



**The First Church of Monson, Congregational
United Church of Christ
Second Sunday of Easter; Communion
Sunday, April 7, 2024**

*As a Christian community of faith and love,
we at First Church strive to accept and respect all people.*

- Core Values, 2022

THREE DAYS

THAXTED



1. Three days our world was bro - ken; the
2. Three days— and on the third day, the
3. Three days our world was bro - ken and



1. Lord of life lay dead. "Take up your cross," he
2. wom - en came at dawn. His tomb, they said, was
3. in an in - stant healed, God's cov - e - nant of



1. told us who fol - lowed where he led. Would
2. emp - ty, his bro - ken bod - y gone. Who
3. mer - cy in mys - ter - y re - vealed. Two



1. we now hang in tor - ment with thieves on ev - 'ry side,
2. could be - lieve their sto - ry? The dead do not a - rise,
3. thou - sand years are one day in God's e - ter - nal sight,



1. our Pass - o - ver shat - tered, our hope cru - ci - fied?
2. yet he walks a - mong us, and with our own eyes
3. and yes - ter - day's sor - rows are this day's de - light.



1. Three days we hid in si - lence, in
2. we've seen him at this ta - ble; we've
3. Though still Christ's bod - y suf - fers, pierced



1. bit - ter fear and grief. Three days we clung to -
2. shared his bread and wine. Hearts burn - ing bright with -
3. dai - ly by the sword, yet death has no do -



1. geth - er where he had washed our feet.
2. in us, we've seen his glo - ry shine.
3. min - ion: the ris - en Christ is Lord!

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Music: Gustav Holst, 1874–1934, alt.

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Second Sunday of Easter; Communion Sunday
April 7, 2024**

Join us today in welcoming our guest
preacher, Deb Shepard

Prelude

The Empty Tomb
- Lani Smith (1934-2015)

Welcome and Announcements

Introit

***Passing of the Lord's Peace**

***Call to Worship (responsive)**

L: Life has been revealed to us in this Easter season.
Gather once more to testify to life.

P: *We declare to each other what we have experienced. In
community we find the life God intends.*

L: Early believers were of one heart and soul. We, too,
are called to find common ground in Christ.

P: *How very good and pleasant it is when kindred people
live together in unity.*

L: Peace be with you as we celebrate the resurrection.
Christ is with us to renew our faith.

P: *We are here to testify to God's grace. We will share our
story and ourselves.*

***Opening Hymn**

Three Days
(Page 1)

***Prayer of Confession**

Holy One, we thank you for your love and your grace so abundant, so overflowing, that you receive us in spite of our fear and our timid lives of faith. As you encouraged the first Christians to witness in the face of all risks, encourage us to follow your call rather than to cower before the powerful. Grant us peace in the midst of the challenge; and fill us with your Holy Spirit, through the risen Christ. Amen.

***Gloria Patri**

Glory be to the Father; and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost; As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen. Amen.

Anthem

What A Beautiful Name
Cindy DeSellier and Jeanne Dill, duettists

Giving of Ourselves

Call to Offering

The Holy One has shown us the meaning of generosity in the beautiful diversity of creation, in the overflowing love of Jesus Christ, and in the never-ending gift of the Holy Spirit! The Holy One has abundantly blessed us and called us to be a community that blesses others through the sharing of our love, our talents, and our material possessions. Let us give generously as we receive our morning offering.

Offertory

Take My Life and Let It Be
(Page 7)

***Doxology**

Praise God, from whom all blessings flow;

Praise Him, all creatures here below;

Alleluia, alleluia!

Praise Him above, ye heavenly host;

Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.

Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia, alleluia, alleluia!

***Prayer of Dedication**

Holy One, whose heart abounds with gifts, receive this offering as a sign of our intention to live surrounded by your mercy, inspired by your Spirit, open to the joy of your presence, hospitable to one another, and generous toward your world. Amen.

First Reading

Acts 4:32-35

³²Now the whole group of those who believed were of one heart and soul, and no one claimed private ownership of any possessions, but everything they owned was held in common. ³³With great power the apostles gave their testimony to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and great grace was upon them all. ³⁴There was not a needy person among them, for as many as owned lands or houses sold them and brought the proceeds of what was sold. ³⁵They laid it at the apostles' feet, and it was distributed to each as any had need.

Second Reading

1 John 1:1-10; 1 John 2:1-2

We declare to you what was from the beginning, what we have heard, what we have seen with our eyes, what we have looked at and touched with our hands, concerning the word of life — ²this life was revealed, and we have

*Those who are able are invited to stand.

seen it and testify to it, and declare to you the eternal life that was with the Father and was revealed to us— ³we declare to you what we have seen and heard so that you also may have fellowship with us; and truly our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ. ⁴We are writing these things so that our joy may be complete.

⁵This is the message we have heard from him and proclaim to you, that God is light and in him there is no darkness at all. ⁶If we say that we have fellowship with him while we are walking in darkness, we lie and do not do what is true; ⁷but if we walk in the light as he himself is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus his Son cleanses us from all sin.

