



**The First Church of Monson, Congregational  
United Church of Christ  
An Open and Affirming Church  
Fifth Sunday in Lent/Communion  
Sunday, April 6, 2025**

*Whoever you are, wherever you are on life's journey,  
**you** are welcome here!*

# All Are Welcome

C<sup>7</sup> F C F B<sup>b</sup> C Dm F C F Dm<sup>7</sup>

1. Let us build a house where love can dwell And all can safe-ly live, A place where saints and  
 build a house where proph-ets speak, and words are strong and true, where all God's chil-dren  
 build a house where hands will reach be-yond the wood and stone to heal and strength-en

Gm C Gm C<sup>7</sup> B<sup>b</sup> F Am Dm

chil-dren tell How hearts learn to for-give. Built of hopes and dreams and  
 dare to seek to dream God's reign a-new. Here the cross shall stand as  
 serve and teach, and live the Word they've known. Here the out-cast and the

Gm C F B<sup>b</sup> F B<sup>b</sup> A<sup>7</sup> Dm

vi-sions, Rock of faith and vault of grace; Here the love of Christ shall end di-vi-sions:  
 wit-ness and as sym-bol of God's grace; here as one we claim the faith of Je-sus:  
 strang-er bear the im-age of God's face; Let us bring an end to fear and dan-ger:

Gm Dm Am Gm F Gm C F B<sup>b</sup> F C<sup>7</sup>

All are wel-come, all are wel-come, all are wel-come in this place. Let us

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**Praise and Worship** (*starting at 9:50*)

**Welcome**

Rev. Dr. Holly Norwick

**Passing of the Lord's Peace**

**Children's Church**

Rev. Dr. Holly Norwick

**Organ Invocation**

*Prelude in D Minor*

- J. S. Bach (1685-1750)

**Introit**

**\*Call to Worship (responsive)**

One: Today we gather in God's house from near and far.

**All: *We are the children of God!***

One: Though we differ in language, custom, and tradition,

**All: *we are siblings in Christ!***

One: For there is one Lord, one faith, and one baptism;

**All: *One God, Creator of all!***

One: One Spirit, uniting creation together

**All: *to bring about God's vision of love for all the world.***

One: Come, let us worship the God of our Salvation!

**All: *Praise God from Whom all blessings flow!***

**\*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!***

**\*Unison Prayer**

***All loving God, we come to You this morning as a beautiful blended family. Each one of us has our own story to tell, we come from many different backgrounds, have different viewpoints, possess different talents, and experience different challenges; yet we worship You with the understanding that we are all members of Your family. Help us open wide the door for all to come, and give equal value to all whom we meet. Let us lift our voices and sing “All Are Welcome.” We ask this in the name of the One whom we call by many names; Amen.***

**\*Opening Hymn**

*All Are Welcome*

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**Epistle Reading**

*Philippians 2: 2-7*

Each of us should please our neighbors for their good, to build them up. For even Christ did not please himself but, as it is written: “The insults of those who insult you have fallen on me.” For everything that was written in the past was written to teach us, so that through the endurance taught in the Scriptures and the encouragement they provide, we might have hope.

May the God who gives endurance and encouragement give you the same attitude of mind toward each other that Christ Jesus had, so that with one mind and one voice you may glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Accept one another, then, just as Christ accepted you, in order to bring praise to God. For I tell you that Christ has become a servant of the Jews on behalf of God's truth, so that the promises made to the patriarchs might be confirmed.

## **Choral Anthem**

## *Lenten Meditation*

- Jay Althouse

## **Gospel Reading**

## *Mark 9: 33-37*

Therefore, if you have any encouragement from being united with Christ, if any comfort from his love, if any common sharing in the Spirit, if any tenderness and compassion, then make my joy complete by being like-minded, having the same love, being one in spirit and of one mind. Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility value others above yourselves, not looking to your own interests but each of you to the interests of the others.

In your relationships with one another, have the same mindset as Christ Jesus: Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be used to his own advantage; rather, he made himself nothing by taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness.

