



*Praise God, all you nations! Extol her, all you peoples! For great is her steadfast love toward us, and the faithfulness of God endures forever. Praise God!*

- Psalm 117

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Regathering Sunday  
September 10, 2023

**FIRST CHURCH  
IN CAMBRIDGE**

Congregational 1633-1636  
United Church of Christ  
Garden and Mason Streets  
Cambridge, Massachusetts

## WELCOME TO FIRST CHURCH IN CAMBRIDGE...

Grounded in God • Growing in Community • Acting in Love

We're glad you are worshiping with us today! First Church is a vibrant, multi-generational, engaged, urban church. We care a lot about each other and what's happening in the world around us. Wherever you are on the journey of faith, you are welcome here.

FIRST CHURCH  
IN CAMBRIDGE  
CONGREGATIONAL  
387 YEARS  
ON THE WAY  
1 6 3 6 – 2 0 2 3

### September 10, 2023

<b>Preaching Today</b>	Dan Smith, <i>Senior Minister</i>
<b>Liturgist</b>	Leslie Pelton-Cairns
<b>Assisting in Worship</b>	Carla Aravelo, <i>Pastoral Associate</i>
	Ahmaad Edmund, <i>Pastoral Associate</i>
	Sarah Higginbotham, <i>Creative Worship &amp; Arts Director</i>
	Kate Layzer, <i>Minister of Street Outreach</i>
	Karen McArthur, <i>Minister of Stewardship &amp; Finance</i>
	Lee Prouty, <i>tech support</i>
	Peter Sykes, <i>Music Director</i>
<b>Bulletin Cover Image</b>	Psalm 117 collage by Audrey Bellinger
	All Psalm collages can be viewed in <a href="#">a digital gallery</a> on our website.

### Today's Programs and Events

10:00 a.m.	Choir Rehearsal, Sanctuary
11:00 a.m.	Hybrid Morning Worship, Sanctuary and <a href="#">via livestream</a>
11:20 a.m.	Church School: Godly Play, Middlers, and Bible 101 classes
12:15 p.m.	Regathering Luncheon, Margaret Jewett Hall (MJH)
7:30 p.m.	Night Song, Sanctuary and <a href="#">via livestream</a>

### New to First Church?

Have you just begun joining us for worship? Consider filling out a visitor card found on the small clipboards or this "[virtual visitor card](#)" so that we might connect with you about our community.

### Give to First Church

You can give online: [www.firstchurchcambridge.org/give](http://www.firstchurchcambridge.org/give) or by texting "\$\_" to: 1-844-996-0982.

### Contact a Pastor or Staff Member

Find [contact information](#) for our ministerial, program, and building staff on our website. For general information and inquiries: [info@firstchurchcambridge.org](mailto:info@firstchurchcambridge.org)

### Minister On Call

If you have an urgent pastoral need, please call 617-547-2724 ext. 222. Your call will be routed to a First Church minister based on a rotating schedule that covers staff time off.

Have a church program or event to promote?  
Complete the [First Church Communications Request](#) form.  
Have an edit or update for our website?  
Complete the [FCC Website Changes](#) form

## GATHERING

**VOLUNTARY**

Impromptu - Fanfare (Suite Breve, 2009)

Craig Phillips

**\*HYMN C-25**

Let There Be Life in This House

**\*GREETING**

Leslie Pelton-Cairns

L: Siblings in the Spirit, whether you are here for an hour or a lifetime,  
welcome to this household of grace!

**C: Here, where our lives are grounded in the hope and healing of God;**

L: here, where we grow together in community and belonging;

**C: here, where we act together in love for a better world.**

L: Sisters, brothers, siblings in the Spirit, come gather in.

**C: Let there be life in this house,  
and may God bless the ties that bind us in love!**

## WORDS OF WELCOME

**ANTHEM**

Grace

Patricia Van Ness

*Beth Spaulding, soprano*

*God of grace  
Creator of grace  
Source of grace,  
Font of grace  
Wide and wide  
Fathoms and fathoms*

*Sweeping and sweeping  
Grace and strength  
Grace and hope  
Grace and compassion  
Courage and grace  
And grace*

**LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT**

Ahmaad Edmund

## CONFESSING

**INVITATION TO CONFESSION**

**SUNG PRAYER**

Sanctuary

Sarah Higginbotham

**Lord, prepare me to be a sanctuary,  
pure and holy, tried and true.**

**With thanksgiving, I'll be a living  
sanctuary for you.**

*(Twice through)*

**SILENCE**

*\*You are invited to stand. Hymns preceded by a "C" are found in the beginning section of the hymnal. This section contains hymns written and composed by current and past members of First Church in Cambridge.*

