



**First Church of Monson, Congregational
United Church of Christ
Fourth Sunday of Advent
Sunday, December 22, 2024**

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

- Core Values, 2022

My Soul Gives Glory to My God

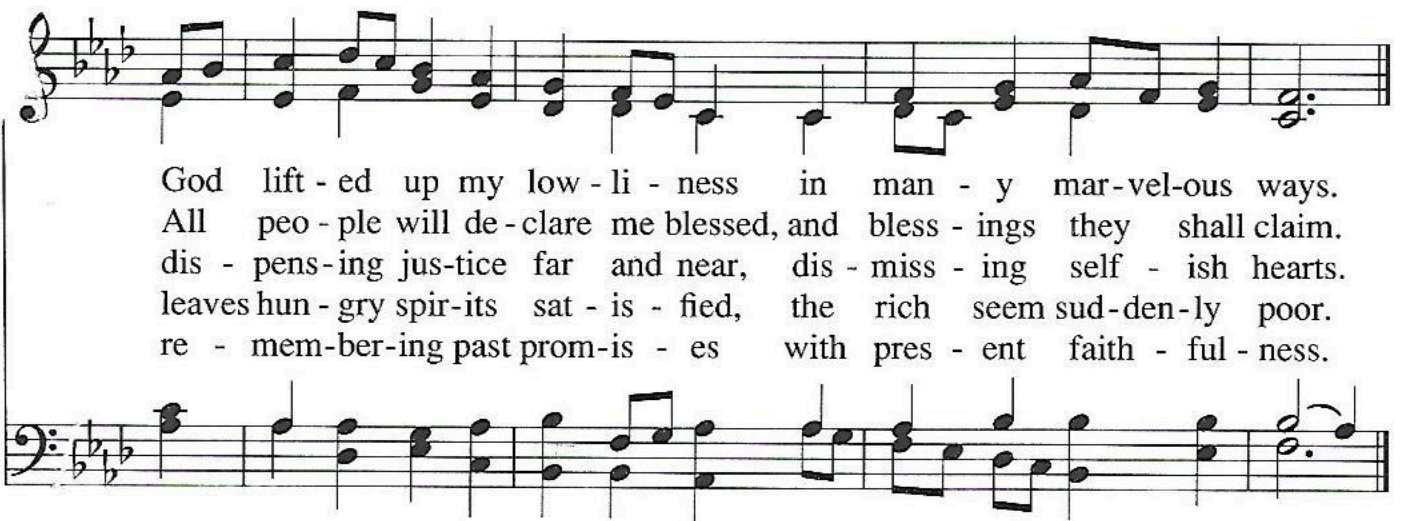
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Miriam Therese Winter, 1987

Luke 1:46b-55; 1 Sam. 2:1-10



1 My soul gives glo - ry to my God. My heart pours out its praise.
2 My God has done great things for me: yes, ho - ly is God's name.
3 From age to age, to all who fear, such mer - cy love im - parts,
4 Love casts the might-y from their thrones, pro-motes the in - se - cure,
5 Praise God, whose lov - ing cov - e - nant sup-ports those in dis - tress,



God lift - ed up my low - li - ness in man - y mar-vel-ous ways.
All peo - ple will de - clare me blessed, and bless - ings they shall claim.
dis - pens-ing jus-tice far and near, dis - miss - ing self - ish hearts.
leaves hun - gry spir-its sat - is - fied, the rich seem sud - den - ly poor.
re - mem-ber-ing past prom-is - es with pres - ent faith - ful - ness.

This New Testament canticle, with its mosaic of liberation motifs that proclaim the justice of God, is known as the "Magnificat," the opening word of its Latin translation.

