



Lent
March 16, 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

March 16, 2025

Liturgist	Lorraine Erickson
Preaching Today	Mike Solberg, <i>Interim Senior Minister</i>
Assisting in Worship	Kate Layzer, <i>Minister of Street Outreach</i> Lee Prouty, <i>Facilities Manager</i> Peter Sykes, <i>Music Director</i>
Bulletin Cover Image	photography by Audrey Bellinger

Today's Programs and Events

9:15 a.m.	Choir Rehearsal, Sanctuary
10:00 a.m.	Lenten Formation: Connecting with Truth Tellers, Harter Room & via Zoom
11:00 a.m.	Hybrid Morning Worship, Sanctuary and via livestream
11:20 a.m.	Church School: Godly Play & Bible 101 classes, Library & The Well
12:15 p.m.	Refreshments in Hastings Common
12:30 p.m.	Our Whole Lives (OWL) for 7/8th graders, The Well
7:30 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

“My real dream is that everybody will see their self-interest tied up with someone else, whether or not they see them, and see that as an opportunity for growing closer together as a culture and as a world.”

- Majora Carter, truth teller featured
in the *Americans Who Tell the Truth* project

VOLUNTARY

Contrapunctus IV (Art of Fugue)

J. S. Bach

*HYMN 2

The God of Abraham Praise

*CALL TO WORSHIP AND WORDS OF WELCOME

Lorraine Erickson

- L: Sisters, brothers, siblings, come,
you who thirst for wellsprings in the wilderness,
C Come, you who long for healing and wholeness!
L: Beloved, come, you who yearn for a deeper life and a fairer world.
C: Come and find this courage through the Spirit’s call
L: to the truth that sets us free,
to love deep as an aquifer and wide as the sea!
C: Come now, draw near to God with thanks and praise!

CONFESSING

ANTHEM

Kyrie

Vincenzo Pellegrini

Lord, have mercy. Christ, have mercy. Lord, have mercy.

PRAYER OF CONFESSION

O Lord, Hear My Prayer

199

SILENCE

SUNG PRAYER OF CONFESSION

DECLARATION OF GOD’S FORGIVENESS

*GREETING OF PEACE

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

The musical score is written for voice and piano. It features a treble and bass clef with a key signature of one sharp (F#) and a common time signature (C). The melody is simple and hymn-like, with lyrics written below the notes. The lyrics are: "O Lord, hear my prayer. O Lord, hear my prayer, when I call an - swer me. O Lord, hear my prayer. O Lord, hear my prayer. Come and lis - ten to me." The score ends with a double bar line and repeat dots.

**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.*

A MUTUAL BLESSING

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: God of living water, you meet us in unexpected places
and surprise us with the abundance of your love.
Feed us by your Word and fill us with your Spirit.
so that we may follow you this day and always.
In Jesus' name, Amen.**

READING

Luke 13:30-35

SERMON

Mike Solberg

***AFFIRMATION OF FAITH** from the United Church of Canada

**All: We are not alone, we live in God's world.
We believe in God: who has created and is creating,
who has come in Jesus, the Word made flesh,
to reconcile and make new,
who works in us and others by the Spirit.

We trust in God.
We are called to be the Church:
to celebrate God's presence, to live with respect in Creation,
to love and serve others, to seek justice and resist evil,
to proclaim Jesus, crucified and risen, our judge and our hope.

In life, in death, in life beyond death, God is with us.
We are not alone.
Thanks be to God.**

SHARING OUR LIFE TOGETHER

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Kate Layzer

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

Let Thy Merciful Ears, O Lord

Thomas Mudd

*DOXOLOGY AND PRAYER OF DEDICATION

**To God and to the Lamb I will sing, I will sing,
to God and to the Lamb, I will sing;
To God and to the Lamb, who is the great I Am,
while millions join the theme, I will sing.**

GOING FORTH

*HYMN 18

Praise to the Living God

*BENEDICTION

VOLUNTARY

Contrapunctus III (Art of Fugue)

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 Massachusetts people. We acknowledge that this land is unceded and remains sacred to the Massachusetts, 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.

OPENING HYMN

2

The God of Abraham Praise

1. The God of A-braham praise, all praise the e-ter-nal name,
 2. God's spir-it flow-eth free, high surg-ing where it will;
 3. We have e-ter-nal life im-plant-ed in our soul;

who was, and is, and is to be, for aye the same!
 in proph-et's word God spoke of old and speak-eth still.
 God's love shall be our strength and stay, while a-ges roll.

