

EVENT

The Newsletter of First Church Cambridge,
Congregational, United Church of Christ

January/February 2018

Dear Friends,

Since mid-November or so, I've been hearing a ton of mostly glowing comments about our new spaces that are now finished, thanks be to God! Many are astonished by the size of the new kitchen. Many rave about the open and inviting feel of our new walkway and Hastings Common. And many share how relieved they are, both literally and figuratively, by the presence of our new rest rooms. My favorite set of comments though is about something that's been there all along, something that had previously been walled off. It's the light! Have you noticed the way natural light now streams in through the new windows in our kitchen and the old windows in the Hastings Common and how it now spills into the hallways? Though I'm sure the architects in our midst and other keen observers of our plans antici-

pated this all along, to some of us the "new" light has been a delightful surprise.

The way our space holds light matters, especially in this season of Epiphany now upon us. For decades now First Church has carried forth a tradition of gathering at the end of the 12-day Christmas season, on the evening of January 6, the Feast of Epiphany. We share a potluck meal and a brief worship service that celebrates the light of Christ that is revealed at Christmas and then shared with the world. In case you've never been with us then, the service begins in the chapel with a rousing version of "We Three Kings," after which the lights go out in the chapel and throughout the entire building. We then begin a single-file, beeswax-taperlit procession through the building, blessing our spaces and bringing the light of Christ to the shadows on every level before encircling the darkened Sanctuary in flickering candlelight. The ritual is stunning.

All this leads to me wonder... In this new year and season, with natural light now streaming into our new spaces and with our Epiphany service inviting us to bring Christ's light to hidden spaces, what is God now calling us to see that has



Rev. Dan Smith

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always been there? What have we been walling off, perhaps without even knowing? What further renovations of our lives and ministries await us, if we let God's light lead the way?

Read on and learn about a few of the ideas we have in mind already. For one thing, I'll be on sabbatical! My last one was in 2012, and a lot has happened since. My contract says I'm once again due for some light at the end of a six-year tunnel of ministry. My family and I are tremendously grateful for the blessing, especially with Julian graduating from high school this spring. I'm eager to see what this time away reveals for me and for the congregation. I'm also very excited about my sabbatical project, which I hope will help us all shed light on the slaveholding shadows in First Church's history. By God's grace and by the ongoing work in store for the congregation while I'm away, I pray that we can do our part to tear down walls that have kept hidden a lasting legacy of slavery in the North. Beyond that, I can't wait to see what our new kitchen, new landscape, new meeting spaces, and new light inspire and reveal for our ongoing ministries.

Happy Epiphany, everyone, and thanks be to God for the light of Christ, our hope and our guide!

Yours in faith

Dan

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11 Garden Street, Cambridge, MA 02138.

Editor: Kenneth Ziebell, ziebellk@comcast.net;

*Layout & Design: Francine LaChance,
francine@firstchurchcambridge.org.*

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**COME CELEBRATE EPIPHANY!
SATURDAY, JANUARY 6, 6:00 P.M.**



Epiphany ("manifestation") is a Christian feast so ancient that it predates Christmas. It celebrates God's self-revelation in Jesus. It is a season of light shining in darkness, a time when the wise leave their books to seek a child, when wine brims from clay water jars, and when the voice of God rings in our ears: "You are my beloved, my child, my delight!"

We will celebrate Epiphany on Saturday, January 6, at 6:00 p.m., beginning in Margaret Jewett Hall. This year's dinner will be potluck through and through. You are invited to bring a main dish casserole (names beginning with A-H), a salad or side dish (names beginning with I-M), dessert (N-R), or drinks (S-Z). After our feast and a brief gathering ritual in Lindsay Chapel, we will set off together on a candlelight journey through the darkness, until we arrive at the Sanctuary and circle it with light. Under the dome in the chancel we will renew our own baptismal promises, ending with a joyful "sprinkling" of all present. This event is for all ages, so gather up friends, neighbors, kids, and come share the light!

All are invited to bundle up and join us on Epiphany, promptly at 5:45 p.m., on the church lawn, as we renew our witness against gun violence. We will offer a reading of names, before we remove 2017 flags and share a brief prayer for peace in our city and nation.

EPIPHANY 2018 WORSHIP SCHEDULE

January 7. First Sunday after Epiphany

- 10:00 a.m. Adult Formation, A Conversation with Jim Antal, Harter Room
- 11:00 a.m. Morning Worship, Jim Antal, preaching
- 11:20 a.m. Church School: Outdoor Church Offering, Margaret Jewett Hall
- 12:15 p.m. Wendy Cadge Sacred Spaces Art Exhibit Reception, MJH
- 1:30 p.m. Confirmation Class Afternoon Retreat, MJH
- 7:30 p.m. Night Song, Sanctuary

January 14. Second Sunday after Epiphany

- 9:00 a.m. Choir Rehearsal, Sanctuary
- 9:45 a.m. Community Gathering Time, Hastings Common
- 10:00 a.m. Adult Formation, Issa Bibbins and the Gospel Tradition, MJH
- 11:00 a.m. Multigenerational Morning Worship, Dan Smith, preaching
- 12:30 p.m. Massachusetts Conference (UCC) Racial Justice Workshop, MJH
- 7:30 p.m. Night Song, Sanctuary

