



**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](http://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

**April 20, 2025 — Easter Sunday**

**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**

**Introit**

*Alleluia Canon*

William Boyce (1711-1779), arr. C.Chase

**Greeting and Announcements**

**Centering in the Spirit**

Gary Coté

Leader: My dear friends,  
We have known grief.  
We have known loss.  
We have known the long road, tired and winding.  
We have whispered prayers on bended knees.  
We have stared at the sky, empty of stars.  
But today—

**All: Today we know hope.**

Leader: Today we know life.

**All: Today we know the sound of Alleluias.**

Leader: Today we know that death does not have the last word.

**All: Today we know that nothing can separate us from the love of God.**

Leader: It is Easter.

May hope find you.  
And may you know, deep in your bones,  
That today is a new day.

**All: Alleluia! Amen.**

**\*Opening Hymn**

*Christ the Lord Is Risen Today*

**CH216**

**Prayer for Transformation**

**The Gospel of Luke says: "It was Mary Magdalene, Joanna, Mary the mother of James, and the other women with them who told the apostles [of the resurrection]. But these words**

seemed to the disciples an idle tale, and they did not believe them. But Peter got up and ran to the tomb.”<sup>1</sup> Forgive us, God, when good news lands in our lap and we refuse to believe it. Forgive us, God, when grief and fear crowd out any room in our hearts for hope. Forgive us, God, when we dismiss the stories of others and minimize the voices of our neighbors. In a world that teeters between grief and hope, show us how to be like Peter. Show us how to hold onto hope. Show us how to run toward you. Amen.

~ moment of silence ~

## Words of Grace

Family of Faith, At first, the disciples didn't believe that Jesus had risen. They stayed locked in an upper room, shaking and afraid. Peter was the only exception. Fortunately, Jesus loves us on our best days and our worst days. God's grace exists for us when we are hopeful and when we're grieving, when we're shouting and when we're silent, when we're full of faith and when we're full of fear. God's grace exists for us on the best days, the worst days, and every day in between. Thanks be to God for this good news! 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  
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!

## Hebrew Scripture

## Psalm 46

- <sup>1</sup>God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble.
- <sup>2</sup>Therefore we will not fear, though the earth should change, though the mountains shake in the heart of the sea;
- <sup>3</sup>though its waters roar and foam, though the mountains tremble with its tumult. Selah
- <sup>4</sup>There is a river whose streams make glad the city of God, the holy habitation of the Most High.
- <sup>5</sup>God is in the midst of the city; it shall not be moved; God will help it when the morning dawns.
- <sup>6</sup>The nations are in an uproar, the kingdoms totter; he utters his voice, the earth melts.
- <sup>7</sup>The LORD of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our refuge. Selah
- <sup>8</sup>Come, behold the works of the LORD; see what desolations he has brought on the earth.
- <sup>9</sup>He makes wars cease to the end of the earth; he breaks the bow, and shatters the spear; he burns the shields with fire.
- <sup>10</sup>“Be still, and know that I am God! I am exalted among the nations, I am exalted in the earth.”
- <sup>11</sup>The LORD of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our refuge. Selah

**Gospel**

Luke 24:1-12

But on the first day of the week, at early dawn, they came to the tomb, taking the spices that they had prepared. <sup>2</sup>They found the stone rolled away from the tomb, <sup>3</sup>but when they went in, they did not find the body. <sup>4</sup>While they were perplexed about this, suddenly two men in dazzling clothes stood beside them. <sup>5</sup>The women were terrified and bowed their faces to the ground, but the men said to them, "Why do you look for the living among the dead? He is not here, but has risen. <sup>6</sup>Remember how he told you, while he was still in Galilee, <sup>7</sup>that the Son of Man must be handed over to sinners, and be crucified, and on the third day rise again." <sup>8</sup>Then they remembered his words, <sup>9</sup>and returning from the tomb, they told all this to the eleven and to all the rest. <sup>10</sup>Now it was Mary Magdalene, Joanna, Mary the mother of James, and the other women with them who told this to the apostles. <sup>11</sup>But these words seemed to them an idle tale, and they did not believe them. <sup>12</sup>But Peter got up and ran to the tomb; stooping and looking in, he saw the linen cloths by themselves; then he went home, amazed at what had happened.

**Reflection**

"A Simple Act of Faith"

**Hymn***Christ is Risen! Shout Hosanna!***CH222****Reading***The Easter Challenge*

by Joyce Rupp

*from "Out of the Ordinary: Prayers, Poems, and Reflections for Every Season"*

Every year it happens:  
earth shakes her sleepy head,  
still a bit wintered and dull,  
and feels new life stirring.

Every year cocoons give up their treasures,  
fresh shoots push through brown leaves,  
seemingly dead branches shine with green,  
and singing birds find their way home.

Every year we hear the stories:  
empty tomb, surprised grievers,  
runners with news and revelation,  
unexpected encounters,  
conversations on the road,  
tales of nets filling with fish,  
and breakfast on a seashore.

And every year  
the dull and dead in us  
meets our Easter challenge:

to be open to the unexpected,  
to believe beyond our security,  
to welcome God in every form,  
and trust in our own greening.

### 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/trespases,  
as we forgive our debtors/those who sin/tresspass 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

This morning we celebrate resurrection, remembering the day when faithful women went to Jesus' tomb only to find it empty, and were told that he was alive. Resurrections continue to happen in our lives today when something precious...something essential...something that seemed hopeless and gone...comes to life. When those who hunger are fed...when the lost are seen and found...when peace overwhelms conflict...whenever there is healing and new life...there is resurrection. The gifts we dedicate to our church's ministries and missions can help to make resurrections happen. May we give joyfully, generously and faithfully now as our offerings are now received.