## DECLARATION OF FORGIVENESS

### \*GREETING OF PEACE

*Please turn to your immediate neighbors and offer a handshake, or a hug! Or if you prefer to maintain social distance, fold your hands or arms in a sign of peace. We want everyone to be comfortable; today let there be no spiritual distance between us.*

### \*HYMN C-20

#### The Household of God

*Children and Church School Teachers are invited to come forward during the final verse of the hymn for a blessing.*

### BLESSING OF CHURCH SCHOOL CHILDREN AND TEACHERS

*Children up through 7th grade are now invited to Church School classes. Godly Play (PreK-4th grade), Middlers (5th grade), and Bible 101 (6/7th grade) students can meet their teachers at the side door by the Children's Book Corner. Caregivers can find the children in the Chapel after worship.*

## OPENING THE WORD

### PRAYER FOR UNDERSTANDING

Carla Arevalo

### RESPONSIVE READING

#### Psalm 145:1-8

- L: I will extol you, my God, and bless your name forever and ever.
- C: Every day I will bless you, and praise your name forever and ever.**
- L: Great is your name, and greatly to be praised;  
your greatness is unsearchable.
- C: One generation shall laud your works to another,  
and shall declare your mighty acts.**
- L: On the glorious splendor of your majesty,  
and on your wondrous works, I will meditate.
- C: The might of your awesome deeds shall be proclaimed,  
and I will declare your greatness.**
- L: They shall celebrate the fame of your abundant goodness,  
and shall sing aloud of your righteousness.
- C: God is gracious and merciful,  
slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love.**

### READING

Hebrews 11:1-12:2 (excerpted)

### SERMON

Dan Smith

# SHARING OUR LIFE TOGETHER

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

### PRAYERS FOR THE CHURCH AND WORLD

Kate Layzer

L: God be with you.

C: **And also with you.**

L: Let us pray... (*silence, intercessions, and the Lord's Prayer*)

### THE LORD'S PRAYER

(*Please pray this prayer in words most meaningful to your heart.*)

**All: Our Creator, 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 trespasses  
as we forgive those who trespass 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.**

### INVITATION TO OFFERING

Karen McArthur

### OFFERTORY

O How Amiable

Ralph Vaughan Williams

*text: Psalms 84 and 90*

*O how amiable are thy dwellings, thou Lord of hosts!  
My soul hath a desire and longing to enter into the courts of the Lord.  
My heart and my flesh rejoice in the living God.  
Yea, the sparrow hath found her an house,  
and the swallow a nest where she may lay her young:  
even thy altars, O Lord of hosts, my King and my God.  
Blessed are they that dwell in thy house: they will be always praising thee.  
The glorious Majesty of the Lord our God be upon us:  
Prosper thou the work of our hands upon us. O prosper thou our handywork.  
O God, our help in ages past, Our hope in years to come,  
Our shelter from the stormy blast, And our eternal home.*

### \*DOXOLOGY

**Praise God, the Source of life and birth,  
Praise God, the Word, who came to earth,  
Praise God, the Spirit, holy flame,  
All glory, honor, to God's name. Amen.**

### \*PRAYER OF DEDICATION

## GOING FORTH

### \*HYMN 80

Our God, Our Help in Ages Past

### \*BENEDICTION

### \*CONGREGATIONAL RESPONSE

Thuma Mina

Hymn 344

1. (Send me, Lord.)

**Send me, Jesus, send me, Jesus,  
send me, Jesus, send me, Lord.**

2. (Lead me, Lord.) **Lead me, Jesus...**

3. (Fill me, Lord.) **Fill me, Jesus...**

4. (Thuma mina.)

**Thuma mina, thuma mina,  
thuma mina, somandla.**

### VOLUNTARY

Epilogue (Suite Breve, 2009)

Craig Phillips

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### First Church Land Acknowledgment

*We, gathered here, acknowledge that we are meeting on land which has been the traditional ancestral homeland of the Massachusetts people. We acknowledge that this land is unceded and remains sacred to the Massachusetts, and to their close neighbors and relatives, the Nipmuc and Wampanoag peoples.*



SCAN ME

You can find a longer version of this acknowledgment [here](#) or by scanning the QR code.

OPENING HYMN

Let There Be Life in This House

C-25

1. Let there be life in this house,  
 2. Let there be life in this house,  
 3. Let there be life in this house,  
 4. Let there be life in this house,

poured from the riches of God; treasure in so many  
 tender and truthful and real; life of belonging, res-  
 life of the Spirit and fire; sisters and brothers new-  
 life of the Body, divine, kindly and passionate,

vessels of clay, given for sharing, not hiding away:  
 pect and free, honored for all God declares us to be:  
 born from above, daring to love because we have been loved:  
 earth and odd, we are the Church, beloved of God:

Let there be life in this house!  
 Let there be life in this house!  
 Let there be life in this house!  
 Let there be life in this house!

