church office for \$3.

Time to find a camp

Preparations have begun for the 2019 camping season. Options are available for pre-kindergarten through 12th grade including family camps and male adults.

You may choose from traditional outdoor settings to canoeing to mission experiences. A few will bring campers together with our United Church of Christ partners. Scholarships are available through the Orchard Crest Permanent Fund.

Please feel free to speak with Carole Hughes or see registration and application forms online at

<http://www.mid-americadisciples.org/summer>

An all-church cleanup thanks

A Big Thank You to all the.....

... donors of donuts and donors of cleaning supplies

...down-on-their-knees bathroom floor scrubbers

...vent cleaners and kitchen scourers and floor moppers

...ladder climbers and high to low cobweb removers

...curtain launderers and light bulb fixture cleaners

...Plus all things not mentioned

...AND the photographer who documented our cleaning!

We found out we were not as "dirty" as we thought we were but it was good to work together to give our worship place a freshening.

- Pat Roseman

SAVE THE DATE

October 7, 2019

3rd Annual KAEChP Fundraiser

Westborough Country Club

631 S. Berry Road • St. Louis, MO • 63122

Monday, October 7

12:00PM Lunch and Golf Tournament

5:00PM Cocktails and Silent Auction

6:00PM Fundraiser Dinner

Come play, celebrate and support Kirkwood Area Every Child Promise for golf and/or our annual fundraising dinner. Help us keep the promise so that all Kirkwood area children and their families are prepared for success as they enter kindergarten.

*Several of KAEChP's component programs and coordination are housed within Webster Groves Christian Church (WGCC), and the facilities of Westborough Country Club are made available for this tournament by special arrangement with WGCC. In lieu of annual rent and event expenses, the first \$30,000 of net tournament proceeds are split evenly between KAEChP and WGCC with KAEChP receiving 100% of the net proceeds exceeding \$30,000.



Every Child Promise



Meet our newest members!

Profiles written by Sally Smith



Barbara Merrell has been attending our worship services for a little while and is already active in the Disciples Women groups, attending the luncheons and the Lydia group meetings.

Barbara has been a long time “Disciple.” Her late husband, James Lee, was a Disciples minister. He had many roles over the years with the Church, but he mainly worked as the Associate Editor of the Disciples Magazine. His job brought the family to St. Louis in 1973. Barbara lives in Kirkwood and is blessed to have her three children, six grandchildren and five great-grandchildren living in the St. Louis area.

Barbara just celebrated her 90th birthday. She had a party in our fellowship hall. A surprise attendee was state Rep. Deb Lavender, who presented Barbara with an award for public service from the State. This isn't the first honor Barbara has received. Her senior year at Transylvania College, she was voted Queen. So we have royalty among us!

When asked about her hobbies, Barbara named things she used to do: quilting and bridge. What she focuses on now is listening to music and reading. She is still active in visiting shut-ins. She named several people around the area that she visits on a regular basis. This is such a wonderful ministry. I hope we can get her involved in visiting some of our home bound members.

Please welcome Barbara to our congregation. I know that she will enhance our mission to serve.

Chris and Sara Webb have been attending services and volunteering for almost a year. They came to an early Christmas Eve service a few years ago and then when they decided to start looking for a church home they came back to us. They say that we were so friendly and welcoming that they knew right away that this would be their church home.

If you have talked with Sara, you know that she “isn't from around here.” Sara moved from her home in Leeks, England, 26 years ago as a nanny for a family that has since outgrown the need for her services. She moved then to her present family with two girls. She started before the first girl was born! This family lives very close to John and Susan Burney.

Chris has only been in the St. Louis area for 12 years. His parents live in Indianapolis but he was living in Southern Illinois when he and Sara met. My question to them was, “how did you meet?” They met online through a dating service. Their first date was at the Art Museum. They have been married 10 years and will celebrate that anniversary with a trip to Italy this summer.

Chris works for Mitek. He writes instructions for machines that make trusses. You will have to ask him for more details. His hobby is woodworking. He has a lathe and makes bowls and candlesticks and other items. He ran a marathon recently. He says he just wanted to see if he could do it. One was enough!

You have probably eaten some of Chris' baking. He and Sara were in charge of getting cookies for the Christmas Jazz service. Chris is the baker, Sara the cook. If you ate some of his cookies, you know that he is an excellent baker.

Their at-home time is devoted to their two dogs, Penelope and Liza. Sara enjoys scrap-booking and of course, travel. They go back to England each year to visit Sara's father and relatives.

Please welcome the Webbs into our congregation. We are so blessed they found us.

