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

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Ministers: All the Members of the Church

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

October 18, 2026 ~ Twenty-first Sunday after Pentecost
Today's Worship Leader: Rev. Chuck Ericson

Thoughts for the Week

"…the imitation of Christ does not mean to live a life like Christ, but to live your life authentically as Christ lived his; then there are many ways and forms in which one can be a Christian."
Henri J. M. Nouwen (Dutch Catholic theologian, 1932-1996)

I hold that a strongly marked personality can influence descendants for generations."
Beatrix Potter (English author, 1866-1943)

Playing the Chimes

Welcome and Announcements

Prelude Erik Haeger

Call to Worship *(inspired by Exodus 33:17)* Gary Coté

Leader: God said to Moses: "you have found favor in my sight and I know you by name."
People: Still today, we continue to find favor in God's sight in many ways.
Leader: When we show compassion to those in need, we find favor in God's sight.
People: When we labor together for peace, we find favor in God's sight.
Leader: And when we gather here for worship, we find favor in God's sight..
People: Come, let us worship — rejoicing and trusting in our God who finds favor in us and knows our names.

***Opening Hymn** *Trust and Obey* CH 556

Prayer of Confession and New Life
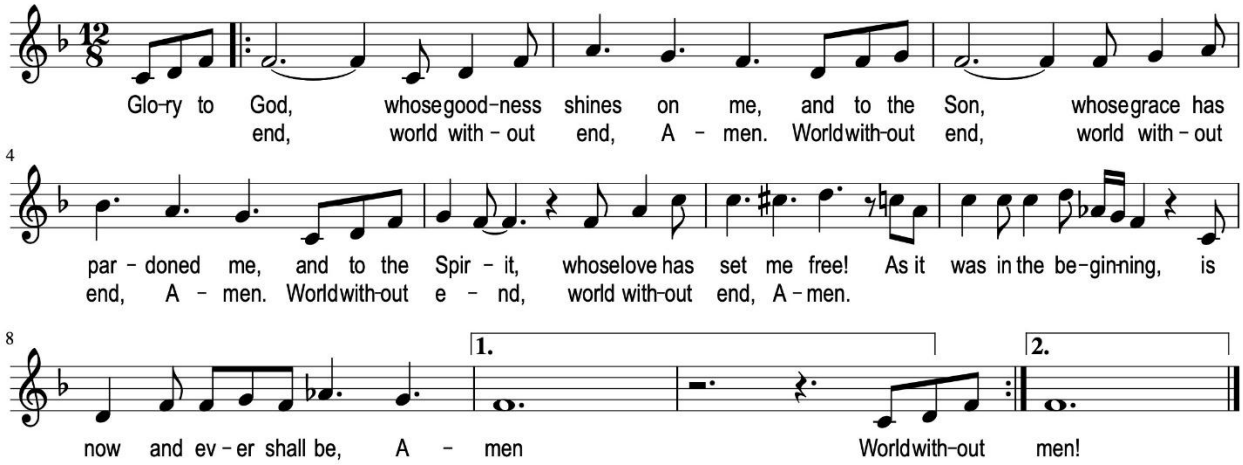
Listening and loving God, as hard as we might try, we sometimes fall short of our own expectations as well as yours. We succumb to sudden impulses instead of quietly seeking your wisdom and guidance before acting; the opinions of others capture our attention, when we should be heeding your still, small voice speaking to our hearts; we can be quick to judge, and resist letting go of old grudges rather than following Jesus' example of forgiveness and mercy. Hear us now, we pray, as we come to you in silence, each with our own longing to transform our ways and discover new life in you…

followed by a brief time of silent prayer

Words of Grace

God does indeed know our names, and watches over each of us — delighting in our moments of kindness and faithfulness, and embracing us with unconditional love and grace when our fragile humanity is on full display. This day, and always, may we trust that God's forgiveness never runs out, and God's favor is always shining upon us. AMEN.

