



**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. Don Erickson, Pastor
Erik Haeger, Organist
Olivia Russell, Worship Circle Coordinator
Mandy Boukus, Office Assistant

April 26, 2026 – Earth Day 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

Welcome and Announcements

Prelude

Erik Haeger

Call to Worship

Paul Tanner

Church, where do you see God?

**We see God in the wide reach of sky,
in the towering height of mountains,
in the depths of the sea,
and in the vividness of flowers.**

Church, where else do you see God?

**We see God in early morning sunrises,
in the quiet after a snow,
in the reaching of rivers and tributaries,
and in the stars that light the night.**

And in your seeing, what do you know?

**We know that God is here,
and we know that God is good.
Let us worship the God of creation!**

Let us worship our with-us God.

Prayer of Confession

**Creator God,
We have lost our way.**

In the beginning,
humanity was instructed to care for creation.
However, in pursuit of our own wealth and efficiency,

we have done the opposite and our earth suffers.

Forgive us, O God

Bring us back to the garden.

Fill our hearts with compassion for your world.

and help us to see your fingerprints

in every glimpse of the natural world.

With hope in our hearts for a better day, we pray:

Amen.

Words of Forgiveness

Friends, when it comes to creation care, we have a lot to confess.

But even here, even now, God's grace for us is like a mighty rushing stream.

So trusting in God's unrelenting mercy, may we be inspired to action.

Join me in proclaiming these words of forgiveness:

Just as flowers that bloom after the fire, there is nothing that God cannot redeem.

We are known. We are loved. We are made new.

So may we roll up our sleeves and get our hands dirty

with the work of justice,

with the work of compassion,

with the work of mercy.

Thanks be to God for this new day!

Alleluia! Amen.

*Opening Hymn

Lord, Make Us Servants of Your Peace

bulletin p. 5

Prayer for Illumination

Hebrew Scripture

Psalm 19:1-4

Paul Tanner

*The heavens are telling the glory of God,
and the firmament proclaims his handiwork.*

*Day to day pours forth speech,
and night to night declares knowledge.*

*There is no speech, nor are there words;
their voice is not heard;*

*yet their voice goes out through all the earth
and their words to the end of the world.*

*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

Matthew 6:25-34

“Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink, or about your body, what you will wear. Is not life more than food and the body more than clothing? Look at the birds of the air: they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they? And which of you by worrying can add a single hour to your span of life? And why do you worry about clothing? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they neither toil nor spin, yet I tell you, even Solomon in all his glory was not clothed like one of these. But if God so clothes the grass of the field, which is alive today and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, will he not much more clothe you—you of little faith? Therefore do not worry, saying, ‘What will we eat?’ or ‘What will we drink?’ or ‘What will we wear?’ For it is the gentiles who seek all these things, and indeed your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things. But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.

“So do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will bring worries of its own. Today’s trouble is enough for today.

Pastoral Meditation

“Christian Mysticism: Francis & Clare of Assisi”

Rev. Don Erickson

Call to Sharing and Prayer

Hear Us O Lord

Don Besig and Nancy Price

9 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.

Invitation to Generosity and Prayer

Laurel Thurman

I live somewhere east of Eden.

It is beautiful, but not complete.

**There are children that play and laugh and sing,
music that moves me, sunsets that undo me.**

The spring is green, the rain is sweet,
but this is not where we’re meant to be.

And we know that, but we’re quick to forget,
because well-intentioned people can always slip.

But I don’t want to forget. I don’t want to think
that daisies in the sidewalk are the same as a garden.

I don’t want to believe
a cup of tap water’s the same as the ocean.

I don’t want to imagine
that this is the way,
that racism and climate change are just part of the day.

**I don’t want to forget that this somewhere-east-of-Eden
home that we’ve built
is not the place we are meant to be.**

It’s not the dream that we’re meant to dream.

So every night as I fall asleep,
I pray, “God wake me up”—

a restoration plea.

**“Don’t let me confuse a little bit of rain
for your downpour of grace,**

or a little bit of progress
for the end of the race.”

**And until heaven’s on earth,
that’s what I’ll pray.**

For I live somewhere east of Eden.

Don’t let me forget.

Offertory

Erik Haeger

Prayers of the People

Prayer of Gratitude

Cheryl Chase

***Closing Hymn**

Canticle of the Sun

bulletin p. 6

***Closing Prayer**

***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

Portions of this morning’s service were written by the Sanctified Art creative group for their Special Sundays liturgy, art, and poetry resource. Permission for use has been granted by A Sanctified Art LLC | sanctifiedart.org

Our Greeters today are John and Katie Clauson.

