



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

549 Storrs Rd. P.O. Box 36 Mansfield Center, CT 06250

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Ministers: All the Members of the Church

The Reverend Dr. Susan J. Foster, Bridge Minister

Erik Haeger, Organist

Olivia Russell, Worship Circle Coordinator

September 20, 2026 – The Seventeenth Sunday after Pentecost

Today's Worship Leader: Cheryl Chase

Thought for the Week

"Dear Child of God, you are loved with a love that nothing can shake, a love that loved you long before you were created, a love that will be there long after everything has disappeared. You are precious, with a preciousness that is totally quite immeasurable."

~ The Archbishop Desmond Tutu ~

Playing the Chimes

Welcome and Announcements

Prelude

Erik Haeger

Call to Worship

Karen Christianson

(inspired by Exodus 16, Philippians 1, Matthew 20)

Leader: In their wilderness wandering, the Israelites grumbled. The Lord lighted their way and provided nourishment.

People: In our life journeys, we will give thanks for the providence of the Holy One.

Leader: In their daily work, the laborers in the field grumbled with resentment over gracious giving.

People: In our daily lives, we will rejoice at generosity shown to others.

Leader: As we seek to live our lives by the example of Christ, may we delight in God's grace.

People: We will offer caring presence and abundant generosity. We will even endeavor to give up our grumbling.

**please rise in body or in spirit, as you are able*

CH = Chalice Hymnal

*Text in **bold** indicates words spoken responsively by the congregation.*

Prayer for Transformation and New Life

Gracious and Loving God, we give thanks for the many ways we see your abiding presence throughout scripture and within our own lives. You hear not only our praise but also our complaints. Teach us to hear our own grumbling as a signifier to redirect our thoughts and lives to gratitude and generosity. In hearing our own complaints, may we look to Christ Jesus for examples of grace. Our greatest hope, O God, is to love as Jesus did, with grace and compassion. Clear the wandering paths of our minds and hearts, that your Spirit may fill us with grace to receive and share your blessings. Amen.

A Moment of Silent Prayer

Assurance of Grace

Friends, the Lord heard the complaints of the Israelites and offered guiding presence. Jesus calls us to celebrate generosity and grace, not just in our own lives but in the lives of others. Know this: In all things, the Lord hears us, sees us, and loves us just as we are.

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 103: 1-12

¹ Praise the Lord, my soul;
all my inmost being, praise his holy name.

² Praise the Lord, my soul,
 and forget not all his benefits—
³ who forgives all your sins
 and heals all your diseases,
⁴ who redeems your life from the pit
 and crowns you with love and compassion,
⁵ who satisfies your desires with good things
 so that your youth is renewed like the eagle's.
⁶ The Lord works righteousness
 and justice for all the oppressed.
⁷ He made known his ways to Moses,
 his deeds to the people of Israel:
⁸ The Lord is compassionate and gracious,
 slow to anger, abounding in love.
⁹ He will not always accuse,
 nor will he harbor his anger forever;
¹⁰ he does not treat us as our sins deserve
 or repay us according to our iniquities.
¹¹ For as high as the heavens are above the earth,
 so great is his love for those who fear him;
¹² as far as the east is from the west,
 so far has he removed our transgressions from us.

Gospel Reading

Matthew 20:1-16

"For the kingdom of heaven is like a landowner who went out early in the morning to hire laborers for his vineyard. ² After agreeing with the laborers for a denarius for the day, he sent them into his vineyard. ³ When he went out about nine o'clock, he saw others standing idle in the marketplace, ⁴ and he said to them, 'You also go into the vineyard, and I will pay you whatever is right.' So they went. ⁵ When he went out again about noon and about three o'clock, he did the same. ⁶ And about five o'clock he went out and found others standing around, and he said to them, 'Why are you standing here idle all day?' ⁷ They said to him, 'Because no one has hired us.' He said to them, 'You also go into the vineyard.' ⁸ When evening came, the owner of the vineyard said to his manager, 'Call the laborers and give them their pay, beginning with the last and then going to the first.' ⁹ When those hired about five o'clock came, each of them received a denarius. ¹⁰ Now when the first came, they thought they would receive more; but each of them also received a denarius. ¹¹ And when they received it, they grumbled against the landowner, ¹² saying, 'These last worked only one hour, and

