

Faith Lutheran Church
Sunday, January 24, 2021
Third Sunday after Epiphany



Welcome

Confession and Forgiveness

Blessed be the holy Trinity, ☩ one God,
whose voice is upon the waters,
whose mercy is poured out upon all people,
whose goodness cascades over all creation.

Amen.

Let us confess our sin, trusting in the abundant grace of God.

Silence is kept for reflection.

Most Holy God,

you search us and know us.

You are acquainted with all our ways.

**We confess that our hearts are burdened by sin—
our own sins and the broken systems that bind us.**

**We turn inward, failing to follow
your outward way of love.**

We distrust those who are not like us.

**We exploit the earth and its resources
and fail to consider generations to come.**

**Forgive us, gracious God,
for all we have done and left undone.**

**Even before the words are on our tongues,
you know them;**

receive them in your divine mercy.

Amen.

How vast is God's grace!

Through the power and promise of ☩ Christ Jesus,
our sins are washed away

and we are claimed as God's own beloved.

Indeed, we are forgiven.

In the wake of God's forgiveness,
we are called to be the beloved community

living out Christ's justice

and the Spirit's reconciling peace. **Amen.**

Gathering Hymn: ELW #720 (*verses 1 & 2*)

“We Are Called”

Opening Prayer

Please join me in the Prayer of the Day:

**Almighty God, by grace alone you call us and accept us in your service. Strengthen us by
your Spirit, and make us worthy of your call, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.
Amen.**

Readings and Psalm

- Jonah 3:1-5, 10 *Repentance at Nineveh*
- 1 Corinthians 7:29-31 *Living in the end times*
- Mark 1:14-20 *The calling of the disciples at the sea*

Psalmody: Psalm 139:1-6, 13-18

¹LORD, you have searched me out; O LORD, you have known me.

²**You know my sitting down and my rising up; you discern my thoughts from afar.**

³You trace my journeys and my resting-places and are acquainted with all my ways.

⁴**Indeed, there is not a word on my lips, but you, O LORD, know it altogether.**

⁵You encompass me, behind and before, and lay your hand upon me.

⁶**Such knowledge is too wonderful for me; it is so high that I cannot attain to it.**

¹³For you yourself created my inmost parts; you knit me together in my mother's womb.

¹⁴**I will thank you because I am marvelously made;
your works are wonderful, and I know it well.**

¹⁵My body was not hidden from you, while I was being made in secret and woven in the depths of the earth.

¹⁶**Your eyes beheld my limbs, yet unfinished in the womb; all of them were written in your book;
my days were fashioned before they came to be.**

¹⁷How deep I find your thoughts, O God! How great is the sum of them!

¹⁸If I were to count them, they would be more in number than the sand;
to count them all, my life span would need to be like yours.

Sermon

Grace, Mercy, and Peace from God our father and our Lord and savior Jesus Christ!

Psalm 139 is one of my favorite psalms because it connects to me personally. When we read Psalm 139 carefully, we notice words like, I, Me, MY, and Mine throughout the passage. The whole psalm is a prayer sung by King David and is full of praises for his creator. King David says in V. 14.... I praise you, for I am **fearfully and wonderfully** made.

What good news to know that we all are made fearfully and wonderfully by our God. When we actually think about our existence, we see how our lives are so wonderful. The way our bodies work and function is truly a miracle. The way our mind processes thoughts, the way we create and procreate. All of this demonstrated for me how human life is not only wonderful but beautiful as well.

When I was pregnant with my child Derrick, I used to spend endless hours wondering whether he would look more like me or my husband. I thought about what traits or characteristics both of us had, that I hoped he would or would not inherit from us. And then after he was born, I would look at him in amazement, thinking how **wonderfully and fearfully** God created him in my womb. I have often wondered if God gets a similar feeling like a mother when he looks at us?

Another thing that attracts me to this psalm is how it talks about our personal relationship with God, like the relationship of a parent and a child. The kind of relationship where I can be angry with God in one minute, and then the next minute I can't stop thanking God for his endless grace and mercies towards me. We all are truly masterpieces! We are all truly unique because there is no other person who is exactly like you or me!! In light of this, we should realize how much God loves us. God molded each one of us personally with His own hands.

Today, science has made it clear that DNA determines our differences. No two people have the same DNA, because God wanted us to be uniquely different. It also reminds us that our potential is endless, and Jesus Christ is always walking with, guiding us. Through his grace we are filled with his love, care and other talents which are within us. And it is up to us how we use it. I became more aware of that when I became a mother. I remember writing in my son's baby book that I hoped he would be kind and loving to others. And I also remind him that he is capable of doing whatever he puts his mind to.

