



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

549 Storrs Rd. P.O. Box 36 Mansfield Center, CT 06250

860.423.9008 + [www.myfcc.info](http://www.myfcc.info)

All the Members, Ministers

Rev. Joseph Blotz, Pastor + Erik Haeger, Organist

Olivia Russell, Worship Circle Coordinator

**THE NINETEENTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME + AUGUST 13, 2023**

**Chimes and Prelude**

**Welcome and Greeting**

**Centering in the Spirit**

Finisterre

David Whyte

The road in the end taking the path the sun had taken,  
into the western sea, and the moon rising behind you  
as you stood where ground turned to ocean: no way  
to your future now but the way your shadow could take,  
walking before you across water, going where shadows go,  
no way to make sense of a world that wouldn't let you pass  
except to call an end to the way you had come,  
to take out each frayed letter you had brought  
and light their illumined corners; and to read  
them as they drifted on the western light;  
to empty your bags; to sort this and to leave that;  
to promise what you needed to promise all along,  
and to abandon the shoes that had brought you here  
right at the water's edge, not because you had given up  
but because now, you would find a different way to tread,  
and because, through it all, part of you would still walk on,  
no matter how, over the waves.

**Hymn**

*Eternal Father Strong to Save*

CH85

**Confessing our Brokenness and Opening Prayer**

Hear these words from the Gospel according to Matthew: Immediately Jesus made the disciples get into the boat and go on ahead to the other side, while he dismissed the crowds. And after he had dismissed the crowds, he went up the mountain by himself to pray. When evening came, he was there alone, but by this time the boat,

battered by the waves, was far from the land, for the wind was against them. And early in the morning he came walking toward them on the sea. But when the disciples saw him walking on the sea, they were terrified, saying, "It is a ghost!" And they cried out in fear. But immediately Jesus spoke to them and said, "Take heart, it is I; do not be afraid." Peter answered him, "Lord, if it is you, command me to come to you on the water." He said, "Come." So Peter got out of the boat, started walking on the water, and came toward Jesus. But when he noticed the strong wind, he became frightened, and beginning to sink, he cried out, "Lord, save me!" Jesus immediately reached out his hand and caught him, saying to him, "You of little faith, why did you doubt?" When they got into the boat, the wind ceased. And those in the boat worshiped him, saying, "Truly you are the Son of God."

When in this past week have we given in to fear?  
 When have not cried out for help when we needed it?

*Silence*

**Through the storms of life, O God, you are with your people in the person of Jesus your Son. Calm our fears and strengthen our faith that we may never doubt your presence among us. 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.

**Christian Scripture**

Romans 10:5-15

The earlier revelation was intended simply to get us ready for the Messiah, who then puts everything right for those who trust him to do it. Moses wrote that anyone who insists on using the law code to live right before God soon discovers it's not so easy—every detail of life regulated by fine print! But trusting God to shape the right living in us is a different story—no precarious climb up to heaven to recruit the Messiah, no dangerous descent into hell to rescue the Messiah. So what exactly was Moses saying?

The word that saves is right here,  
 as near as the tongue in your mouth,  
 as close as the heart in your chest.

It's the word of faith that welcomes God to go to work and set things right for us. This is the core of our preaching. Say the welcoming word to God—"Jesus is my Master"—embracing, body and soul, God's work of doing in us what he did in raising Jesus from the dead. That's it. You're not "doing" anything; you're simply calling out to God, trusting him to do it for you. That's salvation. With your whole being you embrace God setting things right, and then you say it, right out loud: "God has set everything right between him and me!"

Scripture reassures us, "No one who trusts God like this—heart and soul—will ever regret it." It's exactly the same no matter what a person's religious background may be: the same God for all of us, acting the same incredibly generous way to everyone who calls out for help. "Everyone who calls, 'Help, God!' gets help."

But how can people call for help if they don't know who to trust? And how can they know who to trust if they haven't heard of the One who can be trusted? And how can they hear if nobody tells them? And how is anyone going to tell them, unless someone is sent to do it? That's why Scripture exclaims,  
A sight to take your breath away!  
Grand processions of people  
telling all the good things of God!