Tune: MORNING SONG C.M.
Melody from Kentucky Harmony, 1816
Harm. C. Winfred Douglas, 1940

***Morning Prayer (Unison)**

In your love, Holy One, we have become your family. When you sent the world a teacher in Christ, we didn't know that we were his sisters and brothers. We did not understand the significance of our new place. You have adopted us, taken us in, so that even those who do not know mother or father or sister or brother on earth may have you, so that each one of us can be the part of the same family, so that neighbors and enemies all may have one blood and one understanding of peace. We are lucky, Holy One, to call you mother and father, our Protector and Redeemer. 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 Angel Gabriel

-Arr. By Richard Shephard

Giving of Ourselves

Call to Offering



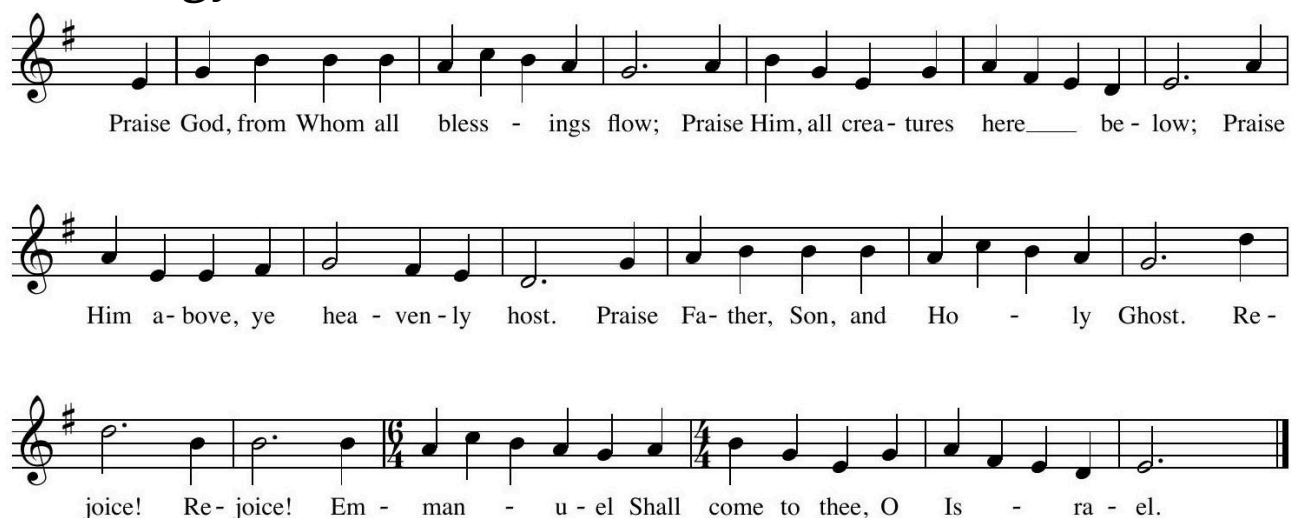
Let us share our tithes and offerings this morning for the work of our church and for the healing of the world.

Offertory

Gentle Joseph, Joseph Dear

(Page 6)

*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. Re-joice! Re-joice! Emmanuel Shall come to thee, O Israel.

*Prayer of Dedication

We dedicate our gifts to you Holy One as we welcome your presence today in our lives. Amen.

Scripture Reading

Luke 1:39-55

³⁹In those days Mary set out and went with haste to a Judean town in the hill country, ⁴⁰where she entered the house of Zechariah and greeted Elizabeth. ⁴¹When Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the child leaped in her womb. And Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit ⁴²and exclaimed with a loud cry, "Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb. ⁴³And why has this happened to me, that the mother of my Lord comes to me? ⁴⁴For as soon as I heard the sound of your greeting, the child in my womb leaped for joy. ⁴⁵And blessed is she who believed that there would be a fulfillment of what was spoken to her by the Lord." ⁴⁶And Mary said, "My soul magnifies the Lord, ⁴⁷and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior, ⁴⁸for he has looked with favor on the lowliness of his servant. Surely, from now on all

generations will call me blessed; ⁴⁹for the Mighty One has done great things for me, and holy is his name. ⁵⁰His mercy is for those who fear him from generation to generation. ⁵¹He has shown strength with his arm; he has scattered the proud in the thoughts of their hearts. ⁵²He has brought down the powerful from their thrones, and lifted up the lowly; ⁵³he has filled the hungry with good things, and sent the rich away empty. ⁵⁴He has helped his servant Israel, in remembrance of his mercy, ⁵⁵according to the promise he made to our ancestors, to Abraham and to his descendants forever.”