⁸If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. ⁹If we confess our sins, he who is faithful and just will forgive us our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness. ¹⁰If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us.

My little children, I am writing these things to you so that you may not sin. But if anyone does sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous; ²and he is the atoning sacrifice for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the sins of the whole world.

Sermon

“Acts”

Sacrament of Holy Communion

Invitation

Prayer of Consecration

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Communion Hymn

Come, Risen Lord

(Page 8)

Sharing the Bread and Cup

Please partake of the bread at the moment most meaningful to you. Please wait to partake of the cup until all are served; then we drink as one.

Prayer of Thanksgiving

***Closing Hymn**

Savior, Like a Shepherd Lead Us

(Page 9)

***Benediction**

Postlude

Jesus Christ Is Risen

- Healey Willan (1880-1968)

Today, Alleluia!

Take My Life and Let It Be

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Frances R. Havergal, 1836-1879

VIENNA 7.7.7.7.

Melody by Justin H. Knecht, 1752-1817

1 Take my life, and let it be Con - se - crat - ed, Lord, to thee;
2 Take my hands, and let them move At the im - pulse of thy love;
3 Take my will, and make it thine; It shall be no long - er mine;
4 Take my love: my Lord I pour At thy feet its treas - ure store;

Take my mo - ments and my days, Let them flow in cease - less praise.
Take my feet, and let them be Swift and beau - ti - ful for thee.
Take my heart, it is thine own; It shall be thy roy - al throne.
Take my - self, and I will be Ev - er, on - ly, all for thee. A - men.

CONSECRATION

Come, Risen Lord

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George W. Briggs, 1875-1959

SURSUM CORDA 10.10.10.10.

Alfred M. Smith, 1879-

In unison

1 Come, ris - en Lord, and deign to be our guest; Nay, let us
2 We meet, as in that up - per room they met, Thou at the
3 One bod - y we, one bod - y who par - take, One Church u -
4 One with each oth - er, Lord, for one in thee, Who art one

be thy guests; the feast is thine; Thy - self at thine own
ta - ble, bless - ing, yet dost stand; "This is my bod - y";
nit - ed in com - mun - ion blest; One name we bear, one
Sav - ior and one liv - ing Head; Then o - pen thou our

board make man - i - fest In this our sac - ra - ment of bread and wine.
so thou giv - est yet: Faith still re - ceives the cup as from thy hand.
bread of life we break, With all thysaints on earth and saints at rest.
eyes, that we may see; Be known to us in break - ing of the bread A - men.

LORD'S SUPPER

*Those who are able are invited to stand.

Savior, Like a Shepherd Lead Us



1. Sa - vior, like a shep-herd lead us, — Much we need Thy ten - der care;
 2. We are Thine, do Thou be - friend us, — Be the guar - dian of our way;
 3. Thou hast pro-mised to re - ceive us, — Poor and sin - ful though we be;
 4. Ear - ly let us seek Thy fa - vour, — Ear - ly let us do Thy will;



In Thy plea - sant pas-tures feed us, — For our use Thy folds pre - pare:
 Keep Thy flock, from sin de - fend us, — Seek us when we go as - tray:
 Thou hast mer - cy to re - lieve us, — Grace to cleanse, and pow'r to free:
 Bles - sed Lord and on - ly Sa - viour, — With Thy love our bo-soms fill:



Bles-sèd Je - sus, bles-sèd Je - sus, Thou hast bought us, Thine we are;
 Bles-sèd Je - sus, bles-sèd Je - sus, Hear, O hear us when we pray;
 Bles-sèd Je - sus, bles-sèd Je - sus, Ear - ly let us turn to Thee;
 Bles-sèd Je - sus, bles-sèd Je - sus, Thou hast loved us, love us still;



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Serving You Today

Worship Leaders

Ministers of the Congregation
Pastor
Director of Music Ministries
Greeters/Ushers
Lay Reader
Fellowship

All Members of First Church
Rev. Jack Kraaz
Kiel Krommer
Roger & Judy Tirrell
Jeanne Dill
Lauren & Alex Fox

Officers

Moderator
Clerk
Treasurer
Chair, Board of Deacons
Chair, Board of Trustees

Cindy DeSellier
Carol Mullen
Suzanne Kelley
Jeanne Dill
David Sanborn

Members at Large

Lynn Galica
Elaine Harris
Mary Newland

Staff

Church Administrator
Sunday School Superintendent
Custodian

Lee Brahen
Erin Greene Wallace
Linda Whippie

Office Hours, Pastoral Care, and Contact Information

The office is open Tuesday and Thursday from 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. Pastor Jack is in the office on Tuesdays and Thursdays, and at other times by appointment. You can always leave a message on the church answering machine at 413-267-3312 when the office is not staffed or contact the office by email at office@firstchurchmonson.org.

IN OUR LOVE AND PRAYERS

Please complete a Prayer Request Form and place it in the offering plate if you wish to include a name in next Sunday's bulletin. Your loved one will remain on the prayer list for one month, after which you may resubmit a request if necessary.

