



**First Church of Monson, Congregational
United Church of Christ
Sunrise Service
Sunday, March 31, 2024**

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

Core Values, 2022

Welcome

***Call to Worship**

L: The Lord is my strength and my song.

P: **The Lord has become my salvation.**

L: There is a song of joy and victory in the tents of the righteous.

P: **The right hand of the Lord has triumphed! The right hand of the Lord is exalted!**

L: Because of the Lord's victory, I will not die.

P: **Instead I will live and proclaim what God has done.**

L: Open to me the gates of the Temple.

P: **I will go in and give thanks to the Lord.**

L: I will give thanks to the Lord, for he has answered me.

P: **He has become my salvation.**

L: The stone the builders rejected as worthless turned out to be the most important of all.

P: **Let us rejoice and be glad in it.**

Hymn

Morning Has Broken

*Morning has broken like the first morning
Blackbird has spoken like the first bird
Praise for the singing, praise for the morning
Praise for them springing fresh from the world.*

*Sweet the rain's new fall, sunlit from Heaven
Like the first dewfall on the first grass
Praise for the sweetness of the wet garden
Sprung in completeness where His feet pass*

*Mine is the sunlight, mine is the morning
Born of the one light, Eden saw play
Praise with elation, praise every morning
God's recreation of the new day.
Morning has broken like the first morning
Blackbird has spoken like the first bird
Praise for the singing, praise for the morning
Praise for them springing fresh from the world.*

Unison Prayer

Alleluia! Christ is risen! He is risen indeed! Receive our unending love and devotion as we celebrate today the undeserved gift of your love. We pray these things in the name of Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Amen.

First Reading

I Corinthians 15:1-11

Now I would remind you, brothers and sisters, of the good news that I proclaimed to you, which you in turn received, in which also you stand, ²through which also you are being saved, if you hold firmly to the message that I proclaimed to you—unless you have come to believe in vain. ³For I handed on to you as of first importance what I in turn had received: that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the scriptures, ⁴and that he was buried, and that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the scriptures, ⁵and that he appeared to Cephas, then to the twelve. ⁶Then he appeared to more

than five hundred brothers and sisters at one time, most of whom are still alive, though some have died. ⁷Then he appeared to James, then to all the apostles. ⁸Last of all, as to one untimely born, he appeared also to me. ⁹For I am the least of the apostles, unfit to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God. ¹⁰But by the grace of God I am what I am, and his grace toward me has not been in vain. On the contrary, I worked harder than any of them—though it was not I, but the grace of God that is with me. ¹¹Whether then it was I or they, so we proclaim and so you have come to believe.

Joys and Concerns

Pastoral Prayer

The Lord's Prayer

Our Father and Mother, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil, for thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.

Second Reading

Mark 16:1–8

When the sabbath was over, Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James, and Salome bought spices, so that they might go and anoint him. ²And very early on the first day of the week, when the sun had risen, they went to the tomb. ³They had been saying to one another, “Who will roll away the stone for us from the entrance to the tomb?” ⁴When they looked up, they saw that the stone,

which was very large, had already been rolled back. ⁵As they entered the tomb, they saw a young man, dressed in a white robe, sitting on the right side; and they were alarmed. ⁶But he said to them, “Do not be alarmed; you are looking for Jesus of Nazareth, who was crucified. He has been raised; he is not here. Look, there is the place they laid him. ⁷But go, tell his disciples and Peter that he is going ahead of you to Galilee; there you will see him, just as he told you.” ⁸So they went out and fled from the tomb, for terror and amazement had seized them; and they said nothing to anyone, for they were afraid.

Homily

“What We Believe”

Hymn

I Danced in the Morning

*I danced in the morning when the world was begun,
and I danced in the moon and the stars and the sun,
and I came down from heaven and I danced on the earth,
at Bethlehem I had my birth.*

*Dance, then, wherever, you may be,
I am the Lord of the Dance, said he,
and I’ll lead you all, wherever you may,
and I’ll lead you all in the Dance, said he.*

*I danced for the scribe and the Pharisee,
but they would not dance and they wouldn’t follow me.*

*I danced for the fishermen, for James and John –
they came with me and the dance went on.*

*Dance, then, wherever, you may be,
I am the Lord of the Dance, said he,
and I’ll lead you all, wherever you may,
and I’ll lead you all in the Dance, said he.*

*I danced on the Sabbath and I cured the lame;
The holy people said it was a shame.
They whipped and they stripped and they hung me high,
And they left me there on a cross to die.
Dance, then, wherever, you may be,
I am the Lord of the Dance, said he,
and I'll lead you all, wherever you may,
and I'll lead you all in the Dance, said he.*

*I danced on Friday when the sky turned black;
it's hard to dance with the devil on your back.
They buried my body and they thought I'd gone,
but I am the Dance, and I still go on.
Dance, then, wherever, you may be,
I am the Lord of the Dance, said he,
and I'll lead you all, wherever you may,
and I'll lead you all in the Dance, said he.*

*They cut me down, and I leapt up high;
I am the life that'll never, never die;
I'll live in you if you'll live in me -
I am the Lord of the Dance, said he.
Dance, then, wherever, you may be,
I am the Lord of the Dance, said he,
and I'll lead you all, wherever you may,
and I'll lead you all in the Dance, said he.*

Benediction



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.

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

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.

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

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

No matter who you are, or where you are on life's journey, you are welcome here."

Pastor Deb Shepard, Guest Preacher

