

Advent Hybrid Morning Worship November 28, 2021

FIRST CHURCH

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

We're glad you are worshiping with us today! First Church is a vibrant, multi-generational, engaged, urban church. We care a lot about each other and what's happening in the world around us. Wherever you are on the journey of faith, you are welcome here. FIRST CHURCH IN CAMBRIDGE CONGREGATIONAL **385 YEARS** ON THE WAY 1636-2021

Sunday, November 28, 2021

Preaching Today	Ebony West, Ministerial Intern
Assisting in Worship	Dan Smith <i>, Senior Minister</i>
	Lexi Boudreaux, Transitional Minister
	Kate Layzer, Minister of Street Outreach
	Sarah Higginbotham, Director of Creative Worship & Arts
	Peter Sykes, Director of Music
	Laurie Williams <i>, liturgist</i>
	Nora Willcutts, Deacon
	Anne McClintock & Catherine Poole, Advent Candle-Lighting
	Kevin Newell, tech support
Bulletin Cover Image	Freddie Funck, Youth Group member

Today's Programs and Events

Choir Rehearsal, Margaret Jewett Hall (MJH)
Hybrid Morning Worship, Sanctuary and via livestream
Children's Worship with Sarah and Jaz, Library
Advent Gathering & Crafting, via Zoom
Night Song, Sanctuary and via livestream

New to First Church?

Have you just begun joining us for worship? Consider filling out this <u>"virtual visitor card"</u> so that we might reach out and connect with you about our community.

Give to First Church

You can give online at <u>www.firstchurchcambridge.org/give</u> or by texting "\$____" to: 1-844-996-0982.

Contact a Pastor or Staff Member

Find <u>contact information</u> for our ministerial, program, and building staff on our website. For general information and inquiries: info@firstchurchcambridge.org

> Have a church program or event to promote? Complete the <u>First Church Communications Request</u> form.

Have an edit or update for our website? Complete the <u>FCC Website Changes</u> form.

GATHERING

Masks will be lowered by worship leaders when speaking at their discretion.

VOLUNTARY	Nun komm, der Heider	Heiland	J. S. Bach
*THE WORD C	DF GOD Isaiah 40:1-5		Sarah Higginbotham
*HYMN 115	Comfort, Comfort Ye My For everyone's safety, please sing		
*GREETING			Laurie Williams
L:	Siblings in Christ, we are already here and not yet there.		
C:	God's love is already here with us,		
	and yet, it is always coming our way!		
L:	God's peace is already here, right in our h	earts,	
	and yet, it is waiting to be born anew!		
C :	God's joy is already here in our worship,		
L:	and it's just a taste of what's to come!	or and waiting	
L. C:	o we gather now, in this season of wonder and waiting, inding strength in what's already here		
с.	and in sacred mysteries, known and unknown.		
L:	Prepare the way for God's already, not yet, glory!		
All:	Let it be revealed in Christ and in us!	, , ,	
WORDS OF V	VELCOME	Laurie William	is and Lexi Boudreaux
ADVENT CAN	IDLE LIGHTING	Anne McClintocl	k and Catherine Poole
L:	God, we light this first candle of Advent. We kindle it with hope.		
C:	May that hope sustain us in this time, and guide us in our work for compassion	and justice.	
SONG	Give me light in the darkness, ligl	nt in the darkness,	

light in the darkness to sing my soul awake.

(Sing twice through.)

*You are invited to stand. Hymns proceeded by a "C" are found in the beginning section of the hymnal. This section contains hymns written and composed by current and past members of First Church in Cambridge.

CONFESSING

INVITATION TO CONFESSION

SILENCE

PRAYER OF CONFESSION

- L: Let us pray for justice, pardon and peace:
- C: God, when we are despairing that we have not yet reached where we are going, You fill the spaces in-between. When we get stuck in the patterns of a weary world longing for stability, instead of the pathways of hope and flexibility, forgive us. When we grow tired of waiting, grant us your kind of vision for where we are now and have yet to go. We pray all this in Jesus' name. Amen.

DECLARATION OF GOD'S FORGIVENESS

*GREETING OF PEACE

Staying in place and observing social distance, share this good news wherever you are! Send it back to us! Share it with a neighbor! Send it to the world! Young children are now invited to join Sarah and Jaz for Children's Worship in the Library.

