



# 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, Bridge Minister  
Erik Haeger, Organist  
Olivia Russell, Worship Circle Coordinator

## December 8, 2024 ~ The Second Sunday of Advent

### 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**                      *Prayer, by Fionnuala Gill*                      Cheryl Chase, Laurel Thurman, Erik Haeger

### Centering in the Spirit

In a world that is lonely, we will save a seat for you.

**In a world that is anxious, we will light candles against the gloom.**

In a world that is weary, we will sing songs of joy and truth.

**I am not alone. We are not alone.**

For here in this place, God is weaving us together.

**Light the candles! Sing with joy! We are a three-cord strand, not easily broken.**

### Procession of the Children                      *Light a Candle for Peace*                      by Shelley Murley (adapted)

Light a can - dle for peace, light a can - dle for peace,  
light a can - dle that shines all a - way a-round the world.  
Light a can - dle for me, light a can - dle for you,  
that our wish for world peace will one day come true.

**Lighting of the Advent Candle: Peace**

Katie Clauson (and Olivia and Emma)

One: In a weary and worn world, how do we begin again? Where do we start?

**All: Let us begin together. Let us begin arm in arm. Let us begin by holding each other up, instead of tearing each other down. Let us begin with words of peace.**

One: Yes, let us begin with peace. Today we light the candles of hope and peace.

**All: May these lights remind us of what could be. May these lights mark a new beginning. May peace flow like a river, and may it start with us.**

One: Arm in arm, hand in hand, side by side. May we begin again. Amen.

**\*Opening Hymn**

*All Earth Is Waiting*

CH139

**Prayer for Transformation**

**Wondrous and Loving God, we need your help. We have tried to make our own way. We have tried to lace our own shoes, to build our own houses, to kindle our own faiths. We have said a thousand times, “turn back,” as if we are fine on our own. But the days are long and we are forgetful. We need your help. Can you remind us, Gracious God? Amen.**

*moment of silence*

**Words of Grace**

I will remind you of this everlasting truth: You are not alone. Where you go, God goes. You are held in grace. Trust in this good news. Thanks be to God! We remember. We believe. Alleluia! 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 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!

**Epistle**

**Philippians 1:3-11**

<sup>3</sup>I thank my God for every remembrance of you, <sup>4</sup>always in every one of my prayers for all of you, praying with joy <sup>5</sup>for your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now. <sup>6</sup>I am confident of this, that the one who began a good work in you will continue to complete it until the day of Jesus Christ. <sup>7</sup>It is right for me to think this way about all of you, because I hold you in my heart, for all of you are my partners in God's grace, both in my imprisonment and in the defense and confirmation of the gospel. <sup>8</sup>For God is my witness, how I long for all of you with the tender affection of Christ Jesus. <sup>9</sup>And this is my prayer, that your love may overflow more and more with knowledge and full insight to help you <sup>10</sup>to determine what really matters, so that in the day of Christ you may be pure and blameless, <sup>11</sup>having produced the harvest of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ for the glory and praise of God.

## Gospel

## Luke 1:68-79

<sup>68</sup>“Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, for he has looked favorably on his people and redeemed them. <sup>69</sup>He has raised up a mighty savior for us in the house of his servant David, <sup>70</sup>as he spoke through the mouth of his holy prophets from of old, <sup>71</sup>that we would be saved from our enemies and from the hand of all who hate us. <sup>72</sup>Thus he has shown the mercy promised to our ancestors, and has remembered his holy covenant, <sup>73</sup>the oath that he swore to our ancestor Abraham, to grant us <sup>74</sup>that we, being rescued from the hands of our enemies, might serve him without fear, <sup>75</sup>in holiness and righteousness before him all our days. <sup>76</sup>And you, child, will be called the prophet of the Most High; for you will go before the Lord to prepare his ways, <sup>77</sup>to give knowledge of salvation to his people by the forgiveness of their sins. <sup>78</sup>By the tender mercy of our God, the dawn from on high will break upon us, <sup>79</sup>to give light to those who sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the way of peace.”

## Reflection

“What Really Matters”

Rev. Charles Ericson

## Hymn

*Of All the Spirit's Gifts to Me*

CH270

## Reading

*“When Will You Be Back?” by Rev Sarah (Are) Speed*

Julie Menard

Yesterday I visited an old man in the hospital.  
I was not the only one. We talked on the elevator ride down—  
*Has he gained any weight? Will he stay in that room?  
Does he like the food? Has he called?*  
All the man wanted to know was, *When will you be back?*  
We ask that question in a thousand different ways  
every single day,  
our hearts leaning over themselves,  
bending to get closer to love.  
We say, *Text me when you're home.  
Call me when you're free.  
One more kiss!  
I love you all the time.  
When will you be back?*  
What we really mean is—  
I can't go through life alone.  
Please don't let me go through life alone.

## 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

As we share in God's grace, we seek ways to share our gratitude with God and our neighbors. Through prayer and pondering, we discover new ways to give our offerings of talents, treasures, and time with a joyful spirit.

### Musical Offering

*"Creator of the Stars of Night"*

by Nancy Raabe

#### \*Doxology

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!

#### \*Prayer of Dedication

God of All Joy,  
 We give thanks each time we remember your gifts in our lives. Our gratitude extends to the ways we can use our gifts of time, talent, and treasures. May your boundless wisdom compel us to use our energies in ways that will share the most love in our world. Amen.

#### \*Closing Hymn

*When God Is a Child*

CH132

#### \*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:

### Wednesday, December 11

1:00 p.m. Book Group (FH)

### Thursday, December 12

12:15 p.m. Mid-week Music Meditation (sanctuary)

6:00 p.m. Governing Board (lower-level meeting space)

7:00 p.m. Choir (FH)

### Saturday, December 14

9 a.m. – noon WAIM work day (at WAIM, 866 Main St, Willimantic)

### Sunday, December 15

10:15 a.m. Worship & Worship Circle - Third Sunday of Advent

## And beyond:

### Sunday, December 22

10:15 a.m. Worship & Worship Circle - Fourth Sunday of Advent  
(poinsettias on display)

### Tuesday, December 24

7:00 p.m. Christmas Eve service – Paper Bag Pageant



Much of this morning's liturgy was written by the Rev. Sarah (Are) Speed for the Advent series "Words for the Beginning." Permission for use has been granted by A Sanctified Art LLC | [sanctifiedart.org](http://sanctifiedart.org)

## About this week's icon:



### **WE CAN'T GO ALONE**

This quilt square design is called a "log cabin" and is meant to symbolize that together we can hold one another up and make something greater.

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The *Invitation to Generosity* and the *Prayer of Dedication* were written by the Rev. Michelle L. Torigian, senior pastor of St. Paul United Church of Christ, Belleville, Illinois, for Worship Ways on [www.ucc.org](http://www.ucc.org)