



Pledge Dedication Sunday
November 23, 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

Prelude (for the Foundations)

Craig Phillips

HYMN 526*

Come, Ye Thankful People, Come

GREETING*

Valerie Blanc

L: Children of the Holy One, we join in worship now to be together, fearless.

C: The Spirit calls us by name, drawing us closer to God and reminding us that we are not alone.

L: In a world that all too often works to separate and isolate us, our togetherness is a holy gift.

C: In a world that all too often works to cower us, or make us complacent, our fearlessness is a sacred blessing.

L: Because we have each other, and because nothing is stronger than the love of Jesus, we can live with open hearts and generous spirits.

C: Let us worship the God who binds us together, makes us fearless, and sends us out with purpose. Come, let us worship!

WORDS OF WELCOME

ANTHEM

Locus iste

Anton Bruckner

*Locus iste a Deo factus est,
inaestimabile sacramentum,
irreprehensibilis est.*

*This place was made by God,
a priceless sacrament;
it is without reproach.*

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

Colossians 1:9-20

SERMON

Mike Solberg

HYMN 457*

Accept, O God, the Gifts We Bring

SHARING OUR LIFE TOGETHER

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Karen McArthur

PRAYERS FOR THE CHURCH AND WORLD

Emma Mitchell

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 GIVE AND PLEDGE

Karen McArthur and Winnie Yip

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.



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.

UNISON PRAYER OF DEDICATION OF OUR GIFTS & 2026 PLEDGES*

L: Let us pray:

C: Gracious and loving God, bless these offerings,
and the pledges we make for 2026, to your use,
among us, in our community, and for the wider world.
May we, like all the faithful,
be known for being together, fearless,
loosely holding what we have,
ready to let it go for the work of repair,
and for the spreading of your love and good news to all. Amen.

GOING FORTH

HYMN 27*

Now Thank We All Our God

BENEDICTION*

VOLUNTARY

Epilogue (for Full Organ)

Craig Phillips

**You are invited to stand.*

Today's Worship Leaders

Valerie Blanc
Karen McArthur
Emma Mitchell
Lee Prouty
Mike Solberg
Peter Sykes
Winnie Yip

*Liturgist
Minister of Stewardship & Finance
Pastoral Associate
Facilities Manager
Interim Senior Minister
Music Director
Stewardship Committee Chair*

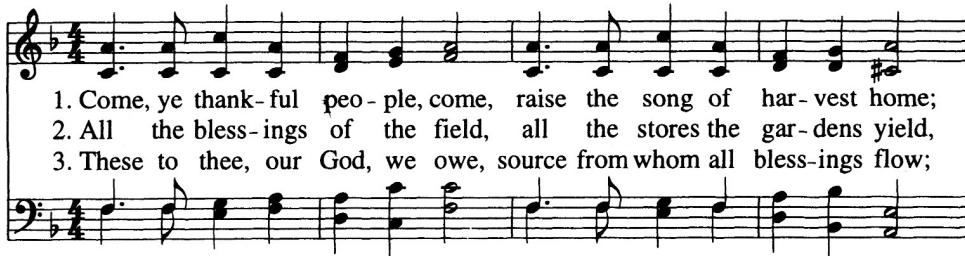
New to First Church?

