



**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

Good Christian Men, Rejoice

125

German-Latin Carol, 14th century
Para. by John M. Neale, 1818-1866

IN DULCI JUBILO Irregular
German Melody, 14th century

1 Good Christian men, re - joice, With heart and soul and voice;
2 Good Christian men, re - joice, With heart and soul and voice;
3 Good Christian men, re - joice, With heart and soul and voice;

Give ye heed to what we say: Je - sus Christ is born to - day;
Now ye hear of end - less bliss; Je - sus Christ was born for this!
Now ye need not fear the grave; Je - sus Christ was born to save!

Ox and ass be - fore him bow, And he is in the man - ger now.
He hath oped the heaven - ly door, And man is bless - ed ev - er - more.
Calls you one and calls you all, To gain his ev - er - last - ing hall.

Christ is born to - day! Christ is born to - day!
Christ was born for this! Christ was born for this!
Christ was born to save! Christ was born to save!

BIRTH

*Those who are able are invited to stand.

Once in Royal David's City 140

1 Once in roy - al Da - vid's cit - y stood a low - ly
 2 He came down to earth from heav - en who is God and
 3 Je - sus is our child - hood's pat - tern; day by day like
 4 And our eyes at last shall see him, through his own re -

cat - tle shed, where a moth - er laid her ba - by in a
 Lord of all, and his shel - ter was a sta - ble, and his
 us he grew; he was lit - tle, weak and help - less; tears and
 deem - ing love; for that child so dear and gen - tle is our

man - ger for his bed: Mar - y was that moth - er
 cra - dle was a stall; with the poor and meek and
 smiles like us he knew; and he feels for all our
 Lord in heaven a - bove; and he leads his chil - dren

mild; Je - sus Christ, her lit - tle child.
 low - ly, lived on earth our Sav - ior ho - ly.
 sad - ness, and he shares in all our glad - ness.
 on to the place where he is gone.

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
 8.7.8.7.7.7

***Opening Hymn** *Once In Royal David's City*

(Page 2)

***Morning Prayer (Unison)**

Giver of Gifts, amid the tall tinsel 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

(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 (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

¹²As God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience. ¹³Bear 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. ¹⁴Above all, clothe yourselves with love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony. ¹⁵And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in the one body. And be thankful. ¹⁶Let 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. ¹⁷And 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

(Page 8)

Second Reading

Luke 2:41-52

⁴¹Now every year his parents went to Jerusalem for the festival of the Passover. ⁴²And when he was twelve years old, they went up as usual for the festival. ⁴³When the festival was ended and they started to return, the boy Jesus stayed behind in Jerusalem, but his parents did not know it. ⁴⁴Assuming 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. ⁴⁵When they did not find him, they returned to Jerusalem to search for him. ⁴⁶After three days they found him in the temple, sitting among the teachers, listening to them and asking

*Those who are able are invited to stand.

them questions. ⁴⁷And all who heard him were amazed at his understanding and his answers. ⁴⁸When 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.” ⁴⁹He said to them, “Why were you searching for me? Did you not know that I must be in my Father’s house?” ⁵⁰But they did not understand what he said to them. ⁵¹Then he went down with them and came to Nazareth, and was obedient to them. His mother treasured all these things in her heart. ⁵²And 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)

Christina G. Rossetti, 1830-1894, alt.

CRANHAM Irregular
Gustav T. Holst, 1874-1934

1 In the bleak mid - win - ter, Frost - y wind made moan,
2 Our God, heaven can - not hold him, Nor earth sus - tain;
3 An - gels and arch - an - gels May have gath - ered there,
4 What can I give him, Poor as I am?

