

Sacrament Sunday!
Sunday, September 14th at 10:00 am
*Held at Paradise Lake Pavilion
on Lakeside Drive
Monson, MA*

First Church is excited to offer a new way to come back together after a nice, long summer. On Sunday, September 14th at our regular 10:00 am worship time, we will gather at the Paradise Lake Pavilion to celebrate Sacrament Sunday.

Our congregation continues to look for ways to move towards celebrating our faith that strengthens our connection with God, deepens relationships with one another, and fosters connections with our larger community. Beyond the balloons and lavish spreads of a “Rally Sunday” or a “Welcome Sunday,” Sacrament Sunday digs a little deeper, getting to the heart of the matter by giving us an opportunity to think about what it really means to be a follower of Jesus in today’s world. Are we living in a way that emulates God? How are we called to *be the church* in this world?

The Reverend Doctor Holly Norwick invites us to think about how we take our faith life to the next level in an untraditional service that gets past the physical church and back to the church as it was created to be: the people. We will gather together, outside in nature, to explore together what it means to be a Christian in a time such as this, and more specifically, what it means to be a part of the First Church of Monson in our community, and beyond.

At Sacrament Sunday we will break bread in communion with one another and remember the extravagant gift of God’s grace poured over each beloved person, created in intricate love and intentional diversity. We will also celebrate baptism at the lakeside for all who wish to be baptized or rededicate themselves in baptism in the beautiful waters of Paradise Lake. We will sit at the table in fellowship with one another with good ole hotdogs on the grill and watch as God turns joy into the sacred.

Let's get down to the holy bones of Christianity, focusing on our call to *be the church* in this world, celebrate the sacraments of communion and baptism in a new way, deepen our relationship with one another, all in the sanctity of the beauty of God’s artistic handiwork of nature. It won’t be the same without you! Your seat at the table awaits.

Logistics

Sacrament Sunday worship will take place at the Paradise Lake Pavilion, which is about a 5-minute drive from the First Church building. We have arranged shuttle bus transportation from First Church to the pavilion, beginning at about 9:30am. Folks are encouraged to park at the First Church parking lot and utilize the shuttle bus which will take them straight there and back. If there is anyone who needs handicap accessibility and wishes to drive their personal vehicle to the pavilion, they can park in the handicapped spaces available on-site, directly in front of the pavilion.

Location Questions

1. Handicap access? There is a parking area similar to the gravel area at the First Church that is situated right next to the pavilion. A paved path leads to the pavilion from the parking area. Because the path has a slight incline, we will have wheelchairs available and people ready to push, as well as a golf cart. You can also drive right up in your car. It is built for all abilities!

2. Seating? There are about 10 picnic tables with benches on both sides, as well as 2 12-foot long single benches. We can also bring single seats for anyone who would prefer a folding chair.
3. Bathrooms? There is one sani-can (*portable bathroom*) on the premises. It is fully outfitted with toilet paper and hand sanitizer.
4. Trouble hearing? The pavilion is outfitted with plenty of electric outlets. We plan on setting up a small sound system to help anyone who might have trouble hearing in an outdoor setting.
5. Mosquitoes? Just like everywhere we go outside, there is always a threat of bugs. We will have bug spray available for anyone who wants to use it. We also plan on citronella candles on the tables. We will also have a few cans of sunscreen for those who wish to enjoy the sunshine.
6. Hungry? We have an amazing big grill up at the pavilion! If we light some charcoal before the action starts, it should be ready to grill some hotdogs at the end of service. Perfect timing!
Fellowship will be hotdogs, chips, and drinks!
7. What do I wear? At Sacrament Sunday we will be outdoors. Please consider wearing comfortable clothes and shoes. For those who are participating in, or witnessing, the baptisms, consider a bathing suit underneath your clothes and water shoes/sandals to walk in the sand. If you would like to swim or spend time in the sand during and/or after the baptisms, wear your swim suit, too!

Kids

People of all ages are part of this exciting worship. For youth who wish to participate, there will be an exciting program during the worship time in the field near the pavilion. Scavenger hunts, stories, and fun of all kinds await! And, after the baptisms, kids are invited to play on the slide and swings, or swim at the beach with supervision.

(Adults are too, by the way.)

Baptisms

All are welcome to be baptized or to rededicate their baptism at Sacrament Sunday. You do *not* have to be a member of First Church to be baptized or rededicated by Pastor Holly. She will offer baptism to all who wish.

- Been thinking about being baptized yourself? You are welcome
- Want to baptize a minor or help another be baptized? You are welcome.
- Been turned away from baptism before? (*If so, I am deeply sorry you experienced that.*) You are welcome.

When it is time to celebrate baptisms, all who wish to participate and any who wish to witness and celebrate will walk down to the beach area. For those with mobility issues, we will have wheelchairs available and happy helpers ready to push! We also will have a golf cart for others who need it, too. The distance from the pavilion to the lakeshore is approximately 4-5 houses down.

Please contact Pastor Holly if you would like to be baptized or rededicate your baptism on Sacrament Sunday. Certified baptism certificates will be available to all who want them. You can reach Pastor Holly via email at pastor@firstchurchmonson.org or by calling 413-267-3312 or 808-71-4701.

All Are Welcome!