



TOGETHER.
FEARLESS.

Stewardship Season
November 16, 2025



Grounded in God • Growing in Community • Acting in Love

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

Allegro (Sonata V)

J. S. Bach

HYMN 259*

Awake, Awake to Love and Work

GREETING*

Marieke Van Damme

L: Beloved children of God, we meet within this holy place.

C: Here may we be grounded in God's hope and healing.

L: We meet at this holy time.

C: Now may we grow in community with Christ at our center.

L: We meet among this holy gathering.

C: Here and now, made bold by the Spirit, may we act in Love.

L: With gratitude for this place, this time, and this community:

All: Let us worship God!

WORDS OF WELCOME

ANTHEM

Down To The River

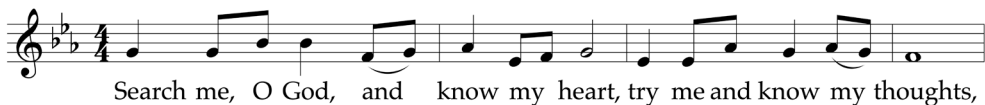
Gospel song, arr. Robert Lee

CONFESSING

INVITATION TO CONFESSION

SONG

Layzer/Sykes



SILENCE

PRAYER OF CONFESSION

L: Let us pray for healing, pardon, and peace:

**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 369*

A New Commandment

MUTUAL BLESSING*

Mike Solberg

Adults: May God be with you there.

Children: And may God be with you here.

Children up through 7th grade are now invited to Church School classes. Godly Play (PreK-3rd grade), Middler (4/5th grade), and Bible 101 (6/7th 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

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 spirits to receive your hope;
draw us nearer to you by your word of grace and truth. Amen.**

READING

2 Thessalonians 3:6-13

SERMON

Noël Grisanti

HYMN 527*

For the Fruit of All Creation

SHARING OUR LIFE TOGETHER

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Mike Solberg

CALL TO FALL CONGREGATIONAL MEETING

Laurie Friedman

MINISTRY MOMENT

Martha Mueller Cook and Kathy Williams

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.**

STEWARDSHIP TESTIMONY AND INVITATION TO OFFERING

Our offering supports the many ministries of our church, with 10% for missions in the community and beyond. Please use the QR code for online gifts, or place your offering in the plate at the edge of the chancel.

George Van Hare



OFFERTORY

How Can I Keep from Singing

Traditional

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 376*

Help Us Accept Each Other

BENEDICTION*

VOLUNTARY

Dies sind die heil'gen zehn Gebot

J.S. Bach

**You are invited to stand.*

Today's Worship Leaders

Laurie Friedman

Noël Grisanti

Martha Mueller Cook & Kathy Williams

Lee Prouty

Mike Solberg

Peter Sykes

Marieke Van Damme

George Van Hare

Clerk

Pastoral Intern

offering a Ministry Moment

Facilities Manager

Interim Senior Minister

Music Director

Liturgist

offering a Stewardship testimony

New to First Church?

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



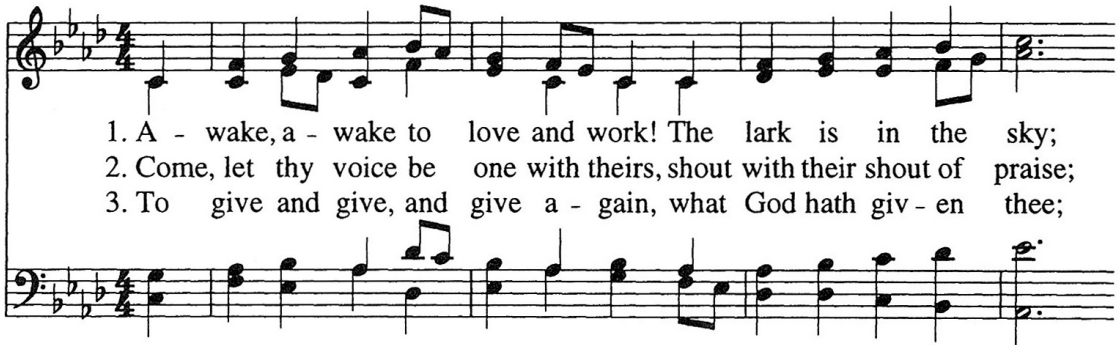
First Church Land Acknowledgment

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.

