



**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 SEASON OF CREATION + SEPTEMBER 3, 2023**

**Chimes and Prelude**

**Welcome and Greeting**

**Centering in the Spirit of Creation**

Blessed are you, Creator God, for in Christ, the living water,  
you have blessed us and transformed us.

**Grant that as we are sprinkled with this water  
we will be refreshed by the power of the Holy Spirit.**

May we draw water from the springs of salvation.

**and continue to walk together in the new life we received in baptism.**

**Musical Response**

*Water River Spirit Grace*

CH366

**Confessing our Brokenness and Opening Prayer**

Hear these words from the Gospel according to Matthew: From that time on, Jesus began to show his disciples that he must go to Jerusalem and undergo great suffering at the hands of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and on the third day be raised. And Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him, saying, "God forbid it, Lord! This must never happen to you." But he turned and said to Peter, "Get behind me, Satan! You are a stumbling block to me; for you are setting your mind not on divine things but on human things." Then Jesus told his disciples, "If any want to become my followers, let them deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me. For those who want to save their life will lose it, and those who lose their life for my sake will find it.

When in this past week have we been a stumbling block to others?

*Silence*

**Faithful God, you are the hope of all the oppressed, and the source of freedom for those held captive. Make us strong to witness to your liberating power, in generosity of life and in humility of spirit, that all the world may delight in your goodness.**

**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

was from the start so it shall be for - ev - er one God, al - ways here.

**Christian Scripture**

Romans 12:9-21

Love from the center of who you are; don't fake it. Run for dear life from evil; hold on for dear life to good. Be good friends who love deeply; practice playing second fiddle.

Don't burn out; keep yourselves fueled and aflame. Be alert servants of the Master, cheerfully expectant. Don't quit in hard times; pray all the harder. Help needy Christians; be inventive in hospitality.

Bless your enemies; no cursing under your breath. Laugh with your joyful friends when they're happy; share tears when they're down. Get along with each other; don't be stuck-up. Make friends with nobodies; don't be the great somebody.

Don't hit back; discover beauty in everyone. If you've got it in you, get along with everybody. Don't insist on getting even; that's not for you to do. "I'll do the judging," says God. "I'll take care of it."

Our Scriptures tell us that if you see your enemy hungry, go buy that person lunch, or if he's thirsty, get him a drink. Your generosity will surprise him with goodness. Don't let evil get the best of you; get the best of evil by doing good.

**Psalter**

Psalm 105: All Creature of Our God and King

CH22

**Hebrew Scripture**

Exodus 3:1-15

Moses was keeping the flock of his father-in-law Jethro, the priest of Midian; he led his flock beyond the wilderness, and came to Horeb, the mountain of God. There the angel of the LORD appeared to him in a flame of fire out of a bush; he looked, and the bush was blazing, yet it was not consumed.

Then Moses said, "I must turn aside and look at this great sight, and see why the bush is not burned up." When the LORD saw that he had turned aside to see, God called to him out of the bush, "Moses, Moses!" And he said, "Here I am." Then God said, "Come no closer! Remove the sandals from your feet, for the place on which you are standing is holy ground." He said further, "I am the God of your father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob."

And Moses hid his face, for he was afraid to look at God. Then the LORD said, "I have observed the misery of my people who are in Egypt; I have heard their cry on account of their taskmasters. Indeed, I know their sufferings, and I have come down to deliver them from the Egyptians, and to bring them up out of that land to a good and broad land, a land flowing with milk and honey, to the country of the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Amorites, the Perizzites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites. The cry of the Israelites has now come to me; I have also seen how the Egyptians oppress them. So come, I will send you to Pharaoh to bring my people, the Israelites, out of Egypt."

But Moses said to God, "Who am I that I should go to Pharaoh, and bring the Israelites out of Egypt?" God said, "I will be with you; and this shall be the sign for you that it is I who sent you when you have brought the people out of Egypt, you shall worship God on this mountain."

But Moses said to God, "If I come to the Israelites and say to them, 'The God of your ancestors has sent me to you,' and they ask me, 'What is his name?' what shall I say to them?"

God said to Moses, "I AM WHO I AM." God said further, "Thus you shall say to the Israelites, 'I AM has sent me to you.'"

God also said to Moses, "Thus you shall say to the Israelites, 'The LORD, the God of your ancestors, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, has sent me to you' This is my name forever, and this my title for all generations.

## Reflection

### Call to Prayer

### Stepping In

Christopher Grundy

There is a prayer like a wide ri-ver it ne-ver ends,  
 does not be - gin... a - round the world  
 its al - ways flow-ing and we are step-ping in we are step-ping in.

