



**The 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
Erik Haeger, Organist
Olivia Russell, Worship Circle Coordinator
Mandy Boukus, Office Assistant

August 16, 2026 ~ Twelfth Sunday after Pentecost

Today's Worship Leader: Rev. Chuck Ericson

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 / Centering in the Spirit Ray LaPointe

One: How very good and pleasant it is when we gather here together in unity!

All: For the unity we share with one another makes almost anything possible.

One: The unity we share together provides support when we face challenges and losses...

All: ...and also empowers us to change people's lives here in our local community and beyond.

One: The unity we share with one another enables each of us to grow deeper in faith...

All: ...and also to joyfully share our faith with our children, youth, and all who come here seeking God's Spirit and new life.

One: Yes, how very good and pleasant it is when we gather together in unity!

All: In unity, then, let us worship God in spirit, in word, in prayer and in song!

***Opening Hymn** *Here, O Lord, Your Servants Gather* CH278

Prayer for Transformation and New Life (unison)

Gracious God, we gather here each week with joyful expectation. We look forward to greeting one another as beloved siblings in Christ. We look forward to sharing our celebrations and concerns in prayer...feeling our souls inspired by moving

melodies and welcome words of faith...being renewed and readied to resume serving beyond the walls of this sanctuary, following the One who is the Way and the Truth and the Life. Fill us then, we pray, with your Spirit that trans-forms our weariness into newfound strength, our timidity into courage, and our worries about the past into bold plans for the future. In Jesus' Name. AMEN

[followed by a brief time of silence]

Words of Grace

Friends, God's grace is like the dew on the mountains of Zion, dropping gently upon our hearts and yielding refreshment and nourishment. God's grace overflows with blessings that shower upon us in our times of weakness and regret, and reveals to us the path of hope, redemption and new life. The morning dew of God's grace is abundant and everlasting and all around us. Lift up your eyes...hold out your hands...and receive it.

All: 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
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 was in the be-ginning, is
end, A - men. World with-out e - nd, world with-out end, A - men.

now and ev - er shall be, A - men World with-out men!

Hebrew Scripture

Genesis 45:1-15 (NRSV)

45 Then Joseph could no longer control himself before all those who stood by him, and he cried out, "Send everyone away from me." So no one stayed with him when Joseph made himself known to his brothers. **2** And he wept so loudly that the Egyptians heard it, and the household of Pharaoh heard it. **3** Joseph said to his brothers, "I am Joseph. Is my father still alive?" But his brothers could not answer him, so dismayed were they at his presence.

4 Then Joseph said to his brothers, "Come closer to me." And they came closer. He said, "I am your brother, Joseph, whom you sold into Egypt. **5** And now do not be distressed or angry with yourselves because you sold me here, for God sent me before you to preserve life. **6** For the famine has been in the land these two years, and there are five more years in which there will be neither plowing nor harvest. **7** God sent me before you to preserve for you a remnant

on earth and to keep alive for you many survivors. **8** So it was not you who sent me here but God; he has made me a father to Pharaoh and lord of all his house and ruler over all the land of Egypt. **9** Hurry and go up to my father and say to him, 'Thus says your son Joseph, God has made me lord of all Egypt; come down to me; do not delay. **10** You shall settle in the land of Goshen, and you shall be near me, you and your children and your children's children, as well as your flocks, your herds, and all that you have. **11** I will provide for you there, since there are five more years of famine to come, so that you and your household and all that you have will not come to poverty. **12** And now your eyes and the eyes of my brother Benjamin see that it is my own mouth that speaks to you. **13** You must tell my father how greatly I am honored in Egypt and all that you have seen. Hurry and bring my father down here." **14** Then he fell upon his brother Benjamin's neck and wept, while Benjamin wept upon his neck. **15** And he kissed all his brothers and wept upon them, and after that his brothers talked with him.

Gospel

Matthew 15:21-28 (NRSV)

21 Jesus left that place and went away to the district of Tyre and Sidon. **22** Just then a Canaanite woman from that region came out and started shouting, "Have mercy on me, Lord, Son of David; my daughter is tormented by a demon." **23** But he did not answer her at all. And his disciples came and urged him, saying, "Send her away, for she keeps shouting after us." **24** He answered, "I was sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel." **25** But she came and knelt before him, saying, "Lord, help me." **26** He answered, "It is not fair to take the children's food and throw it to the dogs." **27** She said, "Yes, Lord, yet even the dogs eat the crumbs that fall from their masters' table." **28** Then Jesus answered her, "Woman, great is your faith! Let it be done for you as you wish." And her daughter was healed from that moment.

