



**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

September 7, 2025

Thirteenth Sunday after Pentecost ~ 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

Centering in the Spirit (*inspired by Psalm 139*)

One: We gather here this morning as people of the God who searches us and knows us.

ALL: God searches us and knows when we are feeling low and in need of a lift.

One: God searches us and knows when we are unsettled and our souls yearn for calm.

ALL: God searches us and knows when temptation lures us and we need strength.

One: God searches us and knows us when we are sorrowful and need comfort and support.

ALL: God searches us and knows when we are joyful and need others to share in our joy.

One: However we feel, God searches us and knows us and is ready to provide for every need.

ALL: Come, let us worship together and receive all that God has to give us this day!

***Opening Hymn**

Sing Praise to God Who Reigns Above

CH6

Prayer for Transformation

God of power, God of love, in this amazing world you have created and given to us as our home, we are surrounded by so much beauty, so much wonder, so much potential. Yet we are also faced with false idols that lure and tempt us —
wealth...addictions...fame...unbridled power...and many more. We struggle against them, we draw upon our faith to give us strength to hold them at bay, however we do not always prevail. As we pause for a few moments of silent reflection, we bring these challenges to you. We seek your help in resisting false idols that turn us away from you. And we ask your for grace, your mercy and your forgiveness. Amen.

moment of silence

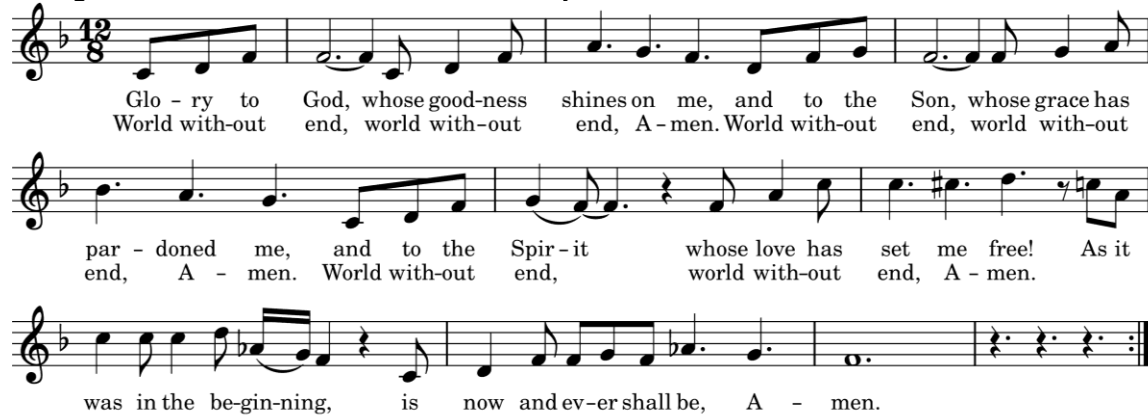
Words of Grace

Kindred in faith, we are each awesomely and wonderfully made by God, and God's Spirit abides with us in all that we do — celebrating with us in our triumphs and accomplishments, and offering us compassion and understanding when false idols get the better of us. God's Spirit is with each of us now: reaching out...lifting up...showing us the way ahead that leads to joy, peace and new life.

*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
World with-out 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
end, A - men. World with-out end, world with-out end, A - men.
was in the be-gin-ning, is now and ev-er shall be, A - men.

Hebrew Scripture

Jeremiah 18:1-8

18:1 The word that came to Jeremiah from the LORD: **2** “Come, go down to the potter’s house, and there I will let you hear my words.” **3** So I went down to the potter’s house, and there he was working at his wheel. **4** The vessel he was making of clay was spoiled in the potter’s hand, and he reworked it into another vessel, as seemed good to him. **5** Then the word of the LORD came to me: **6** Can I not do with you, O house of Israel, just as this potter has done? says the Lord LORD. Just like the clay in the potter’s hand, so are you in my hand, O house of Israel. **7** At one moment I may declare concerning a nation or a kingdom that I will pluck up and break down and destroy it, **8** but if that nation, concerning which I have spoken, turns from its evil, I will change my mind about the disaster that I intended to bring on it.

