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|--|
| Name of Church |
| First Church in Cambridge Congregational UCC |
| Address |
| 11 Garden St Cambridge, MA 02138 |
| Conference: |
| Southern New England |
| Association: |
| Metropolitan Boston |
| Title |
| Senior Minister |
| Start Date |
| n/a |
| Description |
| Cambridge - First Church in Cambridge |

Church Contact Information

(857) 756-5455 (Church Primary Phone)

ministersearch@firstchurchcambridge.org (Primary Email Address)

Listing Information

Web Presences

<https://www.firstchurchcambridge.org/>

Type: Professional

Additional Formal Ecumenical Affiliations

None

UCC Conference or Association Staff Contact Person

Name:

Katie Omberg

Title:

Area Conference Minister for the Northeast Region Southern New England Conference, United Church of Christ

Phone:

508-244-4769

Email:

OmbergK@sneucc.org

Summary Ministry Description

We are a vibrant, active urban church, grounded in God, growing with Jesus as our center, and acting with love and justice as central values to our work in the world. We thrive on community welcome and connecting both within our Sunday services and in our larger community. As we state in our services on Sundays and on our webpage, "Wherever you are on the journey of life or faith, you are welcome here." We are looking to continue to grow our communal reach with the support of a leader who aligns with our values. We are seeking someone who will challenge us through in-worship leadership, support our mission of social justice in our area and the world, educate members of all ages, and listen deeply to the needs of staff and members of the church congregation.

Our next senior minister will lead a dedicated and seasoned team of professionals who are deeply committed to collaboration and shared leadership. This individual will also serve as a spiritual guide for an engaged and active congregation that finds purpose through service, values lay leadership, and active participation in congregational life.

Beginning with baptism through dynamic children's and youth ministries, our community nurtures critical thinking, spiritual exploration and faith in action. These values are woven throughout our congregation's journey, manifesting in intergenerational small groups where members are continually "grounded, growing and acting" in alignment with our shared faith.

We seek a leader who will not only honor this rich tradition but also inspire and sustain its evolution—strengthening the threads that bind us and guiding us forward with vision, compassion and courage.

Church pictures



What we value about living in our area.

We are energized by our bold dedication to equity, activism, and inclusive growth. This powerful alignment not only deepens our roots in the Boston Metropolitan area, it also fuels our shared mission and values. Challenges like high housing costs and a transient population are real, but they are part of what makes the urban landscape so dynamic and alive. Surrounded by world-renowned institutions like Harvard and MIT, the area pulses with intellectual curiosity and innovation, qualities that resonate deeply within our congregation. Living here means being in the heart of New England's best: from the peaceful shores of Cape Cod to the awe-inspiring trails of the White Mountains, adventure and beauty are always within reach. Cambridge's exceptional public schools make it a magnet for families seeking academic excellence and a strong, connected community. Our future pastor will live within walking distance of the church, Boston's MBTA transit system, world-class restaurants, and renowned museums. Cambridge combines the cultural richness and convenience of an urban center with the warmth and character of a true neighborhood—home to a diverse and dynamic community of people, places, and experiences.

Current size of membership

413

Average in person attendance

100

Does your church hold virtual worship services?

Yes

Choose platform type(s) and number for virtual worship.

Video Hosting Platform

On average, how many views are received per service?

55

Languages used in ministry

English

Position Title

Senior Minister

Position Duration

Settled

Compensation Level

Full Time

Does the total support package meet conference compensation guidelines?

Yes

Link to current Conference guidelines

<https://www.sneucc.org/compensation-guidelines>

Scope of Work

Some fields reference The Marks of Faithful and Effective Authorized Ministers of the United Church of Christ .

The United Church of Christ recognizes *The Marks of Faithful and Effective Authorized Ministers* in the formation of ministers, in the practice of active ministry, and throughout life. For the purposes of completing a denominational Profile, ministers are asked to spend some time with the *Marks*.

The Scope of Work developed by our church using the Call Agreement Workbook.

[Download scope of Work](#)

3 core competencies that we imagine could be foundational in our next minister's relationship with the church.

First:

Worship, Sacramental Life, and Spiritual Formation. The Senior Minister, in partnership with the Board of Deacons and staff, leads the worship and sacramental life of the church. This includes planning and conducting regular services, authorizing special services, and ensuring thoughtful preaching and leadership. The Senior Minister collaborates with lay leaders and staff to develop adult and multigenerational education programs and advises children's and family ministries. Since we are a teaching congregation, the Senior Minister recruits and supervises field education interns offering regular mentorship and formal evaluations. They also guide students in discernment and serve as a resource to the Discernment and Christian Formation team nurturing theological growth and vocational clarity.

Second:

Head of Staff and Community Leadership: As Head of Staff, the Senior Minister provides strategic and compassionate leadership to the ministerial, program, and support staff, cultivating a collaborative and collegial work environment based on mutual respect and shared purpose. The Senior Minister leads and facilitates weekly staff meetings to align priorities and foster team cohesion. The Senior Minister participates actively in governance by attending meetings of the Executive Council, Staff Policy Committee, and Board of Deacons, helping to guide the church's mission and ministry with integrity, transparency, and collective wisdom. This role requires a balance of strategic leadership, pastoral care, and organizational oversight to sustain a vibrant and inclusive community of faith. In keeping with a long standing tradition, the Senior Minister may also choose to serve as a Chaplain at Harvard University, deepening our connection to the academic and spiritual life of Cambridge.

Third:

Social Justice, Racial Justice, Wider Church, and Community Engagement:

The Senior Minister plays a vital role in advancing First Church’s prophetic witness through leadership in social and racial justice ministries. This work is deeply rooted in the church’s long-standing commitment to building the Beloved Community—a vision of radical love, equity, and inclusion that predates the national reckoning sparked by Black Lives Matter and the murder of George Floyd.

Our anti-racist journey spans decades, marked by sustained reflection, freedom pilgrimages, courageous dialogue, and bold action. The Senior Minister actively supports and helps lead initiatives such as the church’s Reparations efforts, which reflect a serious commitment to truth-telling, self-examination, and repair. These efforts include educational programming, financial commitments, and partnerships that seek to redress historical harms and build a more just future.

Compensation and Support

The salary basis comes from the Call Agreement Workbook, equal to Cash Salary plus Value of Parsonage/ Housing Allowance. The Conference can assist in determining these amounts or provide a worksheet to be used to calculate these values.

| SALARY AND BENEFITS OFFERED: SALARY BASIS: ITEM OFFERED | AMOUNT OR PERCENTAGE(IF DETERMINED) | IS THIS NEGOTIABLE | PASTORAL CANDIDATE DETERMINES |
|--|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Salary (Cash basis determined from Conference/ Association Guidelines) | 75000 | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Housing Allowance | 0 | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Any Experiential Difference (Related to years of experience) | 0 | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Salary Basis: 75000 | | | |
| Pension/Annuity | 10500 | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Social Security and Medicare Offset | 3720 | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Medical/Dental Insurance | 13717 | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Life Insurance | 560 | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Disability Insurance | 560 | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Worker's Compensation | 364 | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

If needed, please comment further on your church’s salary and benefits for the minister.

The total compensation with benefits will be between 105,000 and 115,000 based on experience, with the split between benefits, professional expenses, and cash salary to be determined in conversation with candidates. The provision of a parsonage or ministerial housing is in addition to this compensation.

