

Advent
December 10, 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

December 10, 2023

Preaching Today	Kate Layzer, <i>Minister of Street Outreach</i>
Liturgist	Jim Cairns
Leading Worship	Ahmaad Edmund, <i>Pastoral Associate</i> Jennifer Massa and family, <i>Advent candle-lighting</i> Lee Prouty, <i>tech support</i> Dan Smith, <i>Senior Minister</i> Peter Sykes, <i>Music Director</i> Emma Thomas, <i>Ministerial Intern</i>
Bulletin Cover Image	Freddie Funck, <i>First Church member</i>

Today's Programs and Events

9:30 a.m.	<i>Postponed to a later date TBD</i> - Adult Formation: The Liturgical Year
10:15 a.m.	Choir Rehearsal, Sanctuary
11:00 a.m.	Hybrid Morning Worship, Sanctuary and via livestream
11:20 a.m.	Church School: Godly Play, Middler, and Bible 101 classes
12:15 p.m.	Alternative Christmas Fair, Margaret Jewett Hall
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

Nun komm, der Heiden Heiland

Dieterich Buxtehude

ADVENT CANDLE LIGHTING

The Massa Lee Family

L: Loving God, be with us now as we light the second candle of Advent and kindle it with peace.

C: O Come, God of peace and healing!

L: Light our path, and guide us on our way.
The Light of Christ!

C: Thanks be to God!

*HYMN RESPONSE

O Come, O Come, Emmanuel

alt. Kate Layzer

**O come, thou Dayspring, come and cheer our spirits by thine advent here.
Disperse the gloomy clouds of night, and death's dark shadows put to flight.
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to us, in peace to dwell.**

*GREETING

Jim Cairns

L: O Come, beloved of God!
with all your yearning and all your heartbreak,
with all your wonder and all your love!

**C: O Come, all you faithful
with your struggles and your doubts.**

L: O Come, O Come!
For here Emmanuel, God-with-us,
comes to us and meets us, just as we are.

C: Then let us rejoice – and give God thanks and praise!

*HYMN 115

Comfort, Comfort Ye My People

WORDS OF WELCOME

ANTHEM

O Clavis David

Healey Willan

*O Key of David and Scepter of the House of Israel,
Who openest doors and none can shut them, who closest portals and none can open them,
Come, and from his cell lead forth the captive, who sits in darkness and the shadow of death.*

CONFESSING

INVITATION TO CONFESSION

**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.*

SILENCE

ADVENT PRAYER OF CONFESSION

L: Now let us ask for healing, pardon and peace.

**C: In your presence, God, and in each other's company,
we confess that our lives and the life of the world
are cast in shadow by what we do and by what we fail to do.
But we know a light shines in the darkness,
and the darkness does not overcome it.
Pardon our deliberate faults.
Heal our weaknesses and fears.
Give us strength to grow in the love we lack.
Illumine our souls with the first glimmers
of the Coming Light of Christ, our Comfort and Redeemer.
Amen.**

DECLARATION OF FORGIVENESS

*GREETING OF PEACE

Please turn to your immediate neighbors and offer a handshake, or a hug! Or if you prefer to maintain social distance, fold your hands or arms in a sign of peace. We want everyone to be comfortable; today let there be no spiritual distance between us.

*HYMN

Give Me Light in the Darkness

(see p. 4)

**Give me light in the darkness, light in the darkness,
light in the darkness to sing my soul awake.**

**Give me peace in the waiting, peace in the waiting,
peace in the waiting to sing my soul awake.**

Children up through 7th grade are now invited to Church School classes. Godly Play (PreK-4th grade), Middlers (5th grade), and Bible 101 (6/7th grade) students can meet their teachers at the side door by the Children's Book Corner. Caregivers can find the children in the Chapel after worship.

OPENING THE WORD

PRAYER FOR UNDERSTANDING

Emma Thomas

READING

Isaiah 40:1–11

READING

Mark 1:1-8

SERMON

Kate Layzer

***HYMN 130**

O Christ, How Shall I Meet You

SHARING OUR LIFE TOGETHER

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Dan Smith

PRAYERS FOR THE CHURCH AND WORLD

Ahmaad Edmund

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.**

INVITATION TO OFFERING

Our offering supports the many ministries of our church, with 10% supporting missions in the community and beyond.

