

SUNDAY, AUGUST 24, 2025

Preaching Today Kate Layzer, *Minister of Street Outreach*
Liturgist Arthur Downey, Jr.
Assisting in Worship Sarah Higginbotham, *Director of Communications & Christian Formation*
Lee Prouty, *Facilities Manager*
Mike Solberg, *Interim Senior Minister*
Peter Sykes, *Music Director*
Laurie Williams, *Deacon*

Opening Voutary
Lebhaft (Sonata II) - Paul Hindemith

Opening Hymn
C-23 Come, All You Thirsty

Anthem
How Very Good and Pleasant - Arlen Clarke

Peace Hymn
422 Have Faith in God

Baptisms of Wesley and Austin Morgan
(see page 2)

Reading
Isaiah 58:6-14
(see page 3)

Sermon Hymn
C-1 Psalm 1

Offertory
Morning Has Broken - Clarke

Closing Hymn
467 I'm Gonna Live So God Can Use Me

Voluntary
Ruhig bewegt (Sonata II) - Hindemith

Today's Programs and Events

9:00 a.m. Choir Rehearsal, Sanctuary
10:00 a.m. Multigenerational Morning Worship, Sanctuary and [via livestream](#)
11:15 a.m. Refreshments on the Lawn (weather permitting)
11:15 a.m. Community Resistance Gathering, Harter Room and [via Zoom](#)
11:30 a.m. WooSox Field Trip, leaving from front lawn

New to First Church?

Have you just begun joining us for worship? Consider filling out a **welcome card** found on small clipboards in the pews or [online](#), so that we might connect with you about our community.

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.

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:



THE SACRAMENT OF BAPTISM

INVITATION

Mike Solberg

ADDRESS

BAPTISMAL PROMISES

CONGREGATIONAL PROMISES

Laurie Williams

- L: Jesus Christ welcomes everyone who desires new life
into the faith and family of Christ.
Do you who will witness this sacrament
promise Wesley and Austin your love, support and care?
- C: **We do!**
- L: Will you help them to grow in faith
and witness with them to the love and mercy 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 evil?
- C: **We do, with the help of God!**

POURING AND BLESSING OF THE WATER

THE BAPTISMS

*PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING

- L: Beloved in Christ, let us give thanks!
- All: **We thank you, God,
for these precious lives entrusted to our care,
and for the waters of baptism that mark us as your people.
Thank you for the gifts your Spirit gives us in this sacrament,
and for life in the church where we help each other grow.
Give to Wesley and Austin strength for life's journey,
courage in the time of trial, the joy of faith, the freedom of love,
and the comfort of everlasting life.
These things we ask in Jesus' name. Amen.**