The expected living situation for our next minister.

FCC is actively searching for a new property for the next minister within 1 mile of the church

If a parsonage is provided, will the church offer a home equity allowance to the pastor? (The recommended guidelines for a home equity allowance is equal to 1.5% of the average home value in the community; this is considered taxable to the minister. The Housing Equity Offset should not be calculated into the Salary Basis upon which other Benefits are determined. Churches should consult a tax advisor prior to establishing any account for an equity allowance to ensure compliance with IRS rules on nonqualified deferred compensation plans.)

Yes
 No response

How our church will adopt part-time adjustments in the pastoral schedule to support a minister's bi-vocational employment.

N/A

Additional reimbursements the next Pastor can expect to receive as part of their employment:

Cell Phone and/or Internet.

Conference and/or Association meeting registrations
Criminal background checks.

Peer and professional supports available for ministers in our association/conferences.

The SNEUCC association offers Clergy Community of Practice, annual educational events like Super Saturday, and an active Committee on Ministerial Standing.

Who Is God Calling to Minister with Us?

The ministry goals we envision our next minister collaborating with the congregation to achieve.

We seek a pastor grounded in spiritual depth and personal maturity, who teaches and leads from a rich synthesis of life experience and theology. Their preaching should illuminate scripture with insight and imagination, inspiring us to grow in faith and live with purpose.

In a recent congregational survey, 88% of respondents identified deepening faith-based beliefs and practices as a top priority. We need a pastor who designs and leads worship that is both responsive to our needs and boldly challenges us to embody Christ's teachings in the world. Biblical understanding, alignment with our denominational values, and a commitment to integrating spiritual growth with social justice are essential.

We desire a preacher who communicates with clarity, passion and relevance. Sermons should be rooted in scripture, applicable to current events and reflect themes of justice, offering both comfort and challenge to inspire conscious action.

We seek a pastor who is attuned to the stress and complexities of the present world as well as to the personal realities our members face such as illness, major life changes, aging, and mental health issues.

How our vision of the minister we are now seeking will assist the congregation in making an impact beyond its walls.

We envision a pastor who will help us grow not only in spirit but also in reach—strengthening and expanding our church. We seek a leader who can inspire and guide us in welcoming new members, with particular attention to engaging young adults, families and individuals seeking a progressive faith-based home.

This growth is essential not only for our long-term financial sustainability but also for amplifying our collective impact in the world. As one member expressed, "I want us to harness our energy and become a destination for those seeking a liberal faith community."

Our next pastor will help us live out our mission more fully by cultivating a vibrant, inclusive and empowered congregation. We seek someone who builds community across generations and backgrounds, strengthens interpersonal connections and nurtures lay leadership. By fostering collaboration and shared discernment they will help us become a more cohesive and caring church—one that radiates its values outward.

We also seek a pastor who integrates spiritual growth with social justice, helping us respond faithfully to the needs of the world. Their leadership will support our public witness and deepen our engagement with pressing issues such as racial equity, climate justice and economic disparity. Through thoughtful preaching, compassionate care, and collaborative leadership, our pastor will equip us to be a church that not only gathers but also acts—making a meaningful difference in the lives of our neighbors and the broader society.

Language requirements or culturally-specific capacities preferred in a next ministerial leader, and why those matter to the congregation's sense of calling.

Our current congregation is predominantly white and English-speaking, yet we are deeply committed to becoming more inclusive and culturally diverse. We seek a minister who values and embraces multicultural and multilingual expressions of faith. Our music ministry, for example, regularly incorporates songs and hymns in various languages and has collaborated with jazz musicians to expand our

worship beyond traditional forms. We host NightSong, a contemplative worship offering that creates a theologically rich experience that transcends language and cultural boundaries.

Based on what we have learned about who our church is, who our church's neighbor is, and who God is calling the church to become, these are four areas of excellence from The Marks of Faithful & Effective Authorized Ministry that our next minister will display to further equip the congregation's ministry in these areas.

Building Transformational Leadership Skills

We seek a pastor who leads through teamwork, consensus building and shared discernment. As head of staff, they will foster a culture of mutual respect and problem solving, encouraging congregants to recognize and activate their own gifts. By empowering lay leadership and nurturing emerging leaders, they will help us grow in spirit and capacity.

Engaging Sacred Stories and Traditions

Rooted in a progressive theology, our next minister will bring sacred texts to life in ways that connect deeply with contemporary issues, especially those related to equity and inclusion. We value preaching and teaching that draw from the Hebrew scriptures and New Testament, offering challenge, comfort and inspiration. Faith for us is a journey, one that welcomes honest questions, open dialogue and deep reflection.

Working Together for Justice and Mercy

Our congregation is committed to social justice and seeks a pastor who will guide us in living out our values with courage and compassion. We are an open and affirming church, striving to be anti-racist, inclusive and responsive to the needs of our neighbors. We recognize that our church's history includes ties to the enslavement of people and we are committed to truth-telling and healing as part of our journey. We are bothered by recent events and policy shifts which challenge the principles we hold dear, and we seek spiritual grounding and nourishment to address these situations.

Strengthening Inter- and Intra- Personal Assets

We value authenticity, warmth, and integrity in all aspects of ministry. Our next pastor will provide compassionate, spiritually grounded care to individuals and families while also nurturing deeper relationships across generations. By fostering a culture of shared leadership and spiritual growth, our next pastor will help deepen our collective sense of purpose and strengthen our capacity to live out our covenant in meaningful and transformative ways.

Who Is God Calling Us to Become?

"You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind." (Matthew 22:37 NRSV)

Who God is calling us to become as a congregation.

Our recent survey revealed a strong and heartfelt desire within our congregation to deepen our grounding in faithfulness. As one respondent beautifully expressed, we seek to "provide spiritual nourishment for the social justice journey." This reflects a growing commitment to intertwining our faith with our advocacy work, ensuring that our outward engagement is rooted in a vibrant and sustaining theological foundation. Another respondent reported, "There is currently a wide gap between social justice and faith concerns. We need to do more connecting of social justice back to theology." This call to bridge that gap speaks to a core aspiration to become a congregation where spiritual depth and justice are inseparable.

Strengthening our internal church life is just as vital. There's a strong desire for intergenerational connection—spaces where people of all ages can share wisdom, energy, and stories to foster lasting relationships. Many have voiced a need for more opportunities to engage across age groups, pointing out that current small group offerings tend to be age-specific and may unintentionally create silo units.

There is a consistent yearning to welcome more young adults and young families into the life of First Church. While we acknowledge the evolving nature of faith participation today, many in our congregation recall a time when church was a cornerstone of family life. These fond memories serve to drive us to intentionally create meaningful and accessible pathways for younger generations to engage with our family of faith. Our strong children's programming continues to be a key reason new families are drawn to First Church—a vital entry point we are eager to nurture and expand.

How God is calling us to reach out to address the emerging challenges and opportunities of our community and congregation.

