

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

CELEBRATING THE REIGN OF CHRIST + NOVEMBER 26, 2023

Chimes and Prelude

Welcome and Greeting

Centering in the Spirit

Hymn

Christ Does Not Need A Crown DIADEMATA/Chris Shelton



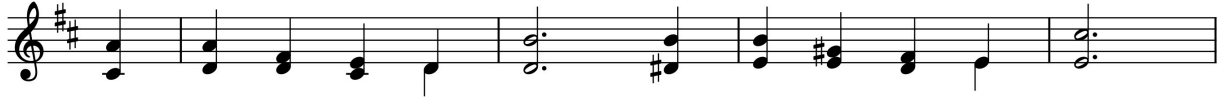
Christ does not need a crown, a sce - pter, throne, or sword.
Christ does not need a crown, though once a crown he wore -
Christ does not need a crown, a ring of gold and jewels;

5



Christ does not need our ro - yal words like "sov - erein," "king," or "lord."
that twist - ed crown of thorns we gave when he our bur - dens bore.
Christ shapes in - stead a glo - ri - ous band of out - casts, friends, and fools.

10



Such signs point to this world, and not the truth he brings:
If he still wears a crown, it is a crown of scars
He leads us in God's love to turn this world a - round;

15



that God in - tends to bless the poor and take the pow'r from kings.
that tell the sto - ry of his pains to set us free from ours.
to set a feast for last and least, where jus - tice shall be crowned.

Confessing our Brokenness and Opening Prayer

Hear these words from the First Nations Version¹ of the Letter to the Ephesians: Ever since I heard of the trust you have in Creator Sets Free (Jesus) and your deep love for all of his holy people, I have never stopped giving thanks for you, remembering you when I send my voice to the Great Spirit. I pray that the Father of honor and beauty, who is the Great Spirit of our Honored Chief Creator Sets Free (Jesus), will gift you with a spirit of wisdom to know him deeply and understand his mysterious ways. I am asking him to shine his light into your hearts so you can clearly see the hope he has chosen us for and the beautiful treasure he has in us, his holy people. I pray he will show how much greater his power is for all who put their trust in him. This is the same power he used when he brought the Chosen One back to life from the dead and gave him the seat of honor at his right hand. This is a high spiritual place greater than all rulers, authorities, and powers. It is a place higher and stronger than all names that can be named, not only in this world but also in the one that is coming. This is how he brought all things, seen and unseen, under his loving power and made him the elder of his sacred family. This sacred family is his body on earth, made whole by the one who gives everything and everyone their full meaning and purpose.

When in this past week have stopped giving thanks?

When have we forgotten we are part of one sacred family?

Silence

Destitute king, one with the hungry, the naked, and the scorned: may our faith be proved not in dogma and piety but in serving you in the last and the least; through Jesus Christ, the stranger's Lord. 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.

Hebrew Scripture

Ezekiel 34:11-16; 20-24

Because Israel's kings proved to be bad shepherds, Ezekiel declares that the LORD will assume the role of shepherd in Israel. The LORD will also set over them a shepherd-messiah, "my servant David," who will feed and care for the people.

¹¹Thus says the Lord GOD: I myself will search for my sheep, and will seek them out. ¹²As shepherds seek out their flocks when they are among their scattered sheep, so I will seek out my sheep. I will rescue them from all the places to which they have been scattered on a day of clouds and thick darkness. ¹³I will bring them out from the peoples and gather them from the countries, and will bring them into their own land; and I will feed them on the mountains of Israel, by the watercourses, and in all the inhabited parts of the land. ¹⁴I will feed them with good pasture, and the mountain heights of Israel shall be their pasture; there they shall lie down in good grazing land, and they shall feed on rich pasture on the mountains of Israel. ¹⁵I myself will be the shepherd of my sheep, and I will make them lie down, says the Lord GOD. ¹⁶I will seek the lost, and I will bring back the strayed, and I will bind up the injured, and I will strengthen the weak, but the fat and the strong I will destroy. I will feed them with justice.

²⁰Therefore, thus says the Lord GOD to them: I myself will judge between the fat sheep and the lean sheep. ²¹Because you pushed with flank and shoulder, and butted at all the weak animals with your horns until you scattered them far and wide, ²²I will save my flock, and they shall no longer be ravaged; and I will judge between sheep and sheep.

²³I will set up over them one shepherd, my servant David, and he shall feed them: he shall feed them and be their shepherd. ²⁴And I, the LORD, will be their God, and my servant David shall be prince among them; I, the LORD, have spoken.

Psalter

Psalm 100: All People That on Earth Do Dwell

CH18

Gospel

Matthew 25:31-46

[Jesus said to the disciples:] ³¹“When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, then he will sit on the throne of his glory. ³²All the nations will be gathered before him, and he will separate people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats, ³³and he will put the sheep at his right hand and the goats at the left. ³⁴Then the king will say to those at his right hand, ‘Come, you that are blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world; ³⁵for I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, ³⁶I was naked and you gave me clothing, I was sick and you took care of me, I was in prison and you visited me.’ ³⁷Then the righteous will answer him, ‘Lord, when was it that we saw you hungry and gave you food, or thirsty and gave you something to drink? ³⁸And when was it that we saw you a stranger and welcomed you, or naked and gave you clothing? ³⁹And when was it that we saw you sick or in prison and visited you?’ ⁴⁰And the king will answer them, ‘Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family you did it to me.’ ⁴¹Then he will say to those at his left hand, ‘You that are accursed, depart from me into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels; ⁴²for I was hungry and you gave me no food, I was thirsty and you gave me nothing to drink, ⁴³I

was a stranger and you did not welcome me, naked and you did not give me clothing, sick and in prison and you did not visit me.’⁴⁴ Then they also will answer, ‘Lord, when was it that we saw you hungry or thirsty or a stranger or naked or sick or in prison, and did not take care of you?’⁴⁵ Then he will answer them, ‘Truly I tell you, just as you did not do it to one of the least of these, you did not do it to me.’⁴⁶ And these will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life.”

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

Sovereign of all, train our ears to hear your cry in the needs of those around us. Bless all outreach ministries of the church through which we seek to serve others as we ourselves have been served.

You cause rain to fall on the just and unjust alike. Direct our use of creation to provide for the needs of all people in ways that are sustainable for the earth.

Bring peace to every place where conflict rages. Grant opportunities for ending divisions among us and usher in your reign of unity and reconciliation.

Heal the sinful divisions we erect between us and release us from systems of oppression and prejudice. Restore our capacity to see your image in those whose dignity we have stripped away.

Pour out the gifts of your Spirit on children and youth throughout the church. Sustain those who work in children’s ministry, youth ministry, and campus ministry as they nurture the gifts of young people.

Thank you for saints now departed who fed the hungry, clothed the naked, and tended to the sick. Inspire us by their example, that we may see your presence in those in need around us.

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

Here Am I

CH654

*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

Come O Long-Expected Jesus

CH125

Benediction and Postlude

The Week Ahead...

Monday, November 27

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

7pm Take Note Rehearsal

Wednesday, November 29

1pm Book Group

Thursday, November 30

12:15pm Contemplative Communion in the Yellow Office

7pm Choir Practice in Fellowship Hall

Friday, December 1

6pm Lasagna Dinner and Auction

Sunday, December 3

10:15am Worship and Worship Circle

6:30pm Tree Lighting

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.