

The Messenger

May - June 2025

The First Church of Monson, Congregational/UCC

5 High Street, Monson MA 01057

413-267-3312

office@firstchurchmonson.org

www.firstchurchmonson.org

www.facebook.com/firstchurchmonson

The Church Office is usually open on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 9 a.m. to 12 noon. Reverend Doctor Holly Norwick is in the office Tuesday and Thursday mornings or by appointment.

Please visit our website for additional information.

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

Our Mission

The Mission of the First Church of Monson is
to praise God through prayer,
to share the Word and love of God by promoting fellowship in the community,
and to serve as stewards of God's creation –
all in a manner that glorifies God and emulates Christ.



Fifty days after Jesus' resurrection, on a day called Pente-cost, the Christian church was born. Because Pentecost was a holiday celebrating the harvest (a bit like our Thanksgiving), the apostles and a large crowd had gathered to celebrate in Jerusalem.

Many people had assembled near Peter and the other followers of Christ when "[F]rom heaven there came a sound like the rush of a violent wind ... " (Acts 2:2 ff, NRSV). Then tongues of fire descended on everyone in the crowd.

After the wind and fire descended, all sorts of languages, known and unknown, came out of the crowd. Each person spoke "about God's deeds of power" (verse 11). No wonder Luke wrote, "All were amazed and perplexed, saying to one another, 'What does this mean?'" (verse 12).

The whole affair was mind-boggling and life-changing. The Holy Spirit had come upon many people; they knew God was powerfully at work in their midst.

On Pentecost many years ago, some 3,000 people came to believe in Christ. That's why today Christians remember this powerful event as the birthday of the church. Pentecost occurs on June 8 this year.

Please consider giving a Pentecost birthday gift to First Church! Various groups have compiled "wish lists" of items they would like to further their ministries. A tri-fold display board in the Fellowship Room shows the "wish lists." Instructions for donating the gifts are included on the display board. Thank you!



Monson Open Pantry: May Donation Challenge

Spaghetti sauce and canned fruits are the two food items most needed now. Please leave food donations in the baskets in the narthex. A reminder: Open Pantry Sunday is the third Sunday of the month. Thank you!

All-Church Work Day

On Saturday, May 3, from 9 a.m. to noon, the trustees are sponsoring an All-Church Work Day. Please come to straighten and clean neglected area of the church. Bring the cleaning supplies you need to do the jobs you want to do. Some possible job include the following: washing baseboards, dusting library books, straightening the Wallace Room, vacuuming pew cushions, etc. All workers are welcome!

Main Street Tavern Nights

Main Street Tavern nights continue through the summer months on the fourth Thursdays. The following groups will host: May 22 (Prayer Shawl Ministry), June 26 (ONA), July 24 (Deacons), and August 28 (Hearts Willing). Please continue to support this great opportunity to be present in the community and to dine together while supporting First Church.

Treble Makers Character Dinner and Concert

Saturday, May 17, 2025

Join us for a fun-filled evening with the “Treble Makers” Community Youth Choir and a cast of storybook characters! The word got out! The magic beans were spilled! The Treble Makers are performing and storybook characters are on the loose and want to have some fun! Meet beloved characters like The Queen of Hearts, Belle, Gaston, Ursula, and more!

A spaghetti dinner at 5 p.m. will precede the concert. Tickets for the dinner are \$10.00 per person with a \$40.00 cap for families. Children under 4 are free. Tickets may be purchased from any member of the Treble Choir or through the Church Office at 413-267-3312. The concert begins at 6:30 p.m.; there is no charge to attend just the concert but donations to support next year's youth music program would be greatly appreciated!

Dressing up in costume is encouraged. The more costumes, the more fun!





New members David and Dylan have been a dynamic addition to the Board of Trustees. With their fresh ideas and energy, the trustees are hoping to accomplish many improvements to the church this year. I will keep the congregation posted through a regular article in *The Messenger*.

