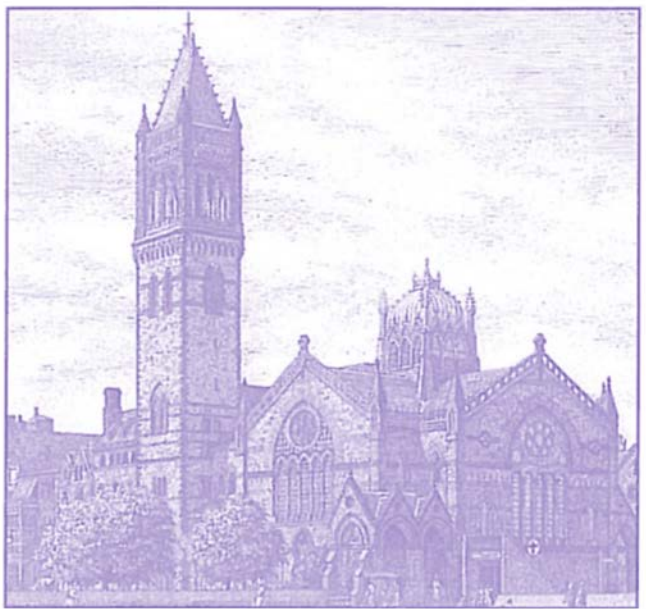


Old South Church

*Copley Square, Boston*

*A Congregation of the United Church of Christ*

*Gathered 1669*

November 29, 2026 ❖ 11:00am

# First Sunday of Advent

*Waiting for our blessed hope.*
Titus 2:13, adapted

## GATHER

PRELUDE *Präludium* Josef Ferdinand Norbert Seger

WELCOME AND INVOCATION Rachel J. Barton

*PASSING OF THE PEACE

May the peace of Christ be with you.

**And also with you.**

*Please greet those around you,*
*wishing them "peace" or "the peace of Christ."*

*HYMN 577 **God the Omnipotent!** RUSSIAN HYMN

**Indicates all who are able may stand*

LIGHTING THE ADVENT WREATH — Ou & Rich Family

Introductory Sentences

At Advent, we join in the tradition of lighting candles around the Advent Wreath [...] For like our ancestors, we know that though the days are long, God is with us, bringing about a new day.

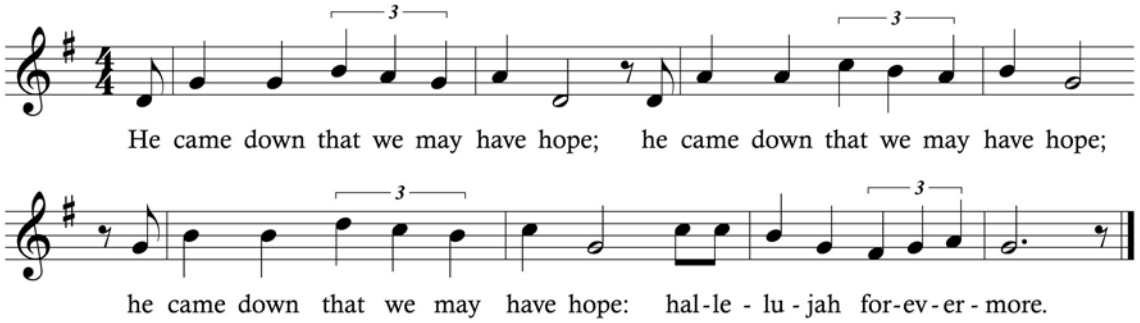
Call to Worship

A tree stump left in the earth does not merely decay,
it puts forth new shoots:
**Could it be that heaven is near at hand?**
A wolf slinks toward sheep and joins their fold:
**Could it be that heaven is near at hand?**
A child plays while serpents slumber:
**Could it be that heaven is near at hand?**
A prophet cries out from the wild places:
**"Prepare the way! For heaven is near at hand."**
People of God, prepare the way!
**For hope rises today.**

Lighting of Candles and Prayer

Spirit of God, you are with us. Though injustice persists, your Good News reigns eternally. Breathe into us, that we might be filled with your sustaining power to persist in hope. **Amen.**

SUNG RESPONSE




Text: Cameroon song
Tune: HE CAME DOWN, Cameroon song; transcr. and arr. John L. Bell (1986)

