

CHRISTMASTIDE

FIRST CHURCH IN CAMBRIDGE

Congregational 1633-1636 United Church of Christ Garden and Mason Streets Cambridge, Massachusetts



WELCOME TO FIRST CHURCH IN CAMBRIDGE... Grounded in God • Growing in Community • Acting in Love

These past months have brought home to all of us the vital importance of working together to slow and limit the spread of Coronavirus. We know we are called to be a community of faith, not fear. We also know we are called to care for the most vulnerable in our midst, to be good stewards of our staff and resources, and to be good citizens of the wider community.

Under normal circumstances, people of faith would care for each other by drawing close together. It's what we do. It's who we are. In times of loss or threat, we respond by coming together to pray and to sing, to hug and hold each other tight.

Pandemics are different. During an outbreak such as the one we are facing now, we are called to care for each other by moving farther apart, creating a holy buffer of social distance. We do this not only for our own safety and the safety of the people around us, but in loving stewardship to our wider world.

Even when apart, we are not alone. God is with us, in every heartbeat, every breath: strengthening, comforting, and upholding us. Christ is with us, walking beside us, sharing our trials, speaking peace to our fears. The Spirit is with us, uniting us one to another across the barrier of physical distance.

These are temporary measures only. They won't last forever. We will rejoice and celebrate all the more when we are able to come back together, to share stories of what it was like, to laugh, to cry, and to share hugs and handshakes again. Until then, day by day, let's hold one another in prayer.

WORSHIP LEADERS January 3, 2021

Preaching Today

Rev. Darrell Goodwin, Executive Conference Minister Southern New England Conference, UCC

Leading Worship

Dan Smith, Senior Minister Kate Layzer, Minister of Street Outreach Peter Sykes, Music Director Joanne Paul, Deacon Ariel Ackermann, First Church member

The photograph on the bulletin cover is by Gaylen Morgan.

FIRST CHURCH IN CAMBRIDGE

January 3, 2021

GATHERING

VOLUNTARY Fantasia William Byrd

*HYMN 164 Brightest and Best of the Stars of the Morning (see page 5)

*LIGHTING OF THE CHRIST CANDLE

Joanne Paul

L: The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light!

C: Glory streams from heaven afar! Alleluia!

L: The Daystar shines upon us!

C: The darkness cannot put it out!

The Christ Candle is lit.

L: The light of Christ!

C: Thanks be to God!

*PRAYER OF PRAISE

L: Let us pray.

C: Praise to you, O God, for the light of Jesus!

L: for the mystery of love,

C: the dawn of hope,

L: the gift of faith!

C: Praise to you, O God, who finds us in the shadows of night

and shines a human face to light our way. Amen.

WORDS OF WELCOME Dan Smith

ANTHEM Jesus Christ, the Apple Tree traditional

Ariel Ackermann, mezzo soprano

CONFESSING

INVITATION TO CONFESSION

SILENCE

PRAYER OF CONFESSION

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

All: Merciful God, you have given light to the world in Jesus Christ,

but we have preferred to live in darkness.

Your justice protects the weak and vulnerable,

yet we seek privilege and power.

Your righteousness redeems the poor and needy,

yet we seek wealth and possessions.

Your peace upholds the oppressed and defenseless,

yet we seek the security of weapons and walls.

Forgive us, and lead us to true repentance,

that we may trust you in all things;

through Jesus Christ we pray.

Amen.

DECLARATION OF GOD'S FORGIVENESS

*GREETING OF PEACE

OPENING THE WORD

PRAYER FOR UNDERSTANDING

READING Isaiah 43:19-21

SERMON Are You Ready For Transformation? Rev. Darrell Goodwin

*HYMN 129 Of Eternal Love Begotten (see page 6)

SHARING OUR LIFE TOGETHER

ANNOUNCEMENTS

INVITATION TO OFFERING Kate Layzer

*DOXOLOGY AND PRAYER OF DEDICATION

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.

SHARING THE FEAST

*PRAYER OF PREPARATION

- L: How good it is to praise you, Morning Star!
 Your beauty ushers in the dawn, and in your light we see light—
- C: justice for the nations, mercy for the broken-hearted, safety for the poor, belonging for the outcast, strength for the weak, and forgiveness for the sinner.
- L: You reveal your love in joy and sorrow, and we know your wonder even in the shadow of death.
- C: All your creatures behold your works and testify to your faithfulness.
- L: And so we, too, fragile lamps in your holy house, raise our hearts in praise. Amen.

