



**The First Church of Monson, Congregational
United Church of Christ
Fourth Sunday of Easter
Sunday, April 21, 2024**

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

- Core Values, 2022

Baptized in Water 919

C Am Dm G F C Am

1. Bap-tized in wa - ter, Sealed by the Spir - it, Cleansed by the
 2. Bap-tized in wa - ter, Sealed by the Spir - it, Dead in the
 3. Bap-tized in wa - ter, Sealed by the Spir - it, Marked with the

Em Am C Dm⁷ G C Am F C

blood of Christ our King: Heirs of sal - va - tion, Trust - ing his
 tomb with Christ our King: One with his ris - ing, Freed and for -
 sign of Christ our King: Born of one Fa - ther, We are his

Am D G C F G C

prom - ise, Faith - ful - ly now God's praise we sing.
 giv - en, Thank - ful - ly now God's praise we sing.
 chil - dren, Joy - ful - ly now God's praise we sing.

Text: Michael Seward, b.1932, © 1982, The Jubilate Group (admin. by Hope Publishing Company)
 Tune: BUNESSAN, 5 5 8 D; Gaelic melody; acc. A. Gregory Murray, OSB, 1905-1992, © Downside Abbey

Please note: these guitar chords do not match the accompaniment version of this hymn.

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Prelude *The King of Love My Shepherd Is* – Charles Callahan (1951–2023)

Welcome and Announcements

A Time for Children

Introit

Celebration of Baptism

Rosalie A. Fox

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

***Call to Worship**

L: Christ our Savior is risen from the dead! Alleluia!

P: *Break forth into joy! Sing together! The Holy One comforts those whose hearts are broken in sorrow.*

L: We who once suffered in death, we who once cried in despair—

P: *Now we know the victory over death, the joy over despair! For God has raised Christ from the grave! The tomb is empty and death has been defeated for all the earth!*

***Opening Hymn**

Baptized in Water

(Page 1)

***Morning Prayer**

God of grace, you have come to us in Jesus Christ so we may have new life— here on earth with each other. You seek that we surrender to your grace completely and change our lives— so we may know new strength in you, so we may love beyond frustrations, so we may help and serve as a witness to your power and grace. Be in all our days, for we pray in the name of 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

You Are All I Want

- Lori True

Giving of Ourselves

Call to Offering

To be a Christian in this day and age is to offer up our lives and deaths to God. These gifts are the sign of the offering of our whole lives.

Offertory

They'll Know We Are Christians

(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**

Gracious God, receive these our gifts. May they be used to enhance and enrich the work of this, our church, and the realm in which you have called us to serve.

First Reading

1 John 3:16-24

¹⁶We know love by this, that he laid down his life for us—and we ought to lay down our lives for one another.

¹⁷How does God's love abide in anyone who has the world's goods and sees a brother or sister in need and yet refuses help? ¹⁸Little children, let us love, not in word or speech, but in truth and action. ¹⁹And by this we will know that we are from the truth and will reassure our hearts before him

²⁰whenever our hearts condemn us; for God is greater than our hearts, and he knows everything. ²¹Beloved, if our hearts do not condemn us, we have boldness before God; ²²and we receive from him whatever we ask, because we obey his commandments and do what pleases him.

²³And this is his commandment, that we should believe in the name of his Son Jesus Christ and love one another, just as he has commanded us. ²⁴All who obey his commandments abide in him, and he abides in them. And by this we know that he abides in us, by the Spirit that he has given us.

Second Reading

John 10:11-18

¹¹“I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep. ¹²The hired hand, who is not the shepherd and does not own the sheep, sees the wolf

coming and leaves the sheep and runs away—and the wolf snatches them and scatters them. ¹³The hired hand runs away because a hired hand does not care for the sheep. ¹⁴I am the good shepherd. I know my own and my own know me, ¹⁵just as the Father knows me and I know the Father. And I lay down my life for the sheep. ¹⁶I have other sheep that do not belong to this fold. I must bring them also, and they will listen to my voice. So there will be one flock, one shepherd. ¹⁷For this reason the Father loves me, because I lay down my life in order to take it up again. ¹⁸No one takes it from me, but I lay it down of my own accord. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it up again. I have received this command from my Father.”

***Sermon Hymn** *Good Shepherd, You Know Us* (Page 8)

Sermon *Parable of the Trapeze/ A Pathway to Change*

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.