God is calling First Church to step boldly into a season of growth, not just in numbers, but in impact, vitality and spiritual depth. While financial sustainability is a real and pressing concern, our deeper motivation stems from a genuine excitement to share the richness of our church life. We strive to be a place of pastoral care across life stages, with a progressive and inclusive theology and a steadfast

commitment to justice and anti-racism. We believe these gifts are not just for us; they are meant to be shared widely. We are called to show that following Jesus in fellowship offers a life-giving alternative to the isolating forces of capitalism, individualism, and oppression. This is a transformative vision, one that invites people into a way of living marked by compassion, equity and faithful grounding.

To live into this call, we are committed to expanding our reach, strengthening our welcome, and investing in programs that meet people where they are, especially young adults, families with young children, and those seeking spiritual renewal. Financially, we are called to align our stewardship with our values. While we may need to make hard choices, we are focused on increasing income in ways that reflect our mission. This includes exploring new revenue streams, deepening member engagement, and making strategic decisions that support both fiscal health and spiritual integrity.

God is calling us to be courageous, creative and faithful—to grow not just for survival, but for the sake of transformation in our congregation and the world.

Congregation Reflections

We would describe our congregation's life of faith as...

Rooted in faith, justice, and care for one another, we are a congregation that shows up with intention and heart. Our worship is both traditional and inclusive, blending deep theological reflection with authentic connection. We honor the sacred with language that reflects the fullness and mystery of the Divine, embracing non-gendered expressions of God. We welcome both faith and doubt, and we're not afraid to wrestle with life's big questions as part of our shared spiritual journey.

In keeping with our covenant's call to love and serve others, we are committed to being an anti-racist congregation and active advocates for social justice. We draw inspiration from the teachings of Jesus, who calls us to love our neighbors, welcome the stranger, and seek justice for the marginalized. His example guides our efforts to build a community rooted in compassion, humility, and radical inclusion. What brings us together is a shared desire to grow spiritually, build real relationships, and make a meaningful difference in the world—guided always by the promise to walk together in love and truth.

Strengths or positive qualities of our congregation.

First Church is a vibrant and welcoming church, grounded in deep connection and care. During worship, the passing of the peace is marked by such enthusiasm that the organist often begins the next hymn to gently guide congregants back to their seats.

We offer varied programming across generations. Young families gather on weeknights to share a simple meal, creating space for parents to connect while children play. The young adult group meets regularly—whether for a pre-worship brunch or a fun outing like a baseball game—fostering friendships and spiritual growth. Older adults convene monthly to reflect on the joys and challenges of aging, while a caregiver support group, formed last fall, offers a compassionate space for sharing and mutual support for one another. Our yearly multigenerational weekend retreat on Cape Cod offers a relaxed space to play, pray and connect with one another.

We are a forward-looking congregation, guided by strong leaders whose backgrounds span industry, management, healthcare, education and ministry. Their professional expertise brings depth, insight, and strategic clarity—qualities that have helped us navigate seasons of transition with confidence.

A growing edge for our congregation and what we plan to strengthen as a congregation

Our recent Discovery Team report revealed a shared aspiration to grow as a congregation, but with a thoughtful hesitation around overtly evangelizing. While we seek to expand our reach, we remain mindful of how we approach that growth with integrity and authenticity.

We recognize that financial sustainability is a foundational pillar for a thriving and expanding church and are acutely aware of the inherent tension between outward growth and the preservation of relational warmth and core values that define us. Navigating this dynamic will require imagination, discernment, and a shared dedication to our mission.

We are blessed with an evolving multigenerational ministry landscape. Our Young Adult Program is gaining momentum, Family Night offers joyful connection across generations, and our Christian Formation programs provide spiritual grounding for children. We do not yet, however, have an intentional outreach program focused on families and young adults to continue to grow our community of radical welcome and care.

What worship is like when our congregation gathers.

Worship at First Church is a deeply meaningful and multifaceted experience that brings our family of faith together in spirit and purpose. Services are intellectually engaging, emotionally resonant, and spiritually grounding, held in a historic sanctuary where music, silence, prayer, and inclusive language invite reflection and renewal. Periodically, we offer healing services that include a simple ritual of prayer, laying on of hands, and anointing with oil—providing space for those seeking comfort, renewal, or rest. Our poet in residence offers his own inspired creations and regularly invites the community to share their voices.

Music is an especially integral part of our worship services, with communal songs as an expression of our congregational spirit. Often described as “the church within church”, our choir is highly active and presents weekly musical offerings. The choir often selects hymns from a variety of cultural traditions, including original works by our leaders and staff composer. Our 2,949-pipe Frobenius organ is a regional treasure, used in worship, concerts and music lessons by the Greater Boston music community. Worship is not just what we do—it’s who we are.

The educational program/faith formation vision of our church.

We have a strong foundation of education and Christian formation guided and enriched by our full time Director of Communications and Christian Formation. From early childhood through high school, our children are nurtured through a comprehensive and age-appropriate progression of programs including the Godly Play curriculum, the Our Whole Lives sexuality education curriculum for middle schoolers, Confirmation class, and an active youth group.

Youth are encouraged to engage through leadership positions on committees as well as small group offerings and church retreats, ensuring their voices and gifts shape the life of the congregation.

Adult faith formation is equally vibrant, with opportunities for spiritual exploration and connection through lay-led Faith and Life groups, a monthly Men’s breakfast, an annual Women’s retreat, and Women’s book group. Additional offerings emerge organically through the collaborative efforts of staff and lay-leaders. All offerings are communicated through a weekly email newsletter First Glance, a community listserve, as well as social media (Facebook, Instagram and YouTube).

How our congregation is organized for ministry and mission.

Our ministry is led collaboratively by clergy and lay leaders, supported by a dedicated staff team equivalent to 8.4 full-time positions. Our outreach ministries embody our call to serve: the Friday Café provides nourishing meals and hospitality to 100–150 guests each week, while our 14-bed men’s shelter provides safety and dignity to unhoused neighbors. These programs reflect our mission to live out compassion in tangible, transformative ways.

Governance at First Church is shaped by openness and dialogue, ensuring that decisions are made with integrity and collective wisdom. Members are encouraged to step into leadership roles, fostering a culture of shared responsibility and mutual care. High attendance at Christian formation programs, often lay led, and congregational meetings further demonstrates the deep commitment of our members to shaping the life and direction of the church together.

Our historic building serves as a dynamic hub for worship, service, and congregational life. Through our hybrid worship model offering both in-person services and a live streaming option, we connect with members both near and far, extending the reach of our faith-based community.

When it comes to decision-making, 10 hours are spent in meetings per month.

Is the pastor expected to attend all church meetings?

No

In times when action had to be taken quickly, for example when a crisis or disaster occurred. These were the key leaders in taking this action and this was accomplished by...

When the COVID-19 pandemic struck, First Church responded with remarkable speed and effectiveness thanks to the foresight and dedication of our lay leaders, staff, and committee members. In 2019, the church had made a strategic investment in livestream technology—an initiative championed by staff and volunteers who recognized the need for broader accessibility. This forward-thinking decision allowed us to transition seamlessly to online worship, preserving connection and spiritual nourishment for our congregation during a time of profound isolation and uncertainty.

Key contributors included our technologically skilled staff, a committed Board of Deacons and other lay leaders who ensured services remained high-quality and inclusive. Our ability to anticipate future needs and act decisively in a moment of crisis exemplifies the kind of thoughtful, proactive leadership that continues to guide our church. First Church remains grateful for the time and care these individuals devote to preparing us for whatever lies ahead.