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

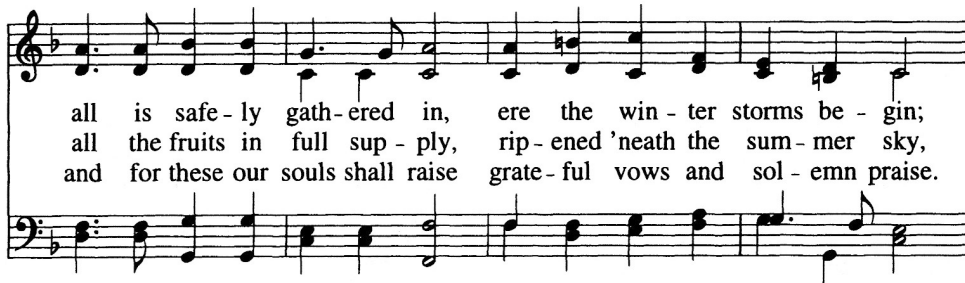
OPENING HYMN

Come, Ye Thankful People, Come

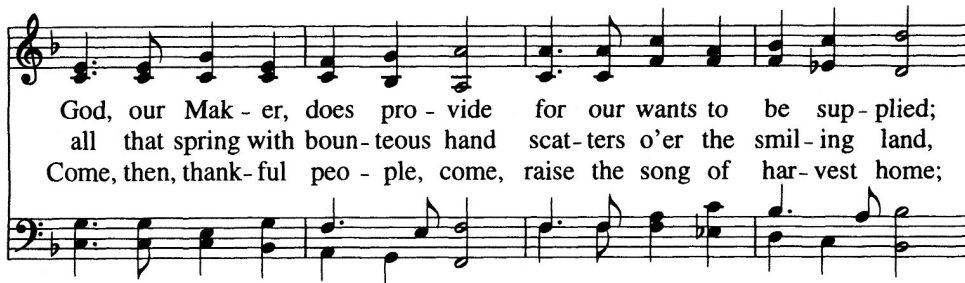
526



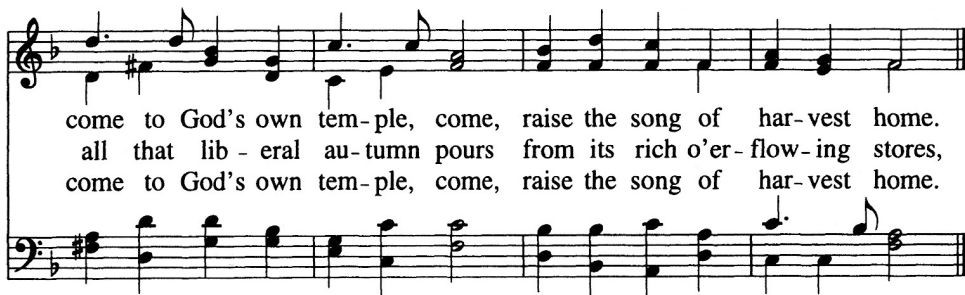
1. Come, ye thank-ful peo-ple, come, raise the song of har-vest home;
 2. All the bless-ings of the field, all the stores the gar-dens yield,
 3. These to thee, our God, we owe, source from whom all bless-ings flow;



all is safe-ly gath-ered in, ere the win-ter storms be-gin;
 all the fruits in full sup-ply, rip-en'd 'neath the sum-mer sky,
 and for these our souls shall raise grate-ful vows and sol-emn praise.



God, our Mak-er, does pro-vide for our wants to be sup-plied;
 all that spring with boun-teous hand scat-ters o'er the smil-ing land,
 Come, then, thank-ful peo-ple, come, raise the song of har-vest home;



come to God's own tem-ple, come, raise the song of har-vest home.
 all that lib-eral au-tumn pours from its rich o'er-flow-ing stores,
 come to God's own tem-ple, come, raise the song of har-vest home.

WORDS: Henry Alford, 1844, Anna L. Barbauld, 1772, et al.
 MUSIC: George J. Elvey, 1858

ST. GEORGE'S WINDSOR
 77.77D

369

A New Commandment

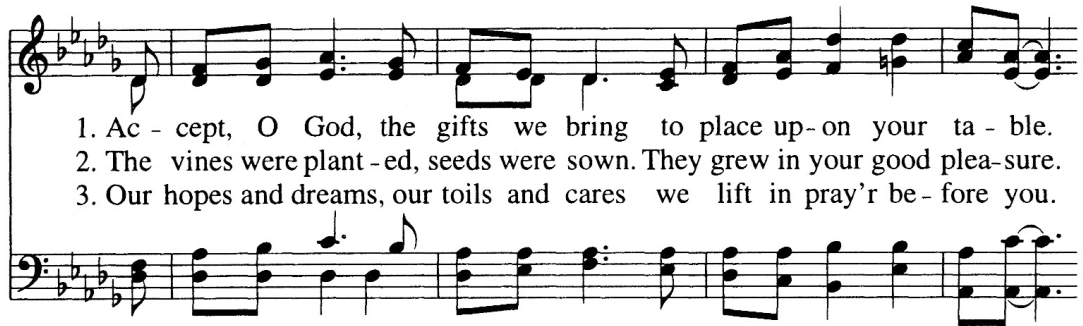
A new com-mand-ment I give un-to you: that you love one an-oth-er as

