



MLK Sunday
January 19, 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 19, 2025

Liturgist

Peggy Stevens

Preaching Today

Mike Solberg, *Interim Senior Minister*

Leading Worship

Laurie Friedman, *Clerk*

Kate Layzer, *Minister of Street Outreach*

Austin Marks, *guest musician*

Lee Prouty, *Facilities Manager*

Marieke Van Damme, *offering a Ministry Moment*

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. Adult Formation: 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: MLK Project, Margaret Jewett Hall
- 12:15 p.m. Refreshments in Hastings Common
- 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

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

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

What a Friend We Have in Jesus

Joseph M Scriven (1855)

*HYMN 509

What Does the Lord Require for Praise

*GREETING

Peggy Stevens

L: We gather to worship God,

C: who creates us and loves us;

L: who gifts us with diversity and makes us for community;

C: who gives Jesus Christ to the world to show us how to live;

L: who inspires children, youth, young adults, and people of all ages

C: to seek justice, share power, and live with others in love and equality;

L: who invites us to join the struggle for wholeness and wellbeing for all,

C: and whose presence, grace, and love sustain us in our living.

L: We gather to worship God.

C: All glory and honor be yours, almighty and everlasting One!

WORDS OF WELCOME

ANTHEM

Steal Away

Spiritual, arr. J. D. Riding

CONFESSING

INVITATION TO CONFESSION

SILENCE

PRAYER OF CONFESSION

from the words of Rev. King

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

All: O thou Eternal God,

out of whose absolute power and infinite intelligence

the whole universe has come into being.

We humbly confess that we have not loved thee

with our hearts, souls, and minds,

and we have not loved our neighbors as Christ loved us.

We have all too often lived by our own selfish impulses

rather than by the life of sacrificial love as revealed by Christ.

**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.*

**We often give in order to receive;
we love our friends, and hate our enemies;
we go the first mile, but dare not travel the second;
we forgive, but dare not forget.
And so, as we look within ourselves
we are confronted with the appalling fact
that the history of our lives is the history
of an eternal revolt against thee.
But thou, O God, have mercy upon us.
Forgive us for what we could have been, but failed to be.
Give us the intelligence to know thy will.
Give us the courage to do thy will.
Give us the devotion to love thy will.
In the name and spirit of Jesus we pray. Amen.**

DECLARATION OF GOD'S FORGIVENESS

***GREETING OF PEACE**

L: The peace of Christ be with you!
C: **And also with you!**

***HYMN 364**

This Little Light of Mine

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 an All-Church-School creative workshop in honor of MLK Day in Margaret Jewett Hall. Caregivers can find the children in MJH after worship.

OPENING THE WORD

PRAYER FOR UNDERSTANDING

All: Source of all truth and light, fill our hearts, and guide our steps
by the ancient and vibrant story we are about to hear.
In the message given and received, draw us into deeper discipleship,
now and always. Amen.

READING

Mark 12:28-34

SERMON

Why Choose Church?

Mike Solberg

LITANY FOR MLK DAY

from Christine Sine's "Godspace" website

- L: May we dream of a world made new,
**C: where together we shout for justice,
and as one we fight against oppression.**
- L: May we dream of a world made new,
**C: where together we seek God's righteousness
and as one we sing God's praise.**
- L: May we dream of a world made new,
**C: where together we climb God's mountain,
and as one we enter the promised land.**
- L: May we dream of a world made new,
**C: where together we proclaim the good news of God's kingdom,
and as one we enjoy its peace, and abundance, and love.**

*HYMN 378

God, We Thank You for Our People

SHARING OUR LIFE TOGETHER

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Kate Layzer

CALL TO ANNUAL MEETING

Laurie Friedman

MINISTRY MOMENT: REPARATIONS FUND

Marieke Van Damme

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

Blessed Assurance

Fannie Crosby (1873)