Our God, the great I AM, ere aught that now ap-pears;
 Es-tab-lished is God's law, and change-less it shall stand,
 Praise to the liv-ing God! All praise the e-ter-nal name,

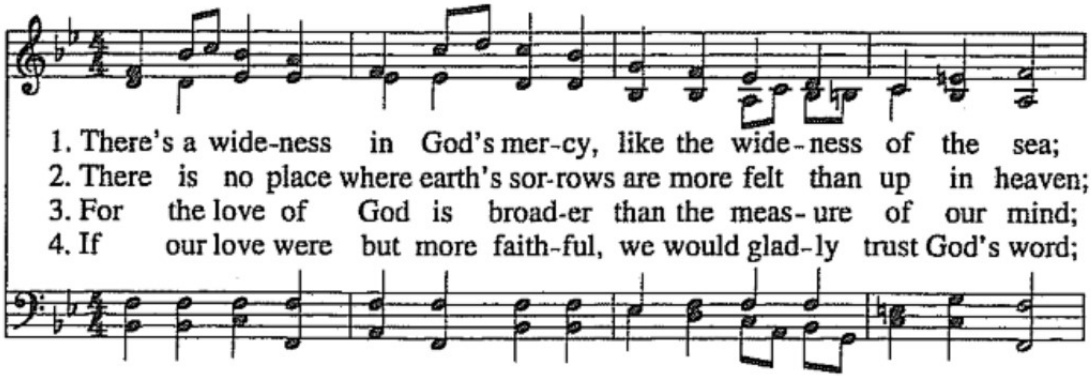
the First, the Last: be-yond all thought, through time-less years!
 deep writ up-on the hu-man heart, on sea or land.
 who was, and is, and is to be, for aye the same!

WORDS: Revised Version of the *Yigdal*, Daniel ben Judah, c. 1400;
 tr. Max Landsberg and Newton Mann, 1885, alt.
 MUSIC: Traditional Hebrew melody; adapt. Meyer Lyon, 1770

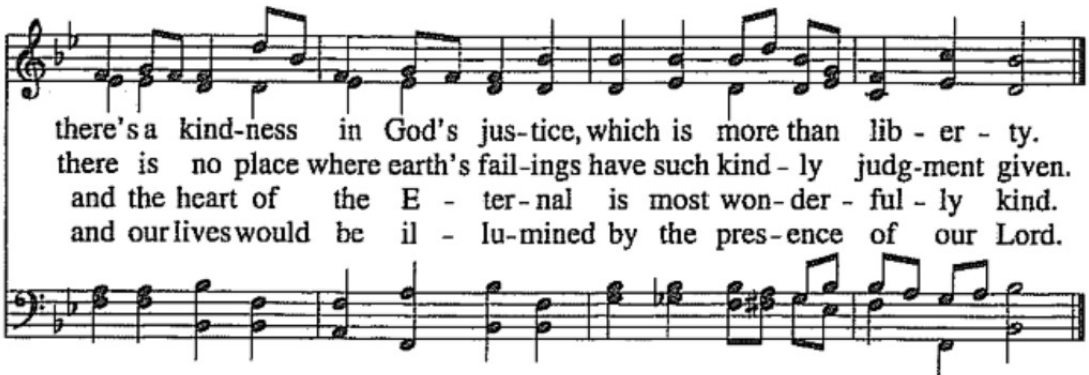
LEONI
 66.84D

There's a Wideness in God's Mercy

72



1. There's a wide-ness in God's mer-cy, like the wide-ness of the sea;
 2. There is no place where earth's sor-rows are more felt than up in heaven;
 3. For the love of God is broad-er than the meas-ure of our mind;
 4. If our love were but more faith-ful, we would glad-ly trust God's word;



there's a kind-ness in God's jus-tice, which is more than lib - er - ty.
 there is no place where earth's fail-ings have such kind - ly judg-ment given.
 and the heart of the E - ter - nal is most won - der - ful - ly kind.
 and our lives would be il - lu - mined by the pres-ence of our Lord.