Please use our [all-in-one link](#) for one-time and recurring gifts, for 2023 or 2024, either from your bank account or by credit/debit card:



OFFERTORY

Comfort Ye

Katherine K. Davis

***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.**

GOING FORTH

***HYMN 129**

Of Eternal Love Begotten

***BENEDICTION**

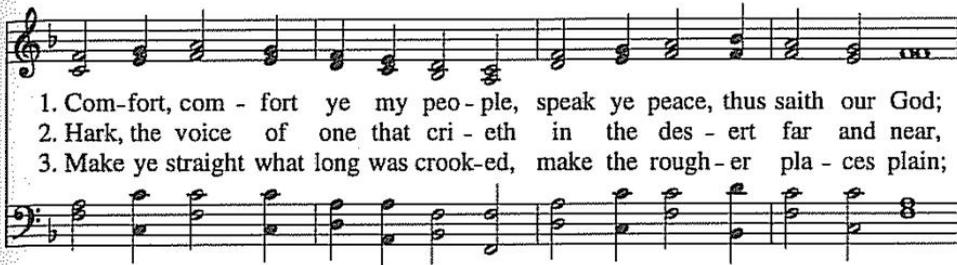
VOLUNTARY

Nun komm, der Heiden Heiland

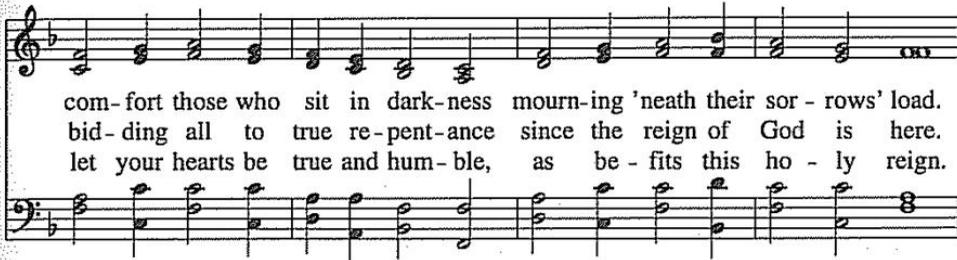
J. S. Bach

Comfort, Comfort Ye My People

115



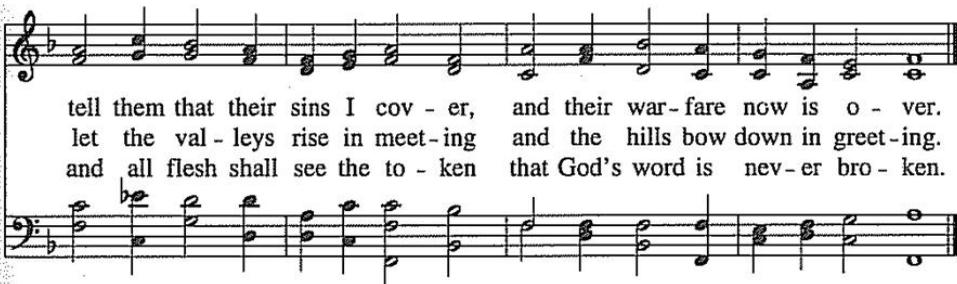
1. Com-fort, com - fort ye my peo - ple, speak ye peace, thus saith our God;
 2. Hark, the voice of one that cri - eth in the des - ert far and near,
 3. Make ye straight what long was crook-ed, make the rough - er pla - ces plain;



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 Pseaumes de David*, Geneva, 1551

PSALM 42
 87.87.77.88

O Christ, How Shall I Meet You

130

1. O Christ, how shall I meet you, how wel - come you a - right?
 2. Love caused your in - car - na - tion; love brought you down to me;
 3. A heav'n - ly hope you give me, a treas - ure safe on high,

Your peo - ple long to greet you, my hope, my heart's de - light!
 your thirst for my sal - va - tion pro - cured my lib - er - ty;
 that will not fail nor leave me as earth - ly rich - es fly.

