



Christmastide
December 31, 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 31, 2023

Liturgist	Don Johnson
Leading Worship	Kate Layzer, <i>Minister of Street Outreach</i> Lee Prouty, <i>tech support</i> Dan Smith, <i>Senior Minister</i> Peter Sykes, <i>Music Director</i>
Bulletin Cover Image	Freddie Funck, <i>First Church member</i>

Today's Programs and Events

10:15 a.m.	Choir Rehearsal, Sanctuary
11:00 a.m.	Hybrid Morning Worship, Sanctuary and via livestream
12:15 p.m.	Refreshments in Hastings Common
7:30 p.m.	Night Song, Sanctuary and via livestream <i>is this happening?</i>

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

In Dulci Jubilo

Dieterich Buxtehude

***HYMN 136**

Angels, from the Realms of Glory

***LIGHTING OF THE CHRIST CANDLE**

Don Johnson and Kate Layzer

L: The people who walked in darkness
have seen a great light!

C: Glory streams from heaven afar! Alleluia!

L: The Daystar shines upon us!

C: The darkness cannot put it out!

The Christ Candle is lit.

L: The light of Christ!

C: Thanks be to God!

***PRAYER OF PRAISE**

L: Let us pray.

**C: Praise to you, O God,
for the light of Jesus!**

L: for the mystery of love,

C: the dawn of hope,

L: the gift of faith!

**C: Praise to you, O God
who finds us in the shadows of night
and shines a human face to light our way. Amen.**

WORDS OF WELCOME

ANTHEM

Ding, Dong, Merrily on High

Traditional, arr. P. 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 healing, pardon and peace.

**C: Holy God, we confess
that we move too quickly to the next thing,
busy with lists of things to do, places to go, and people to see.
We are done with the old year and ready for a new one.
On this seventh day of Christmas, slow us down.
Let us linger in this Christmastide
and at the threshold of a New Year,
glad for the gift of Jesus,
grateful for the simple pleasures of life,
and focused on how we treat ourselves and others.
Let these brightening days fill us with your love,
that we may see your world illumined anew.
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 135

Angels We Have Heard on High

OPENING THE WORD

PRAYER FOR UNDERSTANDING

Emma Thomas

RESPONSIVE READING

Psalm 148

L: Alleluia! Praise the Holy One from the heavens;

**C: praise God in the heights!
Praise God, all you angels;**

L: praise God, all you hosts!
Praise God, sun and moon;

**C: praise God, all you shining stars!
Praise God, you highest heavens;
and you waters above the heavens!**

L: Let them praise the name of the Lord,
by whose command they were created.
God established them forever and ever

and gave a decree which won't pass away.

**C: Praise God, you sea creatures and ocean depths,
lightning and hail, snow and mist,
and storm winds that fulfill God's word!**

L: Mountains and all hills,
fruit trees and all cedars!
Wild animals and all cattle,
small animals and flying birds!

**C: Rulers of the earth,
leaders of all nations and the judges of the world,
young men and young women,
old people and children!**

**All: Let them all praise the Name of the Lord,
whose Name alone is exalted,
whose majesty transcends heaven and earth,
and who has raised up a Horn for God's people
to the praise of the faithful,
the children of Israel,
the people dear to God!
Alleluia!**

READING

Luke 2:25-35

HYMNS OF HOPE AND JOY

Here you are invited to call out a favorite hymn or carol. When the microphone comes to you, please announce the hymn number and say just a sentence about why your choice is meaningful to you. We will sing the first two verses of each hymn.

SHARING OUR LIFE TOGETHER

ANNOUNCEMENTS

PRAYERS FOR THE CHURCH AND WORLD

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% for missions in the community and beyond. Please use our new [all-in-one link](#) for gifts for 2023 or 2024, from your bank account or by credit/debit card:



OFFERTORY

See, Amid the Winter's Snow

John Goss

***DOXOLOGY**

**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.**

***PRAYER OF DEDICATION**

GOING FORTH

***HYMN 155**

Once in Royal David's City

***BENEDICTION**

VOLUNTARY

In Dulci Jubilo

J. S. Bach

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.

OPENING HYMN

Angels, from the Realms of Glory 136

1. An - gels, from the realms of glo - ry, wing your flight o'er
 2. Shep-herds, in the fields a - bid - ing, watch - ing o'er your
 3. Sag - es, leave your con - tem - pla - tions, bright - er vi - sions
 4. Saints be - fore the al - tar bend - ing, watch - ing long in

all the earth; as you sang cre - a - tion's sto - ry,
 flocks by night, God with us is now re - sid - ing;
 beam a - far; seek the great de - sire of na - tions;
 hope and fear, sud - den - ly the Lord, de - scend - ing,

Refrain

now pro - claim Mes - si - ah's birth:
 yon - der shines the in - fant light: Come and wor - ship,
 you have seen Christ's na - tal star:
 here a - mong us shall ap - pear:

come and wor - ship, wor - ship Christ, the new - born King.