WORDS: Kate Layzer  
 MUSIC: Peter Sykes


For First Church in Cambridge on the tenth anniversary  
 of its declaring itself an Open and Affirming Church



PEACE HYMN

C-20

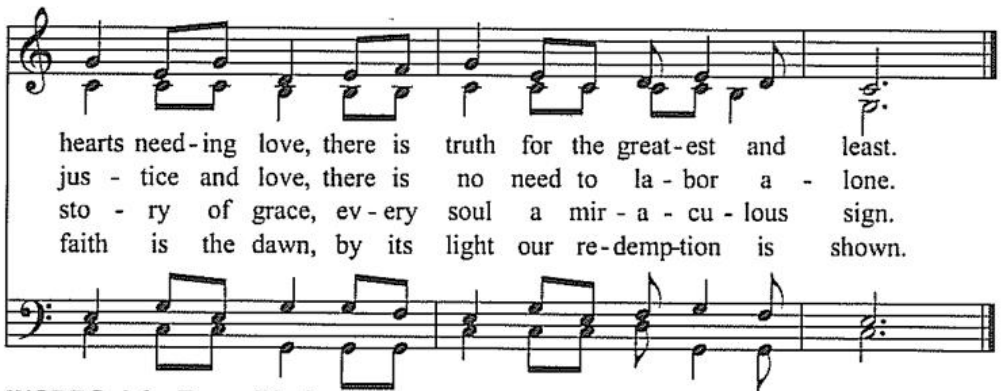
The Household of God



1. The\_ house - hold of God has\_\_\_ room for us all, ev - ery -  
2. The\_ house - hold of God has\_\_\_ work for us all, by\_\_\_  
3. The\_ house - hold of God gives a voice to us all, we can  
4. The\_ house - hold of God has\_\_\_ hope for us all, in the



one has a place at the feast, the\_\_\_ best and the worst have\_\_\_  
man - y have seeds been\_\_\_ sown, in the har - vest of heal - ing, of  
sing in a cho - rus di - vine, we can hear ev - ery life as a  
dark - ness a hand holdsour own, as we walk by that guid - ance our



hearts need - ing love, there is truth for the great - est and least.  
jus - tice and love, there is no need to la - bor a - lone.  
sto - ry of grace, ev - ery soul a mir - a - cu - lous sign.  
faith is the dawn, by its light our re - demp - tion is shown.

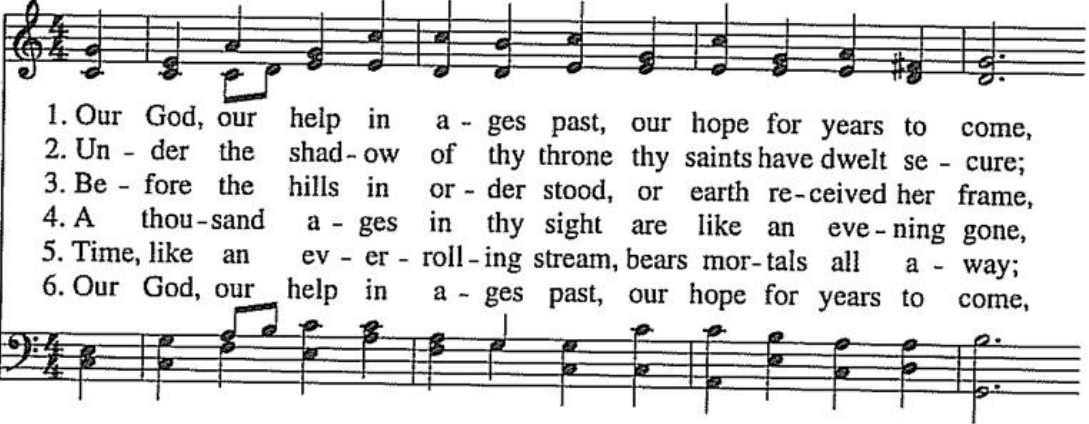
WORDS: John Evans-Klock

MUSIC: Peter Sykes




## Our God, Our Help in Ages Past

80



1. Our God, our help in a - ges past, our hope for years to come,  
 2. Un - der the shad - ow of thy throne thy saints have dwelt se - cure;  
 3. Be - fore the hills in or - der stood, or earth re - ceived her frame,  
 4. A thou - sand a - ges in thy sight are like an eve - ning gone,  
 5. Time, like an ev - er - roll - ing stream, bears mor - tals all a - way;  
 6. Our God, our help in a - ges past, our hope for years to come,



our shel - ter from the storm - y blast, and our e - ter - nal home!  
 2. suf - fi - cient is thine arm a - lone, and our de - fense is sure.  
 from ev - er - last - ing thou art God, to end - less years the same.  
 4. short as the watch that ends the night be - fore the ris - ing sun.  
 they fly, for - got - ten, as a dream dies at the open - ing day.  
 6. be thou our guard while trou - bles last, and our e - ter - nal home.

