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Regathering Sunday  
September 8, 2024

**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

388 YEARS  
ON THE WAY

1 6 3 6 – 2 0 2 4

### September 8, 2024

**Liturgist**

Jim Cairns, *Treasurer*

**Preaching Today**

Mike Solberg, *Interim Senior Minister*

**Leading Worship**

Moana Bentin, *Moderator*

Sarah Higginbotham, *Director of Communications & Christian Formation*

Kate Layzer, *Minister of Street Outreach*

Karen McArthur, *Minister of Stewardship & Finance*

Emma Mitchell, *Pastoral Associate*

Lee Prouty, *Facilities Manager*

Peter Sykes, *Music Director*

**Bulletin Cover Image**

Freddie Funck, *First Church member*

### Today's Programs and Events

- 10:15 a.m. Choir Rehearsal, Sanctuary
- 10:45 a.m. Gather on the Church Lawn
- 11:00 a.m. Hybrid Morning Worship, Sanctuary and [via livestream](#)
- 12:15 p.m. All-Church Luncheon, Margaret Jewett Hall
- 12:30 p.m. Our Whole Lives (OWL) Parent Orientation and Student Welcome, Harter Room and The Well
- 7:30 p.m. Night Song, 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 electronically by using the QR code in the bulletin or explore more options for giving 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.

## GATHERING

### \*GREETING ON THE LAWN

Mike Solberg and Emma Mitchell

- L: Beloved of God, come gather in!  
Be at home in this household of grace!
- C: Here there is room for all that we are:  
room for our stories, our hopes, our yearnings, our fears.**
- L: Here there is room to wonder and grow,  
**C: room to pray and love and act together for a better world.**
- L: Siblings in the Spirit, God's heart is open,  
and God's invitation is deep and wide.
- C: Young and old, come into the warmth of that welcome,  
and together let us make room for joy!**

*Please greet someone you don't know and make your way into the Sanctuary,  
learning a bit about each other as you go.*

### \*HYMN

Let There Be Life in This House

see insert

### WORDS OF WELCOME

Jim Cairns

### ANTHEM

O How Amiable

Ralph Vaughan Williams

### LAND ACKNOWLEDGMENT

Emma Mitchell

## CONFESSING

### INVITATION TO CONFESSION

### SUNG PRAYER

Search Me, O God

Kate Layzer/Peter Sykes



### 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 GOD'S FORGIVENESS

### \*GREETING OF PEACE

L: The peace of Christ be with you!

**C: And also with you!**

### \*HYMN

Le Aso Fiafia

*see insert*

### BLESSING OF CHURCH SCHOOL CHILDREN & TEACHERS

Sarah Higginbotham

Adults: God be with you there.

Children: And God be with you here.

*Children up through 6th grade are now invited to Church School classes. Godly Play (PreK-4th grade) and Bible 101 (5/6th 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

Karen McArthur

### RESPONSIVE READING

Psalm 145:1-3, 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: God is gracious and merciful, slow to anger  
and abounding in steadfast love.**

### READING

Ephesians 2:11-22

### SERMON

Room For Us All

Mike Solberg

### \*HYMN C-20

The Household of God

### SHARING OUR LIFE TOGETHER

### ANNOUNCEMENTS

Moana Bentin and Emma Mitchell

### 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

*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 from your  
bank account or by credit/debit card:*



## OFFERTORY

Psalm 108

Patricia Van Ness

## \*DOXOLOGY AND PRAYER OF DEDICATION

**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

## VOLUNTARY

Fanfare

Jacques Lemmens

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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

*for First Church in Cambridge on its tenth anniversary of declaring itself an Open and Affirming Church*

Peter Sykes

Kate Layzer

Let there be life in this house Poured from the rich - es of  
Let there be life in this house Ten - der and truth - ful and  
Let there be life in this house Life of the Spi - rit and  
Let there be life in this house Life of the Bod - y di -

God Treas - ure in so man - y ves - sels of clay Giv - en for shar - ing, not  
real Life of be - long - ing, res - pect - ed and free Hon - ored for all God de -  
fire Lov - ing, be - lov - ed, new - born from a - bove Dar - ing to love be - cause  
vine Kind - ly and pas - sion - ate, ear - thy and odd We are the Church, be -

hid - ing a - way, Let there be life in this house!  
clares us to be, Let there be life in this house!  
we have been loved, Let there be life in this house!  
lov - ed of God, Let there be life in this house!