JOINING OF NEW MEMBERS

INVITATION

PROMISES

Dan Smith

Nora Willcutts

 *COVENANT OF FIRST CHURCH IN CAMBRIDGE
 L: United with the church of every time and place, we covenant with Christ, with these siblings, and with one another, sharing the words of our historic covenant:
 All: We who are now brought together and united into one Church under the Lord Jesus Christ, our Head, in such sort as becometh all those whom he hath redeemed and sanctified unto himself, do solemnly and religiously, as in His most holy presence, promise and bind ourselves to walk in all our ways according to the rule of the Gospel,

> and in all sincere conformity to His holy ordinances -2

and in mutual love and respect each to other, so near as God shall give us grace.

*ADDRESS

*WELCOME

- L: Friends, let us welcome these new members and affirm the ministry we share in Jesus Christ.
- All: We welcome you with joy into the common life of this church.
 We promise you our friendship and prayers.
 We will share with you the hope and labor of Christ.
 By the power of the Spirit, we are one family for the glory of God!

OPENING THE WORD

PRAYER FOR UNDERSTANDING		Kate Layzer
READING	Jeremiah 33:14-16	
SERMON		Ebony West

SHARING OUR LIFE TOGETHER

ANNOUNCEMENTS

PRAYERS FOR CHURCH AND WORLD

- L: May 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









Give by Text

Give Online

I've Given Already

OFFERTORY

*DOXOLOGY

The Angel Gabriel

Trad., arr. Edgar Pettman

For everyone's safety, please sing quietly or hum.

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 116

People, Look East For everyone's safety, please sing quietly or hum.

