



Season of Epiphany
January 7, 2024

**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
388 YEARS
ON THE WAY
1 6 3 6 – 2 0 2 4

January 7, 2024

Preaching

Ahmaad Edmund, *Pastoral Associate*

Liturgist

Casey Marsh, *Deacon*

Leading Worship

Sarah Higginbotham, *Director of Creative Worship & Arts*

Karen McArthur, *Minister of Stewardship & Finance*

Lee Prouty, *tech support*

Peter Sykes, *Music Director*

Bulletin Cover Image

Freddie Funck, *First Church member*

Today's Programs and Events

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](#)

12:15 p.m. Refreshments in 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 electronically by using the QR code in the bulletin or explore more options for giving at: www.firstchurchcambridge.org/give

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

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

The Old Year Is Past

J.S. Bach

*HYMN 164

Brightest and Best of the Stars of the Morning

*GREETING

Casey Marsh

L: Sisters and brothers, siblings all, grace and peace to you from God!

C: And to the whole world, God's peace, love and light!

L: Arise and show forth the glory of God!

C: With Jesus, our light is come! God's spirit shines on us even now!

L: Then, let us assemble, and sing God's praise!

C: With you, God, our feast is abundant!

L: Our drink flows from the rivers of your delight.

C: With you, is the fountain of life!

All: In your light, we see light!

All glory and honor be yours, almighty and everlasting One!

WORDS OF WELCOME

ANTHEM

When to the Temple Mary Went

Johannes Eccard

CONFESSING

INVITATION TO CONFESSION

SILENCE

PRAYER OF CONFESSION

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

C: Holy God, in your light we see light.

**And so too we see the veils of our ignorance and pride,
the ways we treat ourselves and others
without your mercy, love or justice.**

Let the brightness of your morning

burn through our fog of aimlessness and sin

(cont'd. on next page)

**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.*

and put a new song in our hearts.
Teach us to see your world illumined anew,
as with the eyes of Jesus. Amen.

DECLARATION OF FORGIVENESS

*GREETING OF PEACE

***HYMN C-26** Lord, Your Grace Shines Like the Morning
Children up through 7th 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

READING

Psalm 23

HOMILY

Ahmaad Edmund

***HYMN 88** My Shepherd, You Supply My Need

SHARING OUR LIFE TOGETHER

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Karen McArthur

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

Epiphany Hymn

Allen Happe, Peter Sykes

*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

Sarah Higginbotham

*PRAYER OF PREPARATION

- L: How good it is to praise you, Morning Star!
Your beauty ushers in the dawn, and in your light we see light—
- C: justice for the nations, mercy for the broken-hearted,
safety for the poor, belonging for the outcast,
strength for the weak, and forgiveness for the sinner.**
- L: You reveal your love in joy and sorrow,
and we know your wonder even in the shadow of death.
- C: All your creatures behold your works
and testify to your faithfulness.**
- L: And so we too, fragile lamps in your holy house,
raise our hearts in praise. Amen.

REMEMBERING AND GIVING THANKS

- L: Now, O God, we remember Jesus, our brother.
(Silence)
- L: He took his place among sinners, although he had nothing to repent.
- C: He was baptized with them, God's Child and Delight.**
- L: We remember that he called disciples and ministered to all.
- C: He confounded the haughty and gave hope to the poor.**
- L: We remember that he died between thieves, and was buried in a borrowed grave.
- C: We believe that you raised him. He lives even now, the Light of the World.**
- L: How wonderfully he fed us! Loaves and fish for the multitude,
wine for a wedding in Cana, living water for the woman at the well,
breakfast for disciples on the shore!
- C: Even on the night of betrayal, he ate supper with his friends.**
- L: He took bread, gave you thanks, and broke it, saying:
This is my body, surrendered for you!
- C: And when the supper was over, he took a cup filled with wine.
He gave you thanks for it and passed it to his friends, saying:
This is my life poured out for you, and for everyone,
so that sins might be forgiven.**
- L: He told us, "Do this and remember me!"

PRAYER TO THE HOLY SPIRIT

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 BREAD AND CUP

All who seek to follow Jesus' way of compassion, justice and peace are welcome at this table. If you are joining us online, please take now and eat. If you are here in the Sanctuary, please approach one of the stations. Please take a piece of bread and dip it into the cup. The cup is filled with grape juice and the bread is gluten-free. Anyone who, for any reason, is 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!

**All: Thank you, God, 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 gifts 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 414

This Is a Day of New Beginnings

*BENEDICTION

VOLUNTARY

In Thee Is Gladness

J.S. Bach



SCAN ME

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.

