



**The First Church of Monson, Congregational
United Church of Christ
Epiphany Sunday
Sunday, January 5, 2025**

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

- Core Values, 2022

As with Gladness Men of Old

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DIX 7.7.7.7.7

William Chatterton Dix, c. 1858

Conrad Kocher, 1838
Abr. William Henry Monk, 1861
Harm. *The English Hymnal*, 1906



1. As with glad-ness men of old Did the guid-ing star be-hold;
2. As with joy-ful steps they sped To that low-ly man-ger bed,
3. As they of-fered gifts most rare At that man-ger rude and bare;
4. Ho-ly Je-sus, ev-ery day Keep us in the nar-row way;



As with joy they hailed its light, Lead-ing on-ward, beam-ing bright;
There to bend the knee be-fore Him whom heaven and earth a-dore;
So may we with ho-ly joy, Pure, and free from sin's al-loys,
And, when earth-ly things are past, Bring our ran-somed souls at last



So, most gra-cious Lord, may we Ev-er-more be led to Thee.
So may we with will-ing feet Ev-er seek Thy mer-cy seat.
All our cost-liest trea-sures bring, Christ, to Thee, our heav-en-ly King.
Where they need no star to guide, Where no clouds Thy glo-ry hide.



**First Church of Monson, Congregational
United Church of Christ
Epiphany Sunday
January 5, 2025**

Prelude *Of the Father's Love Begotten* - David Lasky (b. 1957)

Welcome and Announcements

Introit

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

***Call to Worship**

L: Arise, shine; for your light has come.

P: *And the glory of our God has risen upon us.*

L: The Holy One has pity on the weak and needy;

P: *God redeems their life from oppression and violence.*

L: Precious in God's sight are the widows, widowers,
and orphans of war;

P: *Precious in God's sight are the addicted and confused.*

L: Precious in God's sight are the abused and neglected;

P: *Precious in God's sight are the poor and desperate;*

L: Precious in God's sight are all those who sit on the
margins;

P: *Precious in God's sight are all who long for justice;*

L: The glory of our God will rise upon them;

P: The glory of our God will rise upon us all.

***Opening Hymn** *As with Gladness Men of Old* (Page 1)

***Prayer of Confession** (RCD)

Holy One, who has pity on the weak and needy, we come before you admitting our brokenness. We confess that we have not been a source of light to those in desperate need of light, and we confess that we have run from your light, preferring to hide in the dark places of our own need. Have mercy on us. Lift up your eyes and look around. Shine the light of your love on us all, that we may reflect your light in the places of our lives. Amen.

***Words of Grace and Assurance**

The Holy One looks up and sees our needs. In Jesus, God has shined the light of love on us all. In the warm glow of God's light, our path is illumined, so we leave this place enabled to look up and see the needs of those around us. For this great gift, we give you thanks.

***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 *In the Bleak Midwinter*

- Robert Lau

Giving of Ourselves
Call to Offering



As the magi of old, guided by a light in the night sky, brought gifts of gratitude to God, so we bring our

gifts. May these gifts be a source of light to those in need.

Offertory Hymn *We Three Kings of Orient Are* (Page 7)

***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. Amen.*

***Prayer of Dedication**

*Holy One, receive these gifts from our glad and generous hearts. We dedicate them to you and the work of your church, both here and throughout the world.
Amen.*

First Reading

Isaiah 60:1-6

Arise, shine; for your light has come, and the glory of the LORD has risen upon you. ²For darkness shall cover the earth, and thick darkness the peoples; but the LORD will arise upon you, and his glory will appear over you. ³Nations shall come to your light, and kings to the brightness of your dawn. ⁴Lift up your eyes and look around; they all gather together, they come to you; your sons shall come from far away, and your daughters shall be carried on their nurses' arms. ⁵Then you shall see and be radiant; your heart shall thrill and rejoice, because the abundance of the sea shall be brought to you, the wealth of the nations shall come to you. ⁶A multitude of camels shall cover you, the young camels of Midian and Ephah; all those from Sheba shall come. They shall bring gold and frankincense, and shall proclaim the praise of the LORD.

*Those who are able are invited to stand.