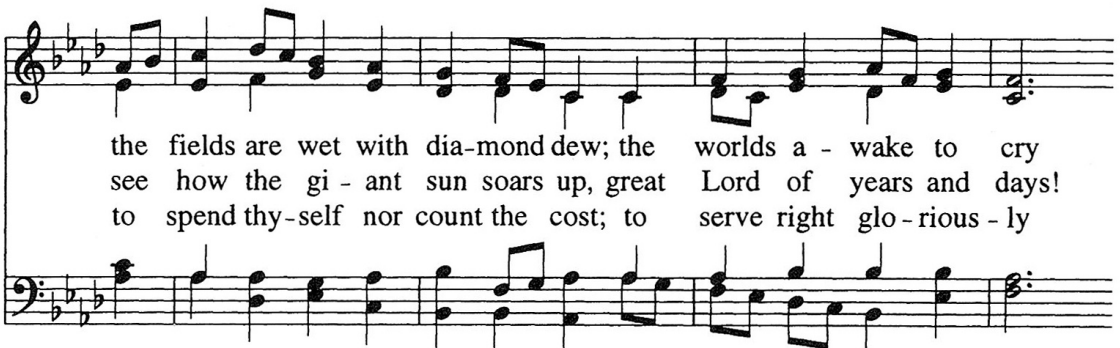
You can find a longer version of this acknowledgment [here](#) or with the QR code.

OPENING HYMN

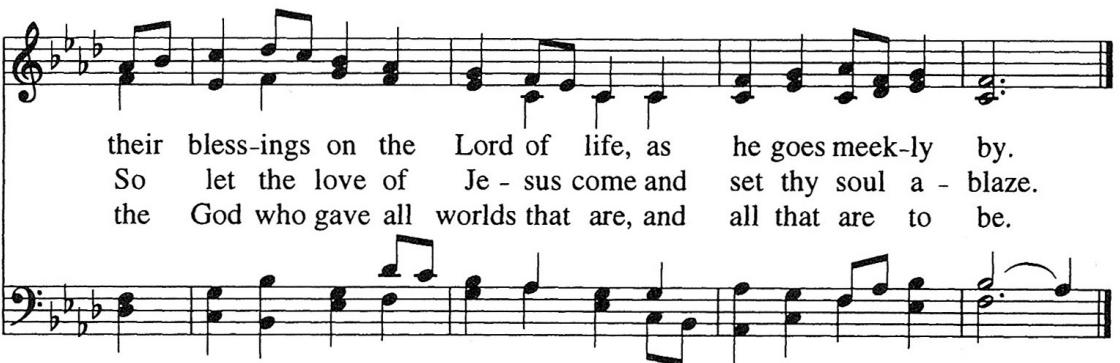
259 Awake, Awake to Love and Work



1. A - wake, a - wake to love and work! The lark is in the sky;
2. Come, let thy voice be one with theirs, shout with their shout of praise;
3. To give and give, and give a - gain, what God hath giv - en thee;



the fields are wet with dia-mond dew; the worlds a - wake to cry
see how the gi - ant sun soars up, great Lord of years and days!
to spend thy-self nor count the cost; to serve right glo - rious - ly



their bless-ings on the Lord of life, as he goes meek-ly by.
So let the love of Je - sus come and set thy soul a - blaze.
the God who gave all worlds that are, and all that are to be.

WORDS: Geoffrey A. Studdert-Kennedy, 1921

MUSIC: John Logan's *Sixteen Tune Settings*, 1812; harm. C. Winfred Douglas, *The Hymnal*, 1940

MORNING SONG

86.86.86

369

A New Commandment

A new com-mand-ment I give un-to you: that you love one an-oth-er as

I have loved you, that you love one an-oth-er as I have loved you.

