

## *The Messenger*

March 2020

**The First Church of Monson, Congregational/UCC**

5 High Street, Monson MA 01057

413-267-3312

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[www.firstchurchmonson.org](http://www.firstchurchmonson.org)

[www.facebook.com/firstchurchmonson](https://www.facebook.com/firstchurchmonson)

**The Church Office is open on Wednesdays, Thursdays, and Fridays from 9 AM to 1 PM. Pastor Peter may be seen on those days from 10 AM to 3 PM or by appointment.**

**Please visit our website and calendar at [www.firstchurchmonson.org](http://www.firstchurchmonson.org).**

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

## **Our Mission**

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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.



## AT LEAST ONCE PER YEAR

At the beginning of last month, we as a congregation gathered to do something we have been doing annually, in some form or another, since our founding.

In 1648, the ministers of the Massachusetts Bay Colony Congregational Churches produced a document outlining how the business of our churches was to be conducted. The document is called the Cambridge Platform and many of the policies and practices that it contained are still in use today!

At First Church's Two Hundred Fifty-eighth Annual Meeting, in celebration of the almost 30 years that First Church has been serving meals at Loaves and Fishes, we were treated to a luncheon prepared by Church Council members which featured two casseroles that many volunteers have faithfully prepared for Loaves and Fishes over these three decades.

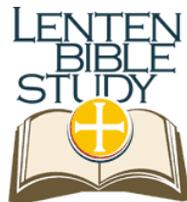
Following the luncheon, the meeting opened with a brief worship service and the singing of a hymn. At that meeting, the group voted to accept the annual reports of boards, committees and staff, voted a new slate of officers and committee members, and approved the 2020 operating budget.

We are grateful to those who have served and are going off of committees, and for those who took up the reins and filled those places.

God, we are thankful for our church and our unique form of governance. We look forward to a new year in the life of our church.

Faithfully,  
Pastor Peter

**Thursdays @ Noon  
Lenten Bible Study**



March 5, 12, 19, and 26

We are pleased to announce that Pastor Peter will be leading a Lenten Bible Study series on the four Thursdays in March.

We will begin with a simple lunch of soup and bread, and then dive into our studies. Please let us know if you're interested in joining us by signing up in Fellowship Hall or by contacting the Church Office at 413-267-3312 or [office@firstchurchmonson.org](mailto:office@firstchurchmonson.org).

**Special Offering to Help Balance the Budget**



If you attended the Annual Meeting, you are aware that we have a sizeable deficit in our proposed 2020 budget. One of the suggestions that was made and voted on was to ask pledging members of the Church to give two extra weeks of pledge. If everyone gave these two additional weeks, we could decrease our deficit by \$4,000.

We prayerfully request that you consider giving this amount or any amount you can. Special envelopes will be available in the pews and in Fellowship Hall.

Hearts Willing Meeting  
March 25, 2020  
7:00 pm



We are blessed to have a special program featuring  
missionary Joel Jette.  
He will speak with us about his work in the Philippines.

*An evening not to miss!  
Guests are welcome.  
Refreshments will be served.*



If you wish, you may order Easter plants through the Church Office. Plants will be delivered for the Easter worship service on April 12, 2020. Orders, with full payment, must be into the Church Office by Sunday, March 22. Quantities are limited, so order early!

Daffodils (6" pot, 3-4 bulbs) @ \$8.00 each  
Easter lily (6" pot, 4-6 blooms) @ \$8.00 each  
Easter lily (7.5" pot, 2 bulbs) @ \$15.00 each  
Hyacinths (6" pot, 3 bulbs) @ \$8.00 each  
Tulips (8" pot, 9 bulbs) @ \$13.00 each

Plants may be given "n memory of" or "in celebration of" a loved one. Please contact Lee, Church Administrator, at 413-267-3312 or [office@firstchurchmonson.org](mailto:office@firstchurchmonson.org) .

OUTREACH UPDATE

We are now in the Lenten season and our thoughts turn to spring, Christ's death, and the glory of His resurrection. As a part of the Easter season, your Outreach Committee is planning its Annual Easter Egg Hunt. It will be held on Saturday, April 4, 2020 and is open to First Church and community children. It is a happy, festive event that brings all children into our church.



As part of this event, we will be filling over 1000 plastic Easter eggs with candy and other goodies. In the past, our church members have generously provided small candies to stuff the eggs. Large bags of small, wrapped candies can be found in most discount stores. In Fellowship Hall, there will be a basket, on the Outreach table, where donations may be placed. Please no candy with nuts or peanut butter, as many children have allergies.

As part of this fun day, we also do something to help those less fortunate. This year we will be donating to Heifer International. Heifer International works in the areas of livestock and agriculture to develop programs that alleviate hunger and poverty around the world. Please check the Outreach table for more information. Thank you!

