



**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. Don Erickson, Pastor

Erik Haeger, Organist

Olivia Russell, Worship Circle Coordinator

Mandy Boukus, Office Assistant

**April 19, 2026 – Third Sunday of Easter**

**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**

**Welcome and Announcements**

**Prelude**

Erik Haeger

**Call to Worship**

Karen Christiansen

O Spirit of Christ, our sole mediator to the sacred realm,

**May we experience divine love and light this day and always.**

May the breath that gives life, enliven us and infuse us.

**May your infinite peace be imminent in the here and now**

And may we live in that peace and let it move in and through us.

**The world yearns for love, light, life, and peace.**

May we be witnesses to your reality vibrant with love, light, life, and peace,  
a reality waiting to be actualized.

**And may the transformation you bring foster our grateful praise.**

**Silent Confession & Words of Grace**

God is closer to us than our jugular veins, someone once wrote.

And in God is forgiveness, endless forgiveness born of unconditional love.

**Our God is a God of mercy.**

**Our God is a God of compassion.**

**Our God is a God of grace.**

**We are forgiven, loved, and invited to choose another way.**

**Thanks be to God for yet another second chance.**

**Amen.**

## Prayer for Illumination

Hebrew Scripture

Psalm 116:1-4, 12-19

*I love you, Lord, because you have heard  
my voice and my supplications.  
Because you inclined your ear to me,  
therefore I will call on you as long as I live.  
The snares of death encompassed me;  
the pangs of Sheol laid hold on me;  
I suffered distress and anguish.  
Then I called on your name,  
"O Lord, I pray, save my life!"  
What shall I return to you, Lord  
for all your bounty to me?  
I will lift up the cup of salvation  
and call on your name;  
I will pay my vows to you, O God,  
in the presence of all the people.  
Precious in your sight  
is the death of your faithful ones.  
O Lord, I am your servant;  
I am your servant, the child of your serving girl.  
You have loosed my bonds.  
I will [selflessly] offer to you [my ardent] gratitude  
and call on your name, O Lord.  
I will pay my vows to you  
in the presence of all your people,  
in the courts of your [most holy place],  
in your midst in the city of peace.  
Praise you, the Lord!*

### \*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.

## Gospel Reading

Luke 24:13-35

Now on that same day two of them were going to a village called Emmaus, about seven miles from Jerusalem, and talking with each other about all these things that had happened. While they were talking and discussing, Jesus himself came near and went with them, but their eyes were kept from recognizing him. And he said to them, "What are you discussing with each other while you walk along?" They stood still, looking sad. Then one of them, whose name was Cleopas, answered him, "Are you the only stranger in Jerusalem who does not know the things that have taken place there in these days?" He asked them, "What things?" They replied, "The things about Jesus of Nazareth, who was a prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people, and how our chief priests and leaders handed him over to be condemned to death and crucified him. But we had hoped that he was the one to redeem Israel. Yes, and besides all this, it is now the third day since these things took place. Moreover, some women of our group astounded us. They were at the tomb early this morning, and when they did not find his body there they came back and told us that they had indeed seen a vision of angels who said that he was alive. Some of those who were with us went to the tomb and found it just as the women had said, but they did not see him." Then he said to them, "Oh, how foolish you are and how slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have declared! Was it not necessary that the Messiah should suffer these things and then enter into his glory?" Then beginning with Moses and all the prophets, he interpreted to them the things about himself in all the scriptures.

As they came near the village to which they were going, he walked ahead as if he were going on. But they urged him strongly, saying, "Stay with us, because it is almost evening and the day is now nearly over." So he went in to stay with them. When he was at the table with them, he took bread, blessed and broke it, and gave it to them. Then their eyes were opened, and they recognized him, and he vanished from their sight. They said to each other, "Were not our hearts burning within us while he was talking to us on the road, while he was opening the scriptures to us?" That same hour they got up and returned to Jerusalem, and they found the eleven and their companions gathered together. They were saying, "The Lord has risen indeed, and he has appeared to Simon!" Then they told what had happened on the road and how he had been made known to them in the breaking of the bread.

