

Mt. Zion United Church of Christ
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Rev. Amy E. Northridge, Pastor
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Travis Pinci, Accompanist, Children's Music Coordinator, & Church Administrator

September 6, 2026

9:45 AM

Home Coming: Welcome Home
A Service of Holy Communion

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! We have children's books and activity bags for them to enjoy in the side narthex! 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

JOYS AND CONCERNS

INVITATION TO WORSHIP

PRELUDE

Come to Me

by Joncas

CALL TO WORSHIP

L: Come, friends. Come, neighbors. Come, family of God.

C: Welcome home.

L: Whether this place is filled with memories, or you are making memories here for the first time,

C: welcome home.

L: Whether you have been here every Sunday, or your journey has taken you far from familiar places,

C: welcome home.

L: For homecoming is more than returning to a building, more than coming back to a familiar place.

*Those for whom it is comfortable, please rise.

C: Homecoming is discovering where God has been with us all along.

L: So come as you are. Come and discover where God is dwelling. Come and worship the God who welcomes us home.

C: God is here. We are home. Let us praise our God here and now!

MT. ZION'S AFFIRMATION OF FAITH

L: As we gather in this homecoming, we remember that part of what makes our church a home is the covenant we share with God and with one another. So let us remember our "house rules," as together we affirm the faith that shapes our life at Mt. Zion United Church of Christ.

C: We believe God works through us as a family of faith. We believe God speaks to us through the power of individual and communal prayer. We believe God accepts everyone as a child of God. We believe God provides for us, strengthens us and is present with us in times of joy and sorrow. We believe God forgives us and in forgiveness for one another.

We believe God promises eternal life for those who confess Jesus Christ as Lord. We celebrate God's presence with us, which calls us to love and accept one another, to serve others through mission, and deepens our spiritual relationship with one another. Therefore, we look to the future, with hope and in faith that God provides vision us as God's people and equips God's us with the leadership to carry out God's will.

***OPENING HYMN FWS NO. 2236** (see next page)

Gather Us In

*Those for whom it is comfortable, please rise.

Gather Us In

Marty Haugen

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Piano $\text{♩} = 80$



1. Here in this place new light is streaming, now is the dark - ness
 2. We are the young - our lives are a mys - t'ry, we are the old - who
 3. Here we will take the wine and the wa - ter, here we will take the
 4. Not in the dark of build - ings con - fin - ing, not in some heav - en,
 4 van - ished a - way, see in this space our fears and our dream - ings
 yearn for your face, we have been sung through - out all of his - t'ry,
 bread of new birth, here you shall call your sons and your daughters,
 light years a - way, but here in this place the new light is shin - ing
 7 brought here to you in the light of this day. Gather us in - the
 called to be light to the whole human race. Gather us in - the
 call us a - new to be salt for the earth. Give us to drink the
 now is the King - dom now is the day. Gather us in and
 12 lost and for - sak - en, gather us in - the blind and the lame; call to us now, and
 rich and the haught-y, gather us in - the proud and the strong; give us a heart so
 wine of com - pas - ion, give us to eat the bread that is you; nour - ish us well and
 hold us for - ev - er, gather us in and make us your own; gath - er us in - all
 16 we shall a - waken, we shall a - rise at the sound of our name.
 meek and so low - ly, give us the courage to en - ter the song.
 teach us to fashion lives that are ho - ly and hearts that are true.
 peo - ples to - geth - er, fire of love in our flesh and our bone.

*Those for whom it is comfortable, please rise.

***CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS¹**

INVITATION TO CONFESSION

L: While we gather this day to celebrate our homecoming, we know that sometimes we wander far from the people God has called us to be. Sometimes we stay close, but allow resentment, fear, or pride to keep our hearts far away. Sometimes we cling so tightly to what has been that we cannot see the new thing God is doing among us. Still, God comes to meet us with mercy and welcomes us with grace. Trusting in the love of the One who has been with us all along, let us confess our sins together.

