



**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 THIRD SUNDAY IN LENT + MARCH 3, 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

Call to Worship

Again and again,

We come to this space.

Again and again,

We gather as a community.

Again and again,

We move closer to God.

And again and again,

God is here.

We are met.

We are heard.

We are shown the way.

So again and again, Let us worship holy God.

Welcome and Greeting

Hymn

Christ Is Made the Sure Foundation

CH275

Prayer of Confession

Science tells us that a person makes about 35,000 choices in a day. 35,000 choices each and every day! In the prayer of confession, we pause to take a moment to think and to ask: How many of our decisions are choices God would have us make? How many are not?

So let us pray together, knowing that we need guidance, and trusting that even if we fall, God is showing us the way.

God of Justice, we are guilty of building tables.

We have built tables that oppression dines on,

Sexism thrives on, and racism lives on.

God of Justice, we are guilty of forgetting where we are,

Of turning faith into a negotiation tool And the church into a place for insiders.

God of Justice, we are guilty of ignoring the point;

For you taught that the temple was for worship

and your message was for all.

God of our hearts,

Be in our decision making.

Draw near to our choices.

Forgive our mistakes.

And as you do,

Flip every table, habit, belief, or point of view that needs adjusting.

With hope we pray for a better day. Amen.

Family of faith, the good news is that God took on flesh and walked this earth to show us the way. God took on flesh so that we could see what it looks like to disrupt and overturn systems of corruption. God took on flesh to teach us another way. God took on flesh to point us to restoration. God took on flesh so that we might be forgiven. Friends, we are held, loved, and forgiven by a just and merciful God.

Thanks be to God for a love like that.

Song of Praise

Glory to the Creator

James Buccini

Glo - ry to the Cre - a - tor, the Christ, the Spi - rit: One; as it
was in the be - gin - ing, is now and ev - er shall be.
be, world with out end. A - men.

Prayer for Illumination

Creator God,

We don't just want to listen.

We want to hear you.

We want to read scripture aloud and

Know that you are as close as you have always been.

We want to read scripture aloud and

Feel your word resonating inside our bones.

We want to read scripture aloud and

Have your words stuck in our heads like a melody,

Falling off our lips like a love song.

Creator God,

We don't just want to listen,

We want to hear you.

So turn our hearts toward you,

Just as you turned strangers into disciples. Turn our ears toward you,

Just as you turned tables in the temple.

We are listening.

Amen.

Hebrew Scripture

Exodus 20:1-17

After escaping from slavery, the Israelites come to Mount Sinai, where God teaches them how to live in community. The Ten Commandments proclaim that God alone is worthy of worship. Flowing from God, the life of the community flourishes when based on honesty, trust, fidelity, and respect for life, family, and property.

¹God spoke all these words:

²I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery; ³you shall have no other gods before me.

⁴You shall not make for yourself an idol, whether in the form of anything that is in heaven above, or that is on the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth. ⁵You shall not bow down to them or worship them; for I the LORD your God am a jealous God, punishing children for the iniquity of parents, to the third and the fourth generation of those who reject me, ⁶but showing steadfast love to the thousandth generation of those who love me and keep my commandments.

⁷You shall not make wrongful use of the name of the LORD your God, for the LORD will not acquit anyone who misuses his name.

⁸Remember the sabbath day, and keep it holy. ⁹Six days you shall labor and do all your work. ¹⁰But the seventh day is a sabbath to the LORD your God; you shall not do any work—you, your son or your daughter, your male or female slave, your livestock, or the alien resident in your towns. ¹¹For in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that is in them, but rested the seventh day; therefore the LORD blessed the sabbath day and consecrated it.

¹²Honor your father and your mother, so that your days may be long in the land that the LORD your God is giving you.

¹³You shall not murder.

¹⁴You shall not commit adultery.

¹⁵You shall not steal.

¹⁶You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor.

¹⁷You shall not covet your neighbor's house; you shall not covet your neighbor's wife, or male or female slave, or ox, or donkey, or anything that belongs to your neighbor.

Psalm

Psalm 19

CH731

Gospel

John 2:13-22

¹³The Passover of the Jews was near, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem. ¹⁴In the temple he found people selling cattle, sheep, and doves, and the money changers seated at their tables. ¹⁵Making a whip of cords, he drove all of them out of the temple, both the sheep and the cattle. He also poured out the coins of the money changers and overturned their tables. ¹⁶He told those who were selling the doves, "Take these things out of here! Stop making my Father's house a marketplace!" ¹⁷His disciples remembered that it was written, "Zeal for your house will consume me." ¹⁸The Jews then said to him, "What sign can you show us for doing this?" ¹⁹Jesus answered them, "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up." ²⁰The Jews then said, "This temple has been under construction for forty-six years, and will you raise it up in three days?" ²¹But he was speaking of the temple of his body. ²²After he was raised from the dead, his disciples remembered that he had said this; and they believed the scripture and the word that Jesus had spoken.