A copy of an organization structure, by laws and/or annual report to further explain the patterns of the church's activity and governance

- [2024-annual-report-390th-annual-meeting-1-26-25.pdf](#)
- [FCC-Bylaws-012620.pdf](#)
- [FCC-Org-Chart-1.pdf](#)

11-Year Report

Download a copy of the 11-Year Report developed with the help of our conference staff and UCC Data Hub.

- [Download 11-Year Report](#)

Congregation Demographics

Describe those who participate in your church.

| DEMOGRAPHIC | NUMBER |
|--|--------|
| NUMBER OF ACTIVE MEMBERS: | 413 |
| NUMBER OF ACTIVE NON-MEMBERS: | 50 |
| TOTAL OF CHURCH PARTICIPANTS (SUM OF THE NUMBERS ABOVE): | 463 |

ARE THESE NUMBERS ESTIMATES?

Yes

Percentage of total participants who have been in the church:

| TIME | PERCENTAGE |
|----------------------------------|------------|
| MORE THAN 10 YEARS: | 62% |
| LESS THAN 10, MORE THAN 5 YEARS: | 13% |
| LESS THAN 5 YEARS: | 25% |

ARE THESE NUMBERS ESTIMATES?

Yes

Number of total participants by age:

| AGE | NUMBER |
|-------|--------|
| 0-11 | 10 |
| 12-17 | 8 |
| 18-24 | 23 |
| 25-34 | 80 |
| 35-44 | 75 |
| 45-54 | 49 |
| 55-64 | 65 |
| 65-74 | 75 |
| 75+ | 65 |

ARE THESE NUMBERS ESTIMATES?

Yes

Percentage of adults in various household types:

| HOUSEHOLD TYPE | PERCENTAGE |
|----------------------------------|------------|
| SINGLE ADULTS UNDER 35: | 15% |
| HOUSEHOLDS WITH MINORS: | 10% |
| SINGLE ADULTS AGE 35-65: | 10% |
| JOINT HOUSEHOLDS WITH NO MINORS: | 40% |
| SINGLE ADULTS OVER 65: | 25% |

ARE THESE NUMBERS ESTIMATES?

Yes

Education level of adult participants by percentage:

| EDUCATION LEVEL | PERCENTAGE |
|------------------------|------------|
| HIGH SCHOOL: | 5% |
| COLLEGE: | 23% |
| GRADUATE SCHOOL: | 62% |
| SPECIALTY TRAINING: | 10% |
| OTHER EDUCATION LEVEL: | 0% |

ARE THESE NUMBERS ESTIMATES?

Yes

Percentage of adults in various employment types:

| EMPLOYMENT TYPE | PERCENTAGE |
|------------------------------------|------------|
| ADULTS WHO ARE EMPLOYED: | 70% |
| ADULTS WHO ARE RETIRED: | 25% |
| ADULTS WHO ARE NOT FULLY EMPLOYED: | 5% |

ARE THESE NUMBERS ESTIMATES?

No

The range of occupations of working adults in the congregation:

Our congregation includes hourly wage earners, undergrad students, grad students, professionals, multiple professionals with post-graduate degrees. We also have a high number of ordained ministers who are members of our church and have supported ministry needs through leadership in various ways.

The mix of ethnic heritages in our congregation, and the overall racial make-up.

The overall racial make up mirrors that of the Cambridge area (data from ARDA report)
Ethnicity and racial breakdown: (1.5 mile radius of Cambridge)

| Race/Ethnicity | 2015 | 2022 |
|---------------------------------|----------------|----------------|
| Asian (non-Hispanic) | 32,274 (13.0%) | 40,823 (16.0%) |
| Black (non-Hispanic) | 19,393 (7.8%) | 17,898 (7.0%) |
| Hispanic | 22,666 (9.1%) | 24,503 (9.6%) |
| Native American (non-Hispanic) | 261 (0.1%) | 323 (0.1%) |
| Pacific Islander (non-Hispanic) | 83 (0.0%) | 151 (0.1%) |

| | | |
|-----------------------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| White (non-Hispanic) | 165,085 (66.3%) | 156,508 (61.5%) |
| Multi-racial (non-Hispanic) | 7,706 (3.1%) | 12,262 (4.8%) |
| Other (non-Hispanic) | 1,440 (0.6%) | 2,084 (0.8%) |

What diversity means in our context?

Our congregation differs from Cambridge's demographics: we are generally whiter, more affluent, and older. Half of First Church congregants reside in Cambridge, with another quarter in the bordering towns of Arlington, Belmont, Somerville and Watertown.

Our geographic area data: Out of 212 congregations in a 2 mile radius, we are one of the 5 UCC churches. Other denominations represented are Catholic (15), Baptist (10), Episcopal (7), Methodist (3), and non denominational Christian churches (52) (according to ARDA report).

Has our congregation recently had a conversation about welcoming diversity, or do we plan to hold one on the near future

Yes

DATE COMPLETED: Dec 30 1981

Comment after the exercise:

Our congregation has had an ongoing commitment to welcoming diversity, through active examination, understanding and action. In 1982, we declared ourselves a Just Peace Church, affirming our commitment to peacemaking and justice. In 1991, we became an Open and Affirming Church, publicly welcoming LGBTQ+ individuals into the full life and leadership of our congregation. Since 2009, we have been engaged racial justice work which is highlighted on our website through 4 identified streams of work.

<https://www.firstchurchcambridge.org/racial-justice/>

Participation and Staffing

Participation and Planning of Gatherings

| WAYS OF CHURCH GATHERING | ESTIMATED NUMBER OF PEOPLE INVOLVED IN ATTENDANCE | WHO PLANS EACH OF THE LISTED GATHERINGS |
|---|---|--|
| Adult Groups or Classes (in person or online) | 80 | Staff and Lay Leaders |
| Baptisms (number last year) | 8 | Staff and Deacons |
| Children's Groups or Classes | 40 | Staff and Lay Leaders |
| Christmas Eve and Easter Worship | 400 | Staff |
| Church-wide Meals | 150 | Lay Leaders |
| Choirs and Music Groups | 40 | Music Director |
| Communion (served how often?) | 13 | Once a month- Music Director, Senior Minister, Director of Christian Formation, Ministerial Staff, Deacons |
| Community Meals | 300 | Staff and Lay Leaders |
| Confirmation (number confirmed last year) | 9 | Staff and Lay Leaders |
| Drama or Dance Program | 10 | Lay Leaders |
| Funerals (number last year) | 3 | (for members) Staff and Deacons |
| Intergenerational Groups | 20 | Staff and Lay Leaders |
| Outdoor Worship | 50 | Minister of Outreach and Lay Leaders |
| Prayer or Meditation Groups | 20 | Staff and Lay Leaders |
| Public Advocacy Work | 70 | Lay Leaders |
| Retreats | 50 | Staff |
| Weddings (number last year) | 2 | (2 members) Staff |
| Worship (digital / online / livestream) | 100 | Staff and Lay Leaders |
| Young Adult Groups or Classes | 20 | Lay Leaders |
| Youth Groups or Classes | 20 | Staff and Lay Leaders |