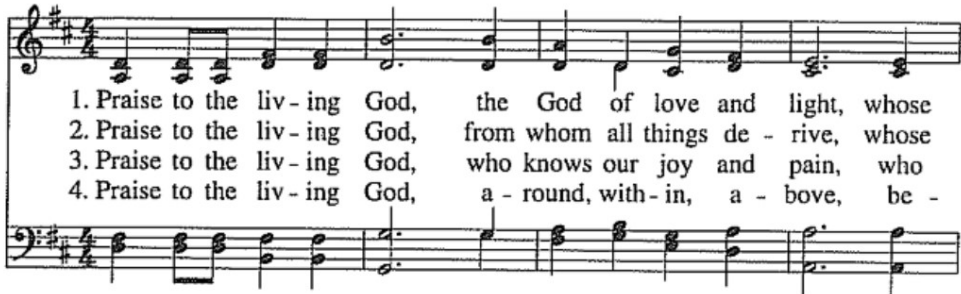
WORDS: Frederick W. Faber, 1854, alt.
 MUSIC: Lizzie S. Tourjée, 1877

WELLESLEY
 87.87

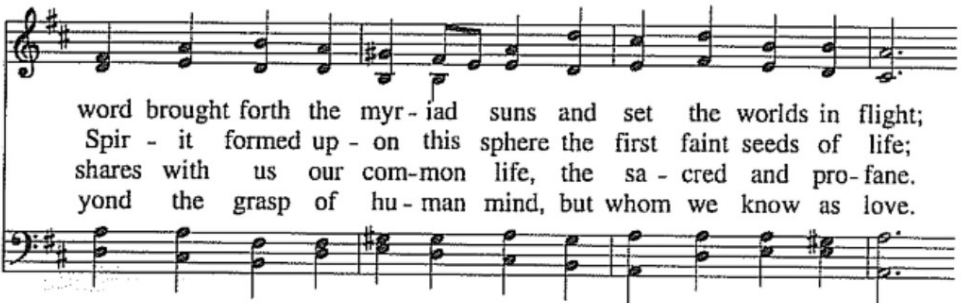
CLOSING HYMN

18

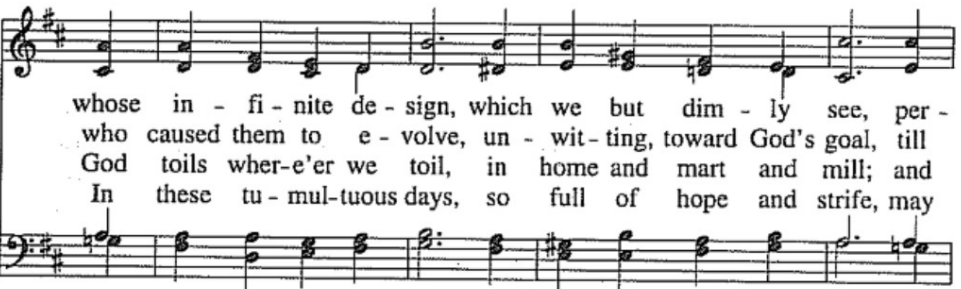
Praise to the Living God



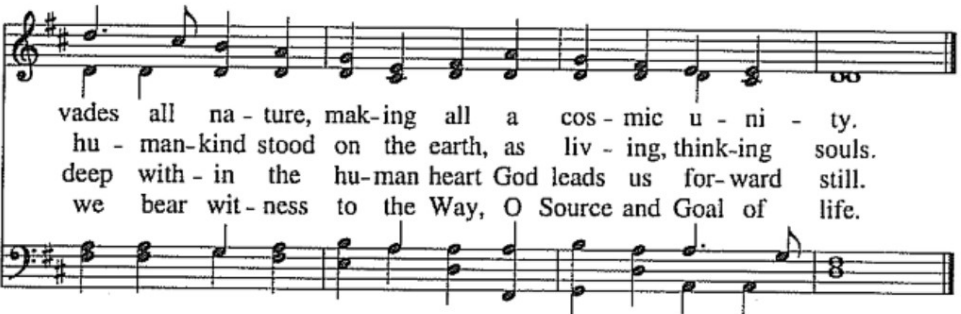
1. Praise to the liv - ing God, the God of love and light, whose
 2. Praise to the liv - ing God, from whom all things de - rive, whose
 3. Praise to the liv - ing God, who knows our joy and pain, who
 4. Praise to the liv - ing God, a - round, with - in, a - bove, be -



word brought forth the myr - iad suns and set the worlds in flight;
 Spir - it formed up - on this sphere the first faint seeds of life;
 shares with us our com - mon life, the sa - cred and pro - fane.
 yond the grasp of hu - man mind, but whom we know as love.