O kin - dle, Lord most ho - ly, a lamp with - in my breast,
 O love be - yond all tell - ing, that led you to em - brace
 My heart shall bloom for - ev - er with joy - ful prais - es new,

to do in spir - it low - ly all that may please you best.
 in love all love ex - cell - ing our lost and fal - len race.
 and from your name shall nev - er with - hold the hon - or due.

CLOSING HYMN

129

Of Eternal Love Begotten

Unison

1. Of e - ter - nal love be - got - ten, ere the worlds be -
 2. O ye heights of heaven sing prais - es; an - gel hosts sweet
 3. Christ, to thee with God Cre - a - tor, and O Ho - ly

gan to be, Christ is Al - pha and O - me - ga, he the
 an - thems sing! And on earth let all the faith - ful now their
 Ghost, to thee, hymn and chant and high thanks - giv - ing and un -

source, the end - ing he, of the things that are, that have been,
 joy - ous car - ols ring, ev - 'ry tongue Christ's name con - fess - ing,
 wea - ried prais - es be: hon - or, glo - ry, and do - min - ion,

and that fu - ture years shall see, ev - er - more and ev - er - more!
 count - less voic - es an - swer - ing, ev - er - more and ev - er - more!
 and e - ter - nal vic - to - ry, ev - er - more and ev - er - more!

WORDS: Aurelius Clemens Prudentius (4th century); sts. 1,3, tr. John Mason Neale, 1854, DIVINUM MYSTERIUM and Henry W. Baker, 1859, alt.; st. 2, tr. R. F. Davis, 1906, alt. 87.87.877
 MUSIC: Plainsong, Mode V (13th century); harm. C. Winfred Douglas, *The Hymnal*, 1940

ADVENT WORSHIP AT FIRST CHURCH

Our Advent Banners

We are happy to bring back our Advent banners, depicting 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 in 2020 as part of our ongoing efforts to lift up historically and Biblically underrepresented images and voices of women and persons of color. This week, in addition to *The Visitation*, we re-introduce McKenzie's *Annunciation*, which references the story of the Angel Gabriel's appearance to Mary, telling her that she will give birth to a son and that his name will be called Jesus.

Give Me Light in the Darkness... Our Advent Song

Our Peace hymn 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.

The musical score is written for three voices: Soprano, Alto, and Bass. It is in the key of D major (two sharps) and 3/4 time. The lyrics are: "Give me light in the dark-ness, light in the dark-ness, Give me hope* in the wait - ing, hope* in the wait - ing, light in the dark - ness to sing my soul a - wake. hope* in the wait - ing to sing my soul a - wake." The score includes a six-measure rest at the beginning of each line and a six-measure rest at the beginning of the second line.

* replace "hope" with "peace," "joy," and "love" on the following Sundays in Advent

COMMUNITY PRAYERS

Prayer for Israel and Palestine

We give thanks for the recent pause in fighting and exchange of hostages, even as we pray now for further breakthroughs, ceasefires, a return of all hostages, and an end to the war and ongoing heartache in Israel and Palestine. We pray for all hostages and their families; for those living in daily fear for their and their loved ones' safety; and for all who are grieving the thousands of deaths of Palestinians, Israelis, and others in Israel, Gaza, and around the world, including members of our congregation who have close ties with people who are currently in the area.

We decry the horrifically violent Hamas attacks against Israel on October 7. We decry violence against civilians, including deprivation of basic needs for people living and being evacuated inside of Gaza. We pray for redoubled diplomatic efforts to address the already devastating humanitarian crisis in Gaza and the ongoing occupation of Palestinian territories. We continue to pray for a just peace in Palestine and Israel and throughout the region. We also pray for Jews and Muslims, nearby and around the world, who are facing increased threats and acts of anti-Semitic and anti-Muslim discrimination, hatred, and violence.

We continue to pray for ourselves, that we will be faithful, compassionate, and open to God's love and leading, and to all whom we encounter through these tension-filled times. Across whatever division or disagreement, may our words and deeds seek to honor the humanity and God-given dignity of every human being.



Join Churches for Middle East Peace (CMEP)

"Stand in the G.A.P." response: Give, Act, and Pray

We are grieved by the war between Israel and Hamas. There is still work to do for peace and justice. We believe that, working together, justice can prevail. Peace is possible. Since October 7, CMEP has issued [many public statements and letters](#). CMEP Executive Director Rev. Dr. Mae Elise Cannon, who preached at First Church on October 15, has been making daily update videos, which [you can watch here](#) to stay updated on pressing news in Gaza, Israel, and the West Bank. Find links to prayer calls, briefings, and donation pages [here](#).