Boilers. The three boilers that heat the church are nearing the end of their useful life. Dylan is working with BG Mechanical to keep them going as long as possible. The trustees hope to have a Mass Save inspection that will provide recommendations and grant money for an upgraded system.

Steeple Leak. Tony saved First Church thousands of dollars last fall by caulking an area in the steeple that was allowing water to enter the church during rainstorms with high winds. He hopes to do some additional caulking this spring.

Thermostats. Chris sets the temperature for each church event manually at the start of the week or whenever plans change. For years the trustees have tried to find reasonably priced thermostats that can be controlled remotely and will work with our wiring. Perhaps this is the year this will happen.

Outdoor Lighting. The lights in the parking lot and on our property on High Street cost us \$350/month for electricity. After months of nagging National Grid, Chris has succeeded in getting the bulbs changed to LEDs. The new white light should result in a much lower electricity bill and better visibility at night.

Ramp Door. Despite David's replacing the weather-stripping, the entrance door at the top of the ramp still does not work properly. Several trustees are using their connections to see about replacing this door with a proper commercial door.

Church Sign. Letting those who drive by First Church know who we are is important. The trustees are investing in a taller, beautiful, two-sided sign to replace the worn sign on the south lawn near the monument. Gary and I are working with Agnoli Sign to have this installed in the near future. Gary will then freshen the landscaping near the sign.

Suzanne, Chair, Board of Trustees



Pastor Holly's Hours

Pastor Holly can be reached on Mondays from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. **remotely** and Tuesdays through Thursdays from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. **in-office**. An appointment can be arranged if you are unable to meet during those times; please contact her by email at pastor@firstchurchmonson.org or by phone at 808-371-4701. For urgent matters, please call 808-371-4701 any time.

A Switch from Carrots to Salads in Loaves and Fishes Program



For the past seven months, we have prepared and served cooked carrots as a side dish to either the lasagna or chicken and rice casseroles that we prepare and take them to South Congregational Church in Springfield to share with anyone in need of a meal.

For the upcoming five months (May through September) we will serve a tossed green salad instead of carrots. Preparing a salad consists of filling a gallon zip-lock style container with mixed greens along with a couple of tomatoes and a cucumber and placing them in the church refrigerator on the Sunday before we go down to Springfield to serve. There is also the option of contributing \$6 for the purchase of salad ingredients, a great option when working around vacations or a busy schedule.

You can also be involved by helping to transport the food to South Congregational Church in Springfield on the second Monday of the month and assist in serving the meal. If you are interested in being a part of this program or would like to know more about it, please contact the Church Office at 413-267-3312 or office@firstchurchmonson.org



A special thank you to Kiel Krommer, our Director of Music Ministry, and to the choir for the music offered in worship all during the Lenten season, including Maundy Thursday. The songs for Palm Sunday and Easter embraced the Scripture and brought deep meaning to

the services. Joe accompanied the choir for one anthem and participated in an organ and flute duet for the Easter Prelude. Cindy offered the beautiful piece "Via Delorosa" for the Maundy Thursday service. First Church is fortunate to have so many gifted musicians willing to share their time and talent.

The Music Committee sponsored Main Street Tavern Night on April 24. Pastor Holly suggested that the raffle prize be a "Singing Telegram" for a special person. The raffle winner will be treated to a potted plant and a group of singers delivering four songs to the lucky person sometime in May.

Music Sunday will be on Mother's Day, May 11. Kiel has chosen a theme of women composers and artists. The service will feature our choir, instrumentalists, and readings honoring women who have contributed to creating music and poetry to inspire our Christian faith. Plan to attend and bring a friend along to enjoy the songs we will sing and hear in appreciation of many talented women.

The Restoration of the Swell Division of the Johnson Organ is complete. The organ has been tuned to perfection. The reeds are especially bright and in fine use for the triumphant music of the Easter season. A celebration concert featuring Robert Greene will be held on September 13, 2025. This concert is being underwritten by the Monson Cultural Council.