PRAYER OF CONFESSION

C: Welcoming God, we confess that we do not always make our home in your love. We wander after things that cannot give us life. We hold tightly to what we believe belongs to us. We draw lines between those we call family and those we call stranger. We remember the past with gratitude, but sometimes cling to it so tightly that we struggle to follow where you are leading us next. We long to receive your grace, yet sometimes struggle to offer that same grace to others.

Forgive us, O God. Meet us on the roads where we wander. Open our hearts to your abundant mercy. Give us gratitude for where we have been, courage for where you are leading, and grace to welcome others along the way. Amen.

WORDS OF FORGIVENESS

P: Friends, while we are still a long way off, God sees us. God comes to meet us. God embraces us with mercy and surrounds us with grace. In Jesus Christ, you are forgiven, we all are forgiven. Our past is held in God's faithfulness. Our future is held in God's promise. And here and now, we are held in God's grace. You have a place in the family of God. There is grace enough for you. There is joy in your homecoming.

C: Thanks be to God! Amen.

*ACT OF PRAISE NCH NO. 449 (black hymnal, v.1 & refrain see next page)

Softly and Tenderly

*Those for whom it is comfortable, please rise.

Softly and Tenderly (verse 1)

Will L. Thompson, 1880

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$\text{♩} = 80$

Piano

1. Soft-ly and tender-ly Jesus is call-ing, call-ing for you and for me; See at the por-tals Christ

wait-ing and watch-ing, watch-ing for you and for me. Come home, come home, all who are weary, come

home

Earn-est-ly, tender-ly Jesus is call-ing call-ing, "O sin-ner, come home!"

*Those for whom it is comfortable, please rise.

CHILDREN'S SERMON WITH BAG BLESSING

SCRIPTURE READING

Luke 15:11-32 (NRSVUE)

SERMON

***HYMN OF THE DAY NCH NO. 423** (see below and next page)

Great is Your Faithfulness

Great Is Your Faithfulness

William M. Runyan, 1923

Thomas O. Chisholm, 1923

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Piano

$\text{♩} = 80$

The musical score is written for piano in 3/4 time with a key signature of one sharp (F#). It consists of three systems of music. Each system has a treble and bass staff joined by a brace. The lyrics are written below the notes. The first system includes three verses of lyrics. The second system continues the lyrics. The third system concludes the hymn.

1. Great is your faith - ful-ness, O God, Cre a - tor,
2. Sum-mer and win - ter, and spring-time and har-vest,
3. Par-don for sin and a peace so en - dur-ing,

with you no shad-ow of turn-ing we see. You do not
sun, moon, and stars in their cours-es a - bove, Join with all
your own dear pres-ence to cheer and to guide. Strength for to -

change, your com - pas-sions they fail not; all of your good-ness for -
na - ture in man - i - fold wit-ness to your great faith - ful-ness,
- day and bright hope for to mor-row, bless-ings all mine with ten

*Those for whom it is comfortable, please rise.

- ev - er will be. Great is your faith-ful-ness! Great is your faith-ful-ness!
mer - cy, and love. side.

Morn-ing by morn-ing new mer-cies I see; All I have need-ed your

hand has pro-vid-ed, Great is your faith-ful-ness, God, un-to me!

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

Those for whom it is comfortable, please rise.

INVITATION TO GENEROSITY & DISCIPLESHIP

OFFERTORY *Indescribable with Morning Has Broken*

arr. Tornquist

OFFERTORY PRAYER

L: Let us pray. Generous God,

C: you have given us a place to belong and people with whom to share the journey. Receive these gifts as signs of our gratitude for all that has been, our commitment to the work you have given us today, and our hope for all that is still to come.

Use what we offer to share your love, widen your welcome, and build a community where all your children may find a place to belong. Amen.

SACRAMENT OF HOLY COMMUNION

INVITATION TO THE TABLE

GREAT THANKSGIVING

P: The Lord be with you.

