

The Messenger

March 2018

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 Mondays, Thursdays, and Fridays
from 9 AM to 1 PM.**

Please visit our website and calendar at www.firstchurchmonson.org.

Holy Week – March 25 to 31

March 25 - Palm/Passion Sunday – Worship Service at 10 a.m.

March 29 - Maundy Thursday – Tenebrae at 7:30 p.m.

(No prayer vigil)

March 30 – Good Friday

(No service)

Easter Sunday

April 1 – Sunrise Service – 6:30 a.m.

Light buffet breakfast following

Worship/Communion at 10 a.m.

No fellowship and no Sunday School classes

Membership Has Its Responsibilities and Its Privileges

Church membership is a covenant between one person, the entire congregation, and God. Sounds important and indeed it is. That is why at First Church Monson, members are called *Covenant Members*. On the religious landscape we are one of the few flavors of Christianity that places all our governance in the hands of the congregation, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. For those who have grown up with this form of church government, it's not a big deal. But, if you didn't, the idea of being in total control is not even on your radar. In a conversation with a guest following a memorial service at a church I was serving, it was clear to me that this individual had never encountered a democratic expression of the faith. I turned to our moderator, who had also attended the service, and asked him, "Hey, David, can you fire me with a two thirds majority vote of the congregation?" "Absolutely!" He cheerfully replied.



Church members are given the privilege of voice and vote in all affairs of the church. While we are a "public church," welcoming any and all to Sunday worship, offering a place where all children are invited into our church school, and everyone may participate in the ministries of church, only those who covenant with the congregation and with God as covenant members, may govern the church.

If you look at our bylaws, you will find under Article IV, Section A, the following as the Covenant of the First Church of Monson, Incorporated, (that) shall be accepted as the basis for covenant membership:

We believe in one God, Almighty; in the ideals and principles taught and lived by Jesus the Christ; in the Divine Spirit within every person.

We seek to know and do the will of God; to proclaim, by word and deed, the truth to all humanity.

We strive to work and pray for the progress of knowledge, the promotion of justice, the reign of peace and the realization of the human family.

We look with faith for the triumph of good over evil and for a life everlasting.

I suggest that the season of Lent is an excellent opportunity to reflect on this covenant as covenant members of First Church of Monson. I encourage you to give some thought and prayer to how it is we exercise our privilege and fulfill our responsibilities as we walk together with God.

Blessings to you this Lent and wishing you a bright joyous Easter come April 1.
Pastor Rob Gormbley, Interim Pastor

We are fools for the sake of Christ.
I Corinthians 4:10



If you, or someone you know, is interested in becoming a covenant member of First Church of Monson, please contact the pastor, the church office, or any church Deacon. We will be welcoming new members into the congregation in the month of April.





If you wish, you may order Easter flowers through the Church Office. Plants will be delivered for the Easter worship service on April 1, 2018. To order, contact Lee at 413-267-3312 or office@firstchurchmonson.org. Quantities are limited; orders must be received by Sunday, March 11. Thank you!

Choices are as follows:

- _____ Daffodils (6" pot, 3-4 bulbs) @ \$8.00
 - _____ Easter lilies (single stalk) @ \$8.00
 - _____ Easter lilies (double stalk) @ \$13.00
 - _____ Hyacinths (8" pot, 6 bulbs) @ \$13.00
 - _____ Tulips (8" pot, 9 bulbs) @ \$13.00
-

Moving First Church Monson Forward



Another all-church conversation is planned for Sunday, March 18, following the worship service. Pastor Rob will facilitate the conversation. All members and friends are welcome.



Fellowship Hosts Needed for April!

There is a sign-up sheet posted on the first bulletin board in Fellowship Hall. Ask any Deacon for assistance if you have questions or need help. Thank you.

If you have a loved one currently serving in the military and would like that person's name on the Sunday bulletin prayer list, please contact the Church Office at 413-267-3312 or office@firstchurchmonson.org.

One Great Hour of Sharing (OGHS) is a special offering of the United Church of Christ (UCC) which involves you in disaster, refugee/immigration, and development ministries throughout the world. The suggested date to receive 2018 donations is Sunday, March 11.