PEACE HYMN

# Le aso fiafia



1. Le a - so fi - a - fi - a, \_\_\_ Le a - so sa le nei, \_\_\_ Ia ta - tou ta - pu - a - i, I  
2. Le ta - tou fi - a - fi - a, \_\_\_ E le ga - lu - e ai, \_\_\_ Ae tau o a - so e - se \_\_\_ E  
3. Ia ta - tou fi - a - fi - a, \_\_\_ I o - na i - tu - la, \_\_\_ Pei o le a - ma - ta - ga, \_\_\_ O



lo ta - tou A - li - i. E te - le la - va a - so, E tu - pu ai ti - ga, \_\_\_  
ga - lu - lu - e a - i. E - si - li - si - li la - va, Le - nei a - so le - lei, \_\_\_  
a - so I lu - ga. \_\_\_ Ie - su la e a - lo - fa I iu le o - la nei, \_\_\_



13  
Ao le - nei la - va a - so, Ta - tou te fi - le - mu. \_\_\_  
E tu - pu ai ma - na - tu I me - a i lu - ga. \_\_\_  
Ia ta mau ai ma o - e I le - na nuu le - lei. \_\_\_

1. This is a happy day. Today is Sunday. Let us pray to our Lord.  
Many days can be difficult, but today we are at peace.

2. Today is a holy day. We rest; other days we work.  
Today is the best day of heavenly thoughts.

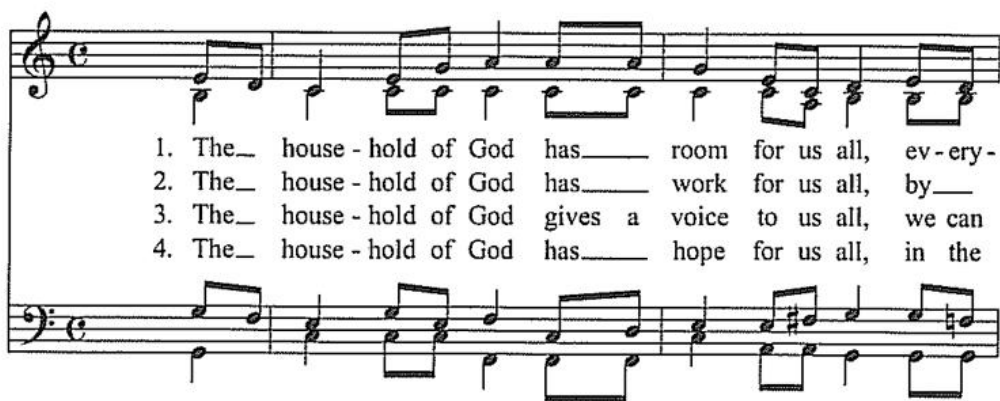
3. Let's be happy. This hour is the beginning of heavenly days  
Jesus, please love us in this life and Your kingdom after.




SERMON HYMN

C-20

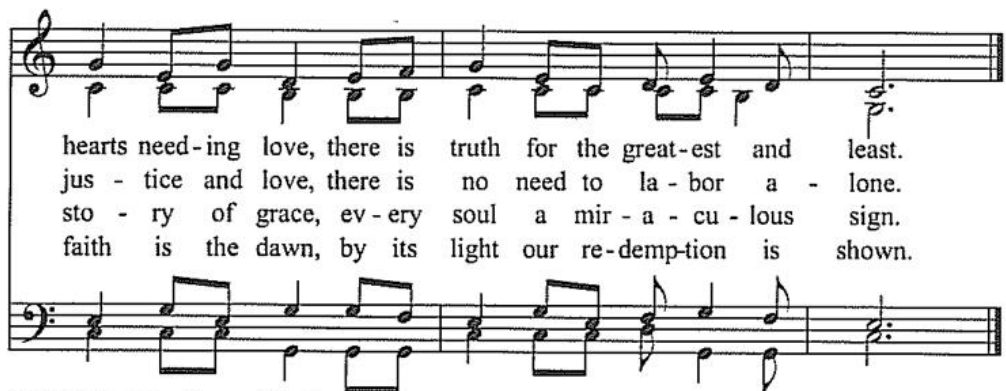
The Household of God



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 holds our 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.

