



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

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Ministers: All the Members of the Church
The Rev. Don Erickson, Pastor
Erik Haeger, Organist
Olivia Russell, Worship Circle Coordinator
Mandy Boukus, Office Assistant

March 22, 2026 – Fifth Sunday of Lent

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

Welcome and Announcements

Prelude

Erik Haeger

Call to Worship

Gary Cote

Welcome to the weary and the worn.

Welcome to the wiggly and the eager.

Welcome to the skeptical and the seeking.

Welcome to the early risers and those still trying to wake up.

Welcome to the rule followers and the rule breakers.

Welcome to those hungry for justice and those desperate for mercy.

Welcome to the sinners and the saints.

This is God's house.

You can make yourself at home here.

Let us worship our just, merciful, and faithful God!

Silent Confession & Words of Grace

Church family,

Jesus saw a crowd ready to throw stones and invited them to choose another way.

Jesus offered them grace, mercy, and compassion,

and the same can be said for us.

So hear and believe the good news of the gospel:

Our God is a God of mercy.

Our God is a God of compassion.

Our God is a God of grace.

We are forgiven, loved, and invited to choose another way.

Thanks be to God for yet another second chance. Amen.

Prayer for Illumination

Psalm

Out of the depths I cry to you, O Lord.
 Lord, hear my voice!
 Let your ears be attentive
 to the voice of my supplications!
 If you, O Lord, should mark iniquities,
 Lord, who could stand?
 But there is forgiveness with you,
 so that you may be revered.
 I wait for the Lord; my soul waits,
 and in the Lord's word I hope;
 my soul waits for the Lord
 more than those who watch for the morning,
 more than those who watch for the morning.
 O [People], hope in the Lord!
 For with the Lord there is steadfast love,
 and with the Lord is great power to redeem.
 It is God who will redeem [us]
 from all [our] iniquities.

*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
 World with-out end, world with-out end, A - men. World with-out end, world with-out

par - doned me, and to the Spir - it whose love has set me free! As it
 end, A - men. World with-out end, world with-out end, A - men.

was in the be-gin-ning, is now and ev-er shall be, A - men.

Gospel Reading

John 8:2-11

Early in the morning he came again to the temple. All the people came to him, and he sat down and began to teach them. The scribes and the Pharisees brought a woman who had been caught in adultery, and, making her stand before all of them, they said to him, "Teacher, this woman was caught in the very act of committing adultery. Now in the law Moses commanded us to stone such women. Now what do you say?" They said this to test him, so that they might have some charge to bring against him. Jesus bent down and wrote with his finger on the ground. When they kept on questioning him, he straightened up and said to them, "Let anyone among you who is without sin

be the first to throw a stone at her.” And once again he bent down and wrote on the ground. When they heard it, they went away, one by one, beginning with the elders, and Jesus was left alone with the woman standing before him. Jesus straightened up and said to her, “Woman, where are they? Has no one condemned you?” She said, “No one, sir.” And Jesus said, “Neither do I condemn you. Go your way, and from now on do not sin again.”

Pastoral Meditation

“What Jesus Scribbled”

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 & the Prayer of Jesus

**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 *help us yield not to/*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

Offertory

"Lead with Love"

by Melanie DeMore
offered by the Children's Worship Circle

*Doxology

Praise God from whom all bless - ings flow; Praise God all crea - tures here be low; Praise

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

***Prayer of Dedication** (in unison)

Howard Drescher

Life-Giving Spirit, you breathe hope into our valleys of despair and call forth life where we saw only dry bones. We come today not out of habit, but out of longing to be part of your work that restores, renews, and redeems. Take these gifts and use them to roll away the stones that keep your people bound. Let them be signs of trust, symbols of resurrection, and tools of transformation in a weary world. May our offering, like our living, lean into your Spirit and testify that life—abundant, eternal, and holy—is possible in you. Amen