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.

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



COMMUNITY PRAYERS

- We pray for a warm and safe arrival for Nuro and Idle, two Somali refugees who are being welcomed to Cambridge by the First Church & Friends Welcome Corps Team in the coming days. We also pray for the team's volunteers as they partner with Nuro & Idle in these first weeks of transition.
- We pray for Kathy Kopp, Leslie Pelton-Cairns's mother, who is recovering from emergency double bypass surgery this past Thursday.
- We pray for Brent and Poppy Coffin as Poppy experiences a significant decline in her struggle with Alzheimer's.
- We pray for Norm Bendroth, who is recovering from hip surgery.
- We pray for Andrea Seek and her family as they grieve the loss of Andrea's mother Lynda Soderquist, who died recently.
- We pray for Marian Smith as she moves from her home in Arlington to a retirement community.
- We pray for Jennifer Petrallia, who is suffering from debilitating anxiety and depression.
- We pray for all who are in treatment for cancer and other ongoing health challenges: Carol Wilson-Braun, who is managing 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 son-in-law Stewart Bailey; Beth and Polly, Ann McCann's sisters; and Michael, Ginny Harlan's son.
- We pray for the many families seeking emergency shelter in cities and towns across Massachusetts.
- We continue to pray for all impacted by and recovering from recent natural and climate-related disasters. We 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 refugees through the Welcome Corps, 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.

Join the [First Church List](#) to see and offer up more community prayer requests.

TODAY AT FIRST CHURCH

Adult Formation:

Exploring the Seasons of Advent, Christmas, and Epiphany

Postponed to a later date TBD. Stay tuned for more info!

Join First Church member Beth Spaulding for an opportunity to delve into the richness of these seasons in the life of the church. We'll look at the themes of the seasons and how they are expressed in music and art, and we'll share memories of our own experiences.



Coat Boston & Christmas Shop Collection Today in Morning Worship

This year, Coat Boston and the Christmas Shop is seeking donations of gift cards, books, toys, socks, hats, mittens, and coats. These gifts will be given directly to schools, partner agencies, and organizations in Boston that serve individuals and families in need of resources. ***It's not too late to give!*** For ideas, please check out their [Amazon Wish List](#). As is our tradition, First Church will collect unwrapped gifts for the Christmas Shop and Coat Boston during our worship service today.

Alternative Christmas Fair

Today, 12:15 - 2:00 p.m., Margaret Jewett Hall

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 this year includes: A Thread of Hope, Solutions at Work, Canaan Fair Trade, the First Church & Friends Welcome Corps Team, and the Friday Café. Come buy presents for your loved ones, and support worthy causes! Hope to see you there!



Night Song

Sunday evenings, 7:30 - 8:15 p.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.](#)

ADVENT AT FIRST CHURCH



Holiday Open House at the Parsonage Wednesday, December 13, 6:00 - 8:30 p.m.

The Parsonage, 44 Garden St., Cambridge

Join Dan Smith and Nancy Kilburn for a First Church tradition of festive and fireside fun. Come for all or part of the evening. We'll provide a light meal and holiday spirit(s)! Feel free to bring some holiday cookies or drinks to share, or just bring yourselves and some holiday cheer. We hope to see you there!

Young Adults Christmas Party & Hymn Sing

Friday, December 15, 7:00 - 9:00 p.m.

Home of Phil Jones and Angela Servello

All Young Adults are invited to celebrate the season at Phil and Angela's home in Brighton. Make a festive craft, drink a festive drink, and sing a festive hymn. RSVP to Phil at: p.robennolt.jones@gmail.com. Even if you can't make it, get in touch with Phil for a full list of Young Adult get-togethers in the new year.



Special Advent Music Sunday, December 17

This year the First Church Choir will sing a setting of the beloved Magnificat text by Italian composer Isabella Leonarda (1620-1704), the first woman to have written sonatas for violin and basso continuo. This rich work is accompanied by strings.

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.



ADVENT AT FIRST CHURCH

Christmas Cookie Swap

Sunday, December 17, 12:15 - 1:00 p.m.