Epistle

Philemon 1:1-21

1:1 Paul, a prisoner of Christ Jesus, and Timothy our brother, To our beloved coworker Philemon, **2** to our sister Apphia, to our fellow soldier Archippus, and to the church in your house: **3** Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. **4** I thank my God always when I mention you in my prayers, **5** because I hear of your love for all the saints and your faith toward the Lord Jesus. **6** I pray that the partnership of your faith may become effective as you comprehend all the good that we share in Christ. **7** I have indeed received much joy and encouragement from your love, because the hearts of the saints have been refreshed through you, my brother. **8** For this reason, though I am more than bold enough in Christ to command you to do the right thing, **9** yet I would rather appeal to you on the basis of love—and I, Paul, do this as an old man and now also as a prisoner of Christ Jesus. **10** I am appealing to you for my child, Onesimus, whose father I have become during my imprisonment. **11** Formerly he was useless to you, but now he is indeed useful to you and to me. **12** I am sending him, that is, my own heart, back to you. **13** I wanted to keep him with me so that he might minister to me in your place during my imprisonment for the gospel, **14** but I preferred to do nothing without your consent in order that your good deed might be voluntary and not something forced. **15** Perhaps this is the reason he was separated from you for a while, so that you might have him back for the long term, **16** no longer as a slave but more than a slave, a beloved brother—especially to me but how much more to you, both in the flesh and in the Lord. **17** So if you consider me your partner, welcome him as you would welcome me. **18** If he has wronged you in any

way or owes you anything, charge that to me. **19** I, Paul, am writing this with my own hand: I will repay it. I say nothing about your owing me even your own self. **20** Yes, brother, let me have this benefit from you in the Lord! Refresh my heart in Christ. **21** Confident of your obedience, I am writing to you, knowing that you will do even more than I ask.

Reflection

The Simple Things in Life

Rev. Chuck Ericson

Hymn

Have Thine Own Way, Lord!

CH588

Call to Prayer

Hear Us O Lord

Don Besig and Nancy Price



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

God's good earth truly provides for us all that we need to live and thrive: nourishment for the grains and greens that sustain our bodies...an environment in which we labor and earn a living...land where we build homes that comfort and protect us. Yet not all share equally in these resources that the good earth offers. Some of our kindred in the human family lack sufficient food, shelter and opportunity. Through the ministries of our church, supported by our offerings, we can enable others to share more fully in the good earth's bounty. To fulfill this hope, may we all give gladly and generously as our morning offering is now received.

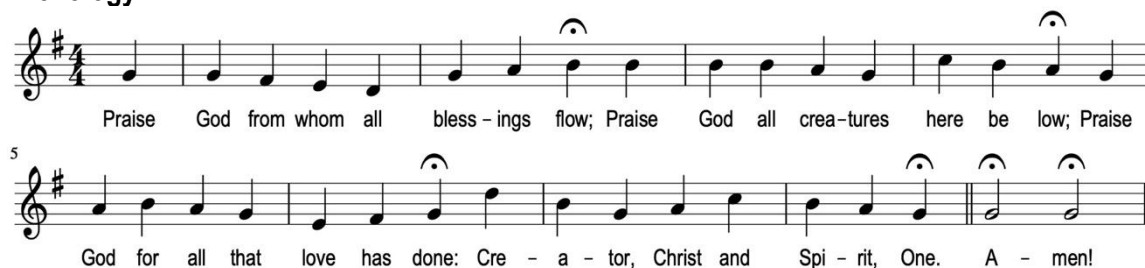
*Your financial offerings may be placed in the collection plates as they come around,
or mailed to: First Church of Christ in Mansfield UCC, PO Box 36, Mansfield Center, CT 06250,*

Musical Offering

Fashioned in the Clay, by Elmer Beal

Rev. Chuck Ericson

*Doxology



*Prayer of Dedication

Creator God, we ask your blessing on the offerings we dedicate to you this morning. Through the mission of our church, and the power and guidance of your Holy Spirit, may these gifts enable neighbors near and far to receive a fuller share of the bounty of the good earth that they need and deserve. 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

Just as I Am, Without One Plea

CH339

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
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

God, Who Touches Earth with Beauty

CH515

*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

Our shift from receiving Communion by intinction to the tradition of passing trays of bread and juice from pew to pew has been made from our concern for health (risk of germ transmission) as well as our hope to create a more unified, communal experience whereby worshippers partake of the elements at the same time.

LAST ONE OUT – PLEASE LOCK UP!

Your safety and security while at church is a top priority but unfortunately, there has been an increase in instances where the doors have been left unlocked. Let's each make it a habit to double-check that exterior doors are closed, locked, and latched behind you, even if you weren't the one who unlocked them. Thank you for helping us to be good stewards of our church home.

THE WEEK AHEAD...

TODAY

11:15 a.m. Second Hour Ice Cream Social and Plarn Mat-making

Monday, September 8

6:30 p.m. Take Note! Rehearsal

Wednesday, September 10

1:00 p.m. Book Group

5:00 p.m. Meditation Group

5:30 p.m. Pastoral Search Committee

Thursday, September 11

6:00 p.m. Governing Board (Zoom)

Saturday, September 13

12:30 p.m. Girl Scouts