Second Reading

Matthew 2: 1-12

In the time of King Herod, after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea, wise men from the East came to Jerusalem, ²asking, “Where is the child who has been born king of the Jews? For we observed his star at its rising, and have come to pay him homage.” ³When King Herod heard this, he was frightened, and all Jerusalem with him; ⁴and calling together all the chief priests and scribes of the people, he inquired of them where the Messiah was to be born. ⁵They told him, “In Bethlehem of Judea; for so it has been written by the prophet: ⁶“And you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, are by no means least among the rulers of Judah; for from you shall come a ruler who is to shepherd my people Israel.”” ⁷Then Herod secretly called for the wise men and learned from them the exact time when the star had appeared. ⁸Then he sent them to Bethlehem, saying, “Go and search diligently for the child; and when you have found him, bring me word so that I may also go and pay him homage.”

⁹When they had heard the king, they set out; and there, ahead of them, went the star that they had seen at its rising, until it stopped over the place where the child was. ¹⁰When they saw that the star had stopped, they were overwhelmed with joy. ¹¹On entering the house, they saw the child with Mary his mother; and they knelt down and paid him homage. Then, opening their treasure chests, they offered him gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh. ¹²And having been warned in a dream not to

return to Herod, they left for their own country by another road.

Sermon “*What’s an Epiphany Anyway?*”

Sacrament of Holy Communion

Invitation

Prayer of Consecration

Communion Hymn *Let Us Break Bread Together* (Page 8)

Sharing the Bread and Cup

Please partake of the bread at the moment most meaningful to you. Please wait to partake of the cup until all are served; then we drink as one.

Prayer of Thanksgiving

***Closing Hymn** *What Star Is This, With Beams So Bright* (Page 9)

***Benediction**

Postlude *Ding Dong Merrily on High* - Charles Callahan (1951-2023)

John H. Hopkins, Jr., 1820-1891, *alt.*KINGS OF ORIENT 8.8.8.6. *with Refrain*

John H. Hopkins, Jr.; 1820-1891

In unison



1 We three kings of O-ri-ent are, Bear - ing gifts we trav-erse a - far ·
 2 Born a king on Beth-le-hem's plain, Gold I bring to crown him a - gain,
 3 Frank-in-cense to of-fer have I, In - cense owns a de - i - ty nigh;
 4 Myrrhis mine; its bit-ter per-fume Breathes a life of gath-er-ing gloom:
 5 Glo-rious now be - hold him a - rise, King and God and Sac - ri - fice;




Field and foun-tain, moor and moun-tain, Fol - low - ing yon - der star.
 King for - ev - er, ceas - ing nev - er O - ver us all to reign.
 Prayer and prais - ing, all men rais - ing, Wor - ship him, God on high.
 Sor - rowing, sigh - ing, bleed - ing, dy - ing, Sealed in the stone - cold tomb.
 Al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia! Sounds through the earth and skies.



REFRAIN



O star of won - der, star of night, Star with roy - al beau - ty bright,




West-ward lead - ing, still pro-ceed - ing, Guide us to thy per - fect light.


BIRTH

Let Us Break Bread Together

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Negro Spiritual

LET US BREAK BREAD 7.3.7.3. with Refrain
Negro Melody

In unison

1 Let us break bread to - geth - er on our knees;
2 Let us drink wine to - geth - er on our knees;
3 Let us praise God to - geth - er on our knees;

Let us break bread to - geth - er on our knees.
Let us drink wine to - geth - er on our knees.
Let us praise God to - geth - er on our knees.

REFRAIN

When I fall on my knees, with my face to the ris - ing sun,

O Lord, have mer - cy on me.

LORD'S SUPPER

*Those who are able are invited to stand.

What Star Is This, With Beams So Bright

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Charles Coffin, 1676-1749
Tr. John Chandler, 1806-1876, alt.

PUER NOBIS NASCITUR L.M.
Adapted by Michael Praetorius, 1571-1621
Harm. by George R. Woodward, 1848-1934

1 What star is this, with beams so bright, More love - ly
2 'Tis now ful - filled what God de - creed, "From Ja - cob.
3 O Je - sus, while the star of grace Im - pels us
4 To God the Fa - ther, heaven - ly Light, To Christ, re -

than the noon - day light? 'Tis sent to announce a new - born
shall a star pro - ceed"; And lo! the east - ern sa - ges
on to seek thy face, Let not our sloth - ful hearts re -
vealed in earth - ly night, To God the Ho - ly Ghost we

king, Glad ti - dings of our God to bring.
stand, To read in heaven the Lord's com - mand.
fuse The guid - ance of thy light to use.
raise An end - less song of thank - ful praise! A - men.

