



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

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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

October 4, 2026 ~ World Communion Sunday

Thoughts for the Week

"If you want peace, you don't talk to your friends. You talk to your enemies."

"Do your little bit of good where you are;

it's those little bits of good put together that overwhelm the world."

~Bishop Desmond Tutu~

Playing the Chimes

Welcome and Announcements

Prelude

Erik Haeger

Call to Worship

Cheryl Chase

Leader: Today we pray for a world where everyone respects each other's way.

People: Today, loving God, today we pray to live your love and offer your justice.

Leader: Today we pray for a world where goods are shared and poverty is eased.

People: Today, loving God, today help us see in the stranger another beloved child of yours.

Leader: Today, let us pray and work for a world preparing for God's peace.

People: Today, loving God, today help us worship you by being messengers of your hope. Amen.

***Opening Hymn**

O for a world

CH 683

Call to Confession

Prayer of Confession and New Life

Creator God, We hear your invitation to love our neighbors as ourselves, to live like we belong to one another. And yet, what is out of sight is often out of mind. Forgive us for training our hearts to focus only on what is in front of us. Forgive us for ignoring the tie that binds us to all of creation. Forgive us for assuming that you being with us means you can't be with others too. Our gaze has been too narrow. Open our hearts. Expand our understanding. Help us to celebrate the many places you are present in this world. Remind us of the ties that bind us to all of creation. With hope in our hearts we pray, Amen.

Words of Grace

Leader: Family of faith, I don't know what this past week has looked like for you, but I do know this: there is a seat at God's table saved for you. And that is the case even if you overlooked your neighbor, even if you doubted God's love for you, even if you chose scarcity over abundance, or fear over joy. God has a seat saved for you. Trusting this good news, join me in the words of forgiveness:

People: We are known. We are loved. We are forgiven. We begin again. Thanks be to God for a love like that. Amen.

*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, A - men. World with-out end, world with-out end, A - men. World with-out end, A - men. 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!

First Reading

Psalm 133

How good and pleasant it is
when God's people live together in unity.
It is like precious oil poured on the head,
running down on the beard,
running down on Aaron's beard,
down on the collar of his robe.
It is as if the dew of Hermon
were falling on Mount Zion.

For there the LORD bestows his blessing,
even life forevermore.

Second Reading

Luke 19: 1-10

Jesus entered Jericho and was passing through. ² A man was there by the name of Zacchaeus; he was a chief tax collector and was wealthy. ³ He wanted to see who Jesus was, but because he was short he could not see over the crowd. ⁴ So he ran ahead and climbed a sycamore-fig tree to see him, since Jesus was coming that way.

When Jesus reached the spot, he looked up and said to him, "Zacchaeus, come down immediately. I must stay at your house today." ⁶ So he came down at once and welcomed him gladly. ⁷ All the people saw this and began to mutter, "He has gone to be the guest of a sinner."

But Zacchaeus stood up and said to the Lord, "Look, Lord! Here and now I give half of my possessions to the poor, and if I have cheated anybody out of anything, I will pay back four times the amount."

Jesus said to him, "Today salvation has come to this house, because this man, too, is a son of Abraham. ¹⁰ For the Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost."

Reflection

"Welcoming the unwelcome"

Rev. Sue Foster

Hymn

This is my song

CH 722

Call to Prayer

Hear Us O Lord

Don Besig and Nancy Price

9 Hear us, O Lord, as we come now in prayer, shar - ing our joys, our trou-bles, and our cares.

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

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

*Your financial offerings may be placed in the collection plates as they come around,
or mailed to: First Church of Christ in Mansfield UCC, PO Box 36, Mansfield Center, CT 06250*

Musical Offering

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**

Generous God, You gift us with sunlight, which grows the wheat, and rain, which nourishes the soil. You gift us with bread, which fills our bellies, and community which fills our hearts. You gift us with rituals that ground us, and music that opens us. You gift us with stories that teach us, and laughter that lifts us. So for all these gifts and countless others, we say thank you. Take this offering and use it for your good. We are grateful. Amen.

~ The Service of Holy Communion ~

Invitation to Communion

The Prayer of Great Thanksgiving

God is with you.

And also with you.

Open up your hearts.

We open them up to God and one another.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

It is right to give our thanks and praise.

Let us continue in the spirit of prayer:

Holy God, our loving Creator, ...

... Gifted by the presence of your Holy Spirit, we offer ourselves to you as we unite our voices in song with the entire family of your faithful people everywhere:

Musical Response

Santo Santo Santo

Traditional Argentine

San - to, san - to, san - to. Mi co - ra - zon te a - do - ra! Mi
Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly. My heart, my heart a - dores you! My

5
co - ra - zon te sa - be de - cir: San - to eres, Se - nor!
heart knows how to say to you: Ho - ly are you, Lord!

Presentation of the Body of Christ

Sharing the Bread and Cup

All are welcome at Christ's table; we offer non-alcoholic juice and gluten-free bread.