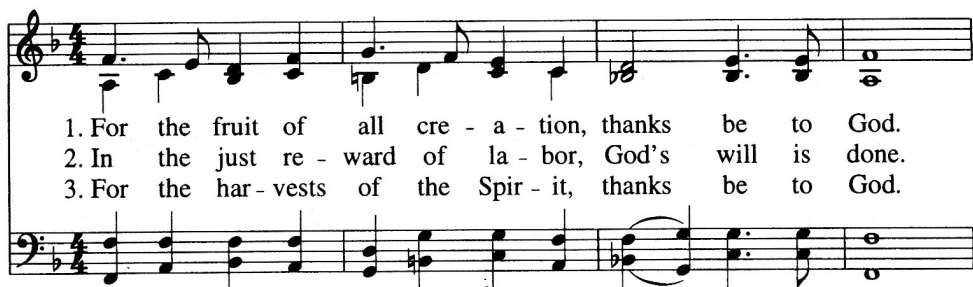
The musical score is written for two staves, treble and bass clef, in the key of D major (indicated by two sharps: F# and C#). The melody is primarily in the treble clef, while the bass clef provides a harmonic accompaniment. The lyrics are written below the notes. The first line of music corresponds to the first line of lyrics, and the second line of music corresponds to the second line of lyrics. The score ends with a double bar line.

WORDS: John 13:34
MUSIC: Anonymous

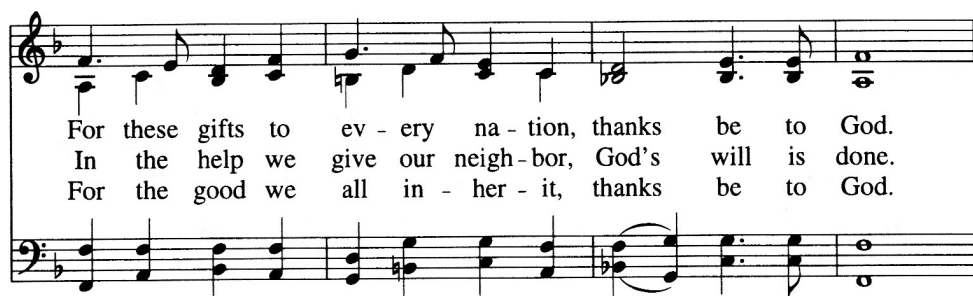
NEW COMMANDMENT
10 12.12

527

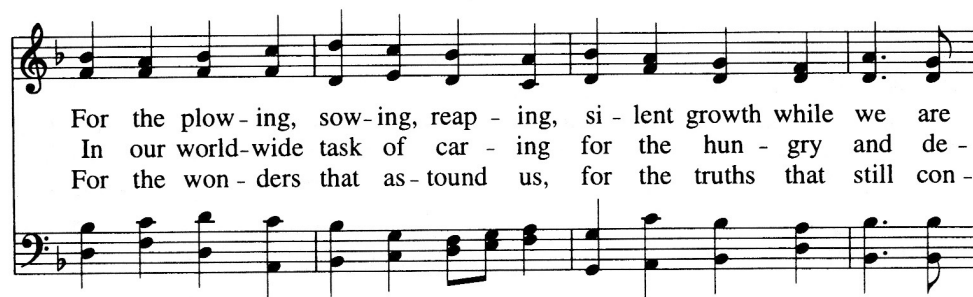
For the Fruit of All Creation



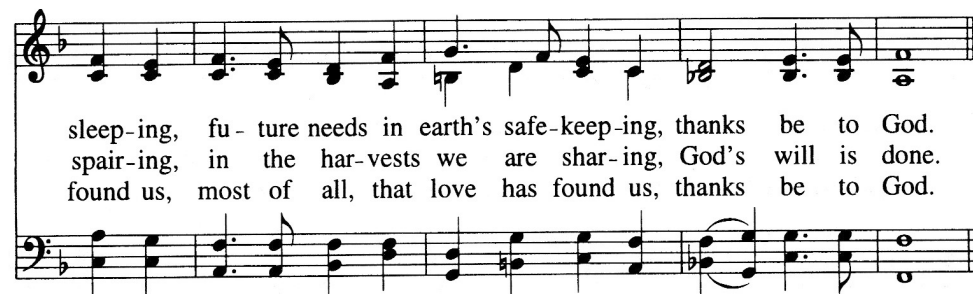
1. For the fruit of all cre - a - tion, thanks be to God.
 2. In the just re - ward of la - bor, God's will is done.
 3. For the har - vests of the Spir - it, thanks be to God.



For these gifts to ev - ery na - tion, thanks be to God.
 In the help we give our neigh - bor, God's will is done.
 For the good we all in - her - it, thanks be to God.