**Psalter**

Psalm 105: We Sing Your Mighty Power O God

CH64

### **Hebrew Scripture**

Genesis 37:1-4, 12-28

Jacob settled in the land where his father had lived as an alien, the land of Canaan. This is the story of the family of Jacob. Joseph, being seventeen years old, was shepherding the flock with his brothers; he was a helper to the sons of Bilhah and Zilpah, his father's wives; and Joseph brought a bad report of them to their father. Now Israel loved Joseph more than any other of his children, because he was the son of his old age; and he had made him a long robe with sleeves. But when his brothers saw that their father loved him more than all his brothers, they hated him, and could not speak peaceably to him. Now his brothers went to pasture their father's flock near Shechem. And Israel said to Joseph, "Are not your brothers pasturing the flock at Shechem? Come, I will send you to them." He answered, "Here I am." So he said to him, "Go now, see if it is well with your brothers and with the flock; and bring word back to me." So he sent him from the valley of Hebron. He came to Shechem, and a man found him wandering in the fields; the man asked him, "What are you seeking?" "I am seeking my brothers," he said; "tell me, please, where they are pasturing the flock." The man said, "They have gone away, for I heard them say, 'Let us go to Dothan.'" So Joseph went after his brothers, and found them at Dothan. They saw him from a distance, and before he came near to them, they conspired to kill him. They said to one another, "Here comes this dreamer. Come now, let us kill him and throw him into one of the

pits; then we shall say that a wild animal has devoured him, and we shall see what will become of his dreams." But when Reuben heard it, he delivered him out of their hands, saying, "Let us not take his life." Reuben said to them, "Shed no blood; throw him into this pit here in the wilderness, but lay no hand on him" --that he might rescue him out of their hand and restore him to his father. So when Joseph came to his brothers, they stripped him of his robe, the long robe with sleeves that he wore; and they took him and threw him into a pit. The pit was empty; there was no water in it. Then they sat down to eat; and looking up they saw a caravan of Ishmaelites coming from Gilead, with their camels carrying gum, balm, and resin, on their way to carry it down to Egypt. Then Judah said to his brothers, "What profit is it if we kill our brother and conceal his blood? Come, let us sell him to the Ishmaelites, and not lay our hands on him, for he is our brother, our own flesh." And his brothers agreed. When some Midianite traders passed by, they drew Joseph up, lifting him out of the pit, and sold him to the Ishmaelites for twenty pieces of silver. And they took Joseph to Egypt.

## Reflection

### Call to Prayer

*Lord Listen to Your Children Praying*

CH305

The image shows two staves of musical notation in G major (one sharp) and 2/2 time. The melody is simple and hymn-like. The lyrics are written below the notes.

9 Lord, li-sten to your chi - ldren pray - ing. Lord, send your Spi-rit in this place.

Lord, lis-ten to your chi - ldren pray - ing. Sendus love, sendus power, sendus grace.

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

For your whole church throughout the world. Give courage in the midst of storms, so that we see and hear Jesus calling: "Take heart, it is I: do not be afraid." May we follow Christ wherever he leads.

For the well-being of your creation. Protect waterways, forests, lands, and wildlife from exploitation and abuse. Help the human family endeavor to sustain and be sustained by the resources of your hand.

For the nations and their leaders. In you, steadfast love and faithfulness meet, and righteousness and peace kiss. May nations in conflict know the peace that is the fruit of justice, and the justice that is the path to peace.

For those in need. Everyone who calls upon your name will be saved. Accompany all who are lonely, hear the voices of those who cry out in anguish, and support those who are frustrated in their search for an affordable place to live. We pray for those suffering this day.

For our congregation. You have gathered us here today as your people and we thank you for this gift. We pray for those who are new to this community, for students and teachers preparing for a new school year, and for those struggling with unexpected hardship. Supply us generously with your grace for our life together.

We give you thanks, O God, for the saints of the whole church from all times and places, and for the saints in our lives and in our community whom you have gathered to yourself.

*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

*Dona Nobis Pacem*

CH297

*Financial 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](http://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**

**Holy Spirit keep us attuned to the voices around us, to those who need us to be bearers of your love and compassion; may these gifts we have given help us, through your church, meet those needs. Amen.**

## **Hymn**

*Just a Closer Walk With Thee*

CH557

## **Benediction and Postlude**

### **The Week Ahead...**

Sunday, August 13

10:15am Worship and Worship Circle

Following Worship, Ministry of Caring

Monday, August 14

10am First Church leads Worship at St Joseph Living Center

Tuesday, August 15

3:15pm First Church leads Worship at MCNR

Thursday, August 17

9:30am Quilting Group in Fellowship Hall

12:15pm Contemplative Communion in Yellow Office

Sunday, August 20

10:15am Worship and Worship Circle

5pm PFLAG of Mansfield Tolland in Fellowship Hall