

# The First Church of Monson, Congregational United Church of Christ First Sunday after Christmas Sunday, December 29, 2024

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

- Core Values, 2022





Like "All Things Bright and Beautiful" (see no. 20), this popular Christmas hymn was written by an Irish poet to illustrate for children the various articles of the Apostles' Creed. It is not known which of several English villages the composer had in mind when naming this tune.

TEXT: Cecil Frances Alexander, 1848, alt. MUSIC: Henry John Gauntlett, 1849; harm. Arthur Henry Mann, 1919 IRBY

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# The First Church of Monson, Congregational United Church of Christ First Sunday After Christmas December 29, 2024

Today we welcome Sarah Brown and Jeanne Dill as our worship leaders

**Prelude** A Christmas Prelude - Charles Callahan (1951-2023)

### Welcome and Announcements

\*Introit Carol Good Christian Men, Rejoice (Page 1)

\*Call to Worship

(MCT)

- L: Some people say Christmas is for children.
- P: Christmas is also for people of age and experience.
- L: Elizabeth, Mary's cousin, and Zechariah, the priest, accepted new birth breaking into all their familiar patterns.
- P: Simeon the singer and Anna the prophet hoped for many years to see the Messiah and then recognized the Messiah in a poor couple's baby.
- L: How then shall we respond to Christ's promised coming?
- P: With willingness for change, with patience in long waiting, with silence and singing, with the ability to see Christ in the least likely of our brothers and sisters.

# \*Morning Prayer (Unison)

Giver of Gifts, amid the tall tinseled trees your light breaks through to the world. We hear that you have come to us in love and flesh. Speak to us anew of that eternal love which reaches out to us in the birth of Jesus. 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**

Joseph's Lullaby Cindy DeSellier, Soloist

# **Giving of Ourselves**

Call to Offering

As we prepare to give our tithes and offerings, we give because we are grateful and because we want to be part of the work of your kingdom in every way we can. We ask that these gifts be used to the betterment of your church and world.

Offertory

In the Bleak Midwinter

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\*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 (Unison)

Holy One, we dedicate these our gifts to the work of your church and realm beyond its doors. Amen.

### First Reading

Colossians 3:12-17

<sup>12</sup>As God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience. <sup>13</sup>Bear with one another and, if anyone has a complaint against another, forgive each other; just as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive. <sup>14</sup>Above all, clothe yourselves with love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony. <sup>15</sup>And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in the one body. And be thankful. <sup>16</sup>Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly; teach and admonish one another in all wisdom; and with gratitude in your hearts sing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs to God. <sup>17</sup>And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.

Carol

God Rest You Merry, Gentleman

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## **Second Reading**

Luke 2:41-52

<sup>41</sup>Now every year his parents went to Jerusalem for the festival of the Passover. <sup>42</sup>And when he was twelve years old, they went up as usual for the festival. <sup>43</sup>When the festival was ended and they started to return, the boy Jesus stayed behind in Jerusalem, but his parents did not know it. <sup>44</sup>Assuming that he was in the group of travelers, they went a day's journey. Then they started to look for him among their relatives and friends. <sup>45</sup>When they did not find him, they returned to Jerusalem to search for him. <sup>46</sup>After three days they found him in the temple, sitting among the teachers, listening to them and asking

them questions. <sup>47</sup>And all who heard him were amazed at his understanding and his answers. <sup>48</sup>When his parents saw him they were astonished; and his mother said to him, "Child, why have you treated us like this? Look, your father and I have been searching for you in great anxiety." <sup>49</sup>He said to them, "Why were you searching for me? Did you not know that I must be in my Father's house?" <sup>50</sup>But they did not understand what he said to them. <sup>51</sup>Then he went down with them and came to Nazareth, and was obedient to them. His mother treasured all these things in her heart. <sup>52</sup>And Jesus increased in wisdom and in years, and in divine and human favor.

