

Advent December 18, 2022

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

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.

IN CAMBRIDGE CONGREGATIONAL

386 YEARS

ON THE WAY

1636-2022

FIRST CHURCH

December 18, 2022

Leading Worship Jaz Buchanan, *Pastoral Associate*

Sarah Higginbotham, Director of Creative Worship & Arts

Dan Smith, Senior Minister

Lexi Boudreaux, Transitional Minister

Peter Sykes, Music Director

Jim Cairns, liturgist

Nancy Cyr, Leah Fatherley-Cyr & Franklin Cyr Kolash,

Advent candle-lighting

Lee Prouty, tech support

Bulletin Cover Image Carina Nebula, photographed by the James Webb telescope

this image and many more may be found at: webb.nasa.gov

Today's Programs and Events

9:30 a.m. Behold: Advent Reflection on the Psalms, Harter Room & via Zoom

10:15 a.m. Choir Rehearsal, Margaret Jewett Hall (MJH) 10:15 a.m. Coffee and Conversation, Hastings Common

11:00 a.m. Hybrid Morning Worship, Sanctuary and via livestream

12:00 p.m. Zoom Coffee Hour

12:00 p.m. Christmas Cookie Swap and Reception for Jaz Buchanan, MJH

12:30 p.m.
3:00 p.m.
7:30 p.m.
Youth Group: Christmas Gift Swap, Library Seraphim Choral Concert, Sanctuary
Night Song, Sanctuary and via livestream

New to First Church?

Have you just begun joining us for worship? Consider filling out a visitor card found on the small clipboard in the pews or this "virtual visitor card" so that we might reach out and connect with you about our community.

Give to First Church

You can give online: www.firstchurchcambridge.org/give or by texting "\$_" to: 1-844-996-0982.

Contact a Pastor or Staff Member

Find contact information 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 First Church Communications Request form.

Have an edit or update for our website? Complete the FCC Website Changes form

GATHERING

VOLUNTARY In dulci jubilo Dietrich Buxtehude

THE WORD OF GOD Isaiah 9:2, 6-7 Jaz Buchanan

*PROCESSIONAL HYMN 127 Lift Up Your Heads, O Mighty Gates

*GREETING Jim Cairns

L: Siblings in Christ, Behold! For God is doing a new thing!

C: Let us open our hearts to watch for awe in the ordinary, for peace in our distress, and for hope in our despair,

L: for joy in our lives, and for Love to lead the way.

C: We gather now, in this season of wonder and waiting, finding strength in beholding the sacred in all that is here.

L: Prepare the way for God's presence in the world!

All: Let it be revealed in Christ and in us!

WORDS OF WELCOME

Jim Cairns, Jaz Buchanan, and Sarah Higginbotham

ADVENT CANDLE-LIGHTING Nancy Cyr, Leah Fatherley Cyr, and Franklin Cyr Kolash

L: God, we light the fourth candle of Advent.

We kindle it with love.

C: May that love sustain us in this time, and guide us in our work for compassion and justice.

SONG Peter Sykes, 2022





The Choir will sing through once to teach us.

The congregation is invited to join on the second and third times 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 turn away from gifts of your presence everyday help us open our hearts to wonder.

When we ignore the sacred in each other's humanity, forgive us.

When we grow weary and turn to distractions, guide us.

Help us to attend to creating a world rooted in your justice and joy.

We pray all this in Jesus' name. Amen.

DECLARATION OF GOD'S FORGIVENESS

PRAYERS FOR THE CHURCH AND WORLD

Lexi Boudreaux

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.

THE UNPAGEANT

Jaz Buchanan & Sarah Higginbotham, guides
Dan Smith & Lexi Boudreaux, reading the Word
Peter Sykes and the Choir, musical narration
Georgia Lee, Mary
Danyson Joachim, Joseph
Ben Jones, Donkey
Molly Fatherley-Cyr, Baby Jesus
Dewey Cyr, Star
John Whaley, Angel Gabriel

GETTING READY

Behold That Star

Behold that star! Behold that star up yonder! Behold that star!

This is the star of Bethlehem!

