



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 FIFTH SUNDAY OF EASTER + MAY 7, 2023

Chimes and Prelude

Welcome and Greeting

Alleluia! Christ is risen!

Christ is risen indeed! Alleluia!

Hymn

Come My Way My Truth My Life Herbert & Vaughn Williams

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Come, my Way, my Truth, my Life: such a
Come, my Light, my Feast, my Strength: such a
Come, my Joy, my Love, my Heart: such a

way as gives us breath, such a truth as ends all
light as shows a feast, such a feast as mends in
joy as none can move, such a love as none can

6

strife, such a life as kill - - eth death.
length, such a strength as makes his guest.
part, such a heart as joys in love.

Confessing our Brokenness and Opening Prayer

Hear these words from the First Letter of Peter: Like newborn infants, long for the pure, spiritual milk, so that by it you may grow into salvation- if indeed you have tasted that the Lord is good.

When in this past week have we forgotten the Lord's goodness?

When are you longing for?

Silence

Generous Spirit, whose way is love, whose truth is searching, whose life is freely given in Jesus Christ our Lord: as you have opened for us your house of many rooms, so may we make a place for the rejected and unloved, and share the work of peace: through Jesus Christ, the image of God. 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 7:55-60

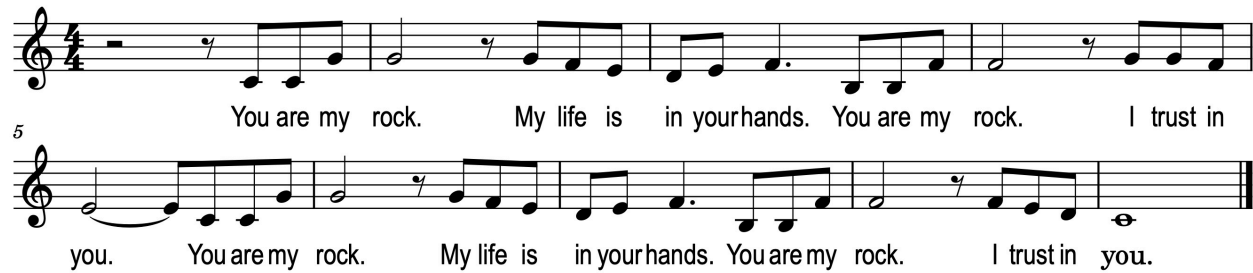
In our Christian Scripture from the book of Acts, a deacon of the church, Stephen, preaches salvation history before the high priest and the council, culminating in a vision of Jesus standing at God's right hand. Those gathered are so provoked by this testimony that, enraged, they drag him from the city and stone him to death. Those stoning Stephen lay their cloaks at the feet of a young man named Saul, who will later become the apostle Paul. Stephen prays God to forgive those putting him to death, as did Jesus from the cross.

A reading from the Acts of the Apostles.

But filled with the Holy Spirit, he gazed into heaven and saw the glory of God and Jesus standing at the right hand of God. "Look," he said, "I see the heavens opened and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God!" But they covered their ears, and with a loud shout all rushed together against him. Then they dragged him out of the city and began to stone him; and the witnesses laid their coats at the feet of a young man named Saul. While they were stoning Stephen, he prayed, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit." Then he knelt down and cried out in a loud voice, "Lord, do not hold this sin against them." When he had said this, he died.

Psalter**Psalm 31**

Juliana Howard



5 You are my rock. My life is in your hands. You are my rock. I trust in
you. You are my rock. My life is in your hands. You are my rock. I trust in you.

Gospel**John 14:1-14**

Jesus continued, "Do not let your hearts be troubled. Believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house there are many dwelling places. If it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you? And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself, so that where I am, there you may be also. And you know the way to the place where I am going." Thomas said to him, "Lord, we do not know where you are going. How can we know the way?" Jesus said to him, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. If you know me, you will know my Father also. From now on you do know him and have seen him." Philip said to him, "Lord, show us the Father, and we will be satisfied." Jesus said to him, "Have I been with you all this time, Philip, and you still do not know me? Whoever has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say, 'Show us the Father'? Do you not believe that I am in the Father and the Father is in me? The words that I say to you I do not speak on my own; but the Father who dwells in me does his works. Believe me that I am in the Father and the Father is in me; but if you do not, then believe me because of the works themselves. Very truly, I tell you, the one who believes in me will also do the works that I do and, in fact, will do greater works than these, because I am going to the Father. I will do whatever you ask in my name, so that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If in my name you ask me for anything, I will do it.

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.

Prayers of the People and the Prayer of Jesus

Build us up, mothering God, as living stones united in your spiritual house. Continually strengthen your church as it is sent forth to proclaim your love. We pray especially for new congregations and those in redevelopment.

Humble us, creator God, as part of your creation. Fill us with respect and awe for the world you have made, including volcanoes, ocean currents, tropical rainstorms, glaciers, and other forces that both destroy and create.