***Song of Praise** *Glory to God* Paul Vasile



First Reading I Thessalonians 1:1-8

1:1 Paul, Silvanus, and Timothy, To the church of the Thessalonians in God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ: Grace to you and peace. **2** We always give thanks to God for all of you and mention you in our prayers, constantly **3** remembering before our God and Father your work of faith and labor of love and steadfastness of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ. **4** For we know, brothers and sisters beloved by God, that he has chosen you, **5** because our message of the gospel came to you not in word only but also in power and in the Holy Spirit and with full conviction; just as you know what kind of

persons we proved to be among you for your sake. **6** And you became imitators of us and of the Lord, for in spite of persecution you received the word with joy from the Holy Spirit, **7** so that you became an example to all the believers in Macedonia and in Achaia. **8** For the word of the Lord has sounded forth from you not only in Macedonia and Achaia but in every place your faith in God has become known, so that we have no need to speak about it.
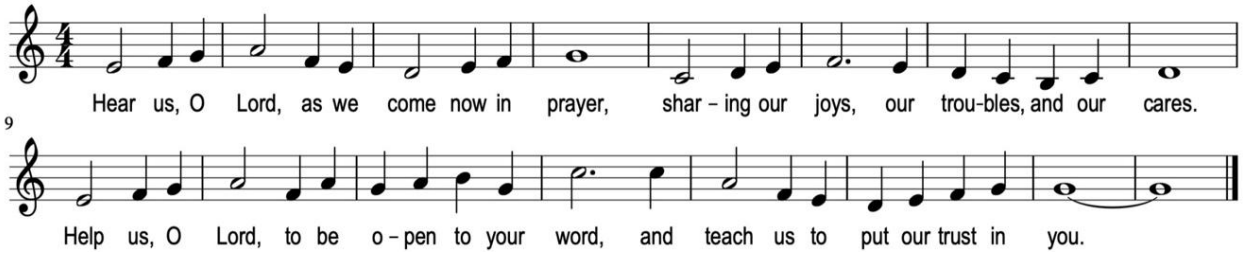
Second Reading Matthew 22:15-22

22:15 Then the Pharisees went and plotted to entrap him in what he said. **16** So they sent their disciples to him, along with the Herodians, saying, "Teacher, we know that you are sincere, and teach the way of God in accordance with truth, and show deference to no one, for you do not regard people with partiality. **17** Tell us, then, what you think. Is it lawful to pay taxes to Caesar or not?" **18** But Jesus, aware of their malice, said, "Why are you putting me to the test, you hypocrites? **19** Show me the coin used for the tax." And they brought him a denarius. **20** Then he said to them, "Whose head is this and whose title?" **21** They answered, "Caesar's." Then he said to them, "Give therefore to Caesar the things that are Caesar's and to God the things that are God's." **22** When they heard this, they were amazed, and they left him and went away.

Reflection Influencers…or Imitators?" Rev. Chuck Ericson

Hymn *Lord, I Want to Be a Christian* CH 589

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,

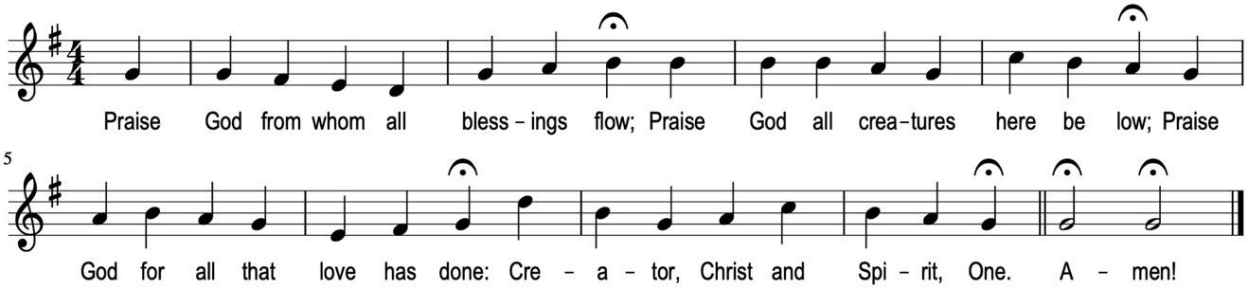
and forgive us our debts / sins / trespasses,
as we forgive our debtors / those who sin / trespass against us.
And lead us not into temptation / help us yield not to temptation,
but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom,
and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.

