

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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September 28, 2025

9:45 AM

Sacred Stones: Building Faith in the Places God Meets Us*
Spaces of Struggle

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! Additionally, after the children's message, children from 3 years old—6th grade are invited to participate in Sunday school in our classroom downstairs. They can choose to attend Sunday school or return to their seats to sit with their parents. Please see a member of the welcoming team for assistance!

WELCOME & ANNOUNCEMENTS
INTRODUCTION TO THEME

PRELUDE
CALL TO WORSHIP

L: Come, people of God, ready to build your faith.

C: We are living stones, gathered in God's house.

L: We come carrying the weight of our battles and fears.

C: God meets us in our struggles.

L: David chose five smooth stones, trusting God's strength.

C: We bring our stones, trusting God will give us courage.

L: Come, let us worship the God who equips and sustains us.

C: We worship the One who is our refuge and strength.

L: I invite you to stand as comfortable as we start this new day turning our hearts to God in praise.

*Those for whom it is comfortable, please rise.

BE THOU MY VISION with IN CHRIST ALONE

VERSE 1 (Be Thou My Vision)

Be Thou my vision, O Lord of my heart;
Naught be all else to me, save that Thou art;
Thou my best thought by day or by night,
Waking or sleeping, Thy presence my light.

VERSE 2 (Be Thou My Vision)

Be Thou my Wisdom and Thou my true Word;
I ever with Thee and Thou with me, Lord;
Thou my great Father, I Thy true son,
Thou in me dwelling, and I with Thee one.

VERSE 1 (In Christ Alone)

In Christ alone my hope is found, He is my light, my strength, my song;
This Cornerstone, this solid Ground, firm through the fiercest drought and storm.
What heights of love, what depths of peace, when fears are stilled, when strivings cease.
My Comforter, my All in All, here in the love of Christ I stand.

VERSE 4 (In Christ Alone)

No guilt in life, no fear in death, this is the pow'r of Christ in me;
From life's first cry to final breath, Jesus commands my destiny.
No pow'r of hell, no scheme of man, can ever pluck me from His hand;
Till He returns or calls me home, here in the pow'r of Christ I'll stand.

VERSE 3 (Be Thou My Vision)

High King of heaven, my victory won,
May I reach heaven's joys, bright heaven's Sun!
Heart of my own heart, whatever befall,
Be Thou my Vision, O Ruler of all.

***TIME OF CONFESSION¹**

CALL TO CONFESSION

PRAYER OF CONFESSION

L: Merciful God,

C: we confess that we are weighed down by fear. We rely on our own strength, forgetting that You fight with us and for us. Forgive us, O God. Give us courage like David, to face our giants with trust in You.

ASSURANCE OF PARDON

L: Hear the good news: God's strength is made perfect in weakness.

C: In Christ, we are forgiven and given courage for the journey. Thanks be to God!

ACT OF PRAISE

Spaces of Struggle (to the tune of the Doxology)

ALL SING: Praise God whose strength will see us through, whose steadfast love is ever true; In trials faced, God makes us strong, Our refuge, courage, and our song.

CHILDREN'S MESSAGE

SCRIPTURE

1 Samuel 17:8-11, 32-50 (The Message)

SERMON

RESPONSE

INVITATION TO RESPONSE

PRAYER OVER THE STONES OF STRUGGLE

HYMN OF THE DAY

Graves Into Gardens

VERSE 1

I searched the world, but it couldn't fill me.
Man's empty praise and treasures that fade are never enough.
Then You came along and put me back together.
And ev'ry desire is now satisfied here in Your love.

CHORUS

Oh, there's nothing better than You.
There's nothing better than You.
Lord, there's nothing, nothing is better than you.

*Those for whom it is comfortable, please rise.

VERSE 2

I'm not afraid to show You my weakness.
My failures and flaws, Lord You've seen them all, and You still call me friend.
'Cause the God of the mountain is the God of the valley.
There's not a place in Your mercy and grace won't find me again.

CHORUS

Oh, there's nothing better than You.
There's nothing better than You.
Lord, there's nothing, nothing is better than you.

BRIDGE

You turn mourning to dancing. You give beauty for ashes.
You turn shame into glory. You're the only one who can.
You turn graves into gardens. You turn bones into armies.
You turn seas into highways. You're the only one who can.

CHORUS

Oh, there's nothing better than You.
There's nothing better than You.
Lord, there's nothing, nothing is better than you.

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE & THE LORD'S PRAYER

*(Please note that during the prayers of the people there will be a time for individuals to name
aloud their joys and concerns as invited by our liturgist.)*

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.

TIME FOR SHARING

INVITATION TO GENEROSITY & DISCIPLESHIP

OFFERTORY

God Is Not Abusive

by Spencer

*PRAYER OF DEDICATION¹

L: Generous God, here are our gifts of time; here are our gifts of talents;
here are our gifts of money; building stones for Your Kingdom,
awaiting shaping and placing within Your loving purpose.

C: Amen.

*Those for whom it is comfortable, please rise.

***CLOSING HYMN**

Great is Thy Faithfulness

VERSE 1

Great is Thy faithfulness, O God my Father,
There is no shadow of turning with Thee;
Thou changest not, Thy compassions they fail not;
As Thou hast been, Thou forever wilt be.

CHORUS

Great is Thy faithfulness! Great is Thy faithfulness!
Morning by morning new mercies I see;
All I have needed Thy hand hath provided
Great is Thy faithfulness, Lord, unto me.

VERSE 2

Summer and winter, and springtime and harvest;
Sun, moon, and stars in their courses above
Join with all nature in manifold witness
To Thy great faithfulness, mercy and love.

CHORUS

Great is Thy faithfulness! Great is Thy faithfulness!
Morning by morning new mercies I see;
All I have needed Thy hand hath provided
Great is Thy faithfulness, Lord, unto me.

VERSE 3

Pardon for sin and a peace that endureth,
Thy own dear presence to cheer and to guide;
Strength for today and bright hope for tomorrow,
Blessings all mine, with ten thousand beside!

CHORUS

Great is Thy faithfulness! Great is Thy faithfulness!
Morning by morning new mercies I see;
All I have needed Thy hand hath provided
Great is Thy faithfulness, Lord, unto me.

***BENEDICTION**

POSTLUDE

*Those for whom it is comfortable, please rise.

References

¹The Offertory Prayer is written by Rev Dr Derek Browning, and posted on the Church of Scotland's Starters for Sunday website. <http://www.churchofscotland.org.uk/>

Welcome Team Members—John & Connie Wolfe

Liturgist—Carol Hartman

Tech Team—George DeMers, Paul Ramsey, & Joe Vacante

*The brick graffiti wall symbolizes the strength of a community built stone by stone, brick by brick. Though bricks are shaped by human hands and stones by the earth itself, together they remind us that God works through both the natural and the crafted to build sacred spaces. Each week, a new word will be added, proclaiming God's presence in our life together and marking this wall as a holy witness to faith. Thank you to the altarscape team for their visioning and sharing of gifts to make our Sanctuary space a beautiful offering to God in this season: Jodi Bender, Danika Dallam, Cindy Hogentogler, Barb Neff

*Those for whom it is comfortable, please rise.