REMEMBERING AND GIVING THANKS

L: Now, O God, we remember Jesus, our brother.

Silence

- L: He took his place among sinners, although he had nothing to repent.
- C: He was baptized with them, God's Child and Delight.
- L: We remember that he called disciples and ministered to all.
- C: He confounded the haughty and gave hope to the poor.
- L: We remember that he died between thieves, and was buried in a borrowed grave.
- C: We believe that you raised him. He lives even now, the Light of the World.
- L: How wonderfully he fed us! Loaves and fish for the multitude, wine for a wedding in Cana, living water for the woman at the well, breakfast for disciples on the shore!
- C: Even on the night of betrayal, he ate supper with his friends.
- L: He took bread, gave you thanks, and broke it, saying: This is my body, surrendered for you!
- C: And when the supper was over, he took a cup filled with wine. He gave you thanks for it and passed it to his friends, saying: This is my life-blood poured out for you, and for everyone, so that sins might be forgiven.
- L: He told us, "Do this and remember me!"

PRAYER TO THE HOLY SPIRIT

THE LORD'S PRAYER

(Please pray this prayer and address God 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.

SHARING BREAD AND CUP

All who seek to follow Jesus' way of justice, compassion and love are invited to partake of this feast, wherever you are. May there be no barriers to participation in this meal of holy communion! Eat and drink with joyful hearts, for all things are now ready.

*THANKSGIVING

L: Let us give thanks!

All: Thank you, God, for gladness in this bread and cup,

for love that cannot die, for peace the world cannot give, for joy in the company of friends, for the splendors of creation,

and for the mission of justice you have made our own.

Give us the gifts of this holy communion:

oneness of heart, love for neighbors,

forgiveness of enemies, the will to serve you every day,

and life that never ends.

In Christ's name we pray. Amen.

GOING FORTH

*HYMN 414 This Is a Day of New Beginnings (see page 7)

*BENEDICTION

*CHORAL RESPONSE Christmas Benediction Beverly Taylor

The word is flesh and dwells among us! Glory to God in the highest!

VOLUNTARY In the Bleak Midwinter Harold Darke

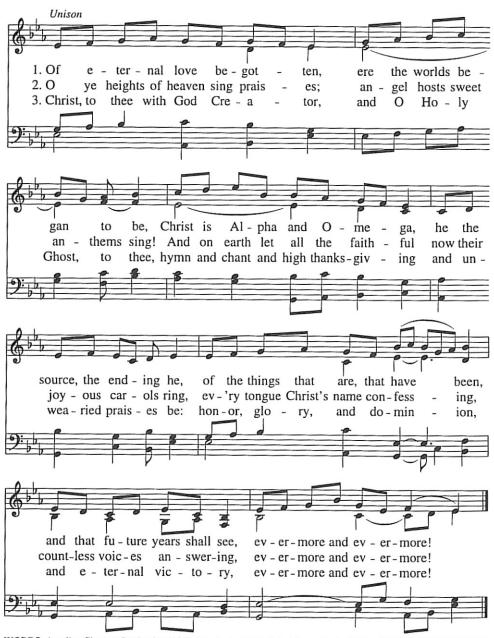
First Church Choir, 2020; Beth Spaulding, soprano

OPENING HYMN

Brightest and Best of the Stars of the Morning



Of Eternal Love Begotten



WORDS: Aurelius Clemens Prudentius (4th century); sts. 1,3, tr. John Mason Neale, 1854, DIVINUM MYSTERIUM and Henry W. Baker, 1859, alt.; st. 2, tr. R. F. Davis, 1906, alt. 87.87.877 MUSIC: Plainsong, Mode V (13th century); harm. C. Winfred Douglas, *The Hymnal*, 1940

This Is a Day of New Beginnings



COMMUNITY PRAYERS

Note: This prayer list was prepared just before Christmas. We will speak aloud new prayer concerns during today's service.

