



Christmas Eve
Candlelight Service
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

www.firstchurchcambridge.org

FIRST CHURCH
IN CAMBRIDGE
CONGREGATIONAL
387 YEARS
ON THE WAY
1636 – 2023

Welcome! We are an Open and Affirming, Just-Peace church, committed to inclusivity and non-violence. We love the teachings of Jesus with our minds as well as our hearts! We believe and question, question and grow. We're an old church with forward-looking ways. We have plenty of passion, theological opinions, good music, food, and fellowship.

We offer a variety of programs, events, and activities for adults, children, and families. Please explore our [website](#) and visit us on a Sunday. If you are looking for a church to call home, maybe we're the one! We pray that you will always be showered with the Love that came to Earth at Christmas. It never ends. It is yours forever.

www.sneucc.org

Website of the Southern New England Conference
of the United Church of Christ

www.ucc.org

The national website of our denomination - the
United Church of Christ - see what we stand for!

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.



You can find a longer version of this acknowledgment here or by scanning the QR code.

Christmas Eve Candlelight Service

VOLUNTARY	In dulci jubilo	Dieterich Buxtehude
THE LIGHTING OF THE WREATH	John 1:1-5, 12, 14	The Antony/Melichar Family
*CAROL	O Come, O Come Emmanuel	alt. Kate Layzer
	O come, O come, Emmanuel and with thy captive people dwell; who mourn in lonely exile here, until the Child of God appear. Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to us, in peace to dwell.	
*GREETING		Joanne Paul
L:	O Come, all you faithful and all you skeptics, too. The time is almost here!	
C:	When worlds are made new, when the poor and humble take heart,	
L:	when shepherds rise up and wise ones bow down,	
C:	and a new day dawns, bringing good news, for a change.	
L:	For tonight, Love is born. And tomorrow...	
C:	justice and joy, grace and glory are born anew.	
All:	Christ is born! So come, let us adore him!	
*CAROL 132	O Come, All Ye Faithful	
WORDS OF WELCOME		Carla Arevalo
ANTHEM	Lo, How a Rose E'er Blooming	arr. P. Sykes
READING	Isaiah 9: 2-11	BBB
*CAROL 137	Hark, the Herald Angels Sing	
READING	Luke 1:26-38	Eleanor Goode
CAROL 147	Infant Holy, Infant Lowly <i>(Please remain seated.)</i>	

**You are invited to stand.*

A STORY AND A SONG

The Message of the Birds
Give Me Birds at the Dawning

Sarah Higginbotham

READING

Luke 2:1-14

HOMILY

Dan Smith

LIGHTING THE CHRIST CANDLE

L: The light of Christ!

C: **Thanks be to God!**

SHARING THE LIGHT

Give Me Light in the Darkness

(see p. 5)

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

PRAYERS FOR THE WORLD & THE LORD'S PRAYER

Kate Layzer

(Please pray this prayer and address God 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.**

CAROL 142

Silent Night, Holy Night

(Please remain seated.)

RESPONSIVE PROCLAMATION

L: The light shines in the darkness,
and the darkness did not overcome it.
Friends, Christ, our Light, is born this night.

C: **Hope and peace are born this night.**

L: Love and light are born this night.

C: **And Joy will come in the morning!**

L: Let it sing your souls awake. Let's sing it together now.

All: **Joy to the world! The Lord is come!**

***CAROL 134**

Joy to the World!

***BLESSING AND PEACE**

Leading Worship

Bappu Antony, Kiran Balummel, and Jodi Melichar, *Advent candle lighters*

Carla Arevalo, *Pastoral Associate*

Bold Black Ballerina (BBB), *First Church member*

First Church Choir

Eleanor Goode, *First Church youth*

Sarah Higginbotham, *Director of Creative Worship & Arts*

Duncan Hollomon, *song leader*

Kate Layzer, *Minister of Street Outreach*

Jodi Melichar, *First Church member*

Joanne Paul, *First Church member*

Lee Prouty, *tech support*

Dan Smith, *Senior Minister*

Beth Spaulding, *song leader*

Peter Sykes, *Music Director*

Bulletin Cover Image

Freddie Funck, *First Church member*



In light of the Christmas theme of welcome to those who seek shelter and refuge in difficult times, tonight's offering will support our Homeless and Refugee Resettlement Ministries through our Friday Café, First Church Shelter, and Welcome Corps projects. There are offering baskets located at each of our doors, or you may use the QR code to the left.

