

Joining Sunday
January 26, 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 26, 2025

Liturgist	Lucy Metz
Preaching Today	Mike Solberg, <i>Interim Senior Minister</i> and Karen McArthur, <i>Minister of Stewardship & Finance</i>
Leading Worship	Emma Mitchell, <i>Pastoral Associate</i> Lee Prouty, <i>Facilities Manager</i> Peter Sykes, <i>Music Director</i> Laurie Williams, <i>Deacon</i>
Bulletin Cover Image	cockerel image by Perry Neubauer, <i>from the church archives</i>

Today's Programs and Events

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
12:30 p.m.	Annual Meeting & Luncheon, Margaret Jewett Hall and via Zoom
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

Allegro: Concerto in G Major

Bach/Ernst

***HYMN 250**

Here in This Place

***GREETING**

Lucy Metz

L: Friends, may the Spirit of the Living God be with you!

C: And with you!

L: We gather now in the name of Jesus, who claims us as his friends,

C: and who, at the same time, rules the world in love.

L: Indeed, we need Jesus to be a friend at our side right now,
to encourage our support for all that is good and true;

**C: and we need to trust in his loving reign to give us the patience, hope,
and strength to resist all that makes a mockery of his love.**

L: Beloved, there is much to do in these days and many who need us
to be with them, so today we ground ourselves
in the presence of our loving God, the Beginning and End.

**C: Because of who we are, and who we are called to be,
let us now worship God!**

WORDS OF WELCOME

ANTHEM

Locus Iste

Anton Bruckner

*Locus iste a Deo factus est,
inaestimabile sacramentum,
irreprehensibilis est.*

This place was made by God,
a priceless sacrament;
it is without reproach.

CONFESSING

INVITATION TO CONFESSION AND SILENCE

PRAYER OF CONFESSION

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

**All: Blessed God, we are gathered today,
many, many years into the life of this congregation.
We thank you for who we have been,
and for who we are today.**

**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.*

As the long history of our church shows, however,
O God, we are plenty capable of not seeing our own sin.
Brutal racism, virulent nationalism, complacent classism,
and other deep sins have been part of our common life -
and were embodied in the everyday actions of people like us.
And what is it now, God of love?
How have we strayed from your way?
Give us a spirit of understanding, humble minds,
and courageous hearts, so that we may see anew,
repair what we can, and live with deep love
for you and your world,
trusting in your unfathomable love. Amen.

DECLARATION OF GOD'S FORGIVENESS

*GREETING OF PEACE

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

*HYMN C-13

Christ, We Meet You On Our Way

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.

JOINING NEW MEMBERS IN COVENANT AND THROUGH BAPTISM

INVITATION

Emma Mitchell

Peter Byerly
Edward Gao
Lucy Metz
Susan Redlich
George Van Hare

ADDRESS AND PROMISES

SACRAMENT OF BAPTISM

Introduction

*Congregational Vows

Laurie Williams

L: Jesus Christ welcomes everyone who desires new life into the faith and family of Christ.
Do you who witness this baptism today promise your Christian love and support to our brother Eddie?

C: We do!

L: Will you help him grow in faith and witness with him to the way of Christ?

C: We will, with the help of God!

L: Do you renew your own promises to live in the freedom of Christ and resist the power of everything that seeks to draw us away from God?

C: We do, with the help of God!

Blessing of the Water

Baptism of Edward Gao

Thanksgiving Prayer

ADDRESS TO NEW MEMBERS

*COVENANT OF FIRST CHURCH IN CAMBRIDGE

**All: We who are now brought together
and united into one Church
under the Lord Jesus Christ, our Head,
in such sort as becometh all those
whom he hath redeemed and sanctified to himself,
do solemnly and religiously, as in his most holy presence,
promise and bind ourselves to walk in all our ways
according to the rule of the Gospel,
and in all sincere conformity to his holy ordinances,
and in mutual love and respect each to other,
so near as God shall give us grace.**

CONCLUDING PRAYER AND WELCOME

OPENING THE WORD

PRAYER FOR UNDERSTANDING

READING

1 Thessalonians 3:6-9, Matthew 18:20

SERMON

Why Choose THIS Church? Mike Solberg & Karen McArthur

SHARING OUR LIFE TOGETHER

ANNOUNCEMENTS

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

Eternal Light

Mark Schweizer

***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 242**

God of Life

***BENEDICTION**

VOLUNTARY

Presto: Concerto in G Major

Bach/Ernst

OPENING HYMN

250

Here in This Place
(Gather Us In)