For the plow - ing, sow - ing, reap - ing, si - lent growth while we are
 In our world - wide task of car - ing for the hun - gry and de -
 For the won - ders that as - tound us, for the truths that still con -



sleep - ing, fu - ture needs in earth's safe - keep - ing, thanks be to God.
 spair - ing, in the har - vests we are shar - ing, God's will is done.
 found us, most of all, that love has found us, thanks be to God.

WORDS: Fred Pratt Green, 1970

MUSIC: Traditional Welsh melody, *Musical Relicks of the Welsh Bards*, Dublin, 1784

AR HYD Y NOS

84.84.888.4

CLOSING HYMN

376

Help Us Accept Each Other

Unison



1. Help us ac - cept each oth - er as Christ ac - cept - ed us;
 2. Teach us, O Lord, your les - sons, as in our dai - ly life
 3. Let your ac - cep - tance change us, so that we may be moved
 4. Lord, for to - day's en - coun - ters with all who are in need,

teach us as sis - ter, broth - er, each per - son to em - brace.
 we strug - gle to be hu - man and search for hope and faith.
 in liv - ing sit - u - a - tions to do the truth in love;
 who hun - ger for ac - cep - tance, for righ - teous - ness and bread,

Be pres - ent, Lord, a - mong us and bring us to be - lieve
 Teach us to care for peo - ple, for all, not just for some,
 to prac - tice your ac - cep - tance, un - til we know by heart
 we need new eyes for see - ing, new hands for hold - ing on;

we are our - selves ac - cept - ed and meant to love and live.
 to love them as we find them or as they may be - come.
 the ta - ble of for - give - ness and laugh - ter's heal - ing art.
 re - new us with your Spir - it; Lord, free us, make us one!

WORDS: Fred Kaan, 1974
 MUSIC: John Ness Beck, 1977

BECK
 76.76D

COMMUNITY PRAYERS

- We pray for Susannah Hopkins Leisher and her family as they mourn the loss of her father John Hopkins, who died from complications of Alzheimer's disease on November 1. John was the husband of beloved First Church member Hilary Hopkins, who died in 2023.
- We pray for Gaylen Morgan's brother Jeff, who has entered hospice and is serene and grateful to be out of the worst pain. We pray for peace and joy for him in these last days, and comfort for all who will greatly miss him.
- 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; First Church friend Kelly; Devin Hansen's aunt Ellen Smith and cousin Rob Dencola; Tim Schoenfield, Henry's brother; Louise Higginbotham, Sarah'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 200+ UMass Amherst students who lost their homes and belongings in a fire that decimated a large off-campus apartment complex.
- We pray for all those impacted by the federal government shutdown and by the negotiations to re-open the government that may not save important subsidies for health insurance payments for many across the country.
- 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 violent 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 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, including in Gaza and Israel, Ukraine, Tanzania, Sudan, Haiti, and 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

Confirmation Class for 8/9th graders

Today, 9:30 - 10:45 a.m., The Well

Our year-long Confirmation journey for 8th and 9th graders continues today with a session entitled “Jesus Christ, Human and Divine.”



Christian Formation: Bible Study @ 10

“Hello, Bible. My name is _____”

Today, 10:00 - 10:45 a.m., Harter Room and via Zoom

Pastor Mike is helping us get to know the Bible better as part of our 10:00 O’Clock Hour offerings this fall. These sessions are for everyone, no matter your Bible background. The Bible has a fascinating personality, so take the first step in getting to know it: Hello Bible. My name is _____.

Talk About Racial Justice: Join the Conversation

Today, 12:30 - 1:30 p.m., Margaret Jewett Hall and via Zoom

At First Church, we affirm in our public witness and on our website that we aspire to be an anti-racist church. Today, we invite you to reflect with us: How does this commitment resonate with you? If it does, can you share why it’s meaningful to you? If it doesn’t, know that it is equally welcome and important to express that too. In a time when our core racial justice values are being tested by forces beyond our walls, it grounds and energizes us to deepen our shared understanding and commitment within our FCC community. Please join us for an open and inclusive conversation about First Church’s racial justice ministry. Lunch will be provided.



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.