LISTENING TO PROPHETS

Isaiah 11:1-2 & 6-9

MARY AND JOSEPH JOURNEY TO BETHLEHEM

HYMN

O Little Town of Bethlehem

O little town of Bethlehem, how still we see the lie!

Above thy deep and dreamless sleep the silent stars go by;
yet in thy dark streets shineth the everlasting Light;
the hopes and fears of all the years are met in thee tonight.

THE BIRTH OF JESUS

Luke 2:6-7

There was no room found in the inn
This is the star of Bethlehem
For Him who was born free from sin
This is the star of Bethlehem

Behold that star...

HYMN

Away in Manager

Away in a manger, no crib for his bed,
The little Lord Jesus laid down his sweet head;
The stars in the heavens looked down where he lay,
The little Lord Jesus, asleep on the hay.

ANGEL GABRIEL'S GREETING

Luke 2:9-14

A song broke forth upon the night
This is the star of Bethlehem
From angel hosts all robed in white
This is the star of Bethlehem

Behold that star...

"O, shepherds, do not be afraid!

This is the star of Bethlehem
Go see the child in manger laid!"

This is the star of Bethlehem

Behold that star...

*HYMN

Angels We Have Heard on High

Angels we have heard on high sweetly singing o'er the plains, and the mountains in reply echo back their joyous strains.

Glo - - - - ria in excelsis Deo! Glo - - - - ria in excelsis Deo!

Shepherds, why this jubilee? Why your joyous strains prolong? Say what may the tidings be, which inspire your heavenly song.

Glo - - - - ria in excelsis Deo! Glo - - - - ria in excelsis Deo!

THE WISE ONES FOLLOW THE STAR Matthew 2:1-2, 9-11

The wise ones came on from the East
This is the star of Bethlehem
To worship Him, the Prince of Peace
This is the star of Bethlehem

Behold that star...

Come wise ones, shepherds, sheep and all:

This is the star of Bethlehem

Behold with wonder, love, and awe!

This is the star of Bethlehem

Behold that star...

*OFFERTORY HYMN

Good Christians, All, Rejoice

Good Christians, all, rejoice, with heart and soul and voice; Now ye hear of endless bliss; Jesus Christ was born for this! He has opened heaven's door, and we are blest forevermore. Christ was born for this! Christ was born for this!

*CONCLUDING PRAYER

Dan Smith

GOING FORTH

*LEAVETAKING BLESSING FOR JAZ BUCHANAN

*HYMN

Joy to the World

Joy to the world, the Lord is come!
Let earth receive her King;
Let every heart prepare Him room,
And Heaven and nature sing,
And Heaven and nature sing,
And Heaven, and Heaven, and nature sing.

Joy to the earth, the Savior reigns!
Let all their songs employ;
While fields and floods,
rocks, hills and plains
Repeat the sounding joy,
Repeat the sounding joy,
Repeat, repeat, the sounding joy.

Christ rules the world with truth and grace,
And makes the nations prove
The glories of His righteousness,
And wonders of His love,
And wonders of His love,
And wonders, wonders, of His love.

*BENEDICTION

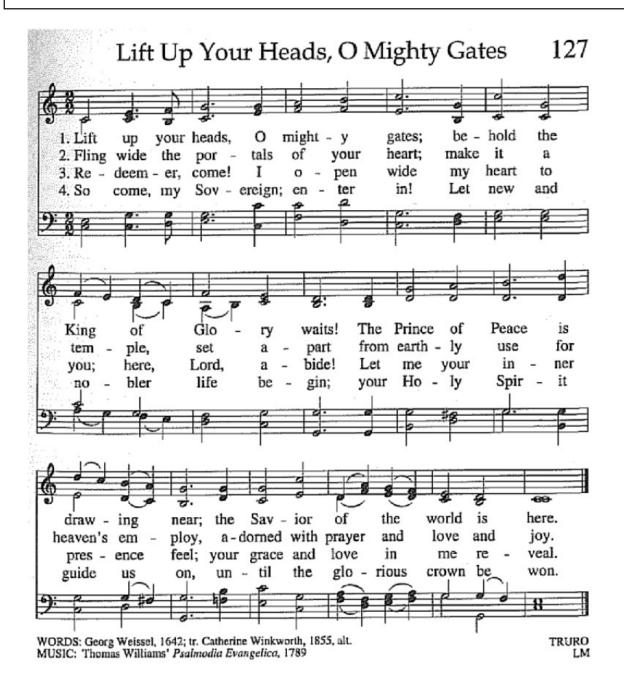
*PASSING OF THE PEACE



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 by scanning the QR code to the left.



