



**The First Church of Christ in Mansfield
(Congregational) United Church of Christ**
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860.423.9008 + www.myfcc.info

Ministers: All the Members of the Church

The Reverend Dr. Susan J. Foster, Bridge Minister
Erik Haeger, Organist
Olivia Russell, Worship Circle Coordinator

September 13, 2026 ~ The Sixteenth Sunday after Pentecost

Thought for the Week

"Whatever you do in life will be insignificant, but it is very important that you do it because you can't know. You can't ever really know the meaning of your life."

— Mahatma Gandhi

Playing the Chimes

Welcome and Announcements

Prelude

Call to Worship

Dave Litrico

Leader: The God of heaven has made a home on earth,

People: Christ dwells among us and is one with us.

Leader: The highest in all creation lives among the least.

People: Christ journeys with the rejected and welcomes the weary.

Leader: Come now all who thirst

People: and drink the water of life.

Leader: Come now all who hunger

People: and be filled with good things.

Leader: Come now all who seek

People: and be warmed by the fire of love. Let us worship God together.

***Opening Hymn**

Go Down, Moses

CH 663

**please rise in body or in spirit, as you are able*

CH = Chalice Hymnal

*Text in **bold** indicates words spoken by the congregation.*

Prayer of Confession and New Life

Gentle and holy God, we acknowledge to you, to one another, and to ourselves that we are not what you have called us to be. We have stifled our gifts and wasted our time. We have avoided opportunities to offer kindness, but have been quick to take offense. We have pretended that we could make no contribution to peace and justice in our world and have excused ourselves from risk-taking in our own community. Have mercy on us, forgive us, and help us to live our lives differently. Help us to receive your love and to share it, near and far. Amen.

followed by a brief time of silent prayer

Words of Grace

Hear the good news: God's yoke is easy and the divine burden is light. God does not look at our historical failings to condemn us, but to call us forward into deeper covenant. In the name of Jesus Christ – who ate with sinners, who welcomed the stranger, who was himself an immigrant child and a refugee – we are forgiven, freed, and empowered to love.

All: Thanks be to God!

***Song of Praise**

Glory to God

Paul Vasile

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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

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.

now and ev-er shall be, A - men World with-out men!

First Reading

Psalm 8

To the leader: according to The Gittith. A Psalm of David.

O Lord, our Sovereign,
how majestic is your name in all the earth!
You have set your glory above the heavens.
Out of the mouths of babes and infants

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you have founded a bulwark because of your foes,
to silence the enemy and the avenger.
When I look at your heavens, the work of your fingers,
the moon and the stars that you have established;
what are humans that you are mindful of them,
mortals that you care for them?
Yet you have made them a little lower than God
and crowned them with glory and honor.
You have given them dominion over the works of your hands;
you have put all things under their feet,
all sheep and oxen,
and also the beasts of the field,
the birds of the air, and the fish of the sea,
whatever passes along the paths of the seas.
O Lord, our Sovereign,
how majestic is your name in all the earth!

Second Reading

Exodus 14:19-31

The angel of God who was going before the Israelite army moved and went behind them, and the pillar of cloud moved from in front of them and took its place behind them. It came between the army of Egypt and the army of Israel. And so the cloud was there with the darkness, and it lit up the night; one did not come near the other all night.

Then Moses stretched out his hand over the sea. The Lord drove the sea back by a strong east wind all night and turned the sea into dry land, and the waters were divided. The Israelites went into the sea on dry ground, the waters forming a wall for them on their right and on their left. The Egyptians pursued and went into the sea after them, all of Pharaoh's horses, chariots, and chariot drivers. At the morning watch the Lord, in the pillar of fire and cloud, looked down on the Egyptian army and threw the Egyptian army into a panic. He clogged their chariot wheels so that they turned with difficulty. The Egyptians said, "Let us flee from the Israelites, for the Lord is fighting for them against Egypt."

Then the Lord said to Moses, "Stretch out your hand over the sea, so that the water may come back upon the Egyptians, upon their chariots and chariot drivers." So Moses stretched out his hand over the sea, and at dawn the sea returned to its normal depth. As the Egyptians fled before it, the Lord tossed the Egyptians into the sea. The waters returned and covered the chariots and the chariot drivers, the entire army of Pharaoh that had followed them into the sea; not one of them remained. But the Israelites walked on dry ground through the sea, the waters forming a wall for them on their right and on their left.

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Thus the Lord saved Israel that day from the Egyptians, and Israel saw the Egyptians dead on the seashore. Israel saw the great work that the Lord did against the Egyptians. So the people feared the Lord and believed in the Lord and in his servant Moses.

Reflection

"Step by step"

Rev. Sue Foster

Hymn

Come Labor On (verses 1 & 4)

last page

Call to Prayer

Hear Us O Lord

Don Besig and Nancy Price



Prayers of the People and Pastoral Prayer

The Prayer of Jesus

You are invited to pray in whatever language is most comfortable for you. The following examples are offered:

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 / help us yield not to temptation,
but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom,
and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.

