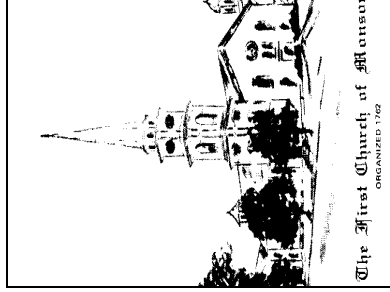


The Messenger is a publication of  
The First Church of Monson, Congregational (UCC)  
5 High Street  
Monson, MA 01057-1007  
Church Office: (413) 267-3312 or office@firstchurchmonson.org  
[www.firstchurchmonson.org](http://www.firstchurchmonson.org)

*"No matter where you are on life's journey, you are welcome at First Church."*

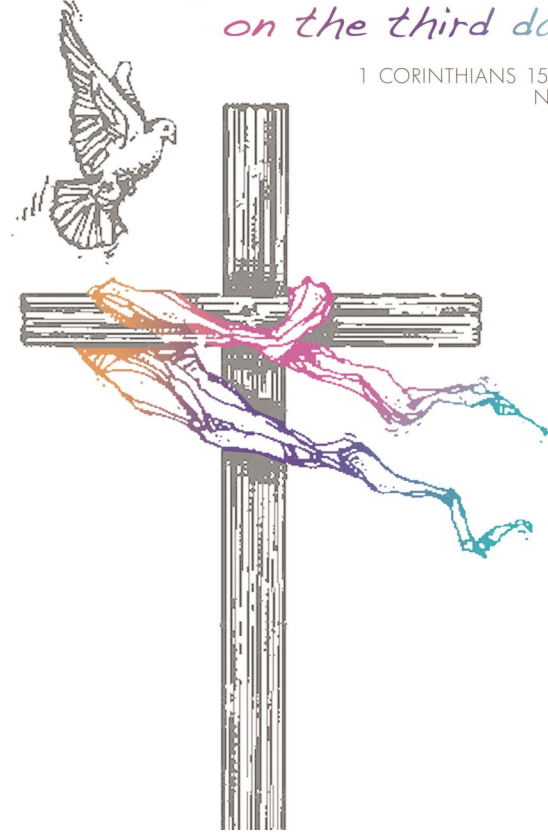


March-April 2024

CHRIST DIED FOR OUR SINS  
IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE  
SCRIPTURES, AND ... HE WAS

*raised*  
*on the third day.*

1 CORINTHIANS 15:3-4,  
NRSV



The Messenger

## Staff, Officers, Boards & Committees

### Staff

#### **Pastor**

Interim Pastor Rev. Jack Kraaz  
Office 267-3312

#### **Sunday School Superintendent**

Erin Greene Wallace

#### **Church Administrator**

Lee Brahen 267-3312  
office@firstchurchmonson.org

#### **Director of Music**

Kiel Krommer

#### **Custodian**

### Officers & Other Positions

#### **Church Clerk**

Carol Mullen

#### **Moderator**

Cindy DeSellier

#### **Treasurer**

Suzanne Kelley

#### **Financial Secretaries**

Jeanne Dill

#### **Pastor Parish Relations Committee**

Elaine Harris

Elaine Carlin

Judy White

Ed Maia

#### **Stewardship**

Laurie Clarke

Carolyn Horacek

Linda Brown

Dan Newberry

#### **Members-at-large**

Mary Newland

Lynn Galica

Elaine Harris

#### **Delegates**

Open

Open

#### **Historian**

Dylan Mann

#### **Kitchen Manager**

Lisa Borlen

#### **Loaves & Fishes Co-coordinators**

Crystal Kofke

Trish Nolen-Parkhouse

#### **Christian Education**

Cindy DeSellier

#### **Deacons**

Jeanne Dill

#### **Trustees**

David Sanborn

#### **Music**

Gay Paluch

#### **Outreach**

Lisa Borlen

Messenger Editor: Carol Mullen

## Easter Flowers

If you wish, you may order Easter plants through the Church Office. Plants will be delivered for the Easter worship service on March 31, 2024.

