
Into the Unknown

A sermon by the Rev. Canon Lauren Holder
Proper 16 – Year A

Good morning, good morning, good morning, children of God! Whether you are 5 years old or 85 years old, today we are celebrating all the children of God! We are celebrating you. We are celebrating the church!

Many of us are also celebrating the start of a new school year. Students and teachers are going back to school! Some virtually, some in person, all in ways that look different than school has ever looked before. The theme song at our house this week has been Elsa singing, “Into the unknown!”

Does that song ring true to you? Do you feel like you’re walking into the unknown too?

Whenever I walk into the unknown, I like to hold onto these four words: Remember who you are. Remember who you are!

Jesus asks his friends in today’s Gospel, who do people say that I am? And his friends give several different responses. And then Jesus asks... but you, who do YOU say that I am?

Jesus doesn’t ask his friends who people say that he is because he’s forgotten who he is and needs a reminder. Jesus is asking his friends who he is to make sure his friends remember who they are. And when Peter answers Jesus, saying, “You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God,” Jesus responds by telling Peter that he’s just the kind of friend to help build the church.

You see, the more we get to know God, the better we get to know ourselves.

And the more we get to know ourselves, the better we get to know God!

And that’s what it looks like to be the church—we are constantly learning more about God and learning more about ourselves... the children of God!

One of my favorite things to say is something a person named Irenaus said a long time ago: “The Glory of God is the human person fully alive.”

Do you know what that means? It means that what brings God the most glory and the most joy is you being the most you that you can be!

You are a child of God. You are lovingly created in the image of God. And so are all the people of the world. Your friends, your family, your teachers, and even the people you don’t know, even the people you don’t like as much... we are all lovingly created in the image of God. And yet, we’re also all created differently!

Paul talks about this when he says we are like many different members in one body. That different people have different gifts. That means that you might be really good at doing something a friend struggles with, but that same friend might be really good at doing something you struggle with. Instead of trying to be good at all-the-things, only to get frustrated with yourself when you struggle... remember who you are!

Remember that you are a child of God, lovingly created by God to be the only You that you can be! And remember that when you are the most you is when you bring God the most joy.

You know where I learned that phrase, remember who you are? I learned it from my mom. Because when I was a kid getting dropped off at school, that's what my mom would say to me... Remember who you are. My mom doesn't drop me off at school anymore, but I still hear her words any time I'm facing something new or hard or scary. Remember who you are.

I am Lauren. I am a child of God, lovingly created by God to be no one else but me. And when I'm the most me I can be, I know that's what brings God glory and joy!

You are you. You are a child of God, lovingly created by God to be no one else by you. And when you are the most you you can be, that is what brings God glory and joy!

We are many members of one church. We are many different members of one body. The church is its best when you are you. So thank you for being you! You are a blessing to all of us!

And as we face the unknown together, at church and at school at home and in the world, may we all work to make sure that everyone gets to be the fullest expression of themselves.

Remember who you are.