Unison



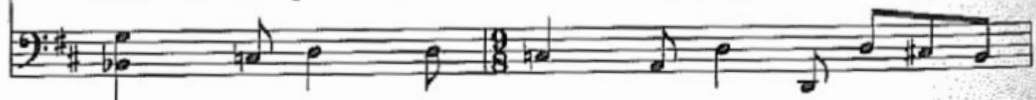
1. Here in this place, the new light is stream-ing, now the dark night has
2. We are the young—our lives are a mys-tery; we are the old, who
3. Here we re-ceive new life in your wa-ters; here we re-ceive the
4. Not just in build-ings, small and con-fin-ing, not in some heav-en,



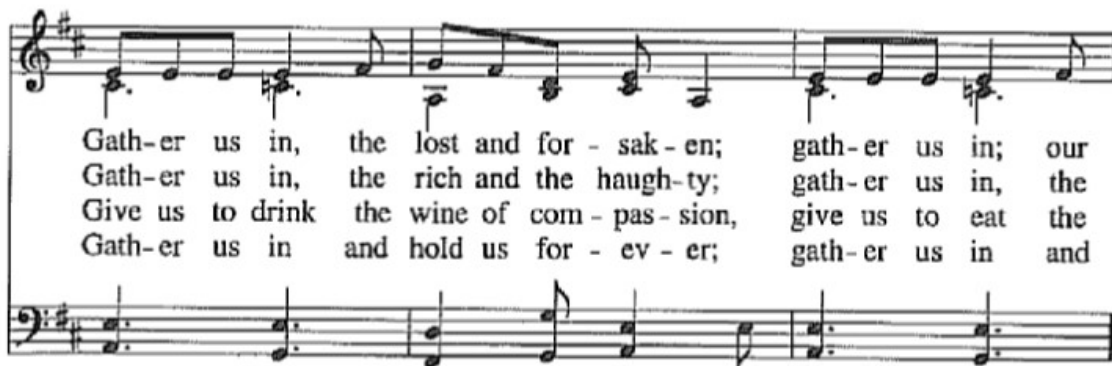
van-ished a - way. See in this space our fears and our dream-ings,
yearn for your face. We have been sung through-out all of his-tory,
bread of new birth; here you shall call your sons and your daugh-ters,
light years a - way, here in this place the new light is shin-ing;



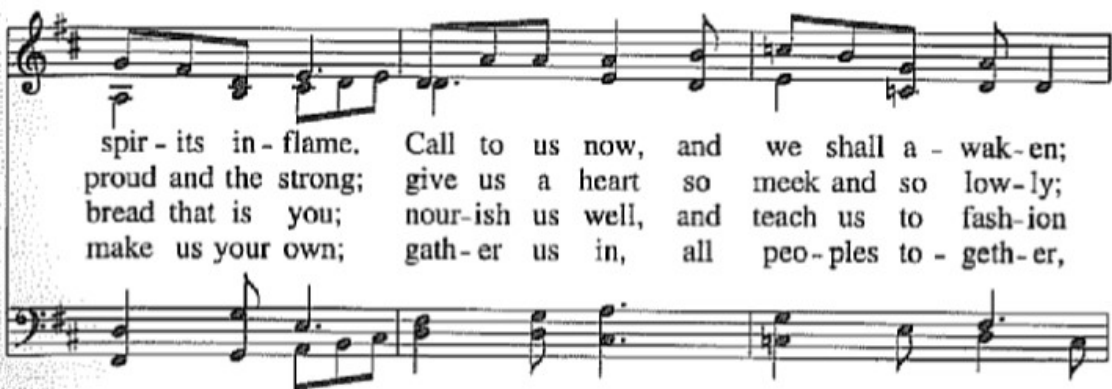
brought here to you in the light of this day.
called to be light to the whole hu-man race.
call us a - new to be salt for the earth.
now is God pres-ent, and now is the day.



OPENING HYMN, cont'd.