Poetry Prayer

Flipping Tables

Sarah Speed

I woke up and realized I was sitting at a table that oppression built.
The patriarchy made the food.

Cheap labor sewed the table cloth.
 The guest list was exclusive.
 Fear was the host.
 And the people seemed happy,
 But the food tasted awful.
 Because milk and honey
 Are reserved for God's promised day.
 So hold onto your silverware,
 Because now that I see it,
 I can't unsee.
 This table is about to be flipped.

Reflection

Affirmation of Faith

**We believe in a God who knows holy rage—
 A God who stands with the underdog,
 Who passionately protects the suffering,
 And who overturns systems of corruption.
 We believe in a God who leads by example—
 Feeding the hungry,
 Healing the sick,
 And offering second chances.
 We believe in a God who knew that we would lose our way,
 And still said, "This is my body broken for you."
 We believe in a God who knew our capacity for mistakes,
 And still said, "I'm going to prepare a place for you."
 And because of this love, we believe that God shows us the way,
 Again and again and again.
 Thanks be to God. Amen.**

Call to Prayer

O Lord Hear My Prayer

Taize

O Lord, hear my prayer. O Lord, hear my prayer. When I call, an - swer me. O
 Lord, hear my prayer. O Lord, hear my prayer. Come and li - sten to me.

Prayers of the People and the Prayer of Jesus

There is no God before you. Purify the faith of your church, that your people place their trust in nothing beside you. Your name is holy. Guide your church, that in every situation your people's words and actions honor your name.

The heavens declare your glory. Renew your creation. Provide leaders in the struggle for clean air and water; protect creatures and crops that rely on healthy ecosystems; give all people the willingness to repent when our way of life pollutes the earth and skies.

Your foolishness is wiser than human wisdom. Fill leaders with the foolishness of your peace and mercy. Your law defends the vulnerable. Work through legislators, judicial systems, and systems of law enforcement to protect the wellbeing and freedom of all

Your weakness is stronger than human strength. Protect those who are vulnerable and give courage to all who are suffering. Defend victims of crime and bring redemption to those who have harmed others. Give sabbath rest to all who labor.

You call us to proclaim Christ crucified. Give clarity to this congregation and our leaders, so that we might follow Christ beyond our own habits and comfort. Clear out anything in our common life that would obscure the gospel or that serves our own interests.

The cross of Christ is your power for all who are being saved. Thank you for Perpetua, Felicity, and all the martyrs whose witness reveals the power of the cross. Give us the same trust in life and in death.

*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/trespases,
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

Seek Ye First

CH354

*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
5 God for all that love has done: Cre - a - tor, Christ and Spi - rit, One. A - men!

Prayer of Dedication

God of the wilderness, we give these offerings in gratitude, rejoicing in the abundance of your gifts to us. We give these offerings in faith, trusting that you will provide for our needs. We give these offerings in hope, knowing you can use them

to spread your love in this world. And with these offerings, we give ourselves; may we live with generous hearts, with open hands. Amen

The Prayer of Great Thanksgiving

God is with you.

And also with you.

Open up your hearts.

We open them up to God and one another.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

It is right to give our thanks and praise.

Musical Response

Santo Santo Santo

Traditional Argentine



San - to, san - to, san - to. Mi co - ra - zon te a - do - ra! Mi
Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly. My heart, my heart a - dores you! My

5
co - ra - zon te sa - be de - cir: San - to eres, Se - nor!
heart knows how to say to you: Ho - ly are you, Lord!

Sharing the Bread and Cup

All are welcome at Christ's table; we offer non-alcoholic juice and gluten-free bread.

Hymn

God of Grace and God of Glory

CH464

Benediction and Postlude

As you leave this space,
May your mouth speak of God's goodness.
May your arms hold those in need.
May your feet walk toward justice.
May your heart trust its worth.
May your soul dance in God's grace.
And may this be your rhythm—
Again and again and again,
Until God's promised day.
In the name of the Lover,
the Beloved,
and Love itself,
Go with courage, go with heart, go in peace.
Amen.

The Week Ahead...

Sunday, March 3	10:15am Worship and Worship Circle
Monday March 4	10am First Church leads Worship at St Joseph Living Center 7pm Take Note in Fellowship Hall
Tuesday March 5	10:30am First Church leads Worship at MCNR 7pm Adult Faith Formation on Zoom
Wednesday, March 6	1pm Book Group in Fellowship Hall
Thursday, March 7	9:30am Sewing and Service in Fellowship Hall 12:15pm Contemplative Communion 7pm Choir Rehearsal in Fellowship Hall
Sunday, March 10	10:15am Worship and Worship Circle 3pm Take Note Concert to Benefit the First Church Roof Fund