



**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

**May 4, 2025 - Third Sunday of Easter
Communion 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

Leader: For much of the week, our days are often busy, full and sometimes stressful.

All: On this day, though, we come here and find rest, inspiration and peace.

Leader: The world in which we live can be harsh, too, critical and marked by judgment.

All: In this place, we are greeted with affirmation, acceptance and love.

Leader: Throughout each day, there are tasks to fulfill, errands to run and lists to check off.

All: At this time, we are given precious opportunity to pray, listen, reflect and sing with joy.

Leader: On this day...in this place...at this sacred hour...our souls are filled and renewed!

All: Come, then, let us worship and thank God, for the peace, love and joy that surround us.

***Opening Hymn**

Joyful, Joyful, We Adore Thee

CH2

Prayer for Transformation (*inspired by Psalm 30*)

Helping God, life has its challenges. Sometimes it is an ailment or injury that weakens our spirits, or a bout of depression that won't seem to go away, or an awareness that we have fallen short or failed to live up to the faith we so cherish. In times like these, we do well to remember that if we bring these struggles to you, you will respond with the relief we are seeking. In these next few quiet moments of silent reflection, you will be listening, with compassion and mercy. May we open our hearts freely and completely to you...

moment of silence

Words of Grace

The Psalmist reminds us that when we face challenges in our lives, God comes to us and heals us...restores us to life...turns mourning into dancing...and weeping into joy. These gifts of grace are being poured out to each of us, and all of us, right now, abundantly and unconditionally. Friends, may we accept these gifts with humility and renewed resolve, and give thanks to our God forever! 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-gin-ning, is
end, A - men. Worldwith-out e - nd, world with-out end, A - men.
8 now and ev - er shall be, A - men Worldwith-out men!

Gospel

John 21:1-6

21:1 After these things Jesus showed himself again to the disciples by the Sea of Tiberias, and he showed himself in this way. ² Gathered there together were Simon Peter, Thomas called the Twin, Nathanael of Cana in Galilee, the sons of Zebedee, and two others of his disciples. ³ Simon Peter said to them, "I am going fishing." They said to him, "We will go with you." They went out and got into the boat, but that night they caught nothing.

⁴ Just after daybreak, Jesus stood on the beach, but the disciples did not know that it was Jesus. ⁵ Jesus said to them, "Children, you have no fish, have you?" They answered him, "No." ⁶ He said to them, "Cast the net to the right side of the boat, and you will find some." So they cast it, and now they were not able to haul it in because there were so many fish.

Christian Scripture

Acts 9:1-20

9:1 Meanwhile Saul, still breathing threats and murder against the disciples of the Lord, went to the high priest ² and asked him for letters to the synagogues at Damascus, so that if he found any who belonged to the Way, men or women, he might bring them bound to Jerusalem. ³ Now as he was going along and approaching Damascus, suddenly a light from heaven flashed around him. ⁴ He fell to the ground and heard a voice saying to him, "Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me?" ⁵ He asked, "Who are you, Lord?" The reply came, "I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting. ⁶ But get up and enter the city, and you will be told what you are to do." ⁷ The men who were traveling with him stood speechless because they heard the voice but saw no one. ⁸ Saul got up from the ground, and though his eyes were open, he could see nothing; so they led him by the hand and brought him into Damascus. ⁹ For three days he was without sight and neither ate nor drank.

¹⁰ Now there was a disciple in Damascus named Ananias. The Lord said to him in a vision, "Ananias." He answered, "Here I am, Lord." ¹¹ The Lord said to him, "Get up and go to the street called Straight, and at the house of Judas look for a man of Tarsus named Saul. At this moment he is praying, ¹² and he has seen in a vision a man named Ananias come in and lay his hands on him so that he might regain his sight."

¹³ But Ananias answered, "Lord, I have heard from many about this man, how much evil he has done to

your saints in Jerusalem, ¹⁴ and here he has authority from the chief priests to bind all who invoke your name.” ¹⁵ But the Lord said to him, “Go, for he is an instrument whom I have chosen to bring my name before gentiles and kings and before the people of Israel; ¹⁶ I myself will show him how much he must suffer for the sake of my name.” ¹⁷ So Ananias went and entered the house. He laid his hands on Saul and said, “Brother Saul, the Lord Jesus, who appeared to you on your way here, has sent me so that you may regain your sight and be filled with the Holy Spirit.” ¹⁸ And immediately something like scales fell from his eyes, and his sight was restored. Then he got up and was baptized, ¹⁹ and after taking some food, he regained his strength. For several days he was with the disciples in Damascus, ²⁰ and immediately he began to proclaim Jesus in the synagogues, saying, “He is the Son of God.”