Reflection

"That's Bad, No That's Good"

Rev. Chuck Ericson

Hymn

My Soul Cries Out with a Joyful Shout
(Canticle of the Turning)

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Call to Prayer

Hear Us O Lord

Don Besig and Nancy Price



Prayers of the People and the Prayer of Jesus

You are invited to pray in whatever language is most comfortable for you. The following examples are offered:

**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 / Help us yield not to temptation,
but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom,
and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.**

Invitation to Generosity

Things have not changed all that much from the days of Joseph and his brothers. Famines still exist: famines of sufficient food, famines of justice, famines of tolerance and acceptance, famines of livable income and shelter. Our faith teaches us to not look away when we encounter such famines, but to do all we can to overcome them. Through our church's outreach ministries and missions, we work together as followers of Jesus to make such a difference in people's lives. So, like Joseph, may our offerings today and always be given without judgment or restraint, only compassion and mercy, always joy-full and generous. The morning offering will now be received.

Offertory

Erik Haeger

***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 and Thanksgiving**

Ever-present and Eternally Watchful God, we ask you to receive and bless our offerings that come to you in many forms and at many times. Just as your guiding Spirit brought Joseph and his brothers together when hope was waning, may your guiding Spirit also bring us together with those who need hope today. May our giving, and the ministries that are supported by our gifts, provide nourishment, shelter, healing, justice and good news — wherever your Spirit leads. Amen.

***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

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.

About our Guest Minister

We welcome the Rev. Chuck Ericson as today's worship leader. Pastor Chuck is no stranger to First Church, having served as our Bridge Minister in 2024 and then as our Intentional Interim Minister in 2025. A Connecticut native, he is a retired pastor in the United Church of Christ, holding standing in the Tolland Association. He also served as the Interim Regional Minister for our Windham Association from 2017-2020 following a 32-year pastorate at the Bolton Congregational Church UCC. Welcome back, Pastor Chuck!

Our Greeter today is Sharon Foster-Chalecki.

Our Cantor is Laurel Thurman.

Our Digital Ministry is Deb Hubbell.

Coffee Hour is hosted by Laurel Thurman, Cheryl Chase.

Please join us in Fellowship Hall after worship!

THE WEEK AHEAD

Sunday, August 16

5:00 pm PFLAG of Mansfield Tolland

Thursday, August 20

6:00 pm Strategic Planning

Welcoming Our New Bridge Minister, Rev. Sue Foster!

The Governing Board is thrilled to announce that the Rev. Dr. Sue Foster has accepted our invitation to serve as our Bridge Minister starting Sunday, September 13. Many of you already know Sue from her wonderful pulpit supply leadership over the last three weeks. She will lead our weekly Sunday worship through December 20 (with two pre-scheduled exceptions on September 20 and October 18). Please join us in giving Pastor Sue a warm official welcome on September 13!

Worship Leaders in the coming weeks:

August 16	Rev. Chuck Ericson
August 23	Bobbi Giardina
August 30	Laurel Thurman
September 6	Rev. Chuck Ericson



Ministry Profile: The Ministry of Caring

Putting our Faith into Action with Church World Service

First Church is dedicated to extending hope and comfort to communities facing difficult times. This week, we are highlighting the impactful work of our **Ministry of Caring** and our congregation's active participation in **Church World Service (CWS)**.

Our community has set a goal to make and fill **50 Kids Kits** (formerly known as School Kits) and **50 Hygiene Kits** this year. Inside every kit are simple, everyday items that bring essential comfort, encouragement, and a powerful reminder that someone cares. Though assembling a kit may seem like a small act, it leaves a lasting impact on someone's life.

Where Do These Kits Go?

These kits journey directly from our local community to vulnerable communities around the world. Your ongoing generosity keeps hope moving exactly where it is needed most.

Our efforts join a massive global network of compassion. In 2025 alone, Church World Service received and distributed a total of:

- **39,300 Kids Kits**
- **71,760 Hygiene Kits**

These supplies were provided entirely by faith communities just like ours, stepping up to help families recover and rebuild.