PRESENTATION

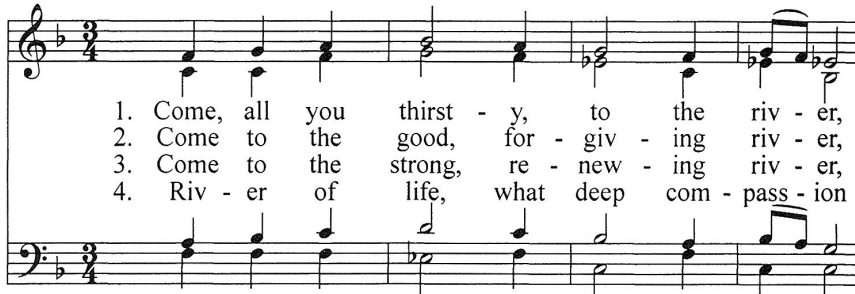
RESPONSIVE READING: ISAIAH 58:6-14

- L: Is not this the fast that I choose:
to loose the bonds of injustice, to undo the straps of the yoke,
to let the oppressed go free, and to break every yoke?
- C: **Is it not to share your bread with the hungry
and bring the homeless poor into your house;
when you see the naked, to cover them
and not to hide yourself from your own kin?**
- L: Then your light shall break forth like the dawn,
and your healing shall spring up quickly; your vindicator shall go before you;
the glory of the Lord shall be your rear guard.
- C: **Then you shall call, and the Lord will answer;
you shall cry for help, and God will say, "Here I am."**
- L: If you remove the yoke from among you,
the pointing of the finger, the speaking of evil,
- C: **if you offer your food to the hungry and satisfy the needs of the afflicted,**
- L: then your light shall rise in the darkness and your gloom be like the noonday.
- C: **The Lord will guide you continually and satisfy your needs in parched places
and make your bones strong,**
- L: and you shall be like a watered garden,
like a spring of water whose waters never fail.
- C: **Your ancient ruins shall be rebuilt;
you shall raise up the foundations of many generations;
you shall be called the repairer of the breach,
the restorer of streets to live in.**
- L: If you refrain from trampling the Sabbath,
from pursuing your own interests on my holy day;
if you call the Sabbath a delight
and the holy day of the Lord honorable;
if you honor it, not going your own ways,
serving your own interests or pursuing your own affairs;
- C: **then you shall take delight in the Lord,
and I will make you ride upon the heights of the earth;
I will feed you with the heritage of your ancestor Jacob,
for the mouth of the Lord has spoken.**

OPENING HYMN

Come, All You Thirsty

C-23



1. Come, all you thirst - y, to the riv - er,
 2. Come to the good, for - giv - ing riv - er,
 3. Come to the strong, re - new - ing riv - er,
 4. Riv - er of life, what deep com - pass - ion



here where the Word_ runs cool and deep.
 here where the Word_ runs calm and clear.
 here where the Word_ runs sweet and wild.
 feeds your e - ter - nal mer - cy song?



Come with the out - casts, crushed and bro - ken,
 Wash in the truth that frees the spi - rit;
 Come by God's gift, though un - de - ser - ving;
 God's own face shines in you re - flec - ted,



come, you who rage_ and you_ who weep._
 shed the ex - cus - es you_ hold dear._
 come be - cause God_ has called_ you Child._
 call - ing us back_ where we_ be - long._

WORDS: Kate Layzer

MUSIC: Peter Sykes

"Then the angel showed me the river of life,
 bright as crystal, flowing from the throne of God
 and from the Lamb."

Rev 22.1

422

Have Faith in God

1. Have faith in God, my heart; trust and be un - a - fraid;
 2. Have faith in God, my mind, al - though your light burns low;
 3. Have faith in God, my soul; the cross for - ev - er stands,
 4. Lord Je - sus, make me whole; grant me no rest - ing place,

God will ful - fil in ev - ery part each prom - ise that was made.
 God's mer - cy holds a wis - er plan than you can ful - ly know.
 and nei - ther life nor death can pluck us chil - dren from God's hands.
 un - til I rest, heart, mind and soul, the cap - tive of your grace.

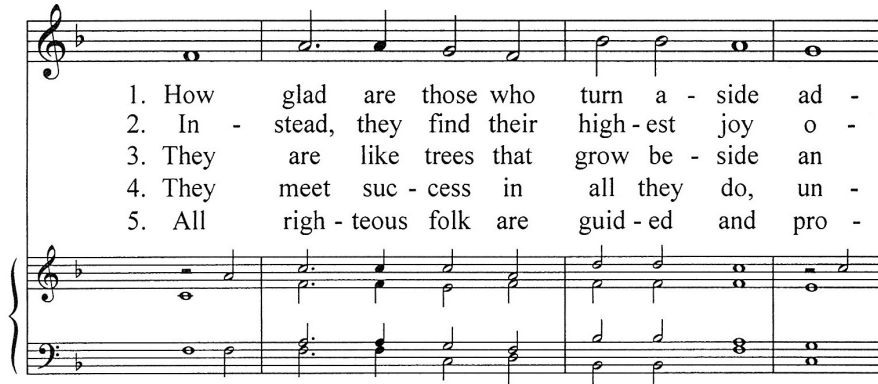
WORDS: Bryn A. Rees, 1951, alt.
 MUSIC: Adapt. from Damon's *Psalmes*, 1579