WORDS: Isaac Watts, 1719, alt.  
 MUSIC: Attr. William Croft, 1708

ST. ANNE  
 CM

## COMMUNITY PRAYERS

- We pray for the family of longtime First Church member John Hildebidle, who died last week in Alexandria, VA. We pray especially for his children Nick and Susannah, who grew up at First Church, and for their families as they grieve.
- We pray for Julie Palmer, her wife Becky Moyer, and their daughter Ally as they mourn the loss of Julie's father Frank Palmer.
- We pray for Anne McClintock as she prepares for foot surgery this week.
- We pray for Anita Anger as she negotiates rehab after a recent fall.
- We pray for Nancy Kilburn and her family as they mourn the loss of her mother Penny, who died recently.
- We pray for all who are in treatment for cancer and other ongoing health challenges: Carol Wilson-Braun, who is managing slow-progressing ALS; Jim Rae, Ami Brenner's father; Ellen Smith, Devin Hansen's aunt; Judith Semmler, Alice Napoleon Jones's mother; Karen Anne Zee's daughter Becky Collet, and her sons-in-law, Denis Collet and Stewart Bailey; Beth and Polly, Ann McCann's sisters. We pray also for friend of Homeless Ministries Brian O'Donovan, who is receiving hospice care.
- We continue to pray for all those impacted by the violence of war and political upheaval, including in Ukraine, Sudan, and Haiti, and especially those displaced and seeking refuge in other countries.
- We pray for all refugees and migrants who make often life-threatening border crossings over land and open water to escape poverty, political persecution, violence, and climate-related disaster.
- We pray for all in Maui who are grieving losses and impacted by recent wildfires, and everyone around the country and globe experiencing deadly heat waves, flooding, and other extreme weather. We continue to pray for our rapidly warming planet and for redoubled efforts to reduce fossil fuel emissions.
- We pray for all whose lives are touched by our nation's raging epidemic of gun violence, and those most recently impacted by the racially motivated shooting in Jacksonville, FL. We pray for ongoing advocacy to create lasting change in our country's gun safety laws.
- We pray for the wellbeing and safety of our trans and gender non-conforming siblings as they face the impact of vitriolic public discourse and of state laws that restrict and criminalize transgender health care, personal expression, and wider LGBTQ+ education.
- We pray for those most affected by changes in reproductive rights: for all those struggling with the moral and political complexities of pregnancy and childbearing, and for patients and healthcare providers who are unable to give and receive care in their own states.

### **In Memoriam**

A memorial service for beloved First Church member John Hildebidle will take place at 11:00 a.m. on Saturday, October 7, in the Sanctuary and via livestream, with a reception to follow in Margaret Jewett Hall.

## TODAY AT FIRST CHURCH



### **Blessing the Ties:**

#### **Fall 2023 and Regathering Sunday**

As we regather this fall in worship, in meetings, and on retreat, we look forward to blessing the ties that keep us connected—to one another, to land and lineage, and to our truest selves. As the old hymn goes, “blest be the ties that bind!” The word Religion is rooted in the Latin word “ligare,” meaning to “bind.” And indeed, “re-ligare” means to “re-bind” or to “bind again!”

Here at First Church, through our community and covenant we are bound to one another, which is a good thing! The joys and challenges of our lives and our world are too great to encounter alone. We need each other, and the world needs our kind of multigenerational and intergenerational community that draws from the deep and timeless wells of wisdom, resource, and grounding, shared by elders and children, ancestors and descendants. Join us for the first time or again for worship on this Regathering Sunday and for a Regathering Lunch in Margaret Jewett Hall at 12:15 p.m., as we bind together again and bless the ties that have kept this beloved community together “from generation to generation!” Staff and lay leaders will offer a brief orientation to our fall programs and offerings, as well as other important updates about our life together at First Church that you won’t want to miss!

### **Welcome Table**

You may have noticed a Welcome Table as you entered the Sanctuary through the main door into the Narthex. The table is part of a new initiative called

“First Friends” that is aimed at new people coming in our doors. Our goal is to connect newcomers with a First Friend within our congregation. For the next several Sundays, we will meet people at the Welcome Table just before worship and also at Coffee Hour. If you happen to meet anyone new, please point them to our table! When the calendar allows, we will be sharing more information during a Ministry Moment. Questions? Seek out Alex Steinert-Evoy, Martha Mueller Cook, or Ginny Harlan.



