

Advent November 30, 2025



## Order of Worship GATHERING

**Voluntary** Savior of the Nations, Come

J. S. Bach

Hymn (insert)\*

O Come, O Come Emmanuel

see page 5

## Advent Candle-Lighting\*

Aging with Grace Group

L: Dear friends, Advent is a season of waiting.

C: We wait for the Light to show us the way through this dark time of year.

L: Loving and patient God, be with us now, as we light the first candle of Advent, the candle of hope.

C: Help us open our hearts to the true glory of God, often found in surprising places.

L: The Light of Christ!

C: Thanks be to God!

**Words of Welcome** 

Mike Wendelin

Anthem O Sapientia Healey Willan

O Wisdom, who camest forth from the mouth of the Most High, reaching mightily from one boundary of the world to the other, and pleasantly ordering all things, come to teach us the way of prudence.

## **CONFESSING**

## **Invitation to Confession**

## **Advent Antiphon**

Layzer/Sykes





## Silence

<sup>\*</sup>You are invited to stand.

## **Advent Prayer of Confession**

L: Let us pray together:

C: Holy One, we begin this Advent season watching and waiting for your glory to appear.

You entered our world not in a palace or on a throne,

but in a shed and upon a manger.

And yet, we are often spiritually impatient,

drawn to what is powerful and safe.

Help us honor the the faithful resisters, the truthtellers,

and those working to build a society of respect and fairness.

Repair our vision, O God, so we may see your glory aright.

In the name of the One for whom we wait, Amen.

## **Declaration of Forgiveness**

L: Beloved of God, in the name of Jesus Christ, and through the Holy Spirit, I joyfully assure you that the One who came in humility loves you completely.

You are forgiven and set free. Your past failures are released,

and your future is held securely by the One who calls you beloved.

C: Thanks be to God! We embrace this forgiveness

and go forth to celebrate the quiet, humble glory of our Redeemer.

## **Greeting of Peace\***

L: The peace of Christ be with you!

C: And also with you!

**Hymn 121\*** Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus

Mutual Blessing\* Karen McArthur

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 Workshop in the Library. Adults can meet their children in Margaret Jewett Hall after worship.

## **OPENING THE WORD**

Prayer for Understanding Emma Mitchell

Reading Isaiah 2:2-4

**Reading** Matthew 24:36-44

Hymn 113\*

Isaiah the Prophet Has Written of Old

## SHARING OUR LIFE TOGETHER

#### **Announcements**

## **Prayers for the Church and World**

Noël Grisanti & 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 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.



Offertory

The Angel Gabriel Trad. carol, arr. Edgar Pettman

**Advent Doxology\*** 

To God, all glorious heavenly Light, to Christ revealed in earthly night, to God the Spirit now we raise our joyful songs of thankful praise. Amen.

**Prayer of Dedication\*** 

## **GOING FORTH**

**HYMN 130\*** O Christ, How Shall I Meet You

**BENEDICTION\*** 

VOLUNTARY Savior of the Nations, Come J. S. Bach

## **Today's Worship Leaders**

Aging with Grace group Noël Grisanti Karen McArthur Emma Mitchell Lee Prouty Peter Sykes

Mike Wendelin

Leading the Advent Candle-Lighting
Pastoral Intern
Minister of Stewardship & Finance
Pastoral Associate
Facilities Manager
Music Director
Liturgist

