

# Advent Hybrid Morning Worship December 5, 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 1 6 3 6 – 2 0 2 1

# Sunday, December 5, 2021

Preaching Today Assisting in Worship	Dan Smith, Senior Minister Lexi Boudreaux, Transitional Minister Ebony West, Ministerial Intern Sarah Higginbotham, Director of Creative Worship & Arts Peter Sykes, Director of Music Taj Smith, liturgist Hendren Eurock family, Advent Candle-Lighting
	Hendren Funck family, Advent Candle-Lighting Kevin Newell, tech support
Bulletin Cover Image	Freddie Funck, Youth Group member

#### **Today's Programs and Events**

10:15 a.m.	Choir Rehearsal, Margaret Jewett Hall (MJH)
11:00 a.m.	Hybrid Morning Worship, Sanctuary and via livestream
11:20 a.m.	Children's Worship with Sarah, Library
12:15 p.m.	Exploring our Advent Theme, <u>via Zoom</u>
1:15 p.m.	Youth Group: Gift Sorting for City Mission, MJH
7:30 p.m.	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 FCC Website Changes form.

#### GATHERING

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

For those participating at home, we invite you to bring bread or crackers and water, juice, or wine to your home altar, so that you may participate in Holy Communion. All are welcome at the Table!

VOLUNTARY	Nun komm, der Heiden Heiland	Dietrich Buxtehude
*THE WORD C L: C:	<b>DF GOD</b> Luke 1:67-79The word of God.Thanks be to God.	Ebony West
*HYMN (inser	t) O Come, O Come, Emmanuel For everyone's safety, please sing quietly or hum.	
*GREETING		Taj Smith
L:	Siblings in Christ, God's love is already here with us, and yet, it's always coming our way!	
C:	God's peace is already here, right in our hearts, and yet, it's waiting to be born anew!	
L:	God's joy is already here in our worship, and it's just a taste of what's to come!	
<b>C</b> :	So we gather now, in this season of wonder and waiting,	
L:	finding strength in what's already here and in sacred mysteries, known and unknown.	
<b>C</b> :	Prepare the way for God's already, not yet, glory!	
ALL:	Let it be revealed in Christ and in us!	
WORDS OF V	VELCOME	
ADVENT CANDLE LIGHTING Hendren Funck Fai		Hendren Funck Family
L:	God, we light this second candle of Advent. We kindle it with peace.	
C:	May that peace sustain us in this time, and guide us in our work for compassion and justice.	
SONG	Give me light in the darkness, light in the darkness	Sarah Higginbotham
	light in the darkness to sing my soul awake. (Sing twice through.)	3,
	o stand. Hymns proceeded by a "C" are found in the beginning section of written and composed by current and past members of First Church in C	

#### CONFESSING

# INVITATION TO CONFESSION

# SILENCE

#### PRAYER OF CONFESSION

- L: Let us pray for justice, pardon and peace:
- C: God, when we despair that we aren't there yet, fill the space in-between.
  When we are weary, afraid, and longing for stability, give us pathways of hope and flexibility.
  When we grow tired of waiting, forgive us, we pray, and give us your vision of where we are now and where we are going. 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 for Children's Worship in the Library; they will return to the Sanctuary for Communion.

### **OPENING THE WORD**

### PRAYER FOR UNDERSTANDING

READING

Malachi 3:1-4

SERMON

Dan Smith

#### SHARING OUR LIFE TOGETHER

ANNOUNCEMENTS

INVITATION TO OFFERING



Give by Text



Give Online

I've Given Already



Pledge for 2022

OFFERTORY

A Tender Shoot

Otto Goldschmidt

#### **\*DOXOLOGY AND PRAYER OF DEDICATION**

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.

# SHARING THE FEAST

#### INVITATION

#### PRAYER OF PREPARATION

#### **REMEMBERING JESUS**

- L: Now, O God, with grateful joy, we remember Jesus, his daring love, his open table. (silence)
- L: Setting aside our wisdom, our will, and our words, emptying our hearts and bringing nothing in our hands,
- C: we come at his invitation, yearning for the healing, the holding, the accepting, the forgiving, which Christ alone can offer.

#### WORDS OF INSTITUTION

#### PRAYER TO THE HOLY SPIRIT

- L: Come Holy Spirit. By this bread connect us more closely with you and with our neighbors near and far.
- All: Bless this bread, we pray.
- L: May this fruit of the vine remind us of the interconnectedness of people around the world.

