



**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

November 30, 2025 ~ The First Sunday of Advent

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

One: On Sundays and Mondays,

All: On good days and bad days,

One: Early in the morning and very late at night,

All: Here in this room, and out in the world,

One: As we move away from Thanksgiving,

All: And rush patiently towards Christmas,

One: God, we long for you to break in.

All: Meet us in this space.

One: Surprise us with your presence.

All: Fill this room with your good news.

With hope, we sing, we worship, we pray. Amen!

Procession of the Children

Light a Candle for Peace

see page 6

Lighting of the Advent Candle:

Hope

The Burnham family

One: In a world full of fear, where do you see hope?

All: We see hope when we look to the next generation.

We feel hopeful when we gather together.

We know hope, deep in our bones, when

We dream of a better world.

One: You are right. Even in a fearful world, hope is all around us.

Today we light the candle of hope as a reminder of this good news.

May this flicker of light help us remember that we have reason to hope.

(Lighting of the candle)

All: Thanks be to God! Amen.

*Opening Hymn

Come, Ye Thankful People, Come

CH718

Prayer for Transformation

Ever-present God, we long to feel you close. We long to feel your presence in our lives. We long for you to break through the chaos and suffering of this world. However, if we're honest, we rarely stand still long enough to feel you in our midst. Forgive our rushing and distractions. Forgive our wandering hearts, and center us in this space. Remind us that even in the time of Herod, even on the longest nights, you are always there. Amen.

moment of silence

Words of Grace

One: *Family of faith, even when we doubt God's presence, even when we fail to notice God's finger-prints in this world, God is always moving closer to us. Hear and believe the good news this Advent season:*

All: **Nothing can keep God's love away. We are seen. We are forgiven. We are not alone. Amen.**

*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.

The Prophets

Isaiah 2:1-5

2:1 The word that Isaiah son of Amoz saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem. 2 In days to come the mountain of the LORD's house shall be established as the highest of the mountains and shall be raised above the hills; all the nations shall stream to it. 3 Many peoples shall come and say, "Come, let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, to the house of the God of Jacob, that he may teach us his ways and that we may walk in his paths." For out of Zion shall go forth instruction and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem. 4 He shall judge between the nations and shall arbitrate for many peoples; they shall beat their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation; neither shall they learn war any more. 5 O house of Jacob, come, let us walk in the light of the LORD!

Hebrew Scriptures

Lamentations 3:55-57

55 I called on your name, O LORD, from the depths of the pit;
56 You heard my plea, "Do not close your ear to my cry for help, but give me relief!"
57 You came near when I called on you; you said, "Do not fear!"

Reflection

"Recipe for Hope"

Rev. Chuck Ericson

Reading (Poem)

"In the Time of Herod" by Rev. Sarah (Are) Speed

Julie Menard

I didn't live during Herod's time—that brutal, murderous king,
God save his soul.
 But even hundreds of years later, I know the prayers of his people.
 I know the prayers of the mothers and the children under his rule.
 I know the prayers of the young men under his angry arm.
 I know their prayers, because anyone who has ever lived in this soft world for more than two days
 knows how to pray for a miracle.
 We rub our hands together.
 We fold weary shoulders in,
 a cage of bone to protect our bleeding hearts.
 We sing, *we shall overcome* and *bind my wandering heart to thee*.
 We walk across bridges and in front of powerful buildings.
 We cover our cars in stickers that scream, *we will not give up!*
 We allow a hungry cry to slip from our lips,
 giving our lament a life of its own (with room to dance!).
 And when all of that is said and done, we whisper to our creator,
God, break through the yelling and the fear. Break through the violence and the oppression.
Get past the Herods of this world, and come be here.
 Like every bleeding heart before, we pray for a miracle.

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

Hope is not only fuel that sustains our spirits. Hope lives within the tangible gifts we give each week to support the most vulnerable among us. In our generosity, we act on God's behalf, ensuring the needs of our community are met.

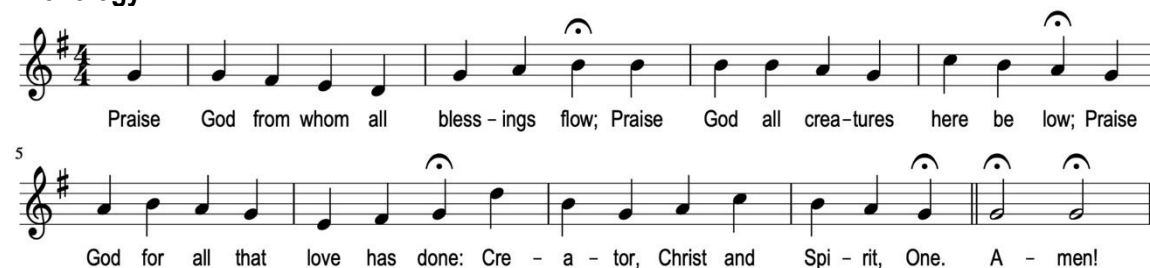
*Your financial offerings may be placed in the collection plates as they come around,
or mailed to: First Church of Christ in Mansfield UCC, PO Box 36, Mansfield Center, CT 06250,*

Musical Offering

*"Come, Emmanuel, Come"
by Don Besig & Nancy Price*

Choir & Worship Circle

*Doxology



*Prayer of Dedication

Beloved Creator, we offer these gifts to you in the spirit of Hope. We place our trust in you and in those who faithfully care for your people, that these gifts will be used to protect and uplift those who are in need. Help us to remember our role to act as agents of your grace each and every day.