COMMUNITY PRAYERS

- We pray for Karen Anne Zee, who had a stroke recently and is now recovering at home.
- We pray for Kathy Williams, who is undergoing neurological testing for an unknown condition.
- We pray for Poppy & Brent Coffin as they continue loving & living with Alzheimer's.
- We pray in gratitude and celebration for Facilities Manager Lee Prouty's partner Phil, who received excellent news about his prognosis after surgery.
- We pray for all who are in treatment for cancer: Anita Anger; Bridget Melle, Rich Goode's sister; Robin Williams, Kimel Williams's wife; Lyman Morrill, Ann Riker's brother; Judith Semmler, Alice Napoleon Jones's mother; Penny Kilburn, Nancy Kilburn's mother; Karen Anne Zee's daughter Becky Collet, and her sons-in-law, Denis Collet and Stewart Bailey; Beth and Polly, Ann McCann's sisters; and friend of Homeless Ministries Brian O'Donovan.
- We pray for all affected by gun violence and by mass shootings that occur with too much frequency in our country. This week, we remember and pray for those experiencing the 10-year anniversary of the shooting at Sandy Hook Elementary School.
- We pray for our Jewish siblings as antisemitic expression is on the rise in local communities, and as antisemitic rhetoric espoused by public figures continues to appear in social media.
- We give thanks for the successful passage of the Respect for Marriage Act, which recognizes and affirms same-sex and interracial marriages throughout the country.
- We pray for the people of Haiti, where water, food, and fuel shortages have led to widespread protests, violence, and civil unrest. We continue to pray for all areas in the world experiencing natural disasters and their aftermath.
- We pray for the people of Iran, especially women, as anti-government protests continue and as a second protester was executed this past Monday.
- We pray for those experiencing the loss of vital reproductive rights across the nation, and all those who care about them. We pray for our country in the lasting wake of changing reproductive rights: for all those struggling through the moral and political complexities of pregnancy and childbearing, and for the integrity of our legal and judicial institutions at a time of extreme political polarization.
- We pray for the people of Ukraine and stand in hope and solidarity as they continue to resist
 unjust and unlawful Russian invasions and retake occupied regions, even in the face of
 escalating violence. We pray for all soldiers and civilians in Ukraine, Russia and surrounding
 areas, and all global regions impacted by the violence of war.
- We continue to pray for all who are affected by COVID-19, and we pray for healthcare professionals as they navigate caring for children and the elderly through a winter season with heavy rates of RSV and the flu, in addition to increasing cases of COVID-19.
- 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.

Join the First Church List to see and offer up more community prayer requests.

TODAY AT FIRST CHURCH



2022 Community Service Award from Pentecostal Tabernacle Church Today at 9:00 a.m., Pentecostal Tabernacle Church 56 Magazine St., Cambridge

Bishop Brian Greene and the Pentecostal Tabernacle
Service Awards to recently retired Cambridge City

Church will present their 2022 Community Service Awards to recently retired Cambridge City Manager Louis DePasquale and our own Senior Minister Dan Smith. Dan's award recognizes his "leadership and work in the area of anti-racism."

Adult Formation - Behold: Advent Reflection on the Psalms Today, 9:30 - 10:15 a.m., Harter Room and <u>via Zoom</u>

First Church artist Audrey Bellinger, Dan Smith and Lexi Boudreaux lead a time of quiet conversation and contemplation of themes and images inspired by the Psalms and Advent readings. Join us as we open our hearts to a spiritual practice of wondering about, waiting for, and perhaps even expecting glad tidings of the new things God has in store, this season and every day.