## **Sermon**

## *"Blended Family"*

## **Musical Response "Spirit of the Living God"**

*Spirit of the living God, fall afresh on me.*

*Spirit of the living God, fall afresh on me.*

*Melt me, mold me, fill me, use me.*

*Spirit of the living God, fall afresh on me.*

## **Prayers of the People (Popcorn Style)**

## **Pastoral Prayer**

## The Lord's Prayer

***Our Father, Who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kin-dom 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 kin-dom, the power, and the glory, forever; Amen.***

## Call to Offering

*Rev. Dr. Holly Norwick*

## \*Doxology

***Praise God, from whom all blessings flow;  
Praise Him, all creatures here below;  
Praise Him above, ye heavenly host;  
Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Amen.***



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## \*Prayer of Dedication

*Rev. Dr. Holly Norwick*

## \*Communion Hymn     *Shepherd of Souls*

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### ***Sacrament of Holy Communion***

*Friends, if you have not yet experienced Christ's meal here at FCM, please know that all are invited to this table. So come, take your seat, and let us join together in Holy Communion.*

Rev: Peace be with you!

**All: *And also with you!***

Rev: We gather around this table, set before time began.

**All: *We come to this table to celebrate, share, and experience God's life-giving love!***

## **Prayer of Invocation**

Rev: Holy are You, God of all creation, and blessed is Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord. Yearning for us to know You, He came to earth to be with us. Longing for reconciliation between You and Your children, He became the broken Bread of Life.

\*Those who are able are invited to stand.

Aching for our release from the agony of sin and death, He suffered on the cross, so we might be made whole. All this, so we may gather around this table.

## **Words of Invitation**

Friends, today is a joyful day! It is a day that we gather around Christ's table and partake in the wonder and grace of communion. All are invited to this table; this table does not belong to any one of us; this table does not belong to First Church; this table does not belong to the United Church of Christ; friends, this table belongs to God, and all whom God created have a seat at this table. So come, take your seat, you belong here...

Rev: The table is set, the time is right; Your meal, like no other, claims us.

**All: *We are called to God's table of love, prepared for all people.***

Rev: The Table of Christ is long and has many chairs.

**All: *There is plenty of room here!***

Rev: It is the table where LOVE is in charge of the guest list,

**All: *And reservations are not required.***

Rev: Come, approach God's table of love, grace, and mercy,

**All: *We come with open hands and open hearts.***

Rev: Come, just as God made you.

**All: *For the gifts of grace are free.***

Rev: Come, for all things are ready...

## **Words of Institution**

### **Breaking of the Bread**

One: On the night that Jesus was betrayed, He took bread, and, after giving thanks to God, broke it and said,

**All: *"This is my body broken for you; do this as often as you eat, in remembrance of Me."***

*\*Please partake of the bread at the moment most meaningful to you.*

### **Pouring of the Fruit of the Vine**

One: In the same way He took the cup, looked lovingly at each face, and said,

**All: “This cup is the new covenant sealed in my blood; do this as often as you drink in remembrance of Me.”**

*\*Please wait to partake of the cup until all are served; then we drink as one.*

### **Prayer of Gratitude**

***Thanks be to You, O God, for the blessings of this table. Because of Your selfless love, nations gather around one table of faith and are fed from one body and one cup. Let the peace of God, and the comfort in our future with God, rest our minds and our hearts. Now, nourished with grace and love, may we go forth to serve You; abounding in hope, strengthened by peace, overflowing with joy, and tenacious in love. Amen.***

**\*Closing Hymn**      *They’ll Know We Are Christians*      (Page 7-8)

### **\*Benediction**

**\*Departing Together**      *Blest Be the Tie That Binds*

*Blest be the tie that binds our hearts in Christian love.  
The fellowship of kindred minds is like to that above. Amen.*

**Postlude**      *Old Rugged Cross*      - Murray C. Bradshaw(1930-2018)

*Please join us for fellowship immediately following worship!*

Lent - Purple

Purple represents royalty and suffering. In the context of Lent, it symbolizes penance, sacrifice, and preparation.

