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Communion Sunday  
February 2, 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

### February 2, 2025

|                        |  |
|------------------------|--|
| <b>Liturgist</b>       | Audrey Bellinger, <i>Deacon</i>  |
| <b>Preaching Today</b> | Mike Solberg, <i>Interim Senior Minister</i>   |
| <b>Leading Worship</b> | Kate Layzer, <i>Minister of Street Outreach</i><br>Lee Prouty, <i>Facilities Manager</i><br>Peter Sykes, <i>Music Director</i> |

**Bulletin Cover Image** wheat 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: Upstander Project Conversation, Harter Room & <a href="#">via Zoom</a> |
| 11:00 a.m. | Hybrid Morning Worship, Sanctuary and <a href="#">via livestream</a>                    |
| 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, <a href="#">via Zoom</a>    |
| 7:30 p.m.  | Night Song, Sanctuary and <a href="#">via livestream</a>                                |

### 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

Improvisation on "Rock of Ages"

Peter Sykes

### \*HYMN 261

The Sun Is on the Sea and Shore

### \*GREETING

Audrey Bellinger

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

Amazing Grace

Spiritual, arr. P. Sykes

### CONFESSING

### INVITATION TO CONFESSION

### SILENCE

### PRAYER OF CONFESSION

*With thanks to church member Duncan Hollomon.*

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

**All: Gracious God, these seem like particularly difficult days  
for confessing our sins, that is, for being honest with you.**

**We barely know what is going on in our own hearts.**

**The reality of these days seems to have us careening back and forth  
between outrage and despair - neither of which**

*\*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.*

seem particularly faithful or useful right now.  
Perhaps our confession, O God, is that we don't spend enough time  
grounding ourselves in your Spirit, so that we can live with your peace  
yet still pay attention to, and resist,  
all that works against your love in this world.  
Help us be deeply centered in you, O God. Amen.

## DECLARATION OF GOD'S FORGIVENESS

### \*GREETING OF PEACE

L: The peace of Christ be with you!

C: **And also with you!**

### \*HYMN 70

O My Soul, Bless Your Redeemer

### 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

**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.**

### READINGS

John 3:16, 1 Peter 2:19-25

### SERMON

Salvation through the Cross of Christ?

Mike Solberg

### \*HYMN 209

Alleluia! The Strife Is O'er

## SHARING OUR LIFE TOGETHER

### ANNOUNCEMENTS

Kate Layzer

## 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

O Taste and See

Thomas Pavlechko

## \*DOXOLOGY

**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.**

## \*PRAYER OF DEDICATION

### SHARING THE FEAST

## \*INVITATION

## \*PRAYER OF PREPARATION

L: How good it is to praise you, Holy One!

Your beauty ushers in the dawn,  
and in your light we see light—

**C: justice for the nations, mercy for the broken-hearted,  
safety for the poor, belonging for the outcast,  
strength for the weak, and forgiveness for the sinner.**

L: You reveal your love in joy and sorrow,  
and we know your wonder even in the shadow of death.

**C: All your creatures behold your works  
and testify to your faithfulness.**

L: And so we too, fragile lamps in your holy house,  
raise our hearts in praise.

## REMEMBERING AND GIVING THANKS

L: Now, O God, with grateful joy, we remember Jesus,  
his daring love, his open table.

*Silence*

L: We remember that he called us friends.

**C: He told us everything you placed in his heart.**

*(cont'd. on next page)*

- L: We remember that he gave us peace.  
**C: A peace no one else can give.**  
L: We remember that he did not leave us bereft.  
**C: He sent us a Helper – the Spirit who dwells in our hearts!**

## WORDS OF INSTITUTION

## PRAYER TO THE HOLY SPIRIT

## 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.**

## \*SHARING THE BREAD AND CUP

*All who seek to follow Jesus' way of compassion, justice, and peace are welcome at this table.  
For those worshipping via the livestream, please take and eat. For those here in the Sanctuary,  
please come forward with your bulletins to receive the elements at one of the stations, and then  
proceed to the chancel to gather in a circle, making space to include the front pew in the circle  
for those who prefer to be seated.*