The UnPageant Today 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. This year, Mary, Joseph, and the donkey travel through our Sanctuary on their way

to Bethlehem. We behold them on their journey and encircle them with love and joy on the chancel as our community's youngest member appears in the starring role. Come hear the ageold texts and sing the cherished carols as we celebrate the wonder of God's love among us.

Zoom Coffee Hour, Today at 12:15 p.m.

Join us online for social connection and conversation. Beginning in the new year, we will shift from weekly Zoom Coffee Hours to monthly Hybrid Community Coffee Hours! Folks joining us online are invited to stop by Zoom Coffee Hour on the second Sunday of the month after worship to see your church friends' faces, share joys and concerns, or just smile and wave! Find the link in the bulletin or on the calendar.

TODAY AT FIRST CHURCH

Christmas Cookie Swap and Reception for Jaz Buchanan Today, 12:00 - 1:00 p.m., Margaret Jewett Hall

After the UnPageant, help us spread some pre-Christmas joy with a cookie swap and hot chocolate and cake reception in honor of our beloved Pastoral Associate, Jaz Buchanan! (You can read Jaz's farewell letter on our website.) There is much to celebrate, given all the gifts Jaz has shared with us, as well as her happy news of a baby on the way. For the cookie swap, please bring your



labeled bags of cookies to Margaret Jewett Hall before or just after Hybrid Worship. Revel in some Christmas joy on UnPageant Sunday; the more cookies, the merrier, and let's send Jaz off with our love!



Youth Group: Christmas Gift Swap Today, 12:30 - 1:30 p.m., Library

The Youth Group meets up for our annual Christmas Gift Swap! We will exchange gifts and spend time with one another enjoying some festive snacks starting at 12:30 p.m. Gift limit to \$10.

Seraphim Choral Concert: A Seraphim Christmas Today, 3:00 - 4:30 p.m., Sanctuary

<u>Seraphim</u>, a choral singing group in residence here at First Church in Cambridge, invites the congregation to <u>"A Seraphim Christmas,"</u> with works old and new, and a festive carol sing with Seraphim. Participate in our <u>outreach</u> to the homeless and those living on the margins by bringing donations of clothing, food, and



other items to the concert. Of importance at this concert is collecting winter wear.



Behold, Take a "Divine Time Out," and Try Night Song This Advent! Sundays, 7:30 - 8:15 p.m., Sanctuary and via livestream

Have you beheld Night Song? Especially amidst this busy season, set aside some time from the demands of daily life, the season, and the troubling issues facing our country and our world. Come and behold God's quiet presence in our candle-lit sanctuary. Enter into stillness; be transported and transformed by ancient and modern contemplative music.

Read more about Night Song.

CHRISTMAS AT FIRST CHURCH

Christmas Eve Candlelight Service December 24 at 6:00 p.m., Sanctuary and via livestream

Come, all ye faithful, and come, all ye who have missed worshiping together on Christmas Eve during Covid! Join us in person or online for a family- friendly candlelit service of lessons and carols. In the warmth and light of our Sanctuary or by your Christmas tree at home, join us as we celebrate this holy night and sing out our joy to the world!



Christmas Day Worship

Sunday, December 25 at 11:00 a.m., Sanctuary and via livestream

Join us on Christmas Sunday morning for a joy-filled and bright service in which we will fill our Sanctuary with the sounds of Christmas—readings, prayers of thanksgiving and praise, and a very special harpsichord meditation by Peter Sykes of William Byrd's "The Bells." The service will also include a Christmas hymn sing which means **you** get to call out and choose which hymns we will sing together! Come and join the fun and "come let us adore Him" together!

Please note: there will be no Nursery care or Coffee Hour (so we can give our non-clergy staff the morning off), but children of all ages are welcome, as always!

New Year's Day Worship

Sunday, January 1 at 11:00 a.m., Sanctuary and via livestream

We'll mark the eighth day of Christmas and the first Sunday of the month on New Year's Day with Communion in our morning worship service. We won't have Church School or Nursery care this day, but children are welcome in worship, and families may supervise their kids in our basement playspace, if they wish.



