



**The First Church of Monson, Congregational  
United Church of Christ  
An Open and Affirming Church  
First Sunday in Lent  
Sunday, March 9, 2025**

*Whoever you are, wherever you are on life's journey,  
**you** are welcome here!*

# Baptized in Water 919

1. Bap-tized in wa - ter, Sealed by the Spir - it, Cleansed by the  
 2. Bap-tized in wa - ter, Sealed by the Spir - it, Dead in the  
 3. Bap-tized in wa - ter, Sealed by the Spir - it, Marked with the

blood of Christ our King: Heirs of sal - va - tion, Trust - ing his  
 tomb with Christ our King: One with his ris - ing, Freed and for -  
 sign of Christ our King: Born of one Fa - ther, We are his

prom - ise, Faith - ful - ly now God's praise we sing.  
 giv - en, Thank - ful - ly now God's praise we sing.  
 chil - dren, Joy - ful - ly now God's praise we sing.

Text: Michael Saward, b.1932, © 1982, The Jubilate Group (admin. by Hope Publishing Company)  
 Tune: BUNESSAN, 5 5 8 D; Gaelic melody; acc. A. Gregory Murray, OSB, 1905-1992, © Downside Abbey

*Please note: these guitar chords do not match the accompaniment version of this hymn.*

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**Prelude**

*O God, You Search Me*

- David Lasky (b. 1957)

**Welcome**

**Passing of the Lord's Peace**

**A Time for Children**

**Introit**

**\*Call to Worship (responsive)**

Rev: God's voice spoke into chaos, forming the waters of the earth.

**All: As we gather together in worship, we remember our baptism in those waters.**

Rev: God's voice flows like the living waters of grace.

**All: Our new name becomes, 'Beloved,' resounding in our souls for all eternity.**

Rev: God's voice stirs the waters of baptismal hope,

**All: calling us to be bearers of peace to a world of brokenness.**

Rev: Grace has been poured upon each of us, through water, through love, and through life.

**All: Let us rejoice as a united family of God!**

**\*Gloria Patri**

*Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost.  
As it was in the the beginning, is now and ever shall be,  
World without end. Amen! Amen!*

## **\*Unison Prayer**

***Holy cleanser of souls, we come before You this day with awe and wonder. In baptism, You claimed us as Your children, freeing us from the power of hatred and death. You joined us to Christ, and to one another, in unity, recalling that “there is no longer Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female; for all are one in Christ Jesus.” You have anointed us for ministry and made us bearers of divine love. We thank you and celebrate our blessed baptism into the fullness of Christ; Amen.***

## **\*Opening Hymn**

*Baptized in Water*



(Page 1)

## **Call to Offering**

God is the giver of all good things, the One who fashioned each of us with unique gifts that together make the Body of Christ whole. In gratitude for all we have received, we offer our lives back to God by sharing our time, our skills, and our treasure. In so doing, we join the collective in building God’s kin-dom here on earth. This morning’s offering shall now be taken.

## **\*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**

*Rev. Dr. Holly Norwick*

## **Choral Anthem**

*O God, You Search Me*

- B. Farrell

## Scripture Readings

### **Old Testament Reading** *Psalm 139: 1-16*

You have searched me, LORD, and you know me. You know when I sit and when I rise; you perceive my thoughts from afar. You discern my going out and my lying down; you are familiar with all my ways. Before a word is on my tongue you, LORD, know it completely. You hem me in behind and before, and you lay your hand upon me.

Such knowledge is too wonderful for me, too lofty for me to attain. Where can I go from your Spirit? Where can I flee from your presence? If I go up to the heavens, you are there; if I make my bed in the depths, you are there. If I rise on the wings of the dawn, if I settle on the far side of the sea, even there your hand will guide me, your right hand will hold me fast.

If I say, “Surely the darkness will hide me and the light become night around me,” even the darkness will not be dark to you; the night will shine like the day, for darkness is as light to you. For you created my inmost being; you knit me together in my mother’s womb.

I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made; your works are wonderful, I know that full well. My frame was not hidden from you when I was made in the secret place, when I was woven together in the depths of the earth. Your eyes saw my unformed body; all the days ordained for me were written in your book before one of them came to be.

### **Gospel Reading**

*Matthew 3: 1-17*

In those days John the Baptist came, preaching in the wilderness of Judea and saying, “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven has come near.” This is he who was spoken of through

the prophet Isaiah: “A voice of one calling in the wilderness, ‘Prepare the way for the Lord, make straight paths for him.’”

John’s clothes were made of camel’s hair, and he had a leather belt around his waist. His food was locusts and wild honey. People went out to him from Jerusalem and all Judea and the whole region of the Jordan. Confessing their sins, they were baptized by him in the Jordan River.