## Pastoral Meditation

"Christian Mysticism: Direct Experience of God"

Rev. Don Erickson

## Call to Prayer

Hear Us O Lord

Don Besig and Nancy Price

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 & the Prayer of Jesus

**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 *help us yield not to*/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

### Offertory

Erik Haeger

### Doxology

Praise God from whom all blessings flow; Praise God all creatures here be low; Praise  
 5 God for all that love has done: Cre - a - tor, Christ and Spi - rit, One. A - men!

### \*Prayer of Dedication (in unison)

Astounding God of the road and the table, you walk with us even when we don't recognize you. You speak, and our hearts burn within us. You break the bread, and our eyes are opened. Today, we bring these offerings as signs of our gratitude and hope. May our giving reflect the joy of being found, the wonder of Resurrection, and the call to share good news. Use these gifts to kindle faith, feed the hungry, and proclaim your presence in every Emmaus moment. We give because we've seen you—alive, loving, and leading us still. Amen.

### \*Closing Hymn

*Womb of Life, and Source of Being*

CH 14

### \*Poetry Prayer

*Descending Theology: Christ Human*

Mary Karr

*Such a short voyage for a god,  
 and you arrived in animal form so as not  
 to scorch us with your glory.  
 Your mask was an infant's head on a limp stalk,  
 sticky eyes smeared blind,  
 limbs rendered useless in swaddle.  
 You came among beasts  
 as one, came into our care or its lack, came crying  
 as we all do, because the human frame  
 is a crucifix, each skeleton borne a lifetime.  
 Any wanting soul lain  
 prostrate on a floor to receive a pouring of sunlight*

*might—if still enough,  
feel your cross buried in the flesh.  
One has only to surrender,  
you preached, open both arms to the inner,  
the ever-present hold,  
out-reaching every want. It's in the form  
embedded, love adamant as bone.  
In a breath, we can bloom and almost be you*

### **\*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**

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*Our Greeters today are Penny Guerin and Parrish Protheroe.  
Our Cantor today is Bobbi Giardina.  
Deb Richards is hosting Coffee Hour. Please join us in Fellowship Hall after worship!*

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### **THE WEEK AHEAD...**

<b>TODAY</b>	5:00 p.m. PFLAG Mansfield Tolland
<b>Monday, April 20</b>	6:30 p.m. Take Note! Rehearsal
<b>Tuesday, April 21</b>	10:00 a.m. Coffeetime with Rev Don (Price Chopper food court) 11:30 a.m.-5 p.m. Office Hours
<b>Wednesday, April 22</b>	1:00 p.m. Book Group 5:00 p.m. Meditation Group
<b>Thursday, April 23</b>	9:30 a.m. Quilt Group
<b>Saturday, April 25</b>	10:30 a.m. Memorial Service for Kimberlie Robitaille 12:30 p.m. Girl Scouts

**New First Hour Series Coming - starting on April 19th at 9:00 a.m.  
~ Peter & Paul and the Christian Revolution ~**

In this 4-week series we will view a documentary on the lives of Saints Peter and Paul as they spread the message of Jesus throughout the Roman Empire. It is part of the PBS "Empire" series that looked at people and passions that changed the world. Each week we will view a 30-minute segment of the video, followed by 30 minutes of discussion. (Video is closed-captioned.)

Ever since the Jesus Movement began, there's been an approach to the faith that focuses less on doctrinal correctness than on a direct connection to Christ. This approach came to be known as Christian Mysticism. While the teaching of Jesus remained central, for Christian mystics, it was all about Christ living in us and through us. In this 6-part series, Rev Don will examine Christian mysticism and what it might mean for us and our spiritual lives.