## \*PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING

- L: Let us give thanks!  
**C: We thank you, God, for gladness in this bread and cup,  
for love that cannot die, for peace the world cannot give,  
for joy in the company of friends, for the splendors of creation,  
and for the mission of justice you have made our own.  
Give us the gifts of this holy communion --  
oneness of heart, love for neighbors, forgiveness of enemies,  
and the will to serve you all the days of our lives.  
In Christ's name we pray. Amen.**

## GOING FORTH

## \*HYMN 380

We Are Not Our Own

*see page 5*

## \*BENEDICTION

261

The Sun Is on the Sea and Shore

1. The sun is on the sea and shore, a new day has be - gun;  
 2. Your love is ev - er in our view, like shin - ing stars by night;  
 3. We do not know what grief and care each com - ing day may bring;

with morn - ing hymns we will a - dore the bless - ed Three - in - One;  
 your gifts are ev - ery morn - ing new, O God of love and light;  
 the heart shall find some glad - ness there, trust you in ev - 'ry - thing;

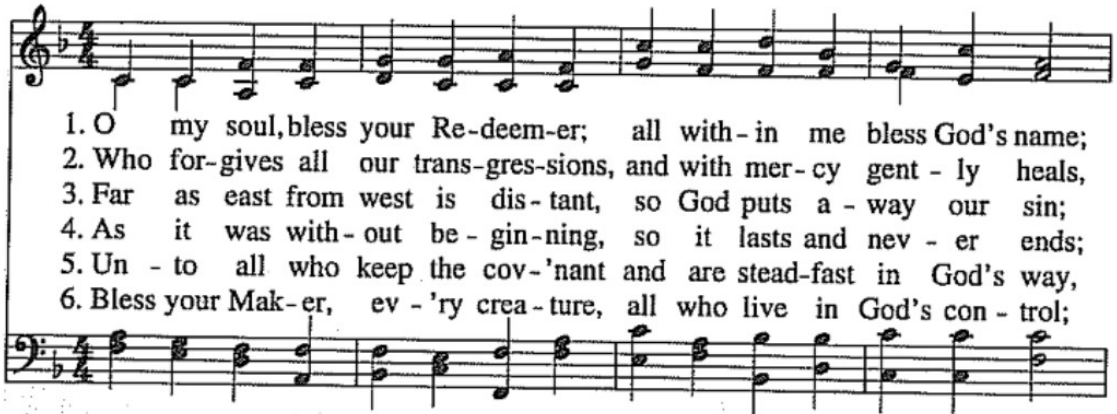
and we shall praise you ev - er more un - til the day is done.  
 your mer - cy, like the heav - en's blue, fills all our daz - zled sight.  
 the life that serves you ev - 'ry - where will nev - er cease to sing.

WORDS: Louis F. Benson, 1897; adapt. Austin C. Lovelace, 1991, alt.  
 MUSIC: J. L. Macbeth Bain, 1915; arr. Gordon Jacob, 1934, adapt.

