

Blessing of the Animals October 8, 2023

**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
387 YEARS
ON THE WAY
1 6 3 6 – 2 0 2 3

October 8, 2023

Preaching Today Dan Smith, *Senior Minister*
Liturgist Abby Shuman
Assisting in Worship Carla Arevalo, *Pastoral Associate*
Sarah Higginbotham, *Creative Worship & Arts Director*
Adeline McNamara, *reader*
Lee Prouty, *tech support*
Peter Sykes, *Music Director*

Today's Programs and Events

10:15 a.m. Choir Rehearsal, Sanctuary
11:00 a.m. Multigenerational Hybrid Morning Worship, Sanctuary and [via livestream](#)
12:15 p.m. Refreshments in Margaret Jewett Hall (MJH)
12:30 p.m. Listening Session on the First Church Cockerel Weathervane, 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 a visitor card found on the small clipboards or this "[virtual visitor card](#)" so that we might 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

Minister On Call

If you have an urgent pastoral need, please call 617-547-2724 ext. 222. Your call will be routed to a First Church minister based on a rotating schedule that covers staff time off.

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

Capriccio

Max Reger

***HYMN 35**

Glory Be to God on High

***GREETING**

Abby Shuman

- L: All you stars of heavens, bless the Lord.
All you waters above the Firmament, bless the Lord:
- C: Praise and magnify God forever!**
- L: Sun and Moon, bless the Lord.
Winter and Summer, bless the Lord.
- C: Praise and magnify God forever!**
- L: All you Nights and Days, bless the Lord.
Let the Earth bless the Lord:
- C: Praise and magnify God forever!**
- L: All you Mountains and Hills, bless the Lord.
All you Green Things upon the Earth, bless the Lord:
- C: Praise and magnify God forever!**
- L: All you Whales, and all that move in the Waters, bless the Lord.
All you Fowls of the Air, bless the Lord:
- C: Praise and magnify God forever!**
- L: All you Beasts and Cattle, bless the Lord.
All Sons, Daughters and Siblings, bless the Lord:
- C: Praise and magnify God forever!**

LAND ACKNOWLEDGMENT

WORDS OF WELCOME

ANTHEM

All Things B&B

Disarranged by Peter Sykes

CONFESSING

INVITATION TO CONFESSION

SILENCE

**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.*

PRAYER OF CONFESSION

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

All: **Maker of all that lives,**

you asked us to care tenderly for your world and every creature in it.

But we have been careless. We have not been reverent.

We have hurt your world.

Pardon us especially for causing needless suffering to our animal companions.

Forgive us as we bless them in your name today.

**Set before us the vision of a time when lion and lamb will lie down together,
and a small child will lead us to justice and joy.**

We pray in Jesus' name. Amen.

DECLARATION OF FORGIVENESS

*GREETING OF PEACE

To ensure the safety and happiness of our animal companions and of every human being in the sanctuary this morning, please offer a sign of peace only to people and pets near you in the pews. Kindly do not leave your pew to greet people and pets in other parts of the sanctuary. Please also take care when greeting pets that you do not touch them without their human companion's permission. All animals should remain in carriers or on leashes.

*HYMN 98

God of the Sparrow

OPENING THE WORD

PRAYER FOR UNDERSTANDING

RESPONSIVE READING

Genesis 1:1 - 2:14 (adapted)

Adeline McNamara

L: In the beginning, God said, "Let there be light;"

C: And there was light, and God saw that the light was good!

L: God separated the light from the darkness.

God called the light Day, and the darkness God called Night.

C: And there was evening and there was morning, the first day.

L: God said, "Let there be a dome in the midst of the waters
and let the dome separate the waters from the waters."

C: And it was so.

L: God called the dome Sky.

C: And there was evening and there was morning, the second day.

L: God said, "Let the waters under the sky be gathered together into one place,
so that the dry land can appear."

C: And it was so.

