



Advent  
December 24, 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  
1636 - 2023

### December 24, 2023

#### Liturgist

Casey Marsh

#### Leading Worship

Ahmaad Edmund, *Pastoral Associate*

Sarah Higginbotham,

*Creative Worship & Arts Director*

Kate Layzer, *Minister of Street Outreach*

Lindsay, Brian, Adeline, Callan & Silas McNamara,

*Advent candle-lighting*

Lee Prouty, *tech support*

Dan Smith, *Senior Minister*

Peter Sykes, *Music Director*

#### UnPageant Characters

Ben Brenner, *Joseph*

Claire Morgan, *The Star*

Wesley Morgan, *Baby Jesus*

Lily Yockel, *Mary*

#### Bulletin Cover Image

Freddie Funck, *First Church member*

#### Today's Programs and Events

10:15 a.m. Choir Rehearsal, Sanctuary

10:45 a.m. UnPageant Preparations, Sanctuary

11:00 a.m. Hybrid Morning Worship, Sanctuary and [via livestream](#)

12:15 p.m. Refreshments in Margaret Jewett Hall

6:00 p.m. Christmas Eve Candlelight Service, Sanctuary and [via livestream](#)

#### 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 from your bank account or credit card at:

[www.firstchurchcambridge.org/give](http://www.firstchurchcambridge.org/give)

#### 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**

In dulci jubilo

J. S. Bach

### ADVENT CANDLE LIGHTING

The McNamara Family

L: Loving God, be with us now as we light the fourth candle of Advent  
and kindle it with .

**C: O Come, God of love and healing!**

L: Light our path, and guide us on our way.  
The Light of Christ!

**C: Thanks be to God!**

### \*HYMN RESPONSE

O Come, O Come, Emmanuel

alt. Kate Layzer

**O come, Desire of nations, bind all peoples in one heart and mind;  
bid envy, strife, and quarrels cease; fill the whole world with heaven's peace.  
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to us, in peace to dwell.**

### \*GREETING

Casey Marsh

L: O Come, beloved of God!  
with all your yearning and all your heartbreak,  
with all your wonder and all your love!

**C: O Come, all you faithful  
with your struggles and your doubts.**

L: O Come, O Come!  
For here Emmanuel, God-with-us,  
comes to us and meets us, just as we are.

**C: Then let us rejoice – and give God thanks and praise!**

### \*HYMN 127

Lift Up Your Heads, O Mighty Gates

### WORDS OF WELCOME

Casey Marsh and Sarah Higginbotham

### ANTHEM

In the Bleak Midwinter  
*Beth Spaulding, soloist*

Harold Darke

## CONFESSING

### INVITATION TO CONFESSION

*\*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.*

## SILENCE

### ADVENT PRAYER OF CONFESSION

- L: Now let us ask for healing, pardon and peace.
- C: In your presence, God, and in each other's company,  
we confess that our lives and the life of the world  
are cast in shadow by what we do and by what we fail to do.  
But we know a light shines in the darkness,  
and the darkness does not overcome it.  
Pardon our deliberate faults.  
Heal our weaknesses and fears.  
Give us strength to grow in the love we lack.  
Illumine our souls with the first glimmers  
of the Coming Light of Christ, our Comfort and Redeemer. Amen.**

### DECLARATION OF FORGIVENESS

#### PRAYERS FOR THE CHURCH AND WORLD

Dan Smith

- 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.**

#### \*HYMN

Give Me Light in the Darkness

*(see p. 6)*

**Give me light in the darkness, light in the darkness,  
light in the darkness to sing my soul awake.**

**Give me love in the waiting, love in the waiting,  
love in the waiting to sing my soul awake.**

### THE UNPAGEANT

#### GETTING READY

**\*HYMN**

Isaiah the Prophet Has Written of Old  
*(Children bring wolf & lamb to the crèche. during the hymn)*

**Isaiah the prophet has written of old  
 how God's new creation shall come.  
 Instead of the thorn tree the fir tree shall grow,  
 and the wolf shall lie down with the lamb, the lamb,  
 the wolf shall lie down with the lamb.**

