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Season of Epiphany  
January 12, 2025

**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  
**389 YEARS**  
ON THE WAY  
1 6 3 6 – 2 0 2 5

### January 12, 2025

#### Liturgist

Christian Baker

#### Preaching Today

Emma Mitchell, *Pastoral Associate*

#### Leading Worship

Laurie Friedman, *Clerk*

Amy Matias, *offering a Ministry Moment*

Lee Prouty, *Facilities Manager*

Mike Solberg, *Interim Senior Minister*

#### Bulletin Cover Image

Epiphany image by Perry Neubauer, *from the church archives*

### Today's Programs and Events

- 9:15 a.m. Choir Rehearsal, Sanctuary
- 10:00 a.m. Pastoral Transition Work: Listening Session, Harter Room
- 11:00 a.m. Hybrid Morning Worship, Sanctuary and [via livestream](#)
- 11:20 a.m. Church School: Godly Play and Bible 101 classes, Library & The Well
- 12:15 p.m. Refreshments in Hastings Common
- 12:20 p.m. Pastoral Transition Work: Listening Session, Harter Room
- 12:30 p.m. Our Whole Lives (OWL) for 7/8th graders, 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.

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**

How Brightly Shines the Morning Star

Dieterich Buxtehude

**\*HYMN 167**

Arise, Your Light Is Come!

**\*GREETING**

Christian Baker

L: Siblings in Christ, grace and peace to you from God.

**C: And to the whole world, God's love, light, and healing!**

L: Arise and show forth the glory and justice of God!

**C: With Jesus, our light has come.**

**God's spirit shines on us, full of grace and peace.**

L: Then let us gather and sing God's praise!

**C: With you, God, our feast is abundant.**

**We drink from the rivers of your delight.**

L: With you is the fountain of life!

**All: In your light we see light!**

**All glory and honor be yours, almighty and everlasting One!**

## WORDS OF WELCOME

**ANTHEM**

O Nata Lux

Thomas Pavlechko

*O born Light of Light, Jesus, Redeemer of the world,  
Mercifully deem worthy and accept the praise and prayers of your supplicants.  
Thou who once deigned to be clothed in flesh for the sake of the lost ones,  
grant us to be made members of your holy body.*

## CONFESSING

### INVITATION TO CONFESSION

### SILENCE

### PRAYER OF CONFESSION

L: Now, let us pray for the pardon and healing we need:

**All: God in Christ, with you at our side,**

**we confess our failings—**

**what we have done, and what we have failed to do.**

**By your baptism in the Jordan, wash us in mercy,**

*\*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.*

and mend the harm we have done to ourselves,  
our neighbor, and our world.  
Help us to live knee-deep in grace,  
our hearts alive to our truest names—  
beloved daughters, cherished sons, siblings in the spirit! Amen.

## DECLARATION OF GOD'S FORGIVENESS

### \*GREETING OF PEACE

L: The peace of Christ be with you!

C: **And also with you!**

### \*HYMN 310

Wonder of Wonders, Here Revealed

### A MUTUAL BLESSING

Mike Solberg

**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

### READING

Luke 3:15-17, 21-22

### SERMON

Emma Mitchell

### \*HYMN 233

Shaping Spirit, Move Among Us

## SHARING OUR LIFE TOGETHER

### ANNOUNCEMENTS

### CALL TO ANNUAL MEETING

Laurie Friedman

### MINISTRY MOMENT

Amy Matias

## PRAYERS FOR THE CHURCH AND WORLD

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

Break Forth, O Beauteous Heavenly Light

Constance Pyle

## \*DOXOLOGY AND PRAYER OF DEDICATION

**To God, all glorious heavenly Light,  
to Christ revealed in earthly night,  
to God the Spirit now we raise  
our joyful songs of thankful praise. Amen.**

## GOING FORTH

## \*HYMN 444

Lord of All Hopefulness

## \*BENEDICTION

## VOLUNTARY

In Thee Is Gladness

J. S. Bach

## 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.*



SCAN ME

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

OPENING HYMN

167

# Arise, Your Light Is Come!

1. A - rise, your light is come! The Spir - it's call o - bey;  
2. A - rise, your light is come! Fling wide the pris - on door;  
3. A - rise, your light is come! All you in sor - row born,  
4. A - rise, your light is come! The moun - tains burst in song!