whose in - fi - nite de - sign, which we but dim - ly see, per -
 who caused them to e - volve, un - wit - ting, toward God's goal, till
 God toils wher - e'er we toil, in home and mart and mill; and
 In these tu - mul - tuous days, so full of hope and strife, may



vades all na - ture, mak - ing all a cos - mic u - ni - ty.
 hu - man - kind stood on the earth, as liv - ing, think - ing souls.
 deep with - in the hu - man heart God leads us for - ward still.
 we bear wit - ness to the Way, O Source and Goal of life.

WORDS: Curtis Beach, 1966, alt.
 MUSIC: George J. Elvey, 1868

DIADEMATA
 SMD

COMMUNITY PRAYERS

- We pray for Cathy Patton and her housemates as they mourn the death of Maxwell Liner, a staff member at Cathy's group home.
- We pray for Susan Ohman as she recovers at home from surgery to repair a broken knee.
- We pray for Peggy Bendroth and her family as they mourn the loss of her sister Ruth, who died on Saturday, March 1, after a long struggle with cancer. We pray for Ruth's husband David, her children Emily and Stephen, and for numerous grandchildren.
- 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 continue to pray for our earth and for all creation in the face of the climate crisis.
- We pray for our nation. Most of all 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 for all whose lives are being upended by the policies of the current administration, both domestically and internationally, especially those whose wellbeing is again being sacrificed for the political power of the few.
- We continue to pray for peace in Eastern Congo, where millions are displaced due to the fighting between the Rwandan-backed M23 militia and the Congolese army. We pray that the children and staff of the Congo Peace School will be safe, and that God's presence may be with them and all the loved ones of Amani and Amini Matabaro Tom.
- We pray for Gaza, that the fragile ceasefire agreement continues to hold. 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 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.



In Memoriam

A memorial service for beloved long-time member Perry Neubauer will take place at 2:00 p.m. on Saturday, April 12, in the Sanctuary and via livestream, with a reception to follow.

TODAY AT FIRST CHURCH

Lenten Formation Series: Connecting with Truth Tellers Today and Sundays, March 23 and 30, 10:00 - 10:45 a.m. Harter Room and via Zoom

The Christian Formation Committee invites you, once again, to engage with portraits of truth tellers as we walk together through the season of Lent. Join us for any or all of the four sessions dedicated to grounding ourselves in the stories of activists for immigrant justice, environmental sustainability, and trans rights, as well as a journalist who spoke truth to power with a generous dose of humor. In this “wilderness” time for our nation, come connect with these wellsprings as we seek spiritual sustenance and inspiration for our own action.



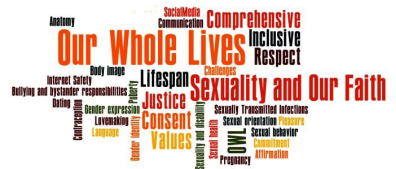
Invitation to Contribute to Coffee Hour

Please help us make worship as delicious as it is spiritually sustaining! For Coffee Hour each week we are looking for 2-4 households to bring 3 dozen cookies each, or the equivalent of snacks such as cheese & crackers or fruit. In general, the church has a No Nuts policy. If possible, please include a brief list of relevant ingredients for those with allergies. [Sign up here](#) or find a quick link to the signup form at: firstchurchcambridge.org/members

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.](#)

LENT AT FIRST CHURCH



Lent 2025: Wellsprings in the Wilderness

Each year the season of Lent begins with the story of Jesus spending 40 days in the wilderness, being tempted by “the Slanderer” (a.k.a. Satan) as Jesus begins his public teaching. “The wilderness” seems like a particularly poignant image for many of us these days, both in personal and public life. During this Lenten season, we will reflect on our experiences of wilderness and take hope that, even in the wilderness, there are wellsprings that sustain us. Because truth and

truth tellers are one of those wellsprings, we’ll be blessed again by engaging with four powerful portraits from the [Americans Who Tell the Truth](#) project. Come, and drink from wellsprings in the wilderness.

