



**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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Ministers: All the Members of the Church

The Rev. Charles Ericson, Intentional Interim Minister

Erik Haeger, Organist

Olivia Russell, Worship Circle Coordinator

**February 23, 2025 — Seventh Sunday after the Epiphany  
Commissioning Our Pastoral Search Committee**

**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**

**Greeting and Announcements**

**Prelude**

**Centering in the Spirit**

L: Shhh...Listen. God may be calling

**P: Who would God be calling here? Is it one of us?**

L: It could be one of us; or it could be all of us.

**P: What would God be calling us about? Does God want us to do something?**

L: If we listen closely...intently...with all of our senses...we just may find out.

**P: Then, indeed, let us listen!**

**\*Opening Hymn**

*The Voice of God Is Calling*

**CH666**

**Prayer for Transformation**

**So often, still-speaking God, we may not be listening if your voice calls out to us. We may be preoccupied with any number of other things that float in and out of our minds throughout the day: our jobs, our calendars, finances, current events. Please reawaken us to the importance of being keenly attentive to your Spirit. Inspire us not only to be listening, but also watching, feeling, sensing you reaching out to us in the midst of daily life. Remind us that if you are "first and foremost" in our lives, we may discover that you are calling out to offer us wisdom and love to guide us through all of those other concerns, bringing us peace. We ask this in Jesus' name. Amen.**

*~ moment of silence ~*

**Words of Grace**

Kindred in Christ, our loving God knows all too well the complexities and demands we face throughout each day. Yes, God knows, but God does not fault us or condemn us for being distracted or out of touch.

Instead, God continues to call, beckoning us to come closer to receive God's generous offering of compassion, grace and renewed faith. 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  
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.  
now and ev - er shall be, A - men Worldwith-out men!

### Hebrew Scripture

Isaiah 6:1-8

<sup>1</sup>In the year that King Uzziah died, I saw the Lord sitting on a throne, high and lofty; and the hem of his robe filled the temple. <sup>2</sup>Seraphs were in attendance above him; each had six wings: with two they covered their faces, and with two they covered their feet, and with two they flew. <sup>3</sup>And one called to another and said: "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts; the whole earth is full of his glory." <sup>4</sup>The pivots on the thresholds shook at the voices of those who called, and the house filled with smoke. <sup>5</sup>And I said: "Woe is me! I am lost, for I am a man of unclean lips, and I live among a people of unclean lips; yet my eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts!" <sup>6</sup>Then one of the seraphs flew to me, holding a live coal that had been taken from the altar with a pair of tongs. <sup>7</sup>The seraph touched my mouth with it and said: "Now that this has touched your lips, your guilt has departed and your sin is blotted out." <sup>8</sup>Then I heard the voice of the Lord saying, "Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?" And I said, "Here am I; send me!"

### Gospel

Luke 5:1-11

<sup>1</sup>Once while Jesus was standing beside the lake of Gennesaret, and the crowd was pressing in on him to hear the word of God, <sup>2</sup>he saw two boats there at the shore of the lake; the fishermen had gone out of them and were washing their nets. <sup>3</sup>He got into one of the boats, the one belonging to Simon, and asked him to put out a little way from the shore. Then he sat down and taught the crowds from the boat. <sup>4</sup>When he had finished speaking, he said to Simon, "Put out into the deep water and let down your nets for a catch." <sup>5</sup>Simon answered, "Master, we have worked all night long but have caught nothing. Yet if you say so, I will let down the nets." <sup>6</sup>When they had done this, they caught so many fish that their nets were beginning to break. <sup>7</sup>So they signaled their partners in the other boat to come and help them. And they came and filled both boats, so that they began to sink. <sup>8</sup>But when Simon Peter saw it, he fell down at Jesus' knees, saying, "Go away from me, Lord, for I am a sinful man!" <sup>9</sup>For he and all who were with him were amazed at the catch of fish that they had taken; <sup>10</sup>and so also were James and John, sons of Zebedee, who were partners with Simon. Then Jesus said to Simon, "Do not be afraid; from now on you will be catching people." <sup>11</sup>When they had brought their boats to shore, they left everything and followed him.

### Reflection

"Opening Day"

### Hymn

*Called as Partners in Christ's Service*

CH453

## **Commissioning our Pastoral Search Committee** *(adapted from the UCC Pilgrimage Document)*

### **The Word**

1 Corinthians 12:4-12

Now there are varieties of gifts but the same Spirit, and there are varieties of services but the same Lord, and there are varieties of activities, but it is the same God who activates all of them in everyone. To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good. To one is given through the Spirit the utterance of wisdom and to another the utterance of knowledge according to the same Spirit, to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healing by the one Spirit, to another the working of powerful deeds, to another prophecy, to another the discernment of spirits, to another various kinds of tongues, to another the interpretation of tongues. All these are activated by one and the same Spirit, who allots to each one individually just as the Spirit chooses.