IN OUR PRAYERS ...

Recent concerns

- For the family of Chris Webb, whose mother recently passed away.
- For Ken and Dev Crist, as they undertake a 2,000 mile trip to move Ken's sister to Phoenix.
- Layton Stewart, recovering from heart surgery.
- Richard Frankenberger, who recently has been moved to palliative care.
- Tom Wood, who was scheduled to undergo surgery this week.
- Dawn Bertand, coworker of Keiler Swarz, whose uncle is ill.
- For Gilda Rzchowski's friends Linda and Larry, battling Alzheimers and recently suffering a broken neck.
- For Craig Wood, who is recovering from a stroke. He is doing well, but has a road ahead to recovery.
- For Lou Garr, a friend of Bob Rose's who is battling cancer.
- For Analyn Howells, recovering from knee replacement surgery.
- For Andy Lindberg, who is recovering from a foot amputation.

- Dick Savage, who continues to ask for our prayers.
- For Linda, a friend of Laura Stuetzer, facing medical issues.
- For a friend of Molly Gibbons, who is in rehabilitation.
- For Katie, a friend of Max Ott, who is a foster parent going through the adoption process.
- Marley Sexhauer, as she battles seizures.
- For Jane Yount.
- Bill Sullivan, as he continues to recuperate.

Thanks for ...

- For a new grandson for Diane Mark.
- Keiler Swartz, who recently was promoted to head track coach at McKinley.
- Prayers of support for the DeKinders after a recent auto accident.
- Prayers of support for Ginny Rainey after recently facing skin cancer.
- A clean bill of health for Marilyn Combs' niece.
- For all those donating books to Project NOW.
- For sons and daughters who recently came by to

visit, including Eric Piening, Abigail Moore, and Lois and Alex Christensen.

- For all the veterans who have served our country.
- The gifts and spirit of our musicians.

Community

- For the people and government of Venezuela to overcome barriers for relief.
- For victims of natural disasters, as we minister to them through our week of compassion offering.
- For refugees and immigrants.
- For families who have lost children to domestic violence.

Ongoing concerns

- Bill Woodrome
- John Norris
- Doris Derickson
- Kathy Carson
- Michelle Fielden
- Jane Michener

UPCOMING EVENTS

ACCESS THE CALENDAR
AT WGCC.ORG

THURSDAY, FEB. 28

9 a.m. Cardmakers

5 p.m.: Room at the Inn

FRIDAY, MARCH 1

World day of Prayer

SUNDAY, MARCH 3

9 a.m.: Christian formation

10:30 a.m.: Worship

TUESDAY, MARCH 5

10 a.m. Matthew Gospel Study

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 6

7 p.m. Ash Wednesday, Love Chapel

THURSDAY, MARCH 7

11 a.m.: CWF general meeting and luncheon

SUNDAY, MARCH 10

9 a.m.: Christian formation

10:30 a.m.: Worship

5 p.m.: Room at the Inn

TUESDAY, MARCH 12

10 a.m. Matthew Gospel Study

THURSDAY, MARCH 14

7:30 a.m.: Foodbank run

CWF group meetings

SUNDAY, MARCH 17

9 a.m.: Christian formation

10:30 a.m.: Worship

TUESDAY, MARCH 19

10 a.m. Matthew Gospel Study

THURSDAY, MARCH 21

9:30 a.m. Sewing group

Tabitha group meeting

SUNDAY, MARCH 24

9 a.m.: Christian formation

10:30 a.m.: Worship

TUESDAY, MARCH 26

10 a.m. Matthew Gospel Study

TUESDAY, MARCH 27

Deadline for next witness

THURSDAY, MARCH 28

5 p.m.: Room at the Inn

SUNDAY, MARCH 31

9 a.m.: Christian formation

10:30 a.m.: Worship

Webster Groves Christian Church

(Disciples of Christ)

A Global Mission Congregation
1320 West Lockwood Ave.
St. Louis MO 63122



The SEGA connection newsletter is available at <http://www.mid-americadisciples.org/>

Webster Groves Christian Church

1320 West Lockwood Avenue

Saint Louis, MO 63122

Phone: 314-961-3232 / Website: www.wgcc.org

Rev. Dr. Jeff Moore, Pastor

jeffmoore@wgcc.org

Robin Woodrome, Choir Director

Lisa Cripe, Organist

lisacripe@wgcc.org

Jeff Wolf, Lead Custodian

jeffwolf@wgcc.org

Gary Smith, Custodian

Steve Staicoff, Office Manager

admin@wgcc.org

Witness Articles

brosepd@hotmail.com