# LISTEN

PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION — David Story

SCRIPTURE — Isaiah 64:1-9

*HYMN 611 — **O Day of God, Draw Near** — ST. MICHAEL

SCRIPTURE — Mark 13:24-37

SERMON — John M. Edgerton

*HYMN 102 — **O How Shall I Receive You** — ST. THEODULPH

# RESPOND

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE — Ashley J. Popperson

God, in your mercy:
**Hear our prayers.**

THE LORD'S PRAYER

**Our Father, 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 debts, as we forgive our debtors; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.**

PRAYER RESPONSE — Let All Mortal Flesh Keep Silence — Edward Eicker, *arr.*

Let all mortal flesh keep silence, and with fear and trembling stand;
ponder nothing earthly minded, for with blessing in his hand
Christ our God to earth descendeth, our full homage to demand.

King of kings, yet born of Mary, as of old on earth he stood,
Lord of lords, in human vesture, in the body and the blood,
he will give to all the faithful his own self for heavenly food.

Rank on rank the host of heaven spreads its vanguard on the way,
as the Light of light descendeth from the realms of endless day,
that the powers of hell may vanish as the darkness clear away.

At his feet, the six-winged seraph; cherubim, with sleepless eye,
veil their faces to the presence, as with ceaseless voice they cry,
"Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia, Lord most high!"

CALL TO THE OFFERING — Rachel J. Barton

*To give online, scan the QR code*

*If you're new to Old South scan the QR code to tell us more about yourself*

OFFERTORY — Lo! He Comes with Clouds Descending — John Rutter, *arr.*

Lo! he comes with clouds descending,
once for favored sinners slain;
thousand, thousand saints attending
swell the triumph of his train:
Alleluia! God appears on earth to reign.

Every eye shall now behold him,
robed in dreadful majesty;
those who set at nought and sold him,
pierced and nailed him to the tree,
deeply wailing, shall the true Messiah see.

Yea, amen! let all adore thee,
high on thine eternal throne;
Savior, take the power and glory;
claim the kingdom for thine own:
O come quickly! Alleluia! Come, Lord, come!

PRAYER OF DEDICATION

*HYMN 112 **Keep Awake, Be Always Ready** WACHET AUF

*CHARGE AND BENEDICTION

Be the voice in our wilderness:
**We prepare the way of the Lord!**
Comfort and feed your flock:
**We prepare the way of the Lord!**
Make us watchful for your new world:
**We prepare the way of the Lord!**

POSTLUDE Wachet auf, ruft uns die Stimme Johann Sebastian Bach
BWV 645

❖❖❖❖❖❖❖❖❖❖

Join us for Refreshments & Fellowship
in the Gordon Chapel following the Postlude.

The flowers are given today by Reid and Debbie Leonard
in honor of supportive communities near and far.

*Close-Up,* a twenty minute tour of the Sanctuary,
begins immediately following worship. Please meet at the pulpit.
Led by docent David Story.

❖❖❖❖❖❖❖❖❖❖❖

## UPCOMING SPECIAL SERVICES AND EVENTS

### Candlelight Christmas Eve

**Thursday, December 24**

***Family Service with Impromptu Pageant* | 5PM**
***Lessons and Carols* | 8PM**
***Carols and Communion* | 11PM**

### Boston First Night at Old South Church

**Thursday, December 31 | All events free and open to the public**

#### Organist David Preston | 1pm

A concert of American organ music in celebration of America 250. The program features variations on the National Anthem and "My Country 'Tis of Thee," colonial-era repertoire, and Samuel Barber's Adagio for Strings.

#### Castle of Our Skins + Old South Church | 4pm

Old South partner organization Castle of Our Skins presents a First Night concert for the first time in the organization's history. A Black arts institution that centers Black arts, culture, and history within each of its curated events, Castle of Our Skins was recently honored by the City of Boston with a new performance venue and workspace at the edge of the South End.

#### "Pipes and Pops" Organ and Brass Spectacular! | 6:30 and 8pm

The best of Boston's brass and percussion artists join organist Mitchell Crawford in a supersonic concert of popular classics. This year's all-American program in celebration of America 250 features Fanfares, Marches, and Features for a variety of instruments, including Leroy Anderson's "Bugler's Holiday" (trumpets) and Henry Fillmore's classic ragtime novelty, "Lassus Trombone." Experience Old South's incredible E. M. Skinner organ, with over 7,000 room-shaking pipes!

## WELCOME TO OLD SOUTH CHURCH

Welcome to Old South Church in Boston. We are a progressive Christian church first gathered in 1669. The Church played a significant role in early American history. Today, Old South Church continues to serve as a sanctuary in the city of Boston.

