

The Messenger
July and August 2019

The First Church of Monson, Congregational/UCC
5 High Street, Monson MA 01057
413-267-3312

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www.facebook.com/firstchurchmonson

**The Church Office is usually open on Mondays, Thursdays, and Fridays from
9 AM to 1 PM.**

Please visit our website and calendar at www.firstchurchmonson.org.

Happy summer!

Wow--it has been one year since Pastor Peter landed at the First Church of Monson. We feel that we can honestly say that, as members of the congregation, we feel grateful and blessed to have such a talented, knowledgeable, hard-working, gifted, kind, welcoming, caring, sincere person to guide our church as we forge ahead into our future.

Peter is a pastor who is in it for the long term. (Historically, he is our 24th settled pastor.) He practices what he preaches. He is a welcoming presence, breaking bread with the folks who gather for fellowship after worship. It is because of his personal outreach to everyone he meets that the church is growing. He has brought in families with children for our Sunday school, reached out to the town at large, and is a frequent flyer at Baystate Wing Hospital doing pastoral visits. He has joined the church as a covenant member and pledged along with his flock.

How do we count the ways that Pastor Peter has brightened our days? Here are a few.

- Seeing all of the new faces in church and the nursery bustling with activity every week.
- Joining the Sunday school mission class to deliver all of the hats, gloves, mittens, and scarves to the Springfield Rescue Mission, then enjoying pizza

together with the class (where they took up most of the tables at Papa Gino's) and saying grace before the meal.

- Attending our Halloween Party in costume--a fuzzy bear!
- Arriving early on Sunday mornings and sharing Let's Eat breakfast with our early risers.
- Saying with sincerity, "whoever you are, wherever you are in life's journey, you are welcome here."
- Playing beautiful music on the piano.

Members have approached us, as part of the Pastoral Search Committee, saying things like we "picked the right person" and that "I don't want to miss a sermon." We, personally, have never, in our lives, looked forward to Sunday morning sermons as we do with Peter in the pulpit. Peter is open to new ideas and new ventures (Baker's Lane Biscotti, @ FirstGlance emailing, and a revived Pastoral Parish Relations Committee); he is ready and willing to improve on what is already in place (website) to make First Church the place that we can be proud of. We know we always brag that we have a fantastic new Pastor whenever we speak of First Church.

We are truly blessed.

Sincerely,
Lyn and Brian

P.S. Please join us at Pastor Peter's Installation, which will be held on Sunday, September 22, 2019 at 4 p.m. More on this later!

During Pastor's Vacation



Pastor Peter will be on vacation from August 7 thru August 20. We are thankful to have Jeanne share a message on August 11 and Bill on August 18.



For the current information about First Church happenings, please visit our website and calendar at www.firstchurchmonson.org or find us on facebook at www.facebook.com/firstchurchmonson.

Nursery care will be provided during the summer months by Michelle.

Sunday School classes resume on Rally Sunday, September 8, 2019. Please consider volunteering as a teacher or nursery care provider.

Let's Eat breakfast will return on September 8, 2019.

Enjoy the Fourth of July festivities and support First Church! Stop at our Summerfest booth for traditional strawberry shortcake, homemade lemonade, or refreshing bottled water!

The deadline for the September 2019 Messenger is Thursday, August 15, 2019.

Please don't let Monson Open Pantry donations dwindle during the summer months. There is always a need for nutritious, non-perishable foods. Food can be dropped off any Sunday; collection baskets are in the narthex. Thank you and have a blessed summer.

At a recent meeting with the Monson Fire Chief and Assistant Fire Chief, they requested that all interior doors within the building remain closed at all times to help prevent the spread of any potential fire that may occur. Please be sure to close doors behind you when you are leaving a room. Thank you for your assistance in this matter.



Summer is upon us. It is that time of year of vacations to the beach, traveling, graduation parties, getting the house painted. We all get so busy that we may not be able to make it to church. We, the Stewardship Committee, wish you lots of fun this summer but would like to remind you to keep your pledges up to date. Bills, whether they are for regular budgeted expenses like electricity, salaries, repairs, mowing, or for any unexpected expenditures, need to be paid in a timely fashion.

Don't forget about the option of electronic giving and you can then scratch writing that check off your list of things to remember and go enjoy more time in your day to relax.