- L: God called the dry land Earth, and the waters that were gathered together God called Seas.
- C: And God saw that it was good!**
- L: Then God said, "Let the earth put forth vegetation, plants and seeds, fruit trees of every kind."
- C: And it was so.**
- L: And God saw that it was good!
- C: And there was evening and there was morning, the third day.**
- L: And God said, "Let there be lights in the dome to separate the day from the night; and let them be for signs and for seasons and for days and years."
- C: And it was so.**
- L: God made the two great lights—the greater light to rule the day and the lesser light to rule the night—and the stars.
- C: And God saw that it was good!**
And there was evening and there was morning, the fourth day.
- L: And God said, "Let the waters bring forth swarms of living creatures, and let birds fly above the earth across the dome of the sky."
- C: So God created the great sea monsters and every living creature that moves, and every wingéd bird of every kind. And God saw that it was good!**
- L: God blessed them, saying, "Be fruitful and multiply and fill the waters in the seas, and let birds multiply on the earth."
- C: And there was evening and there was morning the fifth day.**
- L: And God said, "Let the earth bring forth living creatures of every kind: cattle and creeping things and wild animals of the earth of every kind."
- C: And it was so.**
- L: God made the wild animals of the earth of every kind.
- C: And God saw that it was good!**
- L: Then God said, "Let us make humankind in our image, according to our likeness, and let them have dominion over all creatures.
- C: So God created humankind in God's image, in the image of God, God created them.**
- L: God blessed them, and God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth and subdue it."
- C: And it was so.**
- L: God saw everything that had been made, and indeed, it was very good!
- C: And there was evening and there was morning, the sixth day.**
- L: Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and all their multitude. And on the seventh day God finished the work.
- C: God rested on the seventh day from all the work that they had done.**

L: So God blessed the seventh day and hallowed it.
C: **These are the generations of the heavens and the earth
when they were created.**
All: **Thanks be to God!**

INTRODUCTION

Dan Smith and Lindsay Miller

BLESSING OF THE ANIMALS

Hymn 529 Let All Things Now Living
Hymn 143 Jesus, Our Brother, Strong and Good



The Blessing

God bless you, beloved Creature of God!
May our love for this animal
be a reminder of God's love for us
and all of Creation.

BLESSING OF THE COCKEREL

SHARING OUR LIFE TOGETHER

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Sarah Higginbotham

PRAYERS FOR THE CHURCH AND WORLD

Carla Arevalo

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 Online



Give by Text



I've Given Already

OFFERTORY

The Bird

William Billings

*DOXOLOGY

Praise God, the Source of life and birth,
Praise God, the Word, who came to earth,
Praise God, the Spirit, holy flame,
All glory, honor, to God's name. Amen.

*PRAYER OF DEDICATION

GOING FORTH

*HYMN C-9

Psalm 148

*BENEDICTION

VOLUNTARY

Basso ostinato

Max Reger

First Church Land Acknowledgment

We, gathered here, acknowledge that we are meeting on land which has been the traditional ancestral homeland of the Massachusetts people. We acknowledge that this land is unceded and remains sacred to the Massachusetts, and to their close neighbors and relatives, the Nipmuc and Wampanoag peoples.



SCAN ME

You can find a longer version of this acknowledgment [here](#) or by scanning the QR code.

Glory Be to God on High

1. Glo - ry be to God on high,
 2. Crea-tures of the field and flood, Al - le - lu - ia!
 3. Stars that have no voice to raise,

Let the whole cre - a - tion cry,
 Earth and sea cry "God is good," Al - le - lu - ia!
 Give to God their ra - diant praise,

Peace and bless-ing God has given,
 Toil-ing pil - grims raise the song, Al - le - lu - ia!
 Si - lent powers and an - gels' song,

Earth re - peat the songs of heaven,
 Saints in light the strain pro-long, Al - le - lu - ia!
 All un - to our God be-long,

WORDS: Theodore C. Williams, 1890, alt.
 MUSIC: Joseph David Jones, 1868

GWALCHMAI
 77.77 w. alleluias

PEACE HYMN

98 God of the Sparrow God of the Whale

Unison

1. God of the spar - row God of the whale
 2. God of the earth - quake God of the storm
 3. God of the rain - bow God of the cross
 4. God of the hun - gry God of the sick
 5. God of the neigh - bor God of the foe
 6. God of the a - ges God near at hand

God of the swirl - ing stars How do your crea - tures say
 2. God of the trum - pet blast How do your crea - tures cry
 God of the emp - ty grave How do your crea - tures say
 4. God of the prod - i - gal How do your crea - tures say
 God of the prun - ing hook How do your crea - tures say
 6. God of the lov - ing heart How do your chil - dren say