**The mountains and hills shall break forth into song,  
 the peoples be led forth in peace;  
 the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of God  
 as the waters cover the sea, the sea,  
 as the waters cover the sea.**

**God, bring to fruition your will for the earth,  
 that no one shall hurt or destroy,  
 that wisdom and justice shall reign in the land  
 and your people shall go forth in joy, in joy,  
 your people shall go forth in joy.**

**MARY LISTENS TO AN ANGEL**

Luke 1:26-32

Kate Layzer

**\*HYMN**

The Angel Gabriel from Heaven Came

**The angel Gabriel from heaven came,  
 with wings as drifted snow, with eyes as flame;  
 "All hail to thee, O lowly maiden Mary,"  
 most highly favored lady! *Gloria!***

**"For know a blessed mother thou shalt be,  
 all generations praise and honor thee,  
 Thy son shall be Emmanuel, by seers foretold."  
 Most highly favored lady! *Gloria!***

**The gentle Mary meekly bowed her head;  
 "To me be as it pleaseth God," she said.  
 "My soul shall laud and magnify God's holy name."  
 Most highly favored lady! *Gloria!***

**MARY & JOSEPH  
 JOURNEY TO BETHLEHEM**

Luke 2:1-5

**\*HYMN**

O Little Town of Bethlehem

*(Mary & Joseph approach the crèche during the hymn.)*

**O little town of Bethlehem, how still we see the lie!  
Above thy deep and dreamless sleep the silent stars go by;  
yet in thy dark streets shineth the everlasting Light;  
the hopes and fears of all the years are met in thee tonight.**

**How silently, how silently, the wondrous gift is given!  
So God imparts to human hearts the blessings of God's heaven.  
No ear may hear his coming, but in this world of sin,  
where meek souls will receive him, still the dear Christ enters in.**

**O holy Child of Bethlehem, descend to us, we pray;  
cast out our sin and enter in; be born in us today.  
We hear the Christmas angels the great glad tidings tell;  
O come to us, abide with us, our Lord Emmanuel!**

**THE BIRTH OF JESUS**

Luke 2:6-7

**\*HYMN**

Away in Manager

*(Baby Jesus is brought forward by the Star.)*

**Away in a manger, no crib for his bed,  
The little Lord Jesus laid down his sweet head;  
The stars in the heavens looked down where he lay,  
The little Lord Jesus, asleep on the hay.**

**The cattle are lowing, the baby awakes,  
but little Lord Jesus no crying he makes.  
I love thee, Lord Jesus, look down from the sky,  
and stay by my cradle till morning is night.**

**Be near me, Lord Jesus, I ask the to stay  
close by me forever, and love me, I pray.  
Bless all the dear children in thy tender care,  
and fit us for heaven to live with thee there.**

**ANGELS APPEAR IN THE SKY**

Luke 2:8-14

**\*HYMN**

Angels We Have Heard on High

*(Angels approach the crèche during the hymn.)*

**Angels we have heard on high sweetly singing o'er the plains,  
and the mountains in reply echo back their joyous strains.  
Glo - - - - ria in excelsis Deo! Glo - - - - ria in excelsis Deo!**

**Shepherds, why this jubilee? Why your joyous strains prolong?  
Say what may the tidings be, which inspire your heavenly song.  
Glo - - - - ria in excelsis Deo! Glo - - - - ria in excelsis Deo!**

**Come to Bethlehem and see Christ whose birth the angels sing;  
come adore on bended knee Christ, the Lor, the newborn King.**

**Glo - - - ria in excelsis Deo! Glo - - - ria in excelsis Deo!**

**THE SHEPHERDS GO  
TO THE CHRIST CHILD**

Luke 2:15-20

**\*HYMN**

The First Nowell

*(Shepherds & sheep approach the crèche during the hymn.)*

**The first Nowell the angel did say  
was to certain poor shepherds in fields where they lay;  
in fields where they lay keeping their sheep,  
on a cold winter's night that was so deep.  
Nowell, nowell, nowell, nowell,  
Born is the King of Israel.**

**They looked up and saw a star  
Shining in the east, beyond them far,  
And to the earth it gave great light,  
And so it continued both day and night.  
Nowell, nowell, nowell, nowell,  
Born is the King of Israel.**

