



**First Church of Christ in Mansfield
(Congregational) United Church of Christ**
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Ministers: All the Members of the Church
The Rev. Charles Ericson, Bridge Minister
Erik Haeger, Organist
Olivia Russell, Worship Circle Coordinator

The Nineteenth Sunday after Pentecost ~ September 29, 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!*

Playing the Chimes and Prelude

Greeting and Announcements

Centering in the Spirit

Our ancestors in faith have been known by many names down through the ages.

Jesus called some *disciples* and *friends*.

Those who spread the good news throughout the world were welcomed as *apostles*.

And still others were simply identified as *followers of The Way*.

No matter how we are named, as we gather in this sacred space this morning,

Let us worship God together as *beloved kindred* in the joyful family of believers!

***Opening Hymn**

Christians, We Have Met to Worship

CH277

Prayer for Transformation

We rejoice, Wondrous God, that our tradition is filled with stories of people whose lives were dramatically changed: a reluctant youth who became a prophet, a betrothed woman called forward to deliver the world a miracle child, a persecutor who became the foremost of apostles, an unscrupulous tax collector who went on to write the biography of Jesus. In countless ways, all of our lives can be transformed if we open our hearts to your spirit and listen intently for your voice. Be with us now, we pray, as we contemplate the ways our own lives might be transformed.

~ moment of silence ~

Words of Grace

God sees in all of us the possibility of transformation, and offers each of us the gift of leaving one chapter of our lives behind to pursue a new chapter...to

become “new creations.” It is indeed a gift of grace that may come once in a lifetime, or on many occasions throughout our lives. When it does present itself, may we receive it with gratitude, joy and devotion. Amen.

*Song of Praise

Glory to God

Paul Vasile

Glo-ry to God, whose good-ness shines on me, and to the Son, whose grace has
end, world with-out end, A - men. Worldwith-out end, world with-out
4 par - doned me, and to the Spir - it, whose love has set me free! As it was in the be-ginning, is
end, A - men. Worldwith-out e - nd, world with-out end, A - men.
8 1. 2.
now and ev - er shall be, A - men Worldwith-out men!

Hebrew Scripture

Esther 7:1-6, 9-10; 9:20-22

So the king and Haman went in to feast with Queen Esther. ²On the second day, as they were drinking wine, the king again said to Esther, “What is your petition, Queen Esther? It shall be granted you. And what is your request? Even to the half of my kingdom, it shall be fulfilled.” ³Then Queen Esther answered, “If I have won your favor, O king, and if it pleases the king, let my life be given me—that is my petition—and the lives of my people—that is my request. ⁴For we have been sold, I and my people, to be destroyed, to be killed, and to be annihilated. If we had been sold merely as slaves, men and women, I would have held my peace; but no enemy can compensate for this damage to the king.” ⁵Then King Ahasuerus said to Queen Esther, “Who is he, and where is he, who has presumed to do this?” ⁶Esther said, “A foe and enemy, this wicked Haman!” Then Haman was terrified before the king and the queen. ⁹Then Harbona, one of the eunuchs in attendance on the king, said, “Look, the very gallows that Haman has prepared for Mordecai, whose word saved the king, stands at Haman’s house, fifty cubits high.” And the king said, “Hang him on that.” ¹⁰So they hanged Haman on the gallows that he had prepared for Mordecai. Then the anger of the king abated.

²⁰Mordecai recorded these things, and sent letters to all the Jews who were in all the provinces of King Ahasuerus, both near and far, ²¹enjoining them that they should keep the fourteenth day of the month Adar and also the fifteenth day of the same month, year by year, ²²as the days on which the Jews gained relief from their enemies, and as the month that had been turned for them from sorrow into gladness and from mourning into a holiday; that they should make them days of feasting and gladness, days for sending gifts of food to one another and presents to the poor.

Gospel

Mark 9:38-50

³⁸John said to him, “Teacher, we saw someone casting out demons in your name, and we tried to stop him, because he was not following us.” ³⁹But Jesus said, “Do not stop him; for no one who does a deed of power in my name will be able soon afterward to speak evil of me. ⁴⁰Whoever is not against us is for us. ⁴¹For truly I tell you, whoever gives you a cup of water to drink because you bear the name of Christ will by no means lose the reward.

⁴²“If any of you put a stumbling block before one of these little ones who believe in me, it would be better for you if a great millstone were hung around your neck and you were thrown into the sea. ⁴³If your hand causes you to stumble, cut it off; it is better for you to enter life maimed than to have two hands and to go to hell, to the unquenchable fire. ⁴⁵And if your foot causes you to stumble, cut it off; it is better for you to enter life lame than to have two feet and to be thrown into hell. ⁴⁷And if your eye causes you to stumble, tear it out; it is better for you to enter the kingdom of God with one eye than to have two eyes and to be thrown into hell, ⁴⁸where their worm never dies, and the fire is never quenched.

⁴⁹“For everyone will be salted with fire. ⁵⁰Salt is good; but if salt has lost its saltiness, how can you season it? Have salt in yourselves, and be at peace with one another.”

Reflection

“In Whose Name?”

Hymn

Bring Many Names

CH10

Call to Prayer

Hear Us O Lord

Don Besig and Nancy Price

Hear us, O Lord, as we come now in prayer, shar - ing our joys, our trou-bles, and our cares.

Help us, O Lord, to be o - pen to your word, and teach us to put our trust in you.

Prayers of the People and the Prayer of Jesus

Please pray the Prayer of Jesus in whatever language is 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

Invitation to Generosity

Your financial offerings may be placed in the collection plates as they come around,
or mailed to: First Church of Christ in Mansfield UCC, PO Box 36, Mansfield Center, CT 06250,
or given online at: www.myfcc.info

Musical Offering

Howard Drescher

*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

Just as our lives can be transformed, dear God, so can our gifts transform the lives of others, and indeed the world. Please receive our offerings, and bless them so that neighbors near and far may be served through the ministries and missions of our congregation. May hungers be satisfied...injustices be overcome...conflicts be resolved...wounds be healed...and an extravagant and unconditional welcome always await all whom you send our way. In Jesus' Name we pray, Amen.

*Closing Hymn

Diverse in Culture, Nation, Race

CH485

*Benediction

Now may God bless you and keep you;
May God's face shine upon you and be gracious unto you;
May God's countenance be lifted up upon you and give you peace. Amen.

*Passing the Peace

The peace of our Lord, Jesus Christ, is with you always.

And also with you.

Let us share with one another a sign of that peace.

Postlude