A second concert will be held on Saturday, October 25. Peter Krasinski will bring his famous improvisational skills to accompany the silent film

“Cinderella.” Once again, our sincere gratitude goes to the town of Monson for supporting the upkeep of our historic organ.

Over the summer, the Music Committee will be considering ideas for concerts to be held in 2026. Please let the committee know if you have any ideas for these events. The committee will be writing a grant in early October and submitting it to the Monson Cultural Council



First Church of Monson offers generous hospitality. One way is by hosting Fellowship after the Sunday worship service, where we practice hospitality every week, visiting with old friends and making new ones.

Each month there is a sign-up sheet in the Fellowship Room seeking volunteers who can provide and serve light snacks (not a meal!) and stay to clean up. Teaming up with someone else is a good idea. No one should feel like they need to bring tons of food or spend lots of money. Popular items are cheese, crackers, grapes, cookies, and juice. Packaged food items are on hand, purchased with donated money. Milk, 1/2 & 1/2, juice, and paper goods are also provided. There is no need to worry about coffee preparation. There will always be help and training. If you have never volunteered to host fellowship, please think about doing so. Unfortunately there won't be Fellowship on Sundays that are blank on the sign-up. Won't you consider doing your part?

Hearts Willing Banquet

Wednesday, May 28, 2025 at 6 p.m.

Hearts Willing will hold its end-of-the-year banquet and Annual Meeting on Wednesday, May 28 at 6 p.m. at Mug 'n' Muffin. Meal choices are Chicken Francaise, Haddock, or Vegetarian. The cost is \$30.00 per person, tax and tip included. You may bring wine; Hearts Willing will provide a dessert. Please sign up in the Fellowship Room by Sunday, May 18, 2025.

Prayer Shawl Ministry

The First Church Prayer Shawl Ministry group meets on the first and third Thursday of the month. The meetings are in the Fellowship Room from 6:30 to 8:00 p.m. You are welcome to join us. Yarn can be provided for a first shawl. Learn to knit or crochet. If you need a shawl or know of someone who needs a prayer shawl, please contact the Church Office at 413-267-3312 or office@firstchurchmonson.org



Greetings First Church Family

*"For God saw all that was made and pronounced it **good**."*

Here at First Church, we recognize the sacredness of this beautiful planet and all that inhabits it. We celebrate its diversity of life, its prism of color and texture, the genius in its design, and the importance of protecting our earthly home.

In just a few short weeks, we will be hosting an important electronic recycling program in partnership with Green Day Recycling.

Electronics and Household Goods Recycling Event

Saturday, May 10, 2025

9 a.m. to 2 p.m.

First Church Parking Lot

Fees range from \$5.00 to \$40.00, depending on the size and type of item.

Cash preferred; checks over \$30.00 accepted.

Please visit GreenDayRecyclingMA@gmail.com for the complete fee schedule.



Strengthen the Church (STC) Special Offering

The 2025 theme for Strengthen the Church is “Great and Wide.” This phrase, from Psalm 104, represents the diverse and playful nature of the multitude of ministries the offering supports. Whether the offering supports an outdoor worshipping community in Wisconsin or the National Ministries MESA team who builds systems to connect pastors and congregations, the movement of God is apparent.

The Strengthen the Church (STC) Offering reflects the shared commitment of people across the United Church of Christ to cooperatively build up the UCC. Conferences and the national setting equally share the gifts given by members and friends through their local congregations. The funds raised support leadership development, new churches, youth ministry, and innovation in existing congregations. **By your generosity to this offering, you build up the Body of Christ.**

As God calls our congregations to be the church in new ways, your generosity will plant new churches, awaken new ideas in existing churches, and develop the spiritual life in our youth and young adults. This special offering will be received on Pentecost Sunday, June 8, 2025.

