



Freddie Funck

Regathering Season
September 28, 2025



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.

Order of Worship

GATHERING

VOLUNTARY

Grave - Adagio, from Sonata no. 2

Felix Mendelssohn

*HYMN 26

Praise to the Lord, the Almighty

*GREETING

Mary Robinson

- L: Beloved of God, come gather in!
Together, let us grow closer to God.
- C: We enter now with all that we are, our stories,
our hopes, our yearnings, our fears.**
- L: God embraces all of it- all of you!
- C: Thanks be to God for that!**
- L: Siblings in the Spirit, God's heart is open,
and God's invitation is deep and wide.
- C: No matter where our journey has taken us in the past,
we now begin anew to grow closer to God. Alleluia!**

WORDS OF WELCOME

ANTHEM

Non nobis, Domine

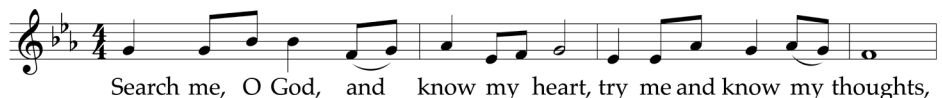
William Byrd (attr.)

Not to us, Lord, but to your name be the glory.

CONFESSING

INVITATION TO CONFESSION

SUNG PRAYER



SILENCE



PRAYER OF CONFESSION

L: Let us pray:

**C: Most merciful God,
we confess that we have strayed from your way,
in thought, word, and deed,
by what we have done, and by what we have left undone.
We have not loved you with our whole heart;
we have not loved our neighbors as ourselves.
Grant us true repentance, and hearts eager for the work of repair.
Through the love and faithfulness of Jesus Christ,
have mercy on us and forgive us;
that we may delight in your will, and walk in your ways,
to the glory of your holy name. Amen.**

DECLARATION OF FORGIVENESS

*GREETING OF PEACE

L: The peace of Christ be with you!

C: And also with you!

*HYMN 281

Spirit of the Living God

*MUTUAL BLESSING

Kate Layzer

Adults: May God be with you there.

Children: And may God be with you here.

Children up through 7th grade are now invited to a creative arts time on the front lawn and playground.

OPENING THE WORD

PRAYER FOR UNDERSTANDING

L: Let us pray.

**C: Come, Holy Spirit, and speak to us now.
Open our minds to receive your wisdom;
open our hearts to receive your truth;
open our bodies to receive your hope;
Draw us nearer to you by your word of grace and truth. Amen.**

**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.*

READING

Psalm 146

READING

I Timothy 6:6-19

SERMON

Real Life

Jennifer Stuart

***HYMN 244**

Like a Tree Beside the Waters

***THE FIRST CHURCH COVENANT**

This covenant, originally from 1630, was created by the church in Charlestown and adopted by our congregation in 1872.

C: 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.

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

O Love That Will Not Let Me Go

Carson Cooman (2007)

*DOXOLOGY

Praise God, the source of life and birth,
Praise God, the Word who came to earth,
Praise God, the Spirit, holy flame,
All glory, honor to God's name! Amen.

*PRAYER OF DEDICATION

GOING FORTH

*HYMN C-3

Psalm 23

*BENEDICTION

VOLUNTARY

Allegro maestoso e vivace, from Sonata no. 2

Mendelssohn

*Please be seated for the closing Voluntary, and use this time to transition your spirit from
communal worship to the living of faith in daily life.*

Today's Worship Leaders

Kate Layzer
Lee Prouty
Mary Robinson
Jennifer Stuart
Peter Sykes

*Minister of Street Outreach
Facilities Manager
Liturgist
Community Minister
Music Director*