SOUTHWELL
 SM

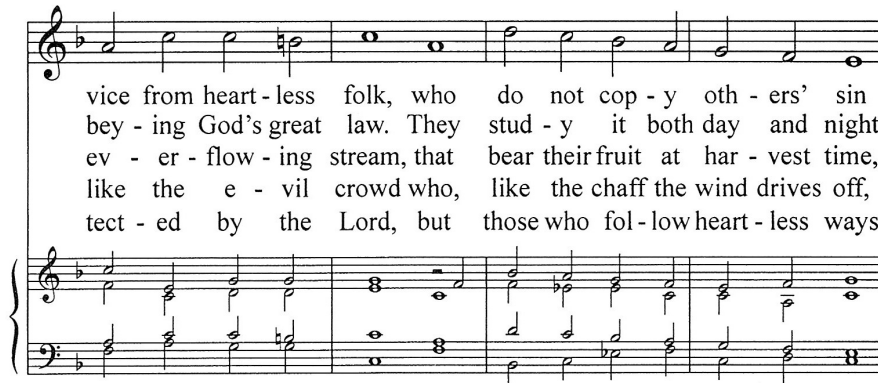
SERMON HYMN

Psalm 1

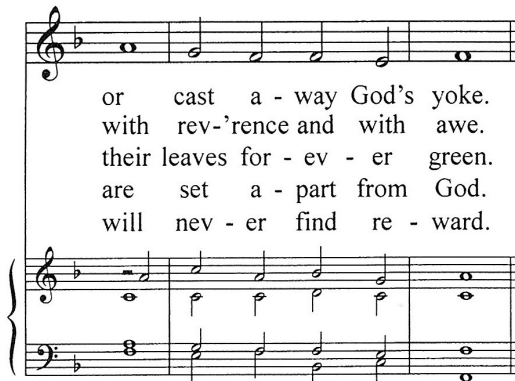
C-1



1. How glad are those who turn a - side ad -
 2. In - stead, they find their high - est joy o -
 3. They are like trees that grow be - side an
 4. They meet suc - cess in all they do, un -
 5. All righ - teous folk are guid - ed and pro -



vice from heart - less folk, who do not cop - y oth - ers' sin
 bey - ing God's great law. They stud - y it both day and night
 ev - er - flow - ing stream, that bear their fruit at har - vest time,
 like the e - vil crowd who, like the chaff the wind drives off,
 tect - ed by the Lord, but those who fol - low heart - less ways



or cast a - way God's yoke.
 with rev - erence and with awe.
 their leaves for - ev - er green.
 are set a - part from God.
 will nev - er find re - ward.

These Psalms were reintroduced into worship at First Church by Allen Happe, Senior Minister, and Robert Schuneman, Director of Music, during the 350th anniversary year of 1983. At first, the original texts of the Bay Psalms, published in 1640, were used. Deacon, choir member and poet Denise Karuth then wrote these new translations in 1984 to fit the old metric structures so that the old tunes might still be preserved. These *New Bay Psalms* have become a beloved part of the musical heritage of First Church.

WORDS: New translation by Denise Karuth

MUSIC: Ravenscroft's Psalter, 1621

WINCHESTER OLD

I'm Gonna Live So God Can Use Me 467

The musical score is written for a four-part setting (Soprano, Alto, Tenor, Bass) in 4/4 time. The key signature has one flat (B-flat). The melody is primarily in the Soprano and Alto parts, with the Tenor and Bass parts providing harmonic support. The lyrics are written below the staves, with some words in italics and parentheses to indicate specific vocal parts or harmonies.

Lyrics:

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*

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

WORDS: African-American spiritual
MUSIC: African-American spiritual; harm. FCC, 1997. © 1998

I'M GONNA LIVE
98.98

In this arrangement those singing harmony should sing
the words in italics and parentheses, when they occur.

