



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

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All the Members, Ministers
Rev. Joseph Blotz, Pastor + Erik Haeger, Organist
Olivia Russell, Worship Circle Coordinator

THE FEAST OF THE BAPTISM OF JESUS + JANUARY 14, 2024

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!*

Chimes and Prelude

Welcoming the Light

There are some days when I need the reminder that I belong to God. Do you ever feel that way?

Yes. We do. The world can be a harsh place; we often need that reminder.

Well then, let us care for one another.

Let us speak the truth we each need to hear. Church, you belong to God. You are God's beloved.

Friend, you belong to God. You are God's beloved.

Let us worship the God who knows our names.

Let us worship the God who calls us beloved. Amen.

Welcome and Greeting

Hymn

Shall We Gather at the River

CH701

Prayer of Confession

Loving God, from the very beginning, you breathed life into us and called us good.

However, somewhere along the way we replaced "good" with "not enough."

Somewhere along the way we turned the volume up on that phrase and began to doubt our own self-worth. Forgive us, for this is not what you have taught us. For when the world tells us we are not enough, you call us beloved. Show us how to return to that truth.

Show us how to let go of our weariness and rest in that good news. Amen.

Family of faith, God's grace and understanding is deeper and wider than we could possibly imagine. Our story begins with belovedness. Even when we lose our way, even if we stumble and fall, God never stops breaking through the clouds to claim us.

We are loved. We are claimed. We are forgiven. We are sent to serve. Amen.

Song of Praise

Doxology for the Weary

CRANHAM



Praise the One Cre - a - tor, praise the Liv - ing Christ. Praise the Ho - ly Spi - rit,
 7 praise both day and night. Praise when you are wea - ry, praise in times of joy.
 13 Praise, my soul, with all your strength and your heart and voice.

Hebrew Scripture

Genesis 1:1-5

When God began to create the heavens and the earth, the earth was complete chaos, and darkness covered the face of the deep, while a wind from God swept over the face of the waters. Then God said, "Let there be light," and there was light. And God saw that the light was good, and God separated the light from the darkness. God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night. And there was evening and there was morning, the first day.

Psalter

Psalm 29

CH737

Gospel

Luke 3:21-22

Now when all the people were baptized and when Jesus also had been baptized and was praying, the heaven was opened, and 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."

Hymn

Wade in the Water

CH371

Poetry Prayer

The Bravest Thing We Can Do

Sarah Speed

Trust your belovedness.
 Let it be a protest,
 an act of resistance,
 a song of celebration.
 Trust your belovedness in a world
 that is rarely satisfied.
 Wear it like a badge of honor.
 Speak it as confidently as your last name.
 Tattoo it to your heart.
 When outside forces
 chip away at your sense of self,
 when life asks you
 to hand over the keys,
 remember the water.
 Remember creation.
 Remember how it was good,

so very good.
 Let that truth hum through your veins.
 Sing it so loud
 that it drowns out the weariness of the world,
 for the bravest thing we can ever do
 is trust that we belong here.

Reflection

words by Rev. Cecelia Armstrong

Call to Prayer

Creator of the Stars of Night

CH127



Cre - a - tor of the stars of night, your peo-ple's e - ver - last - ing light,
 O Christ, re - deem - er of us all, we pray you hear us when we call.

Prayers of the People and the Prayer of Jesus

Please pray the Prayer of Jesus in whatever language is most 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.

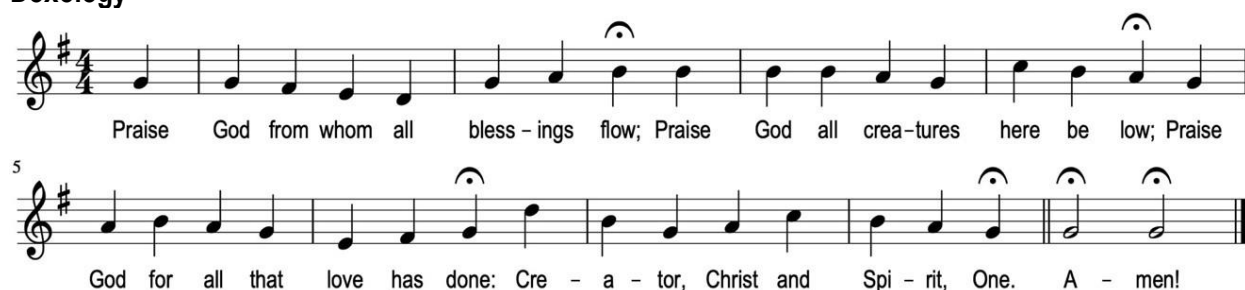
Musical Offering

In Water We Grow

CH375

Offerings may be placed in the collection boxes at the entrances to our worship space, mailed to: First Church of Christ in Mansfield UCC. Box 36. Mansfield Center, CT 06250, or given online at www.myfcc.info

Doxology



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

Prayer of Dedication

Accept, O God, this money offered, these gifts given, the goodwill of our hearts, that disappointment may be turned to hope, and worry may be turned to joy, as we celebrate with wonder the birth of Christ. Amen.

Benediction

Family of faith,

as you leave this place,

you go into a weary world—

so speak tenderly.

Do the good that is yours to do. Choose connection.

Hold onto hope.

And remember

that Christ took on flesh for you. You are God's beloved.

So go rejoicing.

The world needs it.

Amen.

Postlude

The Week Ahead...**Tuesday, January 16**

10:30am First Church leads Worship at MCNR

Wednesday, January 17

1pm Book Group in Fellowship Hall

Thursday, January 18

9:30am Quilt Group in Fellowship Hall

10am First Church leads Worship at St. Joe's Center for Living and Rehab

12:15 Contemplative Communion

Sunday, January 21

10:15am Worship and Worship Circle

5pm PFLAG in Fellowship Hall