



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

549 Storrs Rd. P.O. Box 36 Mansfield Center, CT 06250

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Ministers: All the Members of the Church
Erik Haeger, Organist
Olivia Russell, Worship Circle Coordinator

The Fifteenth Sunday after Pentecost ~ September 1, 2024

Today's Worship Leader: The Reverend Paulette Harwood

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

Welcome and Announcements

FCC Governing Board Member

Prelude

Erik Haeger

Centering in the Spirit

Look to the mountains; look to the hills!

The world is filled with beauty.

The air is filled with sweetness.

The summer of God's love is with us.

Come, let us worship God.

Arise and sing for joy!

***Opening Hymn**

All Things Bright and Beautiful

CH 61

Prayer for Transformation

Holy God, we do not deserve to be here. We haven't led blameless lives, or always done what is right in your sight. We've remained silent when we should have spoken up. We've turned away when we should have reached out. We've hoarded for ourselves what was meant to be shared.

Redeeming God, save us from our foolishness and guide us to your wisdom. Gather us in your righteousness and forgive us. Cleanse us of our brokenness that we might do justice, love kindness, and walk humbly with you.

Hear our cry, God of our hope, as we confess that which weighs us down in the silence of our hearts...

silence

Words of Grace

Love breaks through hatred,
Hope breaks through despair,
Life breaks through death.
The Love of the Beloved sets us free. Thanks be to God!

*Song of Praise

Gloria Patri

traditional

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

Hebrew Scripture

Song of Songs 2:8-13

⁸The voice of my beloved! Look, he comes, leaping upon the mountains, bounding over the hills. ⁹My beloved is like a gazelle or a young stag. Look, there he stands behind our wall, gazing in at the windows, looking through the lattice. ¹⁰My beloved speaks and says to me: "Arise, my love, my fair one, and come away; ¹¹for now the winter is past, the rain is over and gone. ¹²The flowers appear on the earth; the time of singing has come, and the voice of the turtledove is heard in our land. ¹³The fig tree puts forth its figs, and the vines are in blossom; they give forth fragrance. Arise, my love, my fair one, and come away.

Epistle

James 1:17-27

¹⁷Every generous act of giving, with every perfect gift, is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow due to change. ¹⁸In fulfillment of his own purpose he gave us birth by the word of truth, so that we would become a kind of first fruits of his creatures.

¹⁹You must understand this, my beloved: let everyone be quick to listen, slow to speak, slow to anger; ²⁰for your anger does not produce God's righteousness. ²¹Therefore rid yourselves of all sordidness and rank growth of wickedness, and welcome with meekness the implanted word that has the power to save your souls. ²²But be doers of the word, and not merely hearers who deceive themselves. ²³For if any are hearers of the word and not doers, they are like those who look at themselves in a mirror; ²⁴for they look at themselves and, on going away, immediately forget what they were like. ²⁵But those who look into the perfect law, the law of liberty, and persevere, being not hearers who forget but doers who act—they will be blessed in their doing. ²⁶If any think they are religious, and do not bridle their tongues but deceive their hearts, their religion is

worthless. ²⁷Religion that is pure and undefiled before God, the Father, is this: to care for orphans and widows in their distress, and to keep oneself unstained by the world.

Gospel

Mark 7:1-8; 14-23

Now when the Pharisees and some of the scribes who had come from Jerusalem gathered around him, ² they noticed that some of his disciples were eating with defiled hands, that is, without washing them. ³ (For the Pharisees, and all the Jews, do not eat unless they thoroughly wash their hands, thus observing the tradition of the elders; ⁴ and they do not eat anything from the market unless they wash it; and there are also many other traditions that they observe, the washing of cups, pots, and bronze kettles.)

⁵ So the Pharisees and the scribes asked him, “Why do your disciples not live according to the tradition of the elders, but eat with defiled hands?” ⁶ He said to them, “Isaiah prophesied rightly about you hypocrites, as it is written,

‘This people honors me with their lips,
but their hearts are far from me;

⁷ in vain do they worship me,
teaching human precepts as doctrines.’

⁸ You abandon the commandment of God and hold to human tradition.”

¹⁴ Then he called the crowd again and said to them, “Listen to me, all of you, and understand: ¹⁵ there is nothing outside a person that by going in can defile, but the things that come out are what defile.”

¹⁷ When he had left the crowd and entered the house, his disciples asked him about the parable. ¹⁸ He said to them, “Then do you also fail to understand? Do you not see that whatever goes into a person from outside cannot defile, ¹⁹ since it enters, not the heart but the stomach, and goes out into the sewer?” (Thus he declared all foods clean.) ²⁰

And he said, “It is what comes out of a person that defiles. ²¹ For it is from within, from the human heart, that evil intentions come: fornication, theft, murder, ²² adultery, avarice, wickedness, deceit, licentiousness, envy, slander, pride, folly. ²³ All these evil things come from within, and they defile a person.”

Reflection

“FROG-KFG-GSD”

Rev. Paulette Harwood

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.

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/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.**

Invitation to Generosity

Every generous act of giving is from above. May God's word of love, implanted within us at birth, bloom into good intentions that shape our lives so that we become doers of the word, using God's gifts for the good of all. Let us give glory to God and support the ministry of Christ's church with our tithes and offerings.

Your financial offerings may be placed in the collection plates as they come around, or mailed to: First Church of Christ in Mansfield UCC, PO Box 36, Mansfield Center, CT 06250, or given online at: www.myfcc.info

Offertory

Erik Haeger

***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

Generous and Holy God, every good and perfect gift that touches our lives does indeed come from above, provided through your gracious and boundless love. We bring these gifts, such a small portion of what we have received by your hand, and doing so join them with others that we might be found to be doers of the word and not listeners only. We pray this is the name of Jesus the Christ, our rock and our redeemer. Amen.

Invitation to Communion

Communion Prayer

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...

We come to this time apart and time together from many different places... both within and without. We gather to be more open to the presence of our God. Therefore, let us join our hearts around this table, not out of a sense of duty but because we desire to be together as we remember Christ, the Light in our darkness and the bearer of Holy Love among us.

We are invited to come just as we are with our doubts and fears as well as our strengths and gifts. For it is here that we remember that Christ lives among us and through us still.

Let us pray...

You have prepared a table for us, Holy God, not because we are worthy, but because we are needy; not because we are good, but because we are hungry. May your Spirit work within this bread and cup and within us as well. Enable us to become living sacrifices in your name, so others may see your love through us. Amen.

With the faithful in every place and time, we praise with joy God's holy name, singing:

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.

Prayer of Thanksgiving

You are the God of the broken loaf and the over-flowing cup.

Strengthened and nourished by this simple meal, we thank you for

**these moments of communion, and ask your continued presence
with us as we go from this place. Amen.**

***Closing Hymn**

Here I Am, Lord

CH 452

Benediction

Arise, God's fair ones, and come away.

Go forth in joy to serve with love.

Be both hearers and doers of God's word.

God has blessed you forever!

Go in peace, my friends to love and serve our God through loving and serving all God's creation.

Amen.

Postlude

The week ahead...

Tuesday, September 3

10:30 a.m. Monthly worship service at Mansfield Center for Nursing and Rehab.
(See Cheryl Chase for more info)

Thursday, September 5

9:30 a.m. Sewing & Service

Saturday, September 7

9:00 a.m. WAIM work day (See Sharon Foster-Chalecki for more info)

Sunday, September 8

10:15 a.m. Worship and Worship Circle (Worship Leader: Bobbi Giardina)