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

God of wonder, the earth is yours and all that is in it.  
 Heal your creation and give us eyes to see the world as you do.  
 As the seasons change, pattern the rhythm of our lives in harmony with all creation.

God of all nations, you call us to live peaceably with all.  
 Give us ears to hear one another, even those we name as enemies.  
 Fill all leaders with mercy and understanding, that they advocate and genuinely care for those who are poor and most vulnerable in their communities.

God of salvation, you promise to deliver us.  
 Give those who suffer a strong sense of your presence and love.  
 Accompany those who are uncertain,  
 raise the spirits of those who are despairing,  
 and heal those who are.

God of community, you call us to rejoice in hope,  
 be patient in suffering,  
 and persevere in prayer.  
 Make our congregation a workshop of your love.  
 When we quarrel, bring reconciliation.  
 Help us overcome evil with good.

God of all grace, you give us everlasting life.  
 In love we recall your holy ones who now live in your undying light.  
 In our remembering, give us a foretaste of the feast to come.

*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/trespases  
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

*We Are Standing on Holy Ground*

CH112

*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

*Eat this Bread*

CH414

### 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.**

God of all, Ruler of the Universe,  
you are worthy of glory and praise.

At your command all things came to be:  
the vast expanse of interstellar space,  
galaxies, suns, the planets in their courses,  
and this fragile earth, our island home.

By your will they were created and have their being.

From the primal elements you brought forth the human race,  
and blessed us with memory, reason, and skill.  
You made us the stewards of creation.

But we turned against you, and betrayed your trust;  
and we turned your creation and against one another.

Again and again, you called us to return.  
Through prophets and sages you revealed your righteous Law.  
And in the fullness of time you sent Jesus, your only Son,  
born of a woman, to fulfill your Law,  
to open for us the way of freedom and peace.

Therefore, we praise you, joining with the heavenly chorus,  
with prophets, apostles, and martyrs,  
and with all those in every generation who have looked to you in hope,  
to proclaim with them your glory, in the unending hymn:

### Musical Response

### *Santo Santo Santo*

### Traditional Argentine

San - to, san - to, san - to. Mi co - ra - zon te a - do - ra! Mi  
Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly. My heart, my heart a - dores you! My

5  
co - ra - zon te sa - be de - cir: San - to eres, Se - nor!  
heart knows how to say to you: Ho - ly are you, Lord!

We remember how,  
on the night he was betrayed, Jesus took bread,  
said the blessing, broke the bread,  
and gave it to his friends, and said,  
“Take, eat: This is my Body, which is given for you.  
Do this for the remembrance of me.”

After supper, he took the cup of wine,  
gave thanks, and said,  
“Drink this, all of you:  
This is my Blood of the new Covenant,  
which is shed for you and for many for the forgiveness of sins.  
Whenever you drink it, do this for the remembrance of me.”

Remembering now his work of redemption,  
and offering to you this sacrifice of thanksgiving,  
we celebrate his death and resurrection,  
as we await the day of his coming.

Sanctify these gifts of grape and grain by your Holy Spirit  
that our eyes might be opened to see your hand at work in the world about us.

By your Spirit, deliver us from the presumption of coming to this Table for solace only,  
and not for strength;  
for pardon only, and not for renewal.

Through this Holy Communion, may your Spirit make us one body,  
one spirit in Christ,  
that we may worthily serve the world in his name.

All this we ask, through Jesus Christ our great High Priest,  
to whom, with you and the Holy Spirit,  
your Church gives honor, glory, and worship,  
from generation to generation. Amen.

### **Sharing the Bread and Cup**

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

**Hymn**

*Creator God Creating Still*

CH62

### **Benediction and Postlude**

May we be blessed to open our hearts to receive the living waters of God's justice and peace  
within us:

**May we be blessed to share the living waters of justice and peace with our suffering  
brothers and sisters and all creatures around us:**

May we be blessed to walk together with all people of good will so that the many streams of the  
living waters may become a mighty river all over the Earth:

**And may God: Creator, Christ, and Spirit bless us on this journey. Amen.**

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## **THE WEEK AHEAD...**

### **Monday, September 4**

7-9pm Take Note in Fellowship Hall

### **Tuesday, September 5**

10:30 First Church leads Worship at MCNR

### **Thursday, September 7**

9:30 Sewing and Service in Fellowship Hall

10am First Church leads Worship at St Joseph Living Center

12:15pm Contemplative Communion in Yellow Office

### **Saturday, September 9**

9am Summer Musical Theater Workshop in Fellowship Hall

### **Sunday, September 10**

10:15am Worship and Worship Circle