### **Save the Date! September 19, 2020**

The Stewardship Committee is sponsoring a bus trip to Plimoth Plantation and the Mayflower for the 400<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Pilgrim's arrival in The New World. Join us for a fun-filled and educational day. Tickets are \$85.00 and include transportation, entrance fees, and driver tip. Bring your own lunch or eat in the Plantation Café. The bus departs from the church parking lot at 7 a.m. Only 47 seats, sign up now! Payment is due upon registration. See a member of the Stewardship Committee to register.

Your Stewardship Committee,  
Carolyn, Laurie, Anne, or Linda

**Fundraising at Main Street Tavern**

To balance the 2020 budget for the Church, we have to raise over \$19,000 by fundraising. It is an ambitious goal, but we are going to try very hard to make it work!

First Church is planning a fundraiser once a month at the Main Street Tavern at 218 Main Street in Monson. On those Thursdays, First Church will receive 10% of the day's proceeds. This includes dinner, drinks, and take-out. You can even come for dinner and then purchase an additional meal for the next day. In all months except April, the fundraiser is on the third Thursday of the month.

Church Council hopes that all church families who are able will attend these nights. Each night will have a theme, perhaps have a raffle, and should be lots of fun! It is an opportunity for you to enjoy a night out with family and friends and benefit the Church at the same time. Please put these dates into your calendar.

The schedule so far looks like this:

<i>Date</i>	<i>Sponsor</i>	<i>Theme</i>
February 20	Church Council	Mardi Gras
March 19		
April 23	Trustees	Get Gardening
May 21	Christian Ed.	
June 18	Deacons	
July 16		
August 20	Christian Ed.	
September 17		
October 15	Music	
November 19	Trustees	Thanksgiving
December 17	Stewardship	
January 21, 2021		

Throughout the year, you will be hearing about trips and other events to benefit the budget. Please participate as much as you can. If you have any ideas for fundraising, please see Moderator Liz or anyone on the Stewardship Committee (Carolyn, Laurie, Anne, or Linda). Together we can make this work!

## **SCHOLARSHIP APPLICATIONS**



The Dorcas Society Leonora Stiles Thomas Education Trust is offering scholarships to members or affiliates of the First Church of Monson who meet the following qualifications:

1. Member of a current high school graduating class who has been accepted at a school of higher learning,
2. Member or affiliate of The First Church of Monson who has provided some type of meaningful service to the programs of The First Church of Monson.

All applications must be completed and returned to a Dorcas Society Trustee by **11:00 am on the second Sunday of April**. Scholarship payments will be made in two equal parts. Part one will be paid upon receipt of student's first semester college grades and part two will be paid upon receipt of student's second semester grades.

Applications may be obtained from First Church's website <http://www.firstchurchmonson.org>, in the *Messenger* mail slot or from one of the Dorcas Trustees listed below:

Elaine, Crystal, Carol, or Trish

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The **2020 Sanctuary Flower form** and sign-up sheet are available in the Fellowship Room. Please complete one form for each arrangement donated.

**Winter Weather Cancellations:** Watch local stations WFSB Channel 3, ABC 40, FOX 6, WWLP-TV 22 or go to [www.wfsb.com](http://www.wfsb.com), [www.WWLP.com](http://www.WWLP.com), or [www.westernmassnews.com](http://www.westernmassnews.com) to see if worship services or church activities are canceled due to inclement weather.

**Options for Receiving *The Messenger***

There are four options available for receiving monthly newsletter

- Pick up a printed edition available in the narthex and Fellowship Hall
- Have a copy emailed to you from the Church Office
- Read the edited version of the newsletter on the First Church website, [www.firstchurchmonson.org](http://www.firstchurchmonson.org)
- Subscribe to receive a copy via first class mail

You do not need to do anything if you picking up a copy at church or reading the online version. If you wish to have a copy emailed to you, please make your request known to the Church Office. If you wish to receive a copy by first class mail, please provide the Church Office with a current mailing address and a check for \$6.00 per year to cover postage.

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### **Spring Super Saturday – March 14, 2020**

Registration 8 to 9 a.m. - Program 9 a.m. to 3:45 p.m.

Minnechaug Regional High School

621 Main Street

Wilbraham, MA 01095

Super Saturday is a collaborative effort of the Southern New England Conference, UCC, with presenters and attendees from different states and denominations. This event provides a full day of workshops, forums, networking, worship and marketplace.

At our Spring Super Saturday, we are welcoming [Rabbi Elan Babchuck](#), Founding Director of GLEAN Network, an incubator and network for faith leaders who seek to re-imagine the role of religion in an ever-changing world yearning for meaning, belonging, and justice. He serves as the Director of Innovation at CLAL, a think-tank focused on the future of faith in America.

For more information or to register, please see [www.sneucc.org/supersatreg](http://www.sneucc.org/supersatreg)