Amen.

*Closing Hymn

Good King Wenceslas

see page 7

Over the past few weeks, the children have been learning four Christmas carols that we will sing as the last hymn each week in Advent. In preparation for today's carol, they read a picture book that told the story of Good King Wenceslas, who was known for his charity and Christian faith.

*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

This morning's opening liturgy is used by permission granted by Rev. Sarah (Are) Speed | A Sanctified Art LLC | sanctifiedart.org

About this year’s Advent theme & series from Sanctified Art LLC

WHAT DO YOU FEAR? INSISTING ON HOPE THIS ADVENT

Luke’s Gospel begins the story of Jesus with this opening line: “In the time of Herod...” This detail may seem minor to modern readers; however, it reveals layers of information about the fearful world Jesus entered, one filled with rampant oppression, economic disparity, uncertainty, and instability. A world not so unlike our own. And yet, throughout the stories of Christ’s birth, we hear the whispers of angels delivering a surprising message: “Do not fear.”

Every Advent, we light candles, sing carols, and pray for Christ’s coming because we believe God entered a frightened world to bring good news. We hold onto hope because we believe that Christ did come—that’s the promise of the season. Our hope is not flimsy or fleeting. It’s gritty, resilient, and can endure—no matter what we fear or face. This season, let us insist on hope and trust that good news is greater than fear.

WEEK ONE:



THE WEEK AHEAD...

TODAY -

After worship, join the children for an intergenerational craft activity in Fellowship Hall, then, at **6:00 p.m.** we hold the Annual Christmas Tree Lighting on the front lawn, followed by cookies & cocoa in Fellowship Hall

Monday, December 1	6:00 p.m. Special Olympics (downstairs) 6:30 p.m. Take Note (FH & sanctuary)
Tuesday, December 2	10:30 a.m. Monthly service at Mansfield Center for Nursing and Rehab
Wednesday, December 3	1:00 p.m. Book Group 5:00 p.m. Meditation Group 6:00 p.m. Capital Campaign Committee (hybrid – FH & zoom)
Thursday, December 4	7:00 p.m. Choir
Saturday, December 6	12:30 p.m. Girl Scouts

Light a Candle for Peace

by Shelley Murley (2020), adapted

The musical score is written for a single voice in 4/4 time, featuring a key signature of two flats (B-flat and E-flat). The melody is composed of eighth and quarter notes, with some phrases ending in a repeat sign. The lyrics are written below the staff, with hyphens indicating syllables that span across notes. The score is organized into two systems, each containing two staves.

Light a can - dle for hope, light a can - dle for hope,
light a can - dle that shines all a - way a-round the world.
Light a can - dle for me, light a can - dle for you,
that our wish for world peace will one day come true.

Sing peace a - round the world. Sing peace a - round the world.
Sing peace a - round the world. Sing peace a-round the world.

Good King Wenceslas

John Mason Neale, 1853

13th Century Spring Carol

$\text{♩} = 175$

1. Good King Wen - ces - las looked out on the Feast of Ste - phen,
 2. "Hi - ther, page, and stand by me, if you know it, tell - ing,
 3. "Bring me food and bring me wine, bring me pine logs hi - ther,
 4. "Sire, the night is dark - er now, and the wind blows strong - er,
 5. In his mas - ter's steps he trod, where the snow lay dint - ed;

When the snow lay round a - bout, deep and crisp and e - ven.
 Yon - der pea - sant, who is he? Where and what his dwell - ing?"
 You and I will see him dine, when we bear them thi - ther."
 Fails my heart, I know not how; I can go no long - er."
 Heat was in the ver - y sod which the saint had print - ed.

Bright - ly shone the moon that night, though the frost was cru - el,
 "Sire, he lives a good league hence, un - der - neath the mount - ain,
 Page and mon - arch, forth they went, forth they went to - ge - ther,
 "Mark my foot - steps, my good page, tread now in them bold - ly,
 There - fore, Christ - ian men, be sure, wealth or rank pos - sess - ing,

When a poor man came in sight, ga - thering win - ter fu - el.
 Right a - gainst the for - est fence, by Saint Ag - nes' fount - ain."
 Through the cold wind's wild la - ment and the bit - ter wea - ther.
 You shall find the wint - er's rage freeze your blood less cold - ly."
 You who now will bless the poor shall your - selves find bless - ing.

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