***Closing Hymn**

Breathe On Me, Breath of God

CH 254

***Poetry Prayer**

The Things That Matter Most

Rev. Sarah Speed
read by Barbara Dobrocki

*I wrecked the family car, an old gold minivan
that had traveled every inch of I-95. It had worn cushions
and an old school map in the glove box.
It held a folder full of mix CDs under the passenger seat
and every memory of every family trip,
and I wrecked it.
I called the tow truck while the engine
hissed and smoked. I called my dad,
my own apologies tripping over themselves
to get to the front of the line.
I expected to be grounded.
I expected a "How could you?"
But when I got home that night,
my dad held me close and said,
"A car is just a car, but you are my child.
The only thing that matters is that you are okay."
And I knew it for what it was.
It was mercy. It was love.
It was the thing that mattered most.*

***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

Our greeter this morning is Deb Richards
Our cantor is Howard Drescher
Coffee hour is hosted by Carol Drescher and Mary Anne Baker

Portions of this morning's liturgy were written by the Rev. Sarah A. Speed for the Lent series "Tell me something good... Grounding ourselves in the good news this Lent." Permission for use has been granted by A Sanctified Art LLC | sanctifiedart.org

THIS WEEK'S THEME:

 the good news is...
rooted in justice, mercy, & faithfulness



This Lent and Easter season we will once again use the creative ministry resources from A Sanctified Art LLC. The overarching theme for Lent 2026 is "Tell me something good... Grounding ourselves in the good news this Lent."

We often describe Jesus' ministry as "radical" which comes from the Latin word "radicalis," meaning "root" or "ground." Therefore, the good news should bring us back to our roots, back to what grounds us: loving our neighbor, caring for the vulnerable, pursuing justice and mercy, and resting in God's unending grace. This Lent, may the teachings of Jesus lead us forward. Let the good news ground us. And let that good news inspire us to take action in a world desperate to hear, see, and taste what is good.

First Hour Programs During Lent

Sundays, 9:15 to 10:00 a.m. in Fellowship Hall

Next Sunday will be the final offering:

Rev. Don Erickson – The Spirituality of Writing Poetry

HOLY WEEK SERVICES

Palm Sunday - March 29, 10:15 a.m.
We Commemorate Jesus' entry into Jerusalem

Maunder Thursday - April 2, 6:30 p.m.
Contemplative Service with Communion

Good Friday - April 3, 6:30 p.m.
Were You There?: A Service of Poetry and Song

Easter Sunday - April 5, 10:15 a.m.
We Celebrate the Resurrection



THE WEEK AHEAD...

Sunday, March 22	11:15 am Justice & Love Song Circle
Tuesday, March 24	10:00 am – 1:00 pm Office Hours w/ Rev Don
Wednesday, March 25	1:00 pm Book Group 1:00 pm Green Church/Creation Justice meeting 5:00 pm Meditation Group
Thursday, March 26	7:00 pm Choir rehearsal
Friday, March 27	10:00 am Coffee time with Rev Don (Price Chopper Food Court) 5:00 pm Capital Campaign Committee meeting 6:30 pm Ice Cream Dessert before program 7:00 pm Pop/Rock God-Talk
Saturday, March 28	12:30 pm Girl Scouts

Pop/Rock God-Talk

a Song... a Spiritual Theme... a Short Symposium



Friday, March 27, 7-8 pm
I Want to Know What Love Is
(Foreigner)

What is Pop/Rock God-Talk? An alternative form of church gathering that is focused on theology and religious contemplation, using popular music to spark and stimulate discuss.

Come early at 6:30 for dessert before the program (ice cream!)

New First Hour Series Coming - April 19th at 9:00 a.m.

“Peter & Paul and the Christian Revolution”

In this 4-week series we will view a documentary on the lives of Saints Peter and Paul as they spread the message of Jesus throughout the Roman Empire. It is part of the PBS "Empire" series that looked at people and passions that changed the world. Each week we will view a 30-minute segment of the video, followed by 30 minutes of discussion. (Video is closed-captioned.)