



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

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Ministers: All the Members of the Church

Erik Haeger, Organist

Olivia Russell, Worship Circle Coordinator

Mandy Boukus, Office Assistant

**July 26, 2026 ~ The Ninth Sunday after Pentecost**

*Today's Worship Leader: Rev. Dr. Susan J. Foster*

**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!*

*Our worship service is made available digitally for those who cannot attend in person. Footage from this service may also be used in marketing materials for our community. If you do not wish to have your likeness recorded, streamed, or photographed please inform a Greeter who can seat you appropriately.*

**Playing the Chimes**

**Welcome and Announcements**

**Prelude**

*Andante/Gigue*

G.P. Telemann

Laurel Thurman, violin and Cheryl Chase, viola

**Call to Worship** (Inspired by Psalm 105, Romans 8)

**Leader:** Give thanks to God, for God is good.

**People:** **God's goodness and mercy are sure.**

**Leader:** Sing to the Spirit, for the Spirit is here. The Spirit knows the ache for connection deep within us.

**People:** **We come ready to welcome one another, to listen deeply, and to seek God's vision.**

**Leader:** Praise Christ Jesus, who loves us with a love that is boundless and true.

**All:** **Give thanks to God, and sing God's praise, as we worship together this day.**

**\*Opening Hymn**

*Jesus Calls Us O'er the Tumult*

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## Prayer for Transformation and New Life

**God of mystery and majesty, we want to understand your ways, but we seldom can. Help us accept the unfathomable truth of your love. Help us embrace the mystery of your wisdom. Grant us patience when your promises seem delayed, and grant us perseverance when we are tempted to turn away in despair. Most of all, reveal your love to us, that we may truly trust this truth— that nothing can separate us from your love, your mercy, and your grace. In hope and faith, we pray. Amen.**

(Silence)

## Assurance of Grace

**Leader:** My friends, these words are faithful and true, even when we aren't really sure: Nothing— absolutely nothing in all of creation, in all of our histories, in all of our actions, and in all of our world— can separate us from God's love in Christ Jesus our Lord.

**People: Thanks be to God!**

**\*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.

## Hebrew Scripture

## Psalm 128

**A song of ascents.**

- 1 Happy is everyone who fears the Lord,  
who walks in his ways.
- 2 You shall eat the fruit of the labor of your hands;  
you shall be happy, and it shall go well with you.
- 3 Your wife will be like a fruitful vine  
within your house;

your children will be like olive shoots  
 around your table.  
 4 Thus shall the man be blessed  
 who fears the Lord.  
 5 The Lord bless you from Zion.  
 May you see the prosperity of Jerusalem  
 all the days of your life.  
 6 May you see your children's children.  
 Peace be upon Israel!

## Gospel Reading Matthew 14: 23-32

<sup>23</sup> And after he had dismissed the crowds, he went up the mountain by himself to pray. When evening came, he was there alone, <sup>24</sup> but by this time the boat, battered by the waves, was far from the land,<sup>[a]</sup> for the wind was against them. <sup>25</sup> And early in the morning he came walking toward them on the sea. <sup>26</sup> But when the disciples saw him walking on the sea, they were terrified, saying, "It is a ghost!" And they cried out in fear. <sup>27</sup> But immediately Jesus spoke to them and said, "Take heart, it is I; do not be afraid."  
<sup>28</sup> Peter answered him, "Lord, if it is you, command me to come to you on the water." <sup>29</sup> He said, "Come." So Peter got out of the boat, started walking on the water, and came toward Jesus. <sup>30</sup> But when he noticed the strong wind, he became frightened, and, beginning to sink, he cried out, "Lord, save me!" <sup>31</sup> Jesus immediately reached out his hand and caught him, saying to him, "You of little faith, why did you doubt?" <sup>32</sup> When they got into the boat, the wind ceased.

## Reflection

*Getting out of the Boat*

The Rev. Susan J. Foster

## 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.

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

## Prayers of the People

### Pastoral Prayer

### 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**

Gracious and loving God, thank You for being our refuge in every storm. We know that everything we have is a gift from Your abundant hand. As we offer these tithes and offerings, we pray that You will multiply them. Strengthen our faith, cast out our doubts, and help us to be a steady, generous presence in a turbulent world. May our gifts walk on the water of Your love, bringing healing and hope to all those in need. In the name of Christ, we pray. Amen.