[Learn more about Night Song.](#)

THIS WEEK AT FIRST CHURCH

◆ OPEN TO ALL



RSVP



COMMUNITY DEFENSE: SUPPORTING OUR IMMIGRANT NEIGHBORS

MON, NOV 17TH 7:00 PM

**HARVARD-EPWORTH
UNITED METHODIST
CHURCH**

1555 Mass Ave, Cambridge

LEARN ABOUT:

- The state of ICE in MA
- Preparing our Community for Safety
- Knowing Your Rights
- What to do if you See ICE
- Supporting our Immigrant Community Members
- Front-line organizations

Join other First Church Faithful Resisters at this important one-hour in-person training tomorrow evening, Monday, November 17.

Or save the date of Sunday, December 14, when the same training will be offered after worship here in Margaret Jewett Hall.

Looking for more opportunities to preserve our democracy? Bookmark this page on our website; it is updated regularly with new information!

firstchurchcambridge.org/faitful-resistance

 bit.ly/CDT17Nov2025

Family Night

Tuesday, November 18, 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 eat in Sage Hall (our basement playspace) so that kids can play freely after dinner.



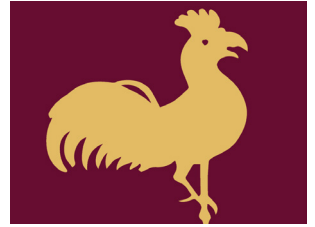
STEWARDSHIP SEASON AT FIRST CHURCH

Fall Congregational Meeting

Sunday, November 23, 12:30 - 1:30 p.m.

Margaret Jewett Hall and via Zoom

Every year at our Fall Congregational Meeting, we review and vote upon a budget proposal for the upcoming year. This year's meeting takes place on our Pledge Dedication Sunday, when we commit what we can to sustain the ministries of First Church. Come enjoy a light luncheon or join us virtually, as we gather to do this important work of the church.



Call to Meeting

Notice is hereby given that the Fall Congregational Meeting of First Church in Cambridge, Congregational, United Church of Christ, will be held in its 390th year at 12:30 p.m., Sunday the 23rd of November 2025, in person in Margaret Jewett Hall and via Zoom conference for the following purposes:

1. To approve the minutes of the Special Congregational Meeting of September 21, 2025, and the Annual Meeting of January 26, 2025
2. To review and vote on the proposed 2026 annual budget of the Congregation as recommended by the Executive Council.

No other business may legally come before the meeting.

By direction of the Executive Council,

Laurie Friedman, Clerk
Cambridge, Massachusetts
October 28, 2025



Commit to a 13th Month

In September, our Treasurers provided the congregation with [a financial update for 2025](#). In short, the good news was that with frugal spending, plus some new and strong giving, we have had a great year of ministry and reduced the expected deficit for this year from \$98,000 (as bravely approved by the congregation) to \$60,000. Now, we invite the whole congregation to help close the remaining gap for 2025. ***We renew the Treasurers' request that everyone prayerfully consider adding a "13th month" to your giving for 2025.*** If you don't give monthly, we note that's an extra 8%. We'd love as many as possible of those 13th month gifts to come in by November 19, hoping that we will have good news for the congregation at the November 23 Fall Congregational Meeting. [Give a 13th month for 2025 here.](#)

THE GLORY OF GOD



Advent 2025

What comes to mind when you hear the phrase, “the glory of God?” Radiant light, blaring trumpets, the impression of overwhelming might? When the shepherds heard the announcement of Jesus’ birth, “an angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them.” And yet this angel was not announcing the arrival of a dominating army, a wealthy ruler, or a powerful king. Instead, the glory of God comes to us vulnerable, weak, needing care – as one destined for the cross. This Advent, join us in worship and community as we consider the glory of God in the body of a baby. Let us bring all our assumptions of what glory looks like and turn them upside down, into a manger.



Christian Meditation @ 10

Fifth Sunday, November 30, 10:00 - 10:45 a.m., Harter Room

Join us for a special fifth Sunday program of Christian Meditation. Noël Grisanti will lead us in a time of silence and reflection, drawing from the rich tradition of Christian contemplative practices. As we enter into the joyful and bustling season of Advent, we hope you will join us to take a moment to pause, breathe, and ground ourselves in the love of God together.