Worship Times

| WORSHIP (TIME SLOT): | ESTIMATED NUMBER OF PEOPLE INVOLVED IN ATTENDANCE | WHO PLANS EACH OF THE LISTED GATHERINGS |
|----------------------|---|--|
| 11:00 | 100 | Music Director, Senior Minister, Director of Christian Formation, Ministerial Staff, Deacons |

Additional comments:

No response

List of all members or regular participants in our congregation who are ordained or commissioned ministers, or who hold Lay Ministerial Standing. Additionally the names of Members in Discernment in our congregation.

| NAME | THREE-WAY OR FOUR-WAY COVENANT | MINISTRY SETTING | TYPE OF MINISTRY ROLE | RETIRED |
|-----------------------------|--------------------------------|--|--|-------------------------------------|
| Rev. Kate Layzer | none | Outdoor Church and Friday Cafe- FCC Staff | Minister of Street Outreach | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Rev. Karen McArthur | none | FCC Staff | Minister of Stewardship and Finance | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Rev. Norman Bendroth | none | N/A | Community Minister | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| Rev. Krysia Burnham | none | N/A | Community Minister | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Rev. Dr. Brent Coffin | none | FCC Small Group Leadership | Community Minister | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| Rev. Henry Gates | none | FCC Small Group Leadership | Community Minister | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| Rev. Phil LaFollette | none | N/A | Community Minister | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| Rev. Beth Loomis | none | Hospital Chaplain | Community Minister | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Rev. Dr. Monica Maher | 3 | Community Minister in Latin America | Community Minister | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Rev. Kerry Maloney | none | N/A | Community Minister | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Rev. Shirley Mulford | none | N/A | Community Minister | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Rev. Jonathan New | none | N/A | Community Minister | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Rev. Stephanie Paulsell | none | Harvard Divinity School Faculty | Community Minister | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Rev. Dr. Lawrence Peers | none | N/A | Community Minister | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Rev. Mary Robinson | none | N/A | Community Minister | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Rev. Dr. Renate Rose | none | N/A | Community Minister | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Rev. Henry Schoenfield | none | N/A | Community Minister | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Rev. Dr. J. Michael Solberg | none | FCC Staff | Interim Minister | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Rev. Beth Spaulding | none | N/A | Community Minister | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Rev. Heather Stanford | none | N/A | Community Minister | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Rev. Alex Steinert-Evoy | none | N/A | Community Minister | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Rev. Nancy Stillman | none | N/A | Community Minister | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Rev. Jennifer Stuart | none | N/A | Community Minister | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Rev. Mary Martha Thiel | none | N/A | Community Minister | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Rev. Carter West | none | FCC small group leadership | Community Minister | <input type="checkbox"/> |

| NAME | THREE-WAY OR FOUR-WAY COVENANT | MINISTRY SETTING | TYPE OF MINISTRY ROLE | RETIRED |
|-------------------------|--------------------------------|------------------|-----------------------|--------------------------|
| Rev. Marian Williams | none | N/A | Community Minister | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Rev. Elizabeth Williams | none | N/A | Community Minister | <input type="checkbox"/> |

Previous pastors or retired ministers who currently hold membership in the church and their role(s) in the life of the congregation:

We have 27 community ministers (minister in our community who hold membership). Some are currently working in chaplaincy, hospice ministry, or are retired. They will offer ministerial support when needed and often lead small groups related to their specific ministerial focus. Several of these members are also active members who have chosen First Church as their spiritual home. Listed here <https://www.firstchurchcambridge.org/spiritual-guidance-and-pastoral-care/>

List of all current staff:

| STAFF POSITION | HEAD OF STAFF | COMPENSATION | SUPERVISED BY | LENGTH OF TENURE FOR CURRENT PERSON IN THIS POSITION |
|--|-----------------|--------------|-----------------|--|
| Director of Operations | Senior Minister | full | Senior Minister | 17 |
| Director of Communications & Christian Formation | Senior Minister | full | Senior Minister | 21 |
| Director of Music | Senior Minister | part | Senior Minister | 40 |
| Shelter Director | Senior Minister | full | Senior Minister | 38 |
| Facilities Manager | Senior Minister | full | Senior Minister | 4 |

Reflection: What this information reflect about our congregation's overall ministry:

First Church is organized around a shared commitment to worship, spiritual growth, social justice, and transparent governance. We cultivate deep relationships through small groups, pastoral care, and intergenerational connections that nurture belonging across all ages. The activities that we currently offer reflect the active lay leaders that are a part of our community as well as the areas of connection that members have asked for through collaborative leadership and feedback. We continue to strive to have our ministry reflect the members of our community and their desire to act in service.

Church Finances

Current Annual Income

| SOURCE | AMOUNT |
|--|---------|
| Annual Offerings and Pledged Giving | 622286 |
| Endowment Draw (beyond what is permitted by spending policy, "drawing down the principal") | 38319 |
| Fundraising Events | 3315 |
| Gifts Designated for a Specific Purpose | 55525 |
| Grants | 815370 |
| Rentals of Church Building | 200039 |
| Support from Related Organizations (e.g. Women's Group) | 59905 |
| Bequests | 47590 |
| Program Fees | 19793 |
| Investment Income | 1342 |
| Miscellaneous Income | 3172 |
| Investments 4% draw | 88681 |
| Investments draw beyond 4% | 35000 |
| Total | 1990337 |

Current annual expenses (dollars budgeted for most recent fiscal year):

2173230

Attach most recent church budget, spending plan, operating statement, or annual treasurer's report as shared publicly with the congregation, or – if your church does not pass an annual budget–list current budgeted expenses here.

[Download church budget](#)

Considering total budgeted expenses for the year, compare total ministerial support. What is the percentage?

11

Has the church ever failed to pay its financial obligations to a minister of the church?

No

Is your church 5-for-5, i.e. does it include each of the following contributions during the church year? (indicate those included during the most recent fiscal year)

In what way is OCWM (Basic Support) gathered?

We tithe our annual operating income for missions, social justice, and the wider church. In 2024, 4.8% of our operating income was contributed to UCC support: SNEUCC Proportional Giving, Metropolitan Boston Association support, special offerings, and Conference attendance.

If calculated as a percentage of operating budget, this is the percentage?

NaN

Total amount of loan debt:

66084

Reason for debt:

We received a no-interest Mass Save loan to install energy efficient boilers for our building in 2020. The loan will be paid off by mid-2027.

Are capital and other payments current?

Yes

Capital Campaigns

Description of any building programs projected or underway.

N/A

Pictures



Description of any capital campaigns in the last ten years:

| YEAR(S) | PURPOSE | GOAL | RESULT | IMPACT |
|---------|---|---------|---------|----------------------------|
| 2016 | Renovate our kitchen, meeting rooms and restrooms | 1900000 | 1900000 | Expanding community spaces |
| 0 | | 0 | 0 | |

Description of any capital campaigns underway or anticipated:

| YEAR(S) | PURPOSE | GOAL | RESULT | IMPACT |
|---------|---------|------|--------|--------|
| 0 | | 0 | 0 | |
| 0 | | 0 | 0 | |

Description the prominent mission component(s) involved in the most recent (or current) capital campaign.