*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 467

I'm Gonna Live So God Can Use Me

*BENEDICTION

*CLOSING PRAYER

adapted from a prayer by Rev. Eliza Buchakjian-Tweedy, adapted from "Our God is Marching On!" - speech delivered at the Alabama State House by Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, March 25, 1965

**All: God of Righteousness,
we thank you for your life-giving presence in our worship,
and trust you to and remain with us as we step out into the world,
that we may face injustice with courage and love.
May we come to see that the end we seek is a society at peace with itself,
a society that can live with its conscience.
The timing may feel off; the end of the road might be out of sight,
yet we trust in your holy presence.**

**How long? Not long, because no lie can live forever.
How long? Not long, because you still reap what you sow.
How long? Not long. Because the arm of the moral universe is long,
but it bends toward justice.
How long? Not long, because you are our God,
and all may take refuge in the shadow of your wings.
Amen.**

VOLUNTARY

High in All The Earth

Hank Williams & Potters House Choir

OPENING HYMN

What Does the Lord Require for Praise 509

1. What does the Lord re - quire for praise and of - fer - ing?
 2. Peo - ple of earth, give ear! Should you not jus - tice know?
 3. How shall our life ful - fill God's law so hard and high?

What sac - ri - fice, de - sire or trib - ute did you bring?
 Will God your plead - ing hear, while crime and cruel - ty grow?
 Let Christ en - due our will with grace to for - ti - fy.

Do just - ly, love mer - cy, walk hum - bly with your God;
 Do just - ly, love mer - cy, walk hum - bly with your God;
 Then just - ly, in mer - cy, we'll hum - bly walk with God;

do just - ly, love mer - cy, walk hum - bly with your God.
 do just - ly, love mer - cy, walk hum - bly with your God.
 then just - ly, in mer - cy, we'll hum - bly walk with God.

364

This Little Light of Mine

1. This lit-tle light of mine, (of mine) I'm gon-na let it shine; (Oh _)

(of mine) (Oh _)

Detailed description: This system contains the first two staves of music. The top staff is a vocal line in treble clef, and the bottom staff is a piano accompaniment in bass clef. The key signature has three flats (B-flat, E-flat, A-flat), and the time signature is 4/4. The lyrics are written below the vocal staff.

This lit-tle light of mine, (of mine) I'm gon-na let it shine; (Oh _)

Detailed description: This system contains the second two staves of music. The top staff is a vocal line in treble clef, and the bottom staff is a piano accompaniment in bass clef. The lyrics are written below the vocal staff.

This lit-tle light of mine, (of mine) I'm gon-na let it shine;

(of mine)

Detailed description: This system contains the third two staves of music. The top staff is a vocal line in treble clef, and the bottom staff is a piano accompaniment in bass clef. The lyrics are written below the vocal staff.

let it shine, let it shine, let it shine. (oh, let it shine.)

Detailed description: This system contains the final two staves of music. The top staff is a vocal line in treble clef, and the bottom staff is a piano accompaniment in bass clef. The lyrics are written below the vocal staff.

2. This great joy I have, I'm gon-na let it shine . . .

3. Ev-'ry-where I go I'm gon-na let it shine . . .

4. All- through the night I'm gon-na let it shine . . .

st. 1-4

378 God, We Thank You for Our People

1. God, we thank you for our peo - ple, roots dug deep with - in the soil,
 2. Thank you, God, for gen - tle plea - sure: les - sons learned and se - crets told,
 3. Still we must con - fess be - fore you, some - times, Sav - ior, we have failed;
 4. By your Spir - it of cre - a - tion keep us bold for risk - ing still,

har - dy spir - its, rich in lov - ing, strong for strug - gle, bold for toil.
 hopes and mem - ories saved as trea - sure, passed to young ones by the old,
 though we wor - ship and a - dore you, some - times love has not pre - vailed.
 ea - ger in an - ti - ci - pa - tion, ev - er strong to do your will.

