

Mt. Zion United Church of Christ
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Rev. Amy E. Northridge, Pastor
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August 31, 2025

9:45 AM

Biblical Detectives: Discovering the Unknown
What Time is it?

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 Mike Gibbs)

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.

***OPENING HYMN**

Amazing Grace (My Chains are Gone)

Verse 1

Amazing grace how sweet the sound
That saved a wretch like me
I once was lost but now I'm found
Was blind but now I see

Verse 2

'Twas grace that taught my heart to fear
And grace my fears relieved
How precious did that grace appear
The hour I first believed

Chorus

My chains are gone I've been set free
My God my Savior has ransomed me
And like a flood His mercy rains
Unending love amazing grace

Verse 3

The Lord has promised good to me
His word my hope secures
He will my shield and portion be
As long as life endures

Chorus

My chains are gone I've been set free
My God my Savior has ransomed me
And like a flood His mercy rains
Unending love amazing grace

My chains are gone I've been set free
My God my Savior has ransomed me
And like a flood His mercy rains
Unending love amazing grace

Verse 4

The earth shall soon dissolve like snow
The sun forbear to shine
But God who called me here below
Will be forever mine
Will be forever mine
You are forever mine

Chris Tomlin, John Newton, Louie Giglio

CCLI Song #4768151

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*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

Leviticus 23:1-8 (CEB)
Ecclesiastes 3:1-8(CEB)

INVESTIGATING THE QUESTIONS

HYMN OF THE DAY (see next page)

I Can Only Imagine

*Those for whom it is comfortable, please rise.

Verse 1

I can only imagine
What it will be like
When I walk by Your side
I can only imagine
What my eyes will see
When Your face is before me
I can only imagine

Chorus

Surrounded by Your glory
What will my heart feel
Will I dance for You Jesus
Or in awe of You be still
Will I stand in Your presence
Or to my knees will I fall
Will I sing hallelujah
Will I be able to speak at all
I can only imagine (yeah)
I can only imagine

Verse 2

I can only imagine
When that day comes
And I find myself standing in the Son
I can only imagine
When all I will do
Is forever, forever worship You
I can only imagine
I can only imagine

Chorus

Surrounded by Your glory
What will my heart feel
Will I dance for You Jesus
Or in awe of You be still
Will I stand in Your presence
Or to my knees will I fall
Will I sing hallelujah
Will I be able to speak at all
I can only imagine (yeah)
I can only imagine

Surrounded by Your glory
What will my heart feel
Will I dance for You Jesus
Or in awe of You be still
Will I stand in Your presence
Or to my knees will I fall
Will I sing hallelujah
Will I be able to speak at all
I can only imagine (yeah)
I can only imagine

Tag

I can only imagine yeah
I can only imagine
I can only imagine
I can only imagine

Ending

I can only imagine when all I will do
Is forever, forever worship You
I can only imagine

CCLI Song # 2978857

Bart Millard

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*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 (sung by Mike Gibbs)

*PRAYER OF DEDICATION

***CLOSING HYMN UM HYMNAL NO. 64** (see next page)

Holy, Holy, Holy

***BENEDICTION**

POSTLUDE

Classical Postlude

by Haydn

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—Deb & Terry Barnes

Liturgist— Stella Fletcher

Tech Team— Deb Herlocker, Jack Herlocker, Ron Miles

Special Musicians—Mike Gibbs, Praise Team

*Those for whom it is comfortable, please rise.

Holy, Holy, Holy (Traditional)

John B. Dykes, 1861


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Piano $\text{♩} = 80$



1. Ho-ly, ho-ly, ho - ly, Lord God Al - might - y!
 2. Ho-ly, ho-ly, ho - ly! All the saints a - dore thee,
 3. Ho-ly, ho-ly, ho - ly! Though the dark-ness hide thee,
 4. Ho-ly, ho-ly, ho - ly, Lord God Al - might - y!

5




Ear - ly in the morn - ing our song shall rise to thee.
 Cast - ing down their gold - en crowns a - round the glass-y sea;
 Though the eye of sin - ful man thy glo - ry may not see,
 All thy works shall praise thy name in earth and sky and sea.

9



Ho - ly, ho - ly ho - ly! Mer - ci - ful and might - y!
 Cher - u - bim and ser - a - phim fall - ing down be - fore thee,
 On - ly thou art ho - ly, there is none be - side thee,
 Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly! Mer - ci - ful and might - y!

13



God in three per - sons, bless-ed Trin - i - ty!
 which wert, and art, and ev - er-more shalt be.
 Per fect in power, in love and pur i ty.
 God in three per - sons, bless-ed Trin - i - ty!