WORDS: James Montgomery, 1816, alt.
 MUSIC: Henry T. Smart, 1867

REGENT SQUARE
 87.87.87

135 Angels We Have Heard on High

1. An - gels we have heard on high sweet - ly sing - ing o'er the plains,
 2. Shep - herds, why this ju - bi - lee? Why your joy - ous strains pro - long?
 3. Come to Beth - le - hem and see Christ whose birth the an - gels sing;

and the moun - tains in re - ply ech - o back their joy - ous strains.
 Say what may the tid - ings be, which in - spire your heaven - ly song.
 come a - dore on bend - ed knee Christ, the Lord, the new - born King.

Refrain

Glo - - - - - ri - a

in ex - cel - sis De - o! Glo - - - - -

- - - - - ri - a in ex - cel - sis De - o!

WORDS: Traditional French carol, tr. *Crown of Jesus II*, 1862, alt.
 MUSIC: French carol melody

GLORIA
 77.77 w. refrain

CLOSING HYMN

155

Once in Royal David's City

1. Once in roy - al Da - vid's cit - y stood a low - ly
 2. Christ came down to earth from hea - ven, love in - car - nate
 3. Je - sus is our child - hood's pat - tern; day by day like
 4. And our eyes at last shall see him, through his own re -

cat - tle shed, where a mo - ther laid her ba - by
 for us all, and his shel - ter was a sta - ble,
 us he grew, he was lit - tle, weak, and help - less,
 deem - ing love; for that child who seemed so help - less

in a man - ger for his bed: Ma - ry was that mo - ther
 and his cra - dle was a stall; with the poor, the scorned, the
 tears and smiles like us he knew. Thus he feels for all our
 lives and reigns in heaven a - bove; and he leads his chil - dren

mild, Je - sus Christ her lit - tle child.
 low - ly, lived on earth our Sav - ior ho - ly.
 sad - ness, and he shares in all our glad - ness.
 on to the place where he is gone.

WORDS: Cecil F. Alexander, 1848, alt.
 MUSIC: Henry John Gauntlett, 1849; harm. Arthur H. Mann, 1910

IRBY
 07 07 77

LOOKING AHEAD TO JANUARY AT FIRST CHURCH

Men's Breakfast

Saturday, January 6, 8:00 - 9:30 a.m., Harter Room

All who identify as men at First Church are invited to join us in person on Saturday morning for our monthly gathering. If you would like to be added to the Men's Breakfast email list to receive reminders of these gatherings, please contact Peter Byerly: p.byerly@comcast.net



Epiphany Potluck and Service

Saturday, January 6, 6:00 - 7:30 p.m., Margaret Jewett Hall & Sanctuary

Epiphany ("manifestation") is a Christian feast so ancient that it predates Christmas. We will celebrate, 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!

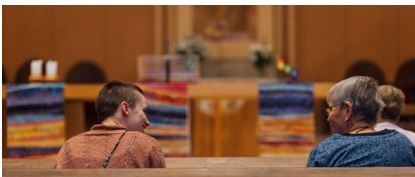
Called To Repair: Church-Wide Conversations

Sundays, January 14 & 21 and February 4

Save the following dates for important First Church conversations about our call to the work of truth telling and to the spiritual practice of repair and reparations! We will hear and learn from Pastoral Associates Carla Arevalo and Ahmaad Edmund, Ministerial Intern Emma Thomas, and members of the Beloved Community group. Bring your questions, concerns, and hopes about reparations to these interactive sessions as we consider not only our church's history, but our lives, our family histories, and growing efforts in Cambridge and beyond in the work of healing and repair.



- January 14 at 12:30 p.m. All-Church Lunch in Margaret Jewett Hall
- January 21 and February 4 at 9:30 a.m. Adult Formation series, Harter Room and via Zoom



Newcomers Meet & Greet and New Members Preparation Sunday, January 21, 12:15 - 12:45 p.m., Hastings Common

Those feeling new to First Church, or interested in meeting someone new to our community, are warmly invited to our first Meet & Greet of the year! Some of what you can expect: friendly faces, meet some "first friends", questions answered, snacks, and an informal atmosphere for conversation. For those who are thinking seriously about joining First Church by covenant as members on the following Sunday, January 28, please plan to stay a bit longer to look at the Joining liturgy together.



THIS WEEK

Looking ahead to this week's programs and events



Monday, January 1 - Church Office & Building Closed for New Year's Day Holiday

Tuesday, January 2

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

Wednesday, January 3

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

7:00 p.m. Christian Formation Committee, via Zoom

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

Thursday, January 4

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

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

Friday, January 5

12:00 p.m. Friday Café, MJH

Saturday, January 6 - Epiphany

8:00 a.m. Men's Breakfast, Harter Room

6:00 p.m. Epiphany Potluck and Service, Margaret Jewett Hall and Sanctuary

Sunday, January 7

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: The UnPageant, Sanctuary and via livestream

12:15 p.m. Refreshments in Margaret Jewett Hall

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

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

617-547-2724 • info@firstchurchcambridge.org • www.firstchurchcambridge.org

 [/firstchurchcambridge](https://www.instagram.com/firstchurchcambridge)  [/FirstChurchInCambridge](https://www.facebook.com/FirstChurchInCambridge)  [/c/FirstChurchInCambridge](https://www.youtube.com/c/FirstChurchInCambridge)