\*Carol

Unto Us a Boy Is Born

(Page 9)

Sermon

"Five Gold Rings"

## 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

Hark! The Herald Angels Sing

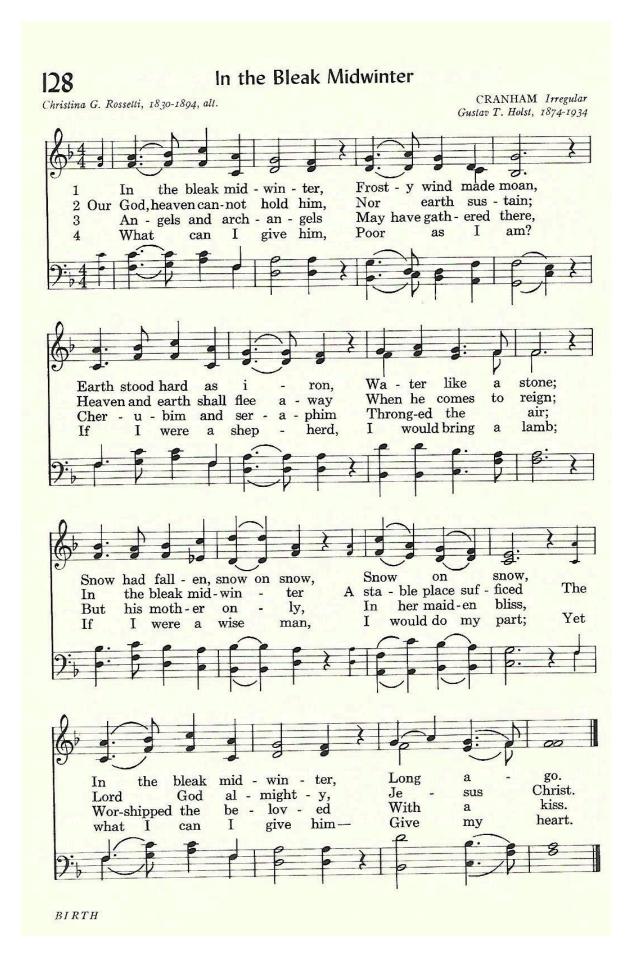
(Page 10)