Earth stood hard as i - ron, Wa - ter like a stone;
Heaven and earth shall flee a - way When he comes to reign;
Cher - u - bim and ser - a - phim Throng - ed the air;
If I were a shep - herd, I would bring a lamb;

Snow had fall - en, snow on snow, Snow on snow,
In the bleak mid - win - ter A sta - ble place suf - ficed The
But his moth - er on - ly, In her maid - en bliss,
If I were a wise man, I would do my part; Yet

In the bleak mid - win - ter, Long a - go.
Lord God al - might - y, Je - sus Christ.
Wor - shipped the be - lov - ed With a kiss.
what I can I give him - Give my heart.

BIRTH

God Rest You Merry, Gentlemen

English Carol, 18th century

GOD REST YOU MERRY *Irregular with Refrain*
English Melody, 18th century

1 God rest you mer - ry, gen - tle - men, Let noth - ing you dis - may,
2 From God, our heav - en - ly Fa - ther, A bless - ed an - gel came;
3 "Fear not, then," said the an - gel, "Let noth - ing you af - fright;
4 Now to the Lord sing prais - es, All you with - in this place,

Re - mem - ber Christ, our Sav - ior, Was born on Christ - mas Day,
And un - to cer - tain shep - herds Brought ti - dings of the same:
This day is born a Sav - ior, Of a pure vir - gin bright,
And with true love and broth - er - hood Each oth - er now em - brace;

To save us all from Sa - tan's power When we were gone a - stray.
How that in Beth - le - hem was born The Son of God by name.
To free all those who trust in him From Sa - tan's power and might."
This ho - ly tide of Christ - mas Doth bring re - deem - ing grace.

REFRAIN
O ti - dings of com - fort and joy, com - fort and joy;

O ti - dings of com - fort and joy!

Unto Us a Boy Is Born!



1. Un - to us a boy is born! The King of all cre -
 2. Cra - dled in a stall was he With sleep - y cows and
 3. Her - od then with fear was filled: "A prince," he said, "in
 4. Now may Mar - y's son, who came So long a - go to
 5. Al - pha and O - me - ga he! Now let the or - gan



a - tion, Came he to a world for - lorn, The
 ass - es; But the ver - y beasts could see That
 Jew - ry!" All the lit - tle boys he killed At
 love us, Lead us all with hearts a - flame Un -
 thun - der, While the choir with peals of glee Shall



Lord of ev - 'ry na - tion.
 he the world sur - pass es.
 Beth-l'em in his fu - ry.
 to the joys a - bove us.
 rend the air a - sun der.

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

HARK! THE HERALD ANGELS SING

VERSES

F C F C F Bb F/C C F C

1. Hark! the her - ald an - gels sing: — “Glo - ry to the new - born King; Peace on earth, and
 2. Christ, by high - est heav'n a - dored, — Christ, the ev - er - last - ing Lord; Late in time, be -
 3. Hail the heav'n - born Prince of Peace! — Hail the Sun of Righ - teous - ness! Light and life to

Dm G7 C G C Fmaj7 G7 C F C7 F C

1. mer - cy mild, — God and sin - ners rec - on - ciled!” Joy - ful, all ye na - tions, rise, —
 2. hold him come, — Off - spring of a vir - gin's womb. Veiled in flesh the God - head see! —
 3. all he brings, — Ris'n with heal - ing in his wings. Mild he lays his glo - ry by, —

F C7 F C Bb Gm D7 Gm C7 F

1. Join the tri - umph of the skies; — With an - gel - ic hosts pro - claim: “Christ is — born in
 2. Hail th'in - car - nate De - i - ty! — Pleased as man with us to dwell; Je - sus, — our Em -
 3. Born that we no more may die, — Born to raise us from the earth, Born to — give us

REFRAIN

C F Bb Gm D7 Gm C7 F C7 F

1. Beth - le - hem!” Hark! the her - ald an - gels sing, “Glo - ry — to the new - born King.”
 2. man - u - el!
 3. sec - ond birth.

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

Martha Warren

Renee

Carolyn Lewis

Beverly

Richard D'Aquila

Marlaina

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

Malik Pugh, USMC

Michael Wales, USN

Stephen Dill, USN

Tim Olson, 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 <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