



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

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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 21, 2025
Fifteenth Sunday after Pentecost**

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

Dave Litrico

One: Outside these walls, we sometimes encounter criticism and unkindness.

All: Inside these walls, we find acceptance, affirmation and affection for one another.

One: Outside these walls, we sometimes encounter cynicism and negativity.

All: Inside these walls, we are immersed in hope and joy and celebration.

One: Outside these walls, we sometimes encounter an emphasis on competition and pursuing self-interests.

All: Inside these walls, we find cooperation, humility and a commitment to serving our neighbors.

One: Outside these walls, praise is heaped upon celebrities, athletes and those in positions of power.

All: Inside these walls, we gather to praise our God who blesses us with love and grace every day.

One: Now, as the hour of worship begins, let us praise God together and rejoice in our community of faith!

All: Indeed, let us worship now, united by a spirit of affirmation, joy, cooperation and praise!

***Opening Hymn**

Praise My Soul, the God of Heaven

CH23

Prayer for Transformation

God of healing and new life, we praise you indeed for the heavenly grace that you shower upon our world and all of our lives in such endless abundance. When we turn from you in headstrong defiance, your grace brings us back. When we act hurtfully toward one another, your grace shows us the way to be reconciled. When we feel isolated or alone, your grace appears at the entrance to our souls like an old friend offering sustenance and support. As we come to you now in holy silence, each with our own need for mercy and reassurance, may we feel your extravagant grace rushing into our lives and making all things new. Amen.

moment of silence


Words of Grace

Beloved ones, God's grace fills this place. God's grace fills our hearts. God's grace shows us the way ahead: the way of faith, hope and peace. Praise God for the life-changing, spirit-renewing gift of grace!

***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.

Psalms

Psalm 113:1-8

113:1 Praise the LORD! Praise, O servants of the LORD; praise the name of the LORD.

2 Blessed be the name of the LORD from this time on and forevermore.

3 From the rising of the sun to its setting, the name of the LORD is to be praised.

4 The LORD is high above all nations and his glory above the heavens.

5 Who is like the LORD our God, who is seated on high,

6 Who looks far down on the heavens and the earth?

7 He raises the poor from the dust and lifts the needy from the ash heap,

8 To make them sit with princes, with the princes of his people.

Epistle

I Timothy 2:1-7

2:1 First of all, then, I urge that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings be made for everyone, 2 for kings and all who are in high positions, so that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and dignity. 3 This is right and acceptable before God our Savior, 4 who desires everyone to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth. 5 For there is one God; there is also one mediator between God and humankind, Christ Jesus, himself human, 6 who gave himself a ransom for all —this was attested at the right time. 7 For this I was appointed a herald and an apostle (I am telling the truth; I am not lying), a teacher of the gentiles in faith and truth.

Reflection

"The Go-Between"

Rev. Chuck Ericson

Hymn

What a Friend We Have in Jesus

CH585

A Reading

Hymn for the Hurting by Amanda Gorman
(see the program note at the end of the bulletin)

Barbara Dobrocki

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.**

Musical Offering

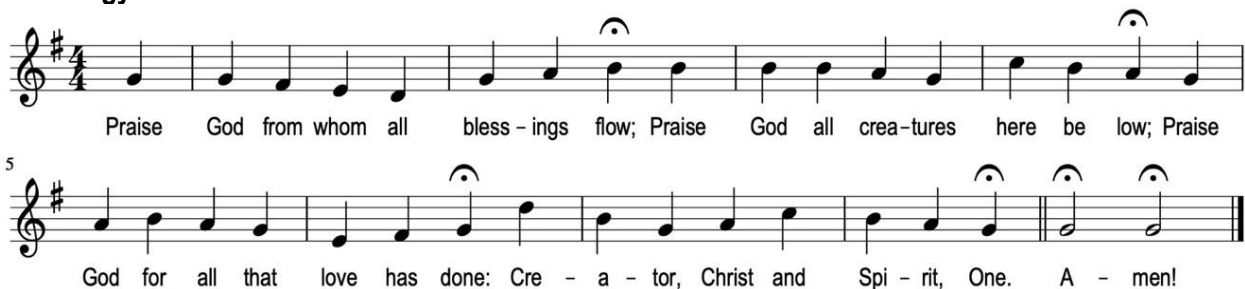
Erik Haeger

Invitation to Generosity

God calls us to labor together to make a better world: to feed the hungry, care for the poor, overcome injustice, preserve the environment, bring peace where there is discord, and so much more. We can pray fervently for these things, create plans to make them happen, and delegate the work to the appropriate groups. More is needed though — the commitment of our own time, talents and treasures. As our offerings are now collected, may we reflect upon how we can change the world for the better, pray for God's guidance, and give generously to our church's ministries and outreach missions.

Musical Offering

*Doxology



*Prayer of Dedication

We ask your blessing, Loving God, on the gifts we now dedicate to you and to the ministries of our church. With our prayers, and the guidance of your Spirit, may they truly make a difference. Amen.

***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

"Hymn for the Hurting" is a poem written by Amanda Gorman, released in May 2022 in response to the Robb Elementary School shooting in Uvalde, Texas. The work expresses collective grief and despair, framing tragedy as a catalyst for change, and calls for action to prevent further loss.

While the poem's reading during worship does not violate U.S. copyright laws, we do not have the author's or her publisher's permission to print the text in the bulletin or to livestream the audio of its reading.

You can find the text here, in a submission to the NY Times by Ms. Gorman:

<https://www.nytimes.com/2022/05/27/opinion/amanda-gorman-uvalde-poem.html>

THE WEEK AHEAD

TODAY	5:00 p.m. PFLAG Mansfield Tolland
Monday, Sept 22	5:30 p.m. Special Olympics 6:30 p.m. Take Note! rehearsal
Wednesday, Sept 24	1:00 p.m. Book Group 5:00 p.m. Meditation Group 5:30 p.m. Search Committee
Thursday, Sept 25	11:00 a.m. Watch Party in Fellowship Hall - Beyond Sundays: Igniting Impact, Transforming Communities
Friday, Sept 26	11:00 a.m. Watch Party in Fellowship Hall - Beyond Sundays: Igniting Impact, Transforming Communities
Saturday, Sept 27	12:30 p.m. Girl Scouts
Sunday, Sept 28	10:15 a.m. Worship and Worship Circle 11:15 a.m. Congregational Meeting 11:30 a.m. Capital Campaign Committee meeting 2:00 p.m. Quiet Corner Indivisible