Margaret Jewett Hall

Join us after worship for First Church's annual Christmas cookie swap! This is a great way to load your pantry with a creative selection of holiday treats for the coming week's festivities. 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 sweet joy as we approach Christmas!



Aging with Grace Monthly Meeting

Tuesday, December 19, 3:00 - 4:15 p.m.

Harter Room and [via Zoom](#)

Join Ginny Harlan, Martha Mueller Cook, and Dan Smith for a monthly support group where we offer each other companionship and spiritual resources as we grow into our elderhood. In this special season of our lives, let's explore together some of those Big Questions as we let God's presence and this community hold us. We can become elders together as we seek dignity, courage, grace, hope, peace, and wisdom in the ending phase of our lives. We are using Joan Chittister's book *The Gift of Years* as a starting point to conversation and reflection, and our reading for this month is "Religion," pp. 101-105. You are welcome to join at any time; homework is not a requirement for participation!

The First Church UnPageant

Sunday, December 24 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, the UnPageant takes place on Christmas Eve morning, making it a very special final moment in the Advent season. Come hear the age-old texts and sing the cherished carols as we celebrate the wonder of God's love among us.



OPPORTUNITIES TO GIVE, VOLUNTEER, AND SHOW UP



Advent Season Gift-Giving and Donation Suggestions

The Missions & Social Justice Committee is pleased to share with you a list of organizations with which First Church partners closely and who are seeking donations in this holiday season.

In the case that you and your family are in a position to support any of these organizations, we hope that you find the list helpful. If you have any questions, please reach out to Molly Baker at: mollybaker96@gmail.com, co-chair of the Missions & Social Justice Committee.

Christmas at the First Church Shelter

At Christmas, each Shelter guest receives a \$25 - \$50 gift card for personal purchases. Would you like to sponsor one this year? Your donation will truly be appreciated by the Shelter guest.

[Donate here.](#) Pies and other dessert items are welcome, as well. For more information contact Shelter Director [Jim Stewart](#).

Friday Café

This year, The Friday Café would love to help guests out with donations of warm winter gloves. Shop locally, or order from our Amazon wish list by visiting [our website](#).

Coat Boston and the Christmas Shop

This year, Coat Boston and the Christmas Shop is seeking donations of gift cards, books, toys, socks, hats, mittens and coats. These gifts will be given directly to schools, partner agencies, and organizations in Boston that serve individuals and families in need of resources. For ideas, please check out their [Amazon Wish List](#). As is our tradition, **First Church will collect unwrapped gifts for the Christmas Shop and Coat Boston during today's worship service.**

OPPORTUNITIES TO GIVE, VOLUNTEER, AND SHOW UP

First Church & Friends Welcome Corps Team

You've heard the exciting news that a Somali mother and her adult son are traveling very soon to make their new home here. Our Welcome Corps team is working to greet them with open arms and companion them as they find their way into housing, health care, learning English, finding jobs and more! We would like to empower the newcomers to begin shopping for clothing, housewares, and food on their own by providing them with gift cards. We need financial contributions for this. [You can donate at this link](#) – please check the box for **Refugee Resettlement Fund** and all your donation will go specifically toward gift cards. See all the details on ways you can help on our [Refugee Resettlement Ministry](#) page on the church website.

Helping Hands Food Pantry

Donations continue to be welcomed and needed for the Food Pantry hosted by St. James Episcopal Church in Porter Square, Cambridge. The Food Pantry is looking for cereals and granola, canned fruit and veggies, proteins, condiments, and cooking oil. Diapers and feminine products are welcome, too. Fresh or frozen food cannot be accepted. Also please be sure that your contributions are unopened, unexpired, and not in glass containers. **Please bring your holiday season donations to First Church on Sunday, January 7.**

Solutions at Work Support

SAW is accepting cash donations to support their mission in breaking the cycle of poverty and homelessness by providing individuals and families with resources and opportunities to strengthen their self-confidence, achieve self-sufficiency, and participate in helping others. They do this by providing key services to people living in poverty such as a children's clothing and toy exchange and professional clothing for people in job training programs. You can donate by [visiting their 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. If possible, please include a brief list of relevant ingredients for those with allergies.

