

# LOOKING AHEAD at First Church



The First Sunday of Advent  
Nov. 28: A Mini-Messiah at First Church

Soprano Mary Bonhag & String Quartet: John Dunlop, Jane Kittredge, Laura Markowitz & Ana Ruesink

**ADVENT BEGINS on SUNDAY NOVEMBER 28**  
**Sermon: The Rev. Elissa Johnk**  
**Worship Music - A Mini-Messiah with musical guests:**

**Soprano Mary Bonhag**  
**with String Quartet Musicians:**  
**John Dunlop, Jane Kittredge,**  
**Laura Markowitz & Ana Ruesink**

**HANDEL'S MESSIAH:** Selections from George Frideric Handel's Messiah will be featured throughout the 10am worship on the first Sunday of Advent at First Church. All are invited to worship in-person (masks required) or remotely via live stream (or later recording) on our [FirstChurchBTV - YouTube Channel](https://www.youtube.com/FirstChurchBTV).

**MUSICAL GUESTS:** We are thrilled to welcome soprano **Mary Bonhag** to worship on November 28. Known nationally as an "extraordinary" (*Classical Voice N. America*) soprano, Mary Bonhag has captivated audiences around the country with her "marvelous versatility" and "supple, expressive" voice (*San Antonio News*)." Mary and husband Evan Premo are the Artistic Directors of Vermont's [Scrag Mountain Music](https://www.scragmountainmusic.com). Since 2010, Scrag Mountain Music has connected Vermont communities to classical music in powerful ways.

Mary Bonhag will be accompanied by a special string quartet featuring professional musicians: **John Dunlop (cello), Jane Kittredge and Laura Markowitz (violin), and Ana Ruesink (viola).**

**WORSHIP & MUSIC HIGHLIGHTS at First Church** – All are welcome and invited to worship at First Church! We are offering both in-person and remote ([YouTube: https://www.youtube.com/FirstChurchBTV](https://www.youtube.com/FirstChurchBTV) - live-stream & recorded for later viewing) worship at 10am on Sundays.

- Masks are always required in the church building by all over age two.
- **PARKING:** On Sunday mornings, the First Church parking lot is reserved for our visitors, friends and members with mobility challenges. If that is your situation – please park in the church lot. Others are welcome to drop off passengers at church and park on the street or parking garage – **free on Sundays**.
- **MUSIC: We are in a search process for a Director of Music Ministries - we are thankful for the gifts and service of our Fall Music Coordinator, Ann Vivian, and of our lay musicians and vocalists.** If you are interested in participating as a musician or vocalist, please be in touch with Ann: [av@gvvarchitects.com](mailto:av@gvvarchitects.com).
  - All interested in participating in **Bell Choir** (novices welcome!) are invited to contact Director [Jennie Coleman \(jenc@ebpabenefits.com\)](mailto:jenc@ebpabenefits.com) about rehearsals, at First Church, Wednesdays: 6:45 to 8:15pm
  - For information about the **Youth Choir**, please contact Ana Ruesink: [aruesink@firstchurchburlington.org](mailto:aruesink@firstchurchburlington.org).
- **CHILDREN & YOUTH:**
  - We are offering both in-person and remote (on Zoom from 9:15 to 9:45am – the link is: <https://bit.ly/churchschool930>) Church School program on Sunday mornings.

- Childcare (infants/toddlers/preschool) and Church School (K thru 5) are offered in-person during the 10am worship service.
  - For information about programs for Children and Youth through high school, please contact [Director of Faith Formation Hilah Clarke](mailto:hclarke@firstchurchburlington.org) at [hclarke@firstchurchburlington.org](mailto:hclarke@firstchurchburlington.org) You can see our Youth Program Calendar for "The Haven" [HERE](#)
- **INVITE YOUR FRIENDS TO CHURCH:** This is a great time to extend an invitation to neighbors, friends and family to join you in worship - in person at First Church - or remotely as the worship is live-streamed on our [YouTube Channel: https://www.youtube.com/FirstChurchBTV](https://www.youtube.com/FirstChurchBTV) at 10am on Sunday (a recording available on our YouTube channel any time after the service).

## **Late NOVEMBER & Early December EVENTS for YOU:**



### **ADVENT 2021 – CLOSE TO HOME**

Following worship this coming Sunday, all are invited to pick up a special "Advent Kit" to support your faith journey through Advent when our theme will be "Close to Home." Follow FirstChurchBTV on social media platforms (Facebook, Instagram & Twitter) as we will provide daily messages on this theme throughout Advent - #advent2021fccb

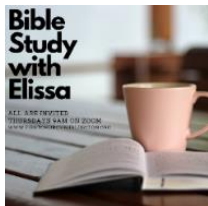
close to  
HOME

**Advent Worship Highlights: All worship services are offered in-person at First Church (masks required) and live streamed on the FirstChurchBTV YouTube Channel:**