January 21. Third Sunday after Epiphany

- 9:00 a.m. Choir Rehearsal, Sanctuary
- 9:45 a.m. Community Gathering Time, Hastings Common
- 10:00 a.m. Adult Formation, Remembrance and Reparations, Harter Room
- 11:00 a.m. Morning Worship, Karin Case, preaching
- 11:20 a.m. Church School: Classes (presch. - Grade 7)
- 12:30 p.m. Greater Boston Interfaith Organization Gathering, MJH
- 12:30 p.m. Church School Teachers Meeting, Harter Room
- 12:30 p.m. Newcomers Luncheon, Hastings Common

- 3:00 p.m. Youth Group, Meet in Hastings Common
- 7:30 p.m. Night Song, Sanctuary

January 28. Fourth Sunday after Epiphany

- 9:00 a.m. Choir Rehearsal, Sanctuary
- 9:45 a.m. Community Gathering Time, Hastings Common
- 10:00 a.m. Adult Formation, Remembrance and Reparations, Harter Room
- 11:00 a.m. Morning Worship, New Members Joining, Dan Smith, preaching
- 11:20 a.m. Church School, Creative Arts: Bread Baking, MJH/Kitchen
- 12:30 p.m. Annual Congregational Meeting and Luncheon, MJH
- 3:00 p.m. Confirmation Class, Harter Room
- 7:30 p.m. Night Song, Sanctuary

February 4. Fifth Sunday after Epiphany

- 9:00 a.m. Choir Rehearsal, Sanctuary
- 9:45 a.m. Community Gathering Time, Hastings Common
- 10:00 a.m. Adult Formation, Harter Room
- 11:00 a.m. Morning Worship, Multigenerational Holy Communion, (a time for healing prayer offered immediately following service), Karin Case, preaching
- 11:20 a.m. Church School: Outdoor Church Offering
- 3:00 p.m. Youth Group, Meet in Hastings Common
- 7:30 p.m. Night Song, Sanctuary

February 11. Sixth Sunday after Epiphany

- 9:00 a.m. Choir Rehearsal, Sanctuary
- 9:45 a.m. Community Gathering Time, Hastings Common
- 10:00 a.m. Adult Formation, Harter Room
- 11:00 a.m. Morning Worship, Dan Smith, preaching

EPIPHANY 2017 WORSHIP SCHEDULE

- 11:20 a.m. Church School: Classes (preschool–Grade 7)
- 3:00 p.m. Confirmation Class, Harter Room
- 7:30 p.m. Night Song, Sanctuary

February 18. First Sunday in Lent

- 9:00 a.m. Choir Rehearsal, Sanctuary
- 9:45 a.m. Community Gathering Time, Hastings Common
- 10:00 a.m. Lenten Study, Contemplative Prayer, Harter Room
- 11:00 a.m. Morning Worship, Karin Case, preaching
- 11:20 a.m. Church School: Classes (preschool–Grade 7)
- 12:30 p.m. Newcomers Luncheon, Hastings Common
- 7:30 p.m. Night Song, Sanctuary

February 25. Second Sunday in Lent

- 9:00 a.m. Choir Rehearsal, Sanctuary
- 9:45 a.m. Community Gathering Time, Hastings Common
- 10:00 a.m. Lenten Study, Contemplative Prayer, Harter Room
- 11:00 a.m. Morning Worship, Jen Bloesch, preaching
- 11:20 a.m. Church School: Creative Arts
- 3:00 p.m. Confirmation Class, Harter Room
- 7:30 p.m. Night Song, Sanctuary

March 4. Third Sunday in Lent

- 9:00 a.m. Choir Rehearsal, Sanctuary
- 9:45 a.m. Community Gathering Time, Hastings Common
- 10:00 a.m. Lenten Study, Contemplative Prayer, Harter Room
- 11:00 a.m. Morning Worship
- 11:20 a.m. Church School: Outdoor Church Offering

- 3:00 p.m. Youth Group, Meet in Hastings Common
- 7:30 p.m. Night Song, Sanctuary

March 11. Fourth Sunday in Lent

- 9:00 a.m. Choir Rehearsal, Sanctuary
- 9:45 a.m. Community Gathering Time, Hastings Common
- 10:00 a.m. Lenten Study - Congregational Worship, Harter Room
- 11:00 a.m. Morning Worship
- 11:20 a.m. Church School: Classes (preschool–grade 7)
- 1:30 p.m. Confirmation Class Afternoon Retreat, First Church Somerville
- 7:30 p.m. Night Song, Sanctuary

