

Good morning everyone! And welcome to online worship with us at Mt. Zion Lutheran Church on this wonderful Sunday morning, the sixth Sunday of Easter! Thank you so much for tuning in and worshipping with us today - it is a delight to have you here.

Today's worship service is a very special one, a favorite hymn/special music spectacular service! Today we are celebrating the very talented musical gifts of folks in our congregation with a bunch of favorite hymns performed in beautiful ways. Thank you to all of you who submitted your favorite hymns - it's so fun to see which are your favorites, and I am so glad we can provide a selection of them for you in worship today.

And as we begin our special service today, let's start with a prayer and blessing of thanks for our musicians here at Mt. Zion. Please join me in raising a hand in blessing, like you are waving hello, like we do in worship, as we bless and pray for all those who influence our life with music:

God of all creation, in Psalm 100 we are encouraged to make a joyful noise, to worship you with gladness. We thank you for all the ways we are able to make these joyful noises, to praise you and worship you with music, and for all the people who make that music possible in our church family.

For our music staff, Craig our choir director and Deb our organist, we give you thanks for their time, talents, and gifts, for so many years.

For our musicians who provided music today, Michaela, Craig, Maggie, Einar, Deb, and Deb, we thank you for the ability to share their gifts with our congregation.

For all the musical groups and musicians at Mt. Zion, for our Sr. Choir, Jr. Choir, Tone Chimes, Psalmodikon players, special music providers, and all other musical ministries at Mt. Zion, we give you heartfelt thanks and praise.

For all the instruments we use to praise you, for pianos, guitars, string instruments, wind instruments, percussion, and voice, we thank you for the diversity that comes in joyful noise.

For all who teach music, who use music to teach, and provide therapy with music, we give you thanks for this creative and powerful medium, and all the skills and gifts these leaders bring.

For all the gatherings of musicians, for choirs, bands, and orchestras, we thank you for the camaraderie, joy, and community uniquely found when musical gifts are brought together. We pray for patience as we wait for these gatherings to become safe again.

And Lord we thank you for all the ways music speaks to us, especially in these challenging times. For that song that comes on the radio at just the right moment, we give you thanks. For the music that soothes us when we are struggling, we praise you, Lord. For the times when words fail us and we need music to speak for our spirits, we give you thanks for your presence in that music. For the creative outlet that music provides, we praise you for that holy comfort.

Lord we pray that through our joyful noise, through our musical talents and abilities and appreciation, that we may serve and worship and praise you with our whole hearts. We pray for continued blessing on our musicians, instruments, and ministries as we worship you uniquely with music today. Thank you for the true gift that music is in our lives. In your Son Jesus' name we pray, Amen.

Our worship service today will be set up like a “lessons and carols” type of service, with music interwoven throughout the service. We will end our time together in the sending blessing, the benediction, and I hope you enjoy our worship journey today filled with the gift of music.

Please join me in our prayer of the day before we move into our first hymn:

Almighty and ever-living God, you hold together all things in heaven and on earth. In your great mercy receive the prayers of all your children, and give to all the world the Spirit of your truth and peace, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

Amen.

(end video 1)

With the whole people of God in Christ Jesus, let us pray for the church, those in need, and all of God’s creation:

Abiding God, you have revealed yourself to us in the form of your Son, Jesus Christ. We give you thanks for Jesus’ assurance of the Holy Spirit, your Advocate, who comes alongside us in all things. Embolden your church, as your followers, to reveal your love to everyone in our speaking and in our living. Lord, in your mercy, hear our prayer.

Healing Spirit, we continue to pray for those who are ill, grieving, lonely, tired, and weary. We pray for all people who are struggling especially with their mental health, with addiction, and with the unforeseen changes which we must adapt to. Help them to receive the care they need. Lord we pray for those in our community who are in particular need of care: George, Carol, Walt, Rich, Ole, Pam, Vera, Becky, Stacy, Nickki, Emily, Dianna, Judy, Dodie, Rebecca, Chad, Mark and Margie, Sandy, Barb, Laura, Gwen, and Janell. Be present with them, surround them with care, and grant them peace that only Christ can give. Lord in your mercy. Hear our prayer.

God of justice, we pray for the well-being of all your people; for those who lack employment, food or shelter, for those whose lives are endangered by unfair policies or abusive circumstances, and for those who are feeling helpless. Lord in your mercy, Hear our prayer.

God of creation, we thank you for the many ways we are able to worship and praise you. We praise you for the gift of your created world, the green trees and grass, the plants rising forth in new life, all the animals and creatures with whom we share this home. For all the gifts of music and musicians, for our ability to worship together as one body, for the many ways we are able to love and serve you and our neighbors, we give you thanks, O Lord. Lord in your mercy, hear our prayer.

Into your hands, gracious God, we commend all for whom we pray, trusting in your mercy and peace. Through Jesus Christ our Savior and Lord, Amen.

And now please join me as we pray the words our Lord Jesus taught us in 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 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, and the power, and the glory, forever and ever, Amen.

One additional act of worship that we have the opportunity to be part of, even in these times of worshipping online, is the act of offering. I would encourage you to take a moment to prayerfully share a gift with our congregation, Mt. Zion. You can either write a check and send it to the church via postal mail, or you can head to our website, mtzionhudson.com and give online. Thank you so very much for your continued generosity and support for the ministries of our congregation.

Please join me as we hear our last favorite hymn today, "We Are Called".

(end video 2)

And now my dear brothers and sisters in Christ, may the Lord bless you and keep you, may God's face shine upon you and be gracious to you, may God look upon you with favor, and give you peace. In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, Amen.

Go in peace to love and serve the Lord. Thanks be to God, Amen.