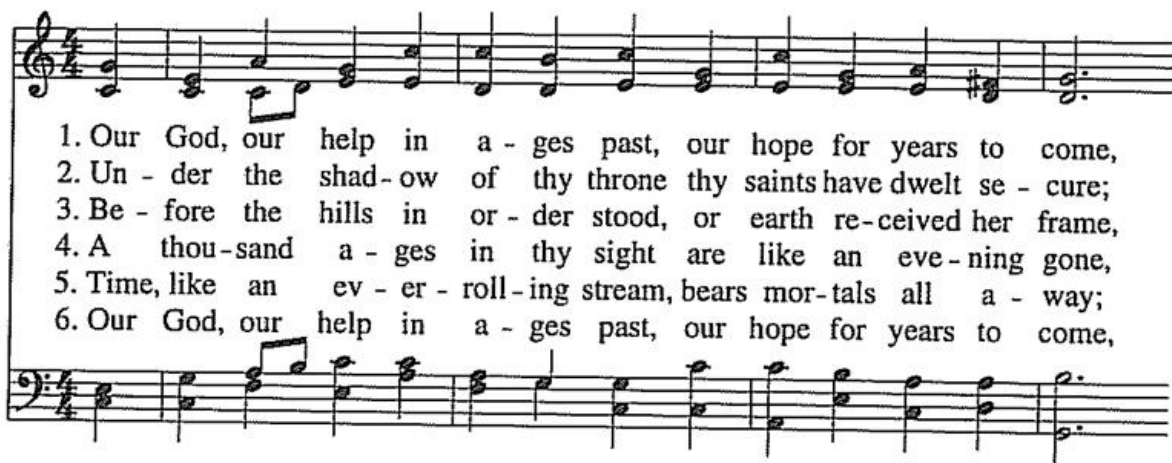
WORDS: John Evans-Klock

MUSIC: Peter Sykes

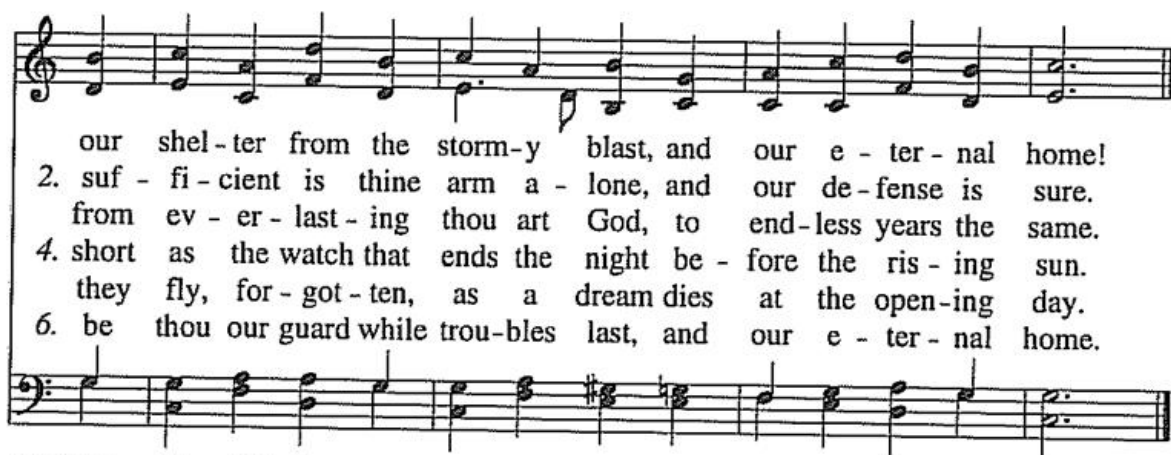


## Our God, Our Help in Ages Past

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 our congregation during this time of transition.
- We pray for Gaylen Morgan as she prepares for knee replacement surgery on Monday.
- We pray for all who are living with significant health challenges and their families and caregivers: Poppy Coffin, who is experiencing Alzheimer's Disease; Carol Wilson-Braun, who is managing ALS; and Carter West, who is experiencing a chronic neurological disorder. We also pray for those in treatment for cancer: Bob Spaulding, Beth Spaulding's father; Dana Hunt, Claire Morgan's mother; 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; and Abby Shuman's uncle Barry.
- We pray for the many people seeking emergency shelter in overflow sites across the state, and for all who seek permanent housing.
- We pray for the community of Winder, GA, that is recovering after a school shooting at Apalachee High School. We pray for the families of those killed and for all who were injured. We continue to pray for our nation to embrace solutions to gun violence in all its forms.
- As the war in Gaza and Israel continues, our hearts cry out in prayer. We pray for those precious souls held hostage and for the families of those hostages who have been killed. We pray for the thousands in Gaza whose families and communities have been decimated and who are enduring hunger, homelessness, and acts of war. With the death of over 1,400 Israelis and over 40,000 Palestinians since October 7, we pray for an end to the war and immediate de-escalation of tensions in the region, as well as redoubled efforts to address the humanitarian crisis in Gaza.
- We pray for our nation during this election season that takes place during a time of political polarization. We pray especially for peaceful, non-violent engagement in the political processes of our democracy.
- We continue to pray for all who are recovering from natural and climate-related disasters. We pray for our rapidly warming planet and for efforts to reduce fossil fuel emissions.
- We pray for the people of the Democratic Republic of Congo, where ongoing armed conflicts have led to more than 6 million people killed and more than 5 million people displaced from their homes. We pray also for those who have experienced devastating incidents of gender-based violence during the conflicts.
- We pray for all those impacted by the violence of war and political upheaval throughout the Middle East, in Ukraine, in Sudan, and in Haiti.
- We pray for the wellbeing and safety of our trans and gender non-conforming siblings as they face the experience of vitriolic public discourse and of state laws that restrict and criminalize transgender health care, personal expression, and wider LGBTQ+ education.
- We continue to 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