For just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though many, are one body, so it is with Christ.

### **Response**

One: There are different gifts...

**All: ...but it is the same Spirit who gives them.**

One: Each one is given a gift by the Spirit...

**All: ...to be used for the common good.**

### **Invitation**

The following members are invited to come forward:

- Donna Clauson
- Artemis Damble
- David Darnell
- Barbara Dobrocki
- Robert Johnson
- Deb Richards

### **Address to the Committee Members**

Siblings in Christ, you have committed yourselves to a significant leadership task on behalf of the entire congregation. In recognition of the importance of your work, we pause to express our gratitude and to remind ourselves that you do not undertake this task alone; you will be guided by the power and presence of the Holy Spirit, the prayerful support of the members of this church, and the assistance of the United Church of Christ through the Windham Association and Southern New England Conference.

### **Covenant**

Promise of the Committee Members:

We, who are serving on the Search Committee for the First Church of Christ in Mansfield (Congregational) United Church of Christ, promise to perform faithfully the vital task of searching for a new settled pastor. We pledge, with God's guidance and your prayers, to be open to the leading of the Holy Spirit in all we do, say and decide. We will endeavor:

- To establish a harmonious working relationship within our committee.
- To maintain consistent attendance at our Search Committee meetings.
- To be open and patient listeners to each other and to the congregation.

- To listen carefully to your hopes and dreams as we consult with you, the members, in the development of a description of our church community and the style of pastoral leadership we seek.
- To maintain strict confidentiality in all we read, say, and hear—protecting both the privacy of each other and of potential candidates.
- To review all profiles with open minds and hearts, treating all candidates fairly and justly.
- To seek decisions not made by majority rule, but by the coming together of minds, hearts, and souls in a consensus that will build a firm foundation for the effective future mission and ministry of this church.

Pledge of the Congregation:

**We pledge, as a gathered community of faith, to be patient with you and to respect your need to be confidential in your task. We recognize that the work of our search committee is a difficult assignment and will take much effort. We pray for you and offer our support and encouragement throughout this time. These things we promise in the hope and belief that you will follow the guidance of the Holy Spirit as you seek a new settled pastor to minister with us.**

**Closing Prayer** - Loving God, thank you for these people who have accepted the responsibility to seek a settled pastor for this congregation. We ask your blessing on them; guide their meetings, decisions and their search. Keep them open to each other, to the members of this community and to your will. Nurture patience among this group and let them follow the leading of your Spirit with deep trust. We pray for the individual who will become our settled pastor. We thank you for that person's passion for faith, trust in you, care for the traditions of the church, gifts of creativity, training, skills and pastoral gifts. And prepare our hearts to accept change and transformation. We pray this in the name of Jesus. Amen.



### 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.

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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.**

### **Invitation to Generosity**

God's voice calls out to us because so many other voices have been calling out, even crying out, to God in need of food, shelter, healing, relief from prejudice and injustice, and peace. Through our generous giving today, which supports the ministries of our church and the missions we share with our interfaith partners, we convey to our neighbors in need that their voices have been heard. Our offerings will now be received.

*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.*

### **Musical Offering**

#### **\*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**

**We give thanks, dear God, for the great privilege of being able to give of ourselves for the well-being of others in our community and our world who cry out for help. We are grateful, too, for our own souls are nourished through the act of generous giving. Please add your blessing to our offerings, and direct them to places and people whose needs are far greater than our own. Amen.**

#### **\*Closing Hymn**

*They'll Know We Are Christians By Our Love*

**CH494**

#### **\*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**

## **A REQUEST FROM SEWING & SERVICE**

During the month of February, we will be collecting items for our Hygiene Kits. We need:

- 30 hand towels
- 21 facecloths /washcloths
- 16 nail clippers
- 26 individually wrapped bars of soap (bath size)
- 270 Band-aids 3/4"-1" width

You can place your donated items in the basket that is in the front of the sanctuary.

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## **THE WEEK AHEAD**

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### **Sunday, Feb. 23**

10:15 a.m. Worship & Worship Circle; Commissioning of the Search Committee; followed by Fellowship Hour hosted by the Worship Circle children

11:30 a.m. Lent planning meeting

2:00 p.m. "Indivisible" meeting (FH)

### **Monday, Feb. 24**

6:30 p.m. Take Note! rehearsal (FH)

### **Tuesday, Feb. 25**

6:00 p.m. Special Olympics Cornhole practice (FH)

### **Wednesday, Feb. 26**

1:00 p.m. Book Group (FH)

### **Thursday, Feb. 27**

9:30 a.m. Quilt Group (FH)

### **Sunday, March 2**

10:15 a.m. Worship & Worship Circle; Service of Communion