



**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
The Rev. Charles Ericson, Intentional Interim Minister
Erik Haeger, Organist
Olivia Russell, Worship Circle Coordinator

April 6, 2025

Fifth Sunday in Lent ~ Communion Sunday

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

Greeting and Announcements

Prelude

Erik Haeger

Centering in the Spirit

Cheryl Chase

Leader: We come to worship because we long for mercy.

All: We long for community. We long for God.

Leader: We come to worship because we need a good word.

All: We need connection. We need moral reminders.

Leader: We come to worship because we are in between:

All: hope and grief, faith and doubt, joy and longing, curiosity and conviction.

Leader: So we come to worship and God meets us here.

All: Surely, we are not alone. Thanks be to God for meeting us in the middle! Amen.

***Opening Hymn** *Guide Me, O Thou Great Jehovah (My Great Redeemer)*

CH622

Prayer for Transformation

Friends, our faith calls us to live with both mercy and righteousness. Somewhere along the way, however, we have forgotten that truth. Somewhere along the way, we began arguing about who deserves mercy and whether or not they had acted with enough righteousness to receive it. Fortunately, God does not act that way. No matter what mistakes we have made or wrong turns we've taken, God consistently meets us with mercy and invites us to try again. So let us lean into that good news as we open our hearts and souls now in silent reflection...

moment of silence

Words of Grace

Family of faith, hear and believe this good news: When we fail to be righteous, God is merciful. When we fail to be merciful, God invites us to try again. Again and again, God moves closer to us. Again and again, God shows us the way. Thanks be to God for this unending love. Amen.

Song of PraiseGlory to God*

Paul Vasile

Glo-ry to God, whose good-ness shines on me, and to the Son, whose grace has world with-out end, A - men. Worldwith-out end, world with-out end, A - men. Worldwith-out e - nd, world with-out end, A - men. 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. Worldwith-out e - nd, world with-out end, A - men. now and ev - er shall be, A - men Worldwith-out men!

Hebrew Scripture

Psalm 103

¹Bless the LORD, O my soul, and all that is within me, bless his holy name. ²Bless the LORD, O my soul, and do not forget all his benefits — ³who forgives all your iniquity, who heals all your diseases, ⁴who redeems your life from the Pit, who crowns you with steadfast love and mercy, ⁵who satisfies you with good as long as you live so that your youth is renewed like the eagle's. ⁶The LORD works vindication and justice for all who are oppressed. ⁷He made known his ways to Moses, his acts to the people of Israel. ⁸The LORD is merciful and gracious, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love. ⁹He will not always accuse, nor will he keep his anger forever.

Gospel

Luke 19:1-10

He entered Jericho and was passing through it. ²A man was there named Zacchaeus; he was a chief tax collector and was rich. ³He was trying to see who Jesus was, but on account of the crowd he could not, because he was short in stature. ⁴So he ran ahead and climbed a sycamore tree to see him, because he was going to pass that way. ⁵When Jesus came to the place, he looked up and said to him, "Zacchaeus, hurry and come down; for I must stay at your house today." ⁶So he hurried down and was happy to welcome him. ⁷All who saw it began to grumble and said, "He has gone to be the guest of one who is a sinner." ⁸Zacchaeus stood there and said to the Lord, "Look, half of my possessions, Lord, I will give to the poor; and if I have defrauded anyone of anything, I will pay back four times as much." ⁹Then Jesus said to him, "Today salvation has come to this house, because he too is a son of Abraham. ¹⁰For the Son of Man came to seek out and to save the lost."

Reflection

"When Eyes Meet"

Rev. Chuck Ericson

Reading*"Righteousness & Mercy" by Rev. Sarah Speed*

Barbara Dobrocki

As children we were taught to tell the teacher.
 (Justice was dealt when we spoke up.)
 As children we were taught to always be kind.
 (Friends were made when we spoke love.)
 As children we were taught that Zaccheus climbed a tree.
 (But we cut that tree down a long time ago.)
 So what are the rules for this day and age?
 Can we turn black and white into shades of gray?
 Do we call each other out, for righteousness sake?
 Do we call each other in? Do we grab something to eat?
 As always, love is somewhere in between.

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 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

Jesus noticed a person in need when he turned his gaze away from the crowd and up towards the tree that Zacchaeus had climbed. So it is with us — for when we look out from the serenity and familiarity of this sacred space, we also see people in need...in need of shelter, food and water, affirmation and acceptance, healing, mercy and even redemption. Our church is able to satisfy needs such as these through the ministries and mission supported by our generous gifts. In this spirit, may our morning offering be given and received.