To order, **please complete one form for each plant** and return it to the Church Office by **Sunday, March 25**. Quantities are limited—order early!

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

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

\_\_\_ Easter Lily (\$12.00 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**. Tax is included in the price. Thank you.



## Share the Light: Special Mission Lenten Offering



One Great Hour of Sharing (OGHS) is a special mission offering of the United Church of Christ that involves you in disaster, refugee/immigration, and development ministries throughout the world. When a disaster strikes or people are displaced or made refugees by violence or extreme poverty, you are part of the immediate response and of long-term recovery.

Through OGHS you engage in holistic development programs including health care, education, agriculture, food sustainability, micro-farming, and women's empowerment. Because the UCC relates in mutual partnership to churches and organizations through Global Ministries and worldwide response and recovery networks, your contributions to One Great Hour of Sharing put you in the right place at the right time for relief, accompaniment, and recovery of the most vulnerable. You meet immediate needs and you address the underlying causes that create those needs in the first place. This offering will be received on **March 10, 2024**.

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**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.**



**The deacons invite you to take part in these Holy Week activities.**

**Palm Sunday, March 24 at 10 a.m.:** Join us for Jesus' triumphal entry into Jerusalem. Wave your palms and join the children in shouting "Hosanna!" as they march in joyful procession.

**Maundy Thursday, March 28 at 7 p.m.:** Continue Holy Week observances in this solemn Tenebrae service. Follow Jesus' path of betrayal, arrest, denial, accusation, and death. The Easter miracle is incomplete without this meaningful and touching service.

**Easter Sunday, March 31 at 6:15 a.m.:** Gather the family on the south lawn for this dawn-breaking celebration of the resurrection. Sunrise will be at 6:34 a.m. on Easter. Watch the sunrise and be reminded of the women who went at sunrise to the empty tomb.

**Easter Sunday, March at 10 a.m.:** Make this your "must attend" service. Celebrate Jesus' resurrection in inspiring word and joyful song. Hallelujah!

# NEWS & Notes

**All-church Meeting:** At our recent Annual Meeting, it was decided to hold quarterly all-church open discussions. Dan Newberry volunteered to organize and facilitate this year's meetings. The first gathering will be on March 10, 2024 following the worship service. Please see Dan in church with any topics or ideas you would like to discuss at this gathering.

**St. Patrick's Dinner and Concert:** The trustees invite you to attend a corned beef and cabbage dinner on Saturday, March 16 at 5 p.m., followed by music from Sarah the Fiddler at 7 p.m. Tickets for the dinner and concert are \$25.00 and must be purchased in advance. Admission to the concert only is \$10.00 at the door. Please contact the Church Office to order tickets.

**Website Update:** The First Church of Monson website [firstchurchmonson.org](http://firstchurchmonson.org) has been recently updated by Bill and Lynn Galicia. They have made it user friendly and accessible on computer or cell phone. On the website is a wealth of information from Upcoming Events to First Church History to By-laws to Ministries to links to past services and so much more! Please take some time to look at what they have done. Pass on the website address to your friends who are looking for a church. Our grateful thanks go to Bill and Lynn for taking on this very important task.

**Daylight Saving Time:** Daylight Saving Time starts at 2 a.m. on March 10, 2024. Turn your clocks ahead one hour!

## Coming to First Church in May

This area's premiere community chorus, Wings of Song, is excitedly preparing a one-of-a-kind musical program that it will offer twice: on Saturday, May 18, 2024 at 7:30 p.m. at the First Church of Monson and on Sunday, May 19, 2024, at 3 p.m. at St. Joachim Chapel at St. Anne-St. Patrick Parish, 16 Church Street, Fiskdale (Sturbridge).



"Rough Seas, Safe Harbor" will take audiences on a huge sea voyage, much of it aboard a 19th-century whaling ship that might have left from Portsmouth, New Hampshire—or Portsmouth, England—and sailed practically around the world, separating the crew from their families for as much as a year or two. Nym Cooke, who served as Music Director for a similar program presented by the Revels organization based in Cambridge, MA (the "Sea Revels"), has combined 29 stirring eloquent songs of the sea into a seven-part odyssey. The individual sections of the program are titled "Home Port," "Setting Sail," "At Sea," "Shipwreck," "Foreign Ports," "Women at Home," and "Return and Reunion."