Advent Workshop

Sunday, November 30, 12:30 - 1:45 p.m., Margaret Jewett Hall

On the first Sunday of Advent, plan to join us after worship for a variety of arts & craft activities to prepare for the season. Bring your Advent candle ring to decorate with greens (new candle rings and candles will be available until we run out). Choose among other crafts, including beeswax candle-dipping, ornament-making, and more. Enjoy a soup and bread lunch as you take in the creative energy around you. All are welcome! ***And if you would like to lead a craft table, Sarah is seeking volunteers - [email](#) or speak with her about your interest.***



LOOKING AHEAD TO ADVENT



Friday Café Benefit Show

Tuesday, December 2 at 7:30 p.m.

The Backroom at the Burren, Davis Square, Somerville

Each year at the start of the holiday season, a variety of outstanding performers gather at the Burren in Davis Square to benefit our own Friday Café. This year's show features local favorite David Coffin, Sephardic Ladino singer Lily Henley, fiddler Ellery Klein and friends, Irish dancers from the Rebecca McGowan school, and many others. Every \$35 ticket directly benefits the work of the Friday Café. Come early and have dinner before the show! [Buy tickets here.](#)

Coat Boston & Holiday Shop Donations

Sunday, December 7

On the second Sunday of Advent, First Church will collect new coats for children, as well as new toys for holiday gifts. All unwrapped gifts and coats will be blessed in our worship service, alongside the offering. Particularly wanted are dolls representing people of color, books, games, and sports equipment (especially soccer balls). All will be distributed in the Greater Boston area by Coat Boston and The Holiday Shop. Learn more at: coatboston.org/donate/
We ask that all adult coats be donated to our own Friday Café.



Alternative Christmas Fair

Sunday, December 7, 12:15 - 2:00 p.m., Margaret Jewett Hall

Please join us for First Church's Alternative Christmas Fair, where we help our non-profit vendors raise money for their organizations and clients by doing our holiday shopping at their tables. And bring your friends as well!

Special Music Sunday

Sunday, December 14 at 11:00 a.m.

Sanctuary and via livestream

On the third Sunday of Advent, December 14, the First Church Choir will sing selections from the beloved *Gloria* by Antonio Vivaldi with a baroque orchestra. We will rehearse on two Thursday evenings, December 4 & 11, from 7:00 to 9:00 p.m., as well as on the morning of December 14. ***If you would like to sing, please contact Music Director Peter Sykes at: psykes@aol.com.***



CALENDAR

FIRST CHURCH
IN CAMBRIDGE
CONGREGATIONAL

389 YEARS
ON THE WAY

1636 – 2025

Today's Events

9:15 a.m.	Choir Rehearsal, Sanctuary
9:30 a.m.	Confirmation Class for 8/9th graders, The Well
10:00 a.m.	Christian Formation: Bible Study @ 10, Harter Room
11:00 a.m.	Morning Worship, Sanctuary and via livestream
11:20 a.m.	Church School: Godly Play, Middler, and Bible 101 Classes
12:15 p.m.	Refreshments in Hastings Common
12:30 p.m.	Talk About Racial Justice: Join the Conversation, Margaret Jewett Hall
7:30 p.m.	Night Song, Sanctuary and via livestream

The Week Ahead

Monday, November 17

4:30 p.m.	Contemplative Practices Gathering, via Zoom
6:00 p.m.	Faith & Life Group: Care for the Caregivers, via Zoom

Tuesday, November 18

6:00 p.m.	Family Night, Sage Hall
7:30 p.m.	Shelter Oversight Committee, via Zoom

Wednesday, November 19

9:30 a.m.	Staff Meeting, Harter Room and via Zoom
7:00 p.m.	Missions & Social Justice Committee, via Zoom

Thursday, November 20

4:00 p.m.	Buildings & Grounds Committee, via Zoom
5:00 p.m.	Faith & Life Group: <i>Reflecting on Miracles and Wonder: The Historical Mystery of Jesus</i> by Elaine Pagels, via Zoom

Friday, November 21

12:00 p.m.	Friday Café, Margaret Jewett Hall (MJH)
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Sunday, November 23 - Pledge Dedication Sunday

9:15 a.m.	Choir Rehearsal, Sanctuary
10:00 a.m.	Christian Formation: Small Groups @ 10, Harter Room and via Zoom
11:00 a.m.	Morning Worship, Sanctuary and via livestream
11:20 a.m.	Church School: Godly Play, Middler, and Bible 101 classes
12:30 p.m.	Fall Congregational Meeting and Luncheon, 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.