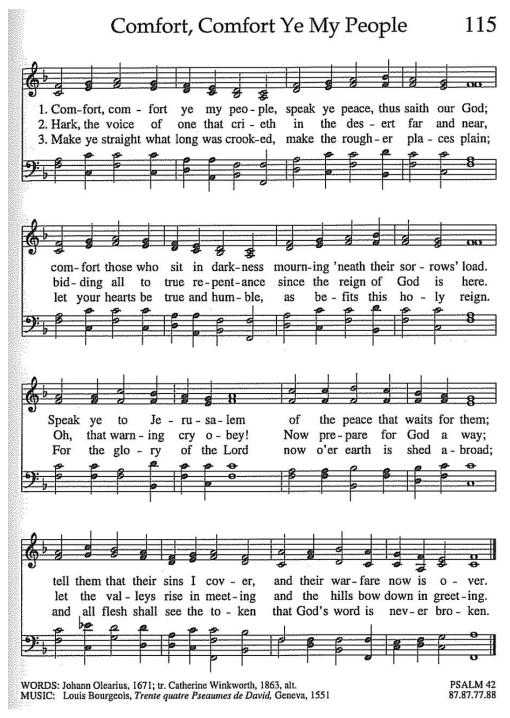
*BENEDICTION

VOLUNTARY

From Heaven Above To Earth I Come

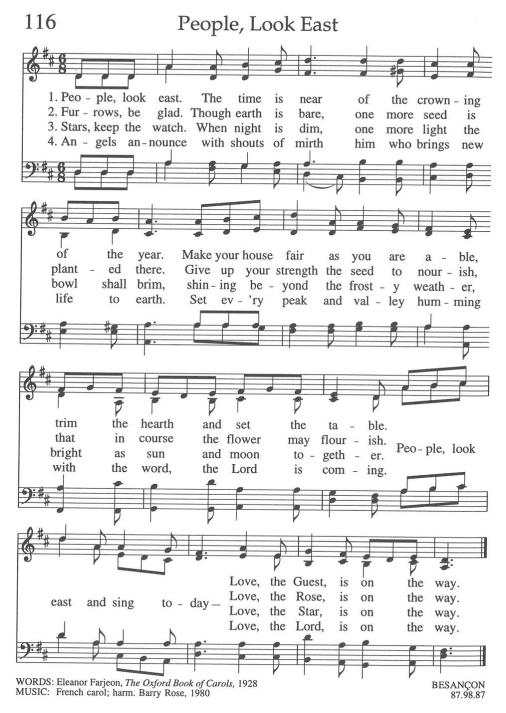
J. S. Bach

OPENING HYMN



-Hymn Insert 1-

CLOSING HYMN



-Hymn Insert 2-

COMMUNITY PRAYERS

- We pray for Susan Redlich and her family. Susan's father William Redlich died peacefully on Monday night.
- We pray for Dave Dyer's brother Daniel Dyer, who had a stroke recently in Hudson, Ohio, and who is also struggling with cancer.
- We pray for Kirsten Manville's father Keith, who is recovering at home after being hospitalized with a bacterial infection. We also pray for Kirsten and her husband Tim Foley as they mourn the loss of Tim's mother Agnes Foley, who died unexpectedly last week.
- We pray for Ida Peterson (age 2) and her moms Kelsey and Tori, as Ida recovers from a third cardiac surgery.
- We pray for Barb Hume as she recovers and heals from bunion surgery.
- We pray for Patty Van Ness as she grieves the loss of her mother Marjorie, who died recently. We pray also for Patty's father Charles, who is receiving hospice care.
- We pray for Abby Shuman and her family as they mourn the loss of Abby's mother Jeri, who died recently of heart failure.
- We pray for all who are in treatment for cancer: Pauline Fennel; Dave Kidder's sister Lucinda Kidder; Sarah Robinson, daughter of Mary Robinson and Mary Martha Thiel; Abby Shuman's uncle Barry; Penny Kilburn, Nancy Kilburn's mother; Amy Golodet, Jonathan New's sister-inlaw; Karen Anne Zee's daughter Becky Collet, and her sons-in-law, Denis Collet and Stewart Bailey; and Beth and Polly, Ann McCann's sisters.
- We pray for all impacted by the crisis at "Mass and Cass" in Boston, especially for those whose makeshift tents and homes have been uprooted by the City of Boston. We pray for creative and compassionate solutions that honor the dignity of all.
- We pray for our divided nation as we process the verdict in the Rittenhouse trial and await the jury's delibrations in the McMichael/Bryan trial. May God's presence and vision of just mercy be with us all as we grapple with the ever-present issues of racism, gun violence, and our country's imperfect justice system.
- We pray for all who are affected by COVID-19 diagnoses. We give thanks that children 5-11 can now be vaccinated, and we pray for all who are awaiting vaccines, globally and locally. May there be a swift, hassle-free, and equitable distribution for all. We continue to pray for all who are grieving the loss of loved ones to COVID-19 and for the "long-haulers." We celebrate with those experiencing long-awaited reunions as international borders begin to open.
- When we feel helpless and overwhelmed by the climate crisis, may God's abiding presence ground us in love and hope. We pray for the divine wisdom, strength and courage needed to ensure that local, national, and global remediation and reparation efforts distribute power equitably and protect the most vulnerable.
- We pray for the 14 men who are finding sustenance and protection in our First Church Shelter, and we pray for the guests of the Friday Café, who are finding food and listening ears. We pray for all who are experiencing deprivation and hardship in these uncertain times.

TODAY AT FIRST CHURCH

We welcome with joy two new members in covenant with First Church in Cambridge:

Susie Hayward is happy to have recently returned to Boston to work for her alma mater, Harvard Divinity School, in its new Religion and Public Life program. She comes most recently from Washington, DC, where she led the religion program at the US Institute of Peace. Susie is a Minnesota girl, through-and-through, happiest navigating a canoe through morning mist on a lake. But she also appreciates backpacking in the White or Green Mountains, or hiking in the Berkshires. And cats.

The Rev. James D. Ross II is excited to join the First Church in Cambridge family. He moved to Hyde Park in Boston in early 2021 when he joined the staff of the Southern New England Conference, where he serves as Minister for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion. James lived most most recently in St. Louis, where he was Pastor at Pilgrim Congregational United Church of Christ. He previously lived and served congregations in Washington, D.C. A former journalist, James also worked in organizational and political communications, and as an advocate for sentencing reform and racial, economic, and queer justice.