Prayer of Thanksgiving

We thank you, generous God, for the nourishment of your table and the present love of Jesus Christ. We thank you for the company of your great cloud witnesses, here in this place, in all the time zones across the globe and throughout your creation's history. Take your gathered people and scatter us again into the world... renewed, invigorated, and committed, so that we may take root and bear life-giving fruit to feed, heal, clothe and comfort, in Jesus' name. Amen.

*Closing Hymn

Let There Be Peace on Earth

CH 677

*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

Resources: Litanies and prayers by Rev. Sarah Speed, *Sanctified Arts World Communion*

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!

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.

Special Communion Sunday Offering

*An envelope labeled **Blessing Box** is 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.*

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 this morning are Carol Fineout and Bill Briggs.

Our Cantor is Laurel Thurman.

Our Communion servers are Gary Cote, David Darnell, Frank Ball, Eleanor Joyce.

Our Digital Minister is Deb Hubbell.

Our Coffee Hour hosts are Ava Little and Carol Fineout.

Please join us in Fellowship Hall for refreshments after worship!
All are welcome!

THE WEEK AHEAD...

Monday, October 5	6:30 p.m. Take Note rehearsal
Wednesday, October 7	1:00 p.m. Book Group 5:00 p.m. Meditation Group
Thursday, October 8	5:00 p.m. Ministry Teams + Governing Board potluck and meeting

Boo Bash and Trick-a-Trunk

We are gearing up for our participation in some SPOOK-tacular fun at the **Downtown Boo Bash!** Young and young-at-heart friends will gather for trick-or-treating at participating downtown businesses, **trick-a-trunk along Wilbur Cross Way**, performances, and Halloween activities during the two hour event.

The event will take place on **Saturday, October 24 from 3:00-5:00 p.m.** We are looking for donations of candy for the event. Please leave your contributions in the basket at the front of the sanctuary. Thank You.

Annual Stewardship Campaign

Deb Richards is convening a short-term committee to plan our annual Stewardship Campaign. This will only require a few meetings - starting in Mid-late October. Please see her if you are interested in assisting with the campaign.

****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.

An Update on our time of Bridge Ministry

We are officially in our season of bridge ministry with the Rev. Sue Foster, and it has been wonderful having her lead us in worship! As we move forward together **through December 20**, we want to share a quick reminder of how our partnership with Pastor Sue is structured.

Because this is a bridge ministry focused on keeping our community spiritually vibrant during our pastoral search, Pastor Sue's role is structured a bit differently than a traditional settled pastor:

- **Sunday Worship Focus:** Her time centers primarily on Sunday worship planning and leadership, in close collaboration with our Ministry of Spiritual Life. (Get ready for Advent—she will be using the *Sanctified Art* curriculum!)
- **No Regular Office Hours:** Pastor Sue does not hold office hours or attend regular Governing Board or committee meetings. This allows her to focus her energy on our Sunday services and certain targeted collaborations such as Children's Ministry and Stewardship.
- **Connecting on Sundays:** Folks are encouraged to touch base and chat with Pastor Sue during the coffee hour after the Sunday service.
- **Who to Contact for Ministry Needs:** To help protect Pastor Sue's contracted time, please route your requests to our active lay leadership teams:
 - **Emergent Pastoral Care:** If you have an urgent or essential care need (such as supporting the sick, elderly, or grieving), please seek out our Ministry of Caring leaders—**Donna Clauson, Sharon Foster-Chalecki, and Carol Fineout**. They serve as the first point of contact to triage care needs and will loop in Pastor Sue directly if needed.
 - **Worship or Faith Formation:** If you have questions or ideas related to our Sunday services or faith formation, please reach out directly to our Ministry of Spiritual Life leaders—**Laurel Thurman, Bobbi Giardina, and David Darnell**.

We are so grateful for our strong lay leadership and for Pastor Sue's presence with us during this transition. If you have any questions, please reach out to our **Ministry Team leaders** or **Governing Board members** listed at the bottom of this newsletter. You can also send an email to the church office: office@mansfielducc.org

Supporting Project HOPE this fall

Project HOPE (formerly the Windham Region No Freeze Project) is currently at capacity and will open its doors at the end of October for transient individuals to drop in and stay the night. Guests are provided with cots for sleeping and have access to essential amenities, including showers and laundry facilities.

The organization employs a dedicated outreach worker who remains in consistent contact with individuals living in tents and vehicles to monitor and address their immediate needs.

Items they need:

Donations can be dropped off at the 459 Valley Street location.

Household

Disinfectant wipes

Disinfectant spray

Hand soap

Tissues

Cleaning products and supplies

55 Gallon trash bags

Paper towels

Toilet Paper

Hygiene

Deodorant

Shampoo

Conditioner

Soap

Lotion

Razors

First Aid supplies

Nail clippers

Tweezers

Combs and brushes

Miscellaneous

Pillows

Twin blankets

Hand/foot warmers

Ear buds/ headphones

Ear plugs

Laundry detergent

Or use this link to make an online monetary donation.

<https://thenofreezeproject.harnessgiving.org/donate>
