



**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, Intentional Interim Minister
Erik Haeger, Organist
Olivia Russell, Worship Circle Coordinator

**April 27, 2025 — Second Sunday of Easter
Earth Sunday**

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

One: In the cheerful springtime trills of bluebirds and robins...

All: God is calling to us.

One: In the graceful breaching of Pacific orcas...

All: God is calling to us.

One: In the subterranean grinding of tectonic plates...

All: God is calling to us.

One: In the lingering auras of long-gone stars.

All: God is calling to us.

One: In the mighty dandelion that emerges from a pavement crack...

All: God is calling to us.

One: God is calling to us, for sure....

All: In every corner of creation, at all times, wherever our senses can keenly perceive the call...

One: As our sacred time of worship now begins..

All: May we be alert to God's persistent calling to each and every one of us.

***Opening Hymn**

For the Beauty of the Earth

CH56

Prayer for Transformation

Creator and Creating God, We realize that our attention is often turned away from you. We can become distracted by the slightest intrusions in our daily routines; we can become consumed by the criticisms of others; our anger can sometimes get the better of us and our best intentions can disappoint us. When such things occur, we find ourselves drifting away from you. We cannot hear you calling to us. In these next few moments of silent reflection, Beckoning God, please draw us back into your holy presence. Amen.

moment of silence

Words of Grace

Kindred in Christ, our God of unconditional love and limitless grace cherishes and accepts each one of us at all times and in every circumstance of life. This good news is revealed all around us, no matter where we turn, in the glory of Creation. God does indeed call to us. God reaches out to bring us closer. God gives us all the time we need. And God waits with open arms.

*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. World with-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. World with-out e - nd, world with-out end, A - men.
8 1. 2.
now and ev - er shall be, A - men World with-out men!

Hebrew Scripture

Genesis 1:26-31

²⁶ Then God said, "Let us make humans in our image, according to our likeness, and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the air and over the cattle and over all the wild animals of the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps upon the earth."

²⁷ So God created humans in his image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them. ²⁸ God blessed them, and God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the air and over every living thing that moves upon the earth." ²⁹ God said, "See, I have given you every plant yielding seed that is upon the face of all the earth and every tree with seed in its fruit; you shall have them for food. ³⁰ And to every beast of the earth and to every bird of the air and to everything that creeps on the earth, everything that has the breath of life, I have given every green plant for food." And it was so. ³¹ God saw everything that he had made, and indeed, it was very good. And there was evening and there was morning, the sixth day.

Gospel

Matthew 6:25-33

²⁵ "Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink, or about your body, what you will wear. Is not life more than food and the body more than clothing? ²⁶ Look at the birds of the air: they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they? ²⁷ And which of you by worrying can add a single hour to your span of life? ²⁸ And why do you worry about clothing? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they neither toil nor spin, ²⁹ yet I tell you, even Solomon in all his glory was not clothed like one of these. ³⁰ But if God so clothes the grass of the field, which is alive today and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, will he not much more clothe you—you of little faith? ³¹ Therefore do not worry, saying, 'What will we eat?' or 'What will we drink?' or 'What will we wear?' ³² For it is the gentiles who seek all these things, and indeed your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things. ³³ But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.

Reflection

"Jesus and the Earth"

Call to Prayer

Hear Us O Lord

Don Besig and Nancy Price

9 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.**

Invitation to Generosity

The divine gift of dominion is not limited to the stewardship of nature — it also requires us to care for one another, including the hungry, the lost, the unsheltered, the afflicted, the marginalized, those treated unjustly and barely surviving. Our generous gifts and offerings, which support our church's ministries and missions, are central to fulfilling our call to have dominion of the earth, including the needs of our neighbors. In that spirit, may our offerings now be given and received.

Musical Offering

Erik Haeger

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!

*Doxology

God for all that love has done: Cre - a - tor, Christ and Spi - rit, One. A - men!

*Prayer of Dedication

We ask your blessing, Gracious and Loving God, on these offerings that support our church's caring ministries, as well as our personal gifts of the talents and time that we each devote to serving our neighbors, the earth and all its bounty, and the heavens above. May we always be mindful of your call to have dominion over Creation in a manner that is faithful, respectful and kind. Amen.

*Benediction

Lord, make me an instrument of your peace:
where there is hatred, let me sow love;
where there is injury, pardon;
where there is doubt, faith;
where there is despair, hope;
where there is darkness, light;
where there is sadness, joy.

O divine Master, grant that I may not so much seek
to be consoled as to console,
to be understood as to understand,
to be loved as to love.
For it is in giving that we receive,
it is in pardoning that we are pardoned,
and it is in dying that we are born to eternal life.

— *Prayer of Peace*, attributed to St. Francis of Assisi

*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

MANY THANKS FOR YOUR RESOUNDING RESPONSE TO THE PASTORAL SEARCH SURVEY!

Please join the Pastoral Search Committee for an overview of the results during a Second Hour on June 1, which will be helpful for the Visioning Retreat.

Thursday, June 5 (8:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.)
Strategic Visioning Retreat

*As we seek a new pastor, and explore our hopes and vision for First Church, the Governing Board invites all members to a retreat on **Thursday, June 5 from 8:30 am to 3:30 pm** in Fellowship Hall. We hope that with this advance notice, members who work will be able to attend. The retreat will be facilitated by the Rev. Monica Lewis, a visioning specialist at the UCC Building & Loan Fund.*

THE WEEK AHEAD...

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| Saturday, April 26 | 9 a.m. to noon Community Giving Event 12:30 p.m. to 4 p.m. Girl Scouts |
| Sunday, April 27 | 10:15 a.m. Worship and Worship Circle 2 p.m. "Indivisible" meeting |
| Monday, April 28 | 7:00 p.m. Take Note! rehearsal |
| Tuesday, April 29 | 5:30 p.m. Pastoral Search Committee |
| Wednesday, April 30 | 1 p.m. Book Group |
| Thursday, May 1 | 9:30 a.m. Sewing & Service noon to 4 p.m. Book Sale set-up |
| Friday, May 2 | 9 a.m. (all day) Book Sale set-up |
| Saturday, May 3 | 9 a.m. Books, Blossoms & Brownies Sale |

COMMUNITY GIVING EVENT
Saturday, April 26 from 9a to 12 noon
in the church parking lot

On April 26 we are collecting Kids' Pull-Ups training pants (sizes 4T, 5T and 6T) as well as sunscreen and insect repellent. Also needed are men's and women's tee shirts and underwear, all sizes. Financial donations are always welcome.

This event is hosted by the First Church Ministry of Caring. Community members are invited to make donations of *NEW* items for our community partners including: the Holy Family Shelter, Natchaug Hospital, the Domestic Violence Shelter, and Project Hope. Please join us in supporting our local partners!

WELCOME SPRING SALE
Books, Blooms, and Brownies!
Saturday, May 3 from 9a to 12 noon, rain or shine

- **Start cleaning your closets!** "All things flat" - Good condition books, cds, dvds, LPs, games, puzzles, and any other "flat" entertainment item can brought in at any time to Fellowship Hall.
- **Think about what you might bake!** All kinds of goodies are needed. Please label and price your items! Drop off at church NO LATER than 8am on the day of the sale.
- **Garden Items needed!** Bare-rooted plants, as well as houseplants, nice plant pots, garden decorations, tools, and other garden items are welcome.
- **Please give of yourself!** We need help on Thursday afternoon (May 1), Friday during the day (May 2) or the day of the sale for final set-up, help during the sale, and clean-up.

If you have any questions, please contact Cheryl Chase (860) 429-7265 or seachase3860@yahoo.com.