***Closing Hymn** *The King of Love My Shepherd Is* (Page 9)

***Benediction**

Postlude

In Thee Is Gladness - Dale Wood (1934-2003)

THE FIRST CHURCH OF MONSON
CONGREGATIONAL/UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST
Established 1762~Incorporated 1946
5 High Street, Monson, MA 01057
413.267.3312 office@firstchurchmonson.org

WARRANT for a SPECIAL CONGREGATIONAL MEETING

The covenant members of The First Church of Monson, Inc., are hereby warned of a Special Congregational Meeting to be held in the sanctuary on Sunday, May 5, 2024 following the worship service. The covenant members will hear and act upon the following business:

- 1. A motion from the Board of Deacons recommending the following individuals for covenant membership: Alexander and Lauren Fox.**
- 2. Any other business to be properly presented.**

Respectfully submitted,

Carol E. Mullen
Church Clerk
April 16, 2024

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 [Fm] Db

REFRAIN

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 Stregle.
 Text and music © 1966, 1967, F.E.L. Church Publications, Ltd., assigned 1991 to the Lorenz Corporation. All rights reserved. Used with permission.

681 Good Shepherd, You Know Us

G C Am D Em G/D D7 G

1. Good Shep-herd, you know us, you call us by name.
 2. Good Shep-herd, you warn us of rob - bers and thieves,
 3. Good Shep-herd, you lay down your life for the sheep.
 4. At one with the Fa - ther, you made your - self known:

C Am D Em G/D D7 G

You lead us; we glad - ly ac - knowl - edge your claim.
 The hire - ling, the wolf who de - stroys and de - ceives.
 Your love is not fick - le, your gift is not cheap.
 "I am the Good Shep - herd," at one with your own.

Em D G Em Bm G DSUS4 D

Your voice has com - pelled us; we come at your call.
 All praise for your prom - ise on which we shall stand,
 You spend your life free - ly, you take it a - gain.
 You loved us be - fore we had heed - ed or heard;

G C Am D Em G/D D7 G

And none you have cho - sen will fi - nal - ly fall.
 That no one can snatch us from out of your hand.
 You died, so we live; we are healed by your pain.
 By grace we re - spond to your life - giv - ing word.

Text: M. Idle, b.1938, © 2001, 2002, 2005. The Jubilate Group (admin. by Hope Publishing Company)

The King of Love My Shepherd Is 712

D G A Em D A Bm G

1. The King of love my shep - herd is, Whose
 2. Where streams of liv - ing wa - ter flow, My
 3. Con - fused and fool - ish oft I strayed, But
 4. In death's dark vale I fear no ill With
 5. You spread a ta - ble in my sight, Your
 6. And so, through all the length of days Your

D G D G³ D A D A Em

good - ness fails me nev - er; I noth - ing lack if
 ran - somed soul he's lead - ing, And, where the ver - dant
 yet in love he sought me, And on his shoul - der
 you, dear Lord, be - side me, Your rod and staff my
 sav - ing grace be - stow - ing; And, oh, what trans - port
 good - ness fails me, nev - er; Good Shep - herd, may I

D A Bm A Em D A Bm G D

I am his And he is mine for - ev - er.
 pas - tures grow, With food ce - les - tial feed - ing.
 gent - ly laid, And home, re - joic - ing, brought me.
 com - fort still, Your cross be - fore to guide me.
 of de - light From your pure chal - ice flow - ing!
 sing your praise With - in your house for - ev - er.

Text: Psalm 23; Henry W. Baker, 1821-1877, alt.

Tune: ST. COLUMBA, 8 7 8 7; Irish melody; harm. by A. Gregory Murray, OSB, 1905-1992, © Downside Abbey

Serving You Today

Worship Leaders

Ministers of the Congregation	All Members of First Church
Pastor	Rev. Jack Kraaz
Director of Music Ministries	Kiel Krommer
Greeters/Ushers	Elaine Carlin & Ed Maia
Lay Reader	Deb Shepard
Fellowship	Dan Newberry

Officers

Moderator	Cindy DeSellier
Clerk	Carol Mullen
Treasurer	Suzanne Kelley
Chair, Board of Deacons	Jeanne Dill
Chair, Board of Trustees	David Sanborn

Members at Large

Lynn Galica
Elaine Harris
Mary Newland

Staff

Church Administrator	Lee Brahen
Sunday School Superintendent	Erin Greene Wallace
Custodian	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:

Kwaku Darko Mensah

Julie

Mike Kurasinski

Martha Warren

Jeannette

Douglas Maliar

For comfort in grief:

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 21, Sunday

OPEN PANTRY

8:00-9:45 a.m. - Let's Eat Breakfast (F/K)

10:00 a.m. - Worship (S)

11:00-11:30 a.m. - Fellowship (F)

April 22, Monday

3:00-4:30 p.m. - Girl Scouts (SSA)

April 24, Wednesday

6:00-8:00 p.m. - Boy Scouts (SSA)

7:00-9:00 p.m. - Hearts Willing (F/K)

7:00-8:00 p.m. - Taizé Rehearsal (C)

April 25, Thursday

5:30-6:30 p.m. - Zumba Class (SSA)

6:30-8:00 p.m. - Choir Practice (C)

