



FIRSTCHURCH

UNITED METHODIST

Order of Worship
Sunday, September 27, 2026

Worship Leader: The Rev. Dr. Susan Patterson-Sumwalt
Worship Assistants: (8) Tom Ault (10:30) Ola Baiyewu **Pianist:** Margaret Lucke

Prelude

Words of Welcome

Call to Worship

We gather in this space not because we have all the answers, but because Love calls us by name.

We hear the quiet and persistent voice of the Divine: "*Love your neighbor as yourself.*"

Not just the neighbor who looks like us, or thinks like us,

But the stranger, the outcast, and the forgotten.

We feel the Spirit moving among us, breaking down the walls we build,

Stirring our hands to work for justice and our hearts to practice deep compassion.

Come, let us worship the God of wide welcome??

Come, let us step into the sacred work of loving our neighbor, today and always. Amen.

Hymn

"In Christ There is No East or West"

UMH 548

1. In Christ there is no east or west,
In him no south or north,
But one great fellowship of love
Thru'out the whole wide Earth.

2. In him shall true hearts ev'rywhere
Their high communion find.
His service is the golden cord
Close binding humankind

3. Join hands, then, children of the faith,
Whate'er your race may be!
Who serves my Father as a child
Is surely kin to me.

4. In Christ now meet both east and west,
In him meet south and north;

All Christly souls are one in him,
Thru'out the whole wide Earth.

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Song # 5357080

Children's Moment

Presentation of Bibles

Lori Brown, Denise Taylor, Geoff VanRemmen, and Doug Lloyd; Sunday School Teachers

Choral Blessing

“The Lord Bless You and Keep You”

Lutkin

The Lord bless you and keep you,
The Lord lift His countenance upon you;
And give you peace, and give you peace,
The Lord make His face to shine upon you,
And be gracious unto you.
Be gracious, the Lord be gracious
Gracious unto you.
Amen.

Lighting the Prayer Candle of Peace, Hope and Justice

Today we light the Candle of Peace, Hope, and Justice for the journalists from CNN, MS NOW, and Politico who have been barred from the White House, and for all who work to gather and report the news in a time when the freedom of the press is under increasing strain. We pray for those who have been told that their questions are unwelcome, their reporting is false, or their presence is no longer permitted.

We give thanks for the First Amendment and for the generations who have understood that a free society depends upon the freedom to speak, to worship, to assemble, to dissent, and to hold those in power accountable.

May we be prevented from believing that the freedom of the press matters only when we agree with what is reported. And may God grant us a readiness to listen when we are challenged, wisdom to discern truth from falsehood, and courage to protect the freedom of those whose voices we may not always want to hear.

May we never forget that the light of truth is not ours to control, and may we be given courage to guard that light for one another, especially when it flickers in places where our President would rather it be extinguished.

One: The light shines in the darkness.

**All: We stand in this light, unshaken,
knowing that the darkness has never overcome the light.**

One: Let us recommit ourselves to walking in Jesus' ways of justice.

**All: Empower us, Jesus, to boldly use
the freedom and power given to us
to resist evil, injustice, and oppression
in whatever forms they present themselves.**

Anthem (10:30)

"This is My Word"
Chancel Choir
Dr. Woodrow Hodges, director
Margaret Lucke, piano

Pepper Choplin

(based on Isaiah 55:10-12)

As the snow falls from Heaven as it comes in swirling showers from the sky,
So is my Word.

As the rains bring the water to the earth that is thirsty and dry,
So is my Word.

And the Word of my mouth, it shall not return empty:
it will bless the earth wherever it is heard.

This is my Word.

As the rains bring renewal and the tender buds begin to come alive,
So is my Word.

Giving seed to the sower, and the bread to the hungry 'til they thrive,
So is my Word.

And the Word of my mouth, it shall not return empty:
it will bless the earth wherever it is heard.

This is my Word.

O Lord, when I am weary, when I feel the days I'm living are in vain,
My God, help me to be faithful to the Word you have given to proclaim.
Proclaim the Word.

And you will go out in joy and be led in peace,
And the hills will break forth in song.

So be faithful, brave and true, For I will go before you.
And when your earthly journey here is done,
I will say well done.

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Song #2941200

Scripture

Isaiah 55.10-12

For as the rain and the snow come down from heaven
and do not return there until they have watered the earth,
making it bring forth and sprout,
giving seed to the sower and bread to the eater,
so shall my word be that goes out from my mouth;
it shall not return to me empty,
but it shall accomplish that which I purpose
and succeed in the thing for which I sent it.

For you shall go out in joy
and be led back in peace;
the mountains and the hills before you
shall burst into song,
and all the trees of the field shall clap their hands.

Matthew 22.34-39

When the Pharisees heard that he had silenced the Sadducees, they gathered together, and one of them, an expert in the law, asked him a question to test him. "Teacher, which commandment in the law is the greatest?" He said to him, " 'You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.' This is the greatest and first commandment. And a second is like it: 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.'"

Message

"Love People"

Prayers

Please lift up these families and individuals in your intentional prayers this week:

Geno Llanas: prayers for my sisters, Gina and Deana, that they find peace.

Joyce Llanas: I pray for the local farmers that the rain will not damage their fall crops.
For Chris Wojciechowicz, his new job and move to Appleton, WI

For the ongoing war in Iran and all of our military members serving in this war

Let us take a moment for silent prayer..

Spirit of Life, and God of all people,

Open our hearts to a love that stretches past our comfort zones, our borders, and our own reflections.

You call us to love our neighbor—not just the ones who look like us, think like us, or love like us, but the stranger, the outcast, and the one with whom we disagree.

Dismantle the walls of prejudice and fear inside us.

Give us the courage to stand with the vulnerable, to raise our voices for the oppressed, and to work for a world where equity and safety are realities for everyone.

Turn our compassion into action, our prayers into justice, and our intentions into welcoming communities.

May we see your sacred reflection in every human face. Amen.

We continue to pray as Jesus taught us saying

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 trespasses as we forgive those who trespass 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.

May we continue to worship as we offer to God our tithes and offerings.

Your connection card may be placed in the offering plate.

You may also give electronically, by clicking give on the website

Or scanning the QR code.

Offering

Hymn

“They’ll Know We Are Christians by Our Love”

TFWS2223

We are one in the Spirit, we are one in the Lord
We are one in the Spirit, we are one in the Lord
And we pray that all unity may one day be restored
And they'll know we are Christians by our love, by our love
They will know we are Christians by our love

We will work with each other, we will work side by side
We will work with each other, we will work side by side
And we'll guard each one's dignity and save each one's pride
And they'll know we are Christians by our love, by our love
They will know we are Christians by our love

We will walk with each other, we will walk hand in hand
We will walk with each other, we will walk hand in hand
And together we'll spread the news that God is in our land
And they'll know we are Christians by our love, by our love
They will know we are Christians by our love

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Song #26997

Benediction

Postlude