1. **Inaugural meeting, January 31, 1866.**
Timed to outpace the planned start of a Presbyterian congregation in Webster Groves, the original members hoped that a Congregational church would supplant the perceived need for a Presbyterian congregation. Ten signed the original Covenant.

2. **April 2, 1866.** First Church lends instrumental support toward the creation of First Baptist Church, by congregational consent.
   a. “On motion of Mr. Martling, Mr. Porter was requested to confer with the brethren of the other churches in this vicinity, in regard to assisting the colored people in this neighborhood in securing a lot on which to erect a house for their worship.” (From the minutes of a Congregational Meeting, the evening of Easter Monday, April 2, 1866.)

3. **Summer 1866 and October 1871** – first structures. Already meeting in a local schoolhouse, First Church’s first building project was a parsonage completed grossly over budget during the spring and summer of 1866. The original stone church building would be completed in October 1871. Building expansions included
   a. second sanctuary and bell tower in 1893, adjoining first sanctuary which becomes a social center;
   b. narthex in 1920;
   c. education wing in 1929; and
   d. social hall with classrooms above and below it, in 1957.
   e. 1893 sanctuary and 1920 narthex are razed and replaced with current sanctuary and office center, 1993-94.

4. **1886-1957.** First Church fostered into existence five more churches –
   a. Old Orchard Congregational (1886-1980),
   b. Brentwood Congregational (1922, from a Sunday School started in 1903),
   c. Church of the Covenant/Maplewood Congregational (1893-2005)
   d. Faith Congregational (1954-85, from South Webster Sunday School begun in 1912), and
   e. Church of the Open Door (1949-2013).

5. The church’s Young People’s Society for Christian Endeavor established a **Reading Room** for First Church in 1884, as an alternative to saloons. The Reading Room would become a fixture in Webster Groves until the establishment of the Webster Groves Public Library in 1912, the shelves of which were largely filled with the Reading Room’s contents.

6. **February 1900 and May 1977.** In 1900, Pastor Charles L. Kloss (1897-1903 and 1910-17) composed “Our Creed” and “Our Aim.” Until 1977, except for a few months at the start of Dwight Bradley’s pastorate in 1920, “Our Creed” was recited each Sunday. Only in 1984 was it set aside entirely, this arising after an attempt by the Board of Deacons to render it in inclusive
language. “Our Creed” would be replaced entirely by our Covenant, composed by a Covenant Committee and approved by the Congregation in May of 1977. The Covenant is now recited at the start of every worship service.

7. In 1908, First Church’s Boys Brigade (with WG Presbyterian) was chartered with the Canadian Boy Scouts. In 1910 it was chartered as Troop 300, the first Boy Scout Troop west of the Mississippi River of the Boy Scouts of America. Later that year, Troop 300 split in an argument over use of space at the Presbyterian Church, and Troop 301 was chartered here. In 2013, a review of the policies of the Boy Scouts of America and their consistency with the Open & Affirming status of the church (see Item 10., below) resulted in a decision to applaud BSA’s decision to admit gay young men as scouts and to meet again in 2016, should BSA have by then failed to open leadership to LGBT adults.

8. **1927-2015, 22 First Church members are ordained**, 12 of them since the start of the UCC. The 22 include the first African American ordained in a Congregational Church in Missouri (Robert L. Parker, Jr., 1953); a former Japanese American internee (Joseph M. Arata, 1954); and a disabled German female immigrant (Johanna Jonas, 1960). The most recent ordinations were in February and August 2015 (Janice Edwards Barnes and Paul Porter, respectively).

9. 1943. In keeping with a call from the 1942 meeting of the General Council of Congregational Christian Churches, and at the behest of regional minister and church member the Rev. Dr. Charles C. Burger, in late 1943 **First Church becomes the home church of five former internees of the Topaz Mountain (Utah) Japanese Resettlement Camp**. Chiura & Haruko Obata and their sons Kimio (Kim) and Gyo (George) were received into membership, December 12, 1943. In 1945, Joseph Matsuo Arata – a former Arkansas internee – was re-located by the church and received into membership.

10. **1968-2002.** First Church’s Youth Fellowship Group, conducted in cooperation with Evangelical (now Peace) UCC, became the primary spiritual and missional outlet for hundreds of young people in Webster Groves and surrounding communities.

11. **2008.** After a year of study and reflection, First Church passed a resolution to become Open & Affirming. The measure passed nearly unanimously. This may have been due to the fact that the Board of Deacons in 1997 had agreed that the Pastor would be allowed the discretion to conduct weddings and other commitment ceremonies on behalf of the church, for couples requesting them.

12. **November 2012.** The church’s Center for Counseling and Healing, directed by the Rev. Linda C. Smith – a licensed social worker and Healing Touch practitioner/instructor – opened as a ministry of outreach and caring.