

***Eighth Sunday after Pentecost***  
**July 23, 2023**

Welcome and Announcements		
Prelude		Christopher A. McCroskey
Call To Worship	<i>“Blessed Assurance”</i>	Choir
Greeting		
*Hymn	<i>“Guide Me, O Thou Great Jehovah”</i>	127
Opening Prayer		
The Lord’s Prayer		895
<b>Proclamation of the Word</b>		
Prayer of Illumination		
Old Testament Reading	Genesis 28:10-19a	Pages 24-25 (O.T.)
Epistle Reading	Romans 8:12-25	Page 149 (N.T.)
*Hymn	<i>“Nearer, My God, to Thee”</i>	528
Gospel Reading	Matthew 13:24-30, 36-43	Page 19 (N.T.)
Anthem	<i>“Here I Am, Lord”</i>	Choir
Psalter	Psalms 139	854-855
Sermon	<i>“Search Me, O God”</i>	Rev. John Jordan
*Affirmation of Faith	<i>“The Apostles’ Creed”</i>	881
*Gloria Patri	<i>“Glory Be to the Father”</i>	70
Pastoral Prayer		
Presentation of Tithes & Offerings		
Offertory		Christopher A. McCroskey
*Doxology	<i>“Praise God from Whom All Blessings Flow”</i>	95
*Hymn	<i>“I Want to Walk as a Child of the Light”</i>	206
*Dismissal With Benediction		
*Benediction Response	<i>“May the Lord, Mighty God, Bless and Keep You”</i>	Choir
	May the Lord, Mighty God bless and keep you forever, Grant you peace, perfect peace, courage in every endeavor. Lift up your eyes and see God’s face and God’s grace forever, May the Lord, Mighty God, bless and keep you forever.	
*Postlude		Christopher A. McCroskey
	*The Congregation May Stand	

***Leading in Worship Today***

Pastor: *John D. Jordan*    AV Director: *Marie Stiles*  
 Choir Director: *Christopher A. McCroskey*    AV Assistant: *Chris Derrick*  
 Church Musician

**VISITORS ARE WELCOME** in the service of worship! Please make use of the visitor’s tags (located in the pew backs) to help us better welcome you as a visitor to Trinity this morning. We ask that you also please fill in the pew pad as it passes to register your attendance with us. **Large print hymnals** are available from the ushers.

You may join as a member into the life and work of this congregation by Confession of Faith or by Transfer of Membership from another church. If you would be interested in becoming a member, please speak to the pastor.

**TODAY’S LOVELY FLOWERS** are given to the Glory of God and in honor and celebration of **Brady Derrick** on his 20<sup>th</sup> birthday today by his parents, **Chris and Erin Derrick**. Thank you, our Trinity Family, for all the love and support.

**“AS MEMBERS OF THIS CONGREGATION, WE WILL FAITHFULLY PARTICIPATE IN ITS MINISTRIES BY OUR PRAYERS...**

Patsy Zeigler    Becky Derrick    Carlis Edwards    Dale Wells    Patsy Shuler    Christopher McCroskey  
Jimmy Grahl    Latson Lewis    Kaye Floyd    John Ballentine    Jack Stevens

**Shut-Ins:** Shirley Butler; Esther Carter; Gillett Hipp; Linda Maloch; Jean Raynor; Claudia Sineath; George Taylor

**Family and Friends:** **Louis Jordan** (brother of John Jordan); **Judy Spence** (former member); **Anne Piercy** (former member); **Missy Abrams** (stepdaughter of Lissa Abrams); **Mary Davis** (daughter of Bob & Libby Strickland); **Kathleen Braun** (sister of Mark Lewis); **Lauren & Leah Grace Edwards** (granddaughter & great-granddaughter of Hilda Edwards); **Gloria Erd** (friend of Lynn Martin); **Pearl Geddens** (mother of Tom Geddens); **Beverly Lipscomb** (sister-in-law of John Jordan); **Ross Deal** (grandson of Mary Kamoroff); **Nancy Wilson** (friends of Jeanette Hornsby); **David Turner** (brother of Pam Turner); **Chip Mixon** (friend of Tommy Gleaton); **Ron Walker** (friend of Tommy & Chris Gleaton); **Merit Takach** (friend of Joyce and Brent Robinson); **James Boggs** (father of Claire Boggs); **Stacy Coggins** (daughter of Steve Aiello); **Dan & Leslie White** (brother & sister-in-law of Steve White); **Paula Milhouse** (friend of Marty Johnson); **Mary Ann Rentz** (stepmother of Marty Johnson); **Alva Humphries** (friend of Marty Johnson); **Bill Areheart** (friend of Bonnie Ramsey); **Hayley Beaudoin** (niece of Edwa Meek); **Addie Kinard** (cousin of coworker of Edwa Meek); **Robert Bradley** (Business Associate of Simon Ross); **Gary Becton** (friend of Mark Branham); **Florence Lee Carter, Monnie Tiller** (friends of Chris Derrick); **Adrin & Linda Hargett** (stepfather and stepmom of Christopher McCroskey); **Alexa Lookingbill, Teddy Derrick** (uncle of Arvan Derrick); **Haidee Baehr** (friends of Ruth Frady); **Denise Paul, Scott & Karen Nelson** (cousins of Gale Frady); **Dan Conner, Max Johnson** (friends of Gale Frady); **Walt & Janet Beck** (friends of Jo Ann Heiting); **Adam Lavender** (son of Phil Lavender)