### **Night Song Returns**

**Sunday evenings, 7:30 - 8:15p.m.**

**Sanctuary and via livestream**

Night Song is a worship opportunity that offers stillness and sublime music in a darkened sanctuary for respite and reset...

[Read more about Night Song.](#)

## REGATHERING AT FIRST CHURCH

### Fall Pastoral and Building Staff Changes

This fall, we are thrilled to welcome back **Carla Arevalo** and **Ahmaad Edmund** in their new roles as half-time Pastoral Associates! As they complete the third year of their Master of Divinity program at Harvard Divinity School, they will no longer be ministerial interns, but full members of our staff. In addition, we will soon welcome HDS third-year Master of Divinity student **Emma Thomas** as our new Ministerial Intern! [Read more about Carla, Ahmaad, and Emma.](#) In case you missed it, in June, we said farewell to beloved Sexton **Kimel Williams**, who was ready for a change after many years. And, Labor Day was the last day for our newest Sexton **Jason Taggart**, who returns full-time to his career as master-brewer... [Read more about our Sexton staff.](#)



### Register for Church School 2023-24

First Church's Church School offers a variety of opportunities for Christian formation for children and youth, including age-based classes, creative arts and pastoral care workshops, child care for little ones, and youth group activities for teens. All children from infants through high school seniors are welcome in the Church School! You can read all the details on the [Faith Formation for Children & Youth](#) page on our website.

Registering your children helps us to prepare for them, but drop-ins are always welcome. [Please complete this registration form](#) to let us know a bit about your children. Church School begins today!



### Register Now: All-Church Fall Retreat at Craigville Retreat Center Friday, September 29 – Sunday, October 1

Register now to join us on the Cape at [Craigville Retreat Center](#) for a weekend of community-building in fellowship, formation, and fun. All ages are invited to come together as a multigenerational community to talk, laugh, play, dance, eat, sing, worship, and connect! Take advantage of scheduled large group gatherings, small group sessions, supervised play/crafting time for kids, worship, group games, and more. Or, opt

for a quiet walk on the beach, bird-watching at the marsh, or whatever your soul needs. Arrive on Friday evening, September 29, and stay through midday on Sunday, October 1, for the full event; or come for a portion of the weekend, for just one night, or even a daytrip on Saturday. [Complete this registration form](#) and stay tuned for more details on this year's retreat theme. Questions? Contact [Sarah Higginbotham](#).

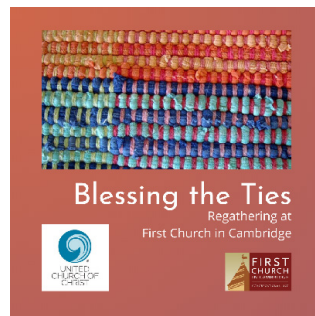


## LOOKING AHEAD TO NEXT SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 17

### **Blessing the Ties & Honoring our Ancestors at First Church & Beyond Sunday, September 17 & 24, 9:30 - 10:15 a.m.**

#### **Harter Room and via Zoom**

Join Dan Smith, Sue Reynolds, and Phil Jones for a two-part 9:30 Hour series aimed at honoring and better understanding our spiritual forebears! On September 17, we offer a brief introduction and discussion of First Church's long history (387 years as a continuing congregation) and also share a bit about our covenantal ties to our wider denomination, the United Church of Christ. Phil was a recent delegate to our national UCC "Synod" gathering in June and can share about what the UCC is and what "we" are up to now! On September 24, we explore questions of how we can better honor our familial and spiritual ancestors (benevolent and otherwise), and how we might consider being "better ancestors" for those who are yet to come!



### ***Gates of Paradise: An Art Exhibit by Henry Gates***

**Sunday, September 17, 12:00 - 1:00 p.m., Margaret Jewett Hall**

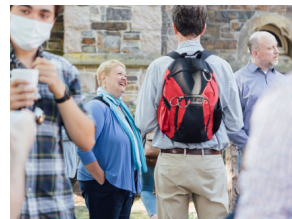
Gates of Paradise, an exhibition of ten paintings of the Hebrew Bible by First Church member Henry Gates, is on display in MJH. The originals are 15th century bronze doors to the Duomo in Florence, Italy. They illustrate the gathered people of Israel with all the Biblical energy and

turmoil of Genesis, Exodus, Joshua, and Kings. As we regather, these scenes remind of our initial covenant in faith.

### **Newcomers Meet and Greet**

**Sunday, September 17, 12:15 - 12:45 p.m., Hastings Common**

Those feeling new to First Church are warmly invited to meet up directly after worship in Hastings Common (through the door by the large screens at the front of the Sanctuary). Some of what you can expect: friendly connections, questions answered, snacks, and an informal atmosphere for conversation. Our first Joining Sunday of the season is tentatively scheduled for October 22. Questions? Please reach out to [Carla Arevalo](#).



