FIRSTCHURCH
UNITED METHODIST

November 8, 2026
Order of Worship

Worship Leader: Rev. Will Horne
Worship Assistants: (8) Scott and Judy Tench (10:30) Janet Cooper

Prelude

Words of Welcome The Rev. Dr. Susan Patterson-Sumwalt

Call to Worship

We gather not just for ourselves, but because our lives are bound up with one another.
We are here because showing up for our neighbors remains essential work.
God calls us to live in a way that honors the gospel of love, peace, and liberation.
We seek to stand firm in one Spirit, grounded in compassion and collective strength.
When the world feels fractured or fearful, we do not face it alone.
With one mind and one heart, we strive side by side for justice and faith.
Come, let us worship the God who anchors us in hope.
Let us encourage one another, share our strength, and walk the path of love together.

Hymn "Immortal, Invisible, God Only Wise" UMH 103

1 Immortal, invisible, God only wise,
in light inaccessible hid from our eyes,
most blessed, most glorious, the Ancient of Days,
almighty, victorious, thy great name we praise.

2 Unresting, unhasting, and silent as light,
nor wanting, nor wasting, thou rulest in might;
thy justice like mountains high soaring above
thy clouds, which are fountains of goodness and love.

3 To all life thou givest, to both great and small;
in all life thou livest, the true life of all;
we blossom and flourish as leaves on the tree,
and wither and perish but naught changeth thee.
4 Great Father of glory, pure Father of light,
thine angels adore thee, all veiling their sight;
all praise we would render, O help us to see
'tis only the splendor of light hideth thee.

Children's Moment

Special Music (8) "Inscription of Hope" Z. Randall Stroope

Scott Tench, soloist; Judy Tench, piano

Anthem (10:30) "Rejoice in the Lord" Agostino Steffani

Chancel Choir

Dr. Woodrow Hodges, director

Margaret Lucke, piano

Rejoice in the Lord, O ye righteous.
Rejoice in the Lord.
For it becometh well to be thankful.

Scripture Philippians 1.1-26

Paul and Timothy, servants of Christ Jesus,

To all the saints in Christ Jesus who are in Philippi, with the bishopsand deacons:

Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

I thank my God for every remembrance of you, always in every one of my prayers for all of you, praying with joy for your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now. I am confident of this, that the one who began a good work in you will continue to complete it until the day of Jesus Christ. It is right for me to think this way about all of you, because I hold you in my heart, for all of you are my partners in God's grace, both in my imprisonment and in the defense and confirmation of the gospel. For God is my witness, how I long for all of you with the tender affection of Christ Jesus. And this is my prayer, that your love may overflow more and more with knowledge and full insight to help you to determine what really matters, so that in the day of Christ you may be pure and blameless, having produced the harvest of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ for the glory and praise of God.

I want you to know, brothers and sisters, that what has happened to me has actually resulted in the progress of the gospel, so that it has become known throughout the whole imperial guard and to everyone else that my imprisonment is for Christ, and most of the brothers and sisters, having been made confident in the Lord by my imprisonment, dare to speak the word with greater boldness and without fear.

Some proclaim Christ from envy and rivalry but others from goodwill. These proclaim Christ out of love, knowing that I have been put here for the defense of the gospel; the others proclaim Christ out of selfish ambition, not sincerely but intending to increase my suffering in my imprisonment. What does it matter? Just this, that Christ is proclaimed in every way, whether out of false motives or true, and in that I rejoice.

Yes, and I will rejoice, for I know that through your prayers and the help of the Spirit of Jesus Christ this will turn out for my salvation. It is my eager expectation and hope that I will not be put to shame in any way but that by my speaking with all boldness Christ will be exalted now as always in my body, whether by life or by death. For to me, living is Christ and dying is gain. If I am to live in the flesh, that means fruitful labor for me, yet I cannot say which I will choose. I am hard pressed between the two: my desire is to depart and be with Christ, for that is far better, but to remain in the flesh is more necessary for you. Since I am convinced of this, I know that I will remain and continue with all of you for your progress and joy in faith, so that, by my presence again with you, your boast might abound in Christ Jesus because of me.

Message "Spiritual Formation Under the Empire"

Lighting the Candle of Peace, Hope and Justice

Prayers

Morning Prayer

Lord's Prayer

Offering

Hymn "How Firm a Foundation" UMH 529

1 How firm a foundation, ye saints of the Lord,
is laid for your faith in God's excellent Word!
What more can be said than to you God hath said,
to you who for refuge to Jesus have fled?

2 "Fear not, I am with thee, O be not dismayed,
for I am thy God, and will still give thee aid;
I'll strengthen thee, help thee, and cause thee to stand,
upheld by my righteous, omnipotent hand.

3 "When through the deep waters I call thee to go,
the rivers of sorrow shall not overflow;
for I will be near thee, thy troubles to bless,
and sanctify to thee thy deepest distress.

4 "When through fiery trials thy pathway shall lie,
my grace, all sufficient, shall be thy supply;

the flame shall not hurt thee; I only design
thy dross to consume, and thy gold to refine.

5 "The soul that on Jesus hath leaned for repose,
I will not, I will not desert to its foes;
that soul, though all hell should endeavor to shake,
I'll never, no, never, no, never forsake."

Benediction

Postlude