March 18. Fifth Sunday in Lent

- 9:00 a.m. Choir Rehearsal, Sanctuary
- 9:45 a.m. Community Gathering Time, Hastings Common
- 10:00 a.m. Lenten Study, Congregational Worship, Harter Room
- 11:00 a.m. Morning Worship
- 11:20 a.m. Church School: Classes (preschool–Grade 7)
- 12:30 p.m. Church School Teachers Meeting, Harter Room
- 12:30 p.m. Newcomers Luncheon, Hastings Common
- 3:00 p.m. Youth Group, Meet in Hastings Common
- 7:30 p.m. Night Song, Sanctuary

A TIME OF REST, RENEWAL, AND STUDY

Following approval from the Board of Deacons and Executive Council, Senior Minister Dan Smith will be on sabbatical February 13 - June 9. Dan's contract allows him (and other clergy and program staff) a paid sabbatical of 3-4 months for every 5-7 years of work. Dan's last sabbatical was in 2012. Much has happened in First Church (and the world!) since then including the successful completion of our three-plus-year For Such a Time as This Capital Campaign and building project. Dan is ready for an extended time of rest, renewal, and reflection.

A Note from Dan—Rest and Renewal

Thank you, First Church! I am indeed ready for a break and for some time with my family, especially as Nancy continues in her transition to a new full-time job and as my son Julian prepares to graduate from high school in June. I'm thrilled that I can be fully present with my family through these major milestones. I'm also excited to renew practices of self-care of my body and soul. For the first time since 1999, I'll be able to observe Lent without having to lead programs or services. For the first time since 2008, I'll be able to celebrate Easter service without having to preach (which is a huge relief!). I'm especially eager to reset my daily rhythms so I can eat better, sleep better, pray more, and play more! At the age of 44, I realize that there may be a less driven, less busy, less pressured way of life and ministry, a "second-half of life" approach that I sense is emerging. This doesn't mean that I plan to care or work less. It is a question of experimenting with how intently I hold it all. During this sabbatical stretch I hope to find a more centered, more graceful way of being in the world that I can bring back and share.

Reflection and Study

In addition to rest and renewal, I am eager also to engage in some focused time of study. As many of you know, I applied for and received a \$15,000 Pastoral Study Project Grant from the Louisville Institute. The project, entitled "Remembrance and Reparation at First Church," dovetails with ongoing work of the congregation to examine its history of complicity with slavery. To read the full grant proposal, please visit www.firstchurchcambridge.org/remembranceandreparation. My time away will include reading, writing, conversations with scholars, and travel. I plan to go to Berlin in March to visit the Holocaust Memorial and learn what I can from Germany's inspiring work of remembrance and reparation related to their own history of racial terror. I will also return to Montgomery, AL, where I will learn more about the groundbreaking remembrance work of Equal Justice Initiative and where I will be for the opening of their National Lynching Memorial.

Keeping in Touch

Know that I will be following your joys and concerns via our online bulletin and keeping track of First Church happenings via First Glance. I will be praying for the church regularly. Since I will be spending a good amount of time in Cambridge (with a family that is not on sabbatical!), I may well be seeing some of you around. Yes, of course we can say a quick hello if we bump into each other — just, please, no "shop talk"!

Sabbatical Coverage Plans

I'm grateful beyond words to our staff and lay leaders who will be carrying added responsibilities and who are allowing me to "let go" and trust that all manner of things will be well while I'm

away! A special word of thanks to Karin, Kate, Kirsten, Sarah, and Karen, with whom I've been in touch about particular responsibilities. Karin will be acting Head of Staff and primarily responsible for worship, pastoral care, and administration. Sarah will be working closely with Karin on all things worship related as well as weekly scheduling, logistics, and some programming. Kate will also be helping Karin with some programming and responding to pastoral care needs, with prayerful help from our Deacons, Pastoral Care Teams, and other staff. Kirsten Manville will continue to be at the hub of whatever seen and unforeseen action in the office. She will be glad to point you in the right direction if you have questions while I'm away. And Karen will continue to be our HR guru, while also ensuring that our Stewardship momentum continues apace.

Please be especially good and kind and patient toward the staff, as they carry whatever extra burdens may arise in my absence! Also, please know we are offering financial compensation for their added responsibilities. That money comes from a First Church budgeted sabbatical accrual fund as well as from the grant I received from the Louisville Institute.

While I won't miss the early morning e-mails, the night meetings, the very long Sundays, or the Saturday prep, I will miss each of you while I'm gone! It continues to be a profound privilege to lead and serve our congregation and a blessing to be in relationship with each of you. I look forward in faith to what God will reveal to me and to First Church during this time, to sharing what we've learned when we reconvene in June, and to continuing to grow our ministry together in the years to come.

FIRST CHURCH CAMBRIDGE SHELTER



Jim Stewart speaking at panel in Springfield

On November 1 First Church Shelter Director Jim Stewart was a panelist on Safe Injection Facilities at UMass Tower Square in Springfield.

Jim joined with students of Massachusetts College of Pharmacy on November 8 in Copley Square to promote greater public awareness about opioid use.

On November 16 Jim and Dr. Mark Eisenberg were guest lecturers for Cambridge Health Alliance Residents on the Opioid Crisis and Harm Reduction.

