



Advent
December 4, 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.

FIRST CHURCH
IN CAMBRIDGE
CONGREGATIONAL
386 YEARS
ON THE WAY
1 6 3 6 – 2 0 2 2

December 4, 2022

Preaching Today Leading Worship

Dan Smith, *Senior Minister*
Lexi Boudreaux, *Transitional Minister*
Ahmaad Edmund, *Ministerial Intern*
Carla Carbajal, *Ministerial Intern*
Peter Sykes, *Music Director*
Peggy Bendroth, *Deacon*
Xiaomeng Han and Kan Xiong, *Advent candle-lighting*
Lee Prouty, *tech support*

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

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, Sanctuary
- 10:15 a.m. Coffee and Conversation, Hastings Common
- 11:00 a.m. Hybrid Morning Worship, Sanctuary and [via livestream](#)
- 11:20 a.m. Church School: Pastoral Care Sunday, Library
- 12:15 p.m. Coffee Hour, Hastings Common and [via Zoom](#)
- 12:30 p.m. Fall Congregational Meeting and Lunch, Margaret Jewett Hall & [via Zoom](#)
- 1:30 p.m. Our Whole Lives (OWL) for 7/8th graders, Old South Church
- 1:30 p.m. Confirmation Class for 9/10th graders, Harter Room
- 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 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

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

Wachet auf, ruft uns die Stimme

J. S. Bach

THE WORD OF GOD

Isaiah 40:1-5

Ahmaad Edmund

***PROCESSIONAL HYMN 115** Comfort, Comfort Ye My People

***GREETING**

Peggy Bendroth

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

ADVENT CANDLE-LIGHTING

Xiaomeng Han and Kan Xiong

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

Peter Sykes, 2022

Be - hold, ___ for God is do - ing a new thing! ___ Let us
5 look, watch and wait, ___ to - geth - er!

*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 preceded 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

*GREETING OF PEACE

We invite you to greet each other with a hug or handshake. If you prefer to maintain social distance, please put your hands together or fold your arms to share the peace.

*HYMN (insert)

Return, My People

Children up through 6th grade are now invited to Church School: Pastoral Care Sunday in the Library. Children will return to worship in time for Communion.

OPENING THE WORD

PRAYER FOR UNDERSTANDING

Lexi Boudreaux

READING

Psalm 25:1-5

ANTHEM

Teach me, O Lord

Thomas Attwood

*Teach me, O Lord, the way of thy statutes, and I shall keep it unto the end.
- Psalm 119:33*

READING

Matthew 3:1-6

SERMON

Dan Smith

SHARING OUR LIFE TOGETHER

ANNOUNCEMENTS

INVITATION TO OFFERING AND GIFT-GIVING

All who have brought unwrapped gifts, gift cards, or money for Coat Boston and the City Mission Christmas Shop are invited to bring them forward now and place them in front of the Communion table. Once all have returned to their seats, our regular morning offering for the support of our ministry will be given and received.

OFFERTORY

A Tender Shoot

Otto Goldschmidt

*A tender shoot has started up from a root of grace,
as ancient seeds imparted from Jesse's holy race:
It blooms without a blight, blooms in the cold bleak winter,
turning our darkness into light.*

*This shoot Isaiah taught us, from Jesse's root should spring;
The Virgin Mary brought us the branch of which we sing;
Our God of endless might gave her this child to save us,
Thus turning darkness into light.*

*ADVENT 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

*INVITATION

L: Friends, let's share what we know in our hearts:
Who is invited to this welcome table of love?

C: Everyone!

L: Everyone! The young and the old,

C: the rich and the poor

L: the lowest and the least;

C: sinners and saints together in communion.

L: Come, then, find your place here, where there are no strangers or outcasts,
only siblings in the sight of God.

REMEMBERING AND GIVING THANKS

L: And what do we remember at this table?

C: We remember Jesus' birth and his presence as God with us.

L: We remember Jesus' life and his love.

C: We remember Jesus' suffering and death.

L: We remember his rising and the promise of new life.

C: We remember he taught us that we are holy,

L: that every person and all creation is holy and beloved in God's sight.

PRAYER TO THE HOLY SPIRIT AND 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**

All who seek to follow Jesus' way of compassion, justice and peace are welcome at this table. If you are in the Sanctuary, please approach one of the stations. The station closest to the organ has individual cups of juice, while at the other two stations, you may receive the bread and dip it in the common cup. The cup is filled with grape juice and the bread is gluten-free. Persons who, for any reason, are not able to come forward will be served in the pews. Young and old alike are welcome to share in the gift of Holy Communion!

***PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING**

L: Let us give thanks to God:

**All: 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 fruits 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 119**

Let All Mortal Flesh Keep Silence

***BENEDICTION**

VOLUNTARY

Nun komm, der Heiden Heiland

J.S. Bach

Comfort, Comfort Ye My People

115

1. Com-fort, com - fort ye my peo - ple, speak ye peace, thus saith our God;
 2. Hark, the voice of one that cri - eth in the des - ert far and near,
 3. Make ye straight what long was crook-ed, make the rough - er pla - ces plain;

com-fort those who sit in dark-ness mourn-ing 'neath their sor - rows' load.
 bid-ding all to true re-pent-ance since the reign of God is here.
 let your hearts be true and hum-ble, as be - fits this ho - ly reign.

Speak ye to Je - ru - sa - lem of the peace that waits for them;
 Oh, that warn - ing cry o - bey! Now pre - pare for God a way;
 For the glo - ry of the Lord now o'er earth is shed a - broad;

tell them that their sins I cov - er, and their war-fare now is o - ver.
 let the val - leys rise in meet-ing and the hills bow down in greet-ing.
 and all flesh shall see the to - ken that God's word is nev - er bro - ken.

WORDS: Johann Olearius, 1671; tr. Catherine Winkworth, 1863, alt.
 MUSIC: Louis Bourgeois, *Trente quatre Pseumes de David*, Geneva, 1551

PSALM 42
 87.87.77.88

PEACE HYMN

118

Return, My People

1. Re - turn, my peo - ple, from a - far, with pen - i - ten - tial tear;
 2. Fear not, be - lov - ed, un - der - stand: our God has done great things!
 3. Then to the faith - ful of the earth the call of God rings clear:

just as the proph-et did fore - tell the ad - vent of Em - man - u - el.
 Your vin - di - ca - tion shall pour down like rain up - on the bar - ren ground,
 "Re - turn, my peo - ple, claim your worth, pre - par - ing for your Sav - ior's birth;

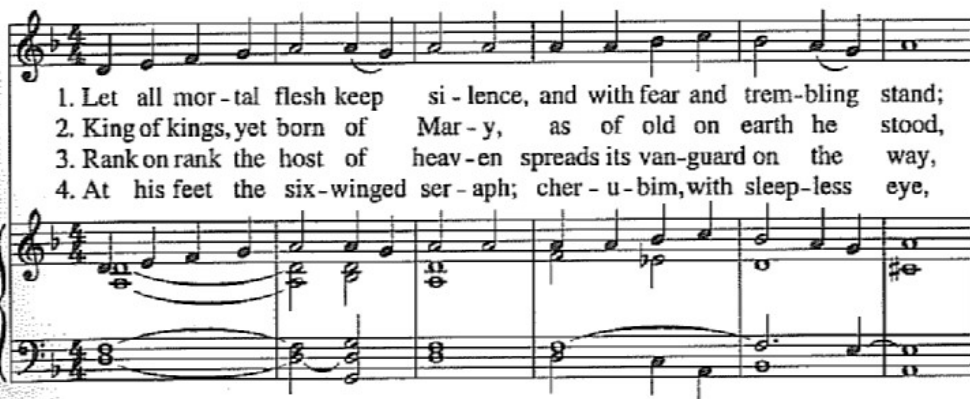
God's reign on earth is near! God's reign on earth is near!
 glad tid - ings to you bring, glad tid - ings to you bring.
 my reign on earth is near. My reign on earth is near."

WORDS: James F. D. Martin, 1981, alt.
 MUSIC: C. Hubert H. Parry, 1888

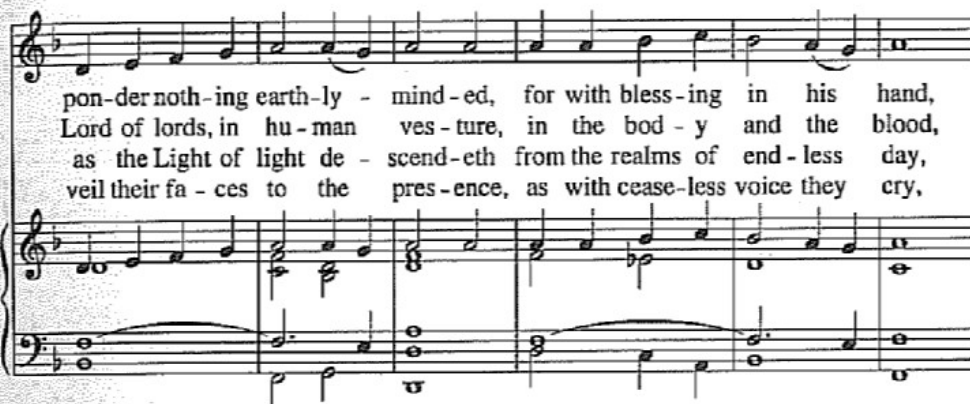
REPTON
 86.88.66

Let All Mortal Flesh Keep Silence

119



1. Let all mor-tal flesh keep si-lence, and with fear and trem-bling stand;
 2. King of kings, yet born of Mar-y, as of old on earth he stood,
 3. Rank on rank the host of heav-en spreads its van-guard on the way,
 4. At his feet the six-winged ser-aph; cher-u-bim, with sleep-less eye,