### **Confirmation Class Orientation**

**Sunday, September 17, 12:30 - 1:15 p.m., Library**

This year's Confirmation journey for 8th and 9th graders begins with an orientation meeting for students and parents after worship. Sarah Higginbotham will introduce the program alongside teachers Carla Arevalo and Phil Jones. Classes take place twice monthly on Sunday mornings from 9:30 to 10:45 a.m., leading up to Confirmation Sunday on Pentecost, May 19, 2024.

## LOOKING AHEAD TO NEXT SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 17



### Welcome Corps Resettlement Information Session Sunday, September 17, 12:15 - 1:15 p.m.

#### Harter Room and via Zoom

“First Church & Friends” is an official sponsor group for [Welcome Corps](#), and two refugees from Sub-Saharan Africa are arriving to us soon! Do you want to learn more about what this will mean for our community and how you can help to welcome and resettle them? Please attend a special information session after worship on Sunday, September 17, led by special guest Ann O’Brien, Director of Sponsorship at IRIS (International Refugee and Immigrant Services). [IRIS](#) is a founding member of the recently launched Welcome Corps national program.

Based in New Haven while working across the nation, IRIS has welcomed over 8,000 refugees together with community sponsor groups such as ours. Ann will be joined by Dr. Simone Bamba, leader of [Mission Maranatha](#), a Welcome Corps sponsor group from West Roxbury similar to ours that recently welcomed a refugee from Somalia. Learn more about Welcome Corps refugee resettlement from those with recent experience, and bring all your questions!

### Call for Fall Faith & Life Group Leaders by September 17

Are you interested in leading a small group over Zoom or in person this Fall? Led by First Church members, Faith & Life Groups are designed to encourage meaningful connections through shared interests, whether exploring a spiritual practice, opening our eyes to the beauty around us, delving into a challenging social issue, or attending to significant life stages (parenting, aging, job transitions, etc.). Faith & Life Groups involve making a short-term commitment (a single session to several weeks, depending on the group). Pitch your idea for a Fall Faith & Life Group to Beth Spaulding ([bspaulding69@gmail.com](mailto:bspaulding69@gmail.com)) or Dan Smith ([dsmith@firstchurchcambridge.org](mailto:dsmith@firstchurchcambridge.org)). **Deadline for proposals is Sunday, September 17.**



### Cambridge Common Youth Group

#### Sunday, September 17, 2:00 - 3:30 p.m., First Church Lawn

In 2023-24, First Church youth will join up with teens from neighboring churches to form the Cambridge Common Youth Group. Teens from 8th to 12th grade (which includes our Confirmation Class) are invited to gather for monthly service opportunities and social events on third Sundays from 2:00 to 3:30 p.m. Stay tuned for more information. Questions? Please contact [Ahmaad Edmund](#).



## SMALL GROUP OPPORTUNITIES THIS FALL



### Drop-In Bible Study

**Thursdays, 6:00 - 7:30 p.m., via Zoom**

You're more than welcome to join our weekly Drop-In Bible Study, held every Thursday evening from 6:00 to 7:30 p.m. ET, via Zoom. (You'll find the Zoom link in the [Calendar](#) section of our First Church website.) We're all amateurs in the best sense, those who love listening for God's word in scripture: no expertise required! We're just beginning a dive into the Gospel of Luke. No time commitment required—come for one session, a dozen, or more, as your calendar allows. If you're enticed, contact Carter West: [cartergw24@gmail.com](mailto:cartergw24@gmail.com).



### Young Adults: Fall Faith on Tap Series

First Church has an active group of Young Adults that gathers a couple of times each month for food and fellowship. Our ongoing Faith on Tap series is a great way to meet others in their 20s to mid-30s. Come hang out, especially if you're new or feeling new! Our next meet-ups will be **Monday, September 18 at 7:00 p.m. at Bow Market in Somerville**, and **Tuesday, October 3, for Candlepin Bowling at Flatbread (aka Sacco's) in Davis Square**. You can learn more about the group and get on the email list for future events by emailing: [youngadults@firstchurchcambridge.org](mailto:youngadults@firstchurchcambridge.org) or talking to Phil Jones.



### Aging with Grace, Growing in Wisdom

**Tuesday, September 19, 3:00 - 4:15 p.m., Harter Room**

Join Ginny Harlan, Martha Cook, and Dan Smith for a monthly support group where we offer each other companionship and spiritual resources as we grow into our elderhood. In this special season of our lives, let's explore together some of those Big Questions as we let God's presence and this community hold us. We can become elders together as we seek dignity, courage, grace, hope, peace, and wisdom in the ending phase of our lives. We will use Joan Chittister's book [The Gift of Years](#) as a starting point to conversation and reflection, along with a few practical resources for end-of-life planning. We welcome you – gray hair, wrinkles, and all! Questions? Email Ginny at: [vbharlan@yahoo.com](mailto:vbharlan@yahoo.com).