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

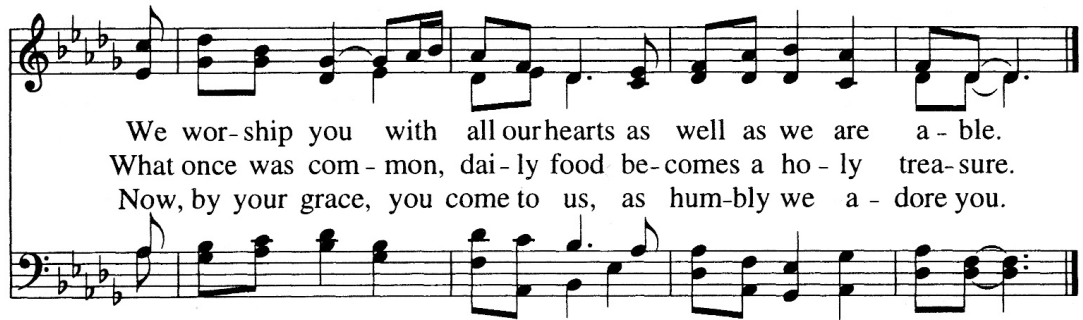
WORDS: John 13:34
MUSIC: Anonymous

NEW COMMANDMENT
10 12.12

457 Accept, O God, the Gifts We Bring



1. Ac - cept, O God, the gifts we bring to place up-on your ta - ble.
 2. The vines were plant - ed, seeds were sown. They grew in your good plea-sure.
 3. Our hopes and dreams, our toils and cares we lift in pray'r be - fore you.



We wor-ship you with all our hearts as well as we are a - ble.
 What once was com - mon, dai - ly food be-comes a ho - ly trea-sure.
 Now, by your grace, you come to us, as hum-bly we a - dore you.

WORDS: Beth Bergeron Folkemer, 1990, *With One Voice*, alt.
 MUSIC: English folk tune, harm. Alice Parker (b. 1925)

BARBARA ALLEN
 87.87

The encounter with God that is worship is a communion of giving and receiving. BARBARA ALLEN is an old English ballad tune.

Words, © 1990, harm. © 1995 Augsburg Fortress

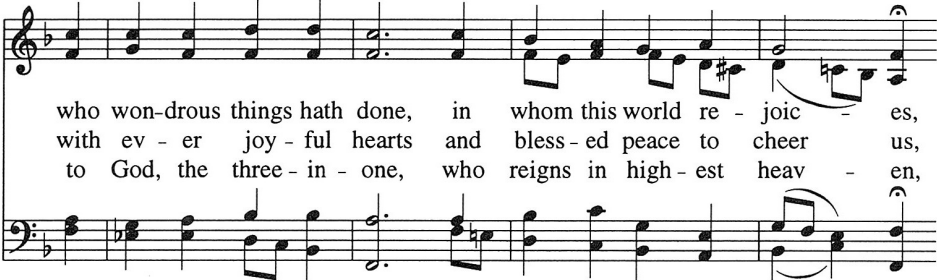
CLOSING HYMN

Now Thank We All Our God

27



1. Now thank we all our God with heart and hands and voice - es,
 2. O may this bounteous God through all our life be near us,
 3. All praise and thanks to God almighty now be given;



who wondrous things hath done, in whom this world rejoices,
 with ever joyful hearts and blessed peace to cheer us,
 to God, the three-in-one, who reigns in highest heaven,



who, from our mothers' arms, hath blessed us on our way
 and keep us in all grace, and guide us when perplexed,
 the one eternal God, whom earth and heaven adore,



with countless gifts of love, and still is ours to-day.
 and free us from all ills in this world and the next.
 for thus it was, is now, and shall be evermore.

WORDS: Martin Rinkart, 1636; tr. Catherine Winkworth, 1858, alt.
 MUSIC: Melody, Johann Crüger, 1647

NUN DANKET
 67.67.66.66

COMMUNITY PRAYERS

- We pray in celebration for the arrival of Winthrop Johnson Mylander, born to Karen Quinn and Jarret Mylander on Friday, November 14. The entire family, including big sister June, is doing well and feeling thankful.
- We pray for Beth Spaulding as she mourns the loss of her father Bob Spaulding, who died on Tuesday, November 18, after a long illness.
- We pray for Lisa DiNardo's niece Dona DeLorenzo and family as Dona's father-in-law Edward enters hospice care.
- We pray for our Community Minister for Latin America Monica Maher and the people of Ecuador, who are living through an authoritarian, and recently brutal and deadly, crackdown by the government against its detractors.
- 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 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 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, and most recently in Charlotte, NC. 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, Haiti, and the Democratic Republic of Congo. We pray for the people of El Fashur in the Darfur region of Sudan, amid a horrific campaign of ethnic cleansing against non-Arabic minorities.
- 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.