Faith - ful Rock of gen - er - a - tions, you whom par - ents' par - ents praised:
 pranks and glo - ries, songs and sto - ries, food by lov - ing hands pre - pared.
 Tem - pers rac - ing, dev - il chas - ing, hearts es - tranged by ice or flame
 Bind us close to one an - oth - er, shar - ing life and death and birth,

here in hope as we re - mem - ber may our song to you be raised.
 God, we bless you for your pres - ence in our tears and laugh - ter shared.
 you trans - form by ways for - giv - ing, Grace a - maz - ing! Grace, your name!
 wel - com - ing as sis - ter, broth - er, all your chil - dren on the earth.

CLOSING HYMN

I'm Gonna Live So God Can Use Me 467

I'm gon-na live so God can use me

1. I'm gon-na live (I'm gon-na live so) God can use (God can

me

use me) an - y - time, Lord, and an - y - where. (yes, an - y -

yes, an - y - time,

I'm gon-na live so God can use me

where.) I'm gon-na live (I'm gon-na live so) God can use me

an - y - time, Lord, and an - y - where. (yes an - y - where.)

Stanza 2. I'm gonna work 3. I'm gonna pray 4. I'm gonna sing

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 the family of the 21-year-old man killed in an act of gun violence on a street in North Cambridge, and we pray for all those in the neighborhood who are managing their responses to such a traumatic event.
- 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 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 with thanksgiving for news of a ceasefire in Gaza, where thousands have died in the tragic war that began in October 2023. We pray that the agreement to end the violence is a lasting one, and we pray for all who will try to rebuild their lives in Gaza.
- We pray for our neighbors all over the world. Especially we pray for all whose lives are affected by political upheaval and war around the globe. 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 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

Supporting Immigrants and Refugees: How to Respond

Today, 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.



Welcome to Guest Musician Austin Marks

We are so pleased to welcome Austin Marks as our guest musician this Sunday! Austin is a devoted man of faith, a father of three, and a highly accomplished musician, educator, and composer. He was awarded a scholarship to attend Berklee College of Music in Boston, where he pursued a Bachelor of Arts in Music Education. Currently, Austin serves as the Director of Worship and Arts at Grace Church of All Nations in Boston, a high school music teacher, and the Music Director for East Coast Soul, the premier function band in the Northeast. In addition, he composes music for TV and film sync placements.

New Year, New Sunday Morning Schedule

In 2025, 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 are returning to this structure, allowing for folks to attend formation programs directly before Morning Worship. As of January, our Sunday morning schedule is now:



- 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.



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.](#)

MLK DAY EVENTS



MOSAIC
INTERFAITH YOUTH ACTION

formerly **K4P**
Kids4Peace Boston

Youth Group: MLK Service Day with Mosaic
Monday, January 20, 2:00 - 5:00 p.m.
Bethel AME, Jamaica Plain

Members of our Youth Group are attending an interfaith Service Day sponsored by Mosaic Interfaith Youth Action.

Teens and chaperones will meet at First Church at 1:00 p.m. to drive to Jamaica Plain.

Martin Luther King Day Commemoration and Remembrance
Monday, January 20 at 11:00 a.m.

St. Peter's Episcopal Church, 838 Mass Ave., Central Square

The City of Cambridge will honor and remember Dr. King and his legacy by gathering at St. Peter's Episcopal Church to hear members of the Cambridge Community share readings of Dr. King's words calling for peace, justice, and transformation, as well as musical contributions from local choirs and original poetry from First Church's own Poet-in-Residence **Jean Dany Joachim**, Cambridge's former Poet Populist. Organized by the Cambridge Peace Commission, this event is free and open to all.

Many Helping Hands 365

MLK Day of Service

Monday, January 20, 2:00 - 5:00 p.m.