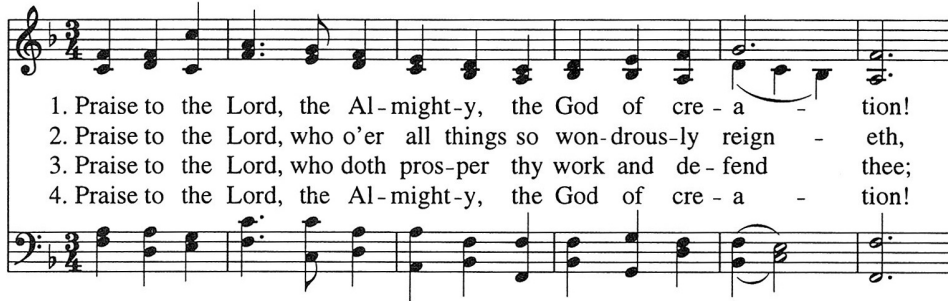
New to First Church?

Consider filling out a **welcome card** ([online](#) or on the small clipboards) to get connected.

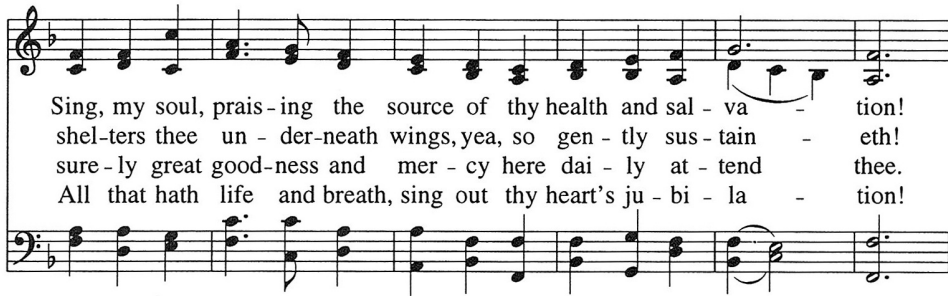
OPENING HYMN

26

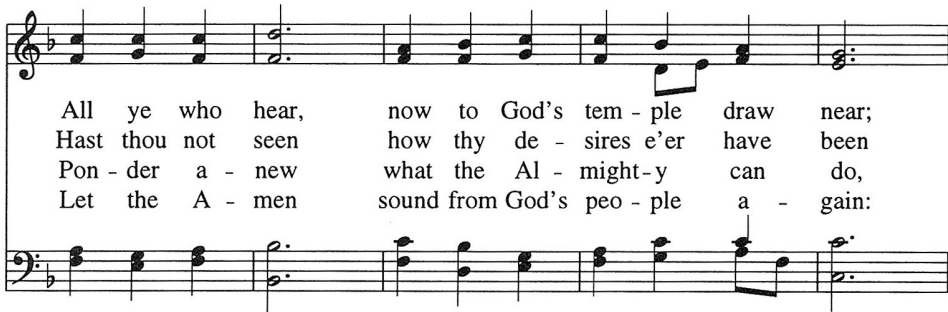
Praise to the Lord, the Almighty



1. Praise to the Lord, the Al-might-y, the God of cre - a - tion!
 2. Praise to the Lord, who o'er all things so won-drous-ly reign - eth,
 3. Praise to the Lord, who doth pros-per thy work and de-fend thee;
 4. Praise to the Lord, the Al-might-y, the God of cre - a - tion!



Sing, my soul, prais-ing the source of thy health and sal - va - tion!
 shel-ters thee un - der-neath wings, yea, so gen - tly sus-tain - eth!
 sure-ly great good-ness and mer - cy here dai - ly at-tend thee.
 All that hath life and breath, sing out thy heart's ju - bi - la - tion!



All ye who hear, now to God's tem - ple draw near;
 Hast thou not seen how thy de - sires e'er have been
 Pon - der a - new what the Al - might-y can do,
 Let the A - men sound from God's peo - ple a - gain:



join me in glad ad - o - ra - tion!
 grant - ed in what God or - dain - eth?
 who with great love doth be - friend thee.
 join - ing in glad ad - o - ra - tion.

WORDS: Joachim Neander, 1680; tr. Catherine Winkworth, 1863, alt.