Awe How do your crea - tures say Praise
 2. Woe How do your crea - tures cry Save
 Grace How do your crea - tures say Thanks
 4. Care How do your crea - tures say Life
 Love How do your crea - tures say Peace
 6. Joy How do your chil - dren say Home

WORDS: Jaroslav J. Vajda, 1983, alt.
 MUSIC: Carl F. Schalk, 1983

ROEDER
 546.77

529

Let All Things Now Living

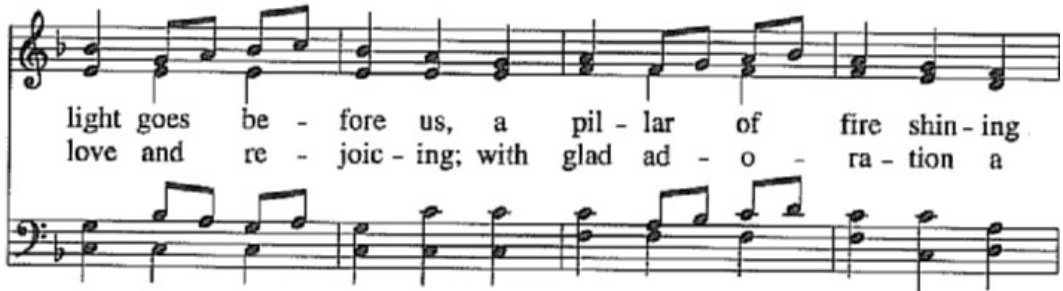
1. Let all things now liv - ing a song of thanks - giv - ing to
 2. By law God en - forc - es. The stars in their cours - es, the

God our cre - a - tor tri - um - phant - ly raise; who fash - ioned and
 sun in its or - bit o - be - dient - ly shine; the hills and the

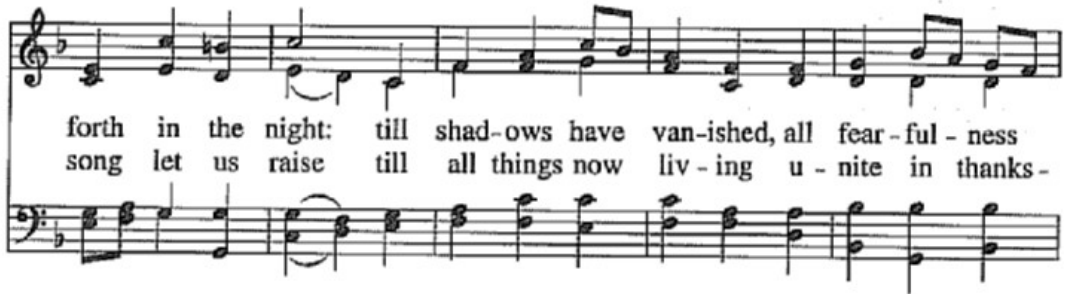
made us, pro - tect - ed and stayed us by guid - ing us on to the
 moun - tains, the riv - ers and foun - tains, the depths of the o - cean pro -

end of our days. God's ban - ners are o'er us, pure
 claim God di - vine. We, too, should be voic - ing our

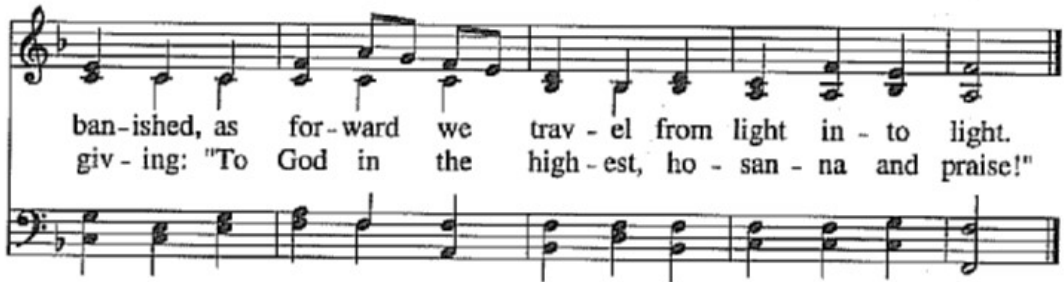
BLESSING OF THE ANIMALS



light goes be - fore us, a pil - lar of fire shin - ing
love and re - joic - ing; with glad ad - o - ra - tion a



forth in the night: till shad - ows have van - ished, all fear - ful - ness
song let us raise till all things now liv - ing u - nite in thanks -



ban - ished, as for - ward we trav - el from light in - to light.
giv - ing: "To God in the high - est, ho - san - na and praise!"