FESTAL SONG

show forth the glo - ry of your God which shines on you to - day.  
pro - claim the cap - tive's lib - er - ty, good tid - ings to the poor.  
bind up the bro - ken - heart - ed ones and com - fort those who mourn.  
Rise up like ea - gles on the wing, God's pow'r will make us strong.

## Wonder of Wonders, Here Revealed 310

1. Won - der of won - ders, here re - vealed; God's cov - e -  
 2. This child of God, though young or old, we wel - come  
 3. Here in this sac - ra - ment we see God's bound - less  
 4. Our vows of faith we now re - new, stretch wide our

nant with us is sealed. And long be - fore we know or  
 now in - to Christ's fold, to know with us God's lov - ing  
 grace for all, for me! May we re - spond with joy - ful  
 sights to glo - bal view, and claim with Chris - tians far and

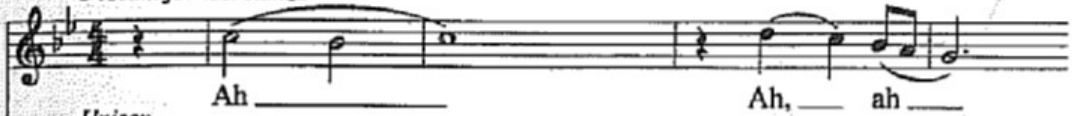
pray, God's love en - folds us ev - ery day.  
 care; here all our joys and sor - rows share.  
 praise in lov - ing serv - ice all our days.  
 near a larg - er kin - ship held most dear.



# Shaping Spirit, Move Among Us

233

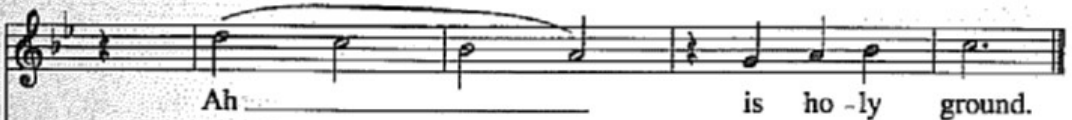
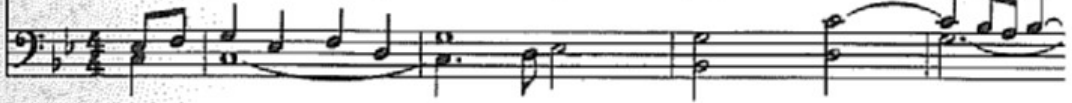
*Descant for last stanza*



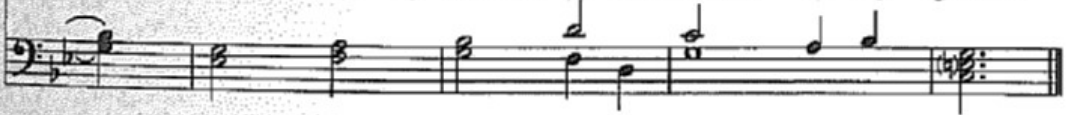
*Unison*



1. Shap-ing spir-it, move a - mong us, liv - ing lead - er, be our friend;
2. En - er - gy of new cre - a - tion, work like yeast with-in the soul;
3. Man - y are the ways you seek us, great the joy when each is found.



source of our mys - te - rious be - ing, greet us at our jour - ney's end.  
 hu - man sav - ior, heav'n - ly ar - tist, in your ser - vice make us whole.  
 Once your gift of faith ig - nites us all the world is ho - ly ground.





CLOSING HYMN

444

Lord of All Hopefulness

1. Lord of all hope - ful - ness, Lord of all joy,  
 2. Lord of all ea - ger - ness, Lord of all faith,  
 3. Lord of all kind - li - ness, Lord of all grace,  
 4. Lord of all gen - tle - ness, Lord of all calm,

whose trust, ev - er child - like, no cares could de - stroy,  
 whose strong hands were skilled at the plane and the lathe,  
 your hands swift to wel - come, your arms to em - brace,  
 whose voice is con - tent - ment, whose pres - ence is balm,

be there at our wak - ing, and give us, we pray, your  
 be there at our la - bors, and give us, we pray, your  
 be there at our hom - ing, and give us, we pray, your  
 be there at our sleep - ing, and give us, we pray, your

bliss in our hearts, Lord, at the break of the day.  
 strength in our hearts, Lord, at the noon of the day.  
 love in our hearts, Lord, at the eve of the day.  
 peace in our hearts, Lord, at the end of the day.

