**Worship Service – July 18, 2021**

**Welcome**

Good morning and welcome to this time of worship.

My hope is that these moments shared together online would be an encouragement to you amidst the ongoing challenges of life. All of us miss the opportunity to gather together in our sanctuary to worship God together. So, let’s continue to hold up each other in prayer and remember that no matter where we are, whether in the church building or in our homes, we are the Body of Christ, joined together by his Spirit.

**Opening Prayer** – Sandi Porter

**Call to Worship**

O come, let us worship and bow down, let us kneel before the Lord, our Maker!

For he is our God, and we are the people of his pasture, and the sheep of his hand.

(Psalm 95:6,7)

**Hymn of Praise:** How Great Thou Art (celebration 147) (4 verses) – Mary Serdaridis

1. O Lord my God When I in awesome wonder

Consider all the worlds Thy hands have made

I see the stars, I hear the rolling thunder

Thy pow'r thru'out the universe displayed

Chorus

Then sings my soul My Savior God to Thee

How great Thou art , how great Thou art

Then sings my soul My Savior God to Thee

How great Thou art, how great Thou art

2. When through the woods and forest glades I wander

And hear the birds sing sweetly in the trees

When I look down from lofty mountain grandeur

And hear the brook and feel the gentle breeze [Chorus]

3. And when I think that God, His Son not sparing

Sent Him to die, I scarce can take it in

That on the cross, my burden gladly bearing

He bled and died to take away my sin [Chorus]

4. When Christ shall come, with shout of acclamation

And take me home, what joy shall fill my heart

Then I shall bow, in humble adoration

And there proclaim, my God, how great Thou art [Chorus]

**Prayer of Confession**

God our Maker,

as we marvel at your creation, we confess we often take it for granted.

We don’t know what to make of reports about the damage human life causes.

We prefer to live as if our lifestyles make no impact on the earth.

We confess we don’t really want to change.

Yet we wonder if the way we live is pleasing to you.

For all the ways we put your creation at risk and harm the earth,

we ask for your forgiveness.

Teach us how to live in this marvellous world with love and respect

for you and for your whole creation.

Through Christ our Lord. Amen

**Words of Assurance**

God says to his people, “I have swept away your transgressions like a cloud, and your sins like a mist: return to me, for I have redeemed you” (Isaiah 44:22)

Sisters and brothers, let us accept the acts of God on our behalf and return into the fulness of fellowship with our Lord.

**Song of Reflection:** Love Lifted Me (3 verses, 4th is piano only) – Mary Serdaridis

1. I was sinking deep in sin,  
Far from the peaceful shore,  
Very deeply stained within,  
Sinking to rise no more;  
But the Master of the sea  
Heard my despairing cry,  
From the waters lifted me–  
Now safe am I.

Refrain:  
Love lifted me,  
Love lifted me,  
When nothing else could help,  
Love lifted me;  
Love lifted me,  
Love lifted me,  
When nothing else could help,  
Love lifted me.

2. All my heart to Him I give,  
Ever to Him I'll cling,  
In His blessed presence live,  
Ever His praises sing.  
Love so mighty and so true  
Merits my soul's best songs;  
Faithful, loving service, too,  
To Him belongs. [Refrain]

3. Souls in danger, look above,  
Jesus completely saves;  
He will lift you by His love  
Out of the angry waves.  
He's the Master of the sea,  
Billows His will obey;  
He your Savior wants to be–  
Be saved today. [Refrain]

**Prayers of Thanksgiving and Intercession**

Good and generous God,

in Jesus Christ you came to us, promising life in abundance.

We give you thanks today for the abundant gifts we receive in him—

the assurance of your love day by day;

the relief of your mercy when we recognize our own failings;

hope to sustain us when things seem bleak;

and peace that comes when we trust ourselves to your eternal keeping.

These are the gifts that matter, O God,

so for all these gifts and other blessings we recognize around us,

we give you thanks in these moments of silence:

Generous God, today we pray for all whose lives seem empty of joy—

because the going is tough, and friends still seem far away…

because their hearts are filled with disappointment…

because their sorrow and grief are keen this day…

Support each one in your abundant compassion.

Generous God,

we remember before you those whose lives are empty of peace and hope—

because they are struggling with illness or disability…

because they are powerless in the face of violence

or other forces beyond their control…

Especially today we pray for all those facing discrimination

because of their culture or their religion,

and those still struggling to overcome the effects of the pandemic…

Send your peace and promise with signs of new possibility and real hope.

Generous God,

we remember before you those for whom life is frustrating—

because they are without work…

because they have made poor choices and cannot find a way forward…

because what comes next does not seem clear…

Support each one in your abundant mercy and lead them in new paths.

Good and generous God,

fill us with energy & compassion to reach out to those facing difficult times.

May we become the gift we have received in Jesus,

for it is in his name we pray. Amen.

**Scripture Lesson:** Jeremiah 36:1-7 – Sherri Knight

**Sermon:** God’s word: in the fire but not consumed

**Prayer after the Sermon**

God of the Ages, through your ancient prophets and disciples, your saints of old, and your Spirit, you have told us what is good — to do justice, to love kindness, and to walk humbly with you. Help us to stand on you, our Rock of salvation, for all other ground is sinking sand. Amen.

**Hymn of Commitment:** I Know Whom I have Believed (4 verses) – Mary Serdaridis

1. I know not why God’s wondrous grace  
to me is daily shown,  
nor why, with mercy, Christ in love  
redeemed me for his own.

Refrain:  
But “I know whom I have believed,  
and am persuaded that he is able  
to keep that which I’ve committed  
unto him against that day.”

2. I know not how this saving faith  
to me he did impart,  
nor how believing in his word  
wrought peace within my heart. [Refrain]

3. I know not how the Spirit moves,  
convincing us of sin,  
revealing Jesus through the Word,  
creating faith in him. [Refrain]

4. I know not when my Lord may come,  
at night or noon-day fair,  
nor if I’ll walk the vale with him,  
or meet him in the air. [Refrain]

**Benediction**

May the peace of God, which is beyond our utmost understanding,

keep guard over your hearts and your thoughts, in Christ Jesus. Amen