BLESSING OF THE ANIMALS

143 Jesus, Our Brother, Strong and Good

1. Je - sus, our broth - er, strong and good, was hum - bly
 2. "I," said the don - key, shag - gy and brown, "I car - ried his
 3. "I," said the cow, all white and red, "I gave him my
 4. "I," said the sheep with curl - y horn, "I gave him my
 5. "I," said the dove, from the raf - ters high, "I cooed him to
 6. Thus all the beasts, by some good spell, in the sta - ble

born in a sta - ble rude, and the friend - ly beasts a -
 2. moth - er up - hill and down; I car - ried his moth - er to
 man - ger for his bed; I gave him my hay to
 4. wool for a blan - ket warm; he wore my coat on
 sleep that he should not cry; we cooed him to sleep, my
 6. dark were glad to tell of the gifts they gave Em -

round him stood, Je - sus, our broth - er, strong and good.
 2. Beth - le - hem town; "I," said the don - key, shag - gy and brown.
 pil - low his head; "I," said the cow, all white and red.
 4. Christ - mas morn; "I," said the sheep with curl - y horn.
 mate and I; "I," said the dove, from the raf - ters high.
 6. man - u - el, the gifts they gave Em - man - u - el.

WORDS: French carol, 12th century; tran. anon.
 MUSIC: French melody, early 13th century; harm. Richard Redhead, 1853

ORIENTIS PARTIBUS
 Irr.

CLOSING HYMN

Psalm 148

C-9

1. O praise the Lord, praise God in all the heav'n - ly land.
 2. All heav - ens praise the Lord, and all the cloud - filled sky.
 3. Praise God from earth be - low; great fish and o - ceans deep.
 4. All moun - tains, cat - tle too, wild game and birds that fly.
 5. For God a - lone is great; great - er than earth and sky.

All an - gels praise our God, and all the sa - cred band.
 O let them praise the Lord, for God has set them high.
 Fire and hail, frost and snow, strong winds God makes to sweep.
 All lead - ers of the earth, judg - es that rule on high.
 God prais - es all the saints and strength - ens Is - rael's cry.

O give God praise; sun and moon bright, all stars of light, O give God praise!
 God made all lands; through-out all time all things sub-lime dis-play God's hand!
 O give God praise; all fruit-ful trees, all hills and ce-dars, Give God praise!
 Sing - ing the same; all wom-en, chil-dren, men, and in-fants, Praise God's name!
 With one ac - cord, let Is - ra - el and all God's peo-ple praise the Lord!