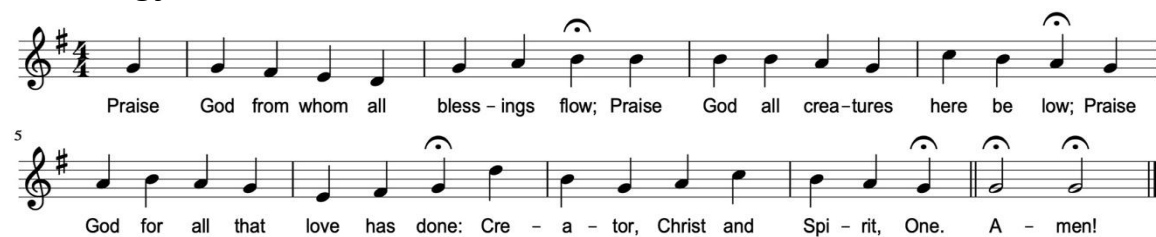
### **Offertory**

*Gavotte*

G.P. Telemann

Laurel Thurman, Violin, Cheryl Chase, Viola

### **\*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)**

**Miraculous God, bless these gifts with your miraculous love. Bless our offerings with the mystery of an abundance that expands and grows, so that all may know the truth of your love— a love that cannot be stopped no matter what. Bless us to bring forth your miraculous love in all that we say and do. Amen.**

### **\*Closing Hymn**

*Here I am, Lord*

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### **\*Benediction**

### **\*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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*Call to Worship, Prayer for Transformation and Assurance of Grace and Prayer of Dedication  
are credited to Ministry Matters*

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The Children's Worship Circle are our Greeters today.  
Our Digital Ministers are Robert Johnson and Penny Guerin.

Our Cantor is Laurel Thurman.

Coffee Hour is hosted by Olivia Russell and the Children's Worship Circle.

***Please join us in Fellowship Hall after worship!***

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### **About our visiting minister:**

Rev. Dr. Susan J. Foster (Sue) is a writer, preacher, retreat leader, counselor, wife, mother, volunteer chaplain, daughter, sister, friend. Sue graduated from Lancaster Theological Seminary (MDiv) and Hartford International Seminary (DMin). Her doctoral thesis focused on theologies of hospitality and how to live out the inclusive Spirit of our welcoming God. After serving the East Woodstock Congregational Church (UCC) for 36 years, Sue has stepped away from active parish ministry and is enjoying exploring retirement.

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### **THE WEEK AHEAD**

**Sunday, July 26**                      10:15 a.m. Worship & Worship Circle

**Thursday, July 30**                      9:30 a.m. Quilt Group

**Saturday, August 1**                      1:00 p.m. Girl Scouts

### **Cleaning Crew Schedule**

The crew from Servitium will conduct their weekly cleaning on Fridays from 2:30-4:30 pm. If you have a late afternoon event scheduled for a Friday, please be in touch with Jean Bell so she can alert the cleaners.

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### **Community Giving during July - Natchaug Hospital**

- T-shirts (long or short sleeves)
- Sweatshirts (crewneck; no hoods or strings)
- Sweatpants

These can be any size, from small to XXL.

Please leave your contributions in the basket at the front of the Sanctuary, beneath the information table near the Brown's Road entrance.

**And many thanks to all the folks who contributed to last week's Community Giving Event. Over one thousand diapers were collected!!**

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### **Blessing Box**

Our pantry on Brown's Road continues to serve so many of our neighbors in need, so we continue to seek your help to maintain a steady flow of supplies.

The most useful items are easy-prep, non-perishable staples: peanut butter, canned proteins (tuna, chicken, spam), pasta & sauce, canned veggies/fruit, canned soup/chili, canned beans, small breakfast cereals, macaroni & cheese, ramen noodles, rice bowls/rice dinners, and shelf-stable milk. Pop-top cans are preferred for ease of use. Single serving items like tuna pouches or small packages of crackers are ideal for those without cooking facilities.

Please leave items inside the Brown's Road entrance or in the plastic bin on the bench outside the Brown's Road door.

If you prefer, you can make a monetary contribution, and our Ministry of Caring will purchase supplies on your behalf. Be sure to indicate that your donation is for the Blessing Box.