



**The First Church of Monson, Congregational
United Church of Christ
Baptism of the Lord/First Sunday after Epiphany
Sunday, January 12, 2025**

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

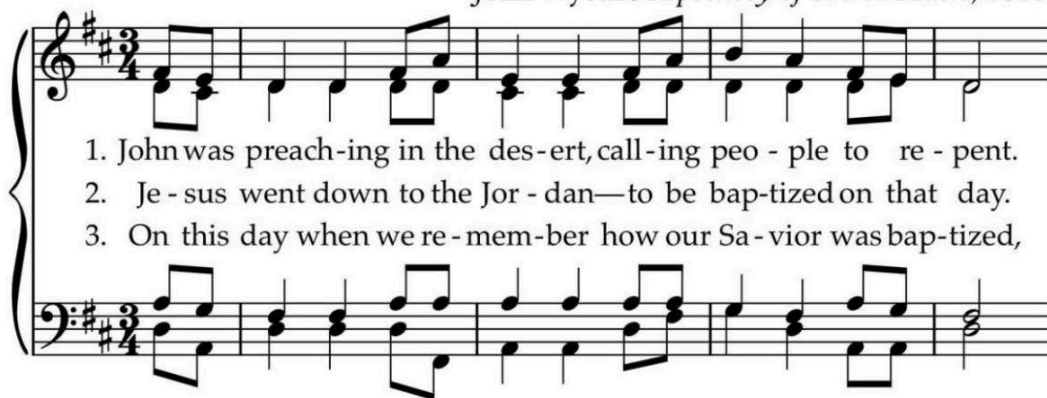
- Core Values, 2022

John Was Preaching in the Desert

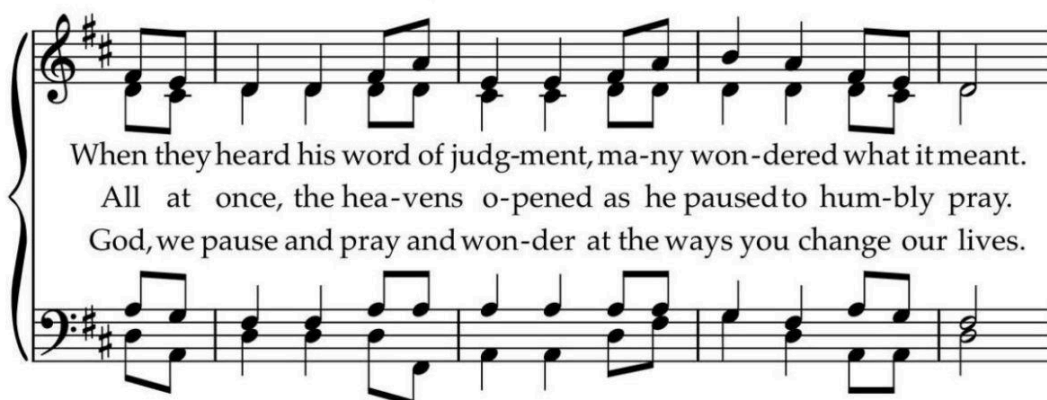
Carolyn Winfrey Gillette, 2019

Nettleton

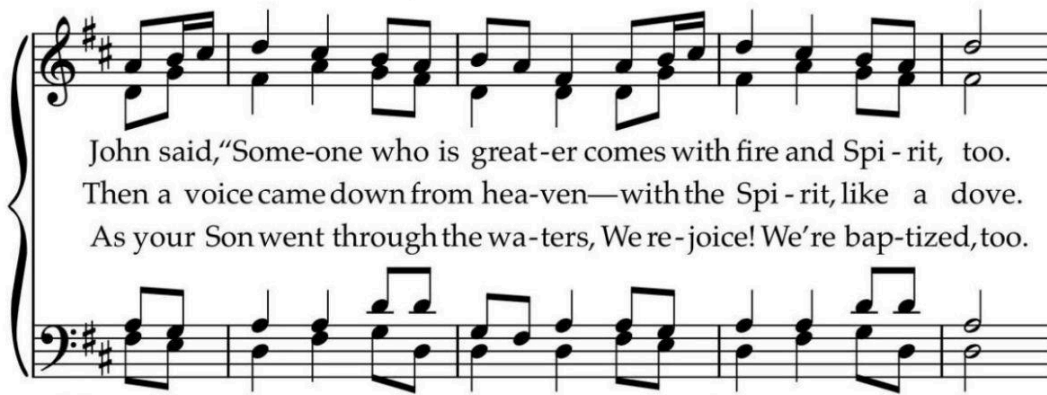
John Wyeth's *Repository of Sacred Music*, 1813