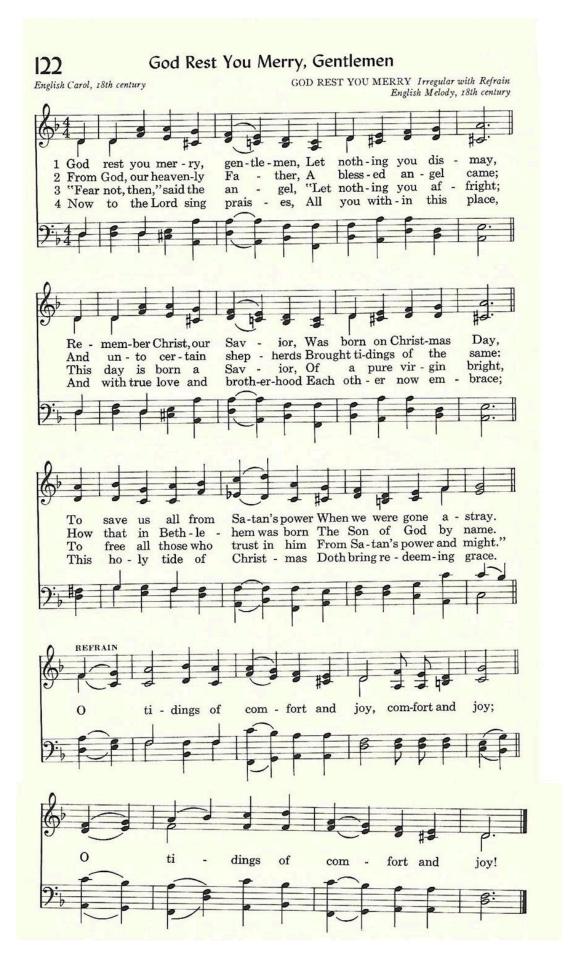
\*Benediction

**Postlude** 

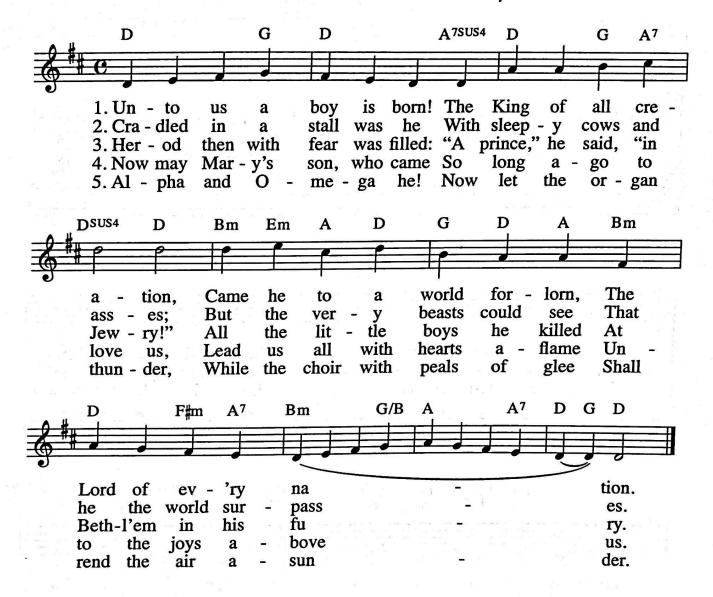
In Dulci Jubilo

- J.S. Bach (1685-1750)





# Unto Us a Boy Is Born!



Text: Puer nobis nascitur; Latin, 15th C.; tr. by Percy Dearmer, 1867–1936, © 1928, Oxford University Press Tune: PUER NOBIS NASCITUR, 7 7 7 7; Piae Cantiones, 1582; harm. by Geoffrey Shaw, 1879–1943, © A. R. Mowbray and Co. Ltd.

# HARK! THE HERALD ANGELS SING



Text: 77 77 D with refrain; Charles Wesley, 1707–1788, alt.

Music: MENDELSSOHN; Felix Mendelssohn, 1809–1847; adapt. and arr. by William H. Cummings, 1831–1915.

## **Serving You Today**

Worship Leaders:

Ministers of the Congregation All Members of First Church

Pastor Rev. Jack Kraaz
Director of Music Ministries Kiel Krommer

Ushers/Greeters Jeff Lord/Michael Taylor

Lay Reader Keith Obert

Fellowship Trish Nolen-Parkhouse and

Carol Mullen

Officers:

Moderator Cindy DeSellier

Clerk Carol Mullen

Treasurer Suzanne Kelley

Chair, Board of Deacons Jeanne Dill

Chair, Board of Trustees David Sanborn

Staff:

Church Administrator Lee Brahen

Sunday School Superintendent Erin Greene Wallace

Custodian 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

Renee

Carolyn Lewis

Beverly

Richard D'Aquila

Marlaina

Martha Warren

## For comfort in grief:

The Family and Loved Ones of Joel Wheeler The Family of Andrew Myers The Family of Roger Ryder

### 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 Stephen Dill, USN Malik Pugh, USMC Tim Olson, USN Michael Wales, USN

### This Week in the Life of the Congregation

December 29, Sunday MESSENGER DEADLINE

10:00 a.m. - Worship (S) 11:00 a.m. - Fellowship (F)

December 30, Monday 3:00-4:30 p.m. - Girl Scouts (SSA)

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

December 31, Tuesday NEW YEAR'S EVE

January 1, Wednesday NEW YEAR'S DAY

**Building Closed** 

January 3, Friday 6:00-9:00 p.m. - Youth United (SSA)

January 4, Saturday 7:00-8:30 a.m. - AA (L)

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)

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 2023**. Please be sure to have all vouchers and expenses for 2023 in the office no later than **Tuesday**, **January 7**, **2024**.

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 for the year before Sunday, January 14. This will take place on Sunday, January 5, from 11:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. 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.

#### 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 <a href="http://www.firstchurchmonson.org">http://www.firstchurchmonson.org</a>.

No matter who you are, or where you are on life's journey, you are welcome here!



Scan Here to Give Online