



**First Church of Monson, Congregational
United Church of Christ
Third Sunday of Advent/Christmas Pageant
Sunday, December 15, 2024**

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

- Core Values, 2022

HE CAME DOWN

1. He came down that we might have love; he came down that we might
 2. He came down that we might have light; he came down that we might
 3. He came down that we might have peace; he came down that we might
 4. He came down that we might have joy; he came down that we might

have love; he came down that we might have love; hal-le lu - jah for-ev - er - more.
 have light; he came down that we might have light; hal-le lu - jah for-ev - er - more.
 have peace; he came down that we might have peace; hal-le lu - jah for-ev - er - more.
 hve joy; he came down that we might have joy; hal-le lu - jah for-ev - er - more.

*Those who are able are invited to stand.

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Prelude *Lo, How a Rose* - Craig Penfield (b. 1948)

Welcome and Announcements

Lighting of the Advent Candles - Natalie Peeler & Alison Draper

L: Today, we are deep in the season of Advent, and we look to God's light to shine in our world.

(Light the pink candle)

P: *God's light can reveal a special kind of love. O God, may love live in our hearts and shine in our world. This is the candle of Joy.*

Advent Wreath Lighting Response

*We lift the light of joy, O God,
Your praise is our delight!
Your blessings flow that all may know
Unbounded joy in Christ.
Your blessings flow that all may know
Unbounded joy in Christ.*

***Opening Hymn** *He Came Down* (Page 1)

***Morning Prayer (Unison)**

Holy One, as Christmas trees are lighted, as we rush to shop and send cards, as we merrily sing Christmas songs, keep us close to you, in order that the one whose coming we celebrate, Jesus Christ, might be honored by all we do. May what we do in this season shine forth with your love. We are your people. Love through us. Let Christ be seen through us; for that we pray in Christ's name. 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

Ready the Way

Cindy DeSellier, soloist and guitarist

Giving of Ourselves

Call to Offering

The Holy One meets us halfway when we remember to do good works. Whenever we offer up our gifts, we share in that wondrous gift we've been given in Christ.

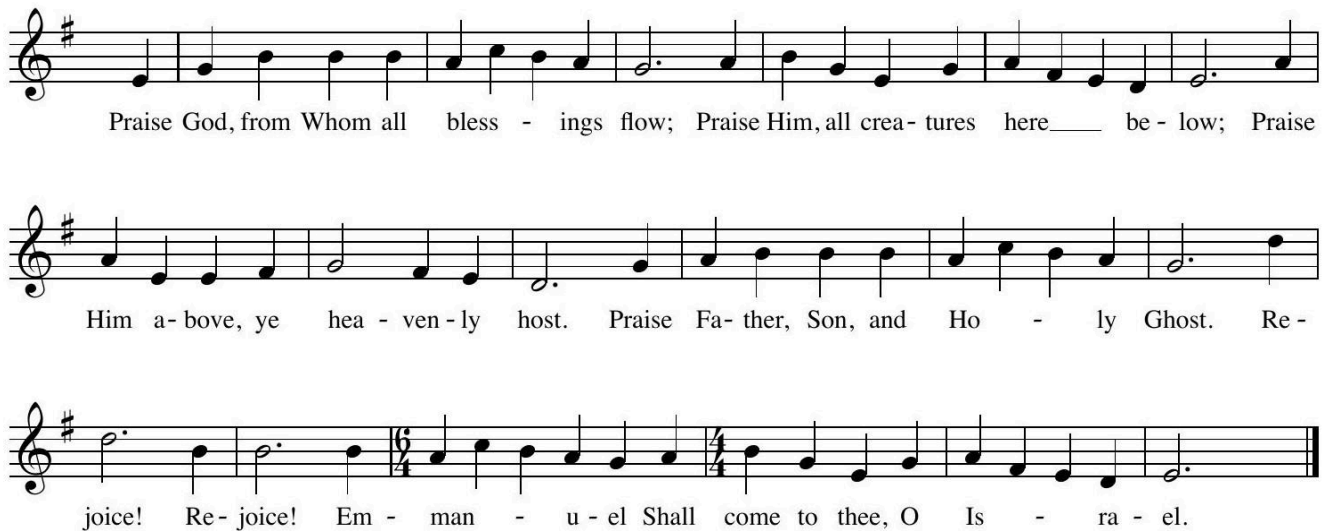


Offertory

Lo, How a Rose E'er Blooming

(Page 5)

*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. Re-joice! Re-joice! Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel.