Our 2016 capital campaign allowed us to renovate our building, replacing a tiny kitchenette with a commercial-grade kitchen, adding a ramp and four accessible gender-neutral bathrooms, and transforming a closed-off meeting room into an open gathering area. We raised \$1.9 million, and then borrowed \$600k in a 15-year loan from the Cornerstone Fund, which we recently paid off nine years early. This campaign allowed expanded fellowship within the congregational as well as support for our homeless ministries through the Friday Cafe

Does your church have an endowment?

Yes

What is the market value of the assets?

1052000

Are funds drawn as needed, regularly, or under certain circumstances?

monthly

What is the percentage rate of draw (last year, compared to 5 years ago)?

4%

Describe draw on endowment, if any, to meet operating budget expenses for the most recent year and the past five years:

We have drawn from our unrestricted investments but not from our endowment, a total of \$380,000 over five years

At the current rate of draw, how long might the endowment last?

indefinitely

Please comment on the above calculations or estimates:

In addition to the above endowment we draw 4% of our investments for our operating budget

Other Assets

\$156000 (Shelter funds)

Reserves (savings):

144000

Investments (other than endowment):

2000000

Does the church have a parsonage?

Yes

Fair market rental value of the parsonage:

4000

How is the parsonage used?

N/A

Street

No response

City

No response

State

No response

Zip

No response

Finished square footage:

No response

Number of Bedrooms:

7

Number of Bathrooms:

5

Assessed real estate value:

No response

Available for minister residence?

No

Expected minister residence?

Yes

Condition of structure, systems and appliances

Property for sale, we are currently searching for a new ministerial housing

Entity in the church responsible for review and needed repairs

Buildings and grounds

Parsonage pictures



Description of all buildings owned by the church:

Utilized 7 days a week

Description of non-owned buildings or space used or rented by the church:

None

Accessibility features of our building(s):

mobility assistance

Access to child care spaces for wheelchair users and people with other mobility aids
Listening devices in the sanctuary, or wireless technology to connect to hearing aids
Large print bulletins
Closed-captioning on sanctuary screen and/or livestream

Wheelchair access in bathrooms
Sound system in sanctuary and other meeting places (fellowship hall, large meeting rooms, etc.)
Accessible bathroom on each floor
Wheelchair areas in sanctuary (other than "front or back")

Which spaces are accessible to wheelchairs:

Several key areas of the building are wheelchair-accessible. The main sanctuary is fully accessible, allowing individuals with mobility challenges to participate in worship services and events with ease. Margaret Jewett Hall, the church's primary meeting and event space, is also wheelchair-friendly. The entrance at 11 Garden Street is accessible, including six restrooms designed to accommodate wheelchair users. These features reflect the church's ongoing dedication to creating a welcoming environment for all members of the community.

Policies regarding financial practices of the church:

Our financial policies and procedures are well documented in our bylaws and [Leadership Hub](#). Our Financial Staff includes our Minister of Stewardship and Finance, Financial Associate, and Office Assistant. Our Finance Committee includes the Treasurer and Associate Treasurer (who serve overlapping four-year terms), Controller, Stewardship chair, and Investment chair. We have two Assistant Treasurers: one who counts Sunday cash, and another who signs checks. We require over-budget expenditures to be approved by the Treasurer, Executive Council, or congregation depending on the amount.

Reflection: After reviewing the church's finances and assets described above, what this information reflects about our congregation's mission and ministry:

We deeply value the life of our congregation, we believe that we provide an important spiritual home for members and the community, and want to position the Church for the beginning of its fifth century by getting our financial house in order. This financial goal was reflected throughout our recent Discovery Team survey and report. The desire for financial stability is strong and multifaceted. This fall, our interim minister led us on a close the gap campaign, outlining existing resources and showing that historically, when there is a need, the congregation has met it.

Historical Information

Significant happenings in the history of our church that have shaped the identity of our congregation.

With nearly 400 years of history, First Church has played a pivotal role in the history of Massachusetts. One of the most defining moments was the Arminian-Calvinist controversy, which led to the split between Unitarian and Congregational churches. Our current sanctuary, built in 1872, continues to serve as a sacred space for worship and community engagement.

Throughout our history, First Church has remained responsive to the moral and spiritual imperatives of each era. In 1982, we declared ourselves a Just Peace Church. In 1987, we established a shelter for unhoused men, and in 1991, we became an Open and Affirming Church, publicly welcoming LGBTQ+ individuals into the full life and leadership of our congregation.

Since 2009, we have been engaged in a sustained reckoning with our historical complicity in slavery and the enduring realities of white supremacy, most recently including the creation of a Reparations Fund in 2021 and a formal commitment to becoming an antiracist church.

A specific change our church has managed in the recent past.

One of the biggest changes in our life as a church was the departure of our last Senior Minister, Dan Smith, in June 2023. The news of Dan's departure after 20 years of loyal service stirred deep emotions across our congregation. For many, Dan was more than a pastor; he had been a spiritual anchor, a trusted confidant, and a steady presence through seasons of joy and sorrow. His voice guided us in worship, his wisdom shaped our decisions, and his compassion held us together in times of trial. It was no surprise that the news of his departure felt painful for so many. The bonds formed over 20 years of shared ministry were not easily loosened. Yet even in our sadness, we held space for gratitude—for the countless ways Dan has blessed our lives—and we trust that God will continue to walk with us through this tender time of change. We also were blessed to have several ordained ministers in the congregation who stepped in to lead prior to the arrival of the interim.

Every church has conflict, some minor, some larger. "Where two or three are gathered, there will be disagreement....". These are our congregation's values and practices when it comes to conflict.

Our approach to decision-making and conflict resolution is grounded in the congregational model, with our core values at the heart of every process. We honor the voices of all members, ensuring that diverse perspectives are considered and treated with care.

A recent example of this process was our discernment around the future of the church parsonage. In response to this complex issue, the moderator appointed a committee to explore available options and assess the associated costs. The committee held three listening sessions before or after worship and two additional Zoom gatherings. At each session, they presented detailed information outlining the pros and cons of three potential paths forward. Throughout, individual concerns were met with attentiveness and respect.

A congregational vote on the parsonage was held on September 21, 2025 where the decision was made to sell the parsonage in favor of purchasing a more sustainable and appropriately sized property in proximity to the church.

The most recent major conflict through which our church has navigated.

In 2023–24, First Church undertook a discernment process regarding the future of a beloved and iconic work of art: a five-foot-high gilded weathervane in the shape of a cockerel, made in 1721 and perched atop our sanctuary. For many, the cockerel held deep symbolic and emotional significance, representing a tangible link to the church's long history. At the same time, experts advised that the piece was potentially valuable and increasingly vulnerable to damage from unpredictable weather conditions. Our membership was split across these two paths.

In response, the congregation embarked on a five-month process of listening sessions and research, led by committed members. Ultimately, the congregation reached a unanimous decision: to sell the original cockerel and replace it with a replica, in accordance with the requirements of the local historical commission. This outcome reflects our commitment to thoughtful stewardship and collective discernment.