Organ Music in Lent

The organ music played during this year’s season of Lent is taken from “The Art of Fugue” by Johann Sebastian Bach. This monumental exploration of musical discipline contains some of the most sophisticated contrapuntal music ever written and was left unfinished at Bach’s death. If you’d like to know more, ask Music Director Peter Sykes after any service; he will be happy to elaborate!



FAITH & LIFE GROUPS



Faith & Life Group Registration: Lent/Spring 2025

You are warmly invited to consider registering for one (or more!) of six Faith & Life Groups on offer for our Lent/Spring session. You can read the full descriptions on [the signup form](#) and in the “Latest News” on our website.

Please register by Monday, March 17. Questions?

Please reach out to Beth Spaulding (bspaulding68@gmail.com) or the leader of the group directly.

- **To Live in the World as Prayer** with Carter West and Duncan Hollomon
- **Exploring our Faith as Adults through the Confirmation Curriculum, Part II** with Meredith Quinn and Lindsey Baker
- **Cross Purposes: What Jesus Did on the Cross** with Rev. Norm Bendroth
- **Breathing Prayer and Midday Mindfulness** with Sunessa Schettler
- **Church: A Larger Picture** with Henry Gates
- **Continuing to Hope for Peace and Justice in the Holy Land** with Adam Weiss

LENT AT FIRST CHURCH

Join Black Churches in Boycotting Target During Lent

Rev. Jamal Bryant of New Birth Missionary Baptist Church in Stonecrest, Georgia, is recruiting “100,000 conscientious Christians,” to join a Lenten fast from Target, a retail chain store that recently announced it would pull back from its diversity, equity, and inclusion programs, including one dedicated to diversifying the suppliers it uses to stock its shelves.

Black churches and denominations, such as Washington’s Metropolitan AME Church, which hosted 40 First Church pilgrims in 2019, are urging white churches to join the effort.

The Missions & Social Justice Committee and the Beloved Community group hope that 100 people at First Church in Cambridge will join this Lenten fast by signing your name to a poster that will be available again during today’s Coffee Hour, or by emailing our Racial Justice group at: belovedcommunity@firstchurchcambridge.org to have your name included.

Supporters of the boycott are urged to support Black businesses instead. Among the resources on the [Racial Justice](#) section of the First Church website is [a list of Boston area Black-owned businesses](#), current as of March 1, 2025.

More information about the Target boycott and other Lenten efforts of protest and prayer by groups such as Sojourners and the National Council of Churches can be found at: <https://religionnews.com/2025/02/26/boycotts-accompany-prayer-as-faith-leaders-prepare-for-lent/>



COMING UP AT FIRST CHURCH



Aging with Grace Monthly Meeting

Tuesday, March 18, 3:00 - 4:15 p.m., via Zoom

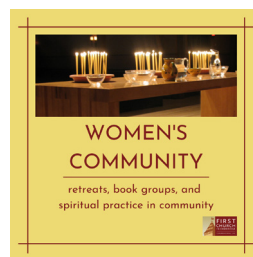
Please join our Graceful Aging Zoom to continue our conversation about Elder Activism/Contribution as part of our monthly sharing with each other about the challenges and joys of becoming Elders in today's society. Newcomers are always welcome; please reach out to Linda

Ziebell (lindaziebell@comcast.net) or Martha Mueller Cook (marthamuellercook@gmail.com) for further information.

Women's Community Book Group

Tuesday, March 18, 6:30 - 7:45 p.m., via Zoom

Please join us for our March book discussion as we share our thoughts about James McBride's [*The Heaven and Earth Grocery Store*](#). Set in a neighborhood of immigrant Jews and African-Americans in a Pennsylvania town, the novel is a fascinating whodunit that contemplates how two very different groups of people learn to value and love one another. We look forward to hearing your reflections.



Family Choir to Sing on Palm Sunday

Anyone and everyone at First Church is invited to sing with the Family Choir in Palm Sunday worship on April 13. People of all ages and all experience levels are welcome to learn a compelling song of walking together. Join Sarah Higginbotham for **three short rehearsals in the Chapel after worship on Sundays, March 23, 30, and April 6, 12:30 - 1:00 p.m.**, then plan to arrive early on Palm Sunday to prepare our musical offering for worship.