THANKSGIVING at the Shelter (photo to the right) was peaceful, pleasant, and filled with PIE. Thanks to all those members of the First Church Shelter Oversight Committee who helped to make it special!



Harvard School of Public Health Work Study Student Noel Martinez and her friend Sabrina Kaplan in the kitchen with Thanksgiving Dinner.

Jim and others in Cambridge worked closely with Vice Mayor Marc McGovern to produce a set of recommendations for how the City of Cambridge can best address the Opioid Crisis. Those reco

FIRST CHURCH CAMBRIDGE UPCOMING EVENTS

DEFIANT HOPE—CHRISTIAN WITNESS IN A TIME OF CLIMATE CRISIS,

REV. DR. JIM ANTAL PREACHING,

SUNDAY, JANUARY 7 First Church member the Rev. Dr. Jim Antal has served since 2006 as Minister and President of the Massachusetts Conference of the United Church of Christ, the largest Protestant denomination in the Commonwealth. In addition to overseeing the extraordinary staff of the Massachusetts Conference, he provides ecumenical and interfaith leadership. Together with the Conference Board of Directors, he is working with the leaders of the Connecticut and Rhode Island Conferences to propose joining together as one Conference. Jim Antal is also the UCC's national spokesperson on climate change, having authored and championed two General Synod resolutions on the subject. Prior to becoming Conference Minister, he had served as the Senior Minister of UCC churches in Shaker Heights, OH, and Newton, MA, as well as Executive Director of the Fellowship of Reconciliation (USA), an interfaith pacifist organization. He is a graduate of Princeton University, Yale Divinity School, and

Andover Newton Theological School. His forthcoming book *Climate Church – Climate World* will be published in March, 2018. Follow Jim Antal on Twitter @JimAntal.



Jim Antal

GUEST MUSICIAN ISSA BIBBINS, Morning Worship, Sunday, January 14

Issa Bibbins, accomplished composer and Minister of Music at Roxbury Presbyterian Church, will join us with some special gospel music on January 14. You may remember his original work *Beyond Sunday Morning*, which premiered at First Church in May, 2017. We expect that Issa will be leading us in a 10 O'clock Hour Gospel Workshop, working with the First Church Choir on some gospel pieces, and joining us to lead Morning Worship on January 14.



Issa Bibbins

FIRST CHURCH CAMBRIDGE UPCOMING EVENTS: BELOVED COMMUNITY

BELOVED COMMUNITY EVENT, Sunday, January 14, 12:30 p.m.

Massachusetts Conference, UCC
Introduction to Racial Justice Training

WHO leads the training:

Toyan Harper, Jr. "TJ",
Massachusetts Conference (UCC)
Associate for Racial Justice Ministries

WHAT the training consists of:

Three-part Covenant
Four Realms of Racism
Race as a social construct
Inclusivity Spectrum

WHERE the training occurs:

Margaret Jewett Hall, First Church in Cambridge

WHEN the training happens:

12:30 - 2:30 p.m., Sunday, January 14

HOW the training achieves its goals:

Through the use of articles, videos, speeches
Group discussion and discourse
Specifically tailored Racial Justice Curriculum

WHY racial justice training?

This training, "From Tolerance to Unity," seeks to create a common language around racism, to unmask racism in our lives, and to encourage long-term engagement in racial justice ministry. We are driven to view racism as a spiritual issue and not a common endeavor.



T. J. Harper

Massachusetts Conference Associate for Racial Justice Ministries T. J. Harper lives in Chelsea with his girlfriend, who is studying for her doctorate. Previously the two operated a racial justice summer program for teenagers, the "Social Justice Sewing Academy," in Chicago and the San Francisco Bay Area. Prior to that, T. J. served as an intern with the Strive Together Foundation, a network dedicated to improving educational outcomes for children, and as an intern with the City Clerk's office in Chicago. He was also a Public Policy and International Affairs Fellow for a seven-week intensive program at Princeton University

T. J. grew up attending the Fellowship Missionary Baptist Church in Chicago and took a number of theology classes at Xavier University, including Black Theology, which he said had a major impact on him. T. J. has an intense interest in advocating and working for racial justice. He says, "I worked with the government and with nonprofits, and those are some ways to make change happen. But I am interested now in coming at it from a religious perspective." He sees church as being about relationships and adds, "developing good relationships is how stuff gets done."

T. J. will facilitate our Racial Justice Training on January 14. Please join in welcoming him, and -8_ come learn from him!