MUSIC: *Ernewerten Gesangbuch*, Stralsund, 1665; harm. *The Chorale Book for England*, 1863

LOBE DEN HERREN

14 14.478

281

Spirit of the Living God

Spir - it of the liv - ing God, fall a-fresh on me; Spir - it of the

liv - ing God, fall a-fresh on me. Melt me, mold me, fill me,

use me. Spir - it of the liv - ing God, fall a-fresh on me.

WORDS and MUSIC: Daniel Iverson, 1926

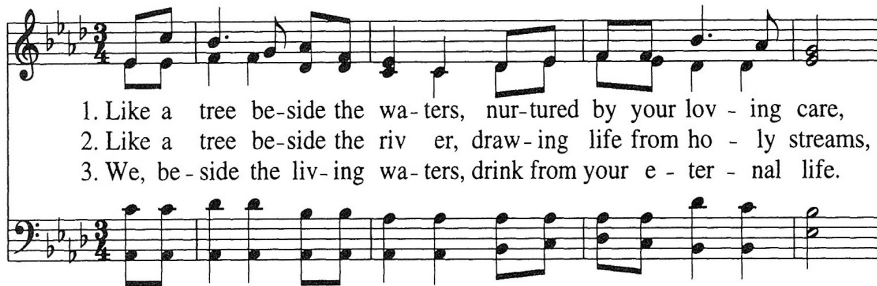
Daniel Iverson was a North Carolina Presbyterian minister who was moved to create this response while attending a revival service.

IVERSON
75.75.875

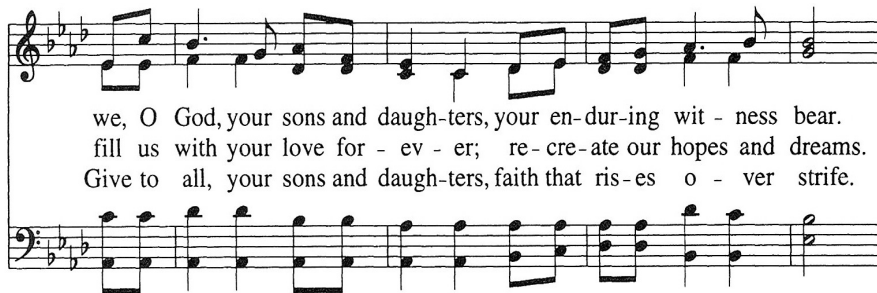
© 1935 Birdwing Music, admin. EMI
Christian Music Publishing

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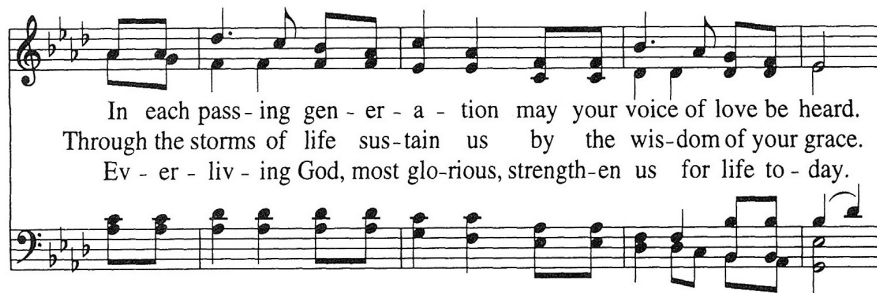
Like a Tree Beside the Waters



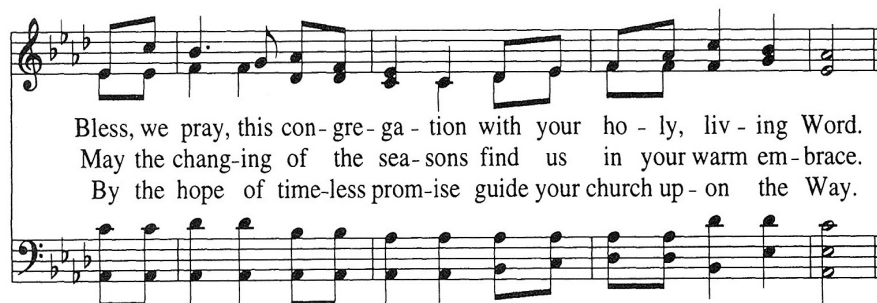
1. Like a tree be-side the wa-ters, nur-tured by your lov - ing care,
 2. Like a tree be-side the riv - er, draw - ing life from ho - ly streams,
 3. We, be - side the liv - ing wa - ters, drink from your e - ter - nal life.



