

Mt. Zion United Church of Christ
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Rev. Amy E. Northridge, Pastor
Mrs. Amy Peck, Worship Choir Director
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August 24, 2025

9:45 AM

Biblical Detectives: Discovering the Unknown
Theodicy

Thank you for worshiping with us today. If you are a guest, we invite you to take a moment to complete a visitor's card located in the back of the pew in front of you and place it in the offering plate when it is passed. We also invite you to sign your name in our guest book located in the back entrance of the sanctuary.

We welcome infants and children and all their wiggles & voices in our worship! For your comfort, we also have a children's corner in the back narthex where your child can relax and play and you can still participate in the worship experience. We have children's books and activity bags for them to enjoy! Please see a member of the welcoming team for assistance!

WELCOME & ANNOUNCEMENTS

JOYS & CONCERNS

PRELUDE (sung by Debbie Butcher) *In the Name of the Lord* Sandy Patty

GATHERING LITURGY¹

L: We gather today as seekers of discovery, carried by wonder, embraced by mystery, drawn here by the God who is always revealing more.

C: We come with expectant hearts, ready to meet the Living God.

L: This is the wonder we cannot keep silent:

C: May this eternal truth be always on our hearts: that the God who breathed this world into being, placed stars into the heavens, and designed a butterfly's wing, is the God who entrusted His Son to the care of ordinary people, and became vulnerable that we might know the strength and wonder of His Love. A mystery so deep it is impossible to grasp. A mystery so beautiful it is impossible to ignore.

L: Let us worship this God of wonder, mystery, and love.

*Those for whom it is comfortable, please rise.

Abide with Me

Text: Henry F. Lyte (1793-1847), alt.

Tune: William H. Monk (1823-1889)

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♩ = 80

Piano

1. A - bide with me; fast falls the e - ven - tide;
2. Swift to its close ebbs out life's lit - tle day;
3. I need your pres-ence ev - ery pass-ing hour;
4. I fear no foe, with you at hand to bless;
5. Hold now your cross be - fore my clos-ing eyes;

5

The shad - ows deep - en, Lord, with me a - bide;
 Earth's joys grow dim, its glo - ries pass a - way;
 I need your grace to foil the tempt-er's power.
 Ills have no weight and tears no bit - ter - ness;
 Shine through the gloom and point me to the skies;

9

When oth - er help - ers fail, and com - forts flee,
 Change and de - cay in all a - round I see;
 Give me your love my guide and stay to be.
 Where is death's sting? where, grave, your vic - to - ry?
 Heaven's morn-ing breaks, and earth's vain shad - ows flee;

13

Help of the help-less, O a - bide with me.
 O Christ who chang-es not, a - bide with me.
 Through cloud and sun-shine, O a - bide with me.
 I tri - umph still if you a - bide with me.
 In life, in death, O Christ, a - bide with me.

*Those for whom it is comfortable, please rise.

***TIME OF CONFESSION²**

CALL TO CONFESSION

PRAYER OF CONFESSION

L: Holy God,

C: you invite us to live in mystery—to walk by faith, not by sight. But we confess: we prefer certainty. We long for clear paths, fixed plans, and predictable outcomes. You call us to trust in your promises, to see the world through your eyes of mercy. But too often, we rely on our own understanding, measuring life by what we can control.

You speak of new creation, of old things passing away and everything becoming new. But we hold on to the familiar, afraid to let go of what no longer gives life. It is hard to live by faith. Forgive us, O God of mercy.

Forgive us for playing god, for clinging to illusions of control, instead of resting in your mystery and love. Teach us again to walk by faith. Amen.

ASSURANCE OF PARDON

L: Hear this good news: The God who scattered stars across the heavens also plants seeds of grace in the soil of your soul. Though the work is hidden, though the growth is a mystery, God is making all things new—even you. In Jesus Christ, you are forgiven, we all are forgiven, set free to live by faith, and called to grow in love.

ALL: Thanks be to God. Amen.

CHILDREN'S MESSAGE

SCRIPTURE

Job 1:1-5 (CEB)
Luke 13:1-5 (CEB)

INVESTIGATING THE QUESTIONS

HYMN OF THE DAY NO. 521 UM HYMNAL (see next page)

I Want Jesus to Walk with Me

*Those for whom it is comfortable, please rise.

I Want Jesus to Walk with Me

arr. J. Jefferson Cleveland and Verolga Nix

African American Spiritual

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♩ = 80

Piano

1. I want Je - sus to walk with me;
2. In my tri - als, Lord, walk with me;
3. When I'm in trou - ble, Lord, walk with me;

5

I want Je - sus to walk with me;
in my tri - als, Lord, walk with me;
when I'm in trou - ble, Lord, walk with me;

9

all a - long my pil - grim jour - ney,
when my heart is al - most break - ing;
when my head is bowed in sor - row,

13

Lord, I want Je - sus to walk with me.
Lord, I want Je - sus to walk with me.
Lord, I want Je - sus to walk with me.

*Those for whom it is comfortable, please rise.

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE & THE LORD'S PRAYER

ALL: Our Father, 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 sins, as we forgive those who sin 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.

A TIME FOR SHARING

INVITATION TO GENEROSITY & DISCIPLESHIP

OFFERTORY

Precious Lord, Take My Hand

by Dorsey

*PRAYER OF DEDICATION

***CLOSING HYMN NCH NO. 506** (see next page)

What a Friend We Have in Jesus

***BENEDICTION**

POSTLUDE

God's Eye is On the Sparrow

by Martin

References

¹The opening liturgy includes the writing of John Birch, posted on [Faith and Worship - Prayers and Resources](https://re-worship.blogspot.com/2011/11/sending-mystery-so-deep.html) and used with permission as accessed at <https://re-worship.blogspot.com/2011/11/sending-mystery-so-deep.html> on 6/11/25.

²The prayer of confession is inspired by the work of by Peter Bankson. Posted on the **Worship Elements** page of the **Ministry Matters** website. <http://www.ministrymatters.com/> and accessed on 6/11/25.

Welcome Team Members—Connie & John Wolfe

Liturgist—Tama Allison

Tech Team—Elaine Bevivino, Jack Herlocker, John Kollasch

Special Musician—Debbie Butcher

*Those for whom it is comfortable, please rise.

What a Friend We Have in Jesus

Charles C. Converse, 1868

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Piano