Gath-er us in, the lost and for - sak - en; gath-er us in; our
Gath-er us in, the rich and the haugh-ty; gath-er us in, the
Give us to drink the wine of com - pas - sion, give us to eat the
Gath-er us in and hold us for - ev - er; gath-er us in and



spir - its in - flame. Call to us now, and we shall a - wak - en;
proud and the strong; give us a heart so meek and so low - ly;
bread that is you; nour - ish us well, and teach us to fash - ion
make us your own; gath - er us in, all peo - ples to - geth - er,



we shall a - rise at the sound of our name.
give us the cour - age to en - ter the song.
lives that are ho - ly and hearts that are true.
fire of love in our flesh and our bone.

PEACE HYMN

Christ, We Meet You On Our Way C-13

1. Christ, we meet you on our way: Al - le -
 2. Take our lives, our hopes, our dreams, Al - le -
 3. Join us in a bond of love, Al - le -
 4. Let your joy - ous songs be sung, Al - le -

lu - ia! Com - ing to re - deem the day, Al - le -
 lu - ia! Wash them in bap - tis - mal streams; Al - le -
 lu - ia! With saints here and saints a - bove, Al - le -
 lu - ia! In each place, by ev' - ry - tongue, Al - le -

lu - ia! Ris - ing out of dark - ness, Al - le -
 lu - ia! Now from e - vil and from death, Al - le -
 lu - ia! Chil - dren, stran - gers, ev' - ry - one, Al - le -
 lu - ia! Gen - tle Sov - ereign, Ris - en - Friend, Al - le -

lu - ia! You would claim a world so fair, Al - le - lu - ia!
 lu - ia! Raise us with re - new - ing breath, Al - le - lu - ia!
 lu - ia! You for us the vic - t'ry won, Al - le - lu - ia!
 lu - ia! Liv - ing Spi - rit, with - out end, Al - le - lu - ia!

WORDS: Allen Happe

MUSIC: Robert Williams

LLANFAIR

SERMON HYMN

We who are now brought together

Mary Luti

Peter Sykes

We who are now brought to - geth - er, e - ven we,
We who are now brought to - geth - er, Spi - rit - led,
We who are now joined to - geth - er in God's sight
We who are now joined to - geth - er in all ways

drawn by the love of our Sa - vior, ev - en he,
called and made ho - ly by Je - sus, hum - ble Head,
so near as grace may be giv - en day and night,
of - fer to you, O Cre - a - tor, praise on praise

pro - mise to walk on his path - way, faith - ful, free.
pro - mise to live by the gos - pel, as he said.
pro - mise to love one an - oth - er, God's de - light.
grate - ful - ly: one con - gre - ga - tion, all our days.

CLOSING HYMN

242

God of Life

1. God of life, in Christ you lead us, guid - ing us a -
 2. God of words and Word In - car-nate, words that chal - lenge
 3. God of mus - ic, psalms and an-thems, help us sing your
 4. God of days and years and e - ons, still you call as

long the way. In our past, through joys and sor - rows,
 and em - brace, grant us bold - ness in our speak - ing,
 faith a - new: mel - o - dies ex - pand - ing wor - ship,
 in the past. Work un - done de - mands our la - bor;

you have been our strength and stay. Keep us faith - ful,
 while we know your lov - ing grace. Give us words both
 har - mo - nies en - rich - ing, too. May our lives be
 jus - tice years for peace at last. Yours the vi - sion

true dis - ci - ples, in our learn - ing and our praise,
 clear and win - some, lov - ing hearts and list'n - ing ears,
 hymns in ac - tion, tuned to Christ in note and rhyme,
 and the chal - lenge; ours the mis - sion and the praise.

cel - e - brat - ing past and pres - ent, con - se - crat - ing fu - ture days.
 cel - e - brat - ing past and pres - ent, con - se - crat - ing fu - ture years.
 cel - e - brat - ing past and pres - ent, con - se - crat - ing fu - ture time.
 Cel - e - brat - ing past and pres - ent, con - se - crat - ing fu - ture days.

COMMUNITY PRAYERS

- We pray for Dave Kidder as he recovers after a recent hospital stay.
- We pray for Renate Rose as she recovers from a car accident.
- We pray for Devin Hansen’s friend Carrie Thomas, who is currently hospitalized while in a diabetic coma.
- We pray for Karen Ann 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 deadly and devastating 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 a new presidential administration comes into office. We pray for all those who are experiencing anxiety about actual and potential changes to how our federal government will treat the rights and freedoms of a variety of groups, including immigrants, trans and gender non-conforming people, and people facing decisions about their reproductive health. We pray that we, as church, will see and embody the way of Jesus Christ in this time and place, even, if need be, at cost to ourselves. We pray that we will have the courage to “render to Caesar that which is Caesar’s, and to God that which is God’s.”
- 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.