Wade in the Water Featured in Quilts250: Stitching in the Spirit of Democracy **Saturday-Sunday, March 22-23**

Concord Academy Gymnasium, 132 Main St., Concord, MA

First Church's fabric artwork that remembers and honors First Church members who were enslaved by other members of our congregation will be part of Quilts250, an exhibit for the 250th commemoration of the Battles of Lexington and Concord that mark the birth of our nation's democracy. Quilts250 will display as many as 250 quilts that visually express through fabric and thread themes related to our country's founding and evolution and the dynamic range of quilting arts in the last 250 years. Admission is free; [learn more](#).



COMING UP AT FIRST CHURCH

Young Adults: Bowling

Friday, March 28, 7:00 - 9:00 p.m.

American Flatbread (Sacco's), Davis Square, Somerville

Come join our active young adults group (20s and 30s) for a fun night of bowling and casual fellowship. It's a great way to meet new friends and to ask questions about faith, life, and First Church. This group gathers a few times a month on a rotating basis. Please RSVP so we know to expect you: youngadults@firstchurchcambridge.org



Discovery Team Conversations

Sundays, April 6 and May 4, 10:00 - 10:45 a.m., Harter Room and via Zoom

The Discovery Team is eager to engage you in conversation on topics that directly relate to our upcoming search for a new Senior Minister. Join us for our April and May conversations! Each person's contributions will be important in our discovery and discernment process.

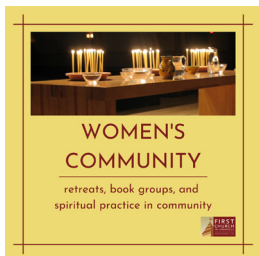
Understanding Human Trafficking Today

Sunday, April 27, 10:00 - 10:45 a.m., Harter Room and via Zoom

While the Emancipation Proclamation ended the legality of slavery in the United States, it did not end its practice – either domestically or abroad.

By many accounts, there are more people facing enslaved conditions

today than at any other time in history. Over a quarter are women and children, the vast majority of whom are victims of sexual exploitation. We welcome Mark van de Fliert to lead a discussion about modern slavery, exploitation, and trafficking. What are the signs that a person might be trafficked? How prevalent do we think trafficking and exploitation are in a metropolis like Greater Boston? And what might faith communities do to combat exploitation and support survivors? Mark has a background working on issues of human trafficking and modern slavery around the world. He currently works in our First Church Shelter while pursuing graduate studies at the Harvard Divinity and Kennedy Schools.



Save the Date: First Church Women's Retreat

Saturday, May 3, 9:00 - 12:00 p.m., Margaret Jewett Hall

All who identify as women in the First Church community are invited to save the date of Saturday, May 3, for our annual Women's Retreat. This year, the focus will be on themes found in Robin Wall Kimmerer's new gem of a book [*The Serviceberry: Abundance and Reciprocity in the Natural World*](#). While reading the book is neither required nor necessary, we would

encourage reading the book, if you can. We have several copies of the book and will pass them around in the next few months as needed/requested. Contact Alex (alex@steinert-evoy.com) or Sue (susanreynolds235@gmail.com) to learn more and borrow a book.



THIS WEEK

Looking ahead to this week's programs and events



Monday, March 17

4:30 p.m. Contemplative Practices Gathering, via Zoom

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

Tuesday, March 18

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. Beloved Community Group, via Zoom
7:30 p.m. Shelter Oversight Committee, via Zoom

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

Wednesday, March 19

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

Thursday, March 20

11:30 a.m. Faith & Life Group: Breathing Prayer and Midday Mindfulness, Harter Room & via Zoom
6:30 p.m. Faith & Life Group: Hope for Peace & Justice in the Holy Land, via Zoom

Friday, March 21

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

Sunday, March 23 - Third Sunday in Lent

9:15 a.m. Choir Rehearsal, Sanctuary
10:00 a.m. Lenten Formation: Connecting with Truth Tellers, Harter Room & 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 & The Well
12:15 p.m. Refreshments in Hastings Common
12:30 p.m. Family Choir Rehearsal, Chapel
12:30 p.m. Our Whole Lives (OWL) for 7/8th graders, The Well
7:00 p.m. Faith & Life Group: Exploring Our Faith as Adults through the Confirmation Curriculum, Harter Room
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

First Church in Cambridge, Congregational, UCC
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