you have made them equal to us who have borne the burden of the day and the scorching heat.' ¹³ But he replied to one of them, 'Friend, I am doing you no wrong; did you not agree with me for a denarius? ¹⁴ Take what belongs to you and go; I choose to give to this last the same as I give to you. ¹⁵ Am I not allowed to do what I choose with what belongs to me? Or are you envious because I am generous?'^[a] ¹⁶ So the last will be first, and the first will be last."

Reflection

"Do You Have a Savings Plan?"

Cheryl Chase

Call to Prayer

Hear Us O Lord

Don Besig and Nancy Price



Prayers of the People and Pastoral Prayer

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.

Offering our Gifts and Gratitude

Musical Offering *Menuetto I/II from Suite in G by J.S. Bach*

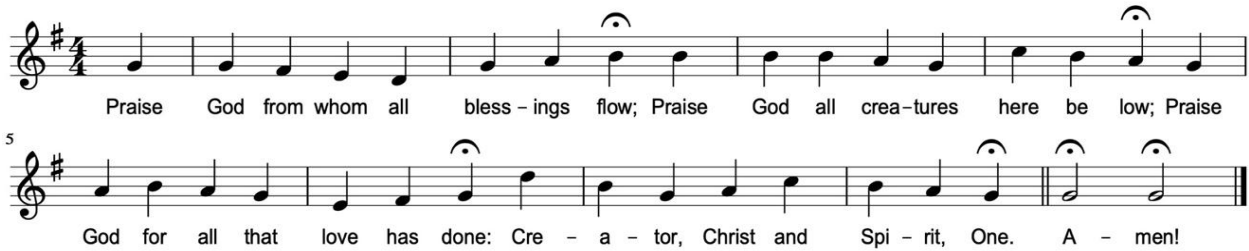
Laurel Thurman, Viola

*Doxology

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***Prayer of Dedication** (in unison)

We offer these gifts, O God, in gratitude for your provision in our lives. We offer tangible gifts of money, where we are able, and tangible gifts of our time, our prayers, our service, and our witness to your abundant grace. Amen.

***Closing Hymn**

All My Hope on God is Founded

CH88

***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

Call to Worship, Prayer for Transformation and Assurance of Grace, Invitation to Generosity, and Prayer of Dedication written by Karen Clark Ristine. Used with permission from Abingdon Worship Annual 2026.

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.

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Our greeters this morning are Karen Christianson and Carol Fineout.

Our cantor is Laurel Thurman.

Our Digital Minister is Robert Johnson.

Coffee hour is hosted by Eleanor Joyce and Frank Ball.

Please join us in Fellowship Hall after worship!

THE WEEK AHEAD...

Sunday, September 20	10:15 a.m. Worship & Worship Circle 5:00 p.m. PFLAG of Mansfield Tolland
Monday, September 21	6:30 p.m. Take Note rehearsal
Wednesday, September 23	1:00 p.m. Book Group 5:00 p.m. Meditation Group
Thursday, September 24	9:30 a.m. Quilt Group
Saturday, September 26	2:00 p.m. Celebrate Mansfield Festival

Celebrate Mansfield Festival!

Saturday, September 26th, downtown Storrs

We will be hosting an activity table with crafts for children and conducting a short community needs survey that will be used to inform our Strategic Plan.

We are looking for volunteers on the day of the event - between 2pm and 6pm. Please contact Deb Richards or Olivia Russell if you are interested in volunteering or add your name to the sign-up sheet in the sanctuary.

****Help Needed: Invasive Plant Removal****

Mark Messier is looking for volunteers to help remove invasive plants from the church property. If you're able to lend a hand, please reach out to Mark at [860-729-1622](tel:860-729-1622) or mark.messier1973@gmail.com. He's happy to work around your schedule — whatever time is convenient for you! **Please note:** adult volunteers only.

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