April 27, Saturday

7:00-8:30 a.m. - AA Meeting (L)

April 28, Sunday

10:00 a.m. - Worship (S)

11:00-11:30 a.m. - Fellowship (F)

7:00-9:00 p.m. - Taizé Service

C - Julie Sprague Chapel

F - Fellowship Hall

K - Kitchen

L - Library

PS - Pastor's Study

S - Sanctuary

SSA - Sunday School Auditorium

SS - Sunday School Classroom

SSC - Silver Street Chapel

Church News

Messenger Deadline - April 22

Please email carellen7@gmail.com

Homeless Package Collection. The Sunday School children are putting together homeless care packages and need your assistance. They would like to assemble 20 bags with the following items: feminine products, deodorant, toothpaste/toothbrush, hand sanitizers, socks, gallon-size ziploc bags, bottled water, cross key chain, pocket-sized bible, and sanitizing wipes. If they collect more items, they will create more bags. Items may be left in Fellowship Hall in the donation box. Please donate what you can!

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 bring 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.

Tag Sale/Craft Fair. Have you done spring cleaning and wish you could have a tag sale, but you don't have a good location? Set up a tent in our parking lot in the center of town. Have a lot of stuff, rent 2 spaces. Been working all winter making crafts? Here's your chance to sell them. If you have items and/or crafts for sale, please sign up for a site at the First Church parking lot. We have approximately 25 10'x10' spots available for \$25 each to set up your tag sale and/or craft booth. This event is a **Fundraiser for First Church Outreach Missions.** The event will be from 10am to 3pm on Saturday, May 11, 2024 (rain date May 18) and you may begin to set up your booth at 7am. Please go to our website, www.firstchurchmonson.org, and click on the Tag Sale/Craft Fair logo to sign up for a site.

**"The Parable of the Trapeze" by Danaan Parry from his book *Warriors of the Heart*
Spoken and accompanied by Fran McKendree CD available on ['franmckendree.com](http://franmckendree.com)**

Sometimes I feel that my life is a series of trapeze swings. I'm either hanging on to a trapeze bar swinging along or, for a few moments in my life, I'm hurtling across space in between trapeze bars.

Most of the time, I spend my life hanging on for dear life to my trapeze-bar-of-the-moment. It carries me along at a certain steady rate of swing and I have the feeling that I'm in control of my life.
I know most of the right questions and even some of the right answers.

But once in a while, as I'm merrily (or not so merrily) swinging along, I look off into the distance, and what do I see? Another trapeze bar swinging toward me. It's empty - and I know, in that place that knows, that this new trapeze bar has my name on it.
It is my next step, my growth; my aliveness coming to get me. In my heart-of-hearts I know that for me to grow,
I have to release my grip on the present, well-known bar to move to the new one.

Each time that happens, I hope - no I pray - that I won't have to grab that new one.
But in my knowing place, I know that I have to totally release my grasp on the old bar and for some moment in time I must hurdle across space before I can grab the new one. And each time I'm filled with terror -
it doesn't matter that in all my previous hurdles across the void of knowing I have always - - - made it.

Still, each time, I'm afraid that I'll miss - that I'll be crushed on the unseen rocks in the chasm below me between the bars.
But I do it anyway.

Maybe this is the essence of what the mystics call the faith experience.
No guarantees. No net. No insurance policy.

I do it anyway, because somehow, hanging on to the old bar is no longer on the list of alternatives.
So, for an eternity that can last for a thousand years or a microsecond, I soar across the void of unknowing.
The past is gone; the future is not yet here.

It's called - - - Transition - - -

And I have come to believe that this is the only place that real change occurs. And I mean real change,
not the pseudo-change that only lasts until the next time my old buttons get punched.

But I have noticed that in our culture, this transition zone is looked upon as a no-thing, a kind of a no-place - in between places. Sure, the old trapeze bar was real and the new one that's coming towards me - I hope that's real too.
But the void between is just a scary, disorienting nowhere
that must be gotten through as quickly and as unconsciously as possible.

What a waste.

Because I have a sneaking suspicion that the transition zone is the only real thing, and that the bars are illusions that we dream up to avoid the void where the real change happens. Now whether or not my hunch is true,
it remains that the transition zones in our lives are incredibly rich places.
They should be honored, even savored.

Because with all the pain and fear and feelings of being outa control that can accompany transitions, they're still the most alive, passionate, growth-filled, expansive moments in our lives. So the transformation of fear may have nothing to do with making fear go away, but rather with giving ourselves permission to hang out in the transitions between the trapeze bars.

Transforming our need to grab that new bar, allowing ourselves to dwell on the only place where change really happens.
It can be terrifying. It can also be enlightening - in the true sense of the word. Hurdling across the void,

*We may just learn
how to fly.*

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!*