The Daily Lectionary Scripture References for March can be found at <https://www.macucc.org/files/files/documentsdailylectionary/march+2018.pdf>

Winter Weather Cancellations: Watch local stations WFSB Channel 3, ABC 40, FOX 6, WWLP-TV 22 or go to www.wfsb.com, www.WWLP.com, or www.westernmassnews.com to see if worship services or church activities are canceled due to inclement weather.



The Second Annual Easter Egg Hunt will be held on Saturday, March 24 at 11 a.m. Doors open and activities begin (egg coloring and face painting) at 10:30 a.m. The Outreach and Christian Education Committees will be working together to bring this free fun-filled event to life. There are several ways you can help. We welcome donations of candy. Helpers are needed to fill the nearly 3500 eggs and extra people are needed the day of the hunt to help keep our little ones safe.

We welcome donations of new toys, puzzles, games, playing cards, etc. to benefit the Child Life Department at Baystate Children's Hospital, Springfield. For suggested items, please visit <https://www.baystatehealth.org/giving/how-to-support/bch-toy-donation>. According to the BHS's website, "the activities and play items you donate directly benefit our pediatric patients, and are so important towards reducing stress and anxiety and providing much needed distraction during their hospital stay."

You can contact the Church Office at 413-267-3312 to volunteer. Thank you

**Hearts Willing Club
March 28, 2018
7 p.m.**



"History of the Monson Hat Shop"
by Bill Dominick, Monson Historical Society
Guests are most welcome to attend this program!
Refreshments will be served.

"Bless the Lord, O my soul; and all that is within me, bless His holy name."
-Psalm 103:1



First Church of Monson MA seeks a Director of Music Ministry. This part-time position will be available in September, 2018. Responsibilities include playing for one Sunday service, directing one adult choir, leading a Thursday evening rehearsal, and coordinating the music program of the church with the liturgical year. The instruments available are a three manual 1891 Johnson pipe organ as well as a Yamaha grand piano. Salary is commensurate with qualifications and experience. Send resume or inquiries by April 15, 2018, to First Church

Monson, 5 High Stret, Monson, MA, Attention: Music Committee.



The 5th Annual Mardi Gras Dinner was a wonderful night full of great fellowship. We thank Pastor Rob and Camilla for providing the beautiful jazz melodies. And who could forget the delicious Cajun food! We raised \$718 to date but are happily taking donations if you were unable to be with us but would like to support the folks at Soldier On. We were grateful to have Casey DiCicco, from Soldier On join us. There is information on this fantastic organization in the Fellowship Hall or you can find even more out by visiting www.wesoldieron.org.

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,
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.

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



Please note: On Sunday mornings, all the parking slots, except the Pastor's, in the parking lot adjacent to the church building are for those with handicapped placards.

STATEMENT **Our Mission** STATEMENT STATEMENT

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 flat-screen TV in the Fellowship Hall may look like a screen for concealing items you don't want to see, but it is not! It is a piece of expensive electronic equipment attached by wires to several other pieces of delicate electronic equipment. Nothing should be put behind that television, and no one should walk or crawl back there either.

Also, if items are moved while setting up for an event, please be sure to put them back in their proper locations at the conclusion of the event.

Thank you,
Board of Trustees



Event: Handbell Choir Workshop

When: Saturday, March 10 beginning at 10 a.m.

Where: Trinity United Methodist Church, 361 Sumner Avenue, Springfield.

The workshop will be led by resident handbell virtuoso Becky Isaacson. The workshop includes ringing for beginner's, special techniques, and a guest duo playing music for two ringers and three octaves of bells. If you're looking for the confidence to lead or participate in a handbell choir, this is the event for you! This workshop is free!!

Event: Concert by Monica Czausz, Organist at First Church of Deerfield

When: Sunday, March 4 at 3:00 P.M.

Where: The First Church of Deerfield, 71 Old Main Street, Deerfield.

Monica is a MA resident currently at The Curtis Institute of Music in Philadelphia PA where she is pursuing an Artist Diploma in Organ Performance. She graduated Summa Cum Laude in May 2017 from Rice University's Shepherd School of Music in Houston, Texas, where she completed a five year combined Bachelor of Music and Master of Music degree program in Organ Performance with Professor Ken Cowan. In 2016, she was recognized as one of the top 20 organists under 30 by *The Dispatcher* magazine. Her program will span four centuries to fully display the colorful and dynamic possibilities of the organ with music by Schilt, Bach, Weaver and others. Suggested donation is \$10-15.