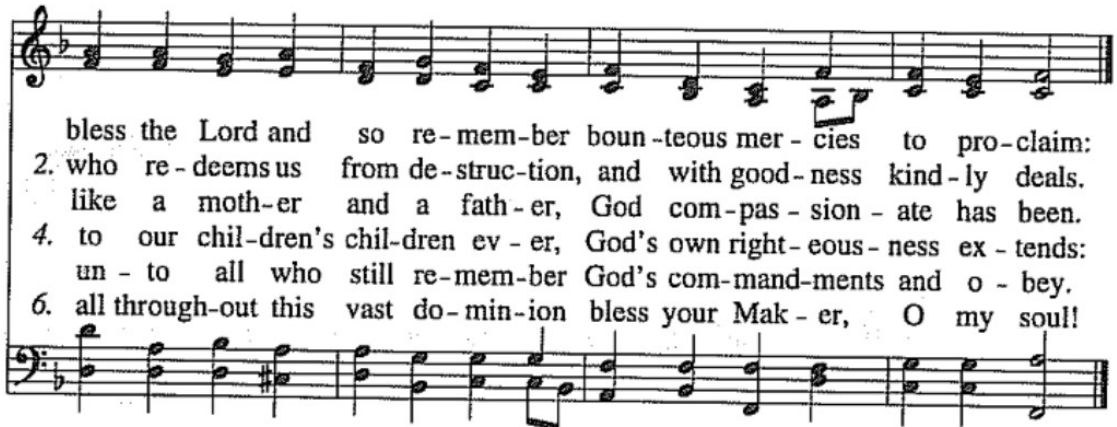
BROTHER JAMES' AIR  
 86.86.86

70

## O My Soul, Bless Your Redeemer



1. O my soul, bless your Re-deem-er; all with-in me bless God's name;  
 2. Who for-gives all our trans-gres-sions, and with mer-cy gent-ly heals,  
 3. Far as east from west is dis-tant, so God puts a-way our sin;  
 4. As it was with-out be-gin-ning, so it lasts and nev-er ends;  
 5. Un-to all who keep the cov-'nant and are stead-fast in God's way,  
 6. Bless your Mak-er, ev-'ry crea-ture, all who live in God's con-trol;



bless the Lord and so re-mem-ber boun-teous mer-cies to pro-claim:  
 2. who re-deems us from de-struc-tion, and with good-ness kind-ly deals.  
 like a moth-er and a fath-er, God com-pas-sion-ate has been.  
 4. to our chil-dren's chil-dren ev-er, God's own right-eous-ness ex-tends:  
 un-to all who still re-mem-ber God's com-mand-ments and o-bey.  
 6. all through-out this vast do-min-ion bless your Mak-er, O my soul!

WORDS: Anonymous, *United Presbyterian Book of Psalms U.S.A.*, 1871, alt. 1972, 1988, alt.  
 MUSIC: Melody attr. Christian F. Witt, *Psalmodia Sacra*, Gotha, 1715

STUTT GART  
 87.87



Alleluia! The Strife Is O'er

Al - le - lu - ia! Al - le - lu - ia! Al - le - lu - ia!

1. The strife is o'er, the bat - tle done; the vic - to -  
 2. The powers of death have done their worst, but Christ their  
 3. The three sad days are quick - ly sped, he ris - es  
 4. Christ, by the stripes which wound - ed thee, from death's dread

ry of life is won; the song of tri - umph  
 le - gions hath dis - persed; let shouts of ho - ly  
 glo - rious from the dead; all glo - ry to our  
 sting thy serv - ants free, that we may live and

has be - gun:  
 joy out - burst:  
 ris - en Head!  
 sing to thee:  
 Al - le - lu - ia!

*D.S.*

CLOSING HYMN

380

We Are Not Our Own

*Unison*

1. We are not our own. Earth forms us, hu - man  
 2. We are not a - lone. Earth names us: past and  
 3. Through a hu - man life God finds us; dy - ing,  
 4. There - fore let us make thanks - giv - ing, and with  
 5. And if love's en - coun - ters lead us on a  
 6. Let us be a house of wel - come, liv - ing

leaves on na - ture's grow - ing vine, fruit of man - y  
 2. pre - sent, peo - ples near and far, fam - i - ly and  
 liv - ing, love is ful - ly known, and in bread and  
 4. jus - tice, will - ing and a - ware, give to earth, and  
 way un - cer - tain and un - known, all the saints with  
 6. stone up - hold - ing liv - ing stone, glad - ly show - ing

gen - er - a - tions, seeds of life di - vine.  
 2. friends and stran - gers show us who we are.  
 wine re - minds us: we are not our own.  
 4. all things liv - ing, lit - ur - gies of care.  
 prayer sur - round us: we are not a - lone.  
 6. all our neigh - bors we are not our own!