#### All: Bless this cup, we pray.

L: May this simple meal enlighten the eyes of our hearts and bring us into union with you, your people and your world united in the One Body of Christ.We do this in the name of Jesus, our friend and companion, who taught us to pray:

#### 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.

#### \*SHARING THE BREAD AND CUP

If you are worshiping from home, please take now, and eat. If you are worshiping in person, please approach one of the communion stations at the front and back of the church. Take the bread and the cup from the servers, and walk to the table with the empty tray, where you are invited to consume the elements. Please do not lower your mask in front of the communion servers. Once you are done, please place your two cups in the empty tray before returning to your seat.

#### \*PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING

- L: Let us give thanks!
- C: Thank you, God, for life in the Spirit of Jesus 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 risen life that never ends. In Christ's name we pray. Amen.

#### **GOING FORTH**

**\*HYMN 122** Now Bless the God of Israel For everyone's safety, please sing quietly or hum.

#### \*BENEDICTION

VOLUNTARY Nun komm, de

Nun komm, der Heiden Heiland

J. S. Bach

#### **OPENING HYMN**

O Come, O Come Emmanuel

Alt. Kate Layzer. Dec. 2016



#### **CLOSING HYMN**



-Hymn Insert 2-

#### COMMUNITY PRAYERS

- We pray for Susan Redlich and her family. Susan's father William Redlich died peacefully at the age of 100 in Evanston, Illinois.
- We pray for courage and strength for Kindle Williams as she enters the final stretch of her Ph.D. thesis at M.I.T. this week.
- We pray for Dave and Ann McCann's beloved friends and mentors Edwin and Fumiko Cranston, who are both struggling with challenging medical conditions.
- 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 and his aunt Doris Hernon, who both died recently.
- 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 and her father Charles, who both died recently.
- We pray for all who are in treatment for cancer: Pauline Fennel; 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-in-law; 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.
- As the Supreme Court hears a case pertaining to reproductive rights currently protected by the Constitution, we pray for all those experiencing anxiety in anticipation of potential changes to abortion access in this country.
- We pray for those grieving the loss of life and those dealing with the trauma of a school shooting in Oxford, Michigan, this week. We continue to pray for the political will to enact common sense gun legislation.
- We pray for all who are affected by COVID-19 diagnoses and for all who are awaiting vaccines, globally and locally. We continue to pray for all who are grieving the loss of loved ones to COVID-19 and for those experiencing symptoms of long Covid.
- When we feel helpless and overwhelmed by the climate crisis, 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**



#### 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, along with *The Annunciation*, we re-introduce McKenzie's *The Visitation*, which reflects the story of a pregnant Mary visits her pregnant cousin Elizabeth, as found in Luke 1:39-56.

# TODAY AT FIRST CHURCH

## Exploring Our Advent Theme: *Already Here, Not Yet There* Today at 12:30 p.m., <u>via Zoom</u>; check-in starting at 12:15 p.m.

Please join us in reflecting on our theme for the season. We will break out into small groups for a time of sharing and reflection about our experience of Advent this year, in this time of in-between. We will also make space to share any reflections on Advent Unbound: An Advent Companion to Padraig O Tuama's podcast, "Poetry Unbound" by the Salt Project. Come early, in the



middle, or towards the end of our time together for reflection, conversation, and fellowship with your First Church family *"Space to Listen: Reflecting on the Gospel of Luke" scheduled for today has been postponed until the New Year.* 



Youth Group: Volunteer to sort gifts for City Mission Gift Drive Today, 1:15 - 3:00 p.m., Margaret Jewett Hall Each year City Mission collects thousands of gifts – clothes, toys, books and household goods. The Youth Group will sort First Church's donations this afternoon for City Mission's Homelessness Prevention clients and other community partners who distribute gifts to their own clients.

# 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</u> is staying the same, and "What about Christmas?"





### SIGN UP NOW! 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! Sign up here:

https://forms.gle/nzPoGUSHw4GEA4KJ6

## 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 -8-

# 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>

# 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>





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.

**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.



#### **OTHER UPCOMING EVENTS**

#### 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.



## Young Adults: Party Friday, December 10 at 7:30 p.m. Home of Claire Cocroft

Come mix with other (fully vaccinated) 20- and 30-somethings at Claire Cocroft's home. Please contact Phil (585-610-7919 or <u>youngadults@</u> <u>firstchurchcambridge.org</u>) for the address. Festive outfits encouraged, and food and drink provided!