If you have a friend or family member on the Prayer List, we ask you to please keep us updated. If no word is received, we will trust that our prayers have been answered and remove the name. To update us, please call the office or e-mail us at [trinityumcwc@sc.rr.com](mailto:trinityumcwc@sc.rr.com).

**OUR PRESENCE ...**

**In-Person Attendance 07/16 SS: 17      Worship: 31**

**OUR GIFTS ...**

**General Fund 07/16 \$ 4,048.56**

**OUR SERVICE ...**

**OUR WITNESS.”**

**Upcoming Events**

**TODAY** Taste of Trinity

Church Council following Taste of Trinity

**07/24** Exercise, 10:30 a.m.

**07/26** T.a.G., 7 p.m.

**07/27** Exercise, 10:30 a.m.

**07/28** Office Closed

FH Reserved

**07/29** FH Reserved

**Readings for July 30**

Genesis 29:15-28

Psalms 105:1-11, 45b

Romans 8:26-39

Matthew 13:31-33, 44-52



**Ministers**

**Pastor**

**Resident Bishop**

**District Superintendent**

**The Congregation**

**John D. Jordan**

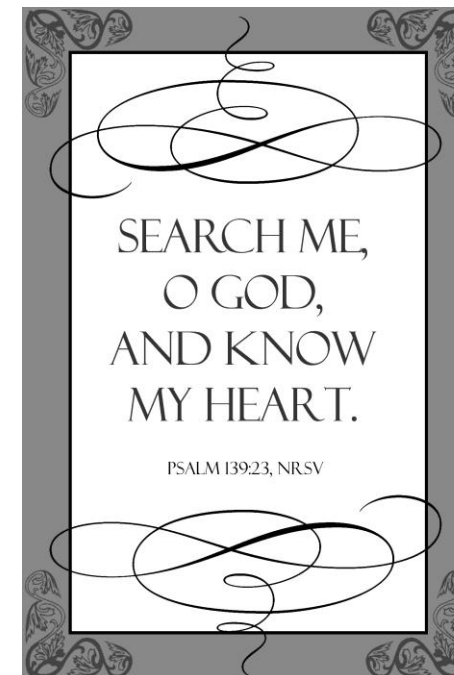
**Jonathan Holston**

**Rev. Fran M. Elrod**

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***Our mission is to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world.***

***Our vision is to Connect, Nurture, Inspire and Transform***



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## Psalm 139

The title of this psalm could be *God Knows*. The verb know, or some derivation, occurs five times in the first six verses. The psalmist recognizes how well God knows him. God knows everything he does. God knows when he sits and when he rises. God discerns his thoughts. God knows what he does during the day and when he goes to bed. Even his little idiosyncrasies and habits are known to God. God knows what he is going to say before he says it. God knows his actions because God surrounds him. The word translated as “hem me in” actually means to surround like an army besieging a city. The knowledge God has of him is too wonderful. It is inconceivable.

Or the title could be *God Knows (fill in your name)*. God knows us. God knows what we do. God knows what we think. God knows what we do each day and when we go to bed. God knows our little idiosyncrasies and habits. God knows I line up my vitamins and medicines before I take them each morning. God knows I put the condiments on my hamburger a certain way. God even knows what we are going to say before we say it. God completely surrounds us. We cannot conceive how well God knows us.

The NRSV entitles this psalm *The Inescapable God*. The psalmist asks where he could flee from God’s presence. God is in heaven and Sheol, the underworld. If he goes to the end of the world, God is there. God will find him if the psalmist extinguishes all the lights and hides in the darkest cave, for darkness is as light to God. He simply cannot get away from God.

We cannot escape from God. We can fly to the farthest reaches of space or dive to the deepest ocean depths, and God is there. We can try to hide in the crowds of New York City or a remote village in the Andes and God is there. No matter how much we may try to get “off the grid,” God is there.

We cannot escape from God. God knows us better than we know ourselves. Why? Because God made us. The psalmist relates that God formed his inward parts and knit him together. God took all these different threads and knitted them together to form the psalmist. God took the unformed substance, formed the psalmist, and then created a life for the psalmist. That is a weighty thought.

