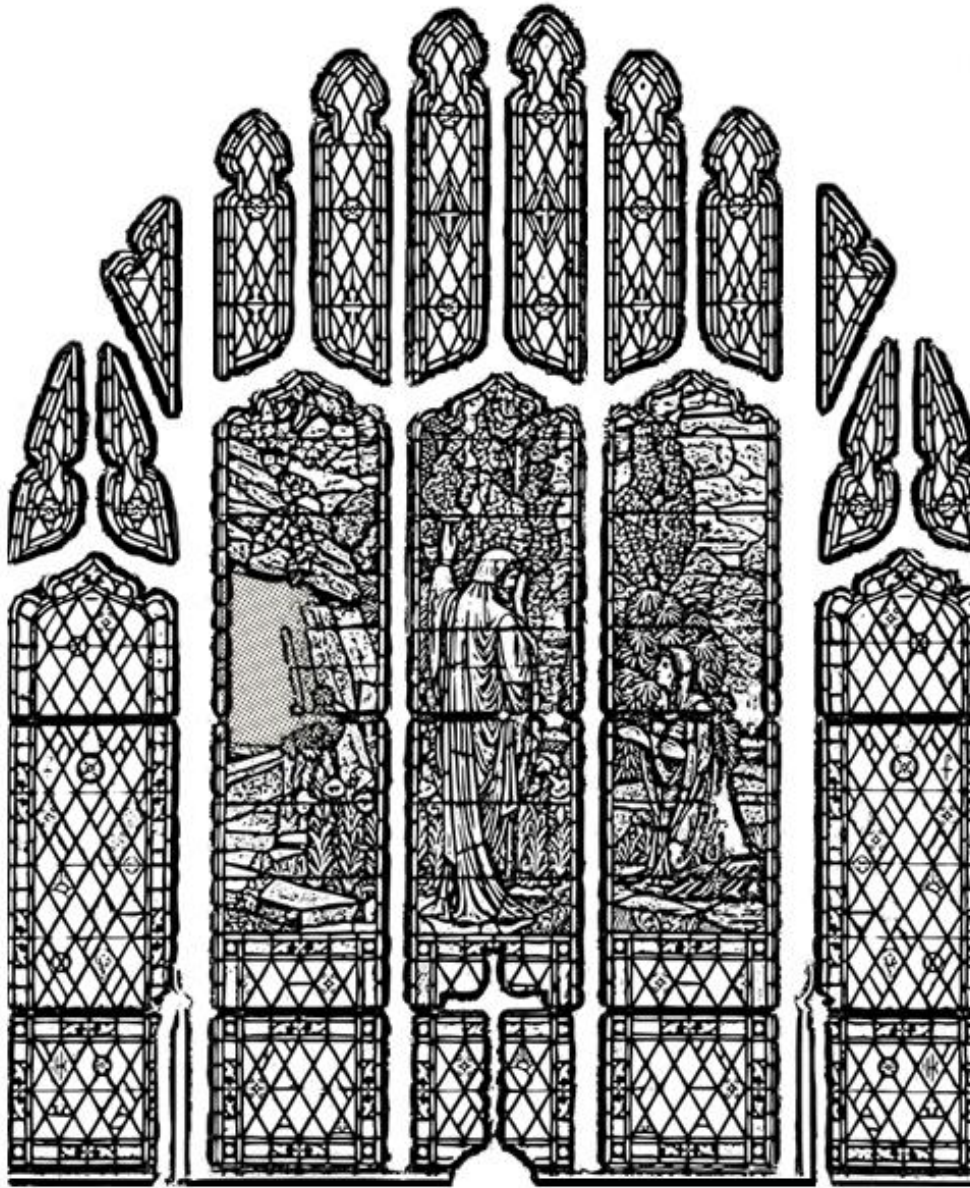


MT. LEBANON UNITED METHODIST CHURCH



Sunday, October 11, 2026, 8:30AM & 10:45AM

The Twentieth Sunday after Pentecost

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

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



Sunday, October 11, 2026 – The Twentieth Sunday after Pentecost

We often treat grace as optional or harmless. God's invitation disrupts both rejection and indifference, calling us beyond mere attendance into transformation. Grace is not just about getting in the door; it is about becoming someone new once inside.

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

The Prelude *"Schmucke dich, O liebe Seele"* (BWV 654) J.S. Bach (1685-1750)
"Deck thyself, my soul, with gladness"

The Introit (10:45) *Introit for the Nineteenth Sunday after Trinity* Healey Willan (1880-1968)

All rise, in body or spirit, at the sound of the chimes.

***Opening Hymn** **"How Great Thou Art"** **UMH 77**

*** The Greeting & Call to Worship**

∞ The Lord be with you.

℞ **And also with you.**

∞ As Jesus called disciples so long ago — Peter, Andrew, Mary, James, Martha, Mary Magdalene, John ...

℞ **let us listen for our own names, written on God's heart
and called in the voice of the Spirit.**

∞ They were fishermen, tax collectors, brothers and sisters.
God transformed them into the beloved community.

℞ **We are office workers, builders, designers, doctors, teachers, business owners,
retirees and accountants, fathers and mothers, brothers and sisters.**

May God transform us into the beloved community.

May our prayer and praise give glory to God! Let us worship God!

***Opening Prayer**

Said by all, with one voice.

Majestic God, shine your light upon us with your love and mercy.

Shine upon us, Lord, with the brightness of your grace.

As we have gathered together to worship, reveal to us your purpose and truth.

