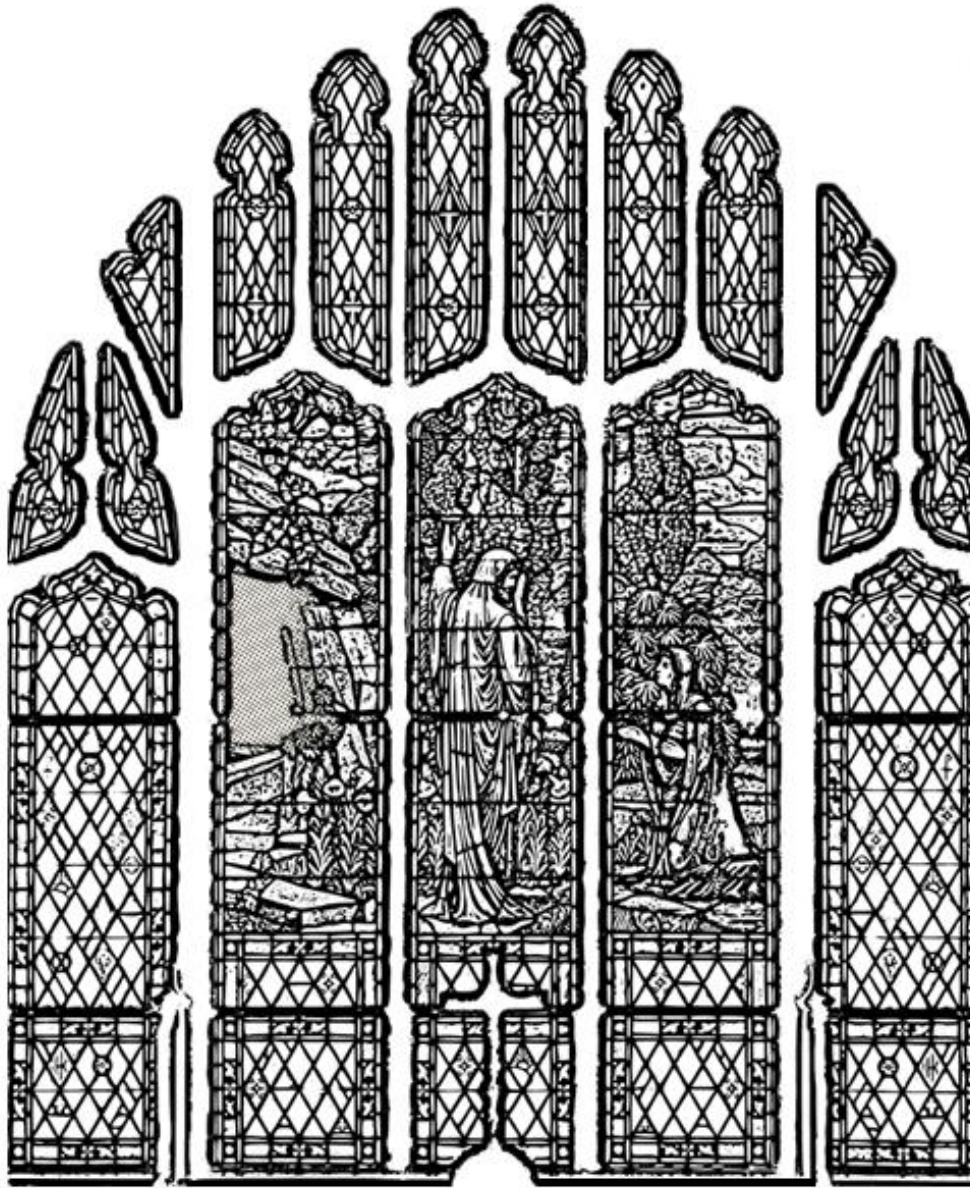


MT. LEBANON UNITED METHODIST CHURCH



Sunday, August 23, 2026, 8:30AM & 10:45AM

The Thirteenth Sunday after Pentecost

3319 WEST LIBERTY AVENUE ... PITTSBURGH, PA 15216 ... 412-531-7131

THE REV'D THOMAS Q. STRANDBURG, PASTOR ... tstrandburg@mlumc.org



Sunday, August 23, 2026 – The Thirteenth Sunday after Pentecost

Researchers can now guess your age, gender, marital status and income solely based on the apps on your phone. Could someone as easily guess that you are a follower of Jesus?

**Indicates an invitation to stand in spirit or posture, as able.*

The Prelude

Prelude No 2. (in G), from *Three Preludes*, Op.37

Felix Mendelssohn (1809-1847)

*Opening Hymn

“The Church's One Foundation”

UMH 545

* The Greeting & Call to Worship

℣ The Lord be with you.

℞ **And also with you.**

℣ In a world where powerful people make decisions to lift themselves up and cast others aside, how does God teach us to use our power?

℞ **God teaches us to protect the vulnerable, resist the oppressors, and persist in doing good.**

℣ In a world where power means might, how does God show us what power means?

℞ **God shows us through the midwives’ daring, Peter’s truth-telling, and Jesus’ humility.**

℣ In a world where power is held over people’s heads, how does God exercise power?

℞ **God exercises power with—with the oppressed, with the outcasts,
with the poor and downtrodden.**

℣ Beloved, we gather to recognize our world as it is and to grow as disciples and imitators of Christ. So, how will you use your power today?

℞ **We will side with the vulnerable, build community in the margins, and love all of our neighbors with the exuberant and all-encompassing love of Christ. Amen.**

*Opening Prayer

Said by all, with one voice.