## NEW AT OLD SOUTH?

Welcome! We are so glad you're here! Please take a moment to fill out a friendship pad so that we can be in touch with you. If you have any questions or would like to talk to a minister to learn more about the church, contact Associate Minister Ashley Popperson at *ashley@oldsouth.org*.

Children are welcome in all aspects of worship. We also offer childcare from 8:20am-12:30pm every Sunday and Church School at 10am. For questions about our children and family ministries, email *children@oldsouth.org*.

For LARGE print bulletins or children's bulletins, please ask an Usher.

An accessible, single-stall restroom is available near Reception. More restrooms are available. Please ask at the reception desk.

## HEARING ASSISTANCE

Hearing assist devices are available from Ava Welling, our Director of Audio. Please see Ava for a device and instructions on how to use it. For more information or answers to questions, please contact Ava at *ava@oldsouth.org*.

## GARAGE PARKING VALIDATIONS

We have arrangements for discounted parking with two nearby garages for Old South Church for Sunday worship services only. For more information check out *www.oldsouth.org/your-first-visit* or see the front desk.

## LEARN MORE

Check out the church website www.oldsouth.org for more on the history and ministries of Old South. See *www.oldsouth.org/calendar* for a calendar of current events.

CCLI #2802138 ❖CCS #12028 ❖ OneLicense #A-700000

**OLD SOUTH CHURCH *in* BOSTON — MINISTERS, OFFICERS, & STAFF**

John M. Edgerton, *Senior Minister*
Ashley J. Popperson, *Associate Minister* ❖ Rachel J. Barton, *Associate Minister for Transformation*
Dimitri Bawole, *Taylor Fellow*

Donald A. Wells, *Theologian in Residence* ❖ June R. Cooper, *Theologian in the City*
James Harrison Jr., *Wedding Minister* ❖ Kenneth H. Orth, *Healing Worship Minister*

James W. Crawford, *Senior Minister Emeritus* ❖ Nancy S. Taylor, *Senior Minister Emeritus*

Mitchell Crawford, *Minister of Music*
Jonathan Reddix, *Collaborative Pianist* ❖ Jan Christoph Hadenfeldt, *Visiting Organist*
Tim Harbold, *Director, Gospel Choir* ❖ Peter Coulombe, *Director, Old South Ringers*
Audrey Woodhams, *Creative Director for Thursday Night Church*

Kate Nintcheu, *Director, Children & Family Ministries*
Summer Marsh, *Director, Old South Preschool*
Jamie Chelel, *Children's Choir Director* ❖ *Jonathan Reddix , Children's Choir Accompanist*
Rory Razon, *Youth Group Co-Leader*

Rebecca Pasipanodya, *Director of Operations*
Rémy Hatfield-Gardner, *Administrative Assistant* ❖ Kathleen Steen, *Staff Accountant*
Karen Hand, *Wedding Coordinator*

Jamie G. Sage, *Multimedia Director* ❖ Ava Welling, *Director of Audio*
Rémy Hatfield-Gardner & William Wei, *Livestream Production Assistants*

Elias Perez, *Senior Sexton* ❖ Tahmina Akter, Richard Serebour, & MD Rahman, *Sextons*

Corey Spence, *Weekday Receptionist* ❖ Shirley Bivins, Anna Pratt, Shelia Randolph, & Zach Zang *Evening & Weekend Receptionists*

Maren Batalden, *Moderator* ❖ Rob Gabler, *Clerk* ❖ Donna Matson, *Treasurer*
Debby Kuenstner, *Chair, Board of Trustees* ❖ Kate Silfen, *Historian*
Rebecca Bowen & Laurie Stickels, *Senior Deacons*

## A NOTE ON THE INCLUSIVE DIMENSIONS OF GOD'S GRACE

Old South Church in Boston, in the name of its host, Jesus Christ, and in the spirit of Christ's invitation carved into the stone of this church's portico, "Behold I Set Before You an Open Door," welcomes all who seek to know God. Following the One who we believe is Sovereign and Savior, we affirm that each individual is a child of God, and recognize that we are called to be like one body with many members, seeking with others of every race, ethnicity, creed, class, age, gender, marital status, physical or mental ability, sexual orientation, gender identity, and gender expression to journey together toward the promised realm of God. We invite everyone to join in the common life and mission of our reconciling community through participation and leadership in this congregation, and by fully sharing in the worship, rites and sacraments of this church. As we all move forward with the work of this church, we commit ourselves to making justice and inclusivity a reality in this congregation and in the world. On the threshold of Christ's open door, we rely upon the healing, unconditional nature of God's love and grace to be our help and guide.