- We pray for Marian Smith, whose 9-year-old grandson Ian has been hospitalized recently and diagnosed with CRMO (chronic osteomyelitis) and Crohn's disease. We pray for Ian and his parents, former members Barb and Adam Kroft, and his sisters Ada and Lily.
- We pray for all who are in treatment for cancer: Sarah Robinson, daughter of Mary Robinson and Mary Martha Thiel; Ron Paquette, Caroline Newton's father; Penny Kilburn, Nancy Kilburn's mother; Katie, Moana Bentin's sister; Amy Golodet, Jonathan New's sister-in-law; Karen Anne Zee's daughter Becky Collet, and for her sons-in-law, Denis Collet and Stewart Bailey; and Beth and Polly, Ann McCann's sisters.
- We pray for all those caring for elderly parents and for all who have dementia.
- We pray for our sharply divided nation, for equal and easy access to voting and clear results from Senate elections in Georgia, and for a peaceful transition of power in this month of Presidential Inauguration.
- We continue to pray for all who are grieving the loss of loved ones to COVID-19. We pray for health care professionals and essential workers, that they may feel supported and cared for.
- We pray for the 14 men who are finding sustenance and protection in our First Church Shelter, and for the guests of the Friday Cafe, who are finding food and listening ears. We pray for all who are experiencing deprivation and hardship in these uncertain times.
- We pray for those who seek sanctuary in houses of worship around the country, including our partner University Lutheran Church in Harvard Square. We pray for solace and security for immigrants and all those who live in fear and anxiety over their status in this country. We also pray for all who work for a just and compassionate future for immigrants and asylum seekers.
- We pray that God may grant us the strength to confront and combat the many realities of the climate crisis, and that we and our leaders may be empowered to take bold steps to care for God's creation. We pray especially for the poor, who are disproportionately affected by our inaction.

TODAY AT FIRST CHURCH

ADULT FORMATION: "IDEAL WHEELS" FOR 2021 Today, 9:30 a.m., via Zoom Join Ariel Ackermann for a quiet and contemplative opportunity to make a simple "Ideal Wheel" for yourself. We will each choose an ideal to guide us in the New Year (patience, courage, or whatever seems most useful to you), and consider ways to embody that ideal in its mental and physical dimensions. We'll each make a simple design of our ideal intentions, which can then be posted at home or at work, as you like. Things to have on hand: a nice-sized piece of paper (copy paper is fine), and writing or drawing materials of your choice.

<u>Click here to join Adult Formation directly</u>, or go to <u>zoom.us</u> and "join a meeting" using the following information:

Meeting ID: 869 6902 6288 Passcode: 372484 Call-in Number: +1 929 205 6099

MULTIGENERATIONAL FORMATION: CREATIVE ARTS WORKSHOP FOLDED PAPER STAR LANTERNS Today, 9:30 a.m., via Zoom

People of all ages are invited to join us in making folded paper star lanterns. This paper craft requires some origami paper-folding skills to create a beautiful centerpiece for your home altar or dining table for the season of Epiphany. Supplies needed: scissors and an 8.5"x11" sheet of paper (watercolor or decorative paper is great, but any paper will do). Click here to join the Church School Zoom directly, or go to zoom.us and "join a meeting" using the following information: Meeting ID: 897 8647 6898 Call-in Number: +1 929 205 6099



SNEUCC EXECUTIVE CONFERENCE MINISTER REV. DARRELL GOODWIN TO PREACH Today, 11:00 a.m., via Live-Stream Worship Join us for virtual morning worship at 11:00 a.m. on this Second Sunday of Christmastide to welcome guest preacher Rev. Darrell Goodwin, the new Executive Conference Minister of the Southern New England Conference. Rev. Goodwin has most recently served the Iowa, Nebraska, and South Dakota Conferences as an Associate Conference Minister. He has founded a church, directed a UCC Pension Board vitality initiative, and served in a variety of roles in higher education settings. We are eager to be among the first to welcome him to New England, since he just started his new job on January 1!

ZOOM COFFEE HOUR Today, 12:15 p.m., via Zoom Join us following worship to share joys and concerns, as well as New Year greetings.

<u>Click here to join Zoom Coffee Hour</u> directly, or go to <u>zoom.us</u> and "join a meeting" with the following instructions:

Meeting ID: 876 6474 8993 Password: coffee

TODAY AT FIRST CHURCH

NEW TO FIRST CHURCH? Have you just begun joining us for online worship? Consider filling out this <u>"virtual visitor card"</u> so that we might reach out and connect with you about our community. We will host a Newcomers' Gathering at Zoom Coffee Hour next Sunday, January 10.

HAVE YOU PLEDGED? We are over \$500,000, which is over 83% of the way to our 2021 pledge goal. Many thanks to all who have responded so far. Is your piece of our puzzle not yet in place? The Stewardship Committee would love to send you your thank you gift this week! <u>Make your pledge online and then check out how we've pieced together our progress</u>.

BIPOC SPACE, TIME, AND COMMUNITY If you are a Black, Indigenous or Person of Color (BIPOC) member of First Church, please consider joining our periodic Zoom meetings designed as active listening sessions to reflect, heal, support one another, and build community. Please contact Moana Bentin (moana.bentin@gmail.com) with questions or to receive a Zoom invitation to participate. This group is by BIPOC for BIPOC.