Advent Gathering and Crafting, November 28 at 12:30 p.m., <u>via Zoom</u>

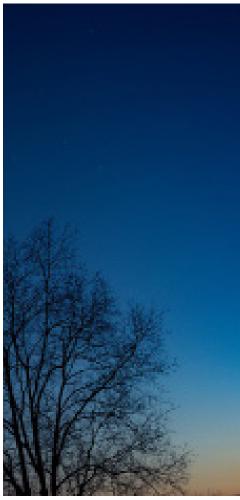
<u>Gather with us on Zoom</u> after worship to hear more about our Advent theme - *Already Here, Not Yet There*. We'll reflect on how we are stepping into a new season — not only Advent, but also in our mid-pandemic world. And in the spirit of our traditional Advent Workshop, we'll have a breakout room for crafting! Find your Advent candle ring, and pick up a set of candles at church this morning. We'll make our wreaths together and share ideas for simple Advent crafts to complete at home.

First Church Walk Sunday, November 28, 1:30 - 3:00 p.m. Fresh Pond Reservation

Join First Church member Susan Ohman for an easy walk at Fresh Pond Reservation. Walk 1-2 miles through Lusitania Meadows, the Butterfly Meadow, and along the main path by Fresh Pond to Maher Park and Blacks Nook... <u>Read more</u>



TODAY AT FIRST CHURCH



Advent 2021: Already Here, Not Yet There

This classic Advent theme seems to fit this year more than most! Indeed, we are stepping into a new season — not only Advent, but also in our mid-pandemic world. We are gathering for hybrid worship. We are already doing more with family and friends than we were a year ago. And yet, nothing feels quite the same as before.

We are not yet back to how our lives used to feel. We are able to sing, but with masks. We have returned to school or work in person, but are struggling to find our way. We are worshiping together, but some of us are tuning in from home. We are already here, and not yet there! In Advent, too, we celebrate that Christ is already here walking alongside us in our journey, and yet, we are waiting for that child who will change everything in the coming weeks. God's kingdom is already here, and yet, we await the justice, reconciliation and healing that is to come.

Join us this Advent in exploring this feeling of being in between, of feeling as if we have arrived somewhere, but are still waiting for something more: of being already here, but not yet there.

<u>Read more</u>

Our Advent Candle-Lighting Song is based on "Give Me Birds at the Dawning," written by Betsy Binstock and arranged by Peter & Mary Alice Amidon, from *Twenty-five Anthems for Interfaith and Community Choirs* ©2016, Amidon Music Publishing. The words have been adapted to fit the Advent season.

And once again, we are featuring three **Advent Banners** with images designed by Vermont artist Janet McKenzie, thanks to a generous donation from Laurie Williams and Andrea Seek. The Deacons were pleased to support this project last year as part of our ongoing efforts to lift up historically and Biblically underrepresented images and voices of women and persons of color. This week, we re-introduce McKenzie's **Annunciation**, which references the story of the Angel Gabriel's appearance to Mary, telling her that she will give birth to a son and that his name will be called Jesus.

HOW WE ARE GATHERING IN DECEMBER AND EARLY JANUARY

Winter Is Coming! A Covid-19 Update for First Church Gatherings

Winter is coming, and public health officials are cautioning us to maintain Covid safety protocols now, more than ever. As one expert put it, "just when you think you can let up, that's the most important time to stay vigilant." Unfortunately, door and window ventilation and heating don't mix and will create strain for our planet and budget. With this in mind, we will be modifying our Sunday schedule a bit for December and early January, at least... <u>Read more about what is changing, what is staying the same, and</u> "What about Christmas?"



CHRISTMAS 2021 AT FIRST CHURCH



Christmas Eve at First Church: How will you participate?

We plan to offer three options for Christmas Eve worship to allow for less crowding and more room for social distancing:

- an outdoor Carol Sing on the Lawn at 4:00 p.m.,
- an indoor **Candlelight Lessons & Carols Service at 6:00 p.m.** that you can attend in person or online, for which we will offer overflow seating in Margaret Jewett Hall before the big screen if we have more than 150 people in our Sanctuary, and
- the recording of our Candlelight Lessons & Carols Service, available on our YouTube channel anytime after the live service concludes.

We invite you to let us know in advance <u>via this survey</u> if you plan to come in person to either of our Christmas Eve services, so that we can plan accordingly. We have also included a few questions for families with young children to help us prepare for the opening of in-person Church School in January. *Please <u>complete the survey</u> by this Tuesday, November 30.*

ADVENT AT FIRST CHURCH



Advent Unbound: A Companion to Pádraig Ó Tuama's **Poetry Unbound**

Looking for a resource for spiritual reflection to keep you grounded this Advent? Join us and our friends at the SALT Project for this go-at-your-own pace devotional that includes Advent scriptures tied to the popular NPR OnBeing poetry podcast featuring Pádraig Ó Tuama. Download the pdf here, which offers instructions on finding the companion podcasts and scripture.