FIRST CHURCH CAMBRIDGE UPCOMING EVENTS

NEWCOMERS LUNCHEON Sunday, January 21, 12:30 p.m., Hastings Common

If you're new (or feeling new) to First Church, looking for ways to get involved, seeking information about our church or our denomination (The United Church of Christ), interested in meeting others who are new to the church, or in connecting with some folks who already know their way around, this luncheon is for you! Join us for a Newcomers Luncheon and meet our ministers and members, learn about our history, explore membership, learn about opportunities for service and action in the community, and hear about our faith formation and educational programs. A light lunch will be served, and childcare will be provided. All are welcome! The next Newcomers Luncheon will be on Sunday, February 19. Questions? Contact Karin Case, karincase@firstchurchcambridge.org

CONSIDER JOINING FIRST CHURCH Sunday, January 28, during Morning Worship

Is First Church tugging at your heart? Does it feel like home to you, or like the sanctuary you need? Is your spirit fed by our music, worship, and study? Is First Church a place where you are challenged, engaged, and growing? Is it a place where you want to bring your children or grandchildren? Do you find an anchor here for your activism and community involvement? Is it a place where you can ask the questions that really matter or pour out your heart? We hope so! If you're experiencing any of these things, we invite you to consider membership in First Church. New members will be welcomed during our 11:00 a.m. service of worship on Sunday, January 28. Karin Case is happy to discuss with you, answer questions, or provide more information.

Please be in touch with her, karincase@firstchurchcambridge.org, and let her know of your interest.

2018 ANNUAL CONGREGATIONAL MEETING AND LUNCH Sunday, January 28, 12:30 p.m., Margaret Jewett Hall

Come one and all to the 382nd Annual Meeting of First Church on Sunday, January 28, following Morning Worship! A delicious luncheon will lead into our meeting. We will celebrate another very full year of ministry, including the completion of our building project. We will thank one another for gifts shared and celebrate our outgoing and incoming leaders. We will also do some looking ahead, as we seek to discern where God is leading us next! Join us for this centuries-old tradition of meeting, prayer, and song!

ADULT CHRISTIAN FORMATION: 10 O'CLOCK HOURS :

A Conversation with Rev. Dr. Jim Antal
Sunday, January 7, 10:00 a.m., in the Harter Room

The Gospel Tradition, with Issa Bibbins
Sunday, January 14, 10:00 a.m., in Margaret Jewett Hall

Remembrance and Reparations at First Church, with Dan Smith
A two-part series, Sundays, January 21 and 28, 10:00 a.m., in the Harter Room

Dan Smith will lead two sessions related to the topic of his upcoming sabbatical study "Remembrance and Reparations at First Church." In his grant proposal he asks: "How can a 21st-century New England congregation publicly

FIRST CHURCH CAMBRIDGE UPCOMING EVENTS

remember and own its historic complicity in the racial terrors of slavery? How can such a public remembrance process be leveraged to raise awareness of ongoing racial injustice while creating some specific, meaningful, systemic change that improves the lives of descendants of enslaved persons?" Join us in the Harter Room, as we begin a conversation about these and other questions!

Lenten Series on Contemplative Prayer, with Stephanie Paulsell, A three-part series, Sundays, February 18 and 25, and March 4, 10:00 a.m., in the Harter Room

Lenten Study on Worship in the Congregational Tradition, with Beth Spaulding, A two-part series, Sundays, March 11 and 18, 10:00 a.m., in the Harter Room

What makes worship "Congregational"? How did Congregationalists move beyond their Puritan roots to the celebration of church seasons such as Advent and Lent? Join Beth Spaulding on March 11 and 18 for discussion of these and other topics concerning Congregational worship.

FAMILY NIGHTS IN EPIPHANY Tuesdays, 5:30 - 7:00 p.m., January 2, 16, and 30, Sage Hall

Families with young children are warmly invited to our bi-weekly pasta-and-potluck suppers in Sage Hall, our indoor play space. We gather to share a meal and share a bit of our lives, as the kids play and the parents try for a bit of grown-up conversation. Our Family Nights in Epiphany will remain informal and "un-programmed," but look ahead to a Lenten series of "Tuesdays Together," a 5-week series for the whole church.

TUESDAYS TOGETHER Tuesday, January 23, 5:30 p.m., Kitchen, Hastings Common, and Margaret Jewett Hall After a fabulous first "Life Together Tuesday" in November, we are eager to continue building a new tradition of gathering on Tuesdays (under a new moniker "Tuesdays Together"!). Plan to join us in our new Kitchen, Hastings Common, and Margaret Jewett Hall on January 23, as we continue to live into our new space and new life together! We'll provide the pasta and water! You bring the rest (salad, side, or dessert, cider). We can break bread and continue to lay groundwork for intentional practices of how we serve and share meals in Christian community, especially in anticipation of our weekly Tuesdays Together in Lent.

MARDI GRAS PANCAKE SUPPER Tuesday, February 13, 5:30 - 7:00 p.m., Margaret Jewett Hall The First Church Family Night regulars invite you to join them for an all-church pancake supper on Mardi Gras, Tuesday, February 13, from 5:30 to 7:00 p.m.. Come celebrate with pancakes and maple syrup, a traditional sweet treat on the eve of the Lenten season. We'll decorate our "Alleluia" banner and bury it in the Sanctuary, where it will await its unveiling on Easter morning. Pancakes will be provided; please bring fruit or breakfast meats (ready for serving) to share. RSVP to Sarah Higginbotham, shigginb@firstchurchcambridge.org, so she can plan the pancake production.