### Fall Faith & Life Group Registration Coming Soon!

Watch for an upcoming announcement to sign up for our Fall round-up of Faith & Life Groups. (And if you would like to propose a Faith & Life Group topic, see page 9 for details!)

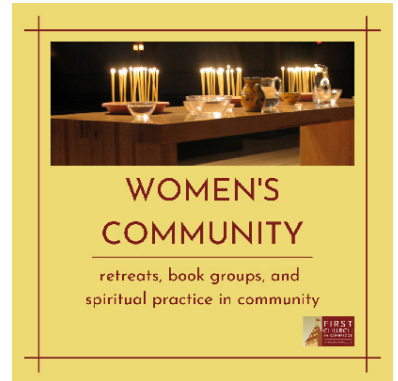
## SMALL GROUP OPPORTUNITIES THIS FALL

### Women's Community Book Group

Tuesday, September 19

6:00 - 7:30 p.m., via Zoom

Please join us for our first meeting of the new program year! All those in the First Church community who identify as women are welcome. We will start with [Women Talking](#) by Miriam Toews. Based on true events, *Women Talking* describes how a group of women respond when they discover that they have been abused by men in their community. It is a shocking, sad, and intelligent book, surely to prompt an important conversation. We encourage everyone to [see the movie](#) and read the book, as we will discuss both versions. Please join us, and bring a friend!



### Reflective Conversations about the Teachings of Jesus with Brent Coffin

Tuesdays, 7:15 - 8:45 a.m., beginning September 26, via Zoom

Brent Coffin leads as we share in weekly reflection about biblical texts, bringing these ancient and often confounding readings into conversation with our own stories and lives.

Meetings begin on Tuesday morning, September 26, from 7:15 a.m. to 8:45 a.m. A time of informal check-in starts promptly at 7:15, followed by framing remarks from Brent, with space for intimate small group listening and sharing to follow. Questions? Please contact Brent at [brentbcoffin@gmail.com](mailto:brentbcoffin@gmail.com).



### The First Church Choir

Sunday rehearsals at 10:15 a.m., Sanctuary

If you're interested in joining a group of friendly, devoted people who love to sing, look no further! The First Church Choir always welcomes new members. If you can read music and enjoy singing, you'll fit right in. We rehearse on Sunday mornings before the service and occasionally on Thursdays. Speak with [Peter Sykes](#) if you'd like to know more!



## SPECIAL EVENTS AND PROGRAMS

### Earth Defenders Banner on First Church Lawn

**September 11 - October 9**

First Church is hosting a banner commemorating lives of indigenous persons who were killed for their defense of the earth's forests, water, air, animals, and their communities' children. The banner, already out of date, commemorates persons murdered while defending natural resources from destruction by irresponsible agribusiness, mining interests, and fossil fuel extractors. The QR code in the corner of the banner leads to further background by [Global Witness](#), which provides regularly updated data on the killings of defenders. The banner not only honors lives, but raises questions of sacrifice. Who are those who sacrifice for others' welfare? What are we willing to sacrifice for protecting people and nature from destructive acts by corporations and governments?



*Photo by Susan Redlich  
left to right: Alfred Brownell (Liberian lawyer), Lynne Cherry (children's book author), Joia Mukherjee (chief medical officer, Partners in Health), David Hughes (Rutgers U. professor)*

### Braver Angels Workshop: Depolarizing Within Saturday, September 23, 9:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m. via Zoom



## Braver Angels

Gather with members and friends of Harvard Square churches for a free, online workshop to become more aware of your "inner polarizer" and learn methods for disagreeing without contempt and ridicule. Organized by [Braver Angels](#), the "Depolarizing Within" workshop is designed to foster skills to help you lessen the effects of polarization when you encounter them in your political conversations. For people of faith, civil discourse begins in recognizing the image of God in our conversation partner. We can have mutual respect for each other because of our belief that all are children of God. Respect, not agreement, is an essential key for a healthy discussion. This workshop addresses how we may inadvertently be complicit in, or possibly even encourage, polarization. [Learn more and register here.](#)



### Greater Boston Interfaith Organization (GBIO) Forum

**Sunday, September 24, 12:15 - 1:15 p.m., Margaret Jewett Hall**

Join us after worship to learn more about GBIO at First Church! We are headed into a new season of advocacy, turning our focus toward a new campaign to work on growing a diverse behavioral health workforce to meet our communities' needs! We will discuss our successes and challenges during the housing justice campaign last year and upcoming events, including information about our upcoming in-district meetings with local legislators this fall. Come to learn more about what GBIO is and how you can get involved! Questions? Please contact Casey Marsh: [kc.marsh103@gmail.com](mailto:kc.marsh103@gmail.com)