WORDS: Brian Wren, 1987  
 MUSIC: Brian Wren, 1987; harm. Fred Graham, 1987

YARNTON  
 89.85

## COMMUNITY PRAYERS

- We pray for Rev. Karen Fritz and the Fritz-Kill family on the recent death of Rev. Tony Kill, beloved pastor and former First Church Interim Minister (1986).
- We pray for Renate Rose as she recovers at home after being struck by a car.
- We pray for Devin Hansen’s friend Carrie Thomas, who continues to recover in the hospital after experiencing a diabetic coma.
- 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 mourning the loss of life in the plane crash at Reagan National Airport on Wednesday night.
- 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 treats 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 for peace in Eastern Congo, the home of the Amani and Amini Mataboro Tom, where Rwandan-backed rebels have taken control of the city of Goma. We pray for the friends and neighbors of the Tom family, and for the millions of people who are in dangerous circumstances. May they know God’s presence and protection.
- 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.*



## COMING UP AT FIRST CHURCH

### Young Adults: Faith on Tap Monday, February 3, 7:00 - 9:00 p.m.

Trina's Starlite Lounge, Somerville

All 20-30 somethings are invited for casual fellowship at the home of the best hot dogs in Camberville. Email [youngadults@firstchurchcambridge.org](mailto:youngadults@firstchurchcambridge.org) to RSVP or to get on the mailing list for upcoming young adult gatherings.



### Women's Community Book Group

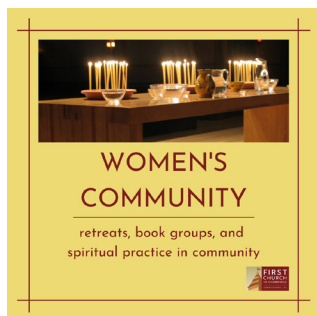
Tuesday, February 11, 6:30 - 7:45 p.m., [via Zoom](#)

Please join us for a discussion of Ann Patchett's [These Precious Days](#).

"This collection of essays spans from marriage and knitting to things more unavoidable, such as family, death, and lockdown, all with the strength of narration Patchett is known for." Just in case you don't have time to read every essay, please look for an email from Susan and Alex with a few of the suggested essays on which we will focus during our gathering. We are always looking for new people to join

us, so please do not hesitate to come Tuesday night--we'd love to have you and a friend!

Contact Alex ([alex@steinert-evoy.org](mailto:alex@steinert-evoy.org)) to get on the list.



### Adult Formation: What Is Christian Nationalism?

Sunday, February 16, 10:00 - 10:45 a.m., Harter Room and [via Zoom](#)

Perhaps you have heard references to this ideology in the news lately, as it has become more clearly part of the self-understanding of many in the "MAGA movement." Pastor Mike will review the core meaning of Christian Nationalism, the nature of support for the ideology today, and lay out some ways in which he believes it goes against core aspects of Christian faith.



### Discovery Team Conversations

Sundays, February 23, March 2, and April 6, 10:00 - 10:45 a.m.

Harter Room and [via Zoom](#)

One Sunday per month in February, March, and April, our newly-appointed Discovery Team will host conversations in which we "drill down" on some specific issues and themes that will affect our upcoming search for a new Senior Minister. We'll be describing the specific topics

soon, but for now, please plan on being a part of these conversations held during the pre-worship Adult Formation Hour. Each person's contributions to the conversation will be important in our discovery and discernment process.



## COMING UP AT FIRST CHURCH

### 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!



### FAITH & LIFE GROUPS

Lent/Spring  
2025



### Faith & Life Groups: Spring 2025

#### Call for Leaders!

Are you interested in leading a small group over Zoom or in person this Spring? Contact Beth Spaulding (bspaulding68@gmail.com) to discuss your idea for the next round of Faith & Life Groups, running in April/May, with registration happening in March.

