

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

549 Storrs Rd. P.O. Box 36 Mansfield Center, CT 06250 860.423.9008 + www.myfcc.info Ministers: All the Members of the Church The Rev. Charles Ericson, Intentional Interim Minister Erik Haeger, Organist Olivia Russell, Worship Circle Coordinator

November 23, 2025

Twenty-fourth Sunday after Pentecost Stewardship Sunday ~ Thanksgiving 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

Karen Christianson

- L: Thanksgiving Day is just a few days away...
- A: ...It is a time to call to mind all that makes us feel grateful.
- L: For some, the atmosphere will be filled with parades and football games and feasting...
- A: ...At the heart of the celebration, though, will be moments of deep appreciation.
- L: We will give thanks for the love we both give and receive...
- A: ...Within our circles of friends and family, and also as we serve and labor in our communities.
- L: We will give thanks for our country's ever-unfolding dream...
- A: ... A dream of freedom, justice, prosperity and opportunity for all.
- L: We will give thanks for Creation's wonders...
- A: ...Blue skies, majestic mountains, green meadows, crystal streams and creatures of all kinds.
- L: Most of all, we will pause in solemn thought to give thanks for our God, whose blessings never end.
- A: Let the celebration of Thanksgiving begin now...as we sing, pray, listen and worship together!

*Opening Hymn

We Gather Together

CH276

Prayer for Transformation

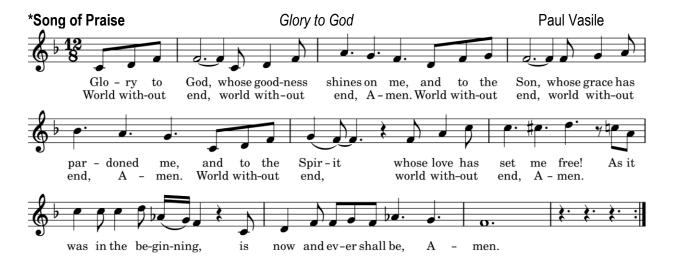
Generous and Giving God, we are thankful for so many things as we gather together here this day. Among all of our sources of gratitude, perhaps one of the greatest is the gift of free will that you endowed in our beings at the dawning of Creation. You made us free to choose where we live, who we love, how we express our thoughts and talents, what we believe and so much more. You even gave us the free will to make unwise choices, to turn away from you and one another, to say and do things we might later regret. In the next few

moments of sacred silence, we bring to you our feelings of thanks for the blessings of our free will, as well as our need to be forgiven and redeemed. Please be with us, Holy One, as our yearning souls reach out to you now. Amen.

moment of silence

Words of Grace

Family of faith, our God also gives us the free will to become new creations — unburdened of past regrets, and empowered to be reborn! Receive the gift of transformation...and give thanks!



Psalms Psalm 46

- 46:1 God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble.
 - 2 Therefore we will not fear, though the earth should change, though the mountains shake in the heart of the sea.
 - 3 Though its waters roar and foam, though the mountains tremble with its tumult. Selah
 - 4 There is a river whose streams make glad the city of God, the holy habitation of the Most High.
 - 5 God is in the midst of the city; it shall not be moved; God will help it when the morning dawns.
 - 6 The nations are in an uproar; the kingdoms totter; he utters his voice; the earth melts.
 - 7 The LORD of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our refuge. Selah
 - 8 Come, behold the works of the LORD; see what desolations he has brought on the earth.
 - 9 He makes wars cease to the end of the earth; he breaks the bow and shatters the spear; he burns the shields with fire.
 - 10 "Be still, and know that I am God! I am exalted among the nations; I am exalted in the earth."
 - 11 The LORD of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our refuge. Selah

Epistle Colossians 1:11-20

1:11 May you be made strong with all the strength that comes from his glorious power, so that you may have all endurance and patience, joyfully **12** giving thanks to the Father, who has enabled you to share in the inheritance of the saints in the light. **13** He has rescued us from the power of darkness and transferred us into the kingdom of his beloved Son, **14** in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins. **15** He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation, **16** for in him all things in heaven and on earth were created, things visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or powers—all things

have been created through him and for him. 17 He himself is before all things, and in him all things hold together. 18 He is the head of the body, the church; he is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, so that he might come to have first place in everything. 19 For in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell, 20 and through him God was pleased to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, by making peace through the blood of his cross.

Reflection "The Transfer Switch" Rev. Chuck Ericson

Hymn God, Whose Giving Knows no Ending CH606

A Poem This Day We Say Grateful Julie Menard

by Jan Richardson

It is a strange thing to be so bound and so released all in the same moment.

to feel the heart

open wide and wider still even as it turns to take its leave. On this day, let us say

this is simply the way

love moves

in its ceaseless spiraling, turning us toward one another.

then sending us into what waits for us

into what waits for us with arms open wide to us

in welcome and in hope. On this day, in this place where you have poured yourself out, where you have been

emptied and filled

and emptied again, may you be aware more than ever of what your heart has opened to

here.

what it has tended and welcomed

here,

where it has broken in love and in grief, where it has given and received blessing in the unfathomable mystery

that moves us, undoes us, and remakes us

finally for joy. This day may you know

this joy

in full measure.
This day
may you know
this blessing
that gathers you in

and sends you forth but will not forget you. O hear us as this day we say grace; this day we say grateful:

we say grateful; this day we say blessing; this day we releas

we release you in God's keeping and hold you in gladness and love.



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.

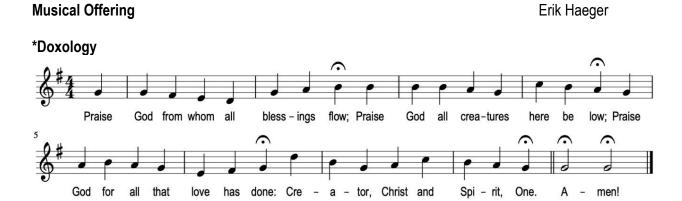
Moment for Stewardship - A Season of Thankfulness

Steve Lane

Invitation to Generosity

When we place our faith in God, darkness is transferred to light, loneliness is transferred to community, and emptiness is transferred to fullness. So it is with our giving. Through the ministries of our beloved church, supported by our gifts and pledges, despair is transferred to hope, conflict is transferred to peace, prejudice is transferred to justice and hatred is transferred to love. May we be generous and glad as we present our offerings to God, believing that the lives of those we serve may be blessed in these ways.

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.



*Prayer of Dedication

God of all that is good and pure, we ask you to bless the offerings that we bring to you this day, and also the gifts of our time and talents that we devote to serving you and our neighbors throughout the week. Accept our thanks for the joy and satisfaction we receive through our giving. Amen.

*Closing Hymn For the Fruit of All Creation PH714

*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.

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Our Cantor today is Laurel Thurman.

Please join us in Fellowship Hall following worship for Coffee Hour, hosted by Laurel Thurman and Cheryl Chase.

THE WEEK AHEAD

Sunday, November 23 10:15 a.m. Worship and Worship Circle

1:30 p.m. WAIM Walk for Warmth (St. Joseph's Church, Willimantic)

Monday, November 24 6:30 p.m. Take Note rehearsal

Wednesday, November 26 1:00 p.m. Book Group

Thursday, November 27 HAPPY THANKSGIVING!

Sunday, November 30 10:15 a.m. First Sunday of Advent

6:00 p.m. Christmas Tree Lighting