I love that imagery. I had an aunt who knitted afghans. She would knit together different colors of yarn into squares and then sew the squares together into a beautiful work of art that kept you warm.

As marvelous as my aunt’s afghans are, they cannot compare to the marvelous way God makes us. God takes bones, muscles, sinew, skin, organs, brain cells, and hair, and forms each of us. God forms us individually, for no two people are exactly alike. No matter how far advanced we may get with AI, it cannot compete with the brain God created. For example, I use Grammarly, which is an AI program, to check my grammar when I write (much to Jackie’s delight). The program tells me to capitalize the word afghan every time. The program cannot delineate Afghan, a native of Afghanistan, and afghan, a small blanket.

We are fearfully and wonderfully made by God. Therefore, God knows us and is always with us, which is a double-edged sword. Knowing that the Divine Creator knows us and is always with us, may be a comfort. God knows our pain, suffering, grief, joy, fear, victory and defeat. God is with us through all these times. But there may be things about us that God knows that we do not want to acknowledge.

After acknowledging how God made, knows, and is with him, the psalmist changes his tenor. He calls for God to kill the wicked. He is being righteous, standing up for God. “Do I not hate those who hate you, O Lord?” “I hate them with perfect (complete) hatred!” Some commentators interpret this section of the psalm as the psalmist asking God for revenge against those who have opposed him. Whether the reference is to the wicked in general or specific persons, one feels the passion and anger in these verses. Verses 19-22 rise to a crescendo that reaches a fever pitch of perfect hatred. They are my enemies! O God, kill them!

We often have that same passion. We want God to get those who think differently to depart from us. Better still, we want God to kill them. Just rid the world of all those who don't think rightly. Of course, right thinking is the way we think. We can let the anger build to perfect hatred. Yes, God, kill my enemies!

Then in mid-rant, there is another shift. Perhaps, the psalmist has an epiphany, a little awakening. The psalmist does one of the gutsiest things anyone could ever do. He asks God to search, test him and reveal any wicked way in him.

Some Hebrew words in verses 23-24 are rare. So an amplified reading could be, “Search me and know, understand, and give insight into my heart, my inner being.” The psalmist is asking God to look into the very core of his being. The second part of verse 23 is quite obscure and the literal reading could be, “Test me like metal and know if I burn.” I know that doesn't make much sense, but I think the psalmist is asking God to put him over a fire like a metalsmith to reveal and remove any impurities in him. The psalmist asks God to search him to the core of his being and use divine fire to reveal and remove impurities from him.

Then in verse 24, he asks if his way is wicked, painful, sorrowful, or idolatrous. He is asking if his way is evil, causes pain or sorrow, and if it is worshipping other “gods”. After his confession, he asks God to lead him on the way of eternity. Lead him on the way to God.

Asking God to search the psalmist to the depths of his inner being is very gutsy. God may reveal things about the psalmist that he may not want to see within himself.

It is much easier to rant against those wicked people out there than to ask if there is any wickedness in us. We can see the wickedness in others easier than we can see it in ourselves. We want to see the wickedness in others but we don't want to see it in ourselves.

Jesus instructed the disciples not to judge, or condemn others. He told them to remove the log from their own eye, so they can see clearly to take the speck out of their neighbor's eye (Matt 7:1-5, Luke 6: 37-42). Jesus told the disciples to look at the wickedness in themselves before looking at the wickedness in others.

Part of John Wesley's discipline was to review each day before retiring. He would examine how he spent his time. He would ask himself if he caused harm to anyone, did all the good he could, and obeyed God that day. Each day Wesley asked God to search him.

Do we have the guts to ask God to search us? Do we want God to search our innermost being? Do we want God to hold us in the divine fire to reveal and remove our impurities? Do we want God to reveal our wickedness, prejudices, anger, hurt, guilt, and other thought and attitudes we may keep hidden? Do we want God to reveal how we have caused pain and sorrow to others? Do we want God to reveal other “gods” we have worshipped?

Asking God to search our innermost being is hard. God may reveal what we have denied about ourselves for our whole lives. Being held in the divine fire is painful but also liberating. God reveals to us how we have distorted God's image in us. God knows us. God knows how we have distorted the divine image in us. God is

always with us and we cannot hide from God. When we ask God to search us, God reveals and liberates us from the distortions. We are liberated from the wickedness within us and free to be the wonderfully made creature God knitted together.

Search Me, O Lord, and see if there is any wicked, painful, sorrowful, or idolatrous way in me. Hold me in the divine fire and see if I burn. Help me to know my true inner self, the way you knit me together. Lead me to the way of eternal life. Amen.