Sermon Hymn *My Heart Sings Out with Joyful Praise* (Page 9)

Sermon “*Love Song*”

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** *O Come Divine Messiah* (Pages 10)

***Benediction**

Postlude *O Come Divine Messiah* - Jean-Jacques Beauvarlet- Charpentier
(1734-1794)

*Those who are able are invited to stand.

ADVENT

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Gentle Joseph, Joseph Dear

Matt. 1:18-25

German carol, 15th century
Paraphr. by Carol Birkland, 1993

Unison
Eb Bb/Eb Eb

1 "Gen - tle Jo - seph, Jo - seph dear, stay with me, for the
2 "Glad - ly Mar - y, Mar - y mine, I will cra - dle the
3 "Peace to all and God's good-will," heaven and earth with this

Bb/Eb Fm Fm7 Bb7

ba - by's near; God will sure - ly your good - ness hear, as
child di - vine; Here will heav - en and earth com - bine, for
song will fill; Soon will God, in the eve - ning still, be

Gm Cm Fm/Ab Bb Ab/Eb Eb

you will love this new - born child," says Mar - y.
you will bear God's child, O dear - est Mar - y."
born in Beth - le - hem, the child of Mar - y.

The German carol on which this is based appears in a mystery play, c. 1500. It is one of a group of related carols that also includes "In dulci jubilo"—"Good Christian friends, rejoice."

Tune: JOSEPH LIEBER, JOSEPH MEIN 7.8.8.11.
German carol, 15th century
Harm. The New Century Hymnal, 1993

My Heart Sings Out with Joyful Praise

106

Ruth Duck, 1985

Luke 1:46-55

A D A/E E7 A

1 My heart sings out with joy - ful praise to God who rais - es me,
 2 The arm of God is strong and just to scat - ter all the proud.
 3 The prom - ise made in a - ges past at last has come to be,

A D A/E E7 A

Who came to me when I was low and changed my des - ti - ny.
 The ty - rants tum - ble from their thrones and van - ish like a cloud.
 for God has come in power to save, to set all peo - ple free.

E A D E7 A E

The Ho - ly One, the Liv - ing God, is al - ways full of grace
 The hun - gry all are sat - is - fied; the rich are sent a - way.
 Re - mem - bering those who wait to see sal - va - tion's dawn - ing day,

A D A/E E7 A

To those who seek their Mak - er's will in ev - ery time and place.
 The poor of earth who suf - fer long will wel - come God's new day.
 Our Sav - ior comes to all who weep to wipe their tears a - way.

The "Magnificat," a traditional text for evening prayer as well as Advent, is paraphrased here by Ruth Duck. She developed it to make the ancient rite of evening prayer available to her own worshipping communities.

Tune: MARIAS LOVSÅNG C.M.D.
 Swedish folk melody
 Alternate tunes: ELLACOMBE, TALLIS' THIRD

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*Those who are able are invited to stand.

479 O Come, Divine Messiah

1. O come, Di - vine Mes - si - ah, The
 2. O come De - sired of na - tions, Whom
 3. O come in peace and meek - ness, For

world in si - lence waits the day When
 priest and proph - et long fore - told, Will
 low - ly will your cra - dle be: Though

hope shall sing its tri - umph, And
 break the cap - tive fet - ters, Re -
 clothed in hu - man weak - ness We

sad - ness flee a - way.
 deem the long - lost fold.
 shall your God - head see.

*Those who are able are invited to stand.