Harm. © 1998 FCC Houston TX

COMMUNITY PRAYERS

- We celebrate with grandparents Kate Layzer and Don Johnson the birth of Oscar Murdo Chiswick, son of Faith Ross and Larry Chiswick, on August 15. The new family is well and happy to be home.
- We pray for Cathy Patton's friend Elmo, whose mother Margaret Mickel died recently following a stroke. We also pray for Radley, another friend of Cathy, who is recovering after a hospitalization.
- We pray for all who are living with significant health challenges and their families and caregivers: Poppy Coffin, who is experiencing Alzheimer's Disease; Carter West, who is experiencing a chronic neurological disorder; Katy Bauer, Sunnessa Schettler's mother, who is experiencing COPD; and Keith Manville, Kirsten's father, who has atypical Parkinsonism. We also pray for those in treatment for cancer: Betsy Opitz; Tim Schoenfield, Henry's brother; Louise Higginbotham, Sarah's mother; 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.
- In this tense time in our country, we pray for all those standing up, in their homes or on the streets, to resist all abuses of power, especially those paying significant personal costs. We pray for strength to not turn away from our neighbors in need, even as our government dramatically expands funding for detention, disappearance, and deportation initiatives that ignore rights guaranteed by our nation's constitution.
- We lift up the Harvard University community, including people from our congregation, in the midst of a confrontation with the federal government over academic independence and freedom of speech.
- We continue to celebrate the dignity and worth of our trans and gender non-conforming siblings who are experiencing an onslaught of prejudicial discrimination condoned by the current administration and encouraged by recent rulings by the Supreme Court. We affirm that all of us are beloved in the eyes of God, just as we are.
- We pray for people around the world trapped in cycles of violence, especially all the innocent victims of the deadly power games of political rulers: in the Middle East, including in Gaza, where the lack of safe access to food is causing mass starvation; in Ukraine; in Haiti; and in the Democratic Republic of Congo.
- We continue to pray for our earth and for all creation in the face of the climate crisis, and especially for those mourning hundreds of lost lives in north Pakistan after torrential rains and heavy flooding.
- We pray for all those giving and receiving care, compassion, and needed services from First Church's homeless ministries, both in the First Church Shelter and at the Friday Café. We continue to pray and work for a just society where housing is recognized as a human right.

Join the [First Church List](#) to see and offer up more community prayer requests.

SUMMER AT FIRST CHURCH

**ONE MILLION
RISING**

Community Resistance Gathering

Today, 11:15 a.m. - 12:30 p.m., Harter Room and [via Zoom](#)

Join with other First Church folks as we connect to [One Million Rising](#), a national effort to train one million people in the strategic logic and practice of non-cooperation. Martha Mueller Cook and Alex Steinert-Evoy will facilitate the gathering, offering an opportunity to learn together and deepen our community connections in the face of authoritarian force being used across the country.

WooSox Field Trip

Today, 11:30 a.m. - 5:00 p.m., Polar Park, Worcester

The Young Adults group invites you to join a multigenerational outing to see the WooSox play at Polar Park! Email youngadults@firstchurchcambridge.org, or talk to Phil Servello-Jones to RSVP. We'll arrange carpooling to and from church.



Prayers for Liberty Labor Day Walk

Monday, September 1, 9:00 - 5:00 p.m., Lexington to Boston

On May 30, [Prayers for Liberty](#) held an interfaith clergy march from Lexington to Boston. Hundreds of faith leaders from all different sects and creeds, including our own Pastor Mike, came together in support of democracy and human rights. The organization is now planning to march again. And this time they're inviting as many lay people as possible to join for all or part of the walk, which will begin



[register here](#)

at the Lexington Battle Green and end at the statue of The Embrace in Boston Common. The walk will take place on Labor Day, all day from 9:00 to 5:00. We understand that this is a lot of effort for a day traditionally spent holidaying, but we believe the times demand this of us. [Register for the walk here](#), and let [Sarah Higginbotham](#) know that you've registered, so that we can look for and connect First Church folks to each other during the walk.