Offering our Gifts and Gratitude

Musical Offering

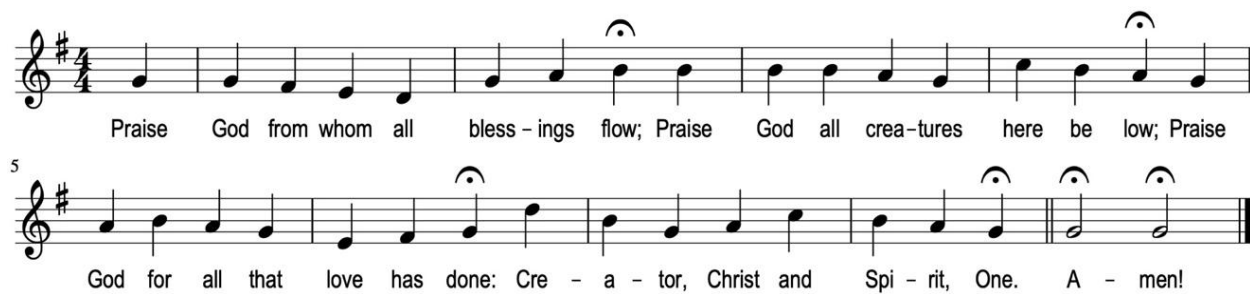
Tunes from the British Isles

Howard Drescher

*Doxology

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*Prayer of Dedication and Thanksgiving

*Closing Hymn

We Shall Overcome

CH 630

*Benediction

*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

Litany: *Iona Abbey Worship Book*, 2013

Prayer of confession: *The New Century Hymnal*, Maren Tirabassi

Welcome to Our Guests!

*We're delighted you have joined us for worship; the members are ministers of this church...
if you have any questions, please do not hesitate to ask us!*

We are delighted to welcome Pastor Sue Foster back to First Church as our **Bridge Minister**. We are deeply grateful for her ministry with us and among us during this upcoming season of transition. Be sure to say hello during coffee hour and grab a name tag so we can all reconnect!

Our Greeters this morning are Lisa Peterson-Blinn and Deb Richards.

Our Cantor is Howard Drescher.

Coffee Hour is hosted by the DeAngelis family.

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THE WEEK AHEAD...

Wednesday, September 16

1:00 p.m. Book Group

5:00 p.m. Meditation Group

Friday, September 18

6:00 p.m. Musical Movie Night – *The Sound of Music*

Saturday, September 19

12 p.m. Girl Scouts



My Favorite Things: Sack-Supper, Snacks, & The Sound of Music

Looking for a fun, casual Friday night out? Our Ministry of Spiritual Life is hosting a special Family Musical Movie Night on **Friday, September 18 at 6:00 p.m.** in **Fellowship Hall!**

We will be showing the timeless classic, *The Sound of Music*. To make this a relaxing evening for everyone, folks are invited to bring a portable, "sack" supper to eat picnic-style—or just come already fed and ready to settle in. Popcorn and drinks will be provided!

Cozy Details:

- **What to bring:** Feel free to bring blankets, sleeping bags, or pillows to create a comfy viewing spot.
- **The "Bedtime" Plan:** We know our littlest crew members have early bedtimes. We will host a built-in intermission halfway through, as well as a stopping point just before the last half-hour of the movie, so families who need to can make a seamless "So Long, Farewell" exit without missing out on the fun.

We can't wait to share laughs, songs, and popcorn with our favorite people. See you there!

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Celebrate Mansfield Festival!

Saturday, September 26th, downtown Storrs

We will be hosting an activity table with crafts for children and conducting a short community needs survey that will be used to inform our Strategic Plan.

We are looking for volunteers on the day of the event - between 2pm and 6pm. Please contact Deb Richards or Olivia Russell if you are interested in volunteering or add your name to the sign-up sheet in the sanctuary.

**** Help Needed: Invasive Plant Removal ****

Mark Messier is looking for volunteers to help remove invasive plants from the church property. If you're able to lend a hand, please reach out to Mark at [860-729-1622](tel:860-729-1622) or mark.messier1973@gmail.com. He's happy to work around your schedule — whatever time is convenient for you! **Please note:** adult volunteers only.

Come, Labor On

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Jane Laurie Borthwick, 1859, rev. 1863; alt.

Matt. 9:37-38; 20:1-7

1 Come, la-bor on. Who dares stay i - dle on the har - vest plain
 2 Come, la-bor on. Claim the high call - ing an - gels can - not share;
 3 Come, la-bor on. A - way with gloom-y doubts and faith-less fear!
 4 Come, la-bor on. No time for rest, till glows the west-ern sky,

while all a - round us waves the gold - en grain? And to each ser - vant
 to young and old the gos - pel glad-ness bear. Re - deem the time; its
 No one so weak but may do ser - vice here; Though fee - ble a - gents,
 till the long shad-ows o'er the path-way lie, And a glad sound comes

does the Sav - ior say, "Go work to - day."
 hours too swift-ly fly. The night draws nigh.
 may we all ful - fill God's righ - - - teous will.
 with the set - ting sun, "Well done, well done!"

Jane Laurie Borthwick, along with her sister, Sarah, was a member of the Scottish Free Church and translated many German hymns. English-born Thomas Tertius Noble was organist-choirmaster at St. Thomas' Church, New York City, for thirty-five years.

Tune: ORA LABORA 4.10.10.4.
 Thomas Tertius Noble, 1918

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