**And by the light of that same star  
three wise men came from country far;  
to seek for a king was their intent,  
And to follow the star wherever it went.  
Nowell, nowell, nowell, nowell,  
Born is the King of Israel.**

**THE WISE ONES FOLLOW THE STAR** Matthew 2:1-2, 9-11

**\*HYMN**

We Three Kings of Orient Are

*(Magi approach the crèche during the hymn.)*

**We three kings of Orient are, bearing gifts we traverse afar,  
field and fountain, moor and mountain, following yonder star.  
O, star of wonder, star of night, star with royal beauty bright,  
westward leading, still proceeding, guide us to thy perfect light.**  
**Born a king on Bethlehem's plain, gold I bring to crown him again,  
King forever, ceasing never over us all to reign.  
O, star of wonder, star of night, star with royal beauty bright,  
westward leading, still proceeding, guide us to thy perfect light.**



## INVITATION TO OFFERING

Our offering supports the many ministries of our church,  
with 10% for missions in the community and beyond.  
Please use our new [all-in-one link](#) for gifts for 2023 or  
2024, from your bank account or by credit/debit card:



### \*OFFERTORY HYMN

Good Christians, All, Rejoice  
(*Townspople join and circle the crèche.*)

**Good Christians, all, rejoice, with heart and soul and voice;  
give ye heed to what we say: Jesus Christ is born today;  
ox and ass before him bow, and he is in the manger now.  
Christ is born today! Christ is born today!**

**Good Christians, all, rejoice, with heart and soul and voice;  
now ye hear of endless bliss; Jesus Christ was born for this!  
He has opened heaven's door, and we are blest forevermore.  
Christ was born for this! Christ was born for this!**

**Good Christians all, rejoice, with heart and soul and voice;  
now ye need not fear the grave; Jesus Christ was born to save!  
Calls you one and calls you all, to gain his everlasting hall.  
Christ was born to save! Christ was born to save!**

### \*CONCLUDING PRAYER

#### GOING FORTH

### \*HYMN

Joy to the World

**Joy to the world, the Lord is come!  
Let earth receive her King;  
let every heart prepare him room,  
and heaven and nature sing, and heaven and nature sing,  
and heaven, and heaven, and nature sing.**

**Joy to the earth, the Savior reigns!  
Let all their songs employ;  
while fields and floods, rocks, hills and plains  
repeat the sounding joy, repeat the sounding joy,  
repeat, repeat, the sounding joy.**

**Christ rules the world with truth and grace,  
and makes the nations prove  
the glories of his righteousness,  
and wonders of his love, and wonders of his love,  
and wonders, wonders, of his love.**

### \*BENEDICTION

### \*PASSING OF THE PEACE



# Lift Up Your Heads, O Mighty Gates 127

1. Lift up your heads, O might - y gates; be - hold the  
 2. Fling wide the por - tals of your heart; make it a  
 3. Re - deem - er, come! I o - pen wide my heart to  
 4. So come, my Sov - ereign; en - ter in! Let new and

King of Glo - ry waits! The Prince of Peace is  
 tem - ple, set a - part from earth - ly use for  
 you; here, Lord, a - bide! Let me your in - ner  
 no - bler life be - gin; your Ho - ly Spir - it

draw - ing near; the Sav - ior of the world is here.  
 heaven's em - ploy, a - dorned with prayer and love and joy.  
 pres - ence feel; your grace and love in me re - veal.  
 guide us on, un - til the glo - rious crown be won.

WORDS: Georg Weissel, 1642; tr. Catherine Winkworth, 1855, alt.  
 MUSIC: Thomas Williams' *Psalmody Evangelica*, 1789

TRURO  
 LM

## ADVENT WORSHIP AT FIRST CHURCH

### Our Advent Banners

We are happy to bring back our Advent banners, depicting images designed by Vermont artist Janet McKenzie. Thanks to a generous donation from Laurie Williams and Andrea Seek, the Deacons were pleased to support this project in 2020 as part of our ongoing efforts to lift up historically and Biblically underrepresented images and voices of women and persons of color. As we begin our Christmas celebrations, we add our Christmas Crèche banners to the chancel.

