



**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 THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT + DECEMBER 11, 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!*

Centering in the Spirit

Prelude

Welcoming the Light

Today we light the candle of joy. May its light remind us of all the good news this season brings. May its light remind us of the many sources of joy in our lives, and may that joy not only draw us closer to one another, but closer to God.

May this light be a reminder that Christ is coming. God was with generations before, God is with us today, and God will be with us tomorrow. Even now, God is on the way. Amen.

Musical Response

Holy is Your Name

WILD MOUNTAIN THYME

And ho - ly is your name through all gen - er - a-tions! Ev - er - last - ing is your
mer - cy to the peo - ple you have cho - sen and ho - ly is your name!

Welcome and Greeting

Hymn

Of The Father's Love Begotten

CH104

Prayer of Confession

God of mercy, a million times a day we have the opportunity to be gracious, to assume the best in others, to give the benefit of the doubt. A million times a day we could choose the better way, but so often we don't. Fear and greed kick in. Assumptions and insecurities take the wheel. Comparison and critique lead the charge. Forgive us for forgetting that we are descendants of Joseph. Forgive us for forgetting that grace and mercy are in our blood. Forgive us for forgetting that all

belong to you. Give us the courage to love even bigger than before, and the wisdom to choose a better way. Amen.

Assurance of Grace

Musical Response

Holy is Your Name

WILD MOUNTAIN THYME

Hebrew Scripture

Isaiah 35:1-10

The wilderness and the dry land shall be glad, the desert shall rejoice and blossom; like the crocus, it shall blossom abundantly, and rejoice with joy and singing. The glory of Lebanon shall be given to it, the majesty of Carmel and Sharon. They shall see the glory of the LORD, the majesty of our God. Strengthen the weak hands, and make firm the feeble knees. Say to those who are of a fearful heart, "Be strong, do not fear! Here is your God. He will come with vengeance, with terrible recompense. He will come and save you." Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf unstopped; then the lame shall leap like a deer, and the tongue of the speechless sing for joy. For waters shall break forth in the wilderness, and streams in the desert; the burning sand shall become a pool, and the thirsty ground springs of water; the haunt of jackals shall become a swamp, the grass shall become reeds and rushes. A highway shall be there, and it shall be called the Holy Way; the unclean shall not travel on it, but it shall be for God's people; no traveler, not even fools, shall go astray. No lion shall be there, nor shall any ravenous beast come up on it; they shall not be found there, but the redeemed shall walk there. And the ransomed of the LORD shall return, and come to Zion with singing; everlasting joy shall be upon their heads; they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away.

Psalter

Psalm 146

CH766

Gospel

Matthew 1:18-25

Now the birth of Jesus the Messiah took place in this way. When his mother Mary had been engaged to Joseph, but before they lived together, she was found to be pregnant from the Holy Spirit. Her husband Joseph, being a righteous man and unwilling to expose her to public disgrace, planned to divorce her quietly. But just when he had resolved to do this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, "Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife, for the child conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. She will bear a son, and you are to name him Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins." All this took place to fulfill what had been spoken by the Lord through the prophet: "Look, the virgin shall become pregnant and give birth to a son, and they shall name him Emmanuel," which means, "God is with us." When Joseph awoke from sleep, he did as the angel of the Lord commanded him; he took her as his wife but had no marital relations with her until she had given birth to a son, and he named him Jesus.

Reflection

Rev. Joseph Blotz

Call to Prayer

Creator of the Stars of Night

CH127

Cre - a - tor of the stars of night, your peo-ple's e - ver - last - ing light,

O Christ, re-deem-er of us all, we pray you hear us when we call.

Prayers of the People and the Prayer of Jesus

**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,
but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom,
and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.**

Musical Offering

An Invitation for Advent

Schram/Nolan

*Offerings may be placed in the collection boxes at the entrances to our worship space,
mailed to: First Church of Christ in Mansfield UCC. Box 36. Mansfield Center, CT 06250,
or given online at www.myfcc.info*

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

Accept, O God, this money offered, these gifts given, the goodwill of our hearts, that disappointment may be turned to hope, and worry may be turned to anticipation, as we await with wonder the birth of Christ. Amen.

Hymn

Lift Up Your Heads O Mighty Gates

CH129

Benediction