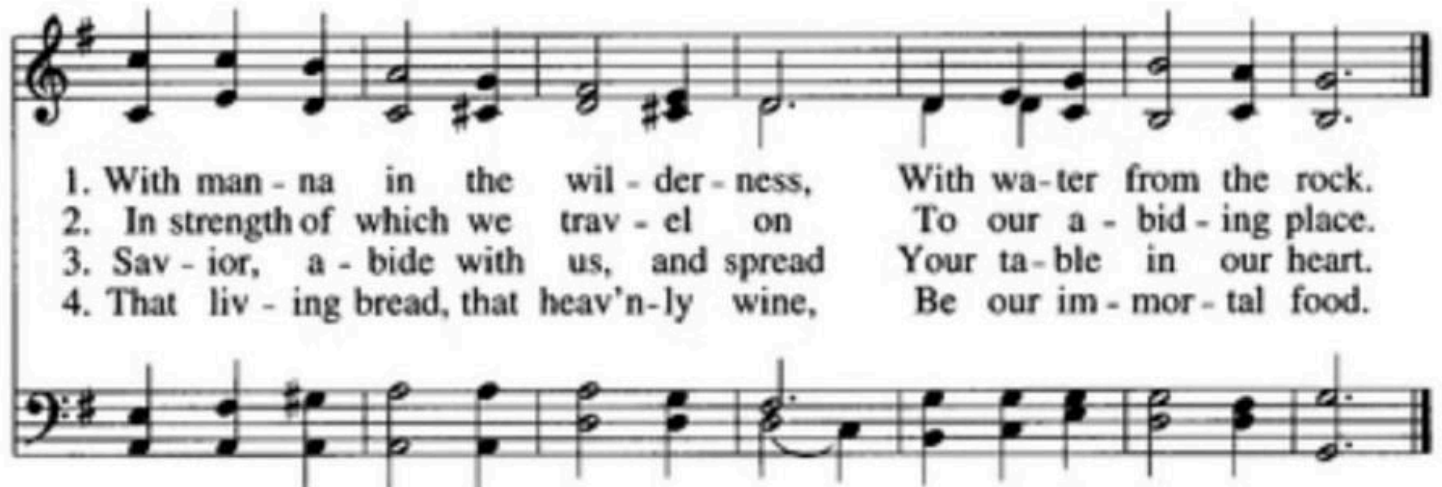
\*Those who are able are invited to stand.



## SHEPHERD OF SOULS



1. Shep-herd of souls, re-fresh and bless Your cho-sen pil-grim flock  
 2. We would not live by bread a-lone, But by your word of grace,  
 3. Be known to us in break-ing bread, But do not then de-part;  
 4. Lord, sup with us in love di-vine; Your bod-y and your blood,



1. With man-na in the wil-der-ness, With wa-ter from the rock.  
 2. In strength of which we trav-el on To our a-bid-ing place.  
 3. Sav-ior, a-bide with us, and spread Your ta-ble in our heart.  
 4. That liv-ing bread, that heav'n-ly wine, Be our im-mor-tal food.

Text: CM; verses 1, 2, James Montgomery, 1771-1854; verses 3, 4, anon.  
 Music: ST. AGNES; John B. Dykes, 1823-1876.

# THEY'LL KNOW WE ARE CHRISTIANS

VERSES

Fm

1. We are one in the Spir - it, we are one in the Lord, We are  
 2. We will walk with each oth - er, we will walk hand in hand, We will  
 3. We will work with each oth - er, we will work side by side, We will  
 4. All — praise to the Fa - ther, from — whom all things come, And all

Bbm Fm Bbm

1. one in the Spir - it, we are one in the Lord, And we pray that all  
 2. walk with each oth - er, we will walk hand in hand, And to - geth - er we'll  
 3. work with each oth - er, we will work side by side, And we'll guard each one's  
 4. praise to Christ Je - sus, his — on - ly — Son, And all praise to the

Fm REFRAIN [Fm] Db

1. u - ni - ty may one day be re - stored. And they'll know we are Chris - tians by our  
 2. spread the news that God is in our land.  
 3. dig - ni - ty and save — each one's pride.  
 4. Spir - it, who — makes — us — one.

Fm Bbm Fm Bbm Fm

love, by our love, Yes, they'll know — we are Chris - tians by our love. —

Text: 13 13 14 with refrain; Peter Scholtes, b. 1938.  
 Music: ST. BRENDAN'S; Peter Scholtes; keyboard acc. by John Strege.  
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## Serving You Today

### *Worship Leaders:*

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

All Members of First Church  
Rev. Dr. Holly Norwick  
Kiel Krommer  
  
Outreach Committee  
Suzanne Kelley

### *Officers:*

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

Cindy DeSellier  
Carol Mullen  
Suzanne Kelley  
Jeanne Dill  
Suzanne Kelley

### *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. You can 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](mailto:office@firstchurchmonson.org).

Rev. Dr. Holly Norwick is available Monday - Thursday from 8:30 - 4:30, and at other times by appointment. You can reach her any time by phone at 808-371-4701, or by email at [pastor@firstchurchmonson.org](mailto:pastor@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:

Carol Snyder

Chris

Martha Warren

Mary Linkenhoker

Ginny

Joanne

Cheryl Howland

Richard D'Aquila

Marlaina

Josh Cash

Joseph B.