Register for the All-Church Fall Retreat

Friday, September 26 - Sunday, September 28, 2025

Registration is now open for the 2025 All-Church Retreat at Craigville! The retreat is an amazing opportunity to spend time with our multigenerational church community in a glorious location on the Cape. Join

Sarah Higginbotham, Noël Grisanti, and other church leaders for a weekend of community-building in fellowship, formation, and fun. Arrive on Friday evening, September 26, and stay through midday on Sunday, September 28, for the full event; or come for a portion of the weekend, for just one night, or even a daytrip on Saturday. [Register here!](#)



[register here](#)

SUMMER AT FIRST CHURCH



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. [Sign up here.](#)



scan to sign up

Meet Our Pastoral Intern

We are very happy to announce that we will have a Pastoral Intern for the coming academic year! At the end of August we will welcome Noël Grisanti, who will be with us 15 hours per week and will be involved in a few areas of ministry: worship, pastoral care, stewardship and finance, communications, and street outreach. Noël introduces herself below, and we look forward to her ministry and learning among us, beginning on August 26.

And just to be clear, we also look forward to Emma Mitchell being back with us as our Pastoral Associate when her parental leave is complete, likely in the October/November timeframe!

Hi, everyone! My name is Noël Grisanti (she/her). I am a third-year Master of Divinity student at Harvard Divinity School, where I study social justice ministry with a particular focus on the role of the church at the intersection of racial, economic, and climate justice. During the 2024-2025 school year, I worked as a chaplain intern in the Office of the Chaplains and Religious Life at Brown University, and this summer I have been serving as an interfaith chaplain at UCLA Santa Monica Hospital.

I grew up in New York City as the oldest of four sisters (yes, I love Little Women.) Growing up, I attended a Southern Baptist church in midtown Manhattan: an incongruous mix of a warm, diverse church community with homogenous, conservative values. During my time at Amherst College, I discovered the United Church of Christ. Within the UCC, I have found a church home where my political life could be fostered and fed by my spiritual life, and vice versa. After several years teaching middle and high school Latin, I followed a call to divinity school and am now pursuing ordination as a Member in Discernment in the UCC.

This year I am eager to join the community at First Church in Cambridge. I am excited to learn about the ins and outs of church life and leadership, to participate in worship, and to support the needs of the community through various forms of ministry. I love iced coffee, astrology, red pandas, and crosswords; and I live in Cambridge with my husband Max.





Growing Closer to God: Regathering Season 2025

The Discovery Team wrote in their comprehensive report last spring that First Church “*stands at a tender and transformative moment in its life together. This time of transition invites us to reflect deeply on who we are, what we value, and where we feel called to go as a community of faith.*” The report highlights that many within our congregation are seeking more spiritual grounding and growth, especially to support us as we live out our values of social justice and anti-racism. And, at the same time, people are not sure exactly what spiritual grounding and growth might look like!

With that in mind, this fall we will center our regathering around a question:

What does it mean to grow closer to God, as individuals and as a church community?

We'll be exploring a range of possible responses to this question, both from an individual and a communal perspective, and also simply affirming that this is a good discussion to have! Join us in worship, small groups, Bible study, and multigenerational formation as we practice our faith together.

Regathering Sunday is September 7.

Join us for 11:00 a.m. Worship, followed by an All-Church Luncheon!

LOOKING AHEAD TO REGATHERING

Faith & Life Groups: Fall 2025 - Call for Leaders!

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

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 as we enter into our Regathering season.



Register for Church School 2025-26

Church School classes begin on September 14! We offer a variety of opportunities for Christian formation for children and youth, including age-based classes, creative arts and pastoral care workshops, child care for little ones, and youth group activities for teens. All children from infants through high school seniors are welcome in the Church School! You can read all the details on the

[Faith Formation for Children & Youth](#) page on our website.



Registering your children helps us to prepare for them, but drop-ins are always welcome. [Please complete this registration form](#) to let us know a bit about your children.



[register here](#)

Friday Café Season 12

After our usual low-key summer lunch format, the Friday Café returns to full operation on Friday, September 5, offering a full cooked meal, along with a variety of other resources. Come visit our thriving community, and consider signing up to volunteer in person or to cook a dish for our weekly potluck-style menu. Community is at the heart of everything we do at the Friday Café, and we would love you to be a part of it. Learn more at: firstchurchcambridge.org/friday-cafe, or reach out to director Kate Layzer.