OLD SOUTH CHURCH *in* BOSTON

# ANNOUNCEMENTS



**BENEFIT CONCERT FOR BIJAN**

*Saturday, December 5, 3-5pm, Gordon Chapel, Free admission, free-will offering to support BIJAN*

You're invited to a benefit concert led by Willie Sordillo featuring a diverse group of musicians (including Zoë Krohne!), dancers and poets/spoken word artists to support the work of The Boston Immigration Justice Accompaniment Network (BIJAN). This event is sponsored by the participating artists, with co-sponsorship from the Old South Christian Service and Outreach Committee and The Immigration Justice Committee of First Parish in Brookline.

**CONTEMPLATIVE PRAYER**

*December 6 and every First Sunday, 10am, in the Columbarium*

Need some space to breathe? Time to rest in the spacious silence of God's presence? Please join us for Contemplative Prayer. Together, we'll engage in practices of contemplative prayer, share from our hearts, and find strength and solace in God's abiding love. Questions? Email *ashley@oldsouth.org* .

## ADVENT @ OLD SOUTH CHURCH

**16th ANNUAL ADVENT AND CHRISTMAS POETRY FEST** - *December 6*

*See forum announcements*

**CHRISTMAS PARTY**

*Sunday, December 20, 5-7pm in Mary Norton Hall*

*Click on the QR code to register so we know you are coming*

Join us for a time of merriment and community, caroling and children's activities! Dinner will be provided. You're invited to bring cookies for a cookie competition! Come prepared for holly, jolly, festive fun!

**GIVING BACK: THE TRUE SPIRIT OF CHRISTMAS**

As we prepare our hearts for Christmas, Old South has several opportunities to give to the wider community through our long-term community partners. Beginning November 19th, there will be a Christmas tree near the reception desk decorated with ornaments. Each ornament will have instructions for a gift for one of the gift drives listed below. You can select an ornament from the tree or you can participate online at ***oldsouth.org/true-spirit-christmas***.

## SMALL GROUPS AT OLD SOUTH CHURCH

For more information or questions about Small Groups at Old South Church, reach out to Associate Minister for Transformation Rachel Barton at ***rachel@oldsouth.org***.

**ONLINE SMALL GROUP**

*December 6 at 7:30pm EST and every first Sunday of the month*
*Go to tinyurl.com/2025OSCOnlineSmallGroup password 684963 to join*
Gather with other online members and Rev. Ashley for a time of fellowship, communion, and deepening our relationships with one another. Please bring something to eat (bread, cracker, cookie) and something to drink (juice, water, coffee) as your communion elements.

**THEOLOGICAL BOOK GROUP WINTER READ**

*Monday nights, beginning December 7, 6-7 pm, on zoom, limited to 20 participants.*
*Contact Don Wells at* ***granwell@comcast.net*** *to sign up.*
The Theological Book Group's winter book is *Do I Stay Christian? A Guide for the Doubters, the Disappointed, and the Disillusioned*, by well-known author, Brian McLaren. He examines some of the concerns many Christians have as to the sins the wider church has engaged in over the centuries. McLaren helps us see a way forward to greater faithfulness in our time by 'renouncing' this checkered past, aspects of which are still with us today, and 'announcing' the Good News in compelling ways. One reviewer says Mclaren's book is a 'breath of fresh air' helping us move into a faith-filled future. Interested?

**QUEER BOOK CLUB'S NEXT BOOK DISCUSSION:**

*The Last List of Mabel Beaumont* by Laurie Pearson. *Tuesday, December 8, 7:15pm on Zoom.*
*RSVP to Mary Thurston for link at* ***mthurston3@outlook.com***
Mabel Beaumont's husband Arthur loved lists. He'd leave them for her everywhere. Remember: eggs, butter, sugar'. 'I love you: today, tomorrow, always'. But now Arthur is gone. He died: softly, gently, not making a fuss. But he's still left her a list. This one has just one item on it though: 'Find D'. Mabel feels sure she knows what it means. She must track down her best friend Dot, who she hasn't seen since the fateful day she left more than sixty years ago.

