

Glen Ridge Congregational Church
The Rev. John Sampson
“Wonderful Are Your Works”



Psalm 139:1 – 6, 13 - 18
September 7, 2025

Will you pray with me?

God, may the words of my mouth and the meditations of all of our hearts be acceptable to you, our rock and our redeemer.

Amen.

On this celebration Sunday, my first Celebration Sunday with all of you, we hear this beautiful passage from the Psalms. And actually, we've heard it before since I've been here, but I think it's one that is worth hearing over and over again because it tells us that God is embracing us. And not just now, but before we were ever born, as we were being knit together in our mother's wombs, God loved us. God knew us. And after we have been born, God continues to be interested in us.

The Psalmist tells us that we are always being searched by God, understood by God, challenged by the Holy One, and loved through it all, even to the end. And it's a beautiful way for each one of us to remember for ourselves, in our own lives, how special we are to God.

But on this celebration Sunday, when we celebrate this church, the history and the traditions of this church, the people of this church, not just in the past, but all of you here present today, those who are with us in spirit today, maybe we could read this passage differently.

It is the apostle Paul who, in a couple of different places, tells us that the body of Christ, the church, is made up of different members. And each one of us is one of those members. Each one of us brings something special and unique to add to this body. This body is better and stronger, more imaginative, more faithful, because of each one of us.

What if we heard the Psalm not in terms of one individual, not God speaking to one body, but to the body of the church?

God would have known us since before this church was founded. God would have worked over the years to knit us together when this church was founded. And even today, God continues to search us and embrace us because we are the loved one of God.

Do you think that someone, something that loved us this much would ever let us go? I don't think so. We look around this sanctuary and like I said in my earlier welcome, it's five times more full than it ever was on any given Sunday in summer.

But we see that there are some empty spaces in these pews. God is not done with us.

So, on this Celebration Sunday, as we celebrate each other, as we celebrate the life of this church, a community that God purposefully has brought together to do the good work of living into God's dream for us, and for the wider world, know that God is not done with us. God has so much more in store for us. God has a dream for us, and we continue to live into this dream.

And I am so thankful that we are all walking this path together.

And I look forward to welcoming those who are not yet with us to join in this blessed, amazing, wonderful path because this body is truly wondrously made.

Amen.