

**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 THIRTY-THIRD SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME + NOVEMBER 19, 2023

Chimes and Prelude

Welcome and Greeting

Centering in the Spirit

Devorah

Rachel Barenblat

Beneath her palm tree, Devorah
(the honey bee, her sting intact)
judged the acts of the Israelites
the people came with gifts
of oil and flour and yearling lambs
and she answered them with justice

she sent for Barak in his leathers
words fell from her mouth like honey
and he yearned to taste her sweetness

come with me, he pleaded
I will relinquish my own glory
if I can have you by my side

nine hundred iron chariots thundered
the Infinite cast panic like a spell
and all Sisera's army was slain
and Devorah slept, and dreamed

Sisera stumbles into a woman's tent
Jael's doors open wide to let him in
he drinks milk fermented in goatskin
he slides into sleep: her tent pin rests
at his sweaty temple: she drives it home.

Hymn

We Gather Together

CH276

Confessing our Brokenness and Opening Prayer

Hear these words from the First Nations Versionⁱ of the Gospel according to Matthew: "Here is another way to see how the Creator's good road from above will come: It is like a tribal headman preparing for a long journey. He gathered three trusted tribal members together to give them charge of his goods during his journey. He gave five herds of horses to one, two herds to another, and one herd to the third man, giving each one according to his ability to make a good trade. After that he left on his journey. The man with five herds of horses went to work right away, traded well, and earned five more herds. In the same way the one with two herds used them to gain two more. But the one who had only one kept the herd well hidden and safe from thieves. Many moons passed before the headman returned from his journey. He gathered the trusted tribal members together to see how well they had traded. The one given five herds came forward and said, 'Look, I have gained five more!' You have served me well, my good and trusted friend,' the headman said, 'You have done well with a small amount, now I will give you much more. Come and live with my family and enjoy all I have.' Then the man to whom he gave two herds came forward and said, 'You gave me two herds, but I have four to give back to you.' The headman honored him and did the same for him as the one with ten. Then the man to whom he had given one herd came to him and said, 'Headman, I know you have a reputation of being a harsh man, taking what you did not plant and gathering what is not yours. I was afraid, so I hid the herd away to keep them safe for you. Here they are!' The headman said to him, 'You have broken the trust I gave you and have proven you are lazy and no good. If you knew I was a harsh man, why did you not ask the trading post to trade for them so there would be something to show for them when I returned?' So he told them to take the herd from him and give it to the one who had ten and said, 'The ones who do well with what they are given will be given more, but the ones who do nothing with it will lose even what they have been given.' Then he had the man thrown out of his house into the darkness outside, the place where they weep and grind their teeth together in anger and frustration.

When in this past week have we broken trust?

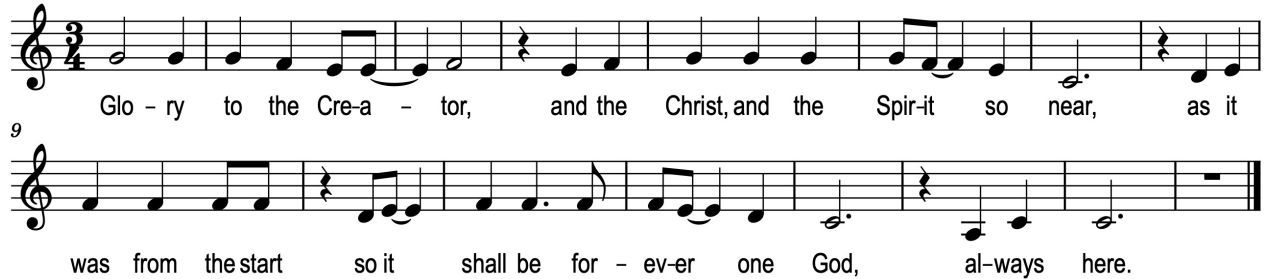
Silence

God of the covenant, even when we fail, your Spirit invites us to remember that you chose us to be your servant people. Awaken us to the power and gifts you pour into us for the good of creation, and grant that we may be trustworthy in all things, producing abundantly as we work to build your realm. 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

1 Thessalonians 5:1-11

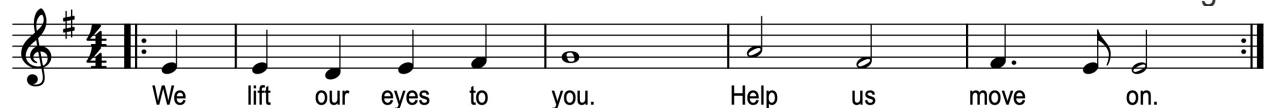
In this reading Paul counsels the new disciples to be alert as in the daylight, for the day of Jesus' return will come swiftly and unexpectedly, although at a time unknown to mortals. Many early Christians believed that the world would soon come to an end and that this meant they could live it up, spending their nights eating and drinking to excess. Paul urges the Thessalonians not to live like people of the night, but to live soberly and expectantly.

