



**First Church of Christ in Mansfield  
(Congregational) United Church of Christ**

549 Storrs Rd. P.O. Box 36 Mansfield Center, CT 06250

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All the Members, Ministers

Rev. Joseph Blotz, Pastor + Erik Haeger, Organist

Olivia Russell, Worship Circle Coordinator

**PALM SUNDAY + MARCH 24, 2024**

**Welcome to Our Guests!**

*We're delighted you have joined us for worship; the members are the ministers of this church...  
if you have any questions, please do not hesitate to ask us!*

**Chimes, Prelude, and Welcome**

**Call to Worship**

The story of faith is a story of courage.

**It took courage for John the Baptist to prepare the way.**

It took courage for Mary to say, "Here I am. Use me."

**It took courage for the disciples to drop their nets and follow Jesus.**

It took courage for the paralyzed man's friends to lower him through the roof.

**It took courage for Peter to walk on water.**

It took courage for Zacchaeus to give half of his possessions to the poor.

**It took courage for Jesus to enter Jerusalem on a donkey.**

Faith has never been easy. It is a journey of courage.

**Again and again, God, show us the way.**

Let us worship a brave and courageous God.

**Gospel**

Mark 11:1-11

**Hymn**

*Jesus Is Coming*

Bret Hesla

Ho - san - na! Je - sus is co - ming! Ho - san - na to the Prince of Peace!

Ho - san - na! Je - sus is co - ming! Ho - sa - na to the Prince of Peace!

**Prayer of Confession**

**God of palm branches and hallelujahs: we confess—we love a good Palm Sunday celebration. We love the sound of a joyful parade. We love shouting, “hallelujah!” We love that Palm Sunday means Easter is just around the corner. We love good news.**

However, if we slow down and pay attention, we know that Palm Sunday was not a walk in the park for you. There was risk. There was fear. There was the threat of violence. You were leading a peaceful protest against an unjust empire, And the whole world knew it.

Forgive us for glossing over the courage this day took. Remind us that the story of faith is a story of courage, and even we can do hard things. With hope we pray.  
Amen.

Family of faith, even when we gloss over the truth, even when our courage fails us, even when we doubt that we can do hard things, God believes in us. God loves us. God forgives us. Hear and believe this truth:

**We are known. We are loved. We are forgiven.  
Again and again and again. Amen.**

### Song of Praise

*Glory to the Creator*

James Buccini

Glo - ry to the Cre - a - tor, the Christ, the Spi - rit: One; as it  
was in the be - gin - ing, is now and ev - er shall be.  
be, world with out end. A - men.

### Prayer for Illumination

#### Poetry Prayer

*Peaceful Protest*

Sarah Speed

I wonder if Jesus could feel his heartbeat  
In his throat, the way I do when I'm afraid.  
I wonder if he had to take deep breaths,  
In through his nose, out through his mouth,  
Tricking his body into a state of calm.  
I wonder if he was nauseous, like I am  
When I'm headed into a hard conversation.  
I wonder if he had to summon his courage,  
Tucking fear away so that he could hold onto  
What mattered most with both hands.

I wonder, because time has taught us  
That it is not uncommon  
For a peaceful protest  
To start or end  
With an unjust death.

So I wonder,

Did he know?  
Was he afraid?  
Did anyone see it?

I want to hold what matters most with both hands.

Hymn

*All Glory Laud and Honor*

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Passion

Mark 14:1-11

Hymn

*Bless the Lord My Soul*

Taize

5 Bless the Lord, my soul, and bless God's ho - ly name.  
5 Bless the Lord, my soul, who leads me in - to life

Passion

Mark 14:12-31

Hymn

*Eat This Bread*

Taize

5 Eat this bread, drink this cup, come to me and ne-ver be hun - gry.  
5 Eat this bread, drink this cup, come to me and you shall not thirst.

Passion

Mark 14:32-52

Hymn

*Stay With Me*

Taize

Stay with me; re - main here with me; watch and pray, watch and pray.

Passion

Mark 14:53-72

Hymn

*Nada Te Turbe*

Taize

5 No-thing can trou - ble, no-thing can frigh - ten, those who seek God shall ne-ver go want - ing.  
5 No-thing can trou - ble, no-thing can frigh - ten, God a - lone fills us.

Passion

Mark 15:1-20

Hymn

*Our Darkness Is Never Darkness*

Taizé



Our dark - ness is ne - ver dark - ness in your sight. The  
4 deep - est night is clear as the day - light.

Passion

Mark 15-21-37

Hymn

*Jesus Remember Me*

Taizé



Je - sus, re - mem-ber me when you come in - to your king-dom.  
Je - sus, re - mem-ber me when you come in - to your king - dom.

Passion

Mark 15:38-47

*silence*

Affirmation of Faith

I refuse to believe that I am powerless.  
I refuse to believe that injustice and hatred  
are simply the way it has to be.  
I refuse to believe that I am better or more deserving than my neighbor.  
I refuse to believe that my self-worth  
is rooted in my accomplishments or appearance.  
I refuse to believe that the Church is dying,  
because I see God all around me.  
I refuse to believe that I cannot make a difference.  
So with hope in my heart,  
I will strive to live a life of courage, conviction, and compassion,  
just as Jesus taught us. Amen.

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/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**

*O Sacred Head Now Wounded*

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*Offerings may be placed in the collection boxes at the entrances to our worship space,  
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**

**God of the wilderness, we give these offerings in gratitude, rejoicing in the abundance of your gifts to us. We give these offerings in faith, trusting that you will provide for our needs. We give these offerings in hope, knowing you can use them to spread your love in this world. And with these offerings, we give ourselves; may we live with generous hearts, with open hands. Amen**

**Hymn**

*Were You There*

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**Benediction and Postlude**

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**The Week Ahead...**

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| Sunday, March 24    | 10:15am Worship and Worship Circle   |
| Monday March 25     | 10am First Church leads Worship at St Joseph Living Center<br>7pm Take Note in Fellowship Hall                 |
| Tuesday March 26    | 7pm Adult Faith Formation on Zoom  |
| Wednesday, March 27 | 1pm Book Group in Fellowship Hall  |
| Thursday, March 28  | 7pm Maundy Thursday Worship  |
| Friday, March 29    | 12 noon Stations of the Cross, Stations of Justice   |
| Sunday, March 31    | 6:15am Sunrise Worship at First Baptist Church in Mansfield<br>followed by breakfast<br>10:15am Easter Worship |