### Musical Offering

*Risen in Glory*

Words by Charlotte Lee, music by Douglas E. Wagner

### \*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 Easter Joy and Everlasting Love, the gifts and offerings we bring to you now represent the labors of our hands, the yearnings of our hearts, and the convictions of our souls. We ask you to bless them and use them through our church's ministries to continue the work of resurrection throughout our community, our nation and the world. In Jesus' Name we pray. Amen.

### \*Closing Hymn

*That Easter Day with Joy Was Bright*

CH229

### \*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 opening liturgy and the 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](http://sanctifiedart.org)*

Our Greeters today are Deb Richards and Mark Messier.

Our Cantor is Laurel Thurman.

Barbara Dobrocki and Penny Guerin host coffee hour in Fellowship Hall following worship.

Thank you to the choir for their musical offerings during Lent.

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### **THE WEEK AHEAD...**

#### **TODAY: DON'T FORGET TO COMPLETE THE SEARCH COMMITTEE SURVEY!**

**Tuesday, April 22**      5:30 p.m. Pastoral Search Committee

**Wednesday, April 23**    1:00 p.m. Book Group

**Saturday, April 26**    9 a.m.-noon Community Giving Event  
12:30-4:00 p.m. Girl Scouts

**Sunday, April 27**      10:15 a.m. Worship and Worship Circle at First Church

**The Easter Flowers in the Sanctuary today are given by:**

Sharon Foster-Chalecki in memory of Our Parents

Jack, Donna and Dawn Clauson in memory of Oscar and Lorraine, Durward and Clemma Gebbie, Darwin Gebbie

Barbara Dobrocki in memory of Roman and Edeltraud Debrocki

Lisa Peterson-Blinn in memory of Mary and Richard Blinn, Richard Blinn Jr. and Alisha Colon

Gretchen and Pheobe in memory of Ross Hall

Ava Little in honor of beloved friend Wanda

Sandy and Don Baxter in memory of parents, Nicolina Pilardi and William Pilardi, Mary Baxter and Bob Baxter

Drescher Family in memory of parents, Ruth and Steve, Toni and Howard

Carol Fineout in memory of cherished loved ones, James Robertson, Marsha Shoemaker, Ruth Berube, Winston Hawkins, George Bailey, Jean Beach

Eleanor Joyce and Frank Ball in memory of Dorothy Eleanor Mead and Martin John Joyce, Melvin Hempstead and Wallace Hempstead

Mary Anne Baker in memory of husband John Baker

Penny Guerin in memory of James Dorothy, Natalie and David Guerin

Dale and Joy Truman in memory of Ruth and Louis Sutro, Horace and Betty Truman

Lucio Mora in honor of the First Church Community

Gary Cote and David Darnell in memory of George and Evelyn Cote and Frances Darnell

Loris Masterton in memory of William Masterton

Linda Wenner in memory of Donald Wenner, Pauline Wenner and Marion Brotzman

Laurel Thurman and Cheryl Chase in memory of Bill Thurman and Bob Foster

Jean and Wes Bell in memory of Elva Benedick (grandmother)

Deb Richards and Mark Messier in memory of parents George and Joyce Richards and Dick and Betty Richards

The Robitaille family in memory of the Schors-Robitaille family, Cindy Benson Collins and Carol Tetzlaff

Jo-Ann, Frank and Frankie Wunschel in memory of the beloved members of the Barber, Waide and Wunschel families

Bobbie Giardina in memory of Barbra and Lyle Perry and Audrey and Tony Giardina, Rosemary Giardina

**COMMUNITY GIVING EVENT**  
**Saturday, April 26 from 9a to 12 noon**  
**in the church parking lot**

This event is hosted by the First Church Ministry of Caring. Community members are invited to make donations of \*NEW\* items for our community partners including: the Holy Family Shelter, Natchaug Hospital, the Domestic Violence Shelter, and Project Hope.

On April 26 we are collecting: Kids' Pull-Ups training pants (sizes 4T, 5T and 6T) as well as sunscreen and insect repellent. Also needed are men's and women's tee-shirts and underwear, all sizes. Financial donations are always welcome.

Please join us in supporting our local partners!

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**SAVE THE DATE**  
**Books, Blooms, and Blossoms!**  
**Saturday, May 3 from 9a to 12 noon, rain or shine**

- **Start cleaning your closets!** "All things flat" - Good condition books, cds, dvds, LPs, games, puzzles, and any other "flat" entertainment item can brought in at any time to Fellowship Hall.
- **Think about what you might bake!** All kinds of goodies are needed. Please label and price your items! Drop off at church NO LATER than 8am on the day of the sale.
- **Garden Items needed!** Bare-rooted plants, as well as houseplants, nice plant pots, garden decorations, tools, and other garden items are welcome.
- **Please give of yourself!** We need help on Thursday afternoon (May 1), Friday during the day (May 2) or the day of the sale for final set-up, help during the sale, and clean-up.

If you have any questions, please contact Cheryl Chase (860) 429-7265 or [seachase3860@yahoo.com](mailto:seachase3860@yahoo.com).

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**Thursday, June 5 (8:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.)**  
**Strategic Visioning Retreat**

*As we seek a new pastor, and explore our hopes and vision for First Church, the Governing Board invites all members to a retreat on **Thursday, June 5 from 8:30 am to 3:30 pm** in Fellowship Hall. We hope that with this advance notice, members who work will be able to attend. The retreat will be facilitated by the Rev. Monica Lewis, a visioning specialist at the UCC Building & Loan Fund.*