ONLINE WORSHIP LITURGISTS Assist in worship, either in-person or via video. <u>Sign up here</u>, and you will receive an email with instructions on how to contribute! Questions? Contact Lexi Boudreaux: lexi@firstchurchcambridge.org

CONNECTING TO FIRST CHURCH

PRAYING THE PSALMS GROUP Tuesdays beginning January 5, 7:45 a.m. - 9:00 a.m., via Zoom Our Praying the Psalms group resumes weekly meetings via Zoom in this first week of the new year. The group is set up to accompany individual reading of one Psalm per day, starting with Psalm 1 on January 1. Each Tuesday at 7:45 a.m., we'll gather online for a time of soulful checkin and shared reflection about the Psalms of the week. Feel free to drop in virtually when you can, or plan to make it a regular part of your week. See the calendar on our website for the Zoom information.

EPIPHANY WORSHIP Wednesday, January 6, 6:00 p.m., begin at FCC Lawn This year we invite you to celebrate Epiphany with us remotely and take some time for prayer and reflection during a short pre-recorded service that will premiere on our YouTube channel on Wednesday morning; you can find the link on our website. On Wednesday evening, we are planning a candlelight prayer walk, weather permitting. Gather with masks and social distancing on the First Church lawn at 6:00 p.m.

AN INVITATION TO CONTEMPLATIVE PRACTICE Sunday, January 10, 9:30 a.m., via Zoom First Church friend Duncan Hollomon, a seasoned psychotherapist with an extensive background in both Buddhist and Christian contemplative practice, will host a weekly gathering of folks who

CONNECTING TO FIRST CHURCH

wish to explore a contemplative approach to our spiritual life. Together we will learn about and practice various approaches to accessing our inner world, with an eye to "doing the inner work of outer work" — seeing the relationship between reflective contemplation and action in the world. Today, Duncan hosts a Zoom call for those who feel drawn to a contemplative spiritual path. This will be a chance to get to know one another a bit and to get a sample of how the proposed weekly small group sessions might run. To learn more about Duncan and this generous offering, please visit our blog.

MEN'S BREAKFAST Saturday, January 9, 8:00 a.m., via Zoom To all identify as men, join us for our monthly breakfast about topics that connect our faith to our lives and our world. One-time visitors, friends, and newcomers are always welcome. In this season of being apart, Men's Breakfasts are hosted on Zoom calls. If you have questions or would like to sign up for the Men's Breakfast email list to receive monthly reminders, contact Peter Byerly (p.byerly@comcast.net) or David Torrey (davidtorrey@comcast.net).

MENTAL HEALTH FIRST AID TRAINING OPPORTUNITY FOR FIRST CHURCH Monday, January 11, 9:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m., via Zoom Have you ever witnessed a friend, acquaintance, or family member enduring what seems to be a mental health crisis and wondered what to do? Mental Health First Aid (MHFA) is an intervention that can help. MHFA training provides the skills you need to assist someone facing such a crisis. Trainees learn about risk factors and warning signs for mental health and addiction concerns, strategies for how to help someone in both crisis and non-crisis situations, and where to turn for help. Sign up for the Cambridge Health Alliance (CHA)'s next *free* MHFA training on January 11. Join other First Church members in this two-part, eight-hour class, involving:

- 1. Two hours of self-paced online prep work on MHFA topics, with a brief training in the online Zoom platform used to host the live part of the class.
- 2. A six-hour CHA-instructor-led live training on Zoom. You will need to complete the prep work BEFORE taking on the live portion of the class.

For this eight-hour certification training, registration is required and is offered on a first-come, first-served basis. This training is rich and rewarding, inspiring confidence. Come join us! For more information, contact Carter West at cartergw24@gmail.com or 781-321-3416.

WOMEN'S COMMUNITY BOOK GROUP Tuesday, January 12, 6:00 p.m. - 7:30 p.m., via Zoom All those who identify as women are welcome to join the Women's Community Book Group for their next read. They will be discussing Wayward Lives, Beautiful Experiments by Laidiya Hartman. Please send an email to Alex Steinert-Evoy (alex@steinert-evoy.org) to be added to the group's email list to receive the Zoom invitation.