Ministerial History:

| | | |
|---|-----------------------------|---------------------|
| <i>Name:</i> Rev. Alan Happe-Senior Minister | <i>Years of service:</i> 21 | UCC Standing |
| <i>Name:</i> Rev. Harry Flad-Sabbatical Interim Minister (1 year); Interim Senior Minister (1 year) | <i>Years of service:</i> 2 | UCC Standing |
| <i>Name:</i> Rev. David Grishow-Jones-Minister for Church & Community | <i>Years of service:</i> 5 | UCC Standing |
| <i>Name:</i> Rev. Mary Luti-Senior Minister | <i>Years of service:</i> 8 | UCC Standing |
| <i>Name:</i> Rev. Dan Smith-Minister of Christian Discipleship (4 years);Senior Minister (16 years) | <i>Years of service:</i> 20 | UCC Standing |
| <i>Name:</i> Rev. Karin Case-Interim (2 years);Minister (5 years) | <i>Years of service:</i> 7 | UCC Standing |
| <i>Name:</i> Rev. Ute Molitor- Minister of Spiritual Formation | <i>Years of service:</i> 2 | UCC Standing |
| <i>Name:</i> Rev. Kate Layzer- Minister of Street Outreach | <i>Years of service:</i> 11 | UCC Standing |
| <i>Name:</i> Rev. Lexi Boundreaux- Transitional Minister | <i>Years of service:</i> 2 | UCC Standing |
| <i>Name:</i> Rev. Cynthia Shoemaker- Minister of Education | <i>Years of service:</i> 10 | |
| <i>Name:</i> Rev. Ellen Peterson- Minister of Christian Education | <i>Years of service:</i> 2 | |
| <i>Name:</i> Rev. Diana Phillips- Consulting Pastor & Chaplain | <i>Years of service:</i> 1 | |
| <i>Name:</i> Rev. Jane Fadden- Interim Minister of Christian Education | <i>Years of service:</i> 2 | |
| <i>Name:</i> Rev. Karen McArthur- Minister of Stewardship & Finance- | <i>Years of service:</i> 17 | |
| <i>Name:</i> Rev. Terry McKinney- Minister of Mental Health Outreach | <i>Years of service:</i> 2 | |
| <i>Name:</i> Rev. Reebee Girash- Sabbatical Interim Minister | <i>Years of service:</i> 1 | |
| <i>Name:</i> Rev. Brent Coffin- Scholar in Residence | <i>Years of service:</i> 2 | |

Name: Rev. J. Michael Solberg- Interim Senior Minister

Years of service: 5

What our church has learned about itself and its relationship with people who provided ministerial leadership.

Through this period of reflection and discernment, First Church has reaffirmed its deep commitment to collaborative leadership and not necessarily subscribing to a set hierarchal leadership structure. Our leadership over the past 30 years has included several ministers who have begun in roles that developed and changed over time. We also recognize that healthy leadership is sustained through mutual care and shared responsibility, which is exhibited by the way that our leadership team has evolved to support the emerging needs of the community.

Has any past leader left under pressure or by involuntary termination?

No

Has your church been involved in a Situational Support Consultation?

No

Has a past pastor been the subject of a Fitness Review while at your church?

No

Has a previous minister been a contributor to conflict following their tenure as pastor?

No

Community Vision

How the relationships and activities of our congregation extend outward in service and advocacy.

We continuously engage in a transformative journey toward justice in faith, historical reckoning, and compassionate action. Since 1987, the church has operated a 14-bed shelter for unhoused men, offering a safe, homelike environment along with supportive services in housing, employment, and healthcare.

In 2014, First Church expanded its outreach by launching the Friday Cafe, a weekly drop-in program that opens its doors every Friday to anyone in need of nourishment, companionship, and other services.

Our active and ongoing racial justice work includes remembrance, reparations, and a public commitment to becoming an antiracist church, through education and partnerships with marginalized communities.

We offered civil rights pilgrimages to historic sites, including the National Memorial for Peace and Justice and the National Museum of African American History and Culture. These journeys strengthen the congregation's resolve to pursue justice through reflection and action.

Our congregation's participation in meetings, relationships and activities connecting the wider United Church of Christ.

Members of First Church actively participate in the life of the wider United Church of Christ through involvement in association and conference events. Congregants regularly attend annual meetings and Super Saturdays, contributing to broader conversations and learning opportunities across the denomination. Several members have also served on the Committee on Ministry within our association, offering leadership and support to clergy and congregations beyond our own.

Looking ahead, we aspire to deepen our engagement with both the association and the conference—strengthening our connections, sharing our gifts, and learning from the wider church community. This growing participation reflects our commitment to collaborative ministry and denominational partnerships.

How our church engages with the community organizing movements in our community.

Founded in 1998, the Greater Boston Interfaith Organization (GBIO) is a powerful multifaith, multiracial, and nonpartisan coalition committed to broad-based community organizing. First Church joined GBIO in 2005 and has been a member ever since. Congregants regularly participate in GBIO events, with 30 to 50 members attending major actions and assemblies. Several First Church members have held—and continue to hold—leadership roles within the organization. Notably, Senior Minister Dan Smith became Vice President of GBIO in 2011, further deepening the church's commitment to faith-based organizing.

In January 2017, First Church joined a coalition of local congregations and organizations committed to supporting undocumented people facing unjust immigration laws. Over the next five years, the Cambridge Interfaith Sanctuary Coalition (CISC) supported a sanctuary guest, their family, and others at risk due to race, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity, or immigration status.

Many local churches love to tell the story of what they are doing in the community to transform lives. Some have identified certain aspects of their witness into the wider community using language shared with other UCC congregations, through Just World Covenants or affiliations with other groups. Check any of the following partnerships which your congregation has formally adopted, or movements which otherwise apply to your congregation.

Just Peace.
Open and Affirming (ONA).
Immigrant Welcoming.

What the above statement(s) mean(s) to our community. How our congregation plans to work toward the above statements of witness in the future.

Working toward social justice is a foundational expression of our faith and identity. In a time marked by division, uncertainty, and rising authoritarianism, we remain steadfast in our commitment to putting faith into action—seeking meaningful ways to embody compassion, courage, and solidarity.

One recent initiative, Faithful Resistance, reflects this commitment. In the past several months, members have been actively exploring how to build relationships with a growing network of nonviolent and resistance-based organizations across the greater Cambridge area. This work is rooted in a desire to stand with those confronting injustice and to amplify efforts that challenge oppressive systems.

As a congregation, we are also engaged in ongoing discernment about where and how to direct our collective energy. This evolving journey reflects our belief that faith is not static but a living call to justice, service, and transformation in the world.

Our congregation's participation in ecumenical and interfaith activities (with other denominations and religious groups, local and regional).

In addition to our work with the GBIO, we participated in a weekly practice of interfaith prayer for social justice in partnership with members of the Pentecostal Tabernacle during the pandemic. Held via Zoom, these gatherings offered a space for spiritual connection, shared reflection, and collective commitment to justice. This collaboration bridges denominational differences and strengthens our resolve to confront injustice through prayerful solidarity.

In addition, First Church's Beloved Community group actively participates in the Reparations Interfaith Coalition, a statewide alliance of faith-based and ethically grounded organizations dedicated to advancing reparations in Massachusetts. A First Church representative serves on the Coalition's leadership board, helping to shape its vision and strategy. Through this partnership, we join a growing movement to address historical harm and pursue repair, accountability, and racial equity.

How our mission statement compares to the actual time spent engaging in different activities.

The 2016 Vision Statement of First Church Cambridge calls the congregation to be:

- Grounded in God—seeking healing, awe, and love through divine presence.
- Growing in community with Jesus at the center—honoring each other's gifts, being vulnerable and accountable.
- Acting in love, made bold by the Spirit—engaging in justice, resisting oppression, and collaborating across faiths.