WORDS: New translation by Denise Karuth

MUSIC: New England Psalter, 1698

PROPER TUNE for PSALM 148

COMMUNITY PRAYERS

- We pray for Jodi Melichar and her family, including husband Bappu and son Kiran, as they mourn the loss of her father Dr. Bob Melichar, who died last weekend after a long struggle with Alzheimer's.
- We pray for Poppy and Brent Coffin as Poppy recovers from fractured wrist and vertebrae following a bad fall this past Wednesday.
- We celebrate with joy the birth of Wesley Dane Morgan, the first child of Claire and Robb Morgan, born on September 8.
- We pray for Andrea Seek's mother Lynda Soderquist, who has entered into hospice care.
- We pray for Gaylen Morgan, who is recovering at home from vestibular surgery.
- We pray for Karen Anne Zee, who is recovering at home from spinal surgery following a fall.
- We pray for Alice Kidder, who was hospitalized recently for weakness in her knees and is recovering in a rehab hospital.
- We pray for all who are in treatment for cancer and other ongoing health challenges: Carol Wilson-Braun, who is managing slow-progressing ALS; Jim Rae, Ami Brenner's father; Ellen Smith, Devin Hansen's aunt; Judith Semmler, Alice Napoleon Jones'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. We pray also for friend of Homeless Ministries Brian O'Donovan, who is receiving hospice care.
- We continue to pray for the health of our democracy in the wake of the House Speaker's removal this week. May our elected representatives find moral courage, may the Holy Spirit protect and guide our social movements for justice, and may we each continue to do our small part to make God's kin-dom in this time.
- We continue to pray for all impacted by and recovering from recent natural and climate related disasters – the earthquake in Morocco, wildfires in Maui, floods in Leominster and Libya. We continue to pray for our rapidly warming planet and for redoubled efforts to reduce fossil fuel emissions.
- We pray for all those impacted by the violence of war and political upheaval, including in Ukraine, Sudan, and Haiti. As we prepare to welcome two refugee through the WelcomeCorps, we pray for all political and climate refugees and migrants who make often life-threatening border crossings over land and open water.
- We pray for the wellbeing and safety of our trans and gender non-conforming siblings as they face the impact of vitriolic public discourse and of state laws that restrict and criminalize transgender health care, personal expression, and wider LGBTQ+ education.
- We pray for those most affected by changes in reproductive rights: for all those struggling with the moral and political complexities of pregnancy and childbearing, and for patients and healthcare providers who are unable to give and receive care in their own states.
- We pray for the 14 men finding sustenance and protection in our First Church Shelter; and we pray for the guests of the Friday Café, who are finding resources and listening ears.

TODAY AT FIRST CHURCH

Blessing of the Animals Service

Today at 11:00 a.m., Sanctuary and via livestream

On this Sunday close to St. Francis's Day, we invite you and your beloved animal companions to join us for a special Blessing of the Animals as part of Morning Worship. This is a moment of gratitude for all the gifts our pets give us and a celebration of all God's creatures and creation! All things bright and beautiful, all creatures great and small are welcome! Pets are welcome on leash or in crates; if it's easier on you and/or your pet, you may also bring a photo to be blessed. We will also take a special moment to bless and give thanks for the cockerel that has topped our tower for over 150 years and that is coming down soon to protect it from further damage.



Listening Session on the First Church Cockerel Weathervane

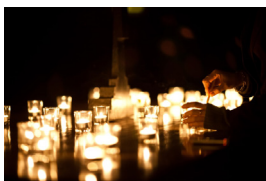
Today, 12:30 - 1:30 p.m., Margaret Jewett Hall

The great gilded cockerel weathervane that has stood atop First Church in Cambridge for the last 150 years is coming down to protect it from further damage caused by extreme weather, pollution and its own venerable age. The decision to bring the much-loved cockerel down for its own safety was made in a unanimous vote by the First Church Executive Council and

following extensive consultation with nationally recognized experts in the field of American Folk Art and historic weathervanes who strongly advised removal as soon as possible. Join us for this first listening session, when the First Church community will have a chance to reflect on, ask questions about and consider next steps following the decision to remove the cockerel, which was announced to the congregation on Sunday, September 10, 2023. ***A second listening session will take place on Wednesday evening, October 11, at 7:30 p.m. via Zoom. You can find the Zoom link on our [events calendar](#). [Read more and find links to drone videos on our website.](#)***

Invitation to Contribute to Coffee Hour

Please help us make worship as delicious as it is spiritually sustaining! For Coffee Hour each week we are looking for 2-4 households to bring 3 dozen cookies each, or the equivalent of snacks such as cheese & crackers or fruit. In general the church has a No Nuts policy. We ask for a brief list of relevant ingredients for those with allergies, if at all possible. **[SIGN UP HERE](#)**. Questions? Difficulty with the online signup? Contact Lisa DiNardo at: ladinardo@hotmail.com.



Night Song

Sunday evenings, 7:30 - 8:15p.m., Sanctuary and via livestream

Night Song is a worship opportunity that offers stillness and sublime music in a darkened sanctuary for respite and reset...

[Read more about Night Song.](#)

REGATHERING SEASON AT FIRST CHURCH



Register for Fall Faith & Life Groups by October 10

Led by First Church members, Faith & Life Groups are designed to encourage meaningful connections through shared interests. Faith & Life Groups involve making a short-term commitment (a single session to several weeks, depending on the group) to something that might be delightful, deep, or even transformational. If you are looking for a way to dip your toes into the life of our church and stay connected outside of Sunday Worship, this is for you!