[Sign up here](#). Questions? Difficulty with the online signup? Contact Lisa DiNardo at ladinardo@hotmail.com.



OPPORTUNITIES TO GIVE, VOLUNTEER, AND SHOW UP

Let's Show Up First Church!

The most politically powerful thing any of us can do to ease the housing crisis in MA is to show up at a meeting with your state electeds held by the Greater Boston Interfaith Organization. There are two major In-District Meetings coming up, and as First Church, we want to pack the house.



Winchester, Medford, Somerville or Cambridge

(North of Garden St, and above Harvard Square)

Tuesday, December 12, 7:00 - 8:30 p.m.

Reservoir Church, 170 Rindge Ave, Cambridge

IDM with Senator Patricia Jehlen and Reps. Christine Barber (confirmed), Marjorie Decker (invited), and Erika Uyterhoeven (invited). [Register here.](#)

Brighton, Watertown, Belmont or Cambridge

(South of Garden St. and above Harvard Square, West Cambridge)

Tuesday, December 12, 7:00 - 8:30 p.m. (arrive between 6:30-6:45)

Beth El Temple Center, 2 Concord Ave, Belmont, MA

IDM with Senator William Brownsberger (#3 in the Senate!) and Reps. Kevin Honan, Mike Moran, John Lawn and Steve Owens. [Register here.](#)

Don't see your neighborhood listed? Check out <https://www.gbio.org/idms.html>

We have meetings for Waltham, Central Square, and more coming up in the new year.

[Register for upcoming meetings here.](#)



Stewardship Campaign Update

First Church has received \$442,102 in 65 pledges and gifts from 93 people; which is **61% of the way to our campaign goal** of \$726,000. We are deeply grateful for these gifts and pledges. But dear friends, we need this trend of generosity to continue. We need your help, your comfort in taking a risk, your faith in this institution. As we wrap up our "A Future with Hope" season, we invite you, if you haven't already, to:

- [pledge your financial gift](#) and [time and talent commitments](#) for 2024.
- check on our progress toward our goal on our [campaign page](#).

2023 Year-End Information from Stewardship & Finance

As 2023 comes to its end this month, Minister of Stewardship & Finance Karen McArthur provides important year-end financial details to consider. Find all the details in [this news post](#) on our website.



CHRISTMAS AND EPIPHANY AT FIRST CHURCH



Christmas Eve Candlelight Service

Sunday, December 24, 6:00 - 7:00 p.m., Sanctuary and via livestream

Come, all ye faithful, and come, worship together on Christmas Eve! Join us in person or online for this festive, 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

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

Join us on Christmas 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.” We will also celebrate Christmas Communion together.

Christmastide Morning Worship & Hymn Sing

Sunday, December 31 at 11:00 a.m., Sanctuary and via livestream

Our Sunday worship during the season of Christmastide will 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!

Epiphany Potluck and Service

Saturday, 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. We will celebrate Epiphany on Saturday, January 6, beginning at 6:00 p.m. with a potluck dinner in Margaret Jewett Hall. After our feast, 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 rejoice in the sacrament of baptism and 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!



THIS WEEK

Looking ahead to this week's programs and events



Monday, December 11

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

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

Tuesday, December 12

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
7:00 p.m. GBIO In-District Meeting with Sen. Brownsberger and others, Beth El Temple Center, Belmont
7:00 p.m. GBIO In-District Meeting with Sen. Jehlen and others, Reservoir Church, Cambridge

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

Wednesday, December 13

9:30 a.m. Staff Meeting, Harter Room and via Zoom
6:00 p.m. Holiday Open House at the Parsonage, 44 Garden St.

Thursday, December 14

5:00 p.m. Drop-In Bible Study, via Zoom (note time change)
7:00 p.m. Choir Rehearsal, Sanctuary

Friday, December 15

12:00 p.m. Friday Café, MJH
7:00 p.m. Young Adults Christmas Party & Hymn Sing, home of Phil Jones & Angela Servello

Sunday, December 17 - Third Sunday of Advent

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, Sanctuary and via livestream
11:20 a.m. Church School: Godly Play and Middler classes
12:15 p.m. Christmas Cookie Swap, MJH
7:30 p.m. Night Song, Sanctuary and via livestream

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