First Church Office & Building Holiday Closures

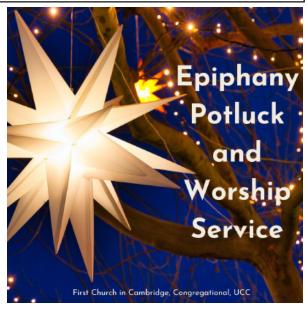
The First Church office will be closed from December 26 through January 2. The office will reopen on January 3. Staff will be working limited hours remotely during that time. The First Church building will be closed on December 25 after Christmas Worship, December 26, and January 2 in observance of the Christmas and New Year's holidays.

EPIPHANY AT FIRST CHURCH

Epiphany Potluck and Service Friday, January 6, 6:00 - 7:30 p.m. Margaret Jewett Hall and Sanctuary

Epiphany ("manifestation") is a Christian feast so ancient that it predates Christmas. It celebrates God's self-revelation in Jesus. It is a season of light shining in darkness, a time when the wise leave their books to seek a child, wine brims from clay water jars, and the voice of God rings in our ears: "You are my beloved, my child, my delight!"

We will celebrate Epiphany on Friday, January 6, beginning at 6:00 p.m. with a potluck dinner in Margaret Jewett Hall. The meal will be potluck through and through: you are invited to bring either a main dish casserole (last names begin-



ning with A-H), a salad or side dish (last names beginning with I-M), dessert (N-R), or drinks (S-Z). After our feast and a brief gathering ritual in the Chapel, we will set off together on a candlelight journey through the darkness until we arrive at the Sanctuary and circle it with light. Under the dome in the chancel, we will renew our own baptismal promises, ending with a joyful "sprinkling" of all present. This event is for all ages, so gather up friends, neighbors, kids, and come share the light!



Art Exhibit: "I and Thou: Epiphany" Friday, January 6 at 6:00 p.m. Margaret Jewett Hall

First Church member and artist Henry Gates displays seven ages of life and seven sacraments correlated in seven altars for the I-THOU: Epiphany. At critical junctions over our lifetime, we call upon God for guidance. Each of these spectral colors cues us to these transitions. Come visit these altars at our Epiphany Potluck and Service to reflect upon a lifetime of yourself and God.

COMMUNITY EVENTS

Harvard Square Poetry Stroll December 10, 2022 - January 1, 2023

Longfellow House-Washington's Headquarters National Historic Site announces the third annual <u>Harvard Square Holiday Poetry Stroll</u> in partnership with Mass Poetry and the Harvard Square Business Association. Short works by local poets are on view at outdoor locations around the Square, including at First Church in Cambridge. Many of this year's poems were selected in conjunction with Mass Poetry's <u>The Hard Work of Hope</u> series, which featured "poems from our community that offer moments of reprieve and inspiration in these difficult and confusing times." Please enjoy the self-guided outdoor Holiday Poetry Stroll with your friends or loved ones. There is no designated start or end point for this experience. <u>Check out the map</u> for this year's poems and locations, and the opportunity to create your own poetry.

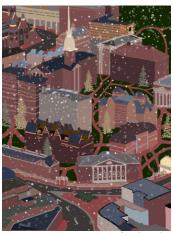


Illustration by Grace Coffey (NPS)

More than a comic wit...
so cheerfully intelligent
he makes his audience
optimistic in the face
of reality"
- The New York Times

Jimmy Tingle's Humor For Humanity Holiday Shows Thursday, December 29 at 7:30 p.m. Friday, December 30 at 7:30 p.m. Sunday, January 1 at 3:00 p.m. Sanctuary

Help us raise spirits, funds and awareness for First Church Homeless Ministries with Jimmy Tingle's

Humor for Humanity Holiday Shows! We are excited to announce that the Jimmy Tingle Live! Humor for Humanity profit sharing series is coming to First Church in Cambridge. For every ticket sold using the **First Church code** at checkout, \$10 will be donated to **First Church Homeless Ministries**. Additional donations to Homeless Ministries and other organizations can be made at checkout as well. And, opening the December 30 show with a few songs will be singer/songwriter Kirsten Manville, also known as First Church's Director of Operations! **Get more information and purchase tickets.**

City Mission Christmas Shop, Coat Boston, and Alternative Christmas Fair were a SUCCESS!