How You Can Help: This Year's Donation List

To meet our target of **50 Kids Kits**, we need to gather specific supplies. Please check the shopping list below and donate what you can. A collection bin is located at the front of the sanctuary, near the Brown's Road door.

- **9** Packages of colored pencils (12 per package)
- **127** #2 unsharpened pencils
- **32** 12-inch rulers (with both inches and centimeters marked)
- **27** 70-page spiral-bound notebooks
- **27** Two-pocket folders
- **18** Packages of crayons (24 per package)
- **20** Glue sticks
- **29** Scissors (with blunt points)
- **21** Pencil sharpeners

Thank you for your open hearts and continued support of the Ministry of Caring. Together, we can make a world of difference for children and families facing adversity.



My Soul Cries Out with a Joyful Shout

Canticle of the Turning



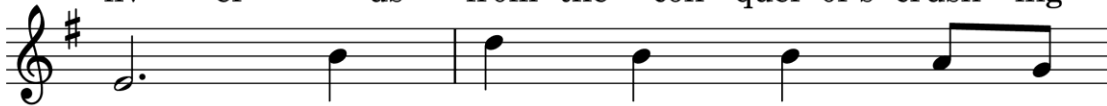
1 My soul cries out with a joy - ful shout that the
 2 Though I am small, my God, my all, you
 3 From the halls of power to the for-tress tower, not a
 4 Though the na - tions rage from age to age, we re-



God of my heart is great, and my spir-it sings of the
 work great things in me, and your mer-cy will last from the
 stone will be left on stone. Let the king be - ware for your
 mem-ber who holds us fast: God's mer-cy must de -



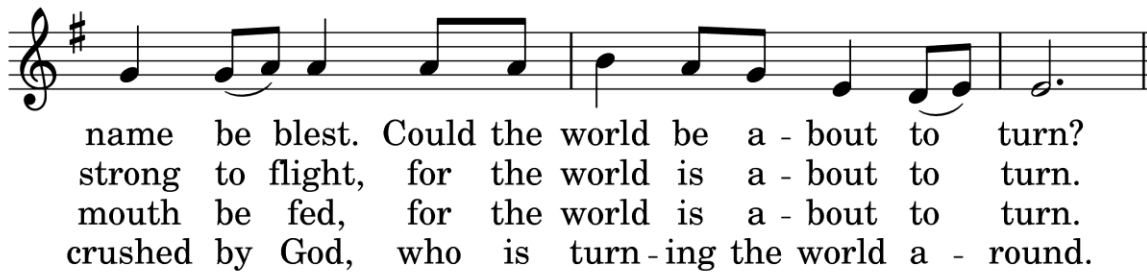
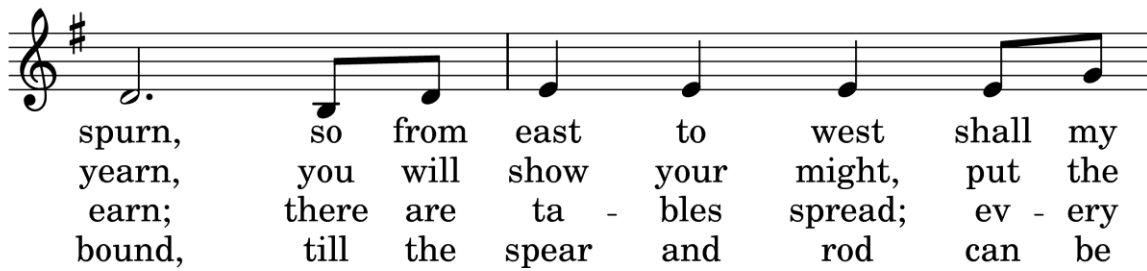
won - drous things that you bring to the ones who
 depths of the past to the end of the age to
 jus - tice tears ev - ery ty - rant from his
 liv - er us from the con - quer-or's crush - ing



wait. You fixed your sight on your
 be. Your ver - y name puts the
 throne. The hun - gry poor shall
 grasp. This sav - ing word that our



ser - vant's plight, and my weak - ness you did not
 proud to shame, and to those who would for you
 weep no more, for the food they can nev - er
 fore - bears heard is the prom - ise which holds us

*Refrain*