O God, you call us to follow Jesus Christ as his disciples. We meet this morning to learn more about how to do this. Help us as we worship to again understand who Jesus was and is. May we learn from the faithful witness of others just what true discipleship looks like. Amen.

*Silent Prayer

*Response

“Up from the Grave He Arose”

UMH 322

A Message for Young Disciples (10:45 am)

As the young disciples gather at the front of the church, all sing:

**This, this is where children belong, welcomed as part of the worshipping throng.
Water, God's word, bread and cup, prayer and song: This is where children belong.**

The young disciples (school-age children) then depart the sanctuary for Kids Praise. Teachers will lead them back to the sanctuary prior to the conclusion of the service. Nursery is available for younger children; please see an usher for directions.

The First Lesson

A Reading from the Epistle to the Romans

ROM.12:1-8

I appeal to you therefore, brothers and sisters, on the basis of God's mercy, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your reasonable act of worship. Do not be conformed to this age, but be transformed by the renewing of the mind, so that you may discern what is the will of God—what is good and acceptable and perfect.

For by the grace given to me I say to everyone among you not to think of yourself more highly than you ought to think but to think with sober judgment, each according to the measure of faith that God has assigned. For as in one body we have many members and not all the members have the same function, so we, who are many, are one body in Christ, and individually we are members one of another. We have gifts that differ according to the grace given to us: prophecy, in proportion to faith; ministry, in ministering; the teacher, in teaching; 8 the encourager, in encouragement; the giver, in sincerity; the leader, in diligence; the compassionate, in cheerfulness.

Lector: Hear what the Spirit is saying to God's people.

People: Thanks be to God.

*Hymn

"In the Garden"

UMH 314

*The Second Lesson

A Reading from the Gospel according to Matthew

MT. 16:13-20

Now when Jesus came into the district of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, "Who do people say that the Son of Man is?" And they said, "Some say John the Baptist but others Elijah and still others Jeremiah or one of the prophets." He said to them, "But who do you say that I am?" Simon Peter answered, "You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God." And Jesus answered him, "Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah! For flesh and blood has not revealed this to you but my Father in heaven. And I tell you, you are

Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not prevail against it. I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven.” Then he sternly ordered the disciples not to tell anyone that he was the Messiah.

Lector: This is the word of the Lord.

People: Thanks be to God.

The Pastoral Prayer & The Lord's Prayer

Said by all, with one voice.

**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, the power, and the glory forever.
Amen.**

The Sermon

“Guess Who?”

Rev. Strandburg

***The Affirmation of Faith**

UMH 882

All are invited to stand, in spirit or in posture, and to face the altar as the affirmation of faith is recited.

Pastor: Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is the one true church, apostolic and universal, whose holy faith let us now declare:

All: **I believe in God, the Father Almighty,
 creator of heaven and earth.
I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord,
 who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,
 born of the Virgin Mary,
 suffered under Pontius Pilate,
 was crucified, died, and was buried;
 he descended to the dead.
 On the third day he rose again;
 he ascended into heaven,
 is seated at the right hand of the Father,
 and will come again to judge the living and the dead.**

I believe in the Holy Spirit,
the holy catholic church,
the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body,
and the life everlasting.
Amen.

***The Sign of Peace**

℣. The peace of Christ be with you.
℟. And also with you.

*The people are now invited to share signs of peace with their fellow members of Christ's body.
Extended conversation would ideally and most appropriately be reserved until the end of the service.*

Announcements

At the Offertory

"The King of Love my Shepherd is"

arr. Kevin Keil
Sarah Boice Stecker, Alto Recorder

***The Doxology & Prayer of Dedication**

UMH 94

***The Sending Hymn**

"Christ Is Made the Sure Foundation"

UMH 559

***The Dismissal**

℣. Let us bless the Lord.
℟. Thanks be to God.

***The Benediction & Recessional**

The people remain in place until the altar party has retired.

The Postlude

Rondo from Abdelazer

Henry Purcell (1659-1695)

Prayer Concerns

Rev. Steve Morse, *experiencing health issues.*

Jane Spicher, *recovering from a recent surgical procedure.*

Gayle Radnich, *who received a recent diagnosis of a health condition.*

Gary Henry, *undergoing cancer treatment.*

Norma Buhrman, *enduring serious illness.*

For those serving their country or community as first responders or in the armed forces, especially:

SPC **Russell Dale** - CPT **Shaun Hay** - LTC **Azizi Wesmiller** - LTC **Matthew Wesmiller**

2LT **Keith Cable** - LTC **Zachary Allen Finch** - CPL **Wyatt Hoover**

We pray for victims of violence in our nation and around the world.

*This week, we remember and pray for Christ's body throughout the world, especially remembering this week the church in **Liberia and Sierra Leone.*** (Prayer Cycle of the World Council of Churches).

Please remember the special concerns of those in our community and throughout our world in your personal prayer life throughout the week. If you wish to solicit prayers from the congregation for any matter (health, travel, special concerns, etc.), please contact the church office to have your concern added to the prayer list.

Leaders in Worship this Morning

JOETA D'ESTE (8:30AM) AND LIZZIE DILLER (10:45AM), LECTORS

MR. A. MITCHELL V. STECKER, DIRECTOR OF MUSIC & LITURGY

THE REV'D THOMAS Q. STRANDBURG, SENIOR PASTOR

The altar flowers this morning given by
Courtney & Eric Schmidt
to the Glory of God and in loving memory of
The Kratz Family:
Toni, Chuck, *and* Monica Kratz

*To provide flowers for a future service of worship,
please call the church office at 412-531-7131,
or use the form linked through the QR code below.*