Thank you all so much for supporting City Mission's Christmas Shop and Coat Boston, as well as our first in-person Alternative Christmas Fair since 2019! First Church raised \$770 for City Mission and filled a car with gifts and coats. At the Alternative Christmas Fair, we hosted 10 vendors, who collectively raised almost \$4,000 to support causes of justice, equity, and opportunity.



YEAR-END STEWARDSHIP AND FINANCE



Holiday Gift-Giving and Donation Suggestions

The Missions & Social Justice Committee has had another eventful year of supporting the work of non-profits both near and far. We share with you a list of organizations with which First Church partners closely and who are seeking donations.

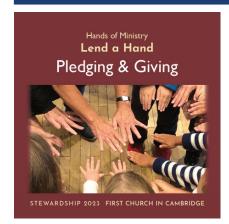
See the full list of organizations on our website.

2022 Year-End Information from Stewardship & Finance

As 2022 comes to its end, Minister of Stewardship & Finance Karen McArthur provides important year-end financial details to consider.

Read Karen's helpful checklist of information on our website.





Stewardship Campaign Update

Thank you to all who have made a financial pledge for 2023! As of December 11, we have received pledges of \$441,279. Based on our previous year-end pledging and giving patterns, this is excellent news! We are ahead of where we usually are at this time of the year.

Collectively, those who have pledged have increased 17% over their last year's pledge, bringing our goal of \$705,000 and a balanced budget within reach. If you haven't already, please pledge online or by sending in your pledge card. Thank you for your generosity!

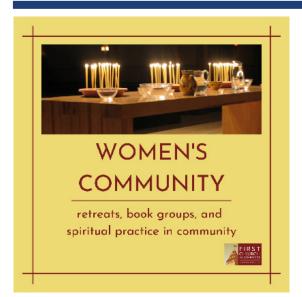
LOOKING AHEAD TO JANUARY

Supporting Our Immigrant Neighbors: The Next Phase Sunday, January 8, 4:00 - 5:30 p.m., via Zoom
Please join other Cambridge Interfaith Sanctuary
Coalition (CISC) members for an online event that will feature representatives from local organizations that

feature representatives from local organizations that support immigrants to give us an update on their work and opportunities to get involved. Our intention is to provide CISC congregations with a way to connect to



this work in a "post-CISC" world. The link for the meeting will be provided the week prior to the event.



Women's Community Book Group
Tuesday, January 10, 6:00 - 7:30 p.m., via Zoom
Our next book selection is *Hamnet* by Maggie
O'Farrell. Published in 2020, it should be available
at libraries and is now out in paperback, but do let
Alex or Susan know if you have trouble getting a
copy. Looking ahead with a sneak peek to our
February selection, we plan to read *The Personal*Librarian by Marie Benedict and Victoria
Christopher Murray. Please join us!

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 to the right 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.





See our Events Calendar

Sign up **here** to receive

our weekly e-newsletter.

for Zoom links and details.

Monday, December 19

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

7:00 p.m. Deacons' Meeting, via Zoom

Tuesday, December 20

7:15 a.m. Reflective Conversations with Brent Coffin, via Zoom

10:30 a.m. Communications Team Meeting, Harter Room

7:30 p.m. Shelter Oversight Committee, via Zoom

Wednesday, December 21

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

Thursday, December 22

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

Friday, December 23

12:00 p.m. Friday Café, MJH

Saturday, December 24

6:00 p.m. Christmas Eve Candlelight Service, Sanctuary and via livestream

Sunday, December 25

11:00 a.m. Christmas Hybrid Morning Worship, Sanctuary and via livestream

Monday, December 26 - Church Office & Building Closed for Christmas Holiday

First Church in Cambridge, Congregational, UCC 11 Garden St. • Cambridge, MA 02138