



**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

All the Members, Ministers

Rev. Joseph Blotz, Pastor + Erik Haeger, Organist

Olivia Russell, Worship Circle Coordinator

THE TWENTY-FIRST SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME + AUGUST 27, 2023

Chimes and Prelude

Welcome and Greeting

Centering in the Spirit

Moses Waits By the Nile

Andera Skevington

Here you stand,
by the place where your mother left you
in a basket,
where your sister stood watch,
all those long, restless years ago.
In the place where a Princess'
attendant drew you out from the water,
crying,
out from the Nile-reeds,
where crocodiles waited,
out from the flood and the snakes
and the hum of mosquitoes,
out from the sentence of death –
instead, adopting you,
making you her own.
And now, all these long,
restless years later,
another from the royal house
makes his way to the bathing place,
just as she did,
and will find you there
as you stand, with your brother
by your side,
as golden Nile-waters
swirl and eddy and
ripple outwards, outwards

from the place where you stand,
shining and fearful
in the dawn light.
And, as there was no freedom
to be granted that day,
You raised high your staff,
brought it down to
strike that golden water
which thickened and reddened
and turned to blood.
And the Nile,
which should be the life-blood
of the land,
became instead the blood of death.
Death like that
of newborns
cast without help or mercy
into these waters, long restless
years ago, at the time
when you were saved.

Judgement,
could this be judgement,
stretching out like
darkness over a dark land?

Where is peace, and mercy,
and life to be found now?
Where a soft heart
in this dry land?
Where freedom?

Hymn

Come Ye Faithful Raise the Strain

CH215

Confessing our Brokenness and Opening Prayer

Hear these words from the Gospel according to Matthew: Now when Jesus came into the district of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, "Who do people say that the Son of Man is?" And they said, "Some say John the Baptist, but others Elijah, and still others Jeremiah or one of the prophets." He said to them, "But who do you say that I am?" Simon Peter answered, "You are the Messiah, the Son of the living

God." And Jesus answered him, "Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah! For flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my Father in heaven. And I tell you, you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not prevail against it. I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven." Then he sternly ordered the disciples not to tell anyone that he was the Messiah.

When in this past week have we not paid attention to what is right in front of us?

Silence

God of Miriam and Moses, you are our help from age to age. Accept our worship, our living sacrifice, and transform us by your Spirit, that, being many members of one true body, we may dare to pray together in the name of Christ the Lord. 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 12:1-6

So here's what I want you to do, God helping you: Take your everyday, ordinary life—your sleeping, eating, going-to-work, and walking-around life—and place it before God as an offering. Embracing what God does for you is the best thing you can do for him. Don't become so well-adjusted to your culture that you fit into it without even thinking. Instead, fix your attention on God. You'll be changed from the inside out. Readily recognize what he wants from you, and quickly respond to it. Unlike the culture around you, always dragging you down to its level of immaturity, God brings the best out of you, develops well-formed maturity in you.

I'm speaking to you out of deep gratitude for all that God has given me, and especially as I have responsibilities in relation to you. Living then, as every one of you does, in pure grace, it's important that you not misinterpret yourselves as people who are bringing this goodness

to God. No, God brings it all to you. The only accurate way to understand ourselves is by what God is and by what he does for us, not by what we are and what we do for him.

In this way we are like the various parts of a human body. Each part gets its meaning from the body as a whole, not the other way around. The body we're talking about is Christ's body of chosen people. Each of us finds our meaning and function as a part of his body. But as a chopped-off finger or cut-off toe we wouldn't amount to much, would we? So since we find ourselves fashioned into all these excellently formed and marvelously functioning parts in Christ's body, let's just go ahead and be what we were made to be, without enviously or pridefully comparing ourselves with each other, or trying to be something we aren't.