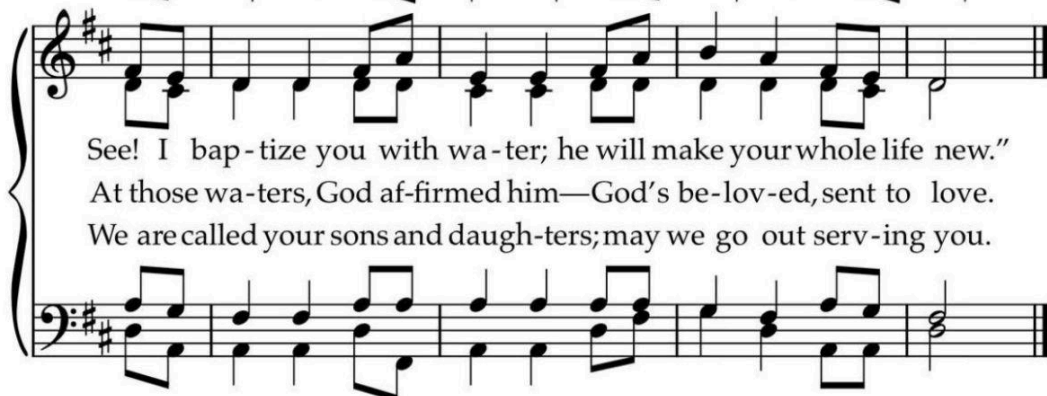
1. John was preach-ing in the des-ert, call-ing peo - ple to re - pent.
2. Je - sus went down to the Jor - dan—to be bap-tized on that day.
3. On this day when we re - mem-ber how our Sa - vior was bap-tized,



When they heard his word of judg-ment, ma-ny won-dered what it meant.
All at once, the hea-vens o-pened as he paused to hum-bly pray.
God, we pause and pray and won-der at the ways you change our lives.



John said, "Some-one who is great-er comes with fire and Spi - rit, too.
Then a voice came down from hea-ven—with the Spi - rit, like a dove.
As your Son went through the wa-ters, We re-joice! We're bap-tized, too.



See! I bap-tize you with wa-ter; he will make your whole life new."
At those wa-ters, God af-firmed him—God's be-lov-ed, sent to love.
We are called your sons and daugh-ters; may we go out serv-ing you.

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Email: carolynshymns@gmail.com | New Hymns: www.carolynshymns.com

**First Church of Monson, Congregational
United Church of Christ
Baptism of the Lord/First Sunday after Epiphany
January 12, 2025**

Prelude *Baptized and Set Free* - Kenneth T. Kosche (b. 1947)

A Time for Children

Welcome and Announcements

Introit

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

***Call to Worship**

L: On this wintry Sunday we've come to be reminded;

P: God has made this day. Let us rejoice and be glad in it.

L: Let us worship the living God.

P: To God, Fountain of Life, Living Word, and Spirit of Holiness, be praise in all the earth.

***Opening Hymn** *John Was Preaching in the Desert* (Page 1)

***Morning Prayer**

With different gifts, with a variety of talents, with an array of interests, we come to worship you, Holy One. We are here to unite our spirits, to be made one in Jesus Christ, to be merged in hope as your children. Bless our differences, that the unique gifts and perceptions of each may strengthen our oneness. Drawn into your Spirit, we give you the thanks of our hearts, in the name of the living 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

The Baptism of Christ

- C. Callahan



Giving of Ourselves Call to Offering

We are poor unless God blesses us. We are rich when we offer up what we have to God. Let us receive our morning offering.