**WELCOME TO THE TABLE**

*Wednesdays and one Saturday a month, 4:00 pm-6:00 pm, in person,*
*Allston Brighton Food Pantry, 404 Washington St, Brighton*
Join a group of Old South members and friends who put their faith into action by helping to feed the hungry at the Allston-Brighton Food Pantry. On either a designated Wednesday afternoon or Saturday morning, volunteers can help serve food or support clean-up of food service stations. Afterwards, the group will go to a restaurant to share a meal and conversation. Hosted by Esther Seguin.

**DECEMBER 6 OPEN NEWBURY**
Newbury Street will be car-free on December 6th so people can stroll and dine in a more relaxed atmosphere. Enjoy the car-free space, but remember to give yourself more time if you plan on finding on-street parking before worship. Parking at the Back Bay Garage is a good way to quickly find parking (at $5 or $10 depending on how long you stay.)

**OLD SOUTH AND ISBCC—Exploring Christian and Islamic Views on Jesus**
*December 14, 6pm, Old South Sanctuary*
Old South with host our friends from the Islamic Society of Boston Cultural Center. We will share a light meal and deep conversation about the role of Jesus in both Christianity and Islam.

**HEARD IT AT COUNCIL**
*Read the full report at* ***oldsouth.org/news/heard-it-council-october-2026***
Church Historian Kate Silfen reports on October's Council meeting which included discussions about budget, human resources, and the Associate Minister Search Committee.

## COMMUNITY HOUR FORUMS: SUNDAYS AT 10AM

Come early or stay late to connect with and learn other Old Southers on Sunday mornings at 10am on the 2nd floor. Programs change week to week, and are led by other Old South folks who want to invite you into what fires them up! This is a great way to get to know each other, and to get in on the discussions.

**CHRISTIAN ETHICS OF AI USE**
*November 29*
What does it mean to be a faithful Christian in the time of artificial intelligence? AI technologies are dominating the headlines and becoming a greater part of our everyday lives, but we don't often get opportunities to reflect on AI as a faith issue. Weijia Cheng, a former Silicon Valley software engineer and current student at the Boston University School of Theology, will walk us through the basic idea of artificial intelligence and introduce concepts from the Christian tradition that might help us establish a responsible relationship with this emerging technology. Questions? Email William Wei ***williamweimian@gmail.com***.

**16th ANNUAL ADVENT AND CHRISTMAS POETRY FEST** - *December 6*
Do you have a favorite poem or short prose selection that celebrates the season? Or have you written a poem or brief meditation that sheds light on the Christmas story? Come and share it. Selections can be humorous, serious or thought provoking . . . but all reflecting some aspect of the season. Let Don Wells ***granwell@comcast.net*** know by Wednesday, December 2 if you would like to read, along with the title of your selection so as to avoid duplication. Even if you choose not to read, please come to hear what other Old South folks are reading and thinking. It will be a wonderful occasion! See you there!

**THE WEEKLY PUSHBACK: BIJAN**

*To learn more and to donate **www.beyondbondboston.org/***
*Have other weekly pushback ideas? Email **outreach@oldsouth.org***

While it is covered in the news less, the pace of deportation of non-violent residents in the Boston area continues at near record highs. Boston Immigration Justice Accompaniment Network is a community of individuals, faith communities, and other activist groups that provide accompaniment to those going through the immigration system. This can include support in court or at ICE check-ins, legal referrals, fundraising for bond or legal fees, letters of support from the community, rides for families to visit loved ones in detention, and logistical assistance with paperwork or bond payments, and more. They also help with housing, transportation, and other immediate needs of people released on bond who have no other resources in the community. We are grateful to stand in solidarity with them with a $1,000 donation. Former Jazz Worship band leader Willie Sordillo is also hosting a BIJAN fundraiser and free will offering performance at Old South this Saturday, December 5th, at 3 pm in the Chapel. *See page 1 for more concert info.*

**WEEKLY WORSHIP**
**Join us in person, on Facebook, and YouTube**
**Thursday Night Church**, Thursdays at 6:00 pm
**FIRST Worship** Sundays at 9:00 am
**FESTIVAL Worship** Sundays at 11:00 am
**VESPERS HEALING Worship,** Second Sundays at 5:00 pm via Zoom

*To give online, Scan the QR code*

*If You're new to Old South, scan the QR code to tell us more about yourself.*

NOTICES 1) Worship services and events at Old South Church are sometimes photographed and videotaped to document the vibrant life of our church. If you do not wish to be included in these recordings, please notify an usher. 2) Please do not leave bags unattended in the building, including the Sanctuary, for any length of time.