MEN'S BREAKFASTS First Saturdays of each month, 8:00 a.m., Hastings Common

The dates for our Saturday morning breakfasts for the first half of 2018 are: January 6, February 3, March 3, April 7, May 5, and June 2. Join us for a hearty breakfast and even heartier conversations

FIRST CHURCH CAMBRIDGE UPCOMING EVENTS

about topics that connect our faith to our lives and our world. Mark your calendars now, and plan to join us regularly. The breakfasts are served in the Kitchen and Harter Room, 8:00 - 9:30 a.m. One-time visitors, friends, and newcomers are always welcome. Questions? Contact David Torrey, davidtorrey@comast.net. If you'd like to sign up for the Men's Breakfast e-mail list to receive monthly reminders, contact Kirsten Manville, parishadmin@firstchurchcambridge.org.

LOOKING AHEAD TO LENT AND EASTER...

LENT is a season of special depth at First Church in Cambridge. We begin with a beautiful and solemn evening service on Ash Wednesday. Each year we observe the forty days leading up to Easter with opportunities to gather for intentional study and spiritual practice. Watch First Glance and the Sunday worship bulletins for the Lenten series at our Sunday 10:00 Adult Formation Hours; Tuesdays Together; and other offerings such as Bible study or a book group. Gather with the First Church community to walk through the events of Holy Week together, beginning with multigenerational worship on Palm Sunday and ending with a joyous multigenerational celebration of Easter!

TUESDAYS TOGETHER IN LENT Join us for our five weekly Tuesdays Together in Lent, beginning Tuesday, February 20, and continuing through March 20, the Tuesday before Holy Week.

These will be prayerful times centered on the season of Lent and the closeness of our community centered in Jesus. They will also be a time to relax, replenish, and be together as family. After the meal together, there will be childcare, and the kids will have a Lenten activity along with

time to play and hang out together.

Our meals will be pot-luck, with a main dish prepared in our kitchen by volunteers. This will be a wonderful opportunity for us to gather together, support one another, have time to restore our spirits, and just have fun! Lindsay Chapel will be open, offering a warm and sacred space for all who would like to take a few moments for quiet reflection.

A few words about how you can help by volunteering for Tuesdays Together: This is a wonderful opportunity to get to know people and have some extra fun without making a long-term commitment. If you want to help cook or set up food, help with children, or have always thought a little table waiting and clean up would be easy and fun, this is your chance. It is all simple and enjoyable in our new kitchen!

Stay tuned for more information from the Christian Formation Committee and for ways that you can help if you would like to volunteer. Plan to come, bring a friend, and maybe help out with a meal. All are welcome!

ROAD TO FREEDOM STUDY Tuesday Nights in Lent, February 20 and 27, March 6, 13, and 20, 7:00 – 9:00 p.m. following the Tuesdays Together in Lent community meal

Join Mike Stevens and members of First Church for an in-depth exploration into the U.S. Civil Rights Movement and its implications for us today.

The Civil Rights Movement from 1954 to 1968 has frequently been viewed as a watershed moment in the history of our country as the time of more fully living into the nation's creed that "all men

are created equal” with “inalienable rights” to “Life, Liberty, and the Pursuit of Happiness.” But as the topics of racial justice and white supremacy have become more ubiquitous in contemporary society, should we now look at the Civil Rights Movement in a different light?

In four or five sessions, we will discuss this question. We will start with a brief view of some of the historical aspects of slavery and white supremacy that are evident today. Then we’ll take a look at an overview of the Civil Rights Movement, why and how it came to be in the short window of 14 years, and why it splintered. Finally, we’ll discuss the impact of the Civil Rights Movement on our current-day discussion of race and white supremacy; what lessons can we take from the Movement?

Participants will be asked to prepare with approximately 40 to 50 pages of reading prior to each week’s discussion. We hope to have two guest speakers, an African-American man who grew up in North Carolina during the Jim Crow period and was one of the students in the Greensboro sit-ins; and an African-American woman who is currently running the Young People’s Project in Cambridge and other sites around the country and whose father is Bob Moses, the creator and one of the leaders of the 1965 “Freedom Summer” in Mississippi.

This study will be led by Mike Stevens, husband of Peggy Stevens. For the last nine years Mike has taught a course on the United States Civil Rights Movement to New Hampshire public high school students during the summer at St. Paul’s School’s

Advanced Studies Program. Mike worships at the Society of St. John the Evangelist, an Episcopal monastery in Cambridge, where he is a member of the Fellowship of St. John.

ROAD TO FREEDOM STUDY TOUR — Fall, 2018

The Opportunity When our senior high youth came back from their Civil Rights Tour last February and shared their experiences with the congregation, many of you indicated an interest in participating in a similar trip for adults. Karin and Dan share your enthusiasm and are in the initial planning stages for a Road to Freedom Study Tour for the Fall of 2018! The schedule is still to be determined, but we are looking at dates in October or November.