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 by February 17!***

### 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.](#)



## INTRODUCING OUR NEW MEMBERS

*We welcomed these six new members in covenant last Sunday.*

**Peter Byerly** has participated in the life of First Church for several decades and is now making his membership official. He is a retired architect living in Boston. Peter is from a small town, but came to the city years ago for college (Philadelphia) and architecture school (Cambridge) and stayed in cities. He lives near a river now and loves it.

**Eddie Gao** is originally from Columbus, Ohio, but spent 7 years in the Bay Area for college and work before moving to Cambridge last year for law school, where he's currently in his second year. Brought to First Church by a rather winding faith journey over the course of the last several years, he is a great admirer of the legacy of English Protestant Nonconformism and is excited to join a church with such an impactful place in the histories of America and of progressive reform.

**Mac Howland** arrived in Cambridge from Ohio in 1968 for college and spent years in the First Church Choir, cycled through committees (music, fellowship, deacons, council, B&G, treasurer, stewardship, investment, peace, organist searches), married Priscilla, and had 3 kids. The Howland family joined a Belmont church for 30 years, but Mac returned to the Choir every summer. He is ready to make his connection to First Church more formal again by re-joining as a member.

**Lucy Metz** grew up in western Massachusetts and moved to Somerville in 2022 after graduating from Smith College. She works in energy policy and in her free time enjoys distance running and writing. She was drawn to First Church's rich sense of community, history, and spirituality.

**Susan Redlich** first participated at First Church in the Jazz 5:30 service in the '90's with her young daughter Elizabeth. She devotes her time to acting for climate justice, indigenous rights, and food security organizations. Her prior work life as an environmental planner and project manager spanned 30 years. Susan has found that First Church has been generous in providing spaces for spiritual growth.

**George Van Hare** and his wife Middy Estabrook moved to Cambridge from Saint Louis in 2023, but George grew up in Connecticut, and they both went to school in Maine. After a 35-year career in clinical pediatric cardiology specializing in heart rhythm disorders, most recently at Washington University in St Louis, he now serves as a Medical Officer in the cardiac devices office of FDA, working remotely. George grew up in the Presbyterian Church (PCUSA) and has served on Session, both as Clerk of Session and on various committees including worship and music. He loves singing in the choir, where some of the best church fellowship is found, and is always looking for people to play guitar with.

## THE PEOPLE OF FIRST CHURCH

A few years ago, we all used to enjoy reading “First Church Profiles,” articles in our newsletter about people in our congregation. Pastor Mike so enjoyed reading them when he arrived here that he thought it would be good to restart these profiles. Dave McCann agreed to write, and Marieke Van Damme and Curt Nickisch graciously agreed to be the pilot subjects.

This will be an “occasional” series, but perhaps with additional authors (volunteers, anyone? - contact Pastor Mike), hopefully we’ll keep it going long enough to write about everyone! Without further ado, here’s the first profile, to help you get to know some of “The People of First Church.”

*Note: Times have changed since the previous version of “First Church Profiles” with regard to digital spread of information and all matters of online privacy. The article printed here will not be accessible in the online version of the bulletin. If you worship with us via livestream using the online bulletin and would like to receive a paper copy, please email Bruce Dillenbeck with your request: [bruce@firstchurchcambridge.org](mailto:bruce@firstchurchcambridge.org)*

**Marieke Van Damme and Curt Nickisch**  
*profile by Dave McCann*





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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 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.*

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



# THIS WEEK

Looking ahead to this week's programs and events



## Monday, February 3

- 4:30 p.m. Contemplative Practices Gathering, via Zoom
- 7:00 p.m. Young Adults: Faith on Tap, Trina's Starlight Lounge, Somerville

## Tuesday, February 4

- 7:00 p.m. Discovery Team Meeting, via Zoom

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

## Wednesday, February 5

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

## Friday, February 7

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

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

## Sunday, February 9

- 9:15 a.m. Choir Rehearsal, Sanctuary
- 10:00 a.m. Adult Formation: Upstander Project Conversation
- 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
- 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](#).

scan for online bulletin

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