



**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 10, 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: Jesus said, "If another member of the church sins against you, go and point out the fault when the two of you are alone. If the member listens to you, you have regained that one. But if you are not listened to, take one or two others along with you, so that every word may be confirmed by the evidence of two or three witnesses. If the member refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church; and if the offender refuses to listen even to the church, let such a one be to you as a Gentile and a tax collector. Truly I tell you, whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven. Again, truly I tell you, if two of you agree on earth about anything you ask, it will be done for you by my Father in heaven. For where two or three are gathered in my name, I am there among them."

When in this past week have we refused to listen to a hard truth about ourselves?

Silence

God among us, we gather in the name of Jesus to learn love for one another. Turn our feet from wayward paths, our hands from hurtful deeds, our minds toward your wisdom, and our hearts to your grace. Amen.

Song of Praise

Gloria

Christopher Grundy

9
 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 13:8-14

Don't run up debts, except for the huge debt of love you owe each other. When you love others, you complete what the law has been after all along.

The law code—don't sleep with another person's spouse, don't take someone's life, don't take what isn't yours, don't always be wanting what you don't have, and any other "don't" you can think of—finally adds up to this: Love other people as well as you do yourself. You can't go wrong when you love others. When you add up everything in the law code, the sum total is love.

But make sure that you don't get so absorbed and exhausted in taking care of all your day-by-day obligations that you lose track of the time and doze off, oblivious to God. The night is about over, dawn is about to break. Be up and awake to what God is doing! God is putting the finishing touches on the salvation work he began when we first believed.

We can't afford to waste a minute, must not squander these precious daylight hours in frivolity and indulgence, in sleeping around and dissipation, in bickering and grabbing everything in sight. Get out of bed and get dressed! Don't loiter and linger, waiting until the very last minute. Dress yourselves in Christ, and be up and about!

Psalter

Psalm 149: Marching to Zion

CH707

Hebrew Scripture

Exodus 12:1-14

The Lord said to Moses and Aaron in the land of Egypt, "This month shall mark for you the beginning of months; it shall be the first month of the year for you. Tell the whole congregation of Israel that on the tenth of this month they are to take a lamb for each family, a lamb for each household. If a household is too small for a whole lamb, it shall join its closest neighbor in obtaining one; the lamb shall be divided in proportion to the number of people who eat of it. Your lamb shall be without blemish, a year-old male; you may take it from the sheep or from the goats. You shall keep it until the fourteenth day of this month; then the whole assembled congregation of Israel shall slaughter it at twilight. They shall take some of the blood and put it on the two doorposts and the lintel of the houses in which they eat it. They shall eat the lamb that same night; they shall eat it roasted over the fire with unleavened bread and bitter herbs. Do not eat any of it raw or boiled in water but roasted over the fire, with its head, legs, and inner organs. You shall let none of it remain until the morning; anything that remains until the morning you shall burn with fire. This is how you shall eat it: your loins girded, your sandals on your feet, and your staff in your hand, and you shall eat it hurriedly. It is the Passover of the Lord. I will pass through the land of Egypt that night, and I will strike down every firstborn in the land of Egypt, from human to animal, and on all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgments: I am the Lord. The blood shall be a sign for you on the houses where you live: when I see the blood, I will pass over you, and no plague shall destroy you when I strike the land of Egypt. "This day shall be a day of remembrance for you. You shall celebrate it as a festival to the Lord; throughout your generations you shall observe it as a perpetual ordinance.

Reflection

Call to Prayer

Stepping In

Christopher Grundy

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

Prayers of the People and the Prayer of Jesus

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

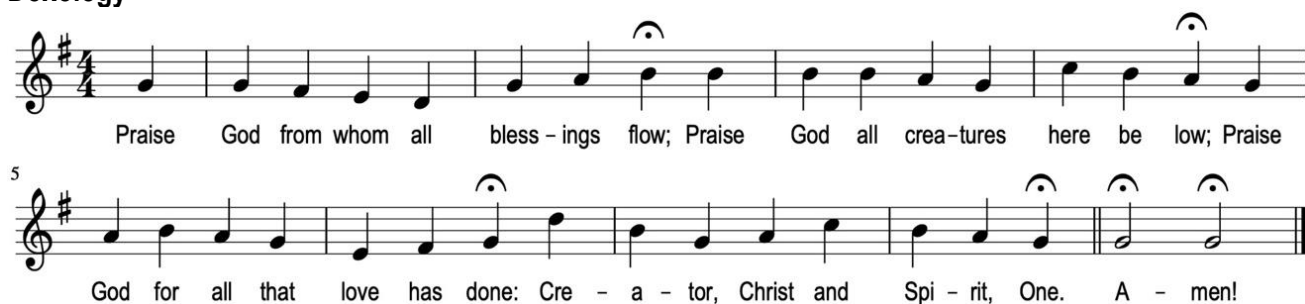
Be Not Afraid

Bob Dufford SJ

6 You shall cross the bar-ren des-ert, but you shall not die of thirst. You shall
11 wan-der far in safe-ty though you do not know the way you shall speak your words in
for-eign lands and all will un-der-stand. You shall see the face of God and live.
18 Chorus
Be not a-fraid I go be-fore you al-ways Come follow me, and I will give you rest.
29 Verse 2
34 If you pass through rag-oing wa-ters in the sea, you shall not drown. if you
40 walk a-mid the burn-ing flames, you shall not be harmed. If you stand be-fore the pow'r of hell and
death is at your side know that I am with you through it all.

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 God, may the gifts here given help meet the needs of the world. Amen.

Hymn

Holy Holy Holy

CH4

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.

The Week Ahead...

Monday, September 10

10am First Church leads Worship at St Joseph Living Center

7-9pm Take Note

Tuesday, September 12

5:30pm Governing Board on Zoom

Wednesday, September 13

First Church hosts the Community Meal at First Baptist Willimantic

1pm Book Group in Fellowship Hall

Thursday, September 14

12:15pm Contemplative Communion in Yellow Office

Sunday, September 17

10:15am Worship and Worship Circle

5pm PFLAG of Tolland Mansfield in Fellowship Hall