OPENING HYMN

164 Brightest and Best of the Stars of the Morning

1, 5. Bright - est and best of the stars of the morn - ing,
 2. Cold on his cra - dle the dew - drops are shin - ing,
 3. Shall we not of - fer our cost - ly de - vo - tion,
 4. Vain - ly we of - fer each am - ple ob - la - tion,

dawn on our path - way and lend us your aid.
 low lies his head with the beasts of the stall;
 fra - grance of E - dom and of - ferings di - vine,
 vain - ly with gifts heav'n - ly fa - vor se - cure;

Star of the east, the ho - ri - zon a - dorn - ing,
 an - gels a - dore him, in slum - ber re - clin - ing,
 gems of the moun - tain and pearls of the o - cean,
 rich - er by far is the heart's ad - o - ra - tion;

guide where our in - fant Re - deem - er is laid.
 Mak - er and Mon - arch and Sav - ior of all.
 myrrh from the for - est and gold from the mine?
 dear - er to God are the prayers of the poor. *(repeat stanza 1)*

WORDS: Reginald Heber, 1811, alt.
 MUSIC: Walker's *Southern Harmony*, 1835; harm. FCC, 1997

WALKER

PEACE HYMN

C-26 Lord, Your Grace Shines Like the Morning

1. Lord, your grace shines like the mor - ning, sweet - ly
2. Bit - ter is our long night's dream - ing, muf - fled
3. You are mer - cy, you are heal - ing, though, save
4. Praise to you, O God most pa - tient! in our

pierc - ing our deep night; comes up - on us with - out
in a cloth of pain; shut in where no light comes -
dark, we noth - ing see; new day breaks, your love re -
dark - ness you see light; sor - row turns to ju - bi -

warn - ing; sor - row yields be - fore your light.
stream - ing, till we wake to you a - gain.
veal - ing: hope in what is yet to be.
la - tion in your ev - er - last - ing sight!

WORDS: Kate Layzer
MUSIC: Peter Sykes

For the dedication of a new central chancel window,
Spring 1994

88 My Shepherd, You Supply My Need

1. My Shep-herd, you sup - ply my need; most ho - ly is your name;
 2. When I walk through the shades of death, your pres-ence is my stay;
 3. Your sure pro - vi - sions, gra - cious God, at - tend me all my days;

in pas-tures fresh you make me feed, be - side the liv - ing stream.
 one word of your sup - port - ing breath drives all my fears a - way.
 O may your house be my a - bode, and all my work be praise.

You bring my wan - dering spir - it back when I for - sake your ways;
 Your hand, in sight of all my foes, does still my ta - ble spread;
 There would I find a set - tled rest, while oth - ers go and come;

you lead me, for your mer - cy's sake, in paths of truth and grace.
 my cup with bless - ings o - ver - flows, your oil a - noints my head.
 no more a strang - er or a guest, but like a child at home.

WORDS: Isaac Watts, 1719, alt.
 MUSIC: Walker's *Southern Harmony*, 1835; harm., FCC, 1997

RESIGNATION
 CMD

This Is a Day of New Beginnings

414

1. This is a day of new be - gin - nings,
 2. For by the life and death of Je - sus,
 3. Then let us, with the Spir - it's dar - ing,
 4. Christ is a - live, and goes be - fore us

time to re - mem - ber and move on,
 love's might - y Spir - it, now as then,
 step from the past and leave be - hind
 to show and share what love can do.

time to be - lieve what love is bring - ing,
 can make for us a world of dif - f'rence
 our dis - ap - point - ment, guilt and griev - ing,
 This is a day of new be - gin - nings -

lay - ing to rest the pain that's gone.
 as faith and hope are born a - gain.
 seek - ing new paths, and sure to find.
 our God is mak - ing all things new.

COMMUNITY PRAYERS

- We pray for Claire Morgan's mother Dana Hunt, who was recently diagnosed with pancreatic cancer and will begin treatment this week.
- We pray for George Williams, who continues his extended recovery from surgery in a Neuro ICU unit following a brain bleed that occurred before Christmas.
- We celebrate with Pastoral Associate Rev. Ahmaad Edmund, who was ordained into the Christian ministry at his home church, Southern Star Missionary Baptist Church in Louisville, KY. We also pray for Ahmaad and his family who are grieving the loss of Ahmaad's grandfather, Jerry L. Summers, who died on December 20 after a short battle with a terminal illness.
- We celebrate with and pray for Rev. James Ross as he transitions to a new role as Acting Director of the Interfaith Center at the University of Vermont.
- We pray for strength, patience and healing for First Church friend Sophia Revett, who has been enduring several recent hospitalizations.
- We pray for Brent and Poppy Coffin as Poppy experiences a significant decline in her struggle with Alzheimer's.
- 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; Michael, Ginny Harlan's son; and Abby Shuman's uncle Barry.
- We pray for the community of Perry, Iowa, as they grieve and recover from a school shooting on Thursday. We continue to pray for all those who have experienced traumatic gun violence, and we pray for our legislators to find a way forward to enact common sense gun legislation.
- We pray for a warm and safe arrival for Nuro and Idle, two Somali refugees who will soon be welcomed to Cambridge by the First Church & Friends Welcome Corps Team. We also pray for the team's volunteers as they anticipate these first weeks of transition.
- We pray for the many families seeking emergency shelter in cities and towns across our state.
- 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. We pray for the loved ones of the more 100 people killed and all affected by Wednesday's bombing in Iran. We also 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.

COMMUNITY PRAYERS

- 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.