Align our ways to your love, O God. We pray for countries, leaders, and other organizations as they prepare places for those seeking refuge and safety. In particular this day we pray for the Quiet Corner Refugee Resettlement Project and the work of IRIS.

God of healing and rest, help those whose hearts are heavy and weighed down by many troubles. Comfort their suffering, ease their distress, and carry their burdens.

Nurturing God, we pray for those who tend and teach young children, for the safe pregnancies of expectant parents, and for families who struggle with infertility and miscarriage. We give thanks for all who have shown mothering care, and we remember all for whom this day is difficult.

Generous God, you call into your brilliant light all who have died. Give us faith to take hold of the promise of your eternal life.

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.**

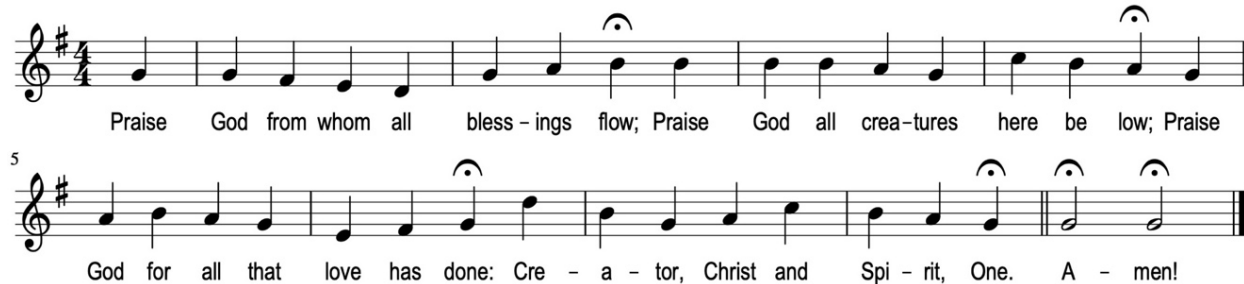
Musical Offering

Be Not Afraid

Bob Dufford

*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 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

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.

Musical Response

No One Higher

Fee, Balltzglier, and Condrey



Lord, we stand a - mazed in your pres - ence, A - stound - ed by your mer - cy and love;
4 Our hands are lift - ed high in sur - ren - der, Your
7 grace for us is a - ways e - nough; So, Lord we meet you here at your ta -
10 - ble Re - mem' - bring as you taught us to do... Let our
13 lives for - ev - er praise the glo - ry of your name; There is no one high - er than you!

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.

Holy God,
you alone are holy, you alone are God.

The universe declares your praise:
beyond the stars;
beneath the sea;
within each cell;
with every breath.

Generations bless your faithfulness:
through the water;
by night and day;
across the wilderness;
out of exile;
into the future.

We give you thanks for your beloved Son:
at the heart of human life;
near to those who suffer;
beside the sinner;
among the poor;
with us now.

***Lord we stand amazed at your presence
Astounded by your mercy and love
Our hands are lifted high in surrender
Your grace for us is always enough
So Lord we meet you here at your table
Remembering as you taught us to do
Let our lives forever praise the glory of your name
There is no one higher than you.***

In the night in which he was betrayed,
our Lord Jesus took bread,
and gave thanks; broke it,
and gave it to his disciples, saying:
Take and eat; this is my body, given for you.
Do this for the remembrance of me.
Again, after supper, he took the cup,
gave thanks, and gave it for all to drink, saying:
This cup is the new covenant in my blood,
shed for you and for all people for the forgiveness of sin.
Do this for the remembrance of me.

***Lord we stand amazed at your presence
Astounded by your mercy and love
Our hands are lifted high in surrender
Your grace for us is always enough
So Lord we meet you here at your table
Remembering as you taught us to do
Let our lives forever praise the glory of your name
There is no one higher than you.***

We pray for the gift of your Spirit:
in our gathering;
within this meal;
among your people;
throughout the world.

Blessing, praise, and thanks to you, holy God,
through Christ Jesus,
by your Spirit,
in your church, without end. Amen.

***Lord we stand amazed at your presence
Astounded by your mercy and love
Our hands are lifted high in surrender
Your grace for us is always enough
So Lord we meet you here at your table
Remembering as you taught us to do
Let our lives forever praise the glory of your name
There is no one higher than you.***

Sharing the Bread and Cup

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

Hymn

Christ is Made the Sure Foundation

CH275

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, May 7	10:15am Worship and Worship Circle
Monday, May 8	10am First Church leads Worship at St Joseph Living Center 7-9pm Take Note in Fellowship Hall
Tuesday, May 9	10:30 First Church leads Worship at MCNR
Wednesday, May 10	1pm Book Group in Fellowship Hall 5pm First Church hosts the Community Supper at First Baptist Willimantic
Thursday, May 11	12:15pm Contemplative Communion 5:30pm Governing Board
Sunday, May 14	10:15am Worship and Worship Circle with Rev. Pat Felleter Preaching