

**A Sermon for the 13th Sunday after Pentecost
September 7, 2025**



Come to New Life!

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Click Here for today's Readings:

[Thirteenth Sunday after Pentecost – The Episcopal Church](#)

Jeremiah 18:1-11, Psalm 139

It is too wonderful for me!

What would it be like, to be thoroughly known by someone? A little scary?

If someone knows us so intimately, we hope that the person views us with benevolence, no matter what we are like and what we have done. Often mothers are like that. They famously feel that their children can do no wrong!

We read part of Psalm 139, one of my favorites, this morning. The writer talks intimately with God, God who knows everything about him or her. This close encounter with God can continue throughout our lives. The writer, let's say it is a girl, feels so close to God that she feels she has known God far longer than her own life, back to when she was still being formed in the womb. She is astounded at their relationship, saying, "Such knowledge is too wonderful for me! ...How deep I find your thoughts, O God! How great is the sum of them!" She stands in awe of God, finding God both unfathomable and yet so close to her, it is as if they are one.

All through our lives we go through different stages, and if we are paying attention, we know that God is always with us. The psalm writer talks about climbing up to heaven, and there's God; she talks about dying, and God is there too. God leads her wherever she goes, whether she notices it or not.

One way or another, God has made us and fashioned us into who we are. In the first reading today, from Jeremiah, the prophet is ordered by God to go to the potter's house, where the potter is working at his wheel, fashioning a vessel. Have you ever worked with clay? The medium offers so many possibilities, just as life offers us so many possibilities in our development as people. I tried this method of clay fashioning many years ago, and I enjoyed kicking the wheel, putting my hands together on the lump of clay in the middle, and drawing up the clay into a tall vessel. It quite amazed me, how little I myself had to do with it. The turning of the potter's wheel was the motion that allowed me to pull up the sides of that lump of clay until it made a beautiful shape. I rather imagine God has been fashioning all of us, all our lives. In Jeremiah's metaphor, occasionally the vessel is spoiled, perhaps out of balance on the turning wheel, and comes out imperfect. The potter does not throw the clay away, rather refashions it, making a better shape out of the same material. We are shaped by God in our lives, and occasionally we require a little reshaping too!

What do these beautiful readings tell us today? We are always in God's hands, being formed into our better selves. And God is always right next to us, wherever we are, accompanying us in all our ways.

These readings also tell us about other people. God is calling us to have compassion for everyone, to reach out to those in need, to see everyone as a precious child of God. Just as we have experienced ups and downs in our lives, we can be sure that everyone else has, too. Plenty of folks may feel like imperfect clay vessels, tossed aside by society. We know where to find these people – perhaps they are visiting a food pantry, perhaps begging on a street corner, perhaps sleeping in a flop house. How do we help others to regain their equilibrium? It depends how involved you want to be, but the easiest and perhaps most effective way to respond is to help agencies that are already serving the needy. There are lots of charities out there – pick one! Or two! Our local food pantry, FISH, is a good start. Our parish has supported it with food donations for many years. How about all those appeals you are receiving in the mail right now? Answer one that speaks to you.

We are all in this together, fashioned by God, led by God, and shown by God how we can be generous. How beautiful it is to be loved by God.

One of our hymns expresses this so well, *Spirit of the Living God*, asking God to melt us, mold us, fill us and use us. Do you know it? Feel free to sing along.

Spirit of the Living God, fall fresh on me.
Spirit of the Living God, fall fresh on me.
Melt me, mold me, fill me, use me.
Spirit of the Living God, fall fresh on me.

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LEVAS 115. Words and music by Daniel Iverson, Birdwing Music 1935.