### Give Me Light in the Darkness... Our Advent Song

Our Peace hymn is based on "Give Me Birds at the Dawning," written by Betsy Binstock and arranged by Peter & Mary Alice Amidon, from *Twenty-five Anthems for Interfaith and Community Choirs* ©2016, Amidon Music Publishing. The words have been adapted to fit the Advent season.

The musical score is written for three parts: Treble, Alto, and Bass. It is in the key of D major (two sharps) and 3/4 time. The first system contains the first two lines of the song. The second system contains the final line. The lyrics are: "Give me light in the dark-ness, light in the dark-ness, Give me hope\* in the wait-ing, hope\* in the wait-ing, light in the dark-ness to sing my soul a - wake. hope\* in the wait-ing to sing my soul a - wake." The asterisk indicates a substitution for other words.

Give me light in the dark-ness, light in the dark-ness,  
Give me hope\* in the wait-ing, hope\* in the wait-ing,  
light in the dark-ness to sing my soul a - wake.  
hope\* in the wait-ing to sing my soul a - wake.

\* replace "hope" with "peace," "joy," and "love" on the following Sundays in Advent

## COMMUNITY PRAYERS

### Prayer for Israel and Palestine

We give thanks for the recent pause in fighting and exchange of hostages, even as we pray now for further breakthroughs, ceasefires, a return of all hostages, and an end to the war and ongoing heartache in Israel and Palestine. We pray for all hostages and their families; for those living in daily fear for their and their loved ones' safety; and for all who are grieving the thousands of deaths of Palestinians, Israelis, and others in Israel, Gaza, and around the world, including members of our congregation who have close ties with people who are currently in the area.

We decry the horrifically violent Hamas attacks against Israel on October 7. We decry violence against civilians, including deprivation of basic needs for people living and being evacuated inside of Gaza. We pray for redoubled diplomatic efforts to address the already devastating humanitarian crisis in Gaza and the ongoing occupation of Palestinian territories. We continue to pray for a just peace in Palestine and Israel and throughout the region. We also pray for Jews and Muslims, nearby and around the world, who are facing increased threats and acts of anti-Semitic and anti-Muslim discrimination, hatred, and violence.

We continue to pray for ourselves, that we will be faithful, compassionate, and open to God's love and leading, and to all whom we encounter through these tension-filled times. Across whatever division or disagreement, may our words and deeds seek to honor the humanity and God-given dignity of every human being.



### Join Churches for Middle East Peace (CMEP)

#### "Stand in the G.A.P." response: Give, Act, and Pray

We are grieved by the war between Israel and Hamas. There is still work to do for peace and justice. We believe that, working together, justice can prevail. Peace is possible. Since October 7, CMEP has issued [many public statements and letters](#). CMEP Executive Director Rev. Dr. Mae Elise Cannon, who preached at First Church on October 15, has been making daily update videos, which [you can watch here](#) to stay updated on pressing news in Gaza, Israel, and the West Bank. Find links to prayer calls, briefings, and donation pages [here](#).

### First Church Land Acknowledgment

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

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



SCAN ME

## COMMUNITY PRAYERS

- We pray for George Williams, who is in the hospital recovering from surgery and being treated for a brain bleed.
- We celebrate with Pastoral Associate Rev. Ahmaad Edmund, who was ordained into the Christian ministry at his home church, Southern Star Missionary Baptist Church in Louisville, KY.
- We pray for Kathy Kopp, Leslie Pelton-Cairns's mother, who is recovering from emergency double bypass surgery.
- We pray for Brent and Poppy Coffin as Poppy experiences a significant decline in her struggle with Alzheimer's.
- We pray for Jennifer Petrallia, who is suffering from debilitating anxiety and depression.
- We pray for all who are in treatment for cancer and other ongoing health challenges: Carol Wilson-Braun, who is managing 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 son-in-law Stewart Bailey; Beth and Polly, Ann McCann's sisters; Michael, Ginny Harlan's son; and Abby Shuman's uncle Barry, whose brain tumor has begun to grow again.
- We pray for a warm and safe arrival for Nuro and Idle, two Somali refugees who will be welcomed to Cambridge by the First Church & Friends Welcome Corps Team soon after the New Year. We also pray for the team's volunteers as they anticipate these first weeks of transition.
- We pray for the safety and wellbeing of college campuses everywhere amid increased expressions of antisemitism and Islamophobia. We pray for campus and community leaders under pressure to address these challenging and complex realities.
- We pray for the many families seeking emergency shelter in cities and towns across Massachusetts.
- We continue to pray for all impacted by and recovering from recent natural and climate-related disasters, including the earthquake in China. We pray for our rapidly warming planet and for redoubled efforts to reduce fossil fuel emissions.
- We pray for all those impacted by the violence of war and political upheaval, including in Ukraine, Sudan, and Haiti. As we prepare to welcome two refugees through the Welcome Corps, we pray for all political and climate refugees and migrants who make often life-threatening border crossings over land and open water.
- 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.