The church's actual activities closely mirror its vision. Worship and community-building are prioritized, governance is participatory, and justice work is robust. However, our recent survey notes a desire for deeper spiritual integration with justice efforts and more intentional relationship-building—suggesting areas for growth in fully living out the vision.

The scope of work assigned to our pastor(s). How their community ministry and their ministry in and on behalf of the wider church accounted for in the congregation's expectations on their time.

First Church pastors are entrusted with a broad and meaningful scope of work that includes preaching, teaching, pastoral care, leadership development, and justice advocacy. The congregation looks to its ministers to integrate faith with social action—embodying a theology that is both grounded and engaged.

While we seek visionary leadership, we also recognize the importance of shared responsibility and effective team management. We need a pastor who not only inspires but also leads with clarity and purpose, someone who can set priorities, navigate challenges and conflicts with wisdom, and conduct meaningful staff performance reviews that foster growth and accountability.

We also affirm the vital role of our pastors in the wider community—through interfaith partnerships, civic engagement, and public witness. At the same time, we acknowledge that these external commitments must be balanced with the needs of the congregation and the sustainability of pastoral leadership.

The ARDA or MissionInsite Reflection

ARDA/MI File

[Download ARDA/MI File](#)

From looking at our congregation's The ARDA or MissionInsite report, these trends and opportunities are what stood out to us.

Cambridge and its surrounding towns hold a diverse and dynamic population. The ARDA data between 2015-22 showed an increase in Asian and Multi-racial residents while also seeing a drop in white residents. While our congregation is generally older, whiter, and more affluent than the broader area, we strive to expand our congregational community. The most recent ARDA data also showed the biggest increases in the 65-74 age range and the biggest decreases in the 18-20 age range, possibly showing the financial challenges of living in the Cambridge area.

How our congregation's internal demographics compare or contrast to a) the neighborhoods adjacent to our church, and b) other neighborhoods with which our church connects.

In many ways, First Church in Cambridge mirrors the city of Cambridge. We are a socially and theologically progressive congregation, reflecting Cambridge's overwhelming support for the Democratic ticket in 2024. Surrounded by institutions like Harvard and MIT, our church is rich in intellect, with many members holding advanced degrees. Our historic building is a community hub, hosting 12-step groups, community gatherings, a 14-bed shelter for unhoused men, and weekly gatherings for housed and unhoused neighbors. First Church is closely connected to our city.

How the demographics of the community are currently shaping ministry, or not.

Yes, our ministry is actively shaped by the members of the church and our outreach and relationship with the community at large. We engage in active listening to the needs of our members through conversation, small group engagement and integrated leadership through both staff and lay leaders.

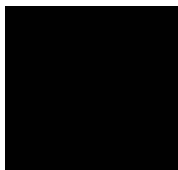
What we hear when we talk to community leaders and ask them what our church is known for.

Due to our high involvement in community organizing like GBIO and local church partnerships, we are known for the dedicated work that we do to reflect our mission of justice. This includes our street outreach and support of unhoused individuals in the area through the shelter and The Friday Cafe. Also our racial justice work has connected us with leaders in the community through our Reparations Fund and historical examination. We are also known for our work towards inclusion as an Open and Affirming church through marching in local Pride events and community connections.

What new people in the church say when asked what got them involved.

In our recent Discovery report conversations, congregants frequently brought up small group programming as a key part to their involvement. One member stated, "Small groups helped bring me into the church. That's why I'm here...because of how that group embraced and supported me." When congregants were asked on the survey what keeps them at First Church, over half cited social outreach as one of their reasons. One member stated that the social justice emphasis "is what makes the church."

References



Emma Mitchell

Completed: Monday, Dec 1, 2025

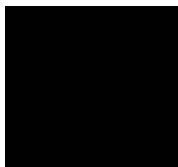
I served at First Church in Cambridge from October 2023 to January 2025, first as Ministerial Intern and then as Pastoral Associate.

Primary Email Address: emmajtmitchell1@gmail.com

Personal: 6174351973

Reference Response

First Church in Cambridge is a vibrant, intellectually engaged, and spiritually rich community. Their multigenerational ministry is strong, with flourishing programs for elders, families, young adults, youth, and children. As a pastor there, I have been loved and cared for as much as I have loved and cared for them. The church is brimming with energy and ways to engage in this moment in the world. They are remarkably open to trying new ways to worship, make music together, and learn. Their commitment to social justice and to following Jesus is strong. Many staff have been there for many years, and people are deeply committed to their work, but at times the dynamics can be tricky between staff members. FCC is a beautiful place to serve, and a thriving congregation that is ready for new leadership that is collaborative, visionary, and fresh.



Ken Reeves

Completed: Wednesday, Dec 17, 2025

President, Cambridge Branch NAACP and former Mayor of Cambridge. We have co-sponsored events on issues of race and reparations.

Primary Email Address: kenerrolreeves@gmail.com

Personal Cell: 6178285262

Reference Response

First Church Cambridge has been a true civic leader in the City of Cambridge, particularly in its pioneering work to acknowledge the role slavery played in the establishment of early institutions. The church has shown moral leadership by confronting its own history and advancing thoughtful conversations around reparations grounded in that legacy. It undertook a deep examination of its earliest history, uncovering that some early ministers and members were slaveholders, and that it once struggled with whether enslaved baptized people could be full members. I was familiar with the former minister Dan Smith, who was deeply engaged in the Cambridge community, and I'm hopeful his successor will continue that tradition. I am also well acquainted with Paula Paris, an active church member, and Steve Brown, 2nd VP of the Cambridge NAACP and manager of the homeless shelter located at the church.

Richard Harter

Completed: Wednesday, Dec 10, 2025

Member for 55 years until retirement in CT. Served as Deacon, Treasurer, Moderator, Search Committee (chair) and Capital Campaign (co-chair).

Email Address: dickharter13@gmail.com

Personal: 2032082909

Reference Response

I know First Church and its members well, and I have the greatest respect and affection for First Church and its members.

Closing Prayer

THE HOUSEHOLD OF GOD

We end with a song composed by our Music Director and a congregant. This encompasses the spirit of our faith community and our hopes for God to guide us to the leader with whom we can share our work.

The Household of God has room for us all, everyone has a place at the feast

The best and the worst have hearts needing love, there is truth for the greatest and least

The Household of God has work for us all, by many seeds have been sown

In the harvest of healing of justice and love, there is no need to labor alone.

(an excerpt, please utilize the link for the whole song)

Statement of Consent

1. Which individuals and groups in the church contributed to the contents of this Local Church Profile?

For example, church council or consistory, transition team, etc.

9 member search committee, Discovery Team with congregant survey responses, Executive Council, Minister of Stewardship and Finance

2. Additional comments for interpreting the profile:

We encourage candidates to review our website, which gives incredible detail about our mission and action in the community. We've included links throughout, but also recommend looking through the site to understand our work within our faith community and the larger world. We also have active and engaged social media accounts that candidates can access to find sermons, testimonials from congregants, and much more.

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/FirstChurchInCambridge/>

Instagram: <https://www.instagram.com/firstchurchcambridge/>

YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/c/firstchurchincambridge>