Advent in our Home Sanctuary: A Video Project

Many of us are choosing to join in-person worship, but not all of us can yet, especially many of our little ones and those caring for them. This year, Jaz Buchanan is sharing multigenerational spiritual practices throughout the four weeks of Advent on our YouTube Channel. These are practices that you can incorporate right from your home sanctuary! Tune in each week, as we pause, wonder, and prepare together for the mystery of Christmas.

MULTI GENERATIONAL FORMATION



Advent Season Giving and Alternative Christmas Fair

The Missions & Social Justice Committee has had another eventful year of supporting the work of non-profit organizations, both near and far. In this Advent season, we share with you a list of organizations with which First Church partners closely and who are seeking donations. Additionally, we are sharing a list of organizations from which you may purchase unique gifts. Vendors from these shops have filled Margaret Jewett Hall for our annual Alternative Christmas Fair in years past. Due to the ongoing pandemic, we are sharing this list as a "virtual event" this year... Read more -9-

ADVENT AT FIRST CHURCH

Space to Listen:

Reflecting on the Gospel of Luke with Brent Coffin Sunday, December 5, 12:30 - 2:00 p.m., <u>via Zoom</u>

Who's controlling the narrative today? Is it the Right or the Left? FOX or MSNBC? Or is it actually no one? Amidst all the clamor and competition, where do we find the space to listen deeply to our own narratives of where we are now, how we got here, and where we are hoping to go next? The Gospel of Luke is just one of countless



narratives. Yet for us, it is the primary text of the new Christian liturgical year beginning this Advent. Brent Coffin will offer some initial reflections on the Gospel of Luke as narrative space for discerning how God is calling us in our own unfolding narratives... <u>Read more</u>



Youth Group: Volunteer to sort gifts for City Mission Gift Drive Sunday, December 5, 1:15 - 3:00, Margaret Jewett Hall Each year City Mission collects thousands of gifts – clothes, toys, books and household goods. Many of these donations come from members of FCC. These gifts are made available to the City Mission's Homelessness Prevention clients and other community partners who distribute gifts to their own clients. Please join the Youth Group on the afternoon of December 5 to help sort these items for delivery.

Women's Community Advent Prayer Retreat Saturday, December 11, 9:30 - 11:00 a.m., via Zoom The women of First Church will gather together on Zoom for a time of worship, spiritual practice, reflection, and fellowship to observe Advent. Everyone who identifies as a woman is welcome to join! Come as you are to take time out of our busy weeks for rest,

spiritual practice and reflection about being a person of faith in this uncertain time. To let us know if you plan on coming, please sign up here:

https://forms.gle/nzPoGUSHw4GEA4KJ6



ADVENT AT FIRST CHURCH



Bishop Greene, Guest Preacher Sunday, December 12, 11:00 a.m. Sanctuary and via livestream

We welcome longtime Cambridge pastor Bishop Brian Greene from the Pentecostal Tabernacle Church as our guest preacher during Hybrid Worship on December 12. For more than a year, members of First Church and Pentecostal Tabernacle (PT) have been gathering weekly on Tuesday afternoons for weekly Biblical Justice Prayer Zoom calls hosted by PT. In addition, Dan Smith and Bishop Greene have been meeting regularly about a deepening connection between our congregations. <u>Read more</u>

Blue Christmas Worship on the Longest Night Tuesday, December 21, 6:30 - 7:15 p.m., via Zoom Join us for an evening worship service on the longest night of the year to hold our grief, our sorrow, and complicated experiences amidst the Christmas season. This is a time for reflection and solace, as we continue to experience the prolonged stress and grief of the pandemic and of difficult seasons of our lives. If you have any questions about this worship service, please contact Lexi Boudreaux.





Warm Hands, Warm Hearts

Give a meaningful gift this holiday season by donating a pair of warm winter gloves through the Friday Café to someone in need. Donate for yourself, or in honor of a special person on your list. They will receive a mailed holiday card with your gift message. Each pair of gloves is \$20. You can make your gift <u>here</u>.