## TODAY AT FIRST CHURCH

### The First Church UnPageant

Today at 11:00 a.m., Sanctuary and [via livestream](#)

On the fourth Sunday of Advent, we gather for our untraditional take on the Christmas pageant! The UnPageant is First Church's unrehearsed, low-stress, multigenerational telling of the story of Jesus' birth. This year, the UnPageant takes place on Christmas Eve morning, making it a very special final moment in the Advent season. Hear the age-old texts and sing the cherished carols as we celebrate the wonder of God's love among us.



### Christmas Eve Candlelight Service

Today, 6:00 - 7:00 p.m., Sanctuary and [via livestream](#)

Come, all ye faithful, and come, worship together on Christmas Eve! Join us in person or online for this festive, family-friendly, candlelit service of lessons and carols. In the warmth and light of our Sanctuary or by your Christmas tree at home, join us as we celebrate this holy night and sing out our joy to the world!

### Holiday Building Closures

The First Church building and office will be closed to observe the upcoming winter holidays. The building will be closed on Monday, December 25 (after 11:00 a.m. Christmas Day Worship) and on Monday, January 1. It will also be closed starting at 2:00 p.m. on Sunday, December 31. During the week between Christmas and New Year's Day, the office will be open on a very limited basis. Most staff will work remotely, and will only check messages periodically. We wish everyone a restful holiday break!



Do you want to follow the hyperlinks, but you're holding a paper bulletin in your hand?

Use your phone's camera to hover over the QR code marked "scan me;" this will take you to the Members & Friends page of our website, where you'll find the bulletin online, as well as links to news, events, and more.



## CHRISTMAS AND EPIPHANY AT FIRST CHURCH

### Christmas Day Worship

Monday, December 25 at 11:00 a.m.

Sanctuary and via livestream

Join us on Christmas morning for a joy-filled and bright service in which we will fill our Sanctuary with the sounds of Christmas—readings, prayers of thanksgiving and praise, and a very special harpsichord meditation by Peter Sykes of William Byrd's "The Bells." We will also celebrate Christmas Communion together.



### Christmastide Morning Worship & Hymn Sing

Sunday, December 31 at 11:00 a.m.

Sanctuary and via livestream

Our Sunday worship during the season of Christmastide will include a Christmas Hymn Sing, which means you get to call out and choose which hymns we will sing together! Come and join the fun, and "come let us adore Him" together!



### Epiphany Potluck and Service

Saturday, January 6, 6:00 - 7:30 p.m.

Margaret Jewett Hall and Sanctuary

Epiphany ("manifestation") is a Christian feast so ancient that it predates Christmas. We will begin with a potluck dinner, followed by 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 rejoice in the sacrament of baptism and 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!

### *Manifestation: An Epiphany Art Exhibit*

Saturday, January 6 in Margaret Jewett Hall

Epiphany is a pathway. The path is taken by the Magi. This path takes Jesus to his identity by baptism. We, too, follow a path throughout our church, beginning our Church year. This art by Henry Gates indicates the life path of seven stages. At each stage, there is a pause with God in rededication of our life. This art can be viewed during our Epiphany potluck supper.