pon-der noth-ing earth-ly - mind-ed, for with bless-ing in his hand,
 Lord of lords, in hu-man ves-ture, in the bod-y and the blood,
 as the Light of light de-scend-eth from the realms of end-less day,
 veil their fa-cies to the pres-ence, as with cease-less voice they cry,



Christ our God to earth de-scend-eth, our full hom-age to de-mand.
 he will give to all the faith-ful his own self for heav-en-ly food.
 that the powers of hell may van-ish as the dark-ness clears a-way.
 "Al-le-lu-ia, Al-le-lu-ia, Al-le-lu-ia, Lord most high!"

WORDS: Liturgy of St. James, 4th century, tr. Gerard Moultrie, 1864
 MUSIC: French carol, 17th century, harm. Ralph Vaughan Williams, *The English Hymnal*, 1906

PICARDY
 87.87.87

COMMUNITY PRAYERS

- We pray for Karen Anne Zee, who had a stroke last Tuesday and is now recovering in a rehab hospital.
- 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 for Facilities Manager Lee Prouty's partner Phil, who is recovering from recent surgery and awaiting next steps for treatment.
- We pray for all who are in treatment for cancer: Anita Anger; 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 mass shootings that occur with too much frequency in our country. We pray especially this week for the people of Chesapeake, VA; Colorado Springs, CO; the University of Virginia; and Florida A&M University in Tallahassee, as they mourn the lives of those killed in recent incidents.
- We pray for the people of Indonesia after a 5.6 magnitude earthquake injured 326 people and killed 162 in the West Java province last week.
- 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 pray for the people of Haiti, where water, food, and fuel shortages are leading to widespread protests, violence, and civil unrest.
- We pray for the people of Iran, especially women, as anti-government protests continue.
- 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 pray for all who are affected by 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.

TODAY AT FIRST CHURCH

Adult Formation

Behold: Advent Reflection on the Psalms

Today and December 11 & 18, 9:30 - 10:15 a.m.,
Harter Room and [via Zoom](#)

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.



Donate to City Mission Christmas Shop & Coat Boston TODAY!

As is our tradition, First Church is collecting gifts for City Mission's Christmas Shop and Coat Boston this Advent season. You will be invited to come forward with your gifts during today's worship service.

Coffee Hour

Hastings Common and [via Zoom](#)

Today at 12:15 p.m.

Join us in person or online for social connection and conversation.



Fall Congregational Meeting and Lunch

Today at 12:30 p.m

Margaret Jewett Hall and [via Zoom](#)

Join us for a soup lunch in Margaret Jewett Hall (thanks, yet again, to Caitlin Anderson and our Friends of Fellowship), and stay for our fall meeting, when we will review and vote on the proposed budget for 2023.

TODAY AT FIRST CHURCH

Youth Programs at First Church



Our Whole Lives (OWL) for 7/8th Graders
Today, 1:30 - 3:00 p.m., Old South Church, Boston
7th and 8th graders meet for OWL, a comprehensive sexuality education curriculum produced by the United Church of Christ and the Unitarian Universalist Association.

Confirmation Class for 9/10th Graders

Today, 1:30 - 3:00 p.m., Harter Room

Our year-long Confirmation journey for 9th and 10th graders continues today with a session entitled “The History of Christianity/The Cloud of Witnesses.”

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. Claim a time to be still, to find clarity and purpose, and to center yourself for the coming week. 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.](#)



Hands of Ministry Lend a Hand Pledging & Giving



STEWARDSHIP 2023 FIRST CHURCH IN CAMBRIDGE

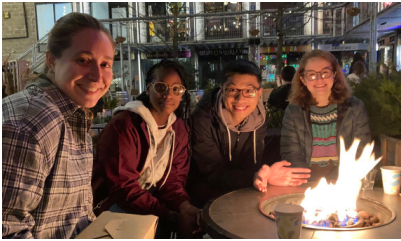
Stewardship Campaign Update

Thank you to all who have made a financial pledge for 2023! As of Pledge Dedication Sunday, we have received pledges of \$406,399, over halfway to our goal of \$705,000.

Collectively, those who have pledged have increased 17% over their last year’s pledge, bringing our goal of 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!