ADVENT

Dear Sav - ior, haste! Come, come to

earth. Dis-pel the night and show your face, And bid us

hail the dawn of grace. O come, Di-vine Mes -

si - ah, The world in si - lence waits the day When

hope shall sing its tri - umph, And sad - ness flee a - way.

Text: *Venez, divin Messie*; Abbé Simon-Joseph Pellegrin, 1663-1745; tr. by S. Mary of St. Philip, 1877
Tune: VENEZ, DIVIN MESSIE, 7 8 7 6 with refrain; French Noël, 16th C.; harm. by Healey Willan, 1880-1968. © 1958,
Ralph Jusko Publications, Inc.

Serving You Today

Worship Leaders:

Ministers of the Congregation	All Members of First Church
Pastor	Rev. Jack Kraaz
Director of Music Ministries	Kiel Krommer
Greeters/Ushers	Donna Okscin & Janice Muldrew
Lay Reader	Carolyn & Sprout Horacek
Fellowship	Music Committee

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 22, Sunday	10:00 a.m. - Worship (S) 11:00 a.m. - Fellowship (F) 11:30-12:30 p.m. - Deacons' Meeting (PS) 11:45-12:45 p.m. - Community Choir (SSA)
December 23, Monday	3:00-4:30 p.m. - Girl Scouts (SSA) 6:00-8:00 p.m. - Cub Scouts (SSA)
December 24, Tuesday	CHRISTMAS EVE Office Closed 7:00 p.m. - Candlelight Service (S)
December 25, Wednesday	CHRISTMAS DAY Building Closed
December 28, Saturday	7:00-8:30 a.m. - AA (L)
December 29, Sunday	MESSENGER DEADLINE 10:00 a.m. - Worship (S) 11:00 a.m. - Fellowship (F)

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

Upcoming Due Dates. As we approach the end of 2024, please be aware of these due dates. The deadline for the January/February *Messenger* is Sunday, December 29, 2024. Articles for the Annual Meeting Warrant are also due by Sunday, December 29, 2024. The warrant will be mailed with the *Messenger*. Both can be sent to carellen7@gmail.com. Annual Reports are due to Lee by Sunday, January 12, 2025. Please email them to the Church Office at office@firstchurchmonson.org.

Christmas Eve Candlelight Service. Mark your calendars for the Christmas Eve candlelight service which will begin at 7:00 p.m. on Christmas Eve. Please be sure to bring your friends and family to this beautiful service.

The Mitten Tree. The Mitten Tree is set up in the narthex. Our hope is to cover the mitten tree in mittens, gloves, hats, and scarves for men, women, and children in need. The donated items will be delivered to the Springfield Rescue Mission after Christmas. Please support this important mission to help keep those in need warm this winter. Thank you.

December 29 Fellowship. Do you have too many sweets (if that's possible!) in your house following Christmas? Please bring some to share for fellowship on December 29. Beverages and non-sweet choices will be provided. Thank you!

Join the First Church Choir. We know you love to sing, so we are inviting you to join our adult choir and add to the angels who lead our hymns, sing our anthems and introits, and embrace the power of music in worship. Choir rehearsals are Thursday evenings from 6:30 to 8:00 p.m. in the Sunday School Auditorium under the direction of Kiel Krommer, Director of Music Ministries. There is no need to audition or sign up, just come.

*Those who are able are invited to stand.

Christmas Flowers 2024

Given by

Bill & Lynn Galica
John Watson & Michelle Duggan
Carol Mullen
Laurie Clarke

Donna & Michael Okscin
Diane Cousineau
Chris Evans
Doug & Suzanne Kelley

Given by

John & Gay Paluch

In Memory of

Lisa Castelli
James Lee Watson, Jr.
Bill and Emmy Hayes
Bruce Clarke, Cliff Graves,
Roy & Shirley Graves
Robert & Dorothy Harris
Lillian Lewison
Bob Evans
Debra Kelley; Garold Thumm
Everett & Gloria Kelley
Bill & Janice Woods

In Celebration of

Jesus, the light of hope

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