## OPPORTUNITIES TO GIVE, VOLUNTEER, AND SHOW UP



### Stewardship Campaign Update

First Church has received \$471,222 in gifts and pledges, which is **65% of the way to our campaign goal** of \$726,000. We are deeply grateful for these gifts and pledges. But dear friends, we need this trend of generosity to continue. We need your help, your comfort in taking a risk, your faith in this institution. As we wrap up our “A Future with Hope” season, we invite you, if you haven’t already, to:

- [pledge your financial gift](#) and [time and talent commitments](#) for 2024.
- check on our progress toward our goal on our [campaign page](#).

### Thank You for Showing Up!

First Church’s GBIO Core Team would like to share their immense gratitude to the many First Churchers who showed power-in-numbers at our recent In-District Meetings (IDM). We spoke truths and shared stories of affordable housing injustice to our Senators and Representatives! 30+ First Church members attended their respective IDMs alongside other congregations in the Greater Boston Interfaith Organization. If you live in Waltham, the western half of Lexington, Central Square, or East Cambridge, Brookline, or Newton YOU have a meeting in the new year! Find yours at: [GBIO.org/idms](https://gbio.org/idms)



The fight continues, and we are proud to be in it together - THANK YOU! Mark your calendars for **GBIO’s next BIG housing action on Sunday afternoon, March 3, 2024.**



### Gift Card Donations for Welcome Corps Newcomers

First Church’s Welcome Corps Team would like to empower our Somali newcomers to shop for themselves by providing them with gift cards. Your donation will truly be appreciated by them. [You can donate at this link](#) – please check the box labeled “Refugee Resettlement Fund.” Also, we still need **boots** for the newcomers as well as **gloves and mittens**. Please bring these items to the bin found near the Sextons’ office in Hasting Common. See all the details on ways you can help on our [Refugee Resettlement Ministry page](#) on the church website.

### 2023 Year-End Information from Stewardship & Finance

As the end of 2023 approaches, please review important year-end income tax considerations for your 2023 contributions. For further information, find details in [this Latest News post on our website](#).





## LOOKING AHEAD TO JANUARY

### Called To Repair: Church-Wide Conversations Sundays, January 14 & 21 and February 4

Save the following dates for important First Church conversations about our call to the work of truth telling and to the spiritual practice of repair and reparations! We will hear and learn from Pastoral Associates Carla Arevalo and Ahmaad Edmund, Ministerial Intern Emma Thomas, and members of the Beloved Community group. Bring your

questions, concerns, and hopes about reparations to these interactive sessions as we consider not only our church's history, but our lives, our family histories, and growing efforts in Cambridge and beyond in the work of healing and repair.



**January 14 at 12:30 p.m.**

All-Church Lunch, Margaret Jewett Hall

**January 21 and February 4 at 9:30 a.m.**

Adult Formation series, Harter Room & via Zoom



### Newcomers Meet & Greet and New Members Preparation Sunday, January 21, 12:15 - 12:45p.m. Hastings Common

Those feeling new to First Church, or interested in meeting someone new to our community, are warmly invited to our first Meet & Greet of the year! Some of what you can expect: friendly faces, meet some "first friends", questions answered, snacks, and an informal atmosphere for conversation. For those who are thinking seriously about joining First Church by covenant as members on the following Sunday, January 28, please plan to stay a bit longer to look at the Joining liturgy together.

### Men's Breakfast

**Saturday, January 6, 8:00 - 9:30 a.m.**

#### Harter Room

All who identify as men at First Church are invited to join us in person on Saturday morning for our monthly gathering, a time to reflect and rejoice. If you would like to be added to the Men's Breakfast email list to receive reminders of these gatherings, please contact Peter Byerly: [p.byerly@comcast.net](mailto:p.byerly@comcast.net)



# THIS WEEK

Looking ahead to this week's programs and events



## **Monday, December 25 - Christmas Day - Church Office & Building Closed (except for worship)**

11:00 a.m. Christmas Day Worship, Sanctuary and via livestream

## **Friday, December 29**

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

## **Sunday, December 31**

10:15 a.m. Choir Rehearsal, Sanctuary

11:00 a.m. Hybrid Morning Worship: Christmastide Hymn Sing, Sanctuary and via livestream

12:15 p.m. Refreshments in MJH

## **Monday, January 1 - New Year's Day - Church Office & Building Closed**

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

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

First Church in Cambridge, Congregational, UCC  
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