



**First Church of Christ in Mansfield
(Congregational) United Church of Christ**

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Ministers: All the Members of the Church

The Rev. Charles Ericson, Intentional Interim Minister

Erik Haeger, Organist

Olivia Russell, Worship Circle Coordinator

January 12, 2025 — First Sunday after the Epiphany

Welcome to Our Guests!

*We're delighted you have joined us for worship; the members are the ministers of this church...
if you have any questions, please do not hesitate to ask us!*

Playing the Chimes and Prelude

Greeting and Announcements

Centering in the Spirit

Dave Litrico

L: Come, beloved of God, to remember who you are and whose you are.

P: God in Christ, has named us all "Beloved."

L: Yes, here and now, God's heaven of love is being poured out anew.

P: May this motion of the Holy One, shape our hearts and minds.

L: May it brighten the Epiphany light in us and the whole creation.

P: And may it shape our words and work into good news for the world!

***Opening Hymn**

O, For a Thousand Tongues to Sing

CH5

Prayer for Transformation

Loving God, let me enter again Your baptismal river of grace. Let it soak every stain attached to the fabric of my life and longings. Yes, Holy One, submerge me in You again and again and again. Cleanse every distracting impulse luring me away from You who are my heart's deepest desire. Let no urgency be more important than Your forgiving love, always transforming. Today, help me choose you above every temptation that lures me to worship lesser things. By this of You, forgive me, renew me, and grant me the grace promised by You in Jesus Christ. Amen.

moment of silence

Words of Grace

Before we thought to turn to God, God already turned toward us in love. The saturating grace of God is trustworthy and true. Our prayers of transformation have been met with God's outpouring of forgiving love. In the name of Jesus Christ, we are forgiven! Thanks be to God!

***Song of Praise**

Glory to God

Paul Vasile

Glo-ry to God, whose good-ness shines on me, and to the Son, whose grace has
end, world with-out end, A - men. World with-out end, world with-out
par - doned me, and to the Spir - it, whose love has set me free! As it was in the be-ginning, is
end, A - men. World with-out e - nd, world with-out end, A - men.
now and ev - er shall be, A - men World with-out men!

Hebrew Scripture

Isaiah 43:1-7

But now thus says the LORD, he who created you, O Jacob, he who formed you, O Israel: Do not fear, for I have redeemed you; I have called you by name, you are mine. ²When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and through the rivers, they shall not overwhelm you; when you walk through fire you shall not be burned, and the flame shall not consume you. ³For I am the LORD your God, the Holy One of Israel, your Savior. I give Egypt as your ransom, Ethiopia and Seba in exchange for you. ⁴Because you are precious in my sight, and honored, and I love you, I give people in return for you, nations in exchange for your life. ⁵Do not fear, for I am with you; I will bring your offspring from the east, and from the west I will gather you; ⁶I will say to the north, "Give them up," and to the south, "Do not withhold; bring my sons from far away and my daughters from the end of the earth— ⁷everyone who is called by my name, whom I created for my glory, whom I formed and made."

Gospel

Luke 3:15-17, 21-22

¹⁵As the people were filled with expectation, and all were questioning in their hearts concerning John, whether he might be the Messiah, ¹⁶John answered all of them by saying, "I baptize you with water; but one who is more powerful than I is coming; I am not worthy to untie the thong of his sandals. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire. ¹⁷His winnowing fork is in his hand, to clear his threshing floor and to gather the wheat into his granary; but the chaff he will burn with unquenchable fire." ²¹Now when all the people were baptized, and when Jesus also had been baptized and was praying, the heaven was opened, ²²and the Holy Spirit descended upon him in bodily form like a dove. And a voice came from heaven, "You are my Son, the Beloved; with you I am well pleased."

Reflection

"Zusha and You"

Hymn

I'm Gonna Live So God Can Use Me

CH614

Reading

Blessing the Baptism by Jan Richardson

Julie Menard

As if we could call you
anything other than
beloved
and blessed

drenched as we are
in our love for you

washed as we are
by our delight in you

born anew as we are
by the grace that flows
from the heart of the one
who bore you to us.

Call to Prayer

Hear Us O Lord

Don Besig and Nancy Price

9 Hear us, O Lord, as we come now in prayer, shar - ing our joys, our trou- bles, and our cares.

Help us, O Lord, to be o - pen to your word, and teach us to put our trust in you.

The image shows two staves of musical notation in 4/4 time. The first staff begins with a treble clef and a key signature of one sharp (F#). The melody consists of quarter and eighth notes. The lyrics are written below the notes. A small number '9' is positioned at the start of the first line of lyrics. The second staff continues the melody with similar note values and lyrics.

Prayers of the People and the Prayer of Jesus

Please pray the Prayer of Jesus in whatever language is comfortable for you.

The following are offered as examples...

**Our Father/Mother/Creator,
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 debts/sins/trespasses,
as we forgive our debtors/those who sin/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.**

Invitation to Generosity

The outpouring of God's spirit described in the baptism of Jesus reminds us that God's very nature is generous, self-giving love. It is the source of our deepest joy. When we open our hearts in generous giving, we give space for God's love and joy to grow in us for the good of others. May our hearts be stretched wide by this motion of the Holy One, as we joyfully bring our gifts.

Musical Offering

Go, Tell It on the Mountain

CH167

*Doxology

Praise God from whom all blessings flow; Praise God all creatures here be low; Praise
5 God for all that love has done: Cre - a - tor, Christ and Spi - rit, One. A - men!

*Prayer of Dedication

O Gracious God, we thank you for the invitation to grow through giving, made possible by Your outpouring spirit. May these gifts we bring be used to form ever-new blessings in this congregation and around the world. And may our lives be the instruments of love and joy you desire. Amen.

*Closing Hymn

O Jesus, I Have Promised

CH612

*Benediction

Now may God bless you and keep you;
May God's face shine upon you and be gracious unto you;
May God's countenance be lifted up upon you and give you peace. Amen.

*Passing the Peace

The peace of our Lord, Jesus Christ, is with you always.

And also with you.

Let us share with one another a sign of that peace.

Postlude

Much of this morning's liturgy is from "*Heaven Opened: Service Prayers for the Baptism of Christ*", written by the Rev. Dr. David Long-Higgins, Conference Minister of the Heartland Conference of the United Church of Christ.

THE WEEK AHEAD...

Wednesday, January 15 1:00 p.m. Book Group in Fellowship Hall

Saturday, January 18 7:00 p.m. Be the Light Salsa Band Concert

If you would like to bake cookies or bars for the concert, they can be labeled and left in the kitchen by Saturday morning, in a closed container so that mice don't find them.

Sunday, January 19 10:15 a.m. Worship and Worship Circle
Second Hour Budget Info Meeting following worship

Sunday, January 26

10:15 a.m. Worship and Worship Circle
Congregational Meeting following worship