



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

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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

May 3, 2026 – Fifth 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

Jo-Ann Wunschel

Leader: In the words of the songwriter, "hello, darkness my old friend,

All: I've come to talk to you again... Within the sound of silence."

Let us leave behind our heady concepts, our sensory images, and our desperate need for certainty.

Let us enter the divine darkness where God resides beyond all attachments of the mind.

We seek not to know *about* God, but to be united with the God who is beyond knowing.

Come away from the noise of the world, into the silence that is more eloquent than words.

We enter the "brilliant darkness" of the Holy Mystery.

Beyond all light, beyond all darkness, beyond all names,

The Goodness of God calls us to rest in divine bliss – to stand outside ourselves and be lost in Love.

Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord of Sabbath Rest, the whole earth is full of Your glory.

Let us worship the One who is beyond all things and within all things.

We come to worship in spirit and in silence. Amen.

Silent Confession & Words of Grace

Divine righteousness redeems us,
Meets us where we are and brings us to the reality of God,
not permitting us to fall to nothingness.

**God redeems us from pain, weakness, inadequacy.
from everything that has gone astray in us.**

Redemption is like a loving father making up for what is missing and overlooking any slack.

**Redemption raises us up and sets us firmly where we ought to be,
recovering lost virtue, bringing back stability and peace, perfecting and liberating
all.**

***Opening Hymn**

Immortal, Invisible, God Only Wise

CH 66

Prayer for Illumination

Hebrew Scripture

Psalms 97:1-2, 6-8, 11-12

Jo-Ann Wunschel

*You, O Lord, are sovereign! Let the earth rejoice;
let the many coastlands be glad!
Clouds and thick darkness are all around you;
righteousness and justice are the foundation of your rule.*

*The heavens proclaim your righteousness,
and all the peoples behold your glory.
All servants of images are put to shame,
those who make their boast in worthless idols;
all gods bow down before you.
Zion hears and is glad,
and the towns of Judah rejoice
because of your just ways, O God.
For you, O Lord, are most high over all the earth;
you are exalted far above all gods.*

*Light and joy dawn on the just.
And the just rejoice in you,
and give thanks to your holy name!*

***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

John 14:1-10

“Do not let your hearts be troubled. Believe in God; believe also in me. ² In my Father’s house there are many dwelling places. If it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you? ³ And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself, so that where I am, there you may be also. ⁴ And you know the way to the place where I am going.” ⁵ Thomas said to him, “Lord, we do not know where you are going. How can we know the way?” ⁶ Jesus said to him, “I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. ⁷ If you know me, you will know my Father also. From now on you do know him and have seen him.”

⁸ Philip said to him, “Lord, show us the Father, and we will be satisfied.” ⁹ Jesus said to him, “Have I been with you all this time, Philip, and you still do not know me? Whoever has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say, ‘Show us the Father?’ ¹⁰ Do you not believe that I am in the Father and the Father is in me? The words that I say to you I do not speak on my own, but the Father who dwells in me does his works.

Pastoral Meditation

“Christian Mysticism: Pseudo-Dionysius”

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.

9 Help us, O Lord, to be o - pen to your word, and teach us to put our trust in you.

Prayers of the People

Invitation to Generosity

Offertory

*Doxology

Praise God from whom all bless - ings flow; Praise God all crea - tures 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)

Laurel Thurman

Gracious Lord, we believe in the gift of your love. We believe in your infinite love's way, truth, and life. We offer these gifts in hope that your work will flourish and bless all creation. Use them to proclaim your love in every place. In Christ's holy name, we pray. Amen.

Invitation to the Table

Communion Litany

"The Lord Jesus, on the night he was betrayed, took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and said, "This is my body broken for you" (distribute bread)

One: O God, just as this broken loaf was scattered over the hill as grain, and, having been gathered together, became one; in like fashion, may your church be gathered together from the ends of the earth into your kingdom.

All: *Because yours is the glory and the power through Jesus Christ forever.*

This is God's restoration for you. (*partake*)

"In the same way, after supper he took the cup, saying, "This cup is the lifeblood of the new covenant, lifeblood poured out for you." (distribute juice)

One: O God, just as this juice comes from a gathering of grapes grown on a vine rooted deep, in like fashion, may we be rooted in the Vine that is Christ, and bear good fruit together as we look to your kingdom.

All: *Because yours is the glory and the power through Jesus Christ forever.*

"This is God's joy for you." (*partake*)

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.**

***Closing Hymn**

God's Love Made Visible

CH 171

***Poetry**

This World is not Conclusion

Emily Dickinson

*This World is not Conclusion.
A Species stands beyond -
Invisible, as Music -
But positive, as Sound -
It beckons, and it baffles -
Philosophy, don't know -
And through a Riddle, at the last -
Sagacity, must go -
To guess it, puzzles scholars -
To gain it, Men have borne
Contempt of Generations
And Crucifixion, shown -
Faith slips - and laughs, and rallies -
Blushes, if any see -
Plucks at a twig of Evidence -
And asks a Vane, the way -
Much Gesture, from the Pulpit -
Strong Hallelujahs roll -
Narcotics cannot still the Tooth
That nibbles at the soul -*

***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

Our Greeter today is Sharon Foster-Chalecki.
Our Cantor is Laurel Thurman.
Our Communion Servers are David Darnell, Gary Cote, Jo-Ann Wunschel, Ray LaPointe
Coffee Hour is hosted by David Darnell and Gary Cote.
Please join us in Fellowship Hall after worship!

About Communion at First Church

At the Last Supper, Jesus turned no one away and imposed no restrictions on receiving the bread and the cup. Neither do we here at the First Church of Christ in Mansfield. Christ's table is open to all, and we extend an extravagant welcome to you to join us. The communion elements will be brought to the pews by servers. Plates containing pieces of bread will be distributed first, followed by trays containing individual cups of grape juice. Each time, worshipers are asked to hold the elements until all have been served and an invitation to partake is spoken from the communion table. For those who wish to know, the cup contains non-alcoholic grape juice and the bread is gluten-free.

New Monthly Offering

Beginning today, an envelope labeled **Blessing Box** will be included in your bulletin on Communion Sundays (every first Sunday of the month.) You may place donations in this envelope and drop it into the offering plate during worship. Every contribution goes directly toward purchasing food for our pantry.

Spring Sermon Series Mysticism: An Ancient Way Made New

Rev Don will examine Christian mysticism and what it might mean for us and our spiritual lives.

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. Each week we will view a 30-minute segment of the video, followed by 30 minutes of discussion.

THE WEEK AHEAD...

- Monday, May 4** 6:30 p.m. Take Note! Rehearsal
- Tuesday, May 5** 10:30 a.m. Monthly service at Mansfield Center for Nursing & Rehabilitation
- Wednesday, May 6** 1:00 p.m. Book Group
5:00 p.m. Meditation Group
- Thursday, May 7** 9:30 a.m. Sewing & Service
- Friday, May 8** 9:00 a.m. (all day) Set-up for Welcome Spring! Sale
- Saturday, May 9** 9 a.m. to noon - Welcome Spring! Sale
12:30 p.m. Girl Scouts

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