If we read V. 14 again, it says.... *"I will praise you for I am fearfully and wonderfully made: marvelous are your works; and that my soul knows right well."* The second part of the verse says "marvelous are your works and that my soul knows right well."

With each passing day, we take many things for granted and often forget to appreciate how God took great care in making each one of us. He took great care in making us unique. He made us all perfect in his sight. God is a great artist because he made human beings in all variations, shapes, sizes, colors and blessed us with all kinds of skills and talents.

God has *fearfully* and *wonderfully* created us, but our understanding must go one step further to understand why God created us so wonderfully? Genesis 1 says, God made human beings in his own image, and each with great purpose. Everything is made with purpose. If we see a building or a house, we understand that there are three essential ingredients needed to build it. A building requires power and resources needed to complete it. Then there is the organization and the design. Lastly, we find the purpose and perhaps this is the most important thing. If God made us without purpose, then it doesn't matter how we spend our time. But if he has given us talents and gifts (I am sure everyone of us have one or the other talent) ...then God's purpose is for us to share our gifts and talents with others in the community.

Our mighty God uses people like you and me according to the gifts and talents he has given us. Everyone cannot sing or teach or cook nice tasty food, but we all are perfect in God's sight. And most importantly we are able to function as a community by sharing each other's talents.

This is my second month here in this church. I have seen in our congregation many different talents, and people working together to share their talents. For example our Musician Dave makes it possible for us to worship every Sunday with music. Sean, our IT person, and video editor live streams and organizes everything for a successful worship service each week. There are so many people in the church using their talents and sharing their gifts. God is specifically using our talents and gifts for God's glory.

Remember God created us fearfully and wonderfully with his never-ending Love and Grace. So, we must appreciate each other. Let me tell you a story here: A little girl was visiting her grandpa at his house. She crawls into his lap and says, "grandpa did God make you? Grandpa says, "oh yes, my dear, God created me a long time ago." She asked again, "Did God make me too? Grandpa responded back, oh yes, my dear, God created you a little while ago." She thinks about it for a moment, then says, "God has been doing His best work in that little while. hasn't he?"

That's a girl who appreciates the way God made her. But not everyone feels that way. Sometimes we wish we were made a little better. I have heard boys say "I wish I was taller. When I play basketball, the taller boys always block my shots. And when I play defense, I am too short to block their shots! I know that God is great and God is good, but I wish he would have made me a little taller.

What can end up happening is that instead of showing appreciation to God for how He created us, we criticize God for how he didn't create us. Instead of praising him for how we are fearfully and wonderfully made, we blame him for not following our specifications.

God knew you while being formed in your mother's womb. Before we were in our mother's womb, Jesus knew the challenges that we would face in life and he has created us for these times and with great purpose, to do his will.

He has an assignment for each of us to do. Regardless of what we have done. Where we have come from and where we have been, whatever challenges we face today, let us remind ourselves. God loves us and has specific plans for our lives.

Jeremiah 29:11 states: *"for I know the plans I have for you, says the Lord." They are plans for good and not for failure. They are plans for your future and hope.*

Now we know that God who formed us fearfully and wonderfully in our mother's womb loves us dearly and wants to give us hope. God alone can turn our messy lives into hopeful lives. God can turn our trials into testimonies that inspire others. So, rejoice today.

For God has made each of us with purpose. We are all wonderfully made and beautifully created by the Most Mighty God. **Amen.**

Blessing

The peace of the lord be with you always
and also with you. Amen.

Nicene Creed

We believe in one God, the Father, the Almighty, maker of heaven and earth, of all that is, seen and unseen.

We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only Son of God, eternally begotten of the Father, God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, of one Being with the Father; through him all things were made. For us and for our salvation he came down from heaven, was incarnate of the Holy Spirit and the virgin Mary and became truly human. For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate; he suffered death and was buried. On the third day he rose again in accordance with the scriptures; he ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead, and his kingdom will have no end.

We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son, who with the Father and the Son is worshiped and glorified, who has spoken through the prophets. We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic church. We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins. We look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come.

Amen.

Prayers of Intercession

Guided by Christ made known to the nations, let us offer our prayers for the church, the world, and all people in need.

A brief silence.

For the church throughout the world, for pastors and teachers, for deacons and deaconesses, and for musicians and servers, that all proclaim the good news of God’s reconciling love, let us pray.

Have mercy, O God.