¹Now concerning the times and the seasons, brothers and sisters, you do not need to have anything written to you. ²For you yourselves know very well that the day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night. ³When they say, "There is peace and security," then sudden destruction will come upon them, as labor pains come upon a pregnant woman, and there will be no escape! ⁴But you, beloved, are not in darkness, for that day to surprise you like a thief; ⁵for you are all children of light and children of the day; we are not of the night or of darkness. ⁶So then let us not fall asleep as others do, but let us keep awake and be sober; ⁷for those who sleep sleep at night, and those who are drunk get drunk at night. ⁸But since we belong to the day, let us be sober, and put on the breastplate of faith and love, and for a helmet the hope of salvation. ⁹For God has destined us not for wrath but for obtaining salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ, ¹⁰who died for us, so that whether we are awake or asleep we may live with him. ¹¹Therefore encourage one another and build up each other, as indeed you are doing.

Psalter

Psalm 123

Richard Bruxvoort Colligan



We lift our eyes to you. Help us move on.

To you I lift up my eyes, O God, you who are enthroned in the heavens!

As the eyes of servants look to the hand of their master,

as the eyes of a maid to the hand of her mistress,

so our eyes look to you LORD our God, until you have mercy upon us.

Have mercy upon us, O LORD, have mercy upon us, f
or we have had more than enough of contempt.

**Our soul has had more than its fill of the scorn of those who are at ease,
of the contempt of the proud.**

Hebrew Scripture

Judges 4:1-7

¹The Israelites again did what was evil in the sight of the LORD, after Ehud died. ²So the LORD sold them into the hand of King Jabin of Canaan, who reigned in Hazor; the commander of his army was Sisera, who lived in Harosheth-ha-goiim. ³Then the Israelites cried out to the LORD for help; for he had nine hundred chariots of iron, and had oppressed the Israelites cruelly twenty years.

⁴At that time Deborah, a prophetess, wife of Lappidoth, was judging Israel. ⁵She used to sit under the palm of Deborah between Ramah and Bethel in the hill country of Ephraim; and the Israelites came up to her for judgment. ⁶She sent and summoned Barak son of Abinoam from Kedesh in Naphtali, and said to him, "The LORD, the God of Israel, commands you, 'Go, take position at Mount Tabor, bringing ten thousand from the tribe of Naphtali and the tribe of Zebulun. ⁷I will draw out Sisera, the general of Jabin's army, to meet you by the Wadi Kishon with his chariots and his troops; and I will give him into your hand.'"

Reflection

Call to Prayer

Lord Listen to Your Children Praying

CH305

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

9 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 of the church, ignite your people with the passion of your love. By the fire of your Holy Spirit, unify us across ministries, congregations, and denominations, and refine us to participate in your activity throughout the world.

Lord of creation, we stand in awe at the works of your hands and praise you for the beauty of nature. Bless the earth for your glory and restore its integrity where exploitation has caused ruin.

Lord of the nations, sound forth your justice in the ears of all leaders. Increase concern for those who are most vulnerable, especially as international leaders forge trade agreements and cooperate to end human rights abuses.

Lord of all in need, search out all who cry to you in distress. Scatter the heavy clouds of depression, chronic illness, unemployment, and loneliness with your radiant light. Send us as encouragement and signs of your healing.

Lord of the stranger, stir up holy restlessness in us to extend love to those at the margins. Release our desire for control and open us to learn from the perspectives of others.

Lord of the living and the dead, we give you thanks for all the saints at rest from their labors. Rouse us to live by their example, that saints yet to come may also know your love.

*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

Many and Great

CH58

*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 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

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

Now Thank We All Our God

CH715

Benediction and Postlude

The Week Ahead...

Monday, November 20

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

7pm Take Note Rehearsal

Tuesday, November 21

10:30am First Church leads Worship at MCNR

Sunday, November 26

10:15am Worship and Worship Circle

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.