Thank you for your generous support!

CHRISTMAS EVE WORSHIP AT FIRST CHURCH

The Message of the Birds

Our Children's Time includes the reading of "The Message of the Birds" by Kate Westerlund, illustrated by Feridun Oral, published by Michael Neugebauer Ltd. ©2014.

Give Me Light in the Darkness

Our candle-lighting song 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 and Christmas season.

The musical score is written for three parts: Soprano, Alto, and Bass. It is in the key of D major (two sharps) and 3/4 time. 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 score includes a six-measure rest at the beginning of each line and a six-measure rest at the beginning of the second system.



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 SERVICES 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.





OUR COMMUNITY

a sampling of programs, events & activities from the last year

Christian Formation for Adults

Weekly Virtual Bible Study
Faith and Life Groups, virtual and in-person
Racial Justice/
Remembering Slavery's Living Legacy
Weekly Contemplative Practice

for Children & Youth

Church School Classes
Creative Arts Projects
Our Whole Lives (sexuality education)
Confirmation Class

Fellowship

Young Adults Group
Women's Community Events
Monthly Men's Breakfasts

Ministries

First Church Shelter
Friday Café Street Ministry
Trans/Non-Binary Ministry Team
Greater Boston Interfaith Organization
Earth Stewardship
Welcome Corps Refugee Resettlement Team

Music & Arts

First Church Choir
Night Song Service
Poet-in-Residence
Staff Composer

Building Use & Community Partnerships

12-Step Meetings
Weekly Dances
Concerts and Lectures
Newtowne School

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 [/firstchurchcambridge](https://www.instagram.com/firstchurchcambridge)  [/FirstChurchInCambridge](https://www.facebook.com/FirstChurchInCambridge)  [/c/FirstChurchInCambridge](https://www.youtube.com/c/FirstChurchInCambridge)

SECOND CAROL

O Come, All Ye Faithful

132

1. O come, all ye faith - ful, joy - ful and tri - um - phant,
 2. Sing, choirs of an - gels, sing in ex - ul - ta - tion,
 3. Child, for us sin - ners poor and in the man - ger,
 4. Yea, Lord, we greet thee, born this hap - py morn - ing,
 (1.) A - des - te fi - de - les, lae - ti tri - um - phan - tes;

O come ye, O come ye to Beth - le - hem;
 sing, all ye cit - i - zens of heaven a - bove!
 we would em - brace thee with love and awe;
 Je - sus, to thee be all glo - ry given;
 ve - ni - te, ve - ni - te in Beth - le - hem.

come and be - hold him, born the King of an - gels;
 Glo - ry to God, all glo - ry in the high - est;
 who would not love thee, lov - ing us so dear - ly?
 Word of the E - ter - nal, now in flesh ap - pear - ing;
 Na - tum vi - de - te Re - gem an - ge - lo - rum.

O come, let us a - dore him, O come, let us a - dore him,
 Ve - ni - te a - do - re - mus, ve - ni - te a - do - re - mus,

O come, let us a - dore him, Christ, the Lord!
 ve - ni - te a - do - re - mus, Do - mi - num.

WORDS: Latin: John Francis Wade, 1743; tr. Frederick Oakeley, 1841, and others, alt.
 MUSIC: John Francis Wade's *Cantus Diversi*, c. 1743

ADESTE FIDELES
 Ir. w. refrain

Though the translation of this Latin hymn by John Francis Wade is primarily that of the Oxford Movement's Frederick Oakeley, over sixteen different translations have been used in hymnals.

BIPTEU

THIRD CAROL

137

Hark! the Herald Angels Sing

1. Hark! the her - ald an - gels sing, "Glo - ry to the new-born King;
 2. Christ, by high - est heaven a - dored, Christ, the ev - er last - ing Lord!
 3. Hail the heaven-born Prince of Peace! Hail the Sun of Right - eous - ness!

peace on earth, and mer - cy mild, God and sin - ners rec - on - ciled!"
 Late in time be - hold him come, off - spring of the vir - gin's womb.
 Light and life to all he brings, risen with heal - ing in his wings.

