



**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 THIRTIETH-SECOND SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME + NOVEMBER 12, 2023

Chimes and Prelude

Welcome and Greeting

Centering in the Spirit

Hymn

Love Divine All Loves Excelling

CH517

Confessing our Brokenness and Opening Prayer

Hear these words from the First Nations Versionⁱ of the Gospel according to Matthew: “When that time comes, the ones who are walking Creator’s good road from above will be like ten young, unmarried women who took their ceremonial torches and went out to welcome the groom. Five of them were foolish and five were wise. The wise women took an extra clay pot of oil along for their torches, but the foolish ones did not bother to bring any. The groom did not come when expected, and they all fell asleep as they waited. Then suddenly, in the dark of the night, someone cried out, ‘Look! The groom is coming, let us go welcome him!’ All the women woke up to prepare their torches, but the oil in the torches had run out. The foolish ones said to the wise, ‘Give us some of your oil so our torches will not go out.’ The wise ones answered back, ‘There is not enough for all of us. Hurry, go to the village and trade for some more.’ They hurried away to get more oil. But while they were gone, the groom came and all the guests went into the lodge for the wedding feast, and the gate was closed. A while later the other women came to the gate and said to the gatekeeper, ‘Honored one, O honored one, open the door and let us come in.’ But he said to them, ‘I truly do not even know who you are—why should I let you in?’”

When have we acted foolishly? When have we neglected to help another in need?

Silence

Holy God, whose fire of love never goes out: free us from the fear of scarcity that keeps us out of love's own feast; renew our trust in your abundance which knows no death and keeps no count; through Jesus Christ, the oil of gladness. Amen.

ⁱ Many First Nations tribes communicate with the cultural and linguistic thought patterns found in their original tongues. The First Nations Version (FNV) recounts the Creator’s Story—the Christian Scriptures—following the tradition of Native storytellers’ oral cultures. This way of speaking, with its simple yet profound beauty and rich cultural idioms, still resonates in the hearts of First Nations people. The FNV is a dynamic equivalence translation that captures the simplicity, clarity, and beauty of Native storytellers in English, while remaining faithful to the original language of the New Testament.

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

1 Thessalonians 4:13-18

Some of the Thessalonians were worried that Christians who had already died would be excluded from the resurrection to eternal life when Christ comes again. Paul reassures them with the word of hope that all, living or dead, will be raised into everlasting life with Christ.

But we do not want you to be uninformed, brothers and sisters, about those who have died, so that you may not grieve as others do who have no hope. For since we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so, through Jesus, God will bring with him those who have died. For this we declare to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive, who are left until the coming of the Lord, will by no means precede those who have died. For the Lord himself, with a cry of command, with the archangel's call and with the sound of God's trumpet, will descend from heaven, and the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive, who are left, will be caught up in the clouds together with them to meet the Lord in the air, and so we will be with the Lord forever. Therefore encourage one another with these words.

Psalter

Psalm 72

Tune: EIN FESTE BURG

1. Grant jus - tice, Lord , to those who rule; let right - eous - ness com - pel their hand;
 2. As long as sun and stars of space walk their di - vine - a - ppoi - nted round;
 3. God's right - eous - ness ex - tends to all who seek a - ssur - ance in dis - tress;
 6
 their courts shall bear pros - per - i - ty, and serve the poor through - out the land.
 long as en - dures our fee - ble race, the bless - ings of the Lord - a - bound.
 the weak who in their an - quish bend when hate and vi - o - lence o - ppress.
 10
 O Lord, our cause de - fend; de - liv' - rance quick - ly send to those who, bound in chains
 Like rains that feed the field, our Lord to us will yield the boun - ty and the peace
 As gold - en sheaves of grain, God's har - vest we re - main; All praise to God a - bove!
 16
 of greed and sel - fish gains, sub - mit them - selves to your com - mand.
 which God will ne - ver cease to sho - wer where true faith - is found.
 Who crowns our life with love, O bless God's name for - e - ver.