Psalter

Psalm 124: Stand By Me

CH629

Hebrew Scripture

Exodus 1:8-2:10

Now a new king arose over Egypt, who did not know Joseph. He said to his people, "Look, the Israelite people are more numerous and more powerful than we. Come, let us deal shrewdly with them, or they will increase and, in the event of war, join our enemies and fight against us and escape from the land." Therefore they set taskmasters over them to oppress them with forced labor. They built supply cities, Pithom and Rameses, for Pharaoh. But the more they were oppressed, the more they multiplied and spread, so that the Egyptians came to dread the Israelites. The Egyptians became ruthless in imposing tasks on the Israelites, and made their lives bitter with hard service in mortar and brick and in every kind of field labor. They were ruthless in all the tasks that they imposed on them. The king of Egypt said to the Hebrew midwives, one of whom was named Shiphrah and the other Puah, "When you act as midwives to the Hebrew women, and see them on the birthstool, if it is a boy, kill him; but if it is a girl, she shall live." But the midwives feared God; they did not do as the king of Egypt commanded them, but they let the boys live. So the king of Egypt summoned the midwives and said to them, "Why have you done this, and allowed the boys to live?" The midwives said to Pharaoh, "Because the Hebrew women are not like the Egyptian women; for they are vigorous and give birth before the midwife comes to them." So God dealt well with the midwives; and the people multiplied and became very strong. And because the midwives feared God, he gave them families. Then Pharaoh commanded all his people, "Every boy that is born to the Hebrews you shall throw into the Nile, but you shall let every girl live." Now a man from the house of Levi went and married a Levite woman. The woman conceived and bore a son; and when she saw that he was a fine baby, she hid him three months. When she could hide him no longer she got a papyrus basket for him, and plastered it with bitumen and pitch; she put the child in it and placed it among the reeds on the bank of the river. His sister stood at a distance, to see what would happen to him. The daughter of Pharaoh came down to bathe at the river, while her attendants walked beside the river. She saw the basket among the reeds and sent her maid to bring it. When

she opened it, she saw the child. He was crying, and she took pity on him, "This must be one of the Hebrews' children," she said. Then his sister said to Pharaoh's daughter, "Shall I go and get you a nurse from the Hebrew women to nurse the child for you?" Pharaoh's daughter said to her, "Yes." So the girl went and called the child's mother. Pharaoh's daughter said to her, "Take this child and nurse it for me, and I will give you your wages." So the woman took the child and nursed it. When the child grew up, she brought him to Pharaoh's daughter, and she took him as her son. She named him Moses, "because," she said, "I drew him out of the water."

Reflection

Call to Prayer

Lord Listen to Your Children Praying

CH305

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

Lord our rock, you are our foundation in Jesus Christ, your Son, whom we confess as the living God. Prepare your church for its mission in bearing witness to Christ, both here at home and throughout the world.

You call forth praises from the far reaches of the universe to the smallest of creatures. Join our songs to theirs, that a spirit of praise and thanksgiving will arouse us to cherish this wondrous home you give us.

All the kings of the earth shall praise you, O Lord. Direct the leaders of countries, legislators and magistrates, mayors and councils, to walk in your ways. Help leaders regard those in need with mercy and fulfill your loving purposes in the governance of peoples.

Though we walk in the midst of trouble, you preserve us, deliver us, and fulfill your purpose for us. According to your steadfast love, grant healing and wholeness to those who are bereaved, in trouble or adversity, or sick and in need of care.

You call us into this community, in which we, though many, are one in Christ. May we recognize in ourselves and in one another the unique gifts you have given us for the building up of the church for the sake of the world.

You are the everlasting Rock from which we were hewn, and you restore your people to joy and gladness. In blessed memory and hope, we thank you for the lives of our beloved dead. Bring us with them to our heavenly home.

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

Spirit of Gentleness

CH249

*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*

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 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

O For a Thousand Tongues to Sing

CH5

Benediction and Postlude

The Week Ahead...

Sunday, August 27

10:15am Worship and Worship Circle
3-7pm Take Note Potluck in Fellowship Hall

Monday, August 28

9am-3:30pm Project Genesis in Fellowship Hall
10am First Church leads Worship at St Joseph Living Center
4-6pm Summer Musical Theater Workshop
7-9pm Take Note

Tuesday, August 29

9am-3:30pm Project Genesis in Fellowship Hall
4-6pm Summer Musical Theater Workshop

Thursday, August 31

12:15pm Contemplative Communion in Yellow Office

Sunday, September 3

10:15am Worship and Worship Circle

Back to School is just around the corner and that means great deals on school supplies for our Church World Service School Kits! This year we need:

22 blunt end (rounded)scissors
7 12" rulers with centimeter markings
30 pencil sharpeners

Please place purchased items in the basket in front of our Welcome Table!

Our own Erik Haeger will be participating in the Jimmy Fund Walk, supporting the fight against cancer at Boston's Dana-Farber Cancer Institute, raising funds for adult and pediatric cancer care and research. You can contribute to his fundraising here.