Faith**BIT**

We Are Better Together

Reflection by Kim Rathjen

I love to sing in worship. It has been an integral part of my worship experience since I was a child. Singing with a choir, or with the congregation, or sometimes by myself is my preferred way to lift my praises to God. As an alto, I love harmonizing on the old hymns or the new worship songs when people around me are carrying the melody. It reminds me that we all play an important role in the Kingdom of God and that each adds their own God given gifts and talents to make a beautiful whole.

A few years ago, I started noticing that my voice would get "tired" after a Sunday morning of singing in worship. The loss of a singing voice got worse over time and I discovered that I had nodules on my thyroid which were impacting my vocal cords. The nodules continued to grow and impact my voice more and more (and some other things as well), so this past July I had the nodules and my thyroid removed. Nothing major, no cancer, just "growths."

> "...as a people of God, we are better when we share our gifts and talents together than when we try to do things on our own."
> - Kim Rathjen

I was hopeful that my singing voice would return without the fatigue, but to this point is has not. In fact, my voice has changed. Sometimes I can sing pretty well for the first song in worship. Other times I can't really get a note out. My range is very limited – I can sing about one octave and much lower than I used to.

Often I feel sad about my loss of singing ability – especially when the words in the songs or liturgy are about singing praises to God. Or when I try and my throat hurts or the notes just won't come out. But, in these moments I have started to have to rely on the voices of the congregation to lift me and my praises to God. It has reminded me that as a people of God, we are better when we share our gifts and talents together than when we try to do things on our own. So, thank you, Immanuel, for being my voice of praise when I am unable to sing with my own voice.