In Memoriam

A memorial service for beloved First Church member Carol Wilson-Braun will take place at 11:00 a.m. on Saturday, March 15, in the Sanctuary and via livestream, with a video presentation beginning at 10:00 a.m. and a light luncheon to follow. In order for the family to plan appropriately, please email Office Assistant Bruce Dillenbeck (bruce@firstchurchcambridge.org) to RSVP with numbers for the luncheon.

TODAY AT FIRST CHURCH

Photography Today!

On this Annual Meeting Sunday, we 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](#).



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



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.](#)

COMING UP AT FIRST CHURCH



Virtual Listening Session Rescheduled

Thursday, January 30, 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 Thursday evening. All are welcome, whether this is your first or thousandth week at First Church.



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](mailto:sarah.higginbotham@firstchurchcambridge.org) 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.

COMING UP AT FIRST CHURCH

Upstander Project Conversations

Sundays, February 2 and 9, 10:00 - 10:45 a.m.

Harter Room and via Zoom

As First Church has walked the journey of becoming an Anti-Racist Church, we have leaned on

connections we've made with the [Upstander Project](#), whose mission is to *"use storytelling to amplify silenced narratives, develop upstander skills to challenge systemic injustice, and nurture compassionate, courageous relationships that honor the interconnection of all beings and the Earth."* Last summer, several First Church members attended a week-long Upstander Project gathering, and they are eager to share the learning and questions that arose. Join Marieke Van Damme and Amy Matias for two Sunday morning conversations, where we'll talk about what people are curious about, what level we are at in our own learning, and what ways we'd like to receive information as we all move forward as a community on this learning journey.



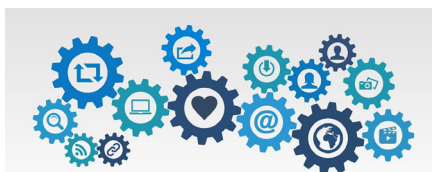
Leadership Retreat

Saturday, March 1, 9:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m.

Margaret Jewett Hall

Mark your calendars for a First Church Leadership Retreat. The event will include both practical details about getting things done at First Church and broader leadership training in the church environment (hint: it's different in some ways than outside the church!). All are welcome, while all those who serve on a church

committee or other task force, team, or issue-based group are particularly encouraged to attend. If you cannot attend the full event, please still come for as much time as you are able. Lunch will be provided, and child care can be arranged (contact Sarah Higginbotham to make a child care plan). So that we can efficiently plan lunch, [please RSVP here](#), no later than Tuesday, February 25. Please contact Moderator Phil Servello-Jones or Pastor Mike with any questions. See you there!



Are you on the First Church List?

The First Church List is a virtual hub for the First Church community to communicate directly with each other through email messages or online posts on topics of interest. Folks use the List to share personal announcements

and prayer requests, publicize events sponsored by outside organizations, ask questions or ask for help from our church community, and remind each other of church events or volunteer opportunities. [Learn how to subscribe to The First Church List.](#)



THIS WEEK

Looking ahead to this week's programs and events



Monday, January 27

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

Wednesday, January 29

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

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

Thursday, January 30

- 6:30 p.m. Faith & Life Group: Exploring Hope for Peace & Justice in the Holy Land, via Zoom
- 7:00 p.m. Rescheduled Virtual Listening Session, via Zoom

Friday, January 31

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

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

Sunday, February 2

- 9:15 a.m. Choir Rehearsal, Sanctuary
- 10:00 a.m. Adult Formation: Upstander Project Conversation, Harter Room & via Zoom
- 11:00 a.m. Hybrid Morning Worship, Sanctuary and via livestream
- 11:20 a.m. Church School: Pastoral Care Sunday, Library
- 12:15 p.m. Refreshments in Hastings Common
- 12:30 p.m. Our Whole Lives (OWL) for 7/8th graders, The Well
- 7:00 p.m. Faith & Life Group: Four Centuries of First Church History, via Zoom
- 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](#).

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First Church in Cambridge, Congregational, UCC
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