### **First Church Land Acknowledgment**

At our recent Fall Congregational Meeting, church leaders introduced a <u>First Church 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.



#### **CHRISTMAS AT FIRST CHURCH**



# The UnPageant Sunday, December 19 at 11:00 a.m Sanctuary and via livestream

How else to enjoy the UnPageant this year but in a hybrid experience? Join us online or in person on the fourth Sunday of Advent for First Church's beloved tradition of the UnPageant, a unique way to include everyone in the story of Christmas. This year, characters will Zoom in, pre-record themselves, and/or show up in person—it's an UnPageant for our hybrid times.

#### All-Church Cookie Swap Sunday, December 19, 12:00 - 1:00 p.m. Margaret Jewett Hall

While we can't gather together for our traditional Christmas Party after worship, we can celebrate with cookies! Bake or buy 6-10 dozen of your favorite holiday cookie, and then package them by the ½ dozen (6 cookies per bag) to be offered at our first All-Church Cookie Swap. Label each bag with ingredients/allergy info before dropping them off in Margaret Jewett Hall before or just after Hybrid Worship.



In your baking/buying plans, consider if you can provide gluten-free, dairy-free, or low-sugar options, and definitely label any baked goods that contain nuts. We'll organize them on tables and invite everyone to walk through from the parish building entrance to the Mason Street door, picking up treats along the way. Help spread some Christmas joy on UnPageant Sunday; the more cookies, the merrier!



# Christmas Eve Carol Sing on the Lawn Friday, December 24, 4:00 - 4:30 p.m.

People of all ages are invited to this 30-minute family-friendly time of singing your favorite carols and hearing the Christmas story! We'll have a lighted Christmas tree set up on the lawn to brighten our gathering, but bring a flashlight or headlamp with you to follow along. We'll finish up with hot cocoa and tea for all.

#### **CHRISTMAS AT FIRST CHURCH**

#### Christmas Eve Candlelight Lessons and Carols Friday, December 24, 6:00 - 7:00 p.m. Sanctuary, via livestream, and on YouTube

Our traditional Christmas Eve service will be held in person and on our livestream. Masks and social distancing will be required. Seating in the sanctuary will be limited for safety, and we will offer overflow seating before the big screen in a cozy, decorated, Christmas-lit Margaret Jewett Hall. The service will also be available to watch on YouTube from home anytime after the livestream ends. Watch with family and friends, near or far, after dinner, at 8, 9, or midnight!



# CHRISTMAS 2021 AT FIRST CHURCH

#### Sunday, December 19

11:00 a.m. The UnPageant in Hybrid Worship 12:30 p.m. All-Church Cookie Swap in MJH

#### Friday, December 24

4:00 p.m. Christmas Eve Carol Sing on the Lawn 6:00 p.m. Christmas Eve Candlelight Lessons & Carols\* in the Sonctuory, via livestream & available after on YouTube

#### Saturday, December 25

11:00 a.m. Christmas Day Service Re-Premiere on YouTube

#### Sunday, December 26

11:00 a.m. First Sunday of Christmas in Hybrid Worship

\*Seating in the Sanctuary for our Christmas Lve Canoleight Lessons & Carols will be limited for safety. Overflow seating will be available in Margaret Jewett Hall.

firstchurchcambridge.org/events



#### Monday, December 6

4:30 p.m.	Contemplative Practices Group, via Zoom
7:00 p.m.	Deacons' Meeting, via Zoom
7:30 p.m.	GBIO Core Team Meeting, via Zoom

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

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

#### Tuesday, December 7

- 4:00 p.m. First Church Professional Caregivers' Call, via Zoom
- 5:30 p.m. Stewardship Committee, via Zoom

#### Wednesday, December 8

9:30 a.m. Staff Meeting, Harter Room7:00 p.m. Church School Teacher Meeting, via Zoom

#### Thursday, December 9

6:00 p.m. Weekly Bible Study, via Zoom6:00 p.m. Friday Café food dropoff, Tower Room

#### Friday, December 10

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 11

9:30 a.m. Women's Community Advent Prayer Retreat, via Zoom

#### Sunday, December 12 - Third 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, Bishop Greene, guest preacher
- 11:20 a.m. Children's Worship with Jaz, Library
- 3:00 p.m. Fall Pilgrimage: African American Heritage Trail, Cambridgeport
- 7:30 p.m. Night Song in the Sanctuary and via livestream

First Church in Cambridge, Congregational, UCC

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