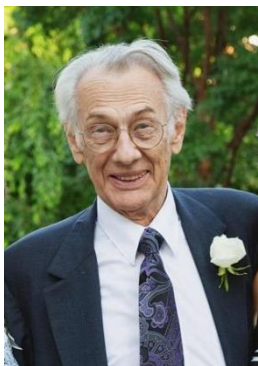
- 1<sup>st</sup> Sunday of Advent - November 28 at 10am: Mini-Messiah with guest musicians including soprano Mary Bonhag and a String Quartet!
- 2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday of Advent – December 5 at 10am: Communion Worship with Harp & Organ. Our Communion table is open to all – every age – every person. Non-fermented grape juice and bread are offered in Communion – a gluten-free option is available.
- Thursday December 9 at 6:30pm: The Youth Advent Worship Service – a favorite annual event.
- 3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday of Advent – December 12 at 10am: The Christmas Pageant! A no-rehearsal family event for the ages! Music to feature the Barker/Ruesink Band!
  - The annual "First Church Christmas Wrap" follows the Pageant at 11am on December 12 - we'll gather in the Church Dining Room to wrap gifts for children and adults in need in our community.
- 4<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Advent – December 19 at 10am: A Special Worship with music of the season and wonderful guest musicians.
- Blue Christmas – a sacred service for challenging times – date/time TBA
- December 24th: Christmas Eve Family Service at 5:30pm & Christmas Eve Traditional Service at 7:30pm – both services with lessons, carols and candlelight.
- Sunday December 26 at 10am: A Cozy Christmas Celebration
- Sunday January 2 at 10am: Star Sunday with Patti Casey!

### **INSPIRING ADVENT SUPPLIES & INFORMATION: *Pick Up Your Advent Kit on the first Sunday of Advent: November 28***

Our Deacons, Faith Formation and Connections Teams are working together with staff to assemble "Advent 2021 Kits" for each First Church household. Please plan to be in worship on Sunday November 28 at 10am to pick up your "Advent Kit." We'll deliver Advent Kits to all households who do not pick them up on the 28th. Let's walk the journey of Advent exploring... hope, peace, joy and love... together.



**Zoom Bible Study – Thursdays at 9am:** The Rev. Elissa Johnk’s Thursday morning, 9am, Bible Study is open to all! Elissa grounds this weekly conversation (on Zoom) in the scripture reading for the upcoming Sunday. Use this link: <https://bit.ly/BibleStudywithElissa>.



**DON JACKSON’S MEMORIAL SERVICE:** A Memorial Service, in celebration of the life of Don Jackson, is planned for **Friday December 3 at 2pm at First Church**. All are welcome in-person, masks are required. Don’s memorial will also be live streamed, and available later as a recording, on YouTube using this link: <https://bit.ly/donjacksonmemorial>

**THANK YOU for SUPPORTING YOUTH at FIRST CHURCH!**

**WREATH PICK UP TIME is:**

**SATURDAY – December 4: 10am to noon**

Special thanks to everyone who ordered wreaths this year. This First Church youth program fund raiser was a big success again this year.

If you ordered a wreath - please mark your calendar for WREATH PICK UP - 10am to noon - next Saturday - December 4 at First Church.

Questions? Please contact **Hilah Clarke**, Director of Faith Formation at [hclarke@firstchurchburlington.org](mailto:hclarke@firstchurchburlington.org)



**Share Christmas** is a First Church tradition dating back to 1988! Share Christmas is a way to give the joy of the holidays to others - and a way to receive practical support (and joy!) from the congregation.

❖ **GIVE:** To learn more about supporting Share Christmas with a gift or time or treasure, use this link:

<https://bit.ly/givesharechristmas2021>

❖ **APPLY:** If you are affiliated with First Church and need support, apply **BY SUNDAY DECEMBER 5** for Share Christmas assistance

using this link: <https://bit.ly/applysharechristmas2021>



**CHRISTMAS MISSION & CHRISTMAS POINSETTIA OFFERINGS:** Watch next week’s E-Newsletter for the opportunity to make a donation to the Christmas Mission Offering &/or to donate Christmas Flower - poinsettias - to decorate our Sanctuary for Advent and Christmas “in memory of” or “in honor of” someone special to you.

## SILENT VIGIL FOR RACIAL JUSTICE – Sunday December 5 - from 1:00 to 1:30pm:

The Outreach Team at First Church invites all to participate in the monthly (first Sunday) Silent Vigil for Racial Justice on the front lawn at First Church. Bring a sign, a water bottle, a chair if you want – and join in to be in solidarity for racial justice in Vermont.



**The YOUTH ADVENT SERVICE on THURSDAY DECEMBER 9:** Youth participating in Confirmation have planned a beautiful Advent Worship Service for **Thursday December 9<sup>th</sup> at 6:30pm**. All are welcome and invited to worship in person at First Church (masks required) or remotely via live stream on the FirstChurchBTV YouTube Channel.



**THE WOMEN'S BOOK GROUP READING LIST for 2021-22:** The Women's Book Group selections for 2021 -2022 are linked [HERE](#). Book discussions are scheduled for the 4<sup>th</sup> Monday of the month at 7pm – on Zoom – in November on the 22<sup>nd</sup>.

**On DECEMBER 20, 2021 - A Holiday Gathering for Women - Christmas Poetry & Short Story**

**Reading:** Our Women's Book Group invites all women to gather on *Monday December 20 at 7 pm* on Zoom for this annual event. Bring a favorite Advent or Christmas poem or story to read, or simply come to enjoy all of the stories and poems!



## SCHOLARSHIP FUNDS AVAILABLE – Applications due by December 15:

Use this link to learn more and to open the application: [2021-2022 Scholarship Application Form](#) Scholarships are available to all affiliated with First Church who are enrolled in post-secondary education.