*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,*

Musical Offering

"Pie Jesu" from Requiem, by Andrew Lloyd Webber

FCC Choir

*Doxology

5 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

Merciful and redeeming God, we pray that you would accept and bless the offerings we bring to you this day. Through our church's ministries and outreach missions, may our gifts be transformed into signs of love and mercy, providing hope and reassurance to those in need that they have been seen, and their needs will not be forgotten. Amen.

~ The Service of Holy Communion ~

For visitors: At the Last Supper, Jesus turned no one away and imposed no restrictions on receiving the bread and the cup. Neither do we here at First Church in Mansfield. Christ's table is open at all, and we extend an extravagant welcome to you to join us. The communion elements will be brought to the pews by servers. Plates containing pieces of bread will be distributed first, followed by trays containing individual cups of grape juice. Each time, worshipers are asked to hold the elements until all have been served and an invitation to partake is spoken from the communion table. For those who wish to know, the cup contains non-alcoholic grape juice and the bread is gluten-free.

Communion Hymn

Let Us Break Bread Together

CH425

Invitation to Communion

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.

Let us continue in the spirit of prayer:

Holy God, our loving Creator, close to us as breathing and distant as the farthest star, we thank you for your constant love for all you have made...

...Gifted by the presence of your Holy Spirit, we offer ourselves to you as we unite our voices with the entire family of your faithful people everywhere:

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

We give thanks, Almighty God, that you have refreshed us at your table by granting us the presence of Jesus Christ. Strengthen our faith, increase our love for one another, and send us forth into the world in courage and peace, rejoicing in the power of your Holy Spirit; through Jesus Christ, our Savior. Amen.

*Closing Hymn

Be Thou My Vision

CH595

*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

Today's Greeters are Deb Richards and Penny Guerin

Communion Servers are Bill Briggs, Gary Cote, David Darnell, Robert Healey

Our Cantor is Laurel Thurman

About the Service of Communion

The shift from receiving communion by intinction to passing trays of bread and juice from pew to pew has been made out of concern for the health of worshipers during this time of numerous colds and flu.

About today's service content

The opening liturgy and the poetry reading were written by the Rev. Sarah A. Speed for the Lent series "everything [in] between." Permission for use has been granted by A Sanctified Art LLC | sanctifiedart.org

THEME FOR THE FIFTH WEEK IN LENT
everything [in] between righteousness & mercy

Please participate in the survey sent out last week by the Pastoral Search Committee! Members of the committee will be in Fellowship Hall after worship if you would like assistance with completing the survey.

Easter Candy orders are ready for pick up in Fellowship Hall. You will receive an email with the amount you owe. Payment can be made via cash or check - made out to First Church of Christ - with "candy" in memo line.

THE WEEK AHEAD...

TODAY	2:00 p.m. "Indivisible" meeting
Monday, April 7	6:30 p.m. Take Note! rehearsal
Tuesday, April 8	6:00 p.m. Special Olympics Cornhole Practice
Wednesday, April 9	1:00 p.m. Book Group 5:30 p.m. Pastoral Search Committee
Thursday, April 10	12 noon Music & Meditation 5:00 p.m. Governing Board and Ministry Teams 7:00 p.m. Choir rehearsal
Sunday, April 13 (Palm Sunday)	10:15 a.m. Worship and Worship Circle

SAVE THE DATE - Books, Blooms, and Blossoms! **Saturday, May 3 from 9a to 12 noon, rain or shine**

- * **Start cleaning your closets!** "All things flat" - Good condition books, cds, dvds, LPs, games, puzzles, and any other "flat" entertainment item can brought in at any time to Fellowship Hall.
- * **Think about what you might bake!** All kinds of goodies are needed. Please label and price your items! Drop off at church NO LATER than 8am on the day of the sale.
- * **Garden Items needed!** Bare-rooted plants, as well as houseplants, nice plant pots, garden decorations, tools, and other garden items are welcome.
- * **Please give of yourself!** We need help on Thursday afternoon (May 1), Friday during the day (May 2) or the day of the sale for final set-up, help during the sale, and clean-up.

If you have any questions, please contact Cheryl Chase (860) 429-7265 or seachase3860@yahoo.com.