*Prayer of Dedication

Holy One, as we celebrate this service with our youth, we thank you for the opportunity again to say thank-you with our gifts for filling our lives with meaning, love and joy. Amen.

An Interactive Christmas Story - First Church Sunday School
(The Congregation will also be participating)

Premier Release *“The Bethlehem Blessing”*

Anthem *The Brightest and the Best*

The “Treble Makers” Youth Choir
Led by Alison Weber, Youth Music Director

Closing Prayer

Postlude The congregation is invited to come forward
and check out the Christmas Experience

*Those who are able are invited to stand.

438 Lo, How a Rose E'er Blooming

Capo 3: (D)
F

(G) (D) (A) (Bm) (G)
B \flat F C Dm B \flat

1. Lo, how a Rose e'er bloom - ing From
2. I - sa - iah 'twas for - told it, The
3. This Flow'r, whose fra - grance ten - der With

(D) (A/C#) (G/B) (Bm) (D/A) (A) (D) (G) (D)
F C/E B \flat /D Dm F/C C F B \flat F

ten - der stem hath sprung! Of Jes - se's lin - eage
Rose I have in mind; With Mar - y we be -
sweet - ness fills the air, Dis - pels with glo - rious

(A) (Bm) (G) (D) (A/C#) (G/B) (Bm) (D/A) (A) (D)
C Dm B \flat F C/E B \flat /D Dm F/C C F

com - ing, As seers of old have sung. It
hold it, The Vir - gin Moth - er kind. To
splen - dor The dark - ness ev - 'ry - where. True

(Em) (F#m) (D) (E) (A) (D) (G) (D)
Gm Am F G C F B \flat F

came, a blos - som bright, A - mid the cold of
show God's love a - right, She bore to us a
man, yet ver - y God, From sin and death he

(A) (B) (Em) (D/F#) (Em/G) (A 6) (D/A) (A SUS^4) (A) (D)
C D Gm F/A Gm/B \flat C 6 F/C C SUS^4 C F

win - ter, When half spent was the night.
Sav - ior, When half spent was the night.
saves us, And light - ens ev - 'ry load.

Text: Isaiah 11:1; *Es ist ein' Ros' entsprungen*; Speyer Gesangbuch, 1599; tr. sts. 1, 2 by Theodore Baker, 1851-1934, alt.; st. 3, Friedrich Layritz, 1808-1859; tr. by Harriet Reynolds Krauth, 1845-1925, alt.

Tune: ES IST EIN' ROS' ENSTSPRUNGEN, 7 6 7 6 6 7 6; *Geistliche Kirchengesänge*, Cologne, 1599; harm. by Michael Praetorius, 1571-1621

*Those who are able are invited to stand.

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	Sunday School

Officers:

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

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:

Doris Carpenter

Louise

Diana Nothe-Taylor

Carol Snyder

Chris

Martha Warren

Renee

Carolyn Lewis

Beverly

Richard D'Aquila

Marlaina

For comfort in grief:

The Family and Loved Ones of Joel Wheeler

The Family of Andrew Myers

The Family of Roger Ryder

For strength and comfort during war:

The people of Ukraine

The people of Israel and Gaza

The people of Palestine and Lebanon

The people of Syria

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

December 15, Sunday	Christmas Pageant 8:00-9:45 a.m. - Let's Eat Breakfast (F/K) 10:00 a.m. - Worship (S) 11:00 a.m. - Fellowship (F) 11:30-12:30 p.m. - Church Council (L) 11:45-12:45 p.m. - Community Choir (SSA) 3:00-5:00 p.m. Christmas Carol Program (SSC)
December 16, Monday	3:00-4:30 p.m. - Girl Scouts (SSA) 6:00-8:00 p.m. - Cub Scouts (SSA)
December 17, Tuesday	4:00-5:00 p.m. - Barre above Class (SSA)
December 18, Wednesday	6:00-8:00 p.m. - Boy Scouts (SSA) 7:00-9:00 p.m. - Hearts Willing (F/K)
December 19, Thursday	4:00-10:00 p.m. - Tavern Night 6:30-8:00 p.m. - Prayer Shawl (F) 6:30-8:30 p.m. - Choir Rehearsal (SSC)
December 21, Saturday	7:00-8:30 a.m. - AA (L)
December 22, Sunday	10:00 a.m. - Worship (S) 11:00 a.m. - Fellowship (F)

C - Sprague Chapel

F - Fellowship Hall

K - Kitchen

L - Library

P - Parking Lot

S - Sanctuary

SA - Sunday School Auditorium

SS - Sunday School Classroom

SSC - Silver Street Chapel

Church News

Upcoming Due Dates. As we approach the end of 2024, please be aware of these due dates. The deadline for the January/February *Messenger* is Sunday, December 29, 2024. Articles for the Annual Meeting Warrant are also due by Sunday, December 29, 2024. The warrant will be mailed with the *Messenger*. Both can be sent to carellen7@gmail.com. Annual Reports are due to Lee by Sunday, January 12, 2025. Please email them to the Church Office at office@firstchurchmonson.org.

Christmas Music and Carol Sing. Please join members of First Church today at 3:00 p.m. for a seasonal music and carol program “Christmas Songs around the World” at the Silver Street Chapel, 224 Silver Street, Monson. There is no admission fee. Refreshments will be available. Donations to the upkeep of the newly refurbished chapel will be gratefully accepted.

Hearts Willing Christmas Social. Members and friends of Hearts Willing are invited to a Christmas Social on Wednesday, December 18, at 6:30 p.m. Please bring an appetizer or dessert to share. The Program Committee will provide the beverages. There is a sign-up sheet in the Fellowship Room. Donations of non-perishable food items for Open Pantry are welcome.

Christmas Eve Candlelight Service. Mark your calendars for the Christmas Eve candlelight service which will begin at 7:00 p.m. on Christmas Eve. Please be sure to bring your friends and family to this beautiful service.

The Mitten Tree. The Mitten Tree is set up in the narthex. Our hope is to cover the mitten tree in mittens, gloves, hats, and scarves for men, women, and children in need. The donated items will be delivered to the Springfield Rescue Mission after Christmas. Please support this important mission to help keep those in need warm this winter. Thank you.

Main Street Tavern Night, sponsored by Church Council, is this coming Thursday, December 19, 2024. The tavern opens at 4 p.m. First Church receives 10% of all sales from that evening, including take-out orders. Hope to see you there!

Poinsettias for Christmas. Today is the last day to order poinsettias for the altar. See the form in the bulletin for details.

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!*



Scan Here to Give Online

Christmas Poinsettias

Flowers will be delivered for the Sunday worship service on December 22, and may be picked up after the 7:00 p.m. Candlelight Service on Christmas Eve, December 24.

To order poinsettias, **please complete a separate form for each dedication** and return to the Church Office by **Sunday, December 15.**

Name: _____

Telephone: _____

Email: _____

_____ Red Poinsettia (8.3" tall) @ \$8.00 each

Message to be included in the bulletin (please select one):

Given in **memory of** _____

OR

Given in **celebration of** _____

_____ I will take the plant after the 7 p.m. Christmas Eve service

OR

_____ I would like the plant delivered to a shut-in.

Tax is included in the price. Payment should accompany the order, with checks payable to **First Church of Monson** and put "Poinsettias" on the memo line. Any questions? Call Lee, Office Manager, at (413) 267-3312 or email the office at office@firstchurchmonson.org.