## **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 <u>here</u> or with the QR code.

#### **OPENING HYMN**

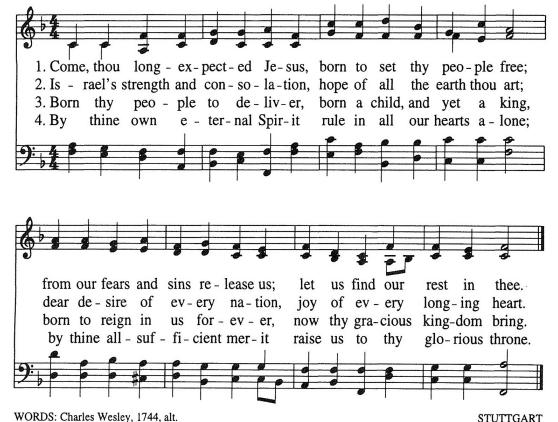
## O Come, O Come Emmanuel

Alt. Kate Layzer. Dec. 2016



## Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus

121



MUSIC: Melody attr. Christian F. Witt, (1660-1716), Psalmodia Sacra, Gotha, 1715

STUTTGART 87.87

#### **SERMON HYMN**

## 113 Isaiah the Prophet Has Written of Old



-Hymn Insert 2-

O Christ, How Shall I Meet You

130

76.76D

#### 1. O Christ, how shall I meet you, how wel - come you a - right? 2. Love caused your in - car - na tion; love brought you down to me; heav'n - ly hope you give me. treas - ure safe on high. hope, my heart's de - light! Your peo-ple long to greet you, my your thirst for my sal - va tion pro - cured my lib - er - ty: that will not fail nor leave earth - ly rich - es me fly. kin - dle, Lord most a lamp with - in ho ly, breast, O love be - youd all tell ing, that led you to em brace My heart shall bloom for - ev er with joy - ful prais - es new, do in spir - it low ly all that may please you to best. ing our love all love ex - cell lost and fal - len race. and from your name shall er with - hold the hon - or due. nev WORDS: Paul Gerhardt, 1653; tr. Catherine Winkworth, 1863, alt. ST. THEODULPH

MUSIC: Melchior Teschner, 1614; harm. William Henry Monk, 1861

#### COMMUNITY PRAYERS

- We pray in celebration for the arrival of Winthrop Johnson Mylander, born to Karen Quinn and Jarrett 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 Monday, November 17, after a long illness.
- We pray for Ian Ho as he recovers from surgery to resolve chronic nasal congestion.
- We pray for Lisa DiNardo's niece Nicole and family as they mourn the loss of Nicole's father-in-law Edward, who died last Saturday.
- We pray for our Community Minister for Latin America Mónica 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 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; Lya Williams, who is living with kidney failure and awaiting a transplant; 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 all who are living in an increased state of fear and betrayal as Immigration and Custom Enforcement agents are intensifying their often unlawful campaigns of violent detention, disappearance, and deportation, including here in Massachusetts, and most recently in Charlotte, NC. We pray for the communities around them, for strength to take action and to bear witness to our neighbors in need. We pray for the moral courage of our political leaders to stand up for what is right, not what is popular.
- 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.

Join the <u>First Church List</u> to see and offer up more community prayer requests.

#### **TODAY AT FIRST CHURCH**

## 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 Today, 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**

## Today, 12:30 - 1:45 p.m., Margaret Jewett Hall

On this 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!



#### **TODAY AT FIRST CHURCH**

#### **Preparing for Emma's Farewell**

Pastoral Associate Emma Mitchell has returned from parental leave and is walking with us through the seasons of Advent and Christmastide. On Sunday, January 11, we will bid her Godspeed as she ends her time with us and moves to midcoast Maine. Before then, Emma is making time in her schedule for visits with anyone who would like to sit together, in person or on Zoom, to share some time before she leaves this role. You can sign up for a meeting with Emma here.

In preparation for saying goodbye, everyone is invited to contribute to a slideshow that we'll share on the big screen in Margaret Jewett Hall at her farewell reception. You can draw a picture, write words of parting and well wishes, and/or include photo images of her time with us. Use an 8.5x11 inch piece of paper as your canvas, and then either scan the page or take a photograph to create a digital image to send to <a href="Sarah Higginbotham">Sarah Higginbotham</a>. If you'd rather just hand over your paper to Sarah, that works, too! Look for Sarah at an Advent Workshop craft table to learn more and create your "slide." Then look for a "Farewell Slides" crafting station on Sundays through January 4, where you can work on your creative offering.



sign up to meet with Emma



## 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.

<u>Learn more about Night Song.</u>



Friday Café Benefit Show Tuesday, December 2 at 7:30 p.m.