[Read full descriptions and register here.](#)

Registration ends on October 10.

- **Becoming a Trans- and Nonbinary-Affirming Church** with Lisa McCarty and Dan Smith
- **Living and Celebrating the Spirituality of the Seasons** with Lee Andrews
- **Creating a Spiritual Autobiography** with Stephen Opie
- **Holiday Art Workshop: Art for God** with Henry Gates

WELCOME CORPS

Are you active on Social Media?

Do you have a background in real estate, or in housing?

Do you enjoy training people on tech, or about budgeting and banking?

Then we especially need your help to welcome refugees! First Church & Friends' Welcome Corps effort is preparing to welcome two refugees from Sub-Saharan Africa in coming weeks. These newcomers will have Official Refugee Status and full access to government benefits. Our team will support them in a minimum 90-day resettlement effort. We are asking for volunteers with these specific backgrounds to support our refugee effort in these areas. ***We also need temporary housing for the refugees for 2- 3 months*** - so if you have any room in your home, or know of anyone else who does – please let us know! If you can join us in our effort with time or housing, [complete this form as a first step](#). And reach out to your friends and community with this experience; people outside of First Church are very welcome to join the team! If you have any questions about being a volunteer, please email Martha Mueller Cook at: marthamuellercook@gmail.com.



Parking at Lesley University Suspended During Construction

Lesley University is doing extensive construction to the property next door to the church. During this time, they are suspending Sunday morning parking in their lots and will ticket cars parked there, even if you display a yellow First Church parking pass. They are open to resuming this arrangement once construction is complete, but the time frame is unknown. In the meantime, parking is available on the street at no charge on Sunday mornings.

REGATHERING SEASON AT FIRST CHURCH

Photography of First Church Community

Sunday, October 15

[Theory One Design](#), our website developer and communications consultant, will be with us next Sunday with cameras in hand to snap a selection of photographs of our community. We are excited to add new images to our media library for use on our website and in our communications. If you have questions about our use of photos or would like to request that we not use your image, please contact [Dan](#) or [Sarah](#).



For a Deeper Dive:

**Reflective Conversational Gatherings with Duncan Holloman
Sundays, October 15 & 22, 9:30 - 10:15 a.m., Harter Room and via Zoom**

For those with a desire for more in-depth exploration of some of the key concepts and practices in our shared Christian life, Duncan Holloman hosts two reflective conversational gatherings in October. Together we'll reflect on such knotty questions as "What does a belief in God look like? Is it necessary

to being a Christian?" "What is the role of forgiveness? How do we do it?" "What do we mean by sin? Is it part of our nature?" "What is an appropriate response to the notion that Jesus died for our sins?" Rather than analyze such questions in the abstract, our emphasis will be on sharing our personal experience and approach. [Read more](#)

Guest Preacher Rev. Dr. Mae Elise Cannon

Sunday, October 15 at 11:00 a.m.

Sanctuary and via livestream

The Missions & Social Justice Committee supports various efforts and organizations for peace with justice in Palestine and Israel, including [Churches for Middle East Peace](#), a group that has been a stalwart witness in this area. We are so pleased to welcome as a guest preacher CMEP Executive Director Rev. Dr. Mae Elise Cannon, an ordained pastor in the Evangelical Covenant Church (ECC). Rev. Dr. Cannon will share her perspectives on the ongoing crisis in Palestine and Israel.

[Read more about Rev. Dr. Cannon here.](#)



REGATHERING SEASON AT FIRST CHURCH

Preparing for Joining Sunday

Sunday, October 15, 12:15 - 1:00 p.m.

Hastings Common

Dear friends, we are happy to walk with you as you contemplate membership at First Church in Cambridge! Do you sense a growing connection to First Church as your spiritual home? Have you recently started attending and enjoy meeting new individuals within our community? Do you wish to support others in their



journey? If your answer is “yes” to any of these questions, we extend a warm invitation for you to join us in our preparation session after worship on October 15. Please mark your calendars for this opportunity to explore membership and foster deeper connections with fellow congregants as we prepare for our next Joining Sunday on October 22. For further information about New Member sessions or our Newcomers community events in general, please reach out to [Carla Arevalo](#), the staff liaison for the Welcoming Team.