ADVENT AT FIRST CHURCH



Young Adults: Faith on Tap

Wednesday, December 7, 8:00 - 9:30 p.m.

Bow Market, Union Square, Somerville

First Church 20- and 30-somethings are invited to get together for drop-in fellowship and conversation. In this cooler season, we'll catch up over warm drinks at outdoor fire pits! All young adults are welcome. Get in touch with Phil Jones (youngadults@firstchurchcambridge.org) if you want to RSVP and hear about other gatherings.

Women's Community Advent Dinner

Saturday, December 10, 5:30 p.m. - 7:30 p.m.

The Home of Alex Steinert-Evoy

The women of First Church will gather together for a time of reflection and fellowship during a simple meal to observe the Advent season. All women and non-binary folks who are comfortable with spaces that center the experiences of women are welcome to join! Come as you are to take time out of your busy week for rest, reflection, and deepening relationships as a community of faith in this season of wonder and expectation. A simple meal of soup and bread will be provided to supplement a potluck of sides, drinks, and desserts. To RSVP and indicate what you might bring to the potluck, please sign up here:

<https://forms.gle/gaB7Fsoqj8MfvpGE6>



Women's Community
Advent Dinner



The Alternative Christmas Fair Is Back!

Sunday, December 11, 12:15 - 2:00 p.m., Margaret Jewett Hall

After two long years, First Church is excited to once again host the annual Alternative Christmas Fair! What makes it "alternative?" All proceeds raised by the vendors will go directly to benefit their charitable and social justice causes. Our growing list of vendors includes: Muddy River Herbals, Solutions at Work, Friday Café, and Sowing Opportunities. Come buy presents for your loved ones, and support worthy causes!

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.](#)



Gift-Giving and Donation Suggestions

from the Missions & Social Justice Committee



ADVENT AT FIRST CHURCH



The UnPageant Sunday, December 18 at 11:00 a.m. Sanctuary and via livestream

On the fourth Sunday of Advent, we'll 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 will travel through our Sanctuary on their

way to Bethlehem. We'll 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 age-old texts and sing the cherished carols as we celebrate the wonder of God's love among us.

Christmas Cookie Swap and Reception for Jaz Buchanan Sunday, December 18, 12:00 - 1:00 p.m. Margaret Jewett Hall

After the UnPageant, help us bring some pre-Christmas joy with a cookie swap and hot apple cider 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 bake or buy 6-10 dozen of your favorite holiday cookies, and then package them by the ½ dozen (6 cookies per bag). 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 pick up treats during the reception. Help spread 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 Sunday, December 18, 12:30 - 1:30 p.m., Library

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



THIS WEEK

Looking ahead to this week's programs and events



Monday, December 5

- 4:30 p.m. Contemplative Practices Gathering, via Zoom
- 7:30 p.m. GBIO Core Team Meeting, via Zoom

See our [Events Calendar](#) for Zoom links and details.

Tuesday, December 6

- 7:15 a.m. Reflective Conversations with Brent Coffin, via Zoom
- 10:30 a.m. Communications Team Meeting, Harter Room
- 4:00 p.m. First Church Professional Caregivers' Call, via Zoom

Sign up [here](#) to receive our weekly e-newsletter.

Wednesday, December 7

- 9:30 a.m. Staff Meeting, Harter Room and via Zoom
- 7:00 p.m. Christian Formation Committee, via Zoom

Thursday, December 8

- 6:00 p.m. Weekly Drop-In Bible Study, via Zoom
- 7:30 p.m. Choir Rehearsal, MJH

Friday, December 9

- 12:00 p.m. Friday Café, MJH and Lawn

Saturday, December 10

- 5:30 p.m. Women's Community Advent Dinner, home of Alex Steinert-Evoy

Sunday, December 11 - Third Sunday of Advent

- 9:30 a.m. Adult Formation: Advent Reflection on the Psalms, Harter Room and via Zoom
- 10:15 a.m. Choir Rehearsal, Sanctuary
- 10:15 a.m. Coffee and Conversation, Hastings Common
- 11:00 a.m. Hybrid Morning Worship, Carlyle Stewart, preaching Sanctuary and via livestream
- 11:20 a.m. Church School: Godly Play and Bible 101 Classes
- 12:15 p.m. Coffee Hour in Hastings Common and via Zoom
- Alternative Christmas Fair, MJH
- 1:30 p.m. Our Whole Lives for 7/8th graders, Old South Church, Boston
- 1:30 p.m. Confirmation Class for 9/10th graders, Harter Room
- 7:30 p.m. Night Song, Sanctuary and via livestream

First Church in Cambridge, Congregational, UCC
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