we, O God, your sons and daugh-ters, your en-dur-ing wit - ness bear.
 fill us with your love for - ev - er; re - cre - ate our hopes and dreams.
 Give to all, your sons and daugh-ters, faith that ris - es o - ver strife.



In each pass - ing gen - er - a - tion may your voice of love be heard.
 Through the storms of life sus-tain us by the wis-dom of your grace.
 Ev - er - liv - ing God, most glo-rious, strength-en us for life to - day.



Bless, we pray, this con-gre-ga - tion with your ho - ly, liv - ing Word.
 May the chang-ing of the sea-sons find us in your warm em-brace.
 By the hope of time-less prom-ise guide your church up - on the Way.

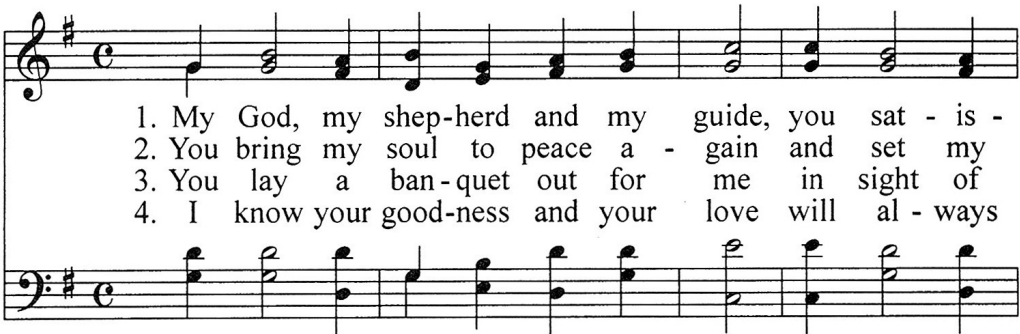
WORDS: James F. D. Martin, 1992, alt.
 MUSIC: Roy Hopp, 1989, adapt.