## COMMUNITY PRAYERS

- We pray for Ami Brenner and her family as they mourn the loss of Ami's father Jim Rae, who died of cardiac arrest on December 28.
- We pray for Abby Shuman and her family as they mourn the passing of her uncle Barry, who died of brain cancer on December 29.
- We pray for Dave Kidder and his family as they experience yet another loss. Dave's younger sister Janet Kidder died on New Year's Day after a long struggle with Alzheimer's Disease. Her family was with her, in person and virtually, as she left this life.
- We pray for Karen Anne Zee, who is grieving the loss of her brother Timothy Lawrence Smith, Jr.
- We pray for all who are living with significant health challenges and their families and caregivers: Ellen Frith, who is living with a serious chronic illness; Poppy Coffin, who is experiencing Alzheimer's Disease; Carter West, who is experiencing a chronic neurological disorder; and Keith Manville, who has atypical Parkinsonism. We also pray for those in treatment for cancer: 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; and Beth and Polly, Ann McCann's sisters.
- We pray for all those impacted by the violent act of terrorism in New Orleans on New Year's Eve. We mourn the loss of life and pray for healing for those who survived this traumatic experience.
- We pray for our nation as we prepare for the transition to a new administration. We pray for a peaceful transfer of power. We pray also for all those who are experiencing anxiety about potential changes to how our federal government will legislate on the rights and freedoms of a variety of groups, including immigrants, trans and gender non-conforming people, and people facing decisions about their reproductive rights. We continue to pray for strength as we find ways to resist evil and act justly in this world.
- We pray for our neighbors all over the world. Especially we pray for all whose lives are affected by political upheaval in Syria and South Korea and by wars in Gaza and Israel, Ukraine, the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Haiti, and Sudan. We pray for the dead, for their loved ones, and for their broader communities. We pray for changed hearts for all those inflicting violence upon others, and thus upon their own souls. We give thanks for the peacemakers. We pray that we, like they, may be free of the myth of redemptive violence, and take collective action, however small, to be people of true peace in this world.
- We pray for all those impacted by wildfires in southern California, and we continue to pray for our earth and all creation in the face of the climate crisis.
- We pray for the 14 men finding sustenance and protection in our First Church Shelter; and we pray for the guests of the Friday Café, who are finding resources and listening ears.

**Join the [First Church List](#) to see and offer up more community prayer requests.**

## TODAY AT FIRST CHURCH



### Pastoral Transition Work: Listening Sessions

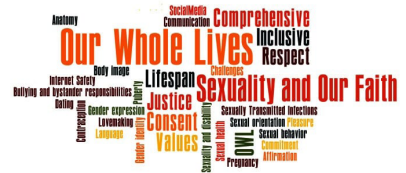
Today at 10:00 a.m. and at 12:20 p.m., Harter Room

In order to set the stage for the work of the transitional Discovery Team, we are hosting listening sessions this month. The goal is to follow up on some themes and hopes from the last few years of our church life and do a “check in” about how the transitional time is going. Join us before or after worship for a 45-55 minute session. Look for other Zoom session times to be announced soon. Please come, share your thoughts!

### Our Whole Lives (OWL) for 7/8th graders

Today, 12:30 - 2:00 p.m., The Well

7th and 8th graders from First Church and Old South Church meet for a session of their year-long sexuality education curriculum.



### Night Song

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.

[Learn more about Night Song.](#)

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.



## WHAT'S HAPPENING AT FIRST CHURCH

### Sabbatical for First Church's Director of Operations

Director of Operations Kirsten Manville is taking a well-earned sabbatical from January 1 to March 31. While she is away, other staff are generously pitching in to cover some of her tasks. For anything related to the building, sextons, and space use, please contact Facilities Manager [Lee Prouty](#). For anything regarding church administration, please contact Office Assistant [Bruce Dillenbeck](#). And for anything communications or worship related, please contact [Sarah Higginbotham](#), Director of Communications and Christian Formation. We wish Kirsten a restorative and restful sabbatical!



### New Year, New Sunday Morning Schedule

As we begin this new year, we are shifting the order of our Sunday morning programs and rehearsals to a new (but really, an old) schedule. Longtime members will remember that our pre-worship formation used to take place in “the ten o’clock hour.” We would like to return to this structure, allowing for folks to attend formation programs directly before Morning Worship. As of January 5, our Sunday morning schedule will be:

- 9:15 a.m.      Choir rehearsal**
- 10:00 a.m.    Christian Formation program**
- 11:00 a.m.    Morning Worship**

Formation programs at 10:00 will end by 10:45 to allow everyone to make a smooth and non-hurried transition into Morning Worship.

