

Mt. Zion United Church of Christ
1054 Ridgewood Road, York, Pennsylvania 17406
Telephone: 717-755-6117
E-mail: office@mtzionucc.org
Website: www.mtzionucc.org

Rev. Amy E. Northridge, Pastor
Louis Allison, Tech Director
Cody Messersmith, Worship Music Director
Travis Pinci, Accompanist, Children's Music Coordinator, & Church Administrator

September 13, 2026

9:45 AM

Home Coming: Home is Where the Heart Is

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

BLANKET SUNDAY VIDEO

PRELUDE

O Waly, Waly

arr. Tate

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.

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

*Those for whom it is comfortable, please rise.

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 to us as God's people and equips us with the leadership to carry out God's will.

***OPENING HYMN NCH NO. 7** (see next page)

All People That on Earth Do Dwell

*Those for whom it is comfortable, please rise.

All People That on Earth do Dwell

Attrib. Louis Bourgeois, 1510-1561

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$\text{♩} = 80$

Piano

1. All peo - ple that on earth do dwell, sing out your faith with
 2. Know that there is one God, in - deed, who fash-ions us with
 3. En - ter the sa - cred gates with praise, with joy ap-proach the
 4. Pro - claim a - gain that God is good, whose mer - cy is for -

cheer - ful voice; De - light in God whose praise you tell, whose
 - out our aid, Who claims us, gives us all we need, whose
 tem - ple walls. Ex - tol and bless our God we al - ways whose
 - ev - er sure, Whose truth at all times firm - ly stood, as

pres-ence calls you to re - jice.
 ten - der care will nev - er fade.
 peo - ple whom the Spir - it calls.
 shall from age to age en - dure.

*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, ten-der-ly Jesus is call-ing call-ing, "O sin-ner, come home!"

*Those for whom it is comfortable, please rise.

CHILDREN'S SERMON

SCRIPTURE READINGS

Matthew 6:19-21 (NRSVUE)
Hebrews 11:1-3, 8-16 (NRSVUE)

SERMON

***HYMN OF THE DAY** (see below and next page)

God You Wrap Your Love Around Us

God, You Wrap Your Love Around Us

Carolyn Winfrey Gillette, 1999

Charles Crozat Converse, 1868

$\text{♩} = 80$

Piano

The musical score is written for piano in 4/4 time, with a tempo of 80 beats per minute. 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 has three verses. The second system has two verses. The third system has one verse. The music is in a simple, accessible style suitable for children's use.

1. God, you wrap your love a round us, Like a blan-ket, soft and warm. You give rest when we are
2. Je-sus, you were once a ba-by, Sought by those who would de-stroy. In - to E - gypt you were
3. May the wo-men, men and chil-dren Flee-ing dan-ger ev-ery day Know, through us, your liv-ing

wea-ry, You pro-tect us from the storm. May each per-son who finds shel-ter In these blankets that we
car-ried Far from home, a lit-tle boy. Were you wrapped up warm to tra-vel, Safe from ter-ror, free from
presence; You walk with them on their way. Spir-it, as you give them com-fort, Teach us here to free-ly

share Al-so feel the joy and com-fort Of your love's pro-TECTING care.
harm? Did you feel God's strong pro-tection, Snuggled there in Mary's arm?
give; May we blan-ket this world o-ver With your love, so all may live.

*Those for whom it is comfortable, please rise.

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE & THE LORD'S PRAYER

L: God who makes your home among us, you gather us from different places, different stories, and different journeys, and you remind us that in you, we belong.

For the gift of places where we are welcomed, for people who know our names and make room for us, for communities where we can bring our whole selves,

C: We give you thanks, O God.

L: For your church, in this place and throughout the world, that we might be more than a place people come, but a people among whom others find welcome, grace, and belonging,

C: Make your home among us, O God.

L: For those searching for a place to belong, for those who are lonely or isolated, for those beginning again in unfamiliar places, for those who have been told they do not belong, and for all who wonder whether there is room for them,

C: Make your home among us, O God.

L: For a world divided by fear, violence, and distrust, for places torn apart by war, for communities facing hunger, disaster, and uncertainty, and for all who have been forced to leave the places they call home,

C: Bring your peace among us, O God.

L: For those carrying burdens we may never see, for those who are sick or awaiting answers, for those who are grieving, for those who are anxious about what comes next, for caregivers and all who are weary, and for those whose needs are known only to you,

C: Draw near to them, O God.

L: For the people who have helped make a home for us, for those whose love continues to shape our lives, for generations who came before us, and for those who will come after us,

C: We give you thanks, O God.

L: God of every road and every returning, wherever our journeys carry us this week, help us remember that we belong to you. Teach us to make room for one another, to welcome those we have not yet met, and to carry your love beyond the places we already know.

C: Wherever we go, make us at home in your love.

L: We offer these prayers, and all that remains unspoken within us, in the name of Jesus Christ, who makes his home among us.

C: Amen.

L: Gathered into one by the Holy Spirit, let us pray as Jesus taught us:

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

Those for whom it is comfortable, please rise.

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 SHARING¹

INVITATION TO GENEROSITY & DISCIPLESHIP

OFFERTORY

OFFERTORY PRAYER

Jesus Draw Me Ever Nearer with Nearer My God to Thee
arr. Tornquist

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.

***CLOSING HYMN** (see next page)

Go My Children With My Blessing



*Those for whom it is comfortable, please rise.

Go, My Children, with My Blessing

Jaroslav J. Vajda, 1983

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Piano $\text{♩} = 80$

1. Go, my chil-dren, with my bless-ing, nev - er a lone; Waking, sleep-ing,
 2. Go, my chil-dren, sins for-giv-en, at peace and pure. Here you learned how
 3. Go, my chil-dren, fed and nourished, clos-er to me; grow in love and
 4. I, the Lord, will bless and keep you and give you peace; I, the Lord, will

I am with you, you are my own; In my love's bap-tis-mal riv-er I have made you
 much I love you, what I can cure. Here you heard my dear Son's sto-ry; here you touched him,
 love by serv-ing, joy-ful and free. Here my Spir-it's pow-er filled you; here his ten-der
 smile up-on you and give you peace. I, the Lord, will be your Fa-ther, Sav-ior, Com-for-

mine for-ev-er, Go, my chil-dren, with my bless-ing, you are my own.
 saw his glo-ry, Go, my chil-dren, sins for-giv-en, at peace and pure.
 com-fort stilled you. Go, my chil-dren, fed and nourished, joy-ful and free.
 -ter, and Broth-er. Go, my chil-dren, I will keep you and give you peace.

*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.

*Those for whom it is comfortable, please rise.

Go Now in Peace

Don Besig & Nancy Price

Don Besig

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♩ = 80

Piano

mf *mf* *mp*

Gonowin peace. Never be a-fraid. God will go with you each hourof ev'ry day. Gonowin

faith, steadfast, strong and true. Know He will guide you in all you do. Gonowin 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. Gonowin

peace, in faith, and in love. *dim.* *dim.*

POSTLUDE

The Heart of Worship

by Redman

Service Participants

Thank you to Doug Fauth for serving as our guest preacher this morning.

Welcome Team Members & Communion Servers— Barb Stebbins, Jennifer Damon

Liturgist— Tama Allison

Tech Team— Deb Herlocker, Jack Herlocker, John Kollasch

*Those for whom it is comfortable, please rise.