### Regathering Sunday

A beloved First Church hymn reminds us that “the household of God has room for us all” as we make our way through a time of transition with the leadership of Interim Senior Minister Mike Solberg. On this journey that we walk together, there is room for your grief and your joy, your longings and your celebrations, your anxieties and your anticipation. Bring all that you are to this place where God assures us that there is room for it all, and for us all!



### Regathering Luncheon

**Today, 12:30 - 1:30 p.m., Margaret Jewett Hall**

Join us after worship for an all-church luncheon in MJH. Reconnect with each other after the summer, meet new friends, and hear from staff and lay leaders about the season ahead of us. All are welcome! Child care will be available on the playground for kids who would like to have a picnic lunch and play.

### Our Whole Lives (OWL) Parent Orientation & Student Welcome Today, 12:30 - 1:30 p.m., Harter Room and The Well

7th and 8th graders begin their one-year OWL program today with an introductory session, and parents and caregivers meet for an orientation to the program, as well. First Church partners with Old South Church to provide this faith-based sexuality education curriculum, developed by the United Church of Christ and the Unitarian Universalist Association. Students from the two congregations meet together here at First Church on many Sunday afternoons through early April.



### Night Song Returns

**Today, 7:30 - 8:15 p.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. We all need time set aside from the demands of daily life and the issues facing our community and our world—a regular time to be still, to find clarity and purpose, and to center ourselves for the coming week. You’ll leave breathing more deeply and recharged to engage with your world. Night Song is a hybrid offering of First Church for in-person attendance in the Sanctuary and viewing via livestream or listening at another time on the Night Song YouTube channel.

[Learn more about Night Song.](#)

## REGATHERING SEASON AT FIRST CHURCH

### **Staff Transitions, New Faces, and Shifting Roles - Fall 2024**

As we regather this fall, the theme of transition can hardly be missed, especially within our staff. Here's a quick summary of how roles are shifting to meet the needs of the church.

**Mike Solberg** joins us as our new **Interim Senior Minister**. He fills the full-time role of Head of Staff as he walks with us through a time of transition. Mike will be leading worship and preaching; partnering with committees and boards on new initiatives and ongoing ministries; and providing pastoral care and spiritual guidance as we look forward to what comes next.

**Emma Mitchell** (née Thomas) returns in the role of **Pastoral Associate** (and with a new shared family last name after her wedding this summer). She will work 25 hours per week, participating in worship at least 2 Sundays per month, preaching, leading Christian formation, working with new members, and more.