Rudy Pyne

Oliver Holden

J. Harris

For comfort in grief:

The Family of Philip Wallander

The Family and Friends of Barry Muldrew

Deb Laviolette and family

For strength and comfort during war and disaster:

The people of Ukraine

The people of Israel and Gaza

The people of Palestine and Lebanon

The people of Syria

The people affected by the California wildfires

For all service people, wherever they may be:

Chelsea Carr

Malik Pugh, USMC

Michael Wales, USN

Stephen Dill, USN

Tim Olson, USN

## **This Week in the Life of the Congregation**

- April 6, Sunday  
10:00 a.m. - Worship (S)  
11:00 a.m. - Fellowship (F)  
11:30 a.m. - 1:30 p.m. Church Council (L)  
11:45-12:45 p.m. - Community Choir (SA)
- April 7, Monday  
3:00-4:30 p.m. - Girl Scouts (SA)  
6:00-8:00 p.m. - Cub Scouts (SA)
- April 8, Tuesday  
5:15-6:15 p.m. - PiYo Class (SA)
- April 9, Wednesday  
6:00-8:00 p.m. - Boy Scouts (SA)
- April 10, Thursday  
5:15-6:15 p.m. - PiYo Class (SA)  
6:30-8:00 p.m. - Adult Choir Rehearsal (SA)
- April 12, Saturday  
7:00-8:30 a.m. - AA (L)  
11:00-2:00 p.m. - Funeral Service (S/F/K)
- April 13, Sunday  
**PALM SUNDAY**  
**Sunday School Time Travel**  
8:00-9:45 a.m. - Let's Eat Breakfast (F/K)  
10:00 a.m. - Worship (S)  
11:00 a.m. - Fellowship (F)  
11:30 a.m. - 1:30 p.m. Church Council (L)  
11:45-12:45 p.m. - Community Choir (SA)

C - Sprague Chapel  
F - Fellowship Hall  
K - Kitchen  
L - Library  
P - Parking Lot  
S - Sanctuary  
SA - Sunday School Auditorium  
SS - Sunday School Classroom

## Church News

**Messenger Deadline - April 23, 2025**

**Please email Carol Mullen at [carellen7@gmail.com](mailto:carellen7@gmail.com)**

**Fellowship Hosts Needed.** Fellowship hosts are needed on April 27. If you are able to help out, please sign up in Fellowship Hall.

**Volunteers Needed for Card Writing Campaign.** A friend of Erin Wallace recently posted that her friend, who has no family, is struggling with a cancer diagnosis and is very sick. He's having a hard time and has no family to support him through this struggle. We are looking for people who would send him a card with prayers and/or encouragement. Cards and his address will be available in Fellowship Hall this Sunday. If you are willing and able, please pick up a card and mail a note of encouragement. You may also contact Erin directly at [wallace3413@gmail.com](mailto:wallace3413@gmail.com). Thanks for letting your love shine!

**FCM Safety Team.** Here at First Church, safety is a top priority. It is even part of our statement of faith: "We will provide a safe haven - physically, emotionally, and spiritually - for all those whom God sends us." As such, the Church Council is developing a safety team, and we are seeking folks interested in serving on this team. The safety team hopes to connect with local safety organizations such as the police and fire department, take advantage of safety training that responds to changing times and new situations, and help develop best practices here at church. If you have a passion for the safety of others, please consider joining this new team, by contacting Cindy DeSellier, or another Church Council member. All are welcome to serve.

**Free Concert.** On Sunday, April 27, at 3 p.m., the Jazz Bones, under the direction of David Neill, will perform at First Church. The ensemble consists of four tenor trombones, one bass trombone, guitar, bass, and drums. The concert is free and open to the public. It is sponsored by the First Church Music Committee and the Monson Cultural Council, a local agency which is supported by the Massachusetts Cultural Council, a state agency.

## Easter Flowers

If you wish, you may order Easter plants through the Church Office. Plants will be delivered for the Easter worship service on April 20, 2025.

To order, **please complete one form for each plant** and return it to the Church Office by **Sunday, April 13**. Quantities are limited—order early!

Given by: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_ Easter Lily (\$14.00 each)

\_\_\_ Hyacinths (\$8.00 each)

\_\_\_ Tulips (\$8.00 each)

Messages to be included in the bulletin (select one):

Given in Memory of \_\_\_\_\_

**OR**

Given in Celebration of \_\_\_\_\_

Checks should be made payable to **First Church of Monson**. Please be sure to put “Easter Flowers” on the memo line. Tax is included in the price.

Thank you.

## 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.

**Coffee 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](mailto: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!”*