



Online Worship Resource (Sunday, September 19, 2021)

BOLD TYPE IS SPOKEN BY THE CONGREGATION

Prelude: **Of the Father's Love Begotten** Wilbur Held

*Of the Father's love begotten, ere the worlds began to be, he is Alpha and Omega;
he the source, the ending he, of the things that are, that have been, and that
future years shall see, evermore and evermore! Amen.*

Jane Kerr, Organist

Welcome and Announcements

Call to Worship Whitney Roberts, Liturgist

Please stand as you are led and join me in our responsive Call to Worship:
God said to Abraham and Sarah: Go forth, and I will make of you a great nation.

They had faith in the promises of God.

So God says to us, this day: I will bless you, and you will be a blessing.

Let us trust in the promises of God.

Let us worship God!

Opening Hymn: "How Great Thou Art"

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 power throughout the universe displayed.

REFRAIN:

Then sings my soul, my Savior God to Thee; How great Thou art! How great Thou art! (repeat)

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. (Refrain)

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!" (Refrain)

Call to Confession

(Liturgist)

Confident in God's love for us, let us tell the truth about how it is with us and with our world. Let us pray. . .

Prayer of Confession

Gracious God, we come before you in need of forgiveness and grace. You call us to trust in you completely, but we do not. We are timid and fearful as we follow your lead. We justify our actions and words, though we know they are not what you require. We struggle to understand the new life Christ offers, preferring old habits to risky change. Forgive us, we pray. Help us to be born again into the life of Christ, trusting that you have included us by grace in the family of faith. In Christ's name we pray. Amen.

Silent Confession

Assurance of Pardon

Friends, our savior Jesus Christ died on the cross. In that act, the God of grace and glory said no to the powers of death, no to the sin that paralyzes our hearts and souls. Christ said yes to new life, yes to hope, yes to transformation. The Spirit of God renovates our lives with that hope.

Alleluia! Amen.

RESPONSE: "We Are Forgiven"

We are forgiven, we are forgiven, Thanks be to God, Thanks be to God.
(repeat)

Passing the Peace

May the Peace of Christ be with you.

And also with you.

Children's Time

Kate Tannuzzo

Prayer for Illumination

(Liturgist)

Let us prepare our hearts to hear God's Word by praying together the Prayer for Illumination:

Prepare our hearts, O God, to accept your Word. Silence in us any voice but your own, so that in hearing, we may obey your will; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Scripture Reading

John 3:1-17

¹ Now there was a Pharisee named Nicodemus, a leader of the Jews. ² He came to Jesus by night and said to him, "Rabbi, we know that you are a teacher who has come from God; for no one can do these signs that you do apart from the presence of God." ³ Jesus answered him, "Very truly, I tell you, no one can see the kingdom of God without being born from above."
⁴ Nicodemus said to him, "How can anyone be born after having grown old? Can one enter a second time into the mother's womb and be born?" ⁵ Jesus answered, "Very truly, I tell you, no one can enter the kingdom of God without being born of water and Spirit. ⁶ What is born of the flesh is flesh, and what is born of the Spirit is spirit. ⁷ Do not be astonished that I said to you, 'You must be born from above.' ⁸ The wind blows where it chooses, and you hear the sound of it, but you do not know where it comes from or where it goes. So it is with everyone who is born of the Spirit." ⁹ Nicodemus said to him, "How can these things be?" ¹⁰ Jesus answered him, "Are you a teacher of Israel, and yet you do not understand these things?"

¹¹ "Very truly, I tell you, we speak of what we know and testify to what we have seen; yet you do not receive our testimony. ¹² If I have told you about earthly things and you do not believe, how can you believe if I tell you about heavenly things? ¹³ No one has ascended into heaven except the one who descended from heaven, the Son of Man.

¹⁴ And just as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted up, ¹⁵ that whoever believes in him may have eternal life. [\[1\]](#)

¹⁶ “For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life.

¹⁷ “Indeed, God did not send the Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him.

This is the Word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

Sermon

“How?”

Rev. MaryAnn McKibben Dana

Hymn After Sermon: “What Wondrous Love Is This”

What wondrous love is this, O my soul, O my soul, What wondrous love is this, O my soul!

What wondrous love is this that caused the Lord of bliss

To bear the dreadful curse for my soul, for my soul, To bear the dreadful curse for my soul.

When I was sinking down, sinking down, sinking down, when I was sinking down, sinking down,

When I was sinking down, despairing to be found,

Christ laid aside his crown for my soul, for my soul, Christ laid aside his crown for my soul.

To God and to the Lamb, I will sing, I will sing, to God and to the Lamb I will sing;
To God and to the Lamb who is the Great I Am,

While millions join the theme, I will sing, I will sing, while millions join the theme, I will sing!

Call to offering

(Liturgist)

Grateful for the privilege of being citizens of God's kingdom, we offer what we have to meet the needs of our sisters and brothers around the globe. Thank you for your generous and joyful giving. Please pray with me the prayer of dedication:

Prayer of Dedication

We give you thanks and praise, O God, for the abundant grace you have given us in Jesus Christ. Let the simple gifts of our lives be a sign of our unending gratitude for your eternal love; through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

Prayers of the People and the Lord's Prayer

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 debts, as we forgive our debtors; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.

Closing Hymn: "To God Be the Glory"

To God be the glory; great things He has done! So loved he the world that He gave us His son,

Who yielded his life an atonement for sin, and opened the life-gate that all may go in.

REFRAIN:

Praise the Lord, praise the Lord; let the earth hear his voice!

Praise the Lord, praise the Lord, let the people rejoice!

O come to the Father through Jesus the Son,

And give him the glory, great things he has done!

Great things he has taught us, great things he has done, And great our rejoicing through Jesus the Son;

But purer and higher and greater will be Our wonder, our transport, when Jesus we see. (REFRAIN)

Benediction

Rev. MaryAnn McKibben Dana is a writer, free-range pastor, speaker, and ministry coach living in Reston, Virginia. She is author of two books, *God, Improv, and the Art of Living*, and *Sabbath in the Suburbs*. She was featured on PBS's *Religion and Ethics Newsweekly* for her work on Sabbath and was recognized by the Presbyterian Writers Guild with the 2015-2016 David Steele Distinguished Writer Award. MaryAnn is a graduate of Rice University in Houston, Texas and received her M.Div. from Columbia Theological Seminary in Decatur, Georgia. She is a mother of three, an imperfect knitter, and an occasional ultra marathoner.

Today's Worship Participants:

Rev. MaryAnn McKibben Dana, guest preacher, Jane Kerr, organist, Judy Viccellio, guitar, David Maley, piano, Whitney Roberts, liturgist and technical team member