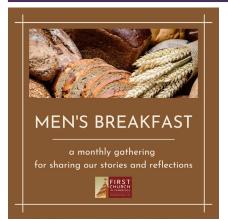
The Backroom at the Burren, Davis Square, Somerville Each year at the start of the holiday season, a variety of outstanding performers gather at the Burren in Davis Square to benefit our own Friday Café. This year's show features local favorite David Coffin, Sephardic Ladino singer

Lily Henley, fiddler Ellery Klein and friends, Irish dancers from the Rebecca McGowan school, and many others. *The show has sold out, but mark your calendars for next year!* 

# Youth Group: Holiday Baking and Card Writing Friday, December 5, 6:00 - 8:00 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!





## Men's Breakfast Saturday, December 6, 8:00 - 9:30 a.m., Harter Room

The Men's Breakfast is a forum for any and all who identify as men at First Church. We meet monthly to share breakfast and to share experiences. We prepare breakfast and participate with a rotating monthly leader. All are welcome! If you would like to be added to the Men's Breakfast email list to receive reminders of these gatherings, please contact Peter Byerly: p.byerly@comcast.net

## Coat Boston & Holiday Shop Donations Next 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: <a href="mailto:coatboston.org/donate/">coatboston.org/donate/</a> We ask that all adult coats be donated to our own Friday Café.





## Alternative Christmas Fair Sunday, December 7, 12:15 - 2:30 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 Poetry & Prayer Mondays, December 8, 15, and 22 5:30 - 6:15 p.m., via Zoom

Join Pastoral Associate Emma Mitchell for an online Advent gathering for community, stillness, and spiritual grounding as the days grow shorter. Together on Zoom, we will read a poem, listen for how it speaks to our lives in this season of Advent, and share prayer in real time. Come as you are — walking the dog, cooking dinner, settled into a quiet corner with a candle. Join us for one session or for all. All are



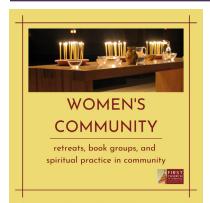
welcome – feel free to invite friends and family. Register to receive your Zoom link here!

## **Family Night**

## Tuesday, December 9, 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.





## Women's Community Book Group Tuesday, December 9, 6:30-7:45 p.m., via Zoom

Please join us for our appropriately-chosen December book: <u>The Time of the Child</u> by Niall Williams. If you haven't read anything by this Irish author, this would be a wonderful place to start. NPR introduces the novel here: "It takes place in the weeks leading up to Christmas 1962 and opens — and closes — on a set piece of Mass at the parish church, where most of the village gathers. In between lies a story that feels, at once, realistic in its rough and comic everyday unfolding and mythic in its riffs on the grand themes of despair and spiritual redemption." Please come

talk with us about your impressions of this novel!! For questions or to receive the Zoom link, contact Alex Steinert-Evoy: alex@steinert-evoy.org

# Young Adults: Christmas Party & Hymn Sing Friday, December 12, 6:30 - 9:00 p.m. Home of Angela & Phil Servello-Jones

Come celebrate the season by singing carols, drinking cider, and sharing fellowship with other Young Adults (20s-30s). RSVP by emailing youngadults@firstchurchcambridge.org or letting Angela or Phil know. Whether you're brand new to First Church,



or have been here your whole life, you're welcome to join the party. Keep an eye out for monthly Young Adult gatherings in 2026!



## **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.

## **Faithful Resistance Gathering**

Sunday, December 14, 12:30 - 1:30 p.m., Margaret Jewett Hall
Join other members of the Faithful Resistance Community for a
training entitled "Community Defense: Supporting Our Immigrant
Neighbors." This one-hour event led by trainer Elaine Almquist will
offer information about the state of ICE in Massachusetts,
preparing our own community for safety, knowing your rights, what



to do if you see ICE, supporting our immigrant neighbors, and connections to front-line organizations. All are welcome to come learn and support each other in these challenging times. A light lunch will be served; please RSVP to Alex (alex@ steinert-evoy.org) or Martha (marthamuellercook@gmail.com) to help us plan the lunch order.