TODAY AT FIRST CHURCH

Christian Formation: 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 explore how to strengthen our practices of hope, both for ourselves and others. Please join us, whether each month or just once.



Fall Congregational Meeting

Today, 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

TODAY AT FIRST CHURCH

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.](#)



First Church Homeless Ministries



A Message from First Church Homeless Ministries

Housing and homelessness advocates are in shock after learning that the Trump administration will slash housing support for hundreds of thousands of residents nationwide. In Cambridge, [more than \\$8 million in annual grants is expected to disappear](#), potentially stripping 344 residents of their housing, if the City is not able to cover grant losses.

These residents include former guests of the [First Church Shelter](#) and members of the [Friday Café](#) community. They are people we know and care about, people we've accompanied on their journey out of homelessness and into housing. The cruelty of taking housing away from people who have worked so hard to get their lives back on track is simply unfathomable.

First Church Homeless Ministries is following developments closely and considering how best to respond. Please stay tuned for future alerts about actions First Church members can take on behalf of those at greatest risk in our community.

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!



ADVENT AT FIRST CHURCH



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, superhero figures, 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.



Youth Group: Holiday Baking and Card Writing

Friday, December 5, 7:00 - 9:00 p.m.

Kitchen and Hastings Common

First Church teens are invited to gather for a cozy evening of cookie-baking and crafting holiday messages for church members, and we'll order pizza to sustain us as we work. Hang out with friends, and help spread some sweet joy in the Advent season!

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!



ADVENT AT FIRST CHURCH

Gift Cards for Shelter Guests

In this holiday season, the Shelter Oversight Committee is inviting donations to help ensure each of the 14 Shelter guests receives \$25 in gift certificates. Providing gift certificates allows Shelter guests to select and choose what they want and need: health and hygiene items, snacks, socks, and more. If you would like to donate gift cards or contribute towards their purchase, contact Shelter Director Jim Stewart: jstewart@firstchurchcambridge.org or 617-335-7664.



[Participate here.](#)

Warm Hands, Warm Hearts: The Friday Café's Winter Glove Drive

Share the gift of warm hands this holiday season by giving a pair of winter gloves to a neighbor in need! If you wish, add a personal message to the recipient. Bonus: Consider making a gift in honor of someone on your holiday gift list!

- Donate gloves: suggested donation \$10 per pair.
Optional: add a personal message for free.
- Make a gift in someone's honor: suggested donation \$25.
Includes glove donation and a card to your honoree.

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.***



Christmas Poinsettia Donations

If you wish to donate poinsettias in celebration, honor, or memory of loved ones this Christmas, please send the names of those to be recognized to Bruce Dillenbeck (bruce@firstchurchcambridge.org) in the First Church office by Monday, December 15. Contributions of \$20 to help defray the cost of flowers can be made [online](#) or by check in the offering basket (payable to First Church in Cambridge, with a memo line of "Poinsettias"). ***Please send an email to Bruce with the names, even if you pay by check through the offering basket or online; this way we can make sure no one is missed.*** The list of names will appear in the UnPageant bulletin on Sunday, December 21.

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, Sanctuary
10:00 a.m.	Christian Formation: Small @ 10, Harter Room & 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, MJH and via Zoom
7:30 p.m.	Night Song, Sanctuary and via livestream

The Week Ahead

Monday, November 24

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

Tuesday, November 25

7:00 p.m.	Executive Council, via Zoom
-----------	-----------------------------

Wednesday, November 26

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

Thursday, November 27 - Church Office & Building Closed for Thanksgiving

Friday, November 28 - Church Office & Building Closed for Thanksgiving

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

Sunday, November 30 - First Sunday in Advent

9:15 a.m.	Choir Rehearsal, Sanctuary
10:00 a.m.	Christian Formation: Christian Meditation @ 10, Harter Room & via Zoom
11:00 a.m.	Morning Worship, Sanctuary and via livestream
11:20 a.m.	Church School: Creative Arts Workshop, Library
12:30 p.m.	Advent Workshop and Soup 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.