WIDER COMMUNITY ACTIONS AND EVENTS

FREE COVID TESTING NOW AVAILABLE FOR ALL WHO LIVE, WORK, AND PRAY IN CAMBRIDGE

The City of Cambridge and Cambridge Public Health Department (CPHD) are offering free
COVID-19 testing for Cambridge residents and, we are told, for all who work and pray in Cambridge. The PCR tests are anterior nasal swab tests and not the nasopharyngeal swab test that go all the way back in the nasal passages. No identification or Social Security number is required. All sites are wheelchair accessible. Available testing appointments can book up quickly, but please keep checking back as new appointments will be added when they become available. When you sign up for an appointment, you will be asked for your address and to "Select all that apply: *I am a Cambridge resident *I am an employee in Cambridge *I am a City of Cambridge employee *None of the above." If you don't live or work in Cambridge, be sure to select *None of the Above and then list in the address line that follows: "Member of First Church in Cambridge, 11 Garden Street, Cambridge, MA." To schedule an appointment, sign up online or call 617-349-9788.

FINANCIAL DONATIONS TO PROVIDE FOOD SECURITY The following organizations welcome financial donations. They work providing food to people who are living with food insecurity.

<u>Food For Free</u> supports low-income Cambridge residents. It offers fresh produce as well as other kinds of food. In some cases it will also deliver food to people who are unable to come to their food pantry.

<u>Greater Boston Food Bank</u> provides food to over 500 partner agencies in Eastern Massachusetts. It will also help people locate and apply for other food resources.

FOOD PANTRY DONATIONS WELCOME Patrons need cereal, canned veggies and fruit, proteins (canned chicken & peanut butter especially); feminine products and diapers very welcome. Please do not donate fresh food or anything already opened. Deliver to Hilary's front porch, 30 Winslow St., Cambridge, ¾ mile up Garden St. from FCC, first street on right after Garden and Sherman diverge. There is a wreath on the front door and a storage box on the porch: pull up its lid, close firmly, ring bell for #30 on silver mailbox. Thank you!

MALE SURVIVORS UNITED You are invited to join together with an anonymous community of like-minded adult men affected by unwanted or abusive sexual experiences. Leave isolation behind and join our monthly phone calls for free peer support, by male survivors for male survivors. Our group is nonprofessional. We are peers, not therapists. Together we help each other reclaim our voices and our lives. The calls are at 5:00 p.m. Eastern Time on the 2nd Sunday of each month. For more information see malesurvivorsunited.org or contact First Church Deacon Bruce Hoppe confidentially at bruce@malesurvivorsunited.org

LOOKING AHEAD

Sunday, January 3

9:30 a.m. Adult Formation: Ideal Wheels, via Zoom

9:30 a.m. Multigenerational Creative Arts Workshop: Folded Paper Lanterns, via Zoom

11:00 a.m. Live-Stream Morning Worship, Multigenerational Communion

Rev. Darrell Goodwin, preaching

12:15 p.m. Zoom Coffee hour

5:30 p.m. Meal Distribution, Tower Room

Monday, January 4

4:00 p.m. Meal Distribution, Tower Room

Tuesday, January 5

7:45 a.m. Praying the Psalms Group, via Zoom 4:00 p.m. Meal Distribution, Tower Room

Wednesday, January 6 - EPIPHANY

9:30 a.m. Staff Meeting, via Zoom

4:00 p.m. Meal Distribution, Tower Room

6:00 p.m. Epiphany Candle Walk on the Cambridge Common, meet at FCC lawn

Thursday, January 7

6:00 p.m. Weekly Bible Study, via Zoom 7:45 p.m. First Church Choir Call, via Zoom

Friday, January 8

1:00 p.m. Friday Café lunch bag pickup, Tower Room

Saturday, January 9

8:00 p.m. Men's Breakfast, via Zoom 4:00 p.m. Meal Distribution, Tower Room

Sunday, January 10

9:30 a.m. Adult Formation: Invitation to Contemplative Practice

9:30 a.m. Children's Formation: Read-Alouds from the Children's Book Corner,

via YouTube Premiere

11:00 a.m. Live-Stream Morning Worship, Dan Smith preaching

12:15 p.m. Zoom Coffee Hour with Newcomers' Gathering

2:00 p.m. Youth Group, via Zoom

5:30 p.m. Meal Distribution, Tower Room

Zoom invitations to our week's programs can be found on each event listed in the calendar on our website. They may also be found in the all-church email that was sent this morning. To join our all-church email list, please sign up here.

THE STAFF AT FIRST CHURCH IN CAMBRIDGE

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Would you like to give to First Church in Cambridge? Here are easy ways to do it:



Text \$ __ to 1-844-996-0982