Our Cantor today is Laurel Thurman.

Frank Ball and Eleanor Joyce are hosting Coffee Hour. Please join us in Fellowship Hall after worship!

THE WEEK AHEAD...

TODAY

11:30 a.m. Ministry of Spiritual Life meeting

11:30 a.m. Ministry of Caring meeting

Monday, April 27

6:30 p.m. Take Note! Rehearsal

Wednesday, April 29

1:00 p.m. Book Group

5:00 p.m. Meditation Group

Friday, May 1

6 - 9 p.m. Visioning Retreat

Saturday, May 2

9 a.m. – 3 p.m. Visioning Retreat

Lord, Make us Servants of Your Peace

Lord, make us ser - vants of Your peace:
 Where all is doubt, may we sow faith;
 Je - sus, our Lord, may we not seek
 May we not look for love's re - turn,
 Dy - ing, we live, and are re - born

where there is hate, may we sow love;
 where all is gloom, may we sow hope;
 to be con - soled, but to con - sole;
 but to seek love un - self - ish - ly,
 through death's dark night to end - less day:

where there is hurt, may we for - give;
 where all is night, may we sow light;
 nor look to un - der - stand - ing hearts,
 for in our giv - ing we re - ceive,
 Lord, make us ser - vants of Your peace.

where there is strife, may we make one.
 where all is tears, may we sow joy.
 but look for hearts to un - der - stand.
 and in for - giv - ing are for - giv'n.
 to wake at last in hea - ven's light.

WORDS: James Quinn, 1919-2010; based on prayer attr. Francis of Assisi, 1182-1226

© 1994 James Quinn, SJ. Published by OCP. All rights reserved. Used with permission.

MUSIC: English melody; adapt. Hal Hopson;

© 1972 Hope Publishing Company, www.hopepublishing.com. All rights reserved. Used by permission.

GIFT OF LOVE, S.M.

Canticle of the Sun

1. My Lord be prais'd by bro - ther sun; thru skies his course doth
 2. My Lord be prais'd by sis - ter moon and all the stars that
 3. By sis - ter wa - ter be thou bless'd, most hum - ble, use - ful,
 4. By mo - ther earth my Lord be prais'd; mov'd by thee she hath
 5. My Lord be prais'd by those who prove with grace and by their

run, and shines in lum - in - ous splen - dor; with
 loom, ig - ni - ting light a - cross the heav'ns. Let
 pure; and be ex - toll'd by bro - ther fire; play -
 raised what for our life and breath a must. Sus -
 love, nor shrink from hard - ships or from trials. Con -

bril - liance he doth fill the day and shows thy bound-less sway.
 wind and air and cloud and calm and cli - mates sing the psalm.
 ful is he, ro - bust and bright, and strong to fuel the night.
 tain'd by thee, through ev' - ry hour, with grain, fruit, herb, and flower.
 tent, who peace - a - bly en - dure; with thee, re - ward is sure.

6. For death our sibling, prais-ed be,
 from whom no one is free.
 Have mercy on those unprepared!
 But blest be they who do they will
 and follow thy way still.

7. Most high, omnipotent, good Lord,
 to thee be praise outpoured,
 and blessing vast and limitless.
 Let creatures all give thanks to thee,
 and live humility.

TEXT: St. Francis of Assissi, adapted
 MUSIC: Frederick Charles Maker, 1887

REST
 8.6.8.8.6
 (Alternate Tune: REPTON)

DON'T FORGET!

All-Church Visioning Retreat

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

A chance for all of us to come together, listen to one another, and imagine what's possible!

Spring Sermon Series

Mysticism: An Ancient Way Made New

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.

April 19: Unmediated Experience of God

April 26: Creation Revealing God

May 3: Communion With God

May 10: Unknowability of God

May 17: Limitless Love of God

May 24: Simplicity of Life in God

First Hour Series, Sundays at 9:00 a.m.

~ Peter & Paul and the Christian Revolution ~

In this 4-week series (April 19-May 10) 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.)

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
- 16 Nail clippers
- 47 Travel-size lotion (3.4 oz. or less which is fragrance free)
- 29 Travel-size shampoo (3.4 oz. or less)
- 18 Toothbrushes (in individual packaging)
- 26 Travel-size toothpaste (3.4 oz. or less, expiration date of 1 year)
- 16 Sturdy wide-tooth comb (6" minimum teeth)



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