



**The 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

August 23, 2026 ~ Children's Sunday

Today's Worship Leader: Bobbi Giardina

Welcome to Children's Sunday!

*Today, we celebrate our children as vital members of our church family.
Our young people will actively lead and participate throughout the service, sharing special
liturgical components they practice each week in their Worship Circle.
We are blessed to learn from their leadership today.*

And 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

Children of First Church

Leader: God calls us together from many places and paths.

People: Each of us carries a gift to share.

Leader: Some bring the gift of a joyful song.

People: Some bring a quiet, listening heart.

Leader: Some bring hands that work for healing.

People: Some bring a fresh, hopeful vision.

Leader: No gift is too small, and no person is left out.

People: All are welcome at this table and in this place.

Leader: Let us worship God together, bringing our whole selves into the circle.

People: Let us praise the Spirit who moves among us!

Rose/Thorn/Acorn

Olivia Russell & Children of First Church

Prayer for Transformation and New Life (unison)

Gracious God, you have knit us together into one body, giving each of us unique gifts to share with the world. Yet we admit that we often hide our light away, or fail to appreciate the beauty and gifts of those around us. We acknowledge the times we compare ourselves to others. We recognize that we sometimes close our hearts to perspectives that challenge us, breaking the unity you desire for your people. Heal our insecurity, open our eyes to the wealth of grace in our neighbors, and embolden us to offer our whole selves to our community and to your service.

a brief time of silence follows

Words of Grace

Hear the good news from the Apostle Paul: We have gifts that differ according to the grace God has given to us. Your unique gifts are holy and pleasing to God, and you belong fully to this community. You are a vital, indispensable part of the body of Christ, and God does not expect you to be anyone other than who you were created to be. Rest secure in that grace, and let us use our differing gifts to serve one another with generosity and cheerfulness.

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!

Scripture Reading

Romans 12:1-8 (NRSV)

Alex Hewes

I appeal to you therefore, brothers and sisters, on the basis of God's mercy, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your reasonable act of worship. Do not be conformed to this age, but be transformed by the renewing of the

mind, so that you may discern what is the will of God—what is good and acceptable and perfect. For by the grace given to me I say to everyone among you not to think of yourself more highly than you ought to think, but to think with sober judgment, each according to the measure of faith that God has assigned. For as in one body we have many members, and not all the members have the same function, so we, who are many, are one body in Christ, and individually we are members one of another. We have gifts that differ according to the grace given to us: prophecy, in proportion to faith; ministry, in ministering; the teacher, in teaching; the encourager, in encouragement; the giver, in sincerity; the leader, in diligence; the compassionate, in cheerfulness.

Reflection

Frederick

Bobbi Giardina

Call to Prayer

Hear Us O Lord

Don Besig and Nancy Price



Prayers of the People

The Prayer of Jesus

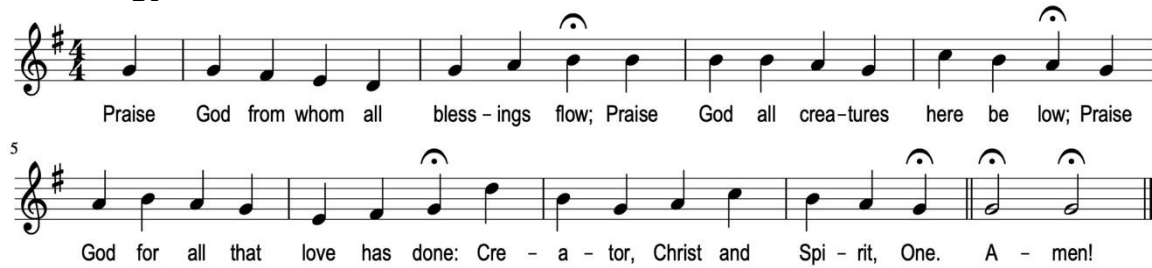
The children will first recite the Lord's Prayer that they have been studying and learning. You will then be invited to pray this prayer in whatever language is most comfortable for you. The following examples are offered:

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

Generous God, you have poured out your grace upon us, giving us a beautiful variety of gifts to share. If we are called to give, let us do it with open hearts. If we are called to serve, let us do it with joy. If we are called to encourage, let us offer hope to one another. Let us give with love, building a world where all belong.

***Doxology**



***Prayer of Dedication and Thanksgiving**

**We bring what we have to this table, knowing that no gift is too small.
Multiply these offerings so that our community may thrive, our neighbors
may be cared for, and your love may be known. Amen.**

***Closing Hymn**

Kum ba Yah

CH590

Blessing of the Backpacks

We invite students, teachers, school staff, and learners of all ages to bring their backpacks, briefcases, or work bags forward to be prayed over, asking God for a safe, joyful, and successful school year.

**Children of God and neighbors to all humankind,
as you carry your backpack along your adventures this year,
you will encounter many children of God.
Treat the people you meet on your path
with kindness, curiosity, and compassion,
because Jesus taught us to love our neighbors as we love ourselves.**

***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.

Our Greeters today are Penny Guerin and Bill Briggs.

Our Cantor is Laurel Thurman.

Our Digital Minister is Deb Hubbell.

Coffee Hour is hosted by Deb Richards.

Please join us in Fellowship Hall after worship!

THE WEEK AHEAD

Monday, August 24	6:30 pm Windham Region Arts Council
Tuesday, August 25	4:00 pm Pastoral Search Committee
Thursday, August 27	9:30 am Quilt Group

**Join us on Sunday, August 30th,
for our annual Rally Day celebration!**

As we wind down our summer schedules and vacations and look forward to the start of a new program and school year, we are kicking things off with a celebration.

We will celebrate **Music Sunday** during our morning worship service, lifting our voices and spirits in praise. Immediately following the service, our fellowship continues with a **Potluck Lunch** in Fellowship Hall.

Please bring a favorite dish to share as we gather for good food, warm community, and a welcome back to those who have been away for the summer. **We look forward to seeing everyone there!**

Welcoming Our New Bridge Minister

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!



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.

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.

- **5** Packages of colored pencils (12 per package)
- **75** #2 unsharpened pencils
- **32** 12-inch rulers (with both inches and centimeters marked)
- **23** 70-page spiral-bound notebooks
- **22** Two-pocket folders
- **9** Packages of crayons (24 per package)
- **10** Glue sticks
- **20** Scissors (with blunt points)
- **15** Pencil sharpeners



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.