Offertory Hymn

Baptized and Set Free

(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. Amen.***

***Prayer of Dedication**

***Holy One, enable us to hear good news when
Christ asks us to give up our attachment to
earthly values, and give us the courage to do so.
May these gifts be used in this spirit that we may
attain to your blessing. Amen.***

Scripture Reading

Luke 3:15-17, 21-22

¹⁵As the people were filled with expectation, and all were questioning in their hearts concerning John, whether he might be the Messiah, ¹⁶John answered all of them by saying, "I baptize you with water; but one who is more powerful than I is coming; I am not worthy to untie the thong of his sandals. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire. ¹⁷His winnowing fork is in his hand, to clear his threshing floor and to gather the

wheat into his granary; but the chaff he will burn with unquenchable fire.”

²¹Now when all the people were baptized, and when Jesus also had been baptized and was praying, the heaven was opened,
²²and the Holy Spirit descended upon him in bodily form like a dove. And a voice came from heaven, “You are my Son, the Beloved; with you I am well pleased.”

***Sermon Hymn** *Shall We Gather at the River* (Page 6)

Sermon *“Beloved!”*

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** *To Jordan Jesus Humbly Came* (Page 7)

***Benediction**

Postlude *Shall We Gather at the River* - Dale Wood (1934-2003)

*Those who are able are invited to stand.

Baptized and Set Free

D C G A

1. We are peo - ple cre - a - ted, cho - sen by God. Then we're
 2. We are fed and we're nour-ished, filled and re - freshed. Then our
 3. We are nour-ished by wa - ter, all liv - ing things and by
 4. Now with praise and thanks - giv - ing, we join the song. All are

D C G A

washed, ev - er gent - ly, in mer - cy and love. Sin has
 hun - ger re - turns and a - gain we are blessed. For what -
 life that the Spir - it a - bun - dant - ly brings. As we
 wel - come! We gath - er to sing loud and strong. Not en -

Bm F#m G A

pow - er no more. Je - sus o - pened the door to a
 ev - er the need, God is great - er in - deed: end - less
 jour - ney toward home, may your pres - ence be known: pre - cious
 slaved, but set free! From now on, all will be one in

Bm G A D

foun - tain bring - ing heal - ing, and whole - ness and more.
 o - cean, al - ways deep - er than all of our need.
 riv - er ev - er - flow - ing, now car - ry us home.
 Je - sus, one in wat - er, bap - tized and set free!

*Those who are able are invited to stand.

Shall We Gather at the River

597

*Robert Lowry, 1864; alt.**Rev. 22:1-5*

1 Shall we gath - er at the riv - er, where bright an - gel feet have trod,
 2 On the mar - gin of the riv - er, wash - ing up its sil - ver spray,
 3 As we reach the shin - ing riv - er, lay we ev - ery bur - den down;
 4 Soon we'll reach the shin - ing riv - er, soon our pil - grim - age will cease;

with its crys - tal tide for - ev - er flow - ing by the throne of God?
 we will walk and wor - ship ev - er, all the hap - py gold - en day.
 grace our spir - its will de - liv - er, and pro - vide a robe and crown,
 soon our hap - py hearts will quiv - er with the mel - o - dy of peace.

Refrain

Yes, we'll gath - er at the riv - er, the beau - ti - ful, the beau - ti - ful riv - er,

Gath - er with the saints at the riv - er that flows by the throne of God.

Written during a time when an epidemic was claiming many lives in New York, Robert Lowry's hymn raised the question "Shall we meet again?" Lowry was pastor at Hanson Place Baptist Church in Brooklyn from 1861 to 1869, and collaborated on numerous hymn collections with William H. Doane.

Tune: HANSON PLACE 8.7.8.7. with refrain
 Robert Lowry, 1864

To Jordan Jesus Humbly Came 457

Capo 3: (G)
B \flat

(C)
E \flat

(D7)
F7

(G)
B \flat

1. To Jor - dan Je - sus hum - bly came, His
 2. John plunged him in that wa - t'ry grave; Christ
 3. God's thun - d'ring voice the heav - ens rends, The
 4. God names us sons and daugh - ters, too, In

(C)
E \flat

(G)
B \flat

(D)
F

(Bm)
Dm

(G)
B \flat

(A)
C

(D)
F

(G)
B \flat

(Am)
Cm

(G)
B \flat

(C)
E \flat

gos - pel mis - sion to pro - claim; On earth, in heav'n, God's
 rose to teach and heal and save, To show us how to
 Spir - it's might on him de - scends; The Word - made - Flesh, with
 font and Spir - it born a - new; In Christ we die, with

