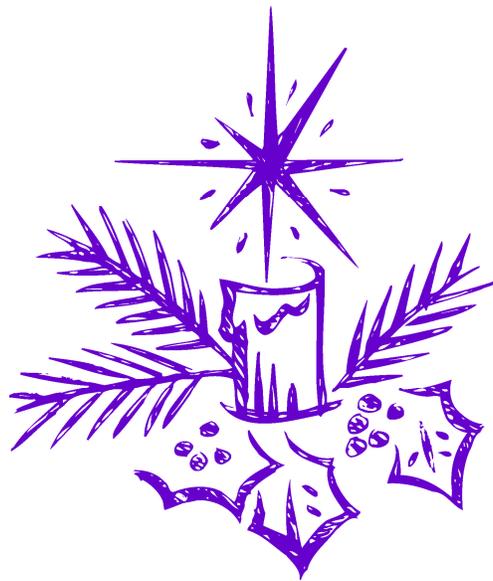


ADVENT

First Church in Cambridge, UCC

December 2014



Advent, the four weeks before Christmas, is the beginning of a new Church Year and a time of quiet, patient preparation for the birth of Jesus. Advent's watchword is *hope*. In song, prayer, and ritual (such as Advent wreaths and candle lighting), we echo the deep longing for peace and justice of God's people in every age. We call on God to send the Promised One to usher in a new world of reconciliation and joy. The colors purple (or blue) and pink express Advent's spirit of contemplation, penitence, hope, and desire.

At First Church we observe the season in worship, study, fellowship, and service. These pages provide details on our many Advent opportunities.

Christian Formation

ADVENT STUDY

Sundays, November 30 and December 7, 14 and 21, 10 a.m., in the Hastings Room

This season our Advent Study will focus on the timeless theme of *preparation*. In our 10 a.m. hour, we hope you will find an oasis of calm and a space to focus on things that truly matter. Find support and encouragement to practice resistance against the frenetic pace and superficial preoccupations of our culture in this season. We will set aside this hour of our week to attune to our own hearts and to “the space between us,” where we may meet God’s Spirit. How are we called *individually* to prepare within ourselves to welcome the Christ? How are we called *as a community* to witness to the light of Christ in the world? We’ll continue with the practice of *discernment*, which we began to develop this fall at a couple of 10 am hours and at the multigenerational retreat in October. But, no worries! You don’t need any prior “preparation” to join this Advent Study! Join us for one or participate in all four sessions.

Fellowship and Fun

ADVENT WORKSHOP

Sunday, November 30, 12:15 p.m., Margaret Jewett Hall (MJH) Join us for a workshop of crafts in Margaret Jewett Hall following Morning Worship on the first Sunday of Advent. People of all ages are invited to make an Advent wreath (bring your candle ring from home), dip beeswax candles, design homemade wrapping paper, decorate cookies, create ornaments, and more. A simple lunch will be offered, as we mark the beginning of this special season. Nancy Cyr is coordinating the workshop, please contact her for more information at ncyr@edlabs.harvard.edu.

PARSONAGE HOLIDAY OPEN HOUSE*

Thursday, December 11, 5 p.m. - 9 p.m., Parsonage (44 Garden Street) Join us by the fireside for a little festive fun and fellowship at the parsonage. Come for all or part of the evening. A special invitation to kids and young families to feel free to join us on the early side, for choir members to come by before rehearsal, and for young adults to swing by before heading out to continue the revelry late night! We’ll provide a light meal, some holiday spirits and of course, pie! Bring some Christmas cookies or a drink to share, if you’d like, or just bring yourselves!



**Events in red are new this season.*

CHRISTMAS PARTY AND POTLUCK

Sunday, December 21, 12:30 p.m., MJH

The annual First Church Christmas Party will be held after church on Sunday, December 21 in Margaret Jewett Hall. Watch for more details coming soon. Organized and animated with great affection and skill by the Friends of Fellowship!

Special Services

ADVENT CHORAL MUSIC SUNDAY

Sunday, December 14, during morning worship, 11 a.m., Sanctuary

Our special Choral Music Sunday service on December 14 highlights the incredible heritage of great music composed for the Advent season. This year we will reprise a beautiful work written especially for First Church and our choir by our staff composer, Patricia Van Ness. ADVENT (1997) is a multi-movement work for choir, soloists, and string orchestra; it is evocative of the longing and mystery of Advent.

WINTER “SOLACE” SERVICE*

Sunday, December 14, 5:30 pm, Lindsay Chapel and Hastings Room

An evening service in the spirit of reflection on the holiday season for those who have a hard time during the holiday season. Join us the evening of December 14 at 5:30. For more information, contact Taj Smith, taj@firstchurchcambridge.org.

FIRST CHURCH UN-PAGEANT

Sunday, December 21, during Morning Worship, 11 a.m., Sanctuary

The Un-Pageant is a fun and funky tradition at First Church! On the fourth Sunday of Advent, we tell the Christmas story as a congregation in Morning Worship by donning costume elements found in the pews, transforming us into angels, shepherds, sheep, wise folks, and villagers of Bethlehem. We sing the well-loved carols and gather close around the Baby Jesus to experience once again that miraculous love and light and hope and peace. Because it's unrehearsed, expect a few surprises... and many joyful hearts!

CHRISTMAS EVE VESPERS SERVICE

Wednesday, December 24, 6 p.m., Sanctuary

Join us for our Christmas Eve candle light service. All ages are welcome.

CHRISTMAS DAY WORSHIP & COMMUNION SERVICE

Thursday, December 25, 11 a.m., Lindsay Chapel

Celebrate the coming of the Christ with our Festival Communion service on Christmas morning.

Social Justice Opportunities

CITY MISSION SOCIETY CHRISTMAS SHOP

Sunday, December 7, during Morning Worship, 11 a.m., Sanctuary

For decades the City Mission Society (CMS) Christmas Shop has enabled people of faith to reach out to others, bringing hope and joy to children and families in the most need during the holiday season. CMS collects thousands of gift items, including clothes, toys, books, and household goods, which are provided, collected, and sorted by volunteers from dozens of congregations, youth groups, college students, and businesses. A portion of these donations are distributed by CMS's community partners; the remainder are made available to CMS's own Homelessness Prevention clients.

On Sunday, December 7, First Church will be collecting gifts for the Christmas Shops during our morning service. Following is a list of requested gifts that can help families and children in need. CMS accepts ***only NEW*** items. Please no food, household, or jewelry items.

Gift List for all ages and sizes:

- Winter coats, sweaters, and sweatshirts
- Hats, mittens, gloves, and scarves
- Socks and underwear
- Blankets and Backpacks
- Toys, books, and games
- Gift cards from Target, Walgreens, Marshalls, CVS, Walmart, Shaws, Stop and Shop, and other merchants

ALTERNATIVE CHRISTMAS FAIR

Sunday, December 7, 12:15 pm, MJH

Looking to keep it simple and socially conscious this holiday season? Want to avoid the malls but still need that perfect gift for a loved one? The Alternative Christmas Fair benefits First Church's ministries and also local justice organizations. Consider some Palestinian soaps or olive oil, the proceeds of which will support efforts toward peace and justice in the Middle East. Purchase some chickens or a cow to send to a family through the Heifer Project, or give a gift in someone's honor! Join us and a growing number of vendors with non-profit missions who will fill Margaret Jewett Hall with a festive and generous Christmas and holiday spirit!