This is sure to be an unforgettable adventure—both musically and imaginatively - and the concert venues are sure to be crowded, so plan to arrive early for a good seat. Admission is free, but a freewill offering will be collected at intermission. Both venues are handicap-accessible. Audience members are invited to join the chorus for tasty (and free!) refreshments after the concert. Last but not least, these concerts are sponsored in part by the Monson and Sturbridge Cultural Councils, local agencies supported by the Massachusetts Cultural Council, a state agency. Wings of Song is grateful for this support - and for the continued support of their many faithful audience regulars, supplemented by first-timers whom we're always glad to see!

Following the nautical theme, a fish dinner, prepared by the Music Committee, will precede the concert. More information will be coming in May.

## SCHOLARSHIP APPLICATIONS

The Dorcas Society H. Leonora Stiles Thomas Educational Trust is offering scholarships to members or affiliates of the First Church of Monson who meet the following qualifications:

1. Member of a current high school graduating class who has been accepted at a school of higher learning, and
2. Member or affiliate of The First Church of Monson who has provided some type of meaningful service to the programs of The First Church of Monson.

All applications must be completed and returned to a Dorcas Society Trustee by **11:00 am on the second Sunday of April**. Scholarship payments will be made in two equal parts. Part one will be paid upon receipt of student's first semester college grades and part two will be paid upon receipt of student's second semester grades.

Also offered by First Church is the H. C. Sanderson Family Scholarship. Recipients must meet the following criteria:

1. be members of The First Church of Monson, MA,
2. have completed at least one year of post high school education at a college, university, or other institute of higher education,
3. have strong academics,
4. participate in extra curricular and/or work activities, and
5. exhibit financial need.

Applications for both scholarship may be obtained from First Church's website <http://www.firstchurchmonson.org>, in the *Messenger* mail slot, or from one of the Dorcas Trustees:

Elaine Harris  
Crystal Kofke  
Carol Mullen  
Trish Nolen-Parkhouse

## COME AND SING: CELEBRATE THE MUSIC OF TAIZÉ

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, 2024 at 7 p.m.

Taizé Music comes to us from the Taizé Community located in Taizé, France. About 100 brothers from Catholic and various Protestant backgrounds dedicated to reconciliation live at the monastery. The order was founded in 1940. Much of the music is of the chanting genre and easy to sing.

First Church is inviting singers from choirs in surrounding towns to join the choir for this service of chanting and meditation. There will be limited rehearsals to begin after Easter. Dates and times will be announced shortly.

We will need a contact person from each church to tally up the names of people who wish to participate and their emails or contact information. These can be sent to First Church at [office@firstchurchmonson.org](mailto:office@firstchurchmonson.org) by March 13.

We hope you will join us for this special service, the first to be held in our area. Lift up your voice and sing! Join us for the reception following the service

**Members-at-large** serve as liaisons between Church Council and the entire congregation. Each member-at-large has one vote at council meetings. We have three members-at-large, Mary Newland, Lynn Galica, and Elaine Harris. If you have any matter you want addressed by Church Council, please contact one of the members-at-large. The service they provide is important and much appreciated.



The **Sixth Annual Easter Egg Hunt** will be held on Saturday, March 23, 2024. Doors open 11:00 a.m.; the egg hunt begins at 11:30 a.m. All activities are indoors. This year's egg hunt is sponsored by The First Church of Monson and The Friends of Monson. The event

is free and all ages are welcome; please bring your own Easter basket. As part of this event, we are collecting donations for Shriners Hospitals for Children; please see the Child Life Wish List on the insert for suggested donations.

There are several ways you can help before and during the hunt. We would appreciate donations of small toys and wrapped candies to fill the eggs. Helpers are needed to fill the nearly 3000 eggs and extra people are needed the day of the hunt to help keep our little ones safe. Please see any member of either Christian Education or Outreach if you are able to help. With thanks,

CE: Cindy, Sarah, Bethany, and Heather

Outreach: Lisa, Janice and Sarah

### Mark Your Calendars

**Let's Eat Breakfast** - March 17

There may be corned beef hash on the menu!