**Sarah Higginbotham** takes on a new job title of **Director of Communications & Christian Formation** as she increases her hours to full-time. Sarah will continue to lead First Church's Communications Team, as well as supervise and/or lead in our Nursery, Church School, and Youth programs. While she no longer has "creative worship & arts" in her title, she still plans to share her creative gifts with our multigenerational community.

**Kirsten Manville** continues to be our **Director of Operations**, but with some accommodations for her growing family. On August 30, Kirsten and her husband Tim were officially matched and placed with a pre-adoptive child by the Massachusetts Department of Children and Families - a 10-year-old boy who will be in the 4th grade this year. Kirsten will be taking 4 full weeks of family leave this fall (September 16 - October 18) and then will work half-time through December 31. A sabbatical for Kirsten had already been planned and approved last spring, which is scheduled for January - March 2025. Stay tuned for more information about who will help cover her tasks while Kirsten is not as present with us during her family's time of transition.

**Kevin Newell** increases his hours to 35 per week as a **First Church Sexton**. He will be working most evening shifts, and he will also keep some hours at the First Church Shelter.

And after more than 35 years of faithful service to the First Church Shelter and the men who seek assistance from it, **Dennis Kaveney** has ended his full-time employment, but continues as a per diem **Shelter employee**. The Shelter Oversight Committee is planning an opportunity for the entire First Church community to celebrate and express gratitude for Dennis's contributions to the Shelter's mission to bring hope to our unhoused neighbors.

## REGATHERING SEASON AT FIRST CHURCH

### Beloved Community Project Teams

The Beloved Community Group extends an invitation to all to get involved in one of our “project teams” running from October 2024 through April 2025. Even if you have not engaged actively in First Church’s work of anti-racism before, there are opportunities, large and small, for you to participate!

Please contact Peggy Stevens ([peggystevens1200@gmail.com](mailto:peggystevens1200@gmail.com)) to express your interest and learn more.



- We are looking for 2 or 3 additional people to help plan another **Pilgrimage to Montgomery, Alabama**, and its many sites and museums related to racial justice.
- Harvard Square churches, History Cambridge, and some staff and faculty at Harvard Divinity School are organizing to **learn more about local indigenous history and current justice efforts, and to develop relationships with indigenous people**. First Church members are welcome to join this work.
- There will be opportunities for **deeper learning and reflection on reparations, and for participating in local and state advocacy efforts**. Let us know if you’d like to hear about specific opportunities.
- We’re looking for a few people who, in collaboration with First Parish, would like to **explore the role of our joint history of settler colonialism and enslavement** in preparation for the observance of the 400th anniversary of First Church (1636) and the settlement of European colonists in Cambridge (1630). Other research topics are also available: i.e. Did First Church members participate in the widespread abolitionist movement in the Boston area?

### FAITH & LIFE GROUPS Fall 2024



### Faith & Life Groups: Fall 2024 - Call for Leaders!

Are you interested in leading a small group over Zoom or in person this Fall? Contact Beth Spaulding ([bspaulding68@gmail.com](mailto:bspaulding68@gmail.com)) to discuss your idea for the next round of Faith & Life Groups, running in October/November, with registration happening in September. 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 Faith & Life Group to Beth as we regather in September!





# THIS WEEK

Looking ahead to this week's programs and events



## Monday, September 9

4:30 p.m. Contemplative Practices Gathering, via Zoom

## Wednesday, September 11

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

3:00 p.m. Buildings & Grounds Committee, via Zoom

## Thursday, September 12

6:00 p.m. Drop-In Bible Study, via Zoom

## Friday, September 13

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

## Sunday, September 15

9:30 a.m. Meet Mike Solberg, 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 and Bible 101 classes

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

12:30 p.m. Our Whole Lives (OWL) for 7th/8th graders, The Well

12:30 p.m. Young Adults: Brunch After Worship, Cambridge Common Restaurant

12:45 p.m. Youth Group: TreeTop Adventures Trip

7:30 p.m. Night Song, Sanctuary and via livestream



SCAN ME

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

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

Have a church program or event to promote?  
Complete the [First Church Communications Request](#) form.

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