SILVER CREEK
 87.87D

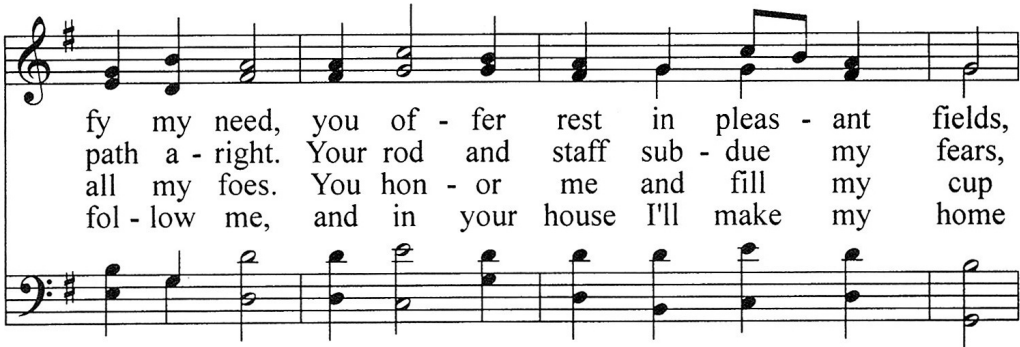
CLOSING HYMN

Psalm 23

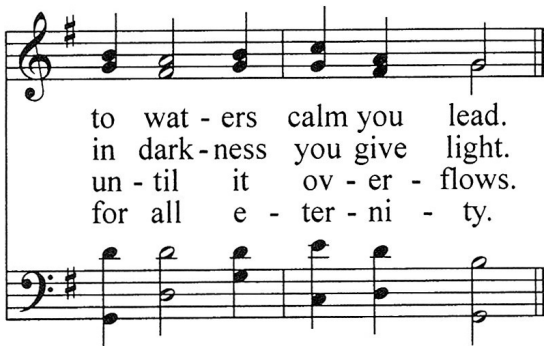
C-3



1. My God, my shep-herd and my guide, you sat - is -
2. You bring my soul to peace a - gain and set my
3. You lay a ban-quet out for me in sight of
4. I know your good-ness and your love will al - ways



fy my need, you of - fer rest in pleas - ant fields,
path a - right. Your rod and staff sub - due my fears,
all my foes. You hon - or me and fill my cup
fol - low me, and in your house I'll make my home



to wat - ers calm you lead.
in dark-ness you give light.
un - til it ov - er - flows.
for all e - ter - ni - ty.

WORDS: New translation by Denise Karuth

MUSIC: New England Psalter, 1698

LOW DUTCH

COMMUNITY PRAYERS

- We pray for Luke Wendelin as he completes boot camp for the Navy, where he will train to be a medic. Also, Luke would appreciate notes or cards during boot camp; please contact Johanna Wendelin for Luke's address.
- We pray for Claire Morgan's mother Dana Hunt, who is now in the hospital for ongoing cancer-related care and will likely be transitioning to hospice care.
- We pray for Jeff Morgan, Gaylen Morgan's brother, who is extremely ill with cancer and suffering significant pain of both body and spirit.
- 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: Mary Martha Thiel, Betsy Opitz; Tim Schoenfield, Henry's brother; Louise Higginbotham, Sarah'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 the moral courage of our political leaders, in particular in the places where Immigration and Custom Enforcement agents are intensifying their unlawful campaigns of detention, disappearance, and deportation, including here in Massachusetts. We pray for all who are living in an increased state of terror due to these actions, and that all of us may have the strength to take action and to bear witness to our neighbors in need.
- We pray for all those touched by gun violence across our country. In the name of Jesus Christ, we condemn all violence, politically motivated and otherwise, whether exercised by those in power or those seeking to resist such power. May the love and justice of Jesus guide us all in this time.
- 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. 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.
- 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.

TODAY AT FIRST CHURCH

68 members of the First Church community are worshipping at Craigville Retreat Center on Cape Cod this morning as part of the All-Church Retreat weekend.

Small Groups @ 10

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

In these difficult times, we need to strengthen our hope, perhaps more than ever. Led by Brent Coffin, this monthly adult formation hour provides us an opportunity to get to know one another better through soulful conversations. And together, we will explore how to strengthen our practices of hope, both for ourselves and others. Please join us, whether each month or just once.



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 3-4 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.](#)

Night Song

Sunday evenings, 7:30 - 8:15 p.m., Sanctuary and [via livestream](#)

A worship opportunity that offers stillness and sublime music in a darkened sanctuary for respite and reset, Night Song is a hybrid offering of First Church for in-person attendance in the Sanctuary and viewing via livestream or listening at another time on the Night Song YouTube channel.channel. **[Learn more about Night Song.](#)**



REGATHERING SEASON AT FIRST CHURCH

A Letter from the Moderator September 25, 2025

Dear friends,

At a special congregational meeting this past Sunday, after a year of discernment and research, and following a recommendation from Executive Council, nearly four-fifths of members present voted to sell our parsonage at 44 Garden Street in Cambridge, and use the proceeds from that sale to acquire a new property to serve as housing for our next senior minister.



The case made by the Parsonage Working Group is that while we have an obligation to provide housing for our senior minister, 44 Garden Street does not best serve that purpose. Its age, size, restoration costs, and limited potential use for mission work have, for some time, been a drain on our limited resources. With a sale, there are opportunities to acquire housing that's "right-sized" for a minister, while maintaining proximity to First Church.