**Main Street Tavern Night** - March 21 (Third Thursday)

Music Committee is hosting this evening.

**Main Street Tavern Night** - April 18 (Third Thursday)

Christian Education is hosting.

**Let's Eat Breakfast** - April 21

### Loaves and Fishes Coordinators Thank

**Dr. Abu Baker Mahmood, DDS**

The Loaves and Fishes program was recently blessed by the generous donation of 100 bags of dental supplies from Dr. Abu Baker Mahmood, DDS of Monson Family Dental. The bags contained a toothbrush, toothpaste, and dental floss and were given for distribution to the Loaves and Fishes community. Thank you Dr. Mahmood! We are blessed to have you as part of the Monson community.

The Loaves and Fishes program involves preparing a casserole or side dish that is taken to South Congregational Church in Springfield and shared with anyone in need of a meal. We do this on the second Monday of every month.

You can be involved in the Loaves and Fishes program by preparing a main dish casserole or a side dish. If you opt to make a casserole, we give you a casserole pan and the recipe, either a chicken and rice dish or, on alternate months, a mock lasagna casserole. You buy the ingredients and bring the finished casserole to First Church the Sunday before our serving date. To accommodate busy schedules, you can make the casserole ahead of time and put it in the church freezer. We are currently preparing cooked carrots as a side dish but, starting in June, we switch from carrots to salad. Cooked carrots can also be made ahead of time and frozen. Just let the coordinators know that the items are in the freezer.

You can also be involved by going to South Congregational Church and helping to serve the meal. We usually travel together from First Church leaving at 3 p.m., but servers sometimes meet us at South Congregational at 4 p.m. because that works best in their schedules.

If you are interested in being a part of this program or would like to know more about it you may contact the Church Office at 413-267-3312 or [office@firstchurchmonson.org](mailto:office@firstchurchmonson.org).

## Prayer Shawl Ministry



Prayer shawl meetings are held in the Fellowship Room on the first and third Thursdays of each month, from 6:30 to 8 pm. All are welcome. Yarn and needles are available for those who want to learn to knit or crochet.

If you would like a prayer shawl for any reason, please contact Jane Roberts Donna Okscin. We can deliver a shawl locally, if needed.

Our ministry reached out to a small community of Native Americans living in the northeast corner of Nebraska with a donation of handmade items. With the help of the Benedictine Sisters from Holyoke, these items, including children's hats, baby blankets, and shawls, were delivered to this rural community. If you could help, we would like to send more handmade items. Thank you.



We know many of you love to sing, so we are inviting you to join our adult choir and add to the angels who lead our hymns, sing our anthems and introits, and embrace the power of music in worship. Choir rehearsals are Thursday evenings from 6:30 until 8 p.m. in the Julia Sprague Chapel upstairs under the direction of Kiel Krommer, Director of Music Ministries at First Church. We hope you will take this opportunity to use your talent to enrich our worship through song. There is no need to audition or sign up, just come.

## Hearts Willing Club

### March and April Programs

Hearts Willing Club will host a program about our former First Church parsonages on **March 27, 2024 starting at 7 p.m.** in Fellowship Hall. Bill Dominick of the Monson Historical Society will be the guest speaker. Bill is very knowledgeable about many things relating to the history of Monson and is always willing to answer your questions All are welcome to attend this program. Refreshments will follow the program.



On **Wednesday, April 24 beginning at 7 p.m.**, Hearts Willing Club will be sponsoring a Drum Circle 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 for \$3.00. Be prepared for a fun and informative evening of gentle drumming.

Reservations are required. To reserve a place, please call Lee at First Church of Monson and/or leave a message at 413.267.3312 or email First Church at [office@firstchurchmonson.org](mailto:office@firstchurchmonson.org) before Sunday, April 21st. Please be sure to let her know whether you will be bringing your own drum or if you'll need to rent one. The \$3.00 fee to rent a drum can be paid at the door. The evening is free if you will be bringing your own drum. Refreshments will be served after the Drum Circle.

