

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

September 20, 2026

9:45 AM

Home Coming: There's No Place Like Home

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

BACK TO SCHOOL SUNDAY VIDEO

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.

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.

-1-

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

***OPENING HYMN** (see next page)

All Are Welcome

*Those for whom it is comfortable, please rise.

-2-

All Are Welcome

Marty Haugen, 1994

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Piano $\text{♩} = 80$

The musical score is written for piano in 4/4 time with a tempo of 80 beats per minute. It features a single melodic line on a treble clef staff. The key signature has one flat (B-flat). The score is divided into systems, with measure numbers 5, 9, 13, and 18 marking the beginning of new systems. The lyrics are written below the staff, with some lines indented to align with specific notes. The piece concludes with a double bar line at the end of the final system.

1. Let us build a house where love can dwell and all can safe - ly
2. Let us build a house where pro-phets speak and words are strong and
3. Let us build a house where love is found in wa - ter, wine, and
4. Let us build a house where hands will reach be - yond the wood and
5. Let us build a house where all are named, their songs and vi - sions

live, a place where saints and chil-dren tell how hearts learn to for -
true, where all God's chil-dren dare to seek to dream God's reign a -
wheat; a ban-quet hall on ho - ly ground, where peace and jus - tice
stone to heal and strengthen, serve and teach and live the Word they've
heard and loved and treas-ured, taught and claimed as words with - in the

- give. Built of hopes and dreams and vi-sions, rock of faith and vault of
- new. Here the cross shall stand as wit-ness and as sym-bol of God's
meet. Here the love of God through Je - sus, is re - vealed in time and
known. Here the out - cast and the stran-ger bear the im - age of God's
Word. Built of tears and cries and laugh-ter, prayers of faith and songs of

grace; here the love of Christ shall end di - visions: All are wel come, all are wel come,
grace; here as one we claim the faith of Je - sus:
space; as we share in Christ the feast that frees us:
face; let us bring an end to fear and danger:
grace; let this house proclaim from floor to raf - ter:

all are wel come in this place.

*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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♩ = 80

Piano

1. Soft-ly and tender-ly Jesus is calling, calling for you and for me; See at the portals Christ

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

home

Earn-estly, tender-ly Jesus is calling calling, "O sin-ner, come home!"

*Those for whom it is comfortable, please rise.

CHILDREN'S SERMON

SCRIPTURE READINGS

Ephesians 2:19-22 (NRSVUE)

Mark 2:1-12 (NRSVUE)

SERMON

***HYMN OF THE DAY NCH NO. 386** (black hymnal, see next two pages)

The Church's One Foundation



*Those for whom it is comfortable, please rise.

The Church's One Foundation SATB

Samuel J. Stone, 1866

Samuel S. Wesley, 1864

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Piano

$\text{♩} = 80$

1. The church's one foun - da - tion is Je - sus Christ our Lord; we
 2. E - lect from ev - ery na - tion, yet one o'er all the earth, one
 3. Mid - toil and trib - u - la - tion and tu - mult of our war, we
 4. Yet we on earth have un - ion with God, the Three - in - One, and

6

are Christ's new cre - a - tion by wa - ter and the word; From
 char - ter of sal - va - tion, one God, one faith one birth, One
 wait the con - sum - ma - tion of peace for - ev - er more; Till
 mys - tic sweet com - mu - nion with those whose rest is won. O

Those for whom it is comfortable, please rise.

heaven Christ came and sought us in love to set us free; with
name to - geth - er bless - ing, one ho - ly food we share, to
with the vi - sion glo - rious, our long - ing eyes are blessed, and
hap - py ones and ho - ly! God, give us grace that we, and like

14

pre-cious blood Christ bought us for all e - ter - ni - ty.
one hope we are pressing, at one in work and prayer.
the great church vic - to - rious shall be the church at rest.
them, the meek and low - ly, may live e - ter - nal - ly.

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE & THE LORD'S PRAYER

P: ...Together we pray in the name of Jesus Christ, our cornerstone, who holds us together,

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.

WORSHIP CHOIR ANTHEM

All Good Gifts

by Sleeth

*Those for whom it is comfortable, please rise.

TIME FOR SHARING¹

INVITATION TO GENEROSITY & DISCIPLESHIP

OFFERTORY

Softly & Tenderly with Turn Your Eyes Upon Jesus

arr. Tate

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.

***CLOSING HYMN NCH NO. 439** (black hymnal, see next two pages)

A Mighty Fortress is Our God

A Mighty Fortress Is Our God SATB

Martin Luther, 1529

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$\text{♩} = 80$

Piano

1. A might - y for - tress is our God, a
2. Did we in our own strength con - fide, our
3. And though this world with dev - ils filled should
4. That word be - yond all earth - ly powers for -

4

bul-wark nev - er fail - ing. Our present help a - mid the flood of
striv-ing would be los - ing. But there is one who takes our side, the
threaten to un-do us. We will not fear for God has willed the
- ev - er is a bid - ing; The Spir-it and the gifts are ours, for

*Those for whom it is comfortable, please rise.

mor-tal ills pre - vail - ing. For still our an-cient foe does
 One of God's own choos - ing. You ask who that may be? Christ
 truth to tri-umph through us. The powers of e - vil grim, we
 Christ is with us sid - ing. Let goods and kin-dred go, this

12

seek to work us woe with craft and pow - er great, and armed with cru - el
 Je - sus sets us free! With might-y power to save, vic - to - rious o'er the
 tremble not for them; their rage we can en - dure, vic - to - rious o'er the
 mor-tal life al - so; the bod - y they may kill; God's truth shall triumph

17

hate, on earth with-out an e - qual.
 grave, Christ will pre-vail tri - um phant.
 sure: one lit - tle word shall fell them.
 still; God's reign end-dures for - ev-er.

*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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♩ = 80

Piano

mf Go now in peace. Never be a-fraid. God will go with you each hour of ev-ry day. *mf* 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. *rall. a tempo* Reach out to others so all the world can see. God will be there watching from a-bove. Go now in

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

*Those for whom it is comfortable, please rise.

Service Participants

Thank you to the worship choir for enhancing the service with their talents this morning.

Welcome Team Members— Barry Schwartz, Nancy Sleeper

Liturgist— Jen Miller

Tech Team— Deb Herlocker, Jack Herlocker, Ron Miles

*Those for whom it is comfortable, please rise.