But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees coming to where he was baptizing, he said to them: “You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the coming wrath? Produce fruit in keeping with repentance. And do not think you can say to yourselves, ‘We have Abraham as our father.’ I tell you that out of these stones God can raise up children for Abraham. The ax is already at the root of the trees, and every tree that does not produce good fruit will be cut down and thrown into the fire.

“I baptize you with water for repentance. But after me comes one who is more powerful than I, whose sandals I am not worthy to carry. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire. His winnowing fork is in his hand, and he will clear his threshing floor, gathering his wheat into the barn and burning up the chaff with unquenchable fire.”

Then Jesus came from Galilee to the Jordan to be baptized by John. But John tried to deter him, saying, “I need to be baptized by you, and do you come to me?” Jesus replied, “Let it be so now; it is proper for us to do this to fulfill all righteousness.” Then John consented.

As soon as Jesus was baptized, he went up out of the water. At that moment heaven was opened, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and alighting on him. And a voice from

heaven said, “This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased.”

**\*Hymn** *Baptized and Set Free* (Page 7)

**Sermon** *“The Image in the Water”*

**Musical Response** *“Spirit of the Living God”*

*Spirit of the living God, fall afresh on me.*

*Spirit of the living God, fall afresh on me.*

*Melt me, mold me, fill me, use me.*

*Spirit of the living God, fall afresh on me.*

**Prayers of the People (Joys and Concerns)**

**Pastoral Prayer**

Holy God, You sent John to prepare the way for Jesus Christ, Your beloved son. We, too, have been sent to prepare the way for peace and love. Yet, there are times when we fall short of our call, and our voices fall silent of Your good news. Pour out Your Holy Spirit upon us so that we may find the courage to proclaim the good news of Your grace. Through Christ, the living water of life, we ask this, and all things, in the words that He taught us;

**The Lord’s Prayer** (you are invited to say these, or whichever words, are meaningful for you)

***Our Father, 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 debts as we forgive our debtors. 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** *“Heaven Came Down”* (Page 8)

**\*Benediction**

## **Postlude**

*Jesus, Priceless Treasure* - Gilbert M. Martin (b. 1941)

(During Lent, please refrain from clapping after the Postlude. Thank you)

## **Announcements**

### Lent - Purple

Purple represents royalty and suffering. In the context of Lent, it symbolizes penance, sacrifice, and preparation.



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5 High Street  
Monson, Massachusetts 01057  
(413) 267-3312  
[www.firstchurchmonson.org](http://www.firstchurchmonson.org)



# 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.

# Heaven Came Down

John 3:5

1. O what a won - der - ful, won - der - ful day, Day I will nev - er for -  
 2. Born of the Spir - it with life from a - bove In - to God's fam - 'ly di -  
 3. Now I've a hope that will sure - ly en - dure Af - ter the pass - ing of

get; \_\_\_\_\_ Af - ter I'd wan - dered in dark - ness a - way, Je - sus my  
 vine, \_\_\_\_\_ Jus - ti - fied ful - ly thru Cal - va - ry's love, O what a  
 time, \_\_\_\_\_ I have a fu - ture in heav - en for sure, There in those

Sav - ior I met, \_\_\_\_\_ O what a ten - der com - pas - sion - ate friend,  
 stand - ing is mine! \_\_\_\_\_ And the trans - ac - tion so quick - ly was made  
 man - sions sub - lime; \_\_\_\_\_ And it's be - cause of that won - der - ful day

He met the need of my heart; \_\_\_\_\_ Shad - ows dis - pel - ling, With  
 When as a sin - ner I came, \_\_\_\_\_ Took of the of - fer Of  
 When at the cross I be - lieved; \_\_\_\_\_ Rich - es e - ter - nal And

joy I am tell - ing, He made all the dark - ness de - part!  
 grace He did prof - fer, He saved me, O praise His dear name!  
 bless - ings su - per - nal From His pre - cious hand I re - ceived.

\*Those who are able are invited to stand.

Refrain

Heav - en came down and glo - ry filled my soul,

When at the cross the Sav - ior made me whole; My  
He made me whole;

sins were washed a - way And my night was turned to day

Heav - en came down and glo - ry filled my soul!  
It filled my soul!

\*Those who are able are invited to stand.

## **Serving You Today**

### *Worship Leaders:*

Ministers of the Congregation	All Members of First Church
Pastor	Rev. Dr. Holly Norwick
Director of Music Ministries	Kiel Krommer
Ushers/Greeters	Roseann & Nick Vinciguerra
Fellowship	Lynn Galica/Crystal Kofke
Lay Reader	Keith Obert

### *Officers:*

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

### *Members at Large:*

Lynn Galica  
Elaine Harris  
Mary Newland

### *Staff:*

Church Administrator	Lee Brahen
Sunday School Superintendent	Erin Greene Wallace
Custodian	Linda Whippie

## **Office Hours, Pastoral Care, and Contact Information**

### ***Church Office Hours***

The church office is open Tuesday and Thursday from 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. 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](mailto:office@firstchurchmonson.org).