(Am)
Cm

(G)
B \flat

(D)
F

(G)
B \flat

(C)
E \flat

(G)
B \flat

(Em)
Gm

(Am7)
Cm7

(D)
F

(G)
B \flat

will was done By God's be - lov - ed on - ly Son.
 die to sin And share e - ter - nal life with him.
 grace in - fused, A - noint - ed, goes to bring Good News.
 Christ we rise, Through Christ we en - ter par - a - dise!

Text: Alan J. Hommerding, b.1956, © 2004, World Library Publications
 Tune: WINCHESTER NEW, LM; adapt. from *Musikalisches Handbuch*, Hamburg, 1690

Serving You Today

Worship Leaders

Ministers of the Congregation
Pastor
Director of Music Ministries
Greeters/Ushers
Lay Reader
Fellowship

All Members of First Church
Rev. Jack Kraaz
Kiel Krommer
Roseann & Nick Vinciguerra
Doug Kelley
Mary Newland

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	Renee
Louise	Carolyn Lewis
Diana Nothe-Taylor	Beverly
Carol Snyder	Richard D'Aquila
Chris	Marlaina
Martha Warren	Julie
Mary Linkenhoker	Joseph B.
Julie Brocklehurst Woods	

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
The Family and Friends of Sharon Allen

For strength and comfort during war and natural disaster:

The people of Ukraine
The people of Israel and Gaza
The people of Palestine and Lebanon
The people of Syria
The people affected by the California wildfires

For all service people, wherever they may be:

Chelsea Carr	Stephen Dill, USN
Malik Pugh, USMC	Tim Olson, USN
Michael Wales, USN	

This Week in the Life of the Congregation

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 (SA)

January 13, Monday

Loaves and Fishes

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

6:00-8:00 p.m. - Cub Scouts (SA)

January 14, Tuesday

4:00-5:00 p.m. - Barre Above Class (SA)

5:15-6:15 p.m. - PiYo Class (SA)

January 15, Wednesday

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

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

January 16, Thursday

5:15-6:15 p.m. - PiYo Class (SA)

6:30-8:00 p.m. - Adult Choir Rehearsal (SA)

6:30-8:30 p.m. - Prayer Shawl (F)

January 18, Saturday

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

January 19, Sunday

8:00-9:45 a.m. - Let's Eat Breakfast

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

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

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

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

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!

Travel Communion Sets. Recently, Pastor Jack trained several deacons in how to serve communion to members who are unable to attend worship services. He also donated two travel communion sets to facilitate this ministry. Please contact the Church Office (413-267-3312) if you would like to share communion with a deacon.

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 the 263rd Annual Meeting of the First Church of Monson, Inc.

The covenant members of the First Church of Monson, Inc. are hereby warned of the Annual Meeting to be held in the sanctuary on Sunday, February 2, 2025, immediately following the worship service. The covenant members will hear and act upon the following business:

1. Motion to postpone this meeting until Sunday, February 9, 2025, in the sanctuary immediately following the worship service. The covenant members will hear and act upon the following business:
2. A motion to accept the 2024 Annual Reports of the officers, boards, and committees, except the Treasurer's Report, the Stewardship Committee's Report, and the Nominating Slate for 2025.
3. A motion to accept the Treasurer's Report for 2024.
4. A motion to accept the 2025 Proposed Budget as recommended by the Stewardship Committee and approved by Church Council.
5. A motion to accept the 2025 slate of officers and members of boards and committees as presented by Church Council.
6. Any other business to be properly presented at this meeting.
7. Motion to adjourn

Respectfully submitted,

Carol E. Mullen, Church Clerk
January 9, 2025

Please see below for a second warrant.

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, February 9, 2025, immediately following the Annual Meeting. The covenant members will hear and act upon the following business:

1. **A motion from the Settled Pastor Search Committee to call their recommended candidate as Settled Pastor for the First Church of Monson, Congregational/UCC effective, March 1, 2025.**

Respectfully submitted,

Carol E. Mullen, Church Clerk
January 9, 2025

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