# March-April 2024

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
					1 Art Class 3:30 pm Youth United 6:30 - 8 pm	2 AA 7-8:30 am Zumba 9 - 10 am
3 Worship/Communion 10 am Fellowship 11 am Deacons 11:30 am	4 Girl Scouts 3:30 - 4:30 pm	5	6 Music 11 am - noon Boy Scouts 6 to 8 pm	7 Zumba 5:30 - 6:30 pm Girl Scouts 6:30 - 7:30 pm Prayer Shawl 6:30 - 8 pm Choir 7 - 8:30 pm	8 Art Class 3-6 pm	9 AA 7-8:30 am
10 Daylight Saving Time begins Worship 10 am Fellowship 11 am All-church meeting Church Council 11:30 am	11 <b>Loaves and Fishes</b> Girl Scouts 3:30 - 4:30 pm	12	13 Boy Scouts 6-8 pm	14 Zumba 5:30 - 6:30 pm Girl Scouts 6:30 - 7:30 pm Choir 7-8:30 pm	15 St. Pat's Dinner Prep Art Class 3:30 pm Youth United at St. Pat's	16 AA 7-8:30 am Pinewood Derby Noon- 5 pm St. Patrick's Dinner 5 pm Concert 7 pm
17 Open Pantry Sunday Let's Eat Breakfast 8-9:45 am Worship 10 am Time Travel Sunday (SS) Fellowship 11 am Trustees 11:30 am	18 Girl Scouts 3:30 - 4:30 pm	19	20 Boy Scouts 6 -8 pm	21 Main Street Tavern Night 4 pm Zumba 5:30 - 6:30 pm Girl Scouts 6:30 - 7:30 pm Prayer Shawl 6:30-8 pm Choir 7-8:30 pm	22 Art Class 3:30 pm	23 AA 7-8:30 am Easter Egg Hunt 11 am
24 <b>Palm Sunday</b> Worship 10 am Fellowship 11 am	25 Girl Scouts 3:30 - 4:30 pm	26	27 Boy Scouts 6-8 pm Hearts Willing Club 7 pm	28 Zumba 5:30 - 6:30 pm <b>Maundy Thursday</b> 7 pm Choir 7- 8:30 pm	29 <b>Good Friday</b> Art Class 3:30 pm	30 AA 7-8:30 am
31 <b>Easter Sunday</b> Sunrise Service 6:15 Worship Service 10 am	April 1 Girl Scouts 3:30 - 4:30 pm	2	3 Boy Scouts 6 -8 pm	4 Zumba 5:30 - 6:30 pm Girl Scouts 6:30 - 7:30 pm Prayer Shawl 6:30 - 8 pm Choir 7- 8:30 pm	5 Art Class 3:30 pm Youth United 6:30-8 pm	6 AA 7-8:30 am
7 Worship/Communion 10 am Fellowship 11 am Deacons 11:30 am	8 <b>Loaves and Fishes</b> Girl Scots 3:30 - 4:30 pm	9	10 Boy Scouts 6-8 pm	11 Zumba 5:30 - 6:30 pm Girl Scouts 6:30 - 7:30 pm Choir 7-8:30 pm	12 Art Class 3:30 pm	13 AA 7-8:30 am
14 Worship 10 am Fellowship 11 am Church Council 11:30 am	15 Girl Scouts 3:30 - 4:30 pm	16	17 Boy Scouts 6- 8 pm	18 Main Street Tavern Night 4 pm Zumba 5:30 - 6:30 pm Girl Scouts 6:30 - 7:30 pm Prayer Shawl 6:30/Choir 7 pm	19 Art Class 3:30 pm Youth United at St. Pat's	20 AA 7-8:30 am
21 Open Pantry Sunday Let's Eat Breakfast 8 - 9:45 am Worship 10 am Fellowship 11 am 4/28 Taizé Service 7 pm	22 Girl Scouts 3:30 - 4:30 pm	23	24 Boy Scouts 6- 8 pm Hearts Willing Club 7 pm	25 Zumba 5-30 - 6:30 pm Choir 7-8:30 pm	26 Art Class 3:30 pm	27 AA 7 - 8:30 am