For healing and support:

Jimmy
Robert

Elliott
Allie & New Baby Stella
Monette Family

Sharon Bliss
Anne

Angela L.
Peter & Teresa

Dave & Gail
Eldon Nothe

Jean Taylor
Danielle

Jeff Lord
Kwaku Darko Mensah
Julie
Mike Kurasinski

Martha Warren
Jeannette
Douglas Maliar

For comfort in grief:

The family of Raymond Rocca
The family of Priscilla Martin
The family of Glenn Putek
The family of Ricky Nash

For strength and comfort during war:

The people of Ukraine
The people of Israel and Gaza

For all service people, wherever they may be:

Chelsea Carr
Tim Olson, USN
Michael Wales, USN

Stephen Dill, USN
Malik Pugh, USMC

This Week in the Life of the Congregation

- April 7, Sunday
10:00 a.m. - Worship (S)
11:00-11:30 a.m. - Fellowship (F)
11:30-1:00 p.m. - Deacons' Meeting (PS)
- April 8, Monday
LOAVES & FISHES
3:00-4:30 p.m. - Girl Scouts (SA)
- April 10, Wednesday
6:00-8:00 p.m. - Boy Scouts (F/SA)
7:00-8:00 p.m. - Taizé Rehearsal (C)
- April 11, Thursday
5:30-6:30 p.m. - Zumba Class (SA)
6:30-8:00 p.m. - Choir Practice (C)
- April 13, Saturday
7:00-8:30 a.m. - AA Meeting (L)
10:30-3:30 p.m. - Girl Scout Paint & Sip (F)
- April 14, Sunday
10:00 a.m. - Worship (S)
11:00-11:30 a.m. - Fellowship (F)
11:30-1:00 p.m. - Church Council (F)

C - Julie Sprague Chapel

F - Fellowship Hall

K - Kitchen

L - Library

PS - Pastor's Study

S - Sanctuary

SA - Sunday School Auditorium

SS - Sunday School Classroom

SSC - Silver Street Chapel

Church News

Scholarship Applications. The Dorcas Society H. Leonora Stiles Thomas Educational Trust is offering scholarships to members or affiliates of First Church who meet the following qualifications: (1) member of a current high school graduating class who has been accepted at a school of higher learning; and (2) is a member or affiliate of First Church who has provided some type of meaningful service to the programs of the church. All applications must be completed and returned to the Dorcas Society Trustees by **11:00 a.m. on April 14, 2024.**

Also offered by First Church is the H.C. Sanderson Family Scholarship. Recipients must meet the following criteria: (1) be members of First Church; (2) have completed at least one year of post high school education; (3) have strong academics; (4) participate in extracurricular activities and/or work activities; and (5) exhibit financial need.

Applications for both scholarships may be obtained from First Church's website <http://www.firstchurchmonson.org>, in *The Messenger* mail slot in Fellowship Hall, or from one of the Dorcas Trustees: Elaine Harris, Crystal Kofke, Carol Mullen, or Trish Nolen-Parkhouse.

Hearts Willing Club is sponsoring a Drum Circle on Wednesday, April 24 at 7:00 p.m. in Fellowship Hall. All are invited. Dave Curry will be the drum facilitator. If you have a drum, please feel free to bring it; if not, drums will be available to rent for the evening. Be prepared for a fun and informative evening of gentle drumming. **Reservations are required by Sunday, April 21.** There is a sign-up sheet in Fellowship Hall. There is a \$3.00 drum rental charge, which can be paid at the door. The evening is free if you will be bringing your own drum. Refreshments will be served after the Drum Circle.

Taizé Concert. Under the direction of Kiel Krommer, Director of Music Ministry, First Church of Monson will hold a service of Taizé

Music on Sunday, April 28 at 7:00 p.m. This ecumenical service of music and meditation is free and open to the public. A reception will follow the service.

Welcome to First Church



Welcome! If this is your first or second Sunday with us, we are grateful that you've come to be with us this morning. It is our hope that you experience the love of Christ and God's presence during our worship. If you have any questions at all about where to go or what to do, our deacons, ushers, and church members are here to assist in making you feel right at home, so please do not hesitate to ask.

All members and guests are encouraged to wear name tags. Guests may obtain a temporary adhesive name tag from an usher.

The Sacrament of Communion is offered the first Sunday of the month. All are welcome to partake of the Lord's Supper. It is up to parents to decide whether their children are ready to receive this Sacrament.

Handicapped parking and a wheelchair ramp to the church and Fellowship Hall are on the High Street side of the building. Hearing assistive devices are available from the ushers.

Fellowship Hour begins after worship in Fellowship Hall (just follow the crowd). Please join us for refreshments and conversation.

Our *Let's Eat* breakfast is on the third Sunday of each month. Come enjoy a hearty breakfast from 8:00 a.m. to 9:30 a.m. before worship. Donations are gratefully accepted but not required.

Learn more. If you would like to learn more about First Church, please call us at (413) 267-3312, email to office@firstchurchmonson.org, or visit our website at <http://www.firstchurchmonson.org>.

*No matter who you are, or where you are on life's journey,
you are welcome here!*