Reveal to us your ways so that we may fully and faithfully serve you as disciples and believers. In Jesus' name: Amen.

***Silent Prayer**

***Response**

"One Bread, One Body"

UMH 620

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 Philippians

PHIL. 4:1-9

Therefore, my brothers and sisters, whom I love and long for, my joy and crown, stand firm in the Lord in this way, my beloved. I urge Euodia and I urge Syntyche to be of the same mind in the Lord. Yes, and I ask you also, my loyal companion, help these women, for they have struggled beside me in the work of the gospel, together with Clement and the rest of my coworkers, whose names are in the book of life. Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, Rejoice. Let your gentleness be known to everyone. The Lord is near.

Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

Finally, brothers and sisters, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is pleasing, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence and if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things. As for the things that you have learned and received and heard and noticed in me, do them, and the God of peace will be with you.

**Lector: Hear what the Spirit is saying to God's people.
People: Thanks be to God.**

***The Second Lesson**

A Reading from the Gospel according to Matthew

MT. 22:1-14

Once more Jesus spoke to them in parables, saying:

"The kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king who gave a wedding banquet for his son. He sent his slaves to call those who had been invited to the wedding banquet, but they would not come. Again he sent other slaves, saying, 'Tell those who have been invited: Look, I have prepared my dinner, my oxen and my fat calves have been slaughtered, and everything is ready; come to the wedding banquet.' But they made light of it and went away, one to his farm, another to his business, while the rest seized his slaves, mistreated them, and killed them.

The king was enraged. He sent his troops, destroyed those murderers, and burned their city. Then he said to his slaves, 'The wedding is ready, but those invited were not worthy. Go therefore into the main streets, and invite everyone you find to the wedding banquet.' Those slaves went out into the streets and gathered all whom they found, both good and bad, so the wedding hall was filled with guests.

But when the king came in to see the guests, he noticed a man there who was not wearing a wedding robe, and he said to him, 'Friend, how did you get in here without a wedding robe?' And he was speechless. Then the king said to the attendants, 'Bind him hand and foot, and throw him into the outer darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.' For many are called, but few are chosen."

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 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.

Announcements – Missions & Outreach Moment

At the Offertory

The Offertory Hymn (8:30 am) “Awake, O sleeper”

UMH 551

REFRAIN: *I cannot come to the banquet, don't trouble me now,
I have married a wife, I have bought me a cow,
I have fields and commitments that cost a pretty sum.
Pray, hold me excused, I cannot come.*

1. *A certain man held a feast on his fine estate in town,
he laid a festive table and wore a wedding gown,
he sent out invitations to his neighbors far and wide,
but when the meal was ready, each one of them replied, "I cannot come." REFRAIN.*

2. *The master rose up in anger, called his servants by name,
said, "Go into the town, fetch the blind and the lame,
fetch the peasant and the pauper, for this I have willed:
my banquet must be crowded and my table must be filled." "I cannot come." REFRAIN.*

3. *When all the poor had assembled there was still room to spare,
so the master demanded, "Go search everywhere,
on the highways and the byways, and beg them to come in.
My table must be filled before the banquet can begin." "I cannot come." REFRAIN.*

4. *Now God has given a lesson for all of mankind:
if we're slow in responding, we may be left behind,
He's preparing a banquet for that great and glorious day.
When the Lord and Master calls us, be certain not to say, "I cannot come." REFRAIN.*

***The Doxology & Prayer of Dedication**

UMH 94

***The Sending Hymn**

"Rejoice, the Lord Is King"

UMH 715

***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

Toccata Brevis

Daniel Gawthrop (b.1949)

Prayer Concerns

Those bereaved of **Mary Garber**, who recently entered into her rest, whose life will be remembered November 14.

Mark Cerneskie, recovering from illness.

Joyce Campbell, sister of Nancy Marshall, struggling with ongoing health issues.

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**

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 **Costa Rica, El Salvador, Nicaragua, and Panama**. (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.

A Music Note

This week's prelude complements the second hymn of the day--as well as the theme that binds the service together. It is one of JS Bach's more complex chorale preludes, based Lutheran chorale dating to the 17th Century. The text of this chorale, "Deck thyself, my soul with gladness" (or, in its original German, "Schmücke dich, o liebe Seele") speaks of the sublime joys of God's wedding feast, to which all who have said "yes" to God's invitation are invited.

The offertory anthem speaks to the imagery of this parable in more direct terms. Although it has all the trappings of a 19th-Century evangelical revival song, this energetic piece was in fact composed in the 1960s by a Roman Catholic sister, Miriam Winter Therese of the Medical Mission Sisters, who has spent her life in service to the poor in the Global South and broader developing world.

Leaders in Worship this Morning

JUDE FLORIAN AND EMILY SCHMIDT, ACOLYTES

JOHN ESAIAS, CROSS BEARER

JOETA D'ESTE (8:30AM) AND DERICK FLORIAN (10:45AM), LECTORS

THE CHOIR OF THE MT. LEBANON UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

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

THE REV'D THOMAS Q. STRANDBURG, SENIOR PASTOR

*The altar flowers this morning given
to the Glory of God and in celebration of
the Rev'd Thomas Q. Strandburg's
recent election as president of the
Western Pennsylvania Annual Conference Ministers' Chorus.*

*The rosebud on the altar this morning
given in honor of the birth of
Neil Thomas Kurta
born October 6, 2026 to parents
Amy & Zach Kurta.*

*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.*