Another harmonization may be found at No. 39

BIRTH

Serving You Today

Worship Leaders

Ministers of the Congregation
Pastor
Director of Music Ministries
Lay Reader

All Members of First Church
Rev. Jack Kraaz
Kiel Krommer
Roy Miller

Officers

Moderator
Clerk
Treasurer
Chair, Board of Deacons
Chair, Board of Trustees

Cindy DeSellier
Carol Mullen
Suzanne Kelley
Jeanne Dill
David Sanborn

Members at Large

Lynn Galica
Elaine Harris
Mary Newland

Staff

Church Administrator
Sunday School Superintendent
Custodian

Lee Brahen
Erin Greene Wallace
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

Mary Lincolnhoker

Renee

Carolyn Lewis

Beverly

Richard D'Aquila

Marlaina

Julie

Joseph B.

For comfort in grief:

The Family and Loved Ones of Joel Wheeler

The Family of Andrew Myers

The Family of Roger Ryder

The Family of A.J. Milne

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

- January 5, Sunday
10:00 a.m. - Worship (S)
11:00 a.m. - Degreening of Sanctuary
11:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m. - Church Council (L)
11:45-12:45 p.m. - Community Choir (SSA)
6:00-8:00 p.m. - Trustees Meeting (L)
- January 6, Monday
3:00-4:30 p.m. - Girl Scouts (SSA)
6:00-8:00 p.m. - Cub Scouts (SSA)
- January 7, Tuesday
All 2024 Vouchers due in Office
4:00-5:00 p.m. - Barre Above Class (SSA)
- January 8, Wednesday
6:00-8:00 p.m. - Boy Scouts (SSA)
- January 9, Thursday
6:30-8:00 p.m. - Adult Choir Rehearsal (SSA)
- January 11, Saturday
7:00-8:30 a.m. - AA (L)
- January 12, Sunday
Annual Reports Due
10:00 a.m. - Worship (S)
11:00 a.m. - Fellowship (F)
11:30-1:30 p.m. - Church Council (L)
11:45-12:45 p.m. - Community Choir (SSA)

C - Sprague Chapel

F - Fellowship Hall

K - Kitchen

L - Library

P - Parking Lot

S - Sanctuary

SA - Sunday School Auditorium

SS - Sunday School Classroom

Church News

Vouchers/Expenses for 2024. Please be sure to have all vouchers and expenses for 2024 in the office no later than **Tuesday, January 7, 2025.**

Annual Reports. Annual reports are due in the office on **Sunday, January 12, 2024.**

Degreening of the Sanctuary. The Christmas decorations in the sanctuary must be removed, repaired, and stored until next year. This will take place today from 11:00 a.m. until we are done! Please plan to stay after service to help. People who are not on Church Council are especially needed as there is a budget meeting at that time.

Automatic Pledge Withdrawal. It is not too late for you to have your First Church pledge withdrawn automatically from your bank account each month! You do not have to be a member to use this service. Fill out the form in the bulletin and get it to Suzanne Kelley as soon as possible. You will have one less item to attend to each month in 2025!

Conflict Resolution Workshop. Pastor Jack will be offering a Workshop on Conflict Resolution and Interventions for Healthy Congregations. The workshop and training will be held on Saturday, February 1st, from 9:00 a.m. to 12 noon in the Fellowship Hall. The event is open to all. Mark your calendar!

THE FIRST CHURCH OF MONSON

CONGREGATIONAL/ UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

Established 1762- Incorporated 1946

Member of The United Church of Christ 1961

5 High Street, Monson MA 01057

413-267-3312

AUTOMATIC PLEDGE WITHDRAWAL 2025

I hereby give my permission for The First Church of Monson to withdraw the amount stated below from my bank account each month on the second business Tuesday of the month.

2025 pledges will be withdrawn monthly on the second Tuesday of the month, beginning on January 14 and continuing for twelve (12) months until December 9, 2025.

MONTHLY PLEDGE: \$ _____

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: (_____) _____ Email: _____

Your Bank: _____

Account Number: _____

Routing Number: _____

Please include a voided check with this request.

Signature of Account Holder _____

Date: _____

If you have previously had automatic pledge withdrawal and want to continue, just indicate the new pledge amount. You may change or revoke your pledge at any time by contacting Suzanne Kelley at suzannekelley@att.net.

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