For the whole church of Christ, especially the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and all congregations, our national Bishop, Elizabeth, our synodical Bishop Katherine, and our pastor Rita. let us pray.

Have mercy, O God.

For skies and seas, for birds and fish, for favorable weather and clean water, and for the well-being of creation, that God raise up advocates and scientists to guide our care for all the earth, let us pray.

Have mercy, O God.

For those who provide leadership in our cities and around the world, for nonprofit and nongovernmental organizations, for planning commissions and homeless advocates, that God inspire all people in the just use of wealth, let us pray.

Have mercy, O God.

For those who are sick, distressed, or grieving; especially for Beverly Tankersly, Pastor Matthew Lamb, Connie Mattson, Lori Strickland, Eric Marken, Eva Mohr, Al Picotte, Bill Duff, Bill Vaneffen, Sandra Kaye, Lois Stoppel, Teri DePlonty, and the family and friends of: Dan Doran, Corri Darou, Adam Sanderson and Tom Krause. For whom and what else do we pray silently or out loud? (Pause...), in the midst of suffering, we ask that God’s peace and mercy surround them, let us pray.

Have mercy, O God.

For our congregation and community, for families big and small, and for the organizations that meet here during the week, that God’s steadfast love serve as a model for all relationships, let us pray.

Have mercy, O God.

Almighty God, we pray for our new President Joe Biden, new Vice-President Kamala Harris, and for all newly elected officials, give wisdom and guide them by Your grace. Let us pray.

Have mercy, O God.

Merciful God, hear the prayers of your people, spoken or silent, for the sake of the one who dwells among us, your Son, Jesus Christ our Savior.

Amen.

Offering

It is generally at this time during the service that worshipers are invited to share their gifts for the Mission and Ministry of the church. Whether you choose to pause at this time or make your contribution following this service, we encourage you to continue your support of the ministry. We are grateful for the community's continued generous support especially during these trying times.

Offertory Prayer (please join in prayer)

O God, receive these gifts as you receive us: like parents receive their children, with arms open wide. Nourish us anew in your tender care, and empower us in faithful service to tend to others with this same love, through Jesus Christ, our saving grace. Amen.

Our Lord's Prayer

I invite you to join in praying the prayer our Lord Jesus taught us...

**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**

Benediction

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ,
The Love of God
and the fellowship of the + Holy Spirit be with you all,
Amen.

Dismissal

Go in Peace, Live in faith, Share Christ's love.
Thanks be to God.

Sending Hymn: ELW # 805 (verses 1 & 2)

"Lead On, O King Eternal"

Sources:

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VIRTUAL AFTER SERVICE COFFEE HOUR

Join us on Jan 24, 2020 at 11:30 AM for a
Virtual Coffee Hour on Zoom, following Sunday's service.

1. Go to www.zoom.us
2. Along the top towards the right corner, click on **"Join A Meeting"**

Enter the following information when asked for it...

Meeting ID: **897 9656 1726**

Passcode: **885647**

If not using a computer or smartphone, you can join by simply calling in and following the prompts.

Phone number: **1(301)715-8592**

(enter this information when asked)

Meeting ID: **89796561726#**

Participant ID: **0#**

Passcode: **885647#**

ANNOUNCEMENTS

❖ **In-person Worship Services at Faith will resume Sunday, February 7th!**

We urge everyone to follow the guidelines set forth to ensure the safety of everyone in attendance. We hope to see you there!

❖ **Pastor Rita is available for any pastoral needs by phone, email, and Zoom!** ❖

If you would like to speak with Pastor Rita, please call or email her at.

(312) 478-6212 or critawilliam@gmail.com

From there if you'd like to set up a Zoom meeting, just ask!

Faith's Annual Meeting will be held February 14, 2021. There are 3 seats to be filled on the council this year. If you are interested please get your information in to the office or to a Council Member. We also need 2 delegates to represent us for the Synod Assembly. More information will be available shortly.

❖ **ANNUAL REPORT TIME!**

If you are responsible for a committee which is included in the Annual Report, please get a report in to the office as soon as possible when 2020 ends. **The deadline is January 31st.** Reports can be emailed to faithlc1966@att.net with the subject "Annual Report". If you have any questions, please contact Sean in the office (906) 632-7246

Watch Faith's Worship Service Live on Sundays on our Facebook page! - You can catch our Service at 10:20am every Sunday at www.facebook.com/FaithLC1966 . You can also find us online by searching for **FaithLC1966** in any browser. If you have any questions or comments, please call the church office at (906) 632-7246.