### We Need Some Good Questions - FINAL CALL!

For the next several weeks, we will focus our preaching on... well... questions. Specifically, questions that come from you! We want you to submit “big” questions about church / God / faith / Jesus / the Bible, etc., and we will respond in our preaching and worship. Maybe, “Is there a hell, and if so who’s in it?” Or, “I know we say science and faith aren’t really in conflict, but really, it is so?” Or, “How can I forgive \_\_\_\_\_?” All questions welcome. This is a good task for this pastoral interim time, as we begin to ask “Who are we?”, “What’s our core message?”, and “Where does God hope to lead us next?” Please email your questions to Pastor Mike at: [mike@firstchurchcambridge.org](mailto:mike@firstchurchcambridge.org). Now send in those “big” questions!

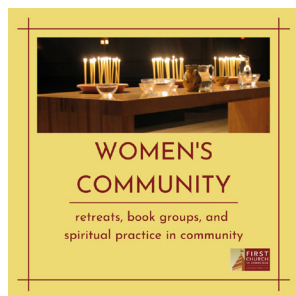


## WHAT'S HAPPENING AT FIRST CHURCH

### Aging with Grace Monthly Meeting

**Tuesday, January 14, 3:00 - 4:15 p.m., via Zoom**

Please join our community of Graceful Agers on Tuesday, January 14, to talk about the journey of retirement. Linda Ziebell and Martha Mueller Cook facilitate a conversation each month on the joys and challenges of Elderhood. If you would like more information, please email either Linda (lindaziebell@comcast.net) or Martha (marthamuellercook@gmail.com).



### Women's Community Book Group

**Tuesday, January 14, 6:30 - 7:45 p.m., via Zoom**

*(please note the new start time)*

Join us for a lively discussion of Lynda Rutledge's [West with Giraffes: A Novel](#). "Part adventure, part historical saga, and part coming of age love story, this novel explores what it means to be changed by the grace of animals." This will be a wonderful way to start the new year, and we hope all who identify as women in our church community will consider joining our gathering of friends and book lovers.

### Supporting Immigrants and Refugees: How to Respond

**Sunday, January 19, 10:00 - 10:45 a.m.**

**Harter Room and via Zoom**

As we approach the transition to a new presidential administration, there are many unknowns about how immigrants and those seeking refuge in our country will be treated and welcomed. As Christians, what will be our response? Join us as we start the conversation by hearing how First Church folks have engaged in the work of immigrant justice and refugee resettlement in the recent past. Bring your questions, your concerns, and your open hearts as we consider how to support our neighbors in a new era of uncertainty.



### Young Adults: Ice Skating

**Friday, January 24, 6:30 - 9:00 p.m.**

**Steriti Memorial Rink, North End, Boston**

All 20-30 somethings are invited to come ice skating in the North End with pizza at Regina Pizzeria to follow. Let Phil Servello-Jones know whether you can make it! There are casual get togethers for Young

Adults at First Church a few times a month. Stay connected by emailing: [youngadults@firstchurchcambridge.org](mailto:youngadults@firstchurchcambridge.org)



## WINTER FAITH & LIFE GROUPS



### Register for a Winter Faith & Life Group

We are offering two Faith & Life groups this season, and you are welcome to register.

Please contact the group leader to get on the list to receive the Zoom invitation to your group of choice.

### Exploring Hope for Peace and Justice in the Holy Land

**Thursdays, January 9, 16, 23, and 30, 6:30 - 8:00 p.m., via Zoom**

Since the vicious attacks in Israel on October 7, 2023, and the unprecedented humanitarian disaster caused by Israel's war in Gaza, along with increased crackdowns in the West Bank, how can Christians effectively engage in this issue? This group will have the opportunity to begin engagement through discussion with fellow congregants.

While there will be some reading to get started, how we engage with this issue will be guided by the questions and interests of those who sign up. Examples may include questions such as what work is already being done between Palestinians and Israelis to promote reconciliation? What do we need to know about the history before October 7 to understand today? How can we support our Jewish and Palestinian neighbors? How can First Church engage with the Israel-Palestine Conflict as witnesses to Christ's peace, aware of power imbalances, but not falling into false binaries? Most importantly, what questions do you have that you would like the group to address?

The group will meet four times with the possibility of additional meetings if there is interest. To receive the Zoom link, contact Adam Weiss at: [adamw@startmail.com](mailto:adamw@startmail.com).