Hebrew Scripture

Joshua 24:1-3a, 14-25

Joshua gathered all the tribes of Israel to Shechem, and summoned the elders, the heads, the judges, and the officers of Israel; and they presented themselves before God. And Joshua said to all the people, "Thus says the Lord, the God of Israel: Long ago your ancestors—Terah and his sons Abraham and Nahor—lived beyond the Euphrates and served other gods. Then I took your father Abraham from beyond the River and led him through all the land of Canaan and made his offspring many.

"Now therefore revere the Lord, and serve him in sincerity and in faithfulness; put away the gods that your ancestors served beyond the River and in Egypt, and serve the Lord. 15Now if you are unwilling to serve the Lord, choose this day whom you will serve, whether the gods your ancestors served in the region beyond the River or the gods of the Amorites in whose land you are living; but as for me and my household, we will serve the Lord."

Then the people answered, "Far be it from us that we should forsake the Lord to serve other gods; for it is the Lord our God who brought us and our ancestors up from the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery, and who did those great signs in our sight. He protected us along all the way that we went, and among all the peoples through whom we passed; and the Lord drove out before us all the peoples, the Amorites who lived in the land. Therefore we also will serve the Lord, for he is our God."

But Joshua said to the people, "You cannot serve the Lord, for he is a holy God. He is a jealous God; he will not forgive your transgressions or your sins. If you forsake the Lord and serve foreign gods, then he will turn and do you harm, and consume you, after having done you good." And the people said to Joshua, "No, we will serve the Lord!" Then Joshua said to the people, "You are witnesses against yourselves that you have chosen the Lord, to serve him." And they said, "We are witnesses." He said, "Then put away the foreign gods that are among you, and incline your hearts to the Lord, the God of Israel." The people said to Joshua, "The Lord our God we will serve, and him we will obey." So Joshua made a covenant with the people that day, and made statutes and ordinances for them at Shechem.

Reflection

The Rev. Joseph Blotz

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

Holy God, rouse us to deep praise as we gather for worship. Enliven our worship with sincere and heartfelt song. Sustain the work of all church musicians and artists who lead us in praise and prayer.

Holy Creator, surprise and delight us with the beauty of the world you have made. Bless the work of landscapers, architects, and artists whose work invites us into harmonious living with your creation.

Holy Judge, let justice roll down like waters over this world. Reign over the courtrooms of every land, in the hearts of those who guard the law and those who stand accused of crimes. Be present in cases where we long for both justice and mercy to prevail.

Holy Companion, console those who feel lonely or abandoned. Share the hours of those who live and eat alone. Comfort those who have few friends or who struggle with their identity and place in this world.

Holy Protector, be with all who observed Veterans Day. Guard the lives of soldiers and civilians. Comfort all who mourn. Bring quickly your reign of peace.

Holy and Immortal One, we pray in thanksgiving for the lives of all who have died. Remind us of the frailty and shortness of our own lives and inspire us to use them for the building up of your kingdom.

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

All Things Bright and Beautiful

CH61

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

God of all goodness and grace, receive the gifts we offer; and grant that our whole life may give you glory and praise; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Hymn

Take My Life

CH609

Benediction and Postlude

The Week Ahead...

Monday, November 13

10am First Church leads Worship at St. Joseph Living Center

7pm Take Note Rehearsal

Tuesday, November 14

9:30-5 Quilt Group Retreat in Fellowship Hall
5pm Governing Board on Zoom

Wednesday, November 15

9:30-5 Quilt Group Retreat in Fellowship Hall
1pm Book Group

Thursday, October 16

9:30-5 Quilt Group Retreat in Fellowship Hall
12:15pm Contemplative Communion in Yellow Office
7pm Choir Practice

Friday, October 17

9:30-5 Quilt Group Retreat in Fellowship Hall

Saturday, November 18

9-12noon Community Giving Event: Collecting socks, gloves, underwear, and toiletries in the lower parking lot

Sunday, November 19

10:15am Worship and Worship Circle