Thank you, Anne for your Stewardship Committee (Doug, Laurie, Carolyn, and Anne)



Church office hours will remain the same over the summer with the office staffed Tuesdays, Thursdays (except July 4th), and Fridays from 9 a. m. to 1 p.m.

A message can always be left on the church answering machine when the office is not staffed and messages are checked throughout the day even when the office is closed. In the case of an emergency, please contact Pastor Peter or any deacon.

Pastor Peter (617-750-2063)
Jeanne, Joan, Dan, Trish, Bill, or Chris



The Board of Deacons is pleased to welcome the following new covenant members to the First Church family who joined on Pentecost, June 9: Elaine, Diane, Rev. Peter Johnston, Jeffrey, Edward, Bill, Audra, and Dana.

Heather, Nicholas, Roseanne, David, and Erin were not able to attend June 9 but will join soon. Each new member brings a wealth of experiences and talents to the body of the church. We look forward to sharing our collective gifts as we serve this church, our community, and God.

Social Time After Sunday Service



With the caring support of our members and friends, on most Sundays after our morning service, we are able to share conversations with one another in the Fellowship Room while enjoying some treats and beverages.

During the summer months, the Deacons will be providing iced tea and lemonade.

Regular fellowship will resume on Rally Sunday, September 8, 2019. Please consider hosting a Sunday so that this hospitality might continue. There is a sign-up sheet in the Fellowship Room or you can call the Church Office, 413-267-3312, to check on available dates.

Many thanks to the people and groups who have supported this ministry by hosting fellowship thus far this year, some several times.

Attention Gardeners



Do you enjoy being outdoors?
Do you appreciate beautiful gardens?
Do you have a few hours to spare once or several times this summer?

If you answer “yes” to these questions, please consider volunteering to help maintain the church’s flower gardens. The tasks are simple: weeding, deadheading, and occasional watering. You do not need to sign-up or make a long term commitment. Any help would be most appreciated!

New Curtains for the Pulpit Stand

A fabric has been chosen for replacing the curtains between the pulpit and choir loft. The theme is from John 15 verse 5: I am the vine; you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing.” Thank you so much to everyone who offered feedback on the fabric samples I presented. I’m very excited about this project and hope to have completed by the end of July.



I understand the emotional attachment to the existing curtains hand woven by former First Church members in years gone by and will provide a remnant to anyone interested in having one once the fabric has been cleaned.

*Yours in Christ,
Joan*

Pentecost Gifts Thank You



Many thanks go to everyone who gave a Pentecost gift to honor the birthday of the Christian church. Gifts received this year include postage stamps, envelopes, cardstock, candle snuffers, a gift subscription to mail the *Messenger* to a member, arts and crafts supplies for Sunday School, flowering plants for the church's garden, and a wall clock for the church office. Your generosity is greatly appreciated!

Interested in Vacation Bible Camp (VBC)?

Wilbraham United Church will present "Christmas in July" VBC for ages 4 to 11 during the week of July 29 to August 2. Camp hours are 9 a.m. to 12:15 p.m. at the church, 500 Main Street, Wilbraham. Late registration is \$40/child. Adults who volunteer at least two full days during the week may have one child attend for free. Registration forms may be obtained by calling 413-596-2511, ext. 105 or printed from the WUC website, www.wilbrahamunitedchurch.org.

Synod Approves Replacing Three Southern New England Conferences with One

Delegates to the United Church of Christ's national meeting overwhelmingly approved a request by its three conferences in Connecticut, Massachusetts and Rhode Island to dissolve and join together to form a new conference.

The vote was 601 to 90, with four delegates abstaining. The new conference, not yet named, will officially come into being on January 1,, 2010.

Staff and Other Contacts

Pastor

The Reverend Peter Johnston
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Emergency # 617-750-2063

Director of Music
Open

Church Administrator

Lee Brahen
267-3312
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Church Custodian
Linda Whippie

Sunday School Superintendent

Carolann Smart

Kitchen Manager
Joseph Wholley Jr.

Church Treasurer

Ted Sisley
treasurer@firstchurchmonson.org

Loaves & Fishes Co-ordinators
John Plaster & Christine Sterritt

Our Mission

The Mission of the First Church of Monson is
to praise God through prayer,
to share the Word and love of God by promoting fellowship in the community,
and to serve as stewards of God's creation –
all in a manner that glorifies God and emulates Christ.