### Four Centuries of First Church History

**Sundays, February 2, 9, 16 & 23, 7:00 - 8:00 p.m., via Zoom**

Delve into First Church's history over the centuries on Sunday evenings in February. Facilitated by Henry Gates, each session of this Faith & Life Group will include brief reflections by FCC folks who have particular knowledge of one of the four centuries through which First Church has existed as a community of faith. As we move through a time of transition, join with others to look at how we've navigated the waters of change in the past.

17th century: Puritan Foundation with Lindsay Miller

18th century: Slavery and Revolution with Dave Kidder


19th century: Unitarianism & Renaissance with Henry Gates

20th century: Church Organizations in Times of War with Peggy Bendroth

Email Henry Gates ([hjgates@comcast.net](mailto:hjgates@comcast.net)) to register and receive the Zoom invitation.


## LOOKING AHEAD

**MANY HELPING HANDS 365  
MLK DAY OF SERVICE**



**MONDAY JANUARY 20, 2025  
CENTRAL SQUARE 2PM - 5PM**

Welcome Gathering at Central Square Church,  
followed by hands-on service projects at  
Cambridge City Hall, Cambridge Senior Center,  
Central Square Church, and YWCA.  
**All ages welcome.**



**REGISTER  
HERE**



**A DAY OF SERVICE FOR THE ENTIRE COMMUNITY  
COME LEND YOUR HANDS AND MAKE A DIFFERENCE  
FOR MORE INFORMATION & PRE-REGISTRATION:  
[WWW.MANYHELPINGHANDS365.ORG](http://WWW.MANYHELPINGHANDS365.ORG)**

SPONSORED BY:



### Call to Annual Meeting

Notice is hereby given that the Annual Meeting of First Church in Cambridge, Congregational, United Church of Christ, will be held in its 389th year at 12:30 p.m., Sunday the 26th of January, 2025, in person in Margaret Jewett Hall and via Zoom conference:

1. to approve the minutes of Congregational Meetings held in 2024;
2. to receive and act upon the 2024 reports of the Staff, Officers, Executive Council, Boards, Committees, Teams, and Groups of the Church;
3. to receive a financial update for 2024 and 2025;
4. to elect officers and standing committee members;
5. to receive an update on our Ministerial Transition; and
6. to consider any other business that may legally come before the meeting.

By direction of the Executive Council,  
Laurie Friedman, Clerk  
Cambridge, Massachusetts  
January 8, 2025





# THIS WEEK

Looking ahead to this week's programs and events



## Monday, January 13

- 4:00 p.m. Gifts Discernment Committee, via Zoom
- 4:30 p.m. Contemplative Practices Gathering, via Zoom
- 6:00 p.m. Faith & Life Group: Care Group for the Caregivers, via Zoom

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

## Tuesday, January 14

- 3:00 p.m. Aging with Grace Monthly Meeting, via Zoom
- 6:30 p.m. Women's Community Book Group, via Zoom
- 7:00 p.m. Executive Council, via Zoom

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

## Wednesday, January 15

- 9:30 a.m. Staff Meeting, Harter Room and via Zoom
- 3:00 p.m. Buildings & Grounds Committee, via Zoom
- 6:00 p.m. Investment Committee, via Zoom
- 7:00 p.m. Christian Formation Committee, via Zoom
- 7:00 p.m. Missions & Social Justice Committee, via Zoom

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

## Thursday, January 16

- 6:30 p.m. Faith & Life Group: Exploring Hope for Peace & Justice in the Holy Land, via Zoom

## Friday, January 17

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

## Sunday, January 19

- 9:15 a.m. Choir Rehearsal, Sanctuary
- 10:00 a.m. Supporting Immigrants & Refugees: How to Respond, Harter Room and via Zoom
- 11:00 a.m. Hybrid Morning Worship, Sanctuary and via livestream
- 11:20 a.m. Church School: Godly Play and Bible 101 classes, Library and The Well
- 12:15 p.m. Refreshments in Hastings Common
- 7:30 p.m. Night Song, Sanctuary and via livestream

## Monday, January 20 - Church Office & Building Closed for MLK Holiday

- 2:00 p.m. Youth Group: MLK Service Project with Mosaic Interfaith Youth Action, JP

First Church in Cambridge, Congregational, UCC  
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617-547-2724 • [info@firstchurchcambridge.org](mailto:info@firstchurchcambridge.org) • [www.firstchurchcambridge.org](http://www.firstchurchcambridge.org)

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