Joy - ful all ye na - tions, rise, join the tri - umph of the skies;
 Veiled in flesh the God - head see; hail the in - car - nate De - i - ty,
 Mild he lays his glo - ry by, born that we no more may die,

with the an - gel - ic host pro - claim, "Christ is born in Beth - le - hem!"
 pleased on earth with us to dwell, Je - sus, our Em - man - u - el.
 born to raise all souls on earth, born to give us sec - ond birth.

Hark! the her - ald an - gels sing, "Glo - ry to the new-born King!"

MENDELSSOHN

FOURTH CAROL

147

Infant Holy, Infant Lowly

1. In - fant ho - ly, in - fant low - ly, for his bed a cat - tle stall;
 2. Flocks were sleep - ing, shep - herds keep - ing vig - il till the morn - ing new,

ox - en low - ing, lit - tle know - ing, Christ the babe is born for all.
 saw the glo - ry, heard the sto - ry - tid - ings of a gos - pel true.

Swift - ly wing - ing an - gels sing - ing, bells are ring - ing, tid - ings bring - ing:
 Thus re - joic - ing, free from sor - row, prais - es voic - ing greet the mor - row:

Christ the babe is born for all; Christ the babe is born for all!
 Christ the babe was born for you; Christ the babe was born for you!

WORDS: Polish carol; tr. Edith M. G. Reed, 1925, alt.
 MUSIC: Polish folk melody; adapt. A. E. Rusbridge

W ŻŁOBIE LEŻY
 87.87.8877

Carols were originally dances. This tune, whose title translates as
 'in manger lying,' is set to the rhythm of a Polish mazurka.

Music adapt. by permission of Rosalind Rusbridge

Silent Night, Holy Night

142

1. Si - lent night, ho - ly night, all is calm, all is bright
 2. Si - lent night, ho - ly night, shep - herds quake at the sight;
 3. Si - lent night, ho - ly night, Son of God, love's pure light;
 (1.) Stil - le Nacht, hei - li - ge Nacht! Al - les schläft, ein - sam wacht

round you vir - gin moth - er and child. Ho - ly in - fant so ten - der and mild,
 glo - ries stream from heav - en a - far, heav - en - ly hosts sing al - le - lu - ia;
 ra - diant beams from thy ho - ly face, with the dawn of re - deem - ing grace,
 nur das trau - te, hoch - hei - li - ge Paar. Hol - der Kna - be im lock - i - gen Haar,

sleep in heav - en - ly peace, sleep in heav - en - ly peace.
 Christ, the Sav - ior, is born! Christ, the Sav - ior, is born!
 Je - sus, Lord, at thy birth, Je - sus, Lord, at thy birth.
 schlaf in himm - li - scher Ruh, schlaf in himm - li - scher Ruh!

CLOSING CAROL

Joy to the World! the Lord Is Come 134

1. Joy to the world! the Lord is come: let earth re -
 2. Joy to the world! the Sav - ior reigns: let earth her
 3. Christ rules the world with truth and grace, and makes the

ceive her King; let ev - ery heart pre - pare him room,
 songs em - ploy; let fields and floods, rocks, hills and plains
 na - tions prove the glo - ries of his right - eous - ness,

and heaven and na - ture sing, and heaven and na - ture
 re - peat the sound - ing joy, re - peat the sound - ing
 and won - ders of his love, and won - ders of his

and heaven and na - ture sing and
 re - peat the sound - ing joy, re -
 and won - ders of his love, and

sing, and heaven, and heaven and na - ture sing.
 joy, re - peat, re - peat the sound - ing joy.
 love, and won - ders, won - ders of his love.

heaven and na - ture sing.
 peat the sound - ing joy,
 won - ders of his love,

WORDS: Isaac Watts, 1719, alt.
 MUSIC: Attr. Georg Frederick Handel, 1741; arr. Lowell Mason, 1848

ANTIOCH
 CM w. repeat

This is Congregationalist Watts' paraphrase of Psalm 98.
 His free paraphrasing helped wean churchgoers from
 singing only literal renditions of the Psalms.

BIRTH