OTHER UPCOMING EVENTS



Young Adults: Open Book Mic Tuesday, November 30 at 7:00 p.m. Ebony's house A time for Story Share! Bring a book you love and read a passage aloud to us. We'll talk about what it means to you. Contact <u>Ministerial Intern Ebony West</u> for the address.

Church School Teacher Meeting

Wednesday, December 8, 7:00 - 8:00 p.m., via Zoom Good news, First Church!

We are preparing to offer in-person Church School Classes for all children from preschool to 7th grade beginning on **Sunday, January 9**. Our twice-monthly classes will include Godly Play (preschool-4th grade), Middler Book & Bible Study (5th graders), and Bible 101 (6/7th graders). If you would like to learn about volunteering as a Church School Teacher, please join



our evening meeting via Zoom on December 8. Our children's formation programming can't run without volunteer help from the congregation; please consider if teaching might be your way of giving your time and talents to the First Church community. Contact <u>Sarah Higginbotham</u> to receive the Zoom invitation or to ask any questions you may have.



Fall Pilgrimage: African American Heritage Trail, Cambridgeport Sunday, December 12 at 3:00 p.m.

rain date: December 26 at 3:00 p.m.

Join us for our final Fall Pilgrimage, as we embark in prayer, quieting our minds and expanding our hearts to hear the Word of God across time and space. <u>Learn more and sign up here.</u>

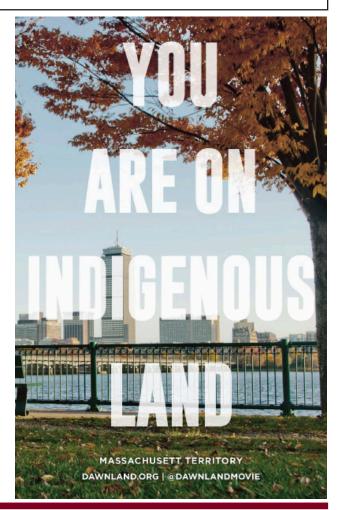
OTHER UPCOMING EVENTS

First Church Land Acknowledgment

At our recent Fall Congregational Meeting, church leaders introduced a <u>First Church</u> <u>Land Acknowledgment</u> and offered suggestions for its use.

We hope the congregation will affirm a version of this statement at our Annual Meeting in January, and we are eager to hear any thoughts you may have.

Please contact <u>Dan Smith</u> or <u>Hilary Hopkins</u> with any comments or questions.





Do you want to follow the hyperlinks, but you're holding a paper bulletin in your hand? Use your phone's camera to hover over the QR code marked "scan me;" this will take you to the **Members & Friends** page of our website, where you'll find the bulletin online, as well as links to news, events, and more.

You can scan these codes to connect with First Church via social media:









Monday, November 29

4:30 p.m.5:00 p.m.Contemplative Practices Group, via Zoom"Exploring Reparations" Faith & Life Group, via Zoom

Tuesday, November 30

7:00 p.m. Young Adults: Open Book Mic, home of Ebony West

Wednesday, December 1

9:30 a.m.
4:00 p.m.
4:30 p.m.
7:00 p.m.
Staff Meeting, Harter Room
Gifts Discernment Committee, via Zoom
Meal Distribution, Tower Room
Christian Formation Committee, via Zoom

Thursday, December 2

6:00 p.m. Weekly Bible Study, via Zoom

6:00 p.m. Friday Café food dropoff, Tower Room

Friday, December 3

9:00 a.m. Friday Café food dropoff, Tower Room

12:00 p.m. Friday Café, Margaret Jewett Hall and the church lawn

Saturday, December 4

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

Sunday, December 5 - Second Sunday of Advent

- 10:15 a.m. Choir Rehearsal, MJH
- 10:45 a.m. Sanctuary doors open
- 11:00 a.m. Hybrid Morning Worship in the Sanctuary and via livestream
- 11:20 a.m. Children's Worship with Sarah, Library
- 12:30 p.m. Space to Listen: Reflecting on the Gospel of Luke, via Zoom
- 1:15 p.m. Youth Group: Gift Sorting for City Mission, MJH
- 7:30 p.m. Night Song in the Sanctuary and via livestream

First Church in Cambridge, Congregational, UCC

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See our <u>Events Calendar</u> for Zoom links and details.

Sign up <u>here</u> to receive our weekly e-newsletter.

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