

SEPTEMBER 13, 2020  
FIFTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

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*\*Please maintain social distance of at least 6 feet and keep your mask on at all times while on MPC property.*

**PRELUDE** — *Fairest Lord Jesus* - arr. Mark Shockey

Mark Shockey

**CALL to WORSHIP** — inspired by *Psalms 42 & 43*

Molly Ramsey

One: Come, all you whose souls thirst for the living God.

**All: We come in search of help and hope.**

One: Come, you who are acquainted with grief or oppression.

**All: We come bearing our doubts, our wounds, and our fears.**

One: Come, you who are in need of good news.

**All: We come in search of joy, truth, and light.**

One: Come, and find refuge in God your rock.

**All: Let us again praise the One who is our help and our hope. Let us worship God together.**

**PRAYER of CONFESSION**

Pastor Lester-Abdalla

Merciful God, it's easy to imagine your presence in grand sanctuaries and fancy liturgy. It's easy to imagine your presence in magnificent hymns and joyful singing. It's harder to imagine your presence in the mundane rhythms of this pandemic life. It's harder to imagine your presence when there are so many rules, and masks cover our faces, and we're not even permitted to shake hands, much less hug one another. And yet, O God, there are no limits to where your presence can be felt. There are no rules that confine you to particular places or to particular circumstances. In fact, it has always been you who leads us out of sanctuaries and into the streets; to the poor and the homeless and the hungry and the afflicted. Forgive us, O God, for assuming we know where to find you. Forgive us, O God, when we fail to see your presence in the mundane and in the unexpected. Forgive us, O God, when we assume you won't be present through a mask, or through safety precautions we don't like, or through a computer screen. Soften our hearts. Empower our imaginations. Remind us of your constant presence.

*(Time for silent prayer and confession.)*

**PROMISE of FORGIVENESS**

One: Hear the good news of God's love for us: whether it is in an earthquake or a storm or in the sound of sheer silence, God will say again and again, "You are my beloved. Nothing you could ever do will separate you from my love." In the name of Jesus Christ, my friends, let us rest in the assurance of God's love and in the promise that we are God's forgiven people.

**All: Thanks be to God! Alleluia! Amen!**

**EXCERPT from SCRIPTURE READING** — 1 Kings 19:11-12

He said, "Go out and stand on the mountain before the Lord, for the Lord is about to pass by." Now there was a great wind, so strong that it was splitting mountains and breaking rocks in pieces before the Lord, but the Lord was not in the wind; and after the wind an earthquake, but the Lord was not in the earthquake; and after the earthquake a fire, but the Lord was not in the fire; and after the fire a sound of sheer silence.

**AFFIRMATION of FAITH - from *A Brief Statement of Faith***

We trust in God the Holy Spirit, everywhere the giver and renewer of life. The Spirit justifies us by grace through faith, sets us free to accept ourselves and to love God and neighbor, and binds us together with all believers in the one body of Christ, the church. The same Spirit who inspired the prophets and apostles rules our faith and life in Christ through Scripture, engages us through the Word proclaimed, claims us in the waters of baptism, feeds us with the bread of life and the cup of salvation, and calls women and men to all ministries of the church. In a broken and fearful world the Spirit gives us courage to pray without ceasing, to witness among all peoples to Christ as Lord and Savior, to unmask idolatries in church and culture, to hear the voices of peoples long silenced, and to work with others for justice, freedom, and peace. In gratitude to God, empowered by the Spirit, we strive to serve Christ in our daily tasks and to live holy and joyful lives, even as we watch for God's new heaven and new earth, praying, Come, Lord Jesus!

**PAUSE for PRAYER**

- 1) When or how do you experience the presence of God?
- 2) When God's presence washes over you, what does it feel like?
- 3) How might you open your heart to experience God's presence, even in the most unlikely of circumstances?

**HYMN 410 — *God is Calling through the Whisper***

W ŻŁOBIE LEŻY

*God is calling through the whisper of the Spirit's deepest sighs,  
through the thrill of sudden beauties that can catch us by surprise.  
Flash of lightning, crash of thunder; hush of stillness, rush of wonder:*

*God is calling—can you hear?  
God is calling—can you hear?*

*God is calling through the voices of our neighbors' urgent prayers,  
through their longing for redemption and for rescue from despair.*

*Place of hurt or face of needing; strident cry or slient pleading:  
God is calling—can you hear?  
God is calling—can you hear?*

*God is calling through the music of sublime and human arts,  
through the hymns of earth and angels, and the carols of our hearts.  
Lift of joy and gift of singing; days and nights our praises bringing:*

*God is calling—can we hear?  
God is calling—can we hear?*

**POSTLUDE — *O Love, How Deep* – arr. Ruth Mackie****OTHERS PARTICIPATING IN TODAY'S SERVICE**

Tim Carpenter – Director of Music

Photos provided by: Luisa Herrera-Gonzalez, Nancy Kernan,  
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