

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

549 Storrs Rd. P.O. Box 36 Mansfield Center, CT 06250

860.423.9008 + www.myfcc.info

Ministers: All the Members of the Church
The Rev. Charles Ericson, Intentional Interim Minister
Erik Haeger, Organist
Olivia Russell, Worship Circle Coordinator

March 9, 2025 – First Sunday in 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

Greeting and Announcements

Prelude

Centering in the Spirit

Rev. Lois Happe

L: Here in this place, we can ask big questions.

P: Who is my neighbor? How can I help? What do I have to learn? Where is God in it all?

L: Here in this place, we can ask big questions.

P: So may we listen. May we learn. May we stay curious, and may we look for God.

L: This is our invitation to lean in.

P: Let us worship our holy God!

***Opening Hymn**

Take Time to Be Holy

CH572

Prayer for Transformation

Holy God, you have told us to love our neighbors as ourselves, but we get tripped up on logistics. We want to know: who is our neighbor? Do we have to love the stranger? Must we have compassion for our enemy? Forgive our human tendency to create exceptions in the face of love. Rewire our hearts so that we might see the face of a neighbor in every stranger we pass. With hope we pray, amen.

moment of silence

Words of Grace

Family of faith, When we set limits on love, God loves extravagantly.
When we forget that we are neighbors, God claims us as God's own.
When we judge, hold back, or harm, God surrounds us with grace.
There is nothing we can do or leave undone that could separate us from the love of God.
This is the good news of the gospel. Thanks be to God! Amen.

Song of PraiseGlory 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 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!

Hebrew Scripture

Psalm 91:1-2, 9-16

- ¹You who live in the shelter of the Most High, who abide in the shadow of the Almighty,
²Will say to the Lord, "My refuge and my fortress; my God, in whom I trust."
⁹Because you have made the Lord your refuge, the Most High your dwelling place,
¹⁰No evil shall befall you, no scourge come near your tent.
¹¹For he will command his angels concerning you to guard you in all your ways.
¹²On their hands they will bear you up, so that you will not dash your foot against a stone.
¹³You will tread on the lion and the adder, the young lion and the serpent you will trample under foot.
¹⁴Those who love me, I will deliver; I will protect those who know my name.
¹⁵When they call to me, I will answer them; I will be with them in trouble, I will rescue them and honor them.
¹⁶With long life I will satisfy them, and show them my salvation.

Gospel

Luke 4:1-13

¹Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan and was led by the Spirit in the wilderness, ²where for forty days he was tempted by the devil. He ate nothing at all during those days, and when they were over, he was famished. ³The devil said to him, "If you are the Son of God, command this stone to become a loaf of bread." ⁴Jesus answered him, "It is written, 'One does not live by bread alone.'" ⁵Then the devil led him up and showed him in an instant all the kingdoms of the world. ⁶And the devil said to him, "To you I will give their glory and all this authority; for it has been given over to me, and I give it to anyone I please. ⁷If you, then, will worship me, it will all be yours." ⁸Jesus answered him, "It is written, 'Worship the Lord your God, and serve only him.'" ⁹Then the devil took him to Jerusalem, and placed him on the pinnacle of the temple, saying to him, "If you are the Son of God, throw yourself down from here, ¹⁰for it is written, 'He will command his angels concerning you, to protect you,' ¹¹and 'On their hands they will bear you up, so that you will not dash your foot against a stone.'" ¹²Jesus answered him, "It is said, 'Do not put the Lord your God to the test.'" ¹³When the devil had finished every test, he departed from him until an opportune time.

Reflection

"Angels"

Rev. Chuck Ericson

Hymn*I Need Thee Every Hour***CH578****Reading**

"I Never Met a Stranger" by Rev. Sarah Speed

Julie Menard

When we talk about God, we say
she's never met a stranger.
She makes friends at the airport.

She waves to babies in the check-out line.

When we talk about God, we say
she'll leave the porch light on.
She'll have warm bread in the oven.
She'll have all the time in the world.

When we talk about God, we say
she'll look you in the eye.
She'll love you as you are.
She'll call you by your name.

When we talk about God,
we never have to talk about
which side of the road she might walk down.
Wherever you are,
that's where she'll be.

Call to Prayer

Hear Us O Lord

Don Besig and Nancy Price

9 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

The heart of our congregational life is centered in service: to neighbors in our church family who need support, to neighbors in our surrounding community who need food and shelter and other essentials, and to neighbors beyond our borders whose faces we may never see, yet have pressing needs that we can help to satisfy. Through the missions and ministries of our church, the needs of our neighbors are seen and fulfilled. Our morning offering will now be received so that we may love our neighbors in these ways.

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

You Are Welcome Here

Gerard DeMan

***Doxology**

Praise God from whom all blessings flow; Praise God all creatures here below; 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, Holy One, upon the gifts and offerings we now present to you. We dedicate them to the ministries of our church that serve our nearby neighbors, as well as those neighbors who live at a distance. May your presence be made known, and our love be revealed, through our giving. Amen.

***Closing Hymn**

On Eagle's Wings

CH77

***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



This morning's opening liturgy and poetry reading were written by the Rev. Sarah A. Speed for the Lent series "everything [in] between." Permission for use has been granted by A Sanctified Art LLC | sanctifiedart.org

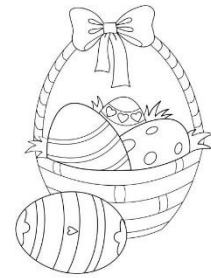
THEME FOR THE FIRST WEEK OF LENT

everything [in] between - strangers & friends

Our 2025 Lent theme branding shows two hands reaching toward each other, representing our longing for connection despite the politics, assumptions, beliefs, and narratives that divide us. The hands look as if they are reaching for a handshake, but they are paused just before they connect. The negative space in between the hands creates the shape of a doorway, symbolizing hospitality or a pathway forward. The doorway invites us to look for God in the spaces in between.

Greeters, Readers, Musicians, Communion Servers, and Coffee Hour Hosts Needed!
Sign up on the clipboard in the Sanctuary.

A delicious way to support First Church:
Our annual Easter Candy Fundraiser
featuring Munson's Chocolates!



From 2/23/2025 through **3/14/2025**, follow the link on our website (myFCC.info) to our Campaign Page to order your favorite chocolate confections. (Orders must only be placed on the Campaign Page.)

There is something for everyone, and these treats also make great gifts!

Payment is not due until you receive your order. They will be available for pick-up in Fellowship Hall the week of April 7th. We can deliver your order upon request.

To help our fundraising efforts go even further, please be sure to share the link to our fundraising page with your family and friends!

THE WEEK AHEAD...

TODAY	2:00 p.m. "Indivisible" meeting
Tuesday, March 11	6:00 p.m. Special Olympics
Wednesday, March 12	1:00 p.m. Book Group 5:30 p.m. Pastoral Search Committee
Thursday, March 13	9:30 a.m. Quilt Group 12:00 p.m. Music and Meditation 7:00 p.m. Choir
Friday, March 14	LAST DAY FOR ORDERING EASTER CANDY!
Saturday, March 15	10:00 a.m. Special Olympics
Sunday, March 16 (Lent 2)	10:15 a.m. Worship & Worship Circle