<b>April 19:</b>	Unmediated Experience of God
<b>April 26:</b>	Creation Revealing God
<b>May 3:</b>	Communion With God
<b>May 10:</b>	Unknowability of God
<b>May 17:</b>	Limitless Love of God
<b>May 24:</b>	Simplicity of Life in God

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**Church World Service Hygiene Kits**

During the month of April we will be collecting items for the Church World Service hygiene kits. There will be a collection basket under the table near our name tags in the sanctuary. If you would rather not shop you can give Sharon Foster-Chalecki a donation and she will shop for you. The items we need this year are:

- 12 Facecloths/washcloths
- 24 Nail clippers
- 50 Travel-size lotion (3.4 oz. or less which is fragrance free)
- 32 Travel-size shampoo (3.4 oz. or less)
- 37 Toothbrushes (in individual packaging)
- 35 Travel-size toothpaste (3.4 oz. or less, expiration date of 1 year)
- 24 Sturdy wide-tooth comb (6" minimum teeth)

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**Calling OFF Plastic Bags**



Please stop bringing in plastic bags for now. A big thank you to everyone who has contributed to the "Plarn" project. We have delivered so many mats to Project Hope that they have said they have enough for now, and we have started to deliver what we have left to a group in Vernon, which is now inspired to make their own mats for the Cornerstone program in Vernon. With your help, approximately 12,000 plastic bags have been kept out of the waste stream. If we start this project up again, we will let you know!!

## Creation Justice Starts with You

**Our church needs your help to Be Green!** You are essential to the success of First Church becoming a Creation Justice Church and “leveling up” to A Level Three Green Congregation. Here are the areas where we need ideas for possible programs over the coming year, either before or after church, or on a weeknight with a meal/fellowship:

- Does anyone know of someone who can speak about how indigenous communities approach creation care and how indigenous removal and cultural genocide are examples of environmental racism?
- We need suggestions for current videos on environmental topics that could be used for viewing and discussion.
- Does anyone know of an organization in our community that is working on environmental issues that would be willing to come to speak to the congregation on what they are doing and how we can help?
- Is anyone out there an expert on hydroponic gardening and would be willing to lead a “hands-on” workshop in creating a table-top hydroponic garden for participants?

As we move through this process and have specifics, there will plenty of opportunities to participate and help. If you have ideas about the above, please let Cheryl Chase know. It takes a village!

# ✨ All-Church Visioning Retreat ✨

Hosted by the Capital Campaign Committee



Think of this as a community brainstorm — a chance for all of us to come together, listen to one another, and imagine what's possible. We'll explore the gifts already present in our congregation: our heart, our people, and our property — and prayerfully consider how those gifts can meet the real needs of our community.

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## SAVE THE DATES

- **Friday, May 1st** | 6:00 p.m. – 9:00 p.m.
- **Saturday, May 2nd** | 9:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m. (lunch provided)

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## SPECIAL GUEST LEADER

**Jill White** *Mission Interpreter*

United Church of Christ Church Building & Loan Fund (CB&LF)

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## WHY ATTEND?

- **Share Your Voice:** Every perspective is needed to shape our path forward.
- **Dream Big:** Moving from where we are today toward exciting new possibilities.
- **Make an Impact:** Discover how our congregation can make a lasting difference.

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## IMPORTANT DETAILS

- **Childcare:** Provided on both days.
- **Sign-up:** Please **add your name to the sign-up sheet** today!

***Every voice matters. Every perspective is needed.***

# Welcome Spring!

## Books, Blooms & Bakery!

Saturday May 9, 9:00 AM - 12:00 PM

*(Rain or Shine!)*

### How You Can Help:



#### The “All Things Flat” Collection

Clear out your closets! We are collecting books, CDs, DVDs, LPs, games, and puzzles - and any other “flat” entertainment items - in good condition.

- **Drop off:** Any time in Fellowship Hall.



#### Garden Treasures

Donate bare-rooted plants, houseplants, decorative pots, garden tools, or outdoor decor.

- **Non-plant items:** Drop off any time in Fellowship Hall.
- **Live plants:** Drop off the week of the sale.



#### Homemade Goodies

Pull out your favorite recipes! We need all kinds of baked treats.

- **Requirements:** Items must be **labeled** and **priced**.
- **Drop off:** During the week of the sale or **by 8 AM** on Saturday morning.



#### Join the Team!

Whether you have one hour or the whole day, we need your hands!

- **Friday, May 8:** Help during the day to set up.
- **Saturday, May 9:** Final set-up, sales, clean-up.

Questions or ready to volunteer?

Contact Cheryl Chase at (860) 208-5269 or [seachase3860@yahoo.com](mailto:seachase3860@yahoo.com)