Cambridge Common Youth Group: Scavenger Hunt

Sunday, October 15, 2:00 - 3:30 p.m, meet on church lawn

In 2023-24, First Church youth is joining up with teens from neighboring churches to form the Cambridge Common Youth Group. Teens from 8th to 12th grade (which includes our Confirmation Class) are invited to gather for monthly service opportunities and social events on third Sundays from 2:00 to 3:30 p.m. This month youth will engage in a Scavenger Hunt in Harvard Square. Questions? Please contact [Ahmaad Edmund](#).

Healing Sunday, October 29

11:00 a.m. in the Sanctuary and via livestream

Healing Sundays at First Church are an opportunity to reflect together on God’s healing peace and to participate in a simple healing ritual involving a brief prayer, laying on of hands, and—for those who wish—anointing with oil, an ancient Christian practice now being revived across the ecumenical spectrum of churches. At the time of the sermon, we offer instead a brief introduction to the ritual and then invite forward all who would like to participate. For those who prefer to remain seated, there will be music and a time of silence for individual prayers.





REGATHERING SEASON AT FIRST CHURCH

Debt Retirement Appeal September 20 Update

As was reported by Associate Treasurer Jim Cairns at our Regathering Luncheon, First Church currently has \$301,000 pledged towards our total goal of \$450,000. When we shared an update in July, a few members of the congregation made a “match” challenge of \$50,000 to encourage new and accelerated pledges to help pay down the debt more quickly. As of today, \$230,000 has been pledged to be paid in 2023, which is an increase of \$110,000 since July. We have more than met the match! If all the funds pledged for this year are paid by December 31, we will have cut five years off the loan repayment period and saved over \$63,000 of interest payments.



This is a significant step in our efforts to improve our financial sustainability. However, we still have a way to go to fully retire this loan. At the moment, we have \$71,000 pledged to be paid in 2024 and 2025. We need at least another \$100,000 in pledges for 2024 if we are to maintain our momentum. So, if you have not yet made a pledge we encourage you to prayerfully consider what you might be able to do.

Please reach out to Jim Cairns (assoctreasurer@firstchurchcambridge.org) or Karen McArthur (karenmc@firstchurchcambridge.org) if you have any questions. You can make a pledge by filling out [this form](#) or emailing Karen. We continue to feel gratitude for the generosity and commitment of this congregation - thank you!

[Learn more about the Debt Retirement Appeal.](#)



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.

REGATHERING SEASON AT FIRST CHURCH



The children collected "heartifacts" on the beach.

All-Church Retreat 2023

Last weekend, over 50 First Church members gathered for our annual All-Church Retreat at the Craigville Conference Center on Cape Cod. Despite the rain, we sang and danced, played and prayed, rested and reflected together!

Our theme was "Blessing the Ties." A truly lovely time of community and connection!



Enjoying the waves and the gray sky.



Sunday Morning Worship in the Tabernacle



THIS WEEK

Looking ahead to this week's programs and events



Monday, October 9 - Church Office & Building Closed for Indigenous Peoples' Day

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

Tuesday, October 10

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

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

4:00 p.m. Buildings & Grounds Committee, via Zoom

Wednesday, October 11

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

7:30 p.m. Listening Session on the First Church Cockerel Weathervane, via Zoom

Thursday, October 12

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

7:00 p.m. Stewardship Committee, via Zoom

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

Friday, October 13

12:00 p.m. Friday Café, Margaret Jewett Hall (MJH)

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

Sunday, October 15

9:30 a.m. Adult Formation: For a Deeper Dive, Harter Room and via Zoom

9:30 a.m. Confirmation Class for 8/9th Graders, The Well

10:15 a.m. Choir Rehearsal, Sanctuary

11:00 a.m. Hybrid Morning Worship with Guest Preacher Rev. Dr. Mae Cannon, Sanctuary and via livestream

11:20 a.m. Church School: Godly Play, Middler, and Bible 101 Classes

12:15 p.m. Refreshments in MJH

12:15 p.m. New Members Prep, Hastings Common

12:30 p.m. Conversation with Rev. Dr. Mae Elise Cannon, Harter Room and via Zoom

2:00 p.m. Cambridge Common Youth Group Scavenger Hunt, meet on lawn

7:30 p.m. Night Song, Sanctuary and via livestream

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