This is a major decision in the life of the church. Besides housing our senior minister for 80 years, the parsonage has served as a place of deep spiritual growth for small groups, committee meetings, social gatherings, and youth group ping-pong tournaments. It is also an unquestionably beautiful building, less than a five-minute walk from the church building. Separating from this house is a big deal!

As we continue the search for our next senior pastor, this decision gives us needed clarity for candidates about the type of housing we're providing. The motions passed on Sunday also directed the finance and investment committees to prepare recommendations for the use of any proceeds from a sale. There will be listening opportunities to learn more about our current financial picture, and what the impact of any proceeds could be. Once a sale is complete, the congregation will vote on how to ultimately direct the proceeds.

I want to give huge thanks to the Parsonage Working Group—Jim Cairns, Audrey Bellinger, Chris Baker, David Torrey, and Laurie Burt—for their thorough and thoughtful research and recommendations, and to everyone who participated in Sunday's meeting. Expect an invitation before long to a Parsonage Send-Off Party, worthy of 44 Garden's 80 years of service!

Yours in faith,

Phil Servello-Jones

First Church Moderator

REGATHERING SEASON AT FIRST CHURCH



Register Now for Fall Faith & Life Groups

Led by First Church members, Faith & Life Groups are designed to encourage meaningful connections through shared interests. Faith & Life Groups involve making a short-term commitment (a single session to several weeks, depending on the group) to something that might be delightful, deep, or even transformational. If you are looking for a way to dip your toes into the life of our church and stay connected outside of Sunday Worship, this is for you! Please register for a specific Faith & Life group [here](#). After registering, you will be contacted by the leader.

Please register by Friday, October 10! Questions? Please reach out to Beth Spaulding (bspaulding68@gmail.com) or the leader of the group directly.

- **Walking the Camino de Santiago**
with Jan Jeffers Lo and Johanna Wendelin
- **Reflecting on *Miracles and Wonder: The Historical Mystery of Jesus* by Elaine Pagels**
with Martha Mueller Cook
- **Rooted Resilience: Grounding and Growing with Nature-Informed Practices**
with Stefanie Haug
- **Caring for the Caregivers**
with Stefanie Haug and Amy Matias



*read full descriptions
and register here*

Family Night

Tuesday, September 30, 6:00 - 7:00 p.m., Sage Hall

We provide pasta and red sauce, you bring a side dish or dessert to share. All are welcome, especially children with their parents and caregivers. Please let Meredith know how many are coming by emailing: familynight@firstchurchcambridge.org. No RSVP is too late! We'll eat in Sage Hall (our basement playspace) so that kids can play freely after dinner.



Breaking Bread Together: Stewardship Meals This Fall

Building on the success of our summer gatherings, the Stewardship Committee is organizing a few more meals to help foster community, connection, and a sense of belonging. A few folks have already kindly agreed to host; now we just need to find attendees to join in! If you would be interested in sharing a meal and connecting with about 8-10 others from First Church, please express your interest by [completing this form](#). All you need to do is indicate your interest, and the Stewardship Committee will follow up to confirm the date, time, location, and coordinate a potluck sign-up!

REGATHERING SEASON AT FIRST CHURCH

Community Resistance Gathering **Sunday, October 5, 12:30 - 1:30 p.m.** **Margaret Jewett Hall**

First Church is offering a space for resisting! Join with First Church folks and friends as we connect to the growing national movement of non-cooperation with our government's authoritarian efforts. We'll recap our August gathering, continue deepening our community connections, and identify ways to be in relationship to the network of actions and organizations that are "being the change" in the greater Cambridge area.



Looking for ways to find out about local opportunities for action?
Check out our [Community Resistance Resources](#).