Reflection

“Becoming Ananias”

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.**

Invitation to Generosity

When we give generously to support our church’s outreach missions, we do much more than feed the hungry, provide shelter and clothing for the poor, and stand up for those who have been treated unjustly. We give love. We share good news. We witness. We change lives. With these high hopes in our hearts, may we give cheerfully and extravagantly as the offering is now 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

Erik Haeger

*Doxology

Praise God from whom all blessings flow; Praise God all creatures 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 ask your blessing, Loving God, upon the gifts and offerings we dedicate now to you. Through our church's ministries and missions, may they help to meet the urgent needs of our neighbors, near and far...and transform lives along the way. Amen.

~ The Service of Holy Communion ~

For visitors: At the Last Supper, Jesus turned no one away and imposed no restrictions on receiving the bread and the cup. Neither do we here at First Church in Mansfield. Christ's table is open at all, and we extend an extravagant welcome to you to join us. The communion elements will be brought to the pews by servers. Plates containing pieces of bread will be distributed first, followed by trays containing individual cups of grape juice. Each time, worshipers are asked to hold the elements until all have been served and an invitation to partake is spoken from the communion table. For those who wish to know, the cup contains non-alcoholic grape juice and the bread is gluten-free.

Communion Hymn

Help Us Accept Each Other

CH487

Invitation to Communion

The Prayer of Great Thanksgiving

God is with you.

And also with you.

Open up your hearts.

We open them up to God and one another.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

It is right to give our thanks and praise.

Let us continue in the spirit of prayer:

Holy God, our loving Creator, close to us as breathing and distant as the farthest star, we thank you for your constant love for all you have made...

... Gifted by the presence of your Holy Spirit, we offer ourselves to you as we unite our voices with the entire family of your faithful people everywhere:

Musical Response

Santo Santo Santo

Traditional Argentine

San - to, san - to, san - to. Mi co - ra - zon te a - do - ra! Mi
 Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly. My heart, my heart a - dores you! My

5
 co - ra - zon te sa - be de - cir: San - to eres, Se - nor!
 heart knows how to say to you: Ho - ly are you, Lord!

Sharing the Bread and Cup

All are welcome at Christ's table; we offer non-alcoholic juice and gluten-free bread.

Prayer of Thanksgiving

We give thanks, Almighty God, that you have refreshed us at your table by granting us the presence of Jesus Christ. Strengthen our faith, increase our love for one another, and send us forth into the world in courage and peace, rejoicing in the power of your Holy Spirit; through Jesus Christ, our Savior. Amen.

*Closing Hymn

O Master, Let Me Walk with Thee"

CH602

*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

The Week Ahead...

Monday, May 5	6:30 p.m. Take Note rehearsal
Tuesday, May 6	10:30 a.m. MCNR Monthly Service 5:30 p.m. Worth Fighting For (Indivisible) Meeting
Wednesday, May 7	1 p.m. Book Group 5:30 p.m. Pastoral Search Committee
Thursday, May 8	6 p.m. Governing Board
Saturday, May 10	12:30 p.m. Girl Scouts

All-Church Visioning Retreat

THURSDAY, JUNE 5, 2025
IN FELLOWSHIP HALL

The Governing Board invites everyone to participate in this retreat that will explore our hopes and vision for First Church as we seek a new settled pastor.

8:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m.
Programming for all participants

2:30 p.m. to 3:30 p.m.
Governing Board and Ministry Team Leaders

Coffee and bagels will be available in the morning.
Lunch will be provided.

We hope that with this advance notice, members who work will be able to secure time off to attend.



Our facilitator will be the Rev. Monica Lewis, a mission interpreter and visioning specialist on the UCC Church Building and Loan Fund team. She is an ordained minister in the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) with a business background, and she has spent most of the previous decade working with churches, non-profits, and higher education institutions to prepare, plan, and implement strategic change. She received her bachelor's degree from the University of Colorado and her master's of divinity from Louisville Theological Presbyterian Seminary.