C: And also with you.

P: Lift up your hearts.

C: We lift them to the Lord.

P: Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

C: It is right to give our thanks and praise.

REMEMBERING CHRIST'S STORY

PRAYER OF INVOCATION

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.

INVITATION TO COMMUNION

DISTRIBUTION HYMN NCH NO. 332 (black hymnal, see next page)

As We Gather

*Those for whom it is comfortable, please rise.

As We Gather at Your Table

Carl P. Daw, 1989; Jack Schrader

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$\text{♩} = 80$

Piano

1. As we gath - er at your ta - ble, as we lis - ten to your word, help us
 2. Turn our wor - ship in - to wit - ness in the sac - ra - ment of life; send us
 3. Gracious Spir - it, help us sum - mon oth - er guests to share that feast where tri -

know, O God, your pres - ence; let our hearts and minds be stirred. Nourish us with sa - cred
 forth to love and serve you, bring - ing peace where there is strife. Give us, Christ, your great com -
 - umphant Love will wel - come those who had been last and least. There no more will en - vy

sto - ry till we claim it as our own; teach us through this ho - ly ban - quet how to
 - pas - sion to for - give as you for - gave; may we still be - hold your im - age in the
 bind us nor will pride our peace de - stroy, as we join with saints and an - gels to re -

make Love's vic - tory known.
 world you died to save.
 - peat the sound - ing joy.

*Those for whom it is comfortable, please rise.

***POST-COMMUNION PRAYER**

L: Welcoming God,

C: you have met us at this table and fed us with the gifts of your grace. As we leave this meal, keep us from believing that home is only a place behind us. Help us carry your welcome wherever we go.

May the grace we have received here become grace we offer to others. May the place we have found at your table make us eager to make room for our neighbors. And may this meal strengthen us for every road on which you will lead us next. For wherever we go, you have promised to go with us. Amen.

***CLOSING HYMN NCH NO. 400** (black hymnal, see below)

Christ Is Made the Sure Foundation

Christ is Made the Sure Foundation

John Mason Neale, 1851

Henry T. Smart, 1867

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Piano $\text{♩} = 80$

1. Christ is made the sure foun-da-tion, Christ the head and cor-nerstone,
2. To this tem-ple, where we call you, come, O God of Hosts, to-day!
3. Here re-new your servants' vis-ion, that by faith they may at-tain

chos-en of our God and precious, bind-ing all the Church in one;
With your con-stant, lov-ing kind-ness, hear your peo-ple as they pray.
peace and hope, re-newed com-pas-sion, strength to com-fort those in pain,

Ho-ly Zi-on's help for-ev-er, and our con-fi-dence a-lone.
Give your full-est ben-e-dic-tion: grace to fol-low Christ the Way.
Tears and grief trans-formed to glad-ness in your ev-er-last-ing reign.

*Those for whom it is comfortable, please rise.

*BENEDICTION

P: May the God who welcomes you home surround you with grace. May Christ meet you on every road you travel. And may the Holy Spirit remind you, wherever the journey leads, that God has been with you all along and God is with you still.

C: Amen.

*SENDING (see below)

Go Now in Peace

by Price/Besig

Go Now in Peace

Don Besig & Nancy Price

Don Besig

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mf $\text{♩} = 80$

Piano

mf *mp*

Go now in peace. Never be a-fraid. God will go with you each hour of ev'ry day. Go now in

faith, steadfast, strong and true. Know He will guide you in all you do. Go now in love, and show you be-

-lieve. Reach out to others so all the world can see. *rall. a tempo* God will be there watching from a-bove. Go now in

dim. *dim.*

peace, in faith, and in love.

*Those for whom it is comfortable, please rise.

Service Participants

Welcome Team Members & Communion Servers— Byron & Dawn Almoney, Cindy & Rick Hogentogler

Liturgist— Tori Everhart

Tech Team— Joe Vacante

*Those for whom it is comfortable, please rise.