St. Peter's Episcopal Church
Central Square

Following the MLK Day Commemoration and Remembrance, join others in acts of service to honor the legacy of the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

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

SPONSORED BY:  **Cambridge**
Community Foundation

LOOKING AHEAD



Young Adults: Ice Skating

Friday, January 24, 6:30 - 9:00 p.m., Steriti Memorial Rink, North End

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

Pastoral Transition Work: Listening Session

Wednesday, January 22, 7:00 - 8:00 p.m., [via Zoom](#)

In order to set the stage for the work of the transitional Discovery Team, we are hosting listening sessions with the goals of following up on some themes and hopes from the last few years of our church life, and “checking in” about how the transitional time is going. Over 70 members have already participated, but we still want to hear from YOU! Come to our virtual listening session this coming Wednesday evening. All are welcome, whether this is your first or thousandth week at First Church.



Annual Congregational Meeting and Luncheon

Sunday, January 26, 12:30 - 1:30 p.m., Margaret Jewett Hall and via Zoom

Come, one and all, to the Annual Meeting of First Church in Cambridge following Morning Worship. A hearty luncheon will lead into our meeting, where we will celebrate another full year of ministry. We will thank one another for gifts shared and celebrate our outgoing and incoming leaders. Join us for this centuries-old tradition of meeting, prayer, and song.



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

LOOKING AHEAD

Photography on January 26

On Annual Meeting Sunday, we will welcome professional photographers into our community to capture images of our life together. Photos and short video reels developed from the day will be used in our communication with you and the wider world via our website, social media posts, e-newsletters, and other places. If you do NOT wish to appear in public church photos or videos, please contact [Director of Communications & Christian Formation Sarah Higginbotham](#).



Winter Faith & Life Group: 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 [Sarah Higginbotham](#) to register and receive the Zoom invitation.

Winter Faith & Life Group: Care Group for the Caregivers Mondays, February 10 & 24, March 10 & 24, and April 7, 6:00 - 7:15 p.m., via Zoom

Are you supporting others and could use some support yourself? Caring for spouses, parents, and other aging loved ones is challenging on many levels. Come join us as we support each other through guided deep listening, prayer, connections, and some practical resource-sharing. Whether you're managing health issues, navigating long-term care options, or balancing work and family responsibilities, we hope to offer encouragement, reduce isolation, and support you to care for your loved one and yourself.

This group began in Fall 2024 and is now extending its time together through early April. New participants are welcome! Please complete the [confidential signup form](#) to express interest. You will then receive the Zoom invitation from the leaders.



THIS WEEK

Looking ahead to this week's programs and events



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

- 11:00 a.m. City of Cambridge MLK Day Commemoration & Remembrance, St. Peter's Episcopal Church, Central Square
- 1:00 p.m. Youth Group meets at church for carpool to Mosaic MLK Service Day, JP
- 2:00 p.m. Helping Hands 365 MLK Day of Service, St. Peter's Episcopal Church, Central Sq.
- 4:30 p.m. Contemplative Practices Gathering, via Zoom

Tuesday, January 21

- 7:00 p.m. Beloved Community Meeting, via Zoom
- 7:30 p.m. Shelter Oversight Committee, via Zoom

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

Wednesday, January 22

- 9:30 a.m. Staff Meeting, Harter Room and via Zoom
- 7:00 p.m. Pastoral Transition Work: Listening Session, via Zoom

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

Thursday, January 23

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

Friday, January 24

- 12:00 p.m. Friday Café, Margaret Jewett Hall (MJH)
- 6:30 p.m. Young Adults: Ice Skating, Steriti Memorial Rink, North End, Boston

Sunday, January 26

- 9:15 a.m. Choir Rehearsal, Sanctuary
- 10:00 a.m. Joining Members Breakfast, 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
- 12:30 p.m. Annual Meeting and Luncheon, Margaret Jewett Hall
- 7:30 p.m. Night Song, Sanctuary and via livestream

Have a church program or event to promote?

Complete the [First Church Communications Request form](#).



SCAN ME

scan for online bulletin

First Church in Cambridge, Congregational, UCC
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