The Context We continue to experience the powerful legacies of institutional racism, structural inequality, and devastating incidents racial violence in our midst. This year, as First Church delves more deeply into slavery in the North and our own troubling history of enslavement, the Road to Freedom Study Tour will allow us to see up close both the Southern histories of enslavement and also movements for justice and liberation. The intention is to make connections that will transform our own lives.

The Itinerary The itinerary is not yet definitely planned, but highlights of the Study Tour might include a visit to the Whitney Plantation on the Mississippi Delta near New Orleans; some time in Memphis, TN, heart of the Delta Blues; visits to Selma and Birmingham; and some focused study in Montgomery with visits to the Southern

FIRST CHURCH CAMBRIDGE UPCOMING EVENTS

Poverty Law Center, Equal Justice Initiative (EJI), their new National Memorial to Peace and Justice Museum, which traces the history of racial terror from enslavement to mass incarceration, and the haunting new EJI monument to lynching.

Planning and Preparation There will be an initial information session and organizing meeting some time in February (date to be determined). Watch your Sunday worship bulletins and First Glance for more information. If you would like to be sure to receive personal notifications, contact Karin Case, karincase@firstchurchcambridge.org to let her know. Finally, if you are interested in participating in the Road to Freedom Study Tour this fall, we strongly urge you to join the Road to Freedom Study Group with Mike Stevens on Tuesday evenings in Lent (see information in this issue of EVENT.) This is not a requirement, but it's one excellent way to begin preparing for an experience this fall! Please consider joining us.

WOMEN'S RETREAT, Saturday, March 10
Save the date for the Spring, 2018, Women's Retreat! Our theme this year is "The Soothing Waters of Peace." Ministerial Intern Jen Bloesch will be leading this year's Retreat. Details of time and location will be announced soon.

STEWARDSHIP UPDATE Thank you to all who have pledged their share of support for our 2018 mission and ministry. Thanks to your generous support, we are well on our way to our goal of increasing our pledged contributions by 9-10%.

As of mid-December, we received 99 pledges from 155 members and friends, totaling \$375,415, which is 10.5% above the amount pledged by those same people in 2017. We are in the process_13-

of following up with those who haven't yet responded, so that we can report at our Annual Congregational Meeting on January 28.

As we complete the second year of our three-year Capital Campaign, we have received \$1,361,433.37 of \$1,843,427.83 pledged, which is 74%. Thank you to all who have contributed!

— Rev. Karen McArthur,
Minister of Stewardship and Finance

LIVING INTO OUR SPACES: OUR NEW KITCHEN Our beautiful new commercial-grade kitchen is finished! It features a handwashing sink, a food prep sink, and three dishwashing sinks; a large central island and pass-through window into Hastings Common; an array of stainless steel appliances (ice-maker, dishwasher, cooking range with a griddle and two ovens, convection oven, freezer, and refrigerator) and generous cupboard and shelf space. Cooking and cleanup in this kitchen are a dream!

There are two key things you need to know: Training is required to use the appliances. If you would like to use the stove, ovens, or dishwasher, you will need a brief orientation. Contact the kitchen coordinator, Kate Layzer (klayzer@gmail.com), to get started! A kitchen-use manual is also being compiled and will be available soon. The kitchen is shared space. Not only First Church groups but also other building users will have an interest in using this new resource. Please contact the church office to reserve the space before making plans.

How will the new kitchen shape our gathering and our breaking bread together? A team has been meeting to work on new practices for congregational life: How we prepare the food we share, how we set the table, how we eat together, and how we clean up. We are beginning to experiment with some of these practices in our Tuesdays Together suppers and Sunday lunches. We welcome your thoughts! Email Kate Layzer, if you'd like to join the team or to send them your ideas and questions.

ALTERNATIVE CHRISTMAS FAIR REPORT

First Church's Alternative Christmas Fair, held on December 10, was a great success, thanks to the generosity of the congregation and others who came in from Garden Street. A total of \$13,484 was raised during the 90 minutes of the Fair.

Thirteen vendors, representing charitable



organizations serving needs in Africa, Asia, India, Palestine, Central America, and here at home in Cambridge, filled a festive Margaret Jewett Hall with their wares and their stories. Plates of home-baked cookies and cups of hot beverages kept shoppers well-fed, as they browsed the tables in the newly renovated hall.

Vendors' reports were enthusiastic. "We were

(continued from page 6).

recommendations were considered and endorsed by the Cambridge City Council on December 4. The recommendations are now awaiting implementation by the Cambridge City Manager.

Jim and other members of Safe Injection Facilities in Massachusetts continue to meet with members of the law enforcement community to generate support for expanded and enhanced forms of harm reduction to reduce opioid overdose deaths in the Commonwealth. Many law enforcement officials recognize the need for alternative approaches to addressing the current opioid public health crisis, including Arlington Police Chief Frederick Ryann. (<http://www.wbur.org/news/2017/12/06/addiction-before-arrest>).



Once again, the Shelter's "Hawaiian Missionary" Robie Price, (pictured right,) trekked 6,000 miles to spend a week helping to winterize the Shelter and catch up on small, maintenance projects.