### ***Pastor's Hours***

Monday 8:30 - 4:30 *remotely*, and

Tuesday - Thursday from 8:30 - 4:30 *in-office*.

If you are unable to meet during any of those hours, she is happy to meet outside those times by appointment, and can be reached by email at

[pastor@firstchurchmonson.org](mailto:pastor@firstchurchmonson.org), or by phone at (808) 371-4701.

For urgent matters, please contact her at any time by calling (808) 371-4701.

## 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:

Carol Snyder

Chris

Martha Warren

Mary Linkenhoker

Wilhelmina Brahen

Richard D'Aquila

Marlaina

Josh Cash

Joseph B.

For comfort in grief:

The Family and Friends of Sharon Allen

The Family and Friends of Earl Chaffee

The Family of Thelma Illig

The Family of Philip Wallander

For strength and comfort during war and 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

Malik Pugh, USMC

Michael Wales, USN

Stephen Dill, USN

Tim Olson, USN

## **This Week in the Life of the Congregation**

March 9, Sunday

### **Daylight Saving Time Begins**

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

11:00 a.m. - Fellowship

11:30-1:30 p.m. - Church Council (L)

11:45-12:45 p.m. - Community Choir (SA)

March 10, Monday

### **Loaves & Fishes**

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

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

March 11, Tuesday

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

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

March 12, Wednesday

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

March 13, Thursday

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

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

March 15, Saturday

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

9:00-4:00 p.m. - Pinewood Derby (SA)

March 16, Sunday

8:00-9:45 a.m. - Let's Eat Breakfast (K/F)

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

11:00 a.m. - Fellowship

11:45-12:45 p.m. - Community Choir (SA)

6:00-8:00 p.m. - Trustees (L)

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

**Outreach Lenten Mission.** From March 1 to March 31, Outreach will be collecting hygiene items to be distributed by the Springfield Rescue Mission. Your donations will be distributed to residents in their Men's New Life Program, to guests at their Emergency Shelter and Giveaway Center, and to those they may meet through their mobile feeding program. **New** items to fill totes: toothbrush and toothpaste; alcohol-free mouthwash; shampoo; conditioner; soap/body wash; deodorant; hand/body lotion; lip balm; body powder; nail clippers/file; disposable razor; shaving cream; feminine products; brush/comb; and rain poncho. There will be a box in Fellowship Hall and the Narthex to drop off your donations. Thank you for your help with this mission.

**Let's Eat Breakfast.** The next Let's Eat Breakfast will be held on March 16, at which we will celebrate St. Patrick's Day with homemade corned beef hash. Please note that the Let's Eat Breakfast in April will be held on Palm Sunday, April 13, instead of Easter Sunday, April 20.

**St. Patrick's Day Corned Beef Dinner and Concert.** On Saturday, March 22, the trustees invite you to a delicious corned beef and cabbage dinner, prepared by Chef David Sanborn and his assistants. The dinner will begin at 5:00 p.m. in the Fellowship Hall, followed at 7 p.m. by a rousing concert of Irish music in the sanctuary with Sarah the Fiddler. The food and entertainment will be superb. Get your tickets by calling the church office 413-267-3312 or seeing Suzanne Kelley each Sunday. The last day for dinner reservations is Wednesday, March 18. Cost is \$25 for the dinner and the concert. Concert tickets only can be purchased at the door for \$10.

**One Great Hour of Sharing.** Our One Great Hour of Sharing offering will be on Sunday, March 30. When we participate in One Great Hour of Sharing, we shed light in places where circumstances make it difficult to imagine a future with hope. We create the possibility for people forced to flee their homes in search of safety and new promise. We support life-giving recovery efforts when disasters devastate a community and overturn lives. We empower partners around the globe in their labors to build sustainable futures. We plant seeds of peace where war has wrought despair and destruction. Checks can be made payable to the First Church of Monson with OGHS 2025 in the memo line.

**Easter Egg Hunt and Pancake Breakfast.** On Saturday, April 5, First Church will be hosting an Easter egg hunt and pancake breakfast. The day will begin with a pancake breakfast at 9:00 a.m. The breakfast is \$5 and free for children under three. At 9:30 a.m. we will have story time, egg coloring, and arts & crafts. The Easter egg hunt will begin at 10:00 a.m. and will feature pictures with the Easter Bunny. Please help the homeless and families in need served by the Springfield Rescue Mission by bringing packages of NEW underwear, socks and t-shirts for men, women, and children.

# 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](mailto:office@firstchurchmonson.org), or visit our website at <http://www.firstchurchmonson.org>.

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