# The UnPageant Sunday, December 21 at 11:00 a.m. Sanctuary and via livestream

On the fourth Sunday of Advent, we gather for our untraditional take on the Christmas pageant: the UnPageant! The UnPageant is First Church's unrehearsed, low-stress,

multigenerational telling of the story of Jesus' birth. Come hear the age-old texts and sing the cherished carols as we celebrate the wonder of God's love among us.

#### **Festive Christmas Coffee Hour**

## Sunday, December 21, 12:15 - 1:00 p.m., Margaret Jewett Hall

We invite everyone to contribute a favorite holiday treat for a festive time of fellowship after the UnPageant. Whether it's a batch of your sought-after Christmas cookies or a holiday veggie plate in the shape of a snowman, we want to see it and eat it! Plan to drop off your offering in the Kitchen before worship, and then come ready to enjoy a mini-feast of snacks for the season.





#### 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.

#### 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.*



Participate here.



#### **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.

#### FIRST CHURCH NEWS



#### **Stewardship Campaign Update**

Many, many thanks to all who have shared their pledge or intention for giving for 2026.

As of November 23, we are 87% towards our goal of \$660,000!

Of the 70 pledges/intentions received so far:

- 10 are from newcomers
- 60 are from people who pledged last year, with an average increase of 19%

Pledging or sharing your intentions is tremendously helpful for the church's faithful financial planning. If you haven't yet shared your financial intention for 2026, you may <a href="mailto:make-your 2026"><u>make your 2026</u></a>
<a href="mailto:stewardship Pledge online">Stewardship Pledge online</a>, or by mailing your pledge card to the church, placing it in the offering plate next Sunday, or <a href="mailto:e

## 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 <u>First Church Shelter</u> and members of the <u>Friday Café</u> 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.

## **CALENDAR**

## **Today's Events**

9:15 a.m. Choir Rehearsal, Sanctuary

10:00 a.m. Christian Formation: Christian Meditation @ 10,

Harter Room and via Zoom

11:00 a.m. Advent Worship, Sanctuary and via livestream11:20 a.m. Church School: Creative Arts Workshop, Library

12:15 p.m. Advent Workshop & Soup Luncheon, Margaret Jewett Hall (MJH)

7:30 p.m. Night Song, Sanctuary and via livestream

## The Week Ahead

## Monday, December 1

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

6:00 p.m. Faith & Life Group: Care for the Caregivers, via Zoom

## Tuesday, December 2

7:00 p.m. Arts & Communications Committee, via Zoom

7:30 p.m. Friday Café Benefit Concert, The Burren in Davis Square

## Wednesday, December 3

9:30 a.m. Staff Meeting, Harter Room and via Zoom7:00 p.m. Christian Formation Committee, via Zoom

7:30 p.m. GBIO Core Team Meeting, via Zoom

## Thursday, December 4

5:00 p.m. Faith & Life Group: Miracles and Wonder Book Reflection, via Zoom

7:00 p.m. Choir Rehearsal, Sanctuary

## Friday, December 5

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

6:00 p.m. Youth Group: Holiday Baking & Card Writing, Kitchen & Hastings Common

## Saturday, December 6

8:00 a.m. Men's Breakfast, Harter Room

## Sunday, December 7 - Second Sunday in Advent

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 and via Zoom

11:00 a.m. Advent Worship, Sanctuary and via livestream11:20 a.m. Church School: Pastoral Care Sunday, Library

12:15 p.m. Alternative Christmas Fair, MJH

7:30 p.m. Night Song, Sanctuary and via livestream



scan for online bulletin

FIRST CHURCH
IN CAMBRIDGE

CONGREGATIONAL

389YEARS

ON THE WAY

1636-2025