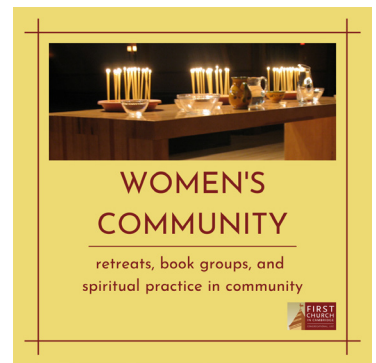
Young Adults: Faith on Tap **Monday, October 6, 7:00 - 9:00 p.m.** **Josephine, 515 Somerville Ave., Somerville**

Gather with our vibrant young adults group for a casual meet up over drinks (and probably snacks). Folks in their 20s and 30s are welcome if you are feeling new or are a seasoned young adults attendee. It's a great way to meet new friends and ask questions about faith, life, and First Church. Please RSVP so we know to expect you or to learn about upcoming events:
youngadults@firstchurchcambridge.org

Women's Community Book Group **Tuesday, October 14, 6:30-7:45 p.m., via Zoom**

Please join us for this month's book discussion of Virginia Evans's *The Correspondent*. This novel is described by a small bookstore owner this way: "The Correspondent is an homage to the written word. As Sybil writes her letters, we journey through her life. Through her grief, her friendships, her family, her loves, and her regrets, we are gifted an indelible character." We will have a lot to talk about, for sure! All who identify as women are welcome.

For questions or to receive the zoom link,
contact Alex Steinert-Evoy: alex@steinert-evoy.org



REGATHERING SEASON AT FIRST CHURCH



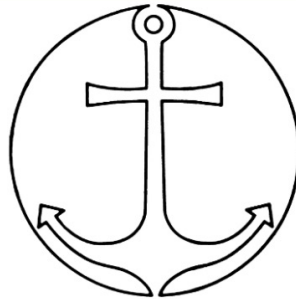
A Conversation about the Crisis in Gaza Sunday, October 19, 12:30 - 1:30 p.m. Harter Room and via Zoom

A number of First Church folks began meeting earlier this year as a Faith & Life Group to explore issues of peace and justice in the Holy Land. Begun as an opportunity to educate themselves, the group now feels called to bring the discussion to the wider congregation. Members of the group will share their personal reflections, and

information will be shared about a resolution regarding the situation in Gaza that was passed this summer at the UCC's General Synod. All are warmly invited to come listen, learn, and reflect on how God may be calling us to respond as a congregation.

First Church Shelter presents

The 2025 Doris Beauvais Luncheon & Mitch Snyder Awards



**FIRST CHURCH
SHELTER**

Sunday, October 26

12:30-2:00p.m.

Margaret Jewett Hall

11 Garden Street, Cambridge

CALENDAR

FIRST CHURCH
IN CAMBRIDGE
CONGREGATIONAL

389 YEARS
ON THE WAY
1 6 3 6 – 2 0 2 5

Today's Events

9:15 a.m.	Choir Rehearsal
10:00 a.m.	Christian Formation: Small Groups @ 10
11:00 a.m.	Morning Worship
11:20 a.m.	Church School: Creative Arts Workshop
12:15 p.m.	Refreshments in Margaret Jewett Hall (MJH)
7:30 p.m.	Night Song

The Week Ahead

Monday, September 29

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

6:00 p.m.	Family Night, Sage Hall
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Wednesday, October 1

9:30 a.m.	Staff Meeting, Harter Room and via Zoom
7:00 p.m.	Christian Formation Committee, via Zoom

Friday, October 3

12:00 p.m.	Friday Café, Margaret Jewett Hall
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Sunday, October 5

9:00 a.m.	Choir Rehearsal, Sanctuary
10:00 a.m.	Christian Formation: Bible Study @ 10, Harter Room and via Zoom
11:00 a.m.	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.	Community Resistance Gathering, MJH
7:30 p.m.	Night Song, Sanctuary and via livestream



scan for online bulletin

Visit firstchurchcambridge.org to:

- Read all the [latest news](#).
- See our [events calendar](#) for Zoom links and details.
- Find transcripts and recordings of [sermons](#).
- Complete a [First Church Communications Request Form](#) to promote a church event.