Offering our Gifts and Gratitude

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**



***Prayer of Dedication and Thanksgiving**

Gracious and Generous God, we thank you for the example of Jesus who taught us to give to you the things that are yours. In that spirit, as imitators of Jesus, we bring these gifts and offering to you today, asking you to bless them and send them out to those whose needs are far greater than our own, through the ministries and missions we share in this beloved family of faith. Amen.

***Closing Hymn** *Lord, Whose Life Through Humble Service* CH 461

***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

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!

Our worship service is made available digitally for those who cannot attend in person. Footage from this service may also be used in marketing materials for our community. If you do not wish to have your likeness recorded, streamed, or photographed please inform a Greeter who can seat you appropriately.

Today we welcome the Rev. Chuck Ericson as our guest pastor. A Connecticut native, Rev. Ericson is a retired pastor in the United Church of Christ holding standing in the Tolland Association. He served as the Interim Regional Minister for our Windham Association from 2017-2020 following a 32-year pastorate at the Bolton Congregational Church UCC. Pastor Chuck also served recently as both our Bridge Minister and our Intentional Interim Minister.

Our Greeter this morning is Sharon Foster-Chalecki.
Deb Hubbell is the Digital Minister.
Our Cantor is Howard Drescher.
Our Coffee Hour host is Deb Richards.

Please join us in Fellowship Hall for refreshments after worship!
All are welcome!

THE WEEK AHEAD…

TODAY	5:00 p.m. PFLAG of Mansfield Tolland
Wednesday, October 21	1:00 p.m. Book Group 5:00 p.m. Meditation Group 5:30 p.m. Search Committee
Thursday, October 22	9:30 a.m. Quilt Group
Friday, October 23	9:30 a.m. Finance committee 10:30 a.m. Stewardship committee
Saturday, October 24	9:00 a.m. Church Work Day 3:00 p.m. Downtown Boo Bash and Trick-a-Trunk

Boo Bash and Trick-a-Trunk

We are gearing up for our participation in some SPOOK-tacular fun at the **Downtown Boo Bash**! Young and young-at-heart friends will gather for trick-or-treating at participating downtown businesses, **trick-a-trunk along Wilbur Cross Way**, performances, and Halloween activities during the two hour event.

The event will take place on **Saturday, October 24 from 3:00-5:00 p.m.** We are looking for donations of candy for the event. Please leave your contributions in the basket at the front of the sanctuary. Thank You.

Supporting Project HOPE this fall

Project HOPE (formerly the Windham Region No Freeze Project) is currently at capacity and will open its doors at the end of October for transient individuals to drop in and stay the night. Guests are provided with cots for sleeping and have access to essential amenities, including showers and laundry facilities.
The organization employs a dedicated outreach worker who remains in consistent contact with individuals living in tents and vehicles to monitor and address their immediate needs. Items needed include:

Household
Disinfectant wipes
Disinfectant spray
Hand soap
Tissues
Cleaning products and supplies
55 Gallon trash bags
Paper towels
Toilet Paper

Miscellaneous
Pillows
Twin blankets
Hand/foot warmers
Ear buds/ headphones
Ear plugs
Laundry detergent

Hygiene
Deodorant
Shampoo
Conditioner
Soap
Lotion
Razors
First Aid supplies
Nail clippers
Tweezers
Combs and brushes

Items can be dropped off at their 459 Valley Street location.
Or use this link to make an online monetary donation:
https://thenofreezeproject.harnessgiving.org/donate

An Invitation -
"Sowing Seeds of Hope in Ukraine"

A presentation on the immediate relief, lasting healing,
and support for the Ukrainian children and families impacted by war.

Sunday, November 8, 12 p.m.
Buckingham Congregational Church
16 Cricket Lane, Glastonbury

Light lunch will be provided, followed by presentation at 12:30 p.m.

Hosted by Common Man for Ukraine
(commonmanforukraine.org)

see Barbara Dobrocki for more information