



**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 OF EASTER + APRIL 30, 2023

Chimes and Prelude

Welcome and Greeting

Alleluia! Christ is risen!

Christ is risen indeed! Alleluia!

Hymn

Christ Arose

CH224

Confessing our Brokenness and Opening Prayer

Hear these words from the First Letter of Peter: Jesus himself bore our sins in his body on the cross, so that, free from sins, we might live for righteousness; by his wounds you have been healed. For you were going astray like sheep, but now you have returned to the shepherd and guardian of your souls.

When in this past week have we strayed from following the way of Jesus?

When have we judged unjustly?

Silence

Life abundant, God of grace, you call us by name to live without fear: in peace may we resist all who kill and despoil your people, that their hearts might be turned to the only source of life; through Jesus Christ, the gateway. Amen.

Song of Praise

Glory Be to God Creator

Richard K Carlson

Glo-ry be to God, Cre - a - tor, glo-ry be to God, the Son, glo-ry
was in the be - gin - ning, it is now and so shall be in a

5
be to God, the Spi - rit, known as Three, yet God the One. As it
world with-out an end - ing, glo - ry through e - ter - ni - ty.

Christian Scripture

Acts 2:42-47

The disciples devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers. Awe came upon everyone, because many wonders and signs were being done by the apostles. All who believed were together and had all things in common; they would sell their possessions and goods and distribute the proceeds to all, as any had need. Day by day, as they spent much time together in the temple, they broke bread at home and ate their food with glad and generous hearts, praising God and having the goodwill of all the people. And day by day the Lord added to their number those who were being saved.

Psalter

Psalms 23

CH78

Gospel

John 10:1-10

Very truly, I tell you, anyone who does not enter the sheepfold by the gate but climbs in by another way is a thief and a bandit. The one who enters by the gate is the shepherd of the sheep. The gatekeeper opens the gate for him, and the sheep hear his voice. He calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. When he has brought out all his own, he goes ahead of them, and the sheep follow him because they know his voice. They will not follow a stranger, but they will run from him because they do not know the voice of strangers.” Jesus used this figure of speech with them, but they did not understand what he was saying to them. So again Jesus said to them, “Very truly, I tell you, I am the gate for the sheep. All who came before me are thieves and bandits; but the sheep did not listen to them. I am the gate. Whoever enters by me will be saved, and will come in and go out and find pasture. The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly.”

Reflection

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.

The image shows two staves of musical notation in 4/4 time. The first staff begins with a treble clef and a key signature of one flat (B-flat). The melody consists of quarter and eighth notes. The lyrics are written below the staff. A small number '9' is positioned to the left of the first line of lyrics. The second staff continues the melody and lyrics.

Prayers of the People and the Prayer of Jesus

Shepherding God, we thank you for the caring ministries of your church. Enrich the work of those who visit, call, and support its members; strengthen those who encourage change, growth, and renewal.

Creating God, we praise you for those who maintain and operate farm equipment, for those who plant and harvest crops, for local farmers' markets, and for those involved in agriculture of any kind. Strengthen their hands as they feed the world.

Guiding God, no one should be in want. Move the nations to return to your paths of righteousness and inspire our leaders to walk in your ways, so that all may have the opportunity to live abundantly and sustainably.

Comforting God, you carry us tenderly. We pray for those who walk through dark valleys overshadowed by anxiety and overwhelmed with suffering.

Nurturing God, you desire justice for the hungry. Bless advocacy work, food pantries, and feeding ministries in our congregations. May none of our neighbors lack for basic needs.

Everlasting God, your beloved have heard your voice; you have called them by name and guided them to your side in death. We thank you for their lives of faithful witness.

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/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.**

Offering Hymn

The Lord is My Shepherd
Laurel Thurman and Erik Haeger

P.I. Tchaikovsky

*Offerings may be placed in the collection plates,
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 blessings flow; Praise God all creatures here below; Praise
5 God for all that love has done: Cre - a - tor, Christ and Spi - rit, One. A - men!

Prayer of Dedication

**Gracious God, through the resurrection of Jesus, you have shown us
the power of life and love. May our offerings reflect the grace we have
known and symbolize lives committed to your service. Amen.**

Hymn

Leaning on the Everlasting Arms

CH560

Benediction

Alleluia! Christ is risen!

Christ is risen indeed! Alleluia!

The peace of Christ is with you always!

And also with you!

The Week Ahead...

Sunday, April 30	10:15am Worship and Worship Circle Second Hour: Supporting Independent College Students with Alex Katz
Monday, May 1	10am First Church leads Worship at St Joseph Living Center 7-9pm Take Note in Fellowship Hall
Tuesday, May 2	10:30 First Church leads Worship at MCNR
Wednesday, May 3	11am Ministry of Caring 1pm Book Group in Fellowship Hall
Thursday, May 4	12:15pm Contemplative Communion
Sunday, May 7	10:15am Worship and Worship Circle