Prayer for Israel and Palestine

We pray earnestly for an end to the war and ongoing heartache in Israel and Palestine. We pray for all hostages and their families, and for the immediate return of hostages; for all 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](#).

TODAY AT FIRST CHURCH

Confirmation Class for 8/9th graders

Today, 9:30 - 10:45 a.m., The Well

Our year-long Confirmation journey for 8th and 9th graders continues today with a session entitled “Reconciliation and Reparation: FCC History.”



Young Adults: Brunch at Zoe’s Diner

Today, 12:15 - 2:00 p.m., Zoe’s Diner, Cambridge

First Church has an active young adults group that meets a few times each month for casual conversation and a meal. Get in touch with Phil Jones or Emma Duke to learn more, and email: youngadults@firstchurchcambridge.org to stay in the loop for all our get-togethers. Open to all ages from 18 to mid-30s. Meet us on the lawn after church today, and we’ll take a walk to Zoe’s Diner for brunch!

Night Song

Sundays, 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.](#)



Do you want to follow the hyperlinks, but you’re holding a paper bulletin in your hand?

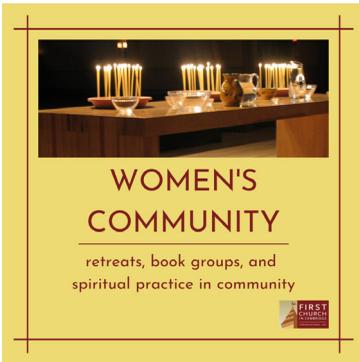
Use your phone’s camera to hover over the QR code marked “scan me;” this will take you to the Members & Friends page of our website, where you’ll find the bulletin online, as well as links to news, events, and more.

JANUARY AT FIRST CHURCH

Women's Community Book Group

Tuesday, January 9, 6:00 - 7:30 p.m., via Zoom

The Women's Community Book Group begins the New Year with a reading and discussion of William Kent Krueger's [Ordinary Grace](#). "In this powerful novel a boy must leave his childhood behind and confront the dark nature of the adult world and its myriad moral questions: What secrets will destroy us? How do we deal with grief? And what solace is there in the ordinary grace of the world?" Please join us, and bring a friend!



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.

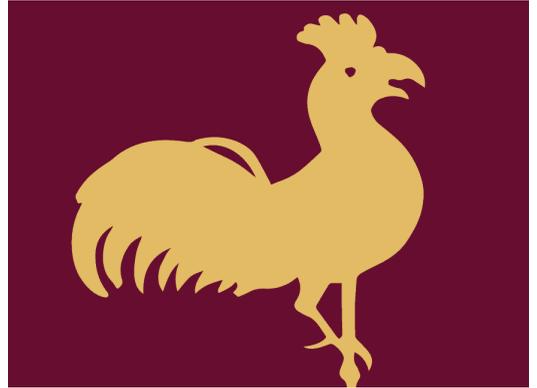
JANUARY AT FIRST CHURCH

Annual Congregational Meeting and Luncheon

Sunday, January 28, 12:30 - 1:30 p.m.

Margaret Jewett Hall and via Zoom

Come, one and all, to the Annual Meeting of First Church in Cambridge following Morning Worship. A hearty luncheon will lead into our meeting, where we will celebrate another full year of ministry. We will thank one another for gifts shared and celebrate our outgoing and incoming leaders. Join us for this centuries-old tradition of meeting, prayer, and song.



Call to Annual Meeting

Notice is hereby given that
the Annual Meeting of First Church in Cambridge, Congregational,
United Church of Christ, will be held in its 388th year
at 12:30 p.m., Sunday the 28th of January, 2024,
in person in Margaret Jewett Hall and via Zoom conference:

1. to approve the minutes of Congregational Meetings held in 2023;
2. to receive and act upon the 2023 reports of the Staff, Officers, Executive Council, Boards, Committees, Teams, and Groups of the Church;
3. to receive a financial update for 2023 and 2024;
4. to consider next steps for the First Church Cockerel;
5. to consider any other business that may legally come before the meeting.

By direction of the Executive Council,

Chris Reynolds, Clerk
Cambridge, Massachusetts
January 4, 2024



THIS WEEK

Looking ahead to this week's programs and events



Monday, January 8

- 4:30 p.m. Contemplative Practices Gathering, via Zoom
- 7:00 p.m. Executive Council, via Zoom

Tuesday, January 9

- 10:30 a.m. Communications Team Meeting, The Landing
- 4:00 p.m. Buildings & Grounds Committee, via Zoom
- 6:00 p.m. Women's Community Book Group, via Zoom

Wednesday, January 10

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

Thursday, January 11

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

Friday, January 12

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

Sunday, January 14 - Reparations Sunday

- 10:15 a.m. Choir Rehearsal, Sanctuary
- 11:00 a.m. Hybrid Morning Worship, Sanctuary and via livestream
- 12:30 p.m. Called To Repair: Church-Wide Conversation and Luncheon, MJH
- 7:30 p.m. Night Song, Sanctuary and via livestream

Monday, January 15 - Church Office & Building Closed for the MLK Holiday

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

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

First Church in Cambridge, Congregational, UCC
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