



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

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All the Members, Ministers

Rev. Joseph Blotz, Pastor + Erik Haeger, Organist

Olivia Russell, Worship Circle Coordinator

**THE FOURTH SUNDAY IN LENT + MARCH 27, 2022**

**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 and Prelude**

**Centering in Silence and Song**

*Bless the Lord*

*Taize*

Bless the Lord, my soul, and bless God's ho - ly name.

Bless the Lord, my soul, who leads me in - to life

**Greeting and Welcome**

**Opening Hymn**

*Softly and Tenderly*

CH340

**Confessing our Brokenness and Opening Prayer**

Hear these words from Paul's Second Letter to the Church in Corinth: From now on, therefore, we regard no one from a human point of view; even though we once knew Christ from a human point of view, we know him no longer in that way. So if anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation: everything old has passed away; see, everything has become new! All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation; that is, in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting the message of reconciliation to us. So we are ambassadors for Christ, since God is making his appeal through us; we entreat you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God.

When in this past week have we failed to seek reconciliation?

*Silence*

**Eternal lover of our wayward race, you open your arms to accept us even before we turn to meet your welcome; you invite us to forgiveness even before our hearts are softened to repentance. Hold before us the image of our humanity made new, that we may live in Jesus Christ, the model and the pioneer of your new creation. Amen.**

**Song of Praise**

*Gloria*

Christopher Grundy

Glo - ry to the Cre - a - tor, and the Christ, and the Spir - it so near, as it  
9  
was from the start so it shall be for - ev - er one God, al - ways here.

**Hebrew Scripture**

Joshua 5:9-12

The LORD said to Joshua, "Today I have rolled away from you the disgrace of Egypt." And so that place is called Gilgal to this day. While the Israelites were camped in Gilgal they kept the Passover in the evening on the fourteenth day of the month in the plains of Jericho. On the day after the passover, on that very day, they ate the produce of the land, unleavened cakes and parched grain. The manna ceased on the day they ate the produce of the land, and the Israelites no longer had manna; they ate the crops of the land of Canaan that year.

**Psalter**

Psalm 32

CH739

**Gospel**

Luke 15:1-3; 11b-31

Now all the tax collectors and sinners were coming near to listen to him. And the Pharisees and the scribes were grumbling and saying, "This fellow welcomes sinners and eats with them." So he told them this parable: "There was a man who had two sons. The younger of them said to his father, 'Father, give me the share of the property that will belong to me.' So he divided his property between them. A few days later the younger son gathered all he had and traveled to a distant country, and there he squandered his property in dissolute living. When he had spent everything, a severe famine took place throughout that country, and he began to be in need. So he went and hired himself out to one of the citizens of that country, who sent him to his fields to feed the pigs. He would gladly have filled himself with the pods that the pigs were eating; and no one gave him anything. But when he came to himself he said, 'How many of my father's hired hands have bread enough and to spare, but here I am dying of hunger! I will get up and go to my father, and I will say to him, "Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you; I am no longer worthy to be called your son; treat me like one of your hired hands."' So he set off and went to his father. But while he was still

far off, his father saw him and was filled with compassion; he ran and put his arms around him and kissed him. Then the son said to him, 'Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you; I am no longer worthy to be called your son.' But the father said to his slaves, 'Quickly, bring out a robe--the best one--and put it on him; put a ring on his finger and sandals on his feet. And get the fatted calf and kill it, and let us eat and celebrate; for this son of mine was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found!' And they began to celebrate. "Now his elder son was in the field; and when he came and approached the house, he heard music and dancing. He called one of the slaves and asked what was going on. He replied, 'Your brother has come, and your father has killed the fatted calf, because he has got him back safe and sound.' Then he became angry and refused to go in. His father came out and began to plead with him. But he answered his father, 'Listen! For all these years I have been working like a slave for you, and I have never disobeyed your command; yet you have never given me even a young goat so that I might celebrate with my friends. But when this son of yours came back, who has devoured your property with prostitutes, you killed the fatted calf for him!' Then the father said to him, 'Son, you are always with me, and all that is mine is yours. But we had to celebrate and rejoice, because this brother of yours was dead and has come to life; he was lost and has been found.'"

## **Reflection**

### **Prayers of the People and the Prayer of Jesus**

For the Church: that we may be ambassadors of Christ, bringing God's message of compassion, mercy, and salvation to all who are wounded or alienated

For government leaders: that God will give them the wisdom to understand the needs of those they serve and inspire within them fresh ideas to advance the common good

For Peace and an end to warfare: that God will change hearts of those advancing violence, help them to recognize the value and dignity of each person, and open new opportunities for dialogue

For Refugees: that God will guide them safely to find new homes and help them enrich their new communities with their gifts and talents

For all who are ill: that God's renewing love will strengthen and comfort all who are facing surgery or who have been hospitalized

For young people who have run away from their families: that God will protect them from harm and give them the courage to make contact again

For healing within families: that God will heal the wounds of words and actions so that families may work together and support one another

For new understanding: that we may recognize God's love for us is not based on our deeds or achievements but on God's free and generous choice

All this we ask in the name of Jesus, who taught us to call upon you, saying...

*Please pray the Prayer of Jesus in whatever language is most 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/trespases,  
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.**

**Musical Offering**

*Kyrie*

Antonín Dvorák

*Offerings may be placed in passed plates, mailed to:  
First Church of Christ in Mansfield UCC.*

*Box 36. Mansfield Center, CT 06250, or given online at [www.myfcc.info](http://www.myfcc.info)*

**Doxology**

Praise God from whom all blessings flow; Praise God all creatures 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**

**Holy God, we give you thanks for the diverse gifts you have bestowed upon us. Bless us with your Spirit that they may be used to proclaim your good news in word and deed. Amen.**

Hymn

*Amazing Grace*

CH546

**Benediction**

**The Week Ahead...**

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|---------------------|--|
| Sunday, March 27    | 10:15am Worship and Worship Circle   |
| Monday, March 28    | 10am First Church leads Worship at St Joseph Living Center                   |
| Tuesday, March 29   | 6pm Adult Education on Zoom<br>7pm Prayers at the End of the Day on Facebook |
| Wednesday, March 30 | 1pm Book Group in Fellowship Hall  |
| Thursday, March 31  | 7pm Music Ministry Rehearsal   |
| Sunday, April 3     | 10:15am Worship and Worship Circle   |

Our current list for our **Church World Service Health Kits** is:

- 35 hand towels
- 5 washcloths
- 15 toothbrushes
- 28 nail clippers
- 25 bars of soap
- 180 bandaids
- 30 combs

Items may be placed in the basket in front of the Welcome Table.