The Shelter staff and Oversight Committee hosted its annual Christmas Breakfast for Shelter guests on Sunday, December 17, in Sage Hall.

Thanks to the generous support of members of the First Church community, each Shelter guest enjoyed a great meal, and each received \$50 in gift cards. Pictured above: Shelter Christmas Breakfast, December 17, Shelter Oversight Committee; Dave Haas, Davis Dyer, Marc O'Brien, and Sarah Fujiwara.



Rev. Dr. Mónica Maher serves with Friends Peace Teams, as Peacebuilding in the Americas (PLA) Initiative Coordinator, traveling frequently to Central America and Colombia. Based in Quito, Ecuador, she is the Community Minister for Latin America of First Church in Cambridge, where she was ordained in March, 2014. Latin American Ministry Snapshots are an occasional EVENT feature, sharing memorable moments from diverse aspects of Mónica's work. The Alternatives to Violence Project (AVP) mentioned in this article is supported by Friends Peace Teams and other agencies. This Latin American Ministry Snapshot was prepared by PLA Communications Specialist Allie Prescott and edited by Mónica.

Part 1 of this Latin American Ministry Snapshot, reporting on Mónica's work in Honduras and Colombia appeared in the November / December, 2017, EVENT.

Human Inside the Uniform of the Guatemalan National Civil Police The National Civil Police force is infamous for being corrupt, violent, abusive, and arrogant. "When we see a police officer, we immediately think that he doesn't have values or principles, that he believes he has power over people and can do whatever he wants," said AVP Guatemala National Coordinator Lorena Escobar.

After PLA's AVP Guatemala program partnered with the Guatemalan National Civil Police force in early 2017 to deliver AVP workshops, it became clear that police officers are traumatized, under resourced, underpaid, and lacked the training and tools to de-escalate conflicts in Guatemala City, where an estimated 100 deaths occur weekly.

"There is a lot of violence thrown at them daily. Many times they arrive at a crime scene and don't know if they will leave alive," Ms. Escobar explained. "Sometimes they find a woman cut into pieces. They don't even see (others) as human any more. They have to desensitize themselves, but the trauma never stops, because they live through something new every day."

AVP Guatemala partnered with the National Civil Police Chaplain to work with recent police graduates, after 14 officers committed suicide in 2016. Since February, 2017, PLA has financially supported facilitators to deliver workshops to 159 police officers (49 women, 110 men). Workshops help participants see their own humanity and learn important tools they can utilize to transform situations of conflict in both their work and their personal lives.

"The workshop makes officers more efficient in their work, because it gives them the tools to deal with their stress, fear, conflicts, low self-esteem, lack of teamwork, and lack of communication between themselves and their communities. AVP offers them the necessary tools to cope with the situations they face daily. This benefits not only their own personal lives but all our citizens."

Since 2010 AVP Guatemala has partnered with schools, prison personnel, indigenous communities, and grassroots leaders to challenge violence rooted in systemic and intra-personal discrimination.

(continued on back cover)

Healing War Victims Demanding Reparations for Disappeared, CoMadres in El Salvador

During El Salvador's twelve-year "Dirty War," approximately 75,000 civilians were murdered, an estimated 5,000 to 10,000 disappeared [1], and thousands were separated from their families.

When the disappearances began, many women came together to demand the truth behind missing relatives, forming the organization CoMadres (Committee of Mothers and Relatives of the Disappeared, Assassinated, and Political Prisoners of El Salvador) with the support of Archbishop Oscar Romero.

Many CoMadres members faced unspeakable trauma: witnessing loved ones tortured and killed, or living with the crippling uncertainty of whether their missing family members were alive or dead.

Despite 25 years of advocacy and demands for justice, the scars left from unhealed traumas of war continue to plague Salvadoran society, and the government provides few resources to help communities heal.

"They talk about what happened to them, as if it occurred yesterday. Their trauma is still very raw," explained Monica Maher, PLA Coordinator. Often living in small, impoverished communities, CoMadres members have been physically isolated as well as systematically ignored. In early 2014

PLA partnered with CoMadres to offer members training in AVP.

"We are in solidarity with them, so we can look for alternatives that help them search for peace, as much inside themselves as in their families, organizations, churches, and country," said Salomon Medina, AVP Coordinator for El Salvador. "This all brings us to a process that includes justice, forgiveness, reconciliation, and individual and collective wellbeing."

"They have shown a tremendous maturity and capacity to reinvent themselves, to be resilient... We contribute to their ability to talk, to rediscover their ability to raise their voices against individual and structural violence and the injustices and problems that occur each day," said Mr. Medina.

AVP El Salvador, now in its ninth year, offers workshops in twelve municipalities with over seventeen organizations and churches, including with war survivors in resettled communities, at-risk youth in gang-dominated communities, and people living with disabilities.

[1] (<https://www.telesurtv.net/english/opinion/The-Legacy-of-Disappearances-in-El-Salvador-150524-0001.html>)



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CONGREGATIONAL, 1633–1636

United Church of Christ
11 Garden Street, Cambridge, MA 02138
www.firstchurchcambridge.org