## SPECIAL EVENTS AND PROGRAMS



**Guest Preacher Rev. Liz Walker**  
**Sunday, September 24 at 11:00 a.m.**  
**Sanctuary and via livestream**

Join us as we joyfully welcome Rev. Liz Walker as guest preacher for our morning worship service. Rev. Walker is the recently retired pastor of Roxbury Presbyterian Church, an ordained minister in the African Methodist Episcopal tradition, and a veteran television journalist, the first African-American weeknight news anchor in Boston. Co-founder of Embrace Boston, she is currently serving as Executive Director of the Social Impact Center and the “Can We Talk” network. With 14 local and national “Can We Talk” chapters (and counting), Rev. Walker has been

expanding her Roxbury-based model of transformative, trauma-informed care that is creating sacred spaces for people and communities impacted by violence and poverty to share their stories of trauma, loss, grief, and hope. We are thrilled that Rev. Walker will be leading us and breaking open God’s holy word for us!

### **2023 SNEUCC Justice Summit:**

#### **Trans and Nonbinary Belonging in the Church**

**Saturday, October 7, 10:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m., Old South Church in Boston**

The Southern New England UCC’s annual Justice Summit in 2023 will center on trans and nonbinary belonging in the church. This full-day event includes worship and preaching, workshops, relationship-building and connection. Workshop options include an introductory session for people who have had little exposure to the experiences of trans and nonbinary people, as well as sessions for trans and nonbinary people, and cisgender people who have begun to engage in the work of fostering trans belonging. The Justice Summit is a hybrid event, being hosted at Old South Church in Boston, with options for in-person or online participation. ***As part of a conference-wide initiative on Trans and Nonbinary Affirming Churches, First Church in Cambridge has eight spots reserved at the conference. Please reach out to [Dan Smith](#) if you would like to attend. In-person and online registration deadline is September 16!***



#### **LGBT Asylum Task Force Gala**

**Saturday, September 30, 5:30 - 10:30 p.m.**

**Worcester DCU Center, Worcester, MA**

You are invited to support the [LGBT Asylum Task Force](#) by attending its annual Gala. As a ministry of the Hadwen Park Congregational Church in Worcester, the LGBT Asylum Task Force currently supports 15 LGBTQ+ persons seeking political asylum in the US. The organization is a recipient of gifts from First Church’s Missions & Social Justice Committee. For more information, contact Mary Martha Thiel, or [purchase tickets here](#).





# THIS WEEK

Looking ahead to this week's programs and events



## Monday, September 11

- 4:30 p.m. Contemplative Practices Gathering, via Zoom
- 5:00 p.m. Assets Research Team Meeting, via Zoom

## Tuesday, September 12

- 10:30 a.m. Communications Team Meeting, Harter Room
- 4:00 p.m. Buildings & Grounds Committee, via Zoom

## Wednesday, September 13

- 9:30 a.m. Staff Meeting, Harter Room and via Zoom

## Thursday, September 14

- 6:00 p.m. Drop-In Bible Study, via Zoom
- 6:00 p.m. Choir Potluck, home of Susie & Perry Neubauer

## Friday, September 15

- 12:00 p.m. Friday Café, Margaret Jewett Hall (MJH)

## Sunday, September 17

- 9:30 a.m. Adult Formation: Blessing the Ties, Harter Room and via Zoom
- 10:15 a.m. Choir Rehearsal, Sanctuary
- 11:00 a.m. Hybrid Morning Worship, Sanctuary and via livestream
- 11:20 a.m. Church School: Godly Play, Middlers, and Bible 101 classes
- 12:00 p.m. *Gates of Paradise* Art Exhibit, MJH
- 12:15 p.m. Newcomers Meet & Greet, Hastings Common
- 12:15 p.m. Welcome Corps Info Session, Harter Room and via Zoom
- 12:30 p.m. Confirmation Orientation for Students & Parents, Library
- 2:00 p.m. Cambridge Common Youth Group, church lawn
- 7:30 p.m. Night Song, Sanctuary and via livestream

See our [Events Calendar](#) for Zoom links and details.

Sign up [here](#) to receive our weekly e-newsletter.

First Church in Cambridge, Congregational, UCC  
11 Garden St. • Cambridge, MA 02138

617-547-2724 • [info@firstchurchcambridge.org](mailto:info@firstchurchcambridge.org) • [www.firstchurchcambridge.org](http://www.firstchurchcambridge.org)

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