



## Wednesday Prayer

5<sup>th</sup> Sunday after Epiphany – Created equally in the image of God

**As soon as they left the synagogue, they entered the house of Simon and Andrew, with James and John. Now Simon's mother-in-law was in bed with a fever, and they told him about her at once. He came and took her by the hand and lifted her up. Then the fever left her, and she began to serve them. Mark 1:29-31**

Immediately after being healed, she serves them. An appropriate response for the culture of that time and highlighting the value of hospitality. Also, mirroring the service of Jesus' ministry. The first person of many to be healed in this story is a woman. From the very beginning, Jesus showed us the importance of serving those who were considered the least in society.

And yet, there's also something about this verse that catches me and makes me pause. She began to serve them. Why didn't Simon step in to serve the others while his mother-in-law rested? How would this story play out today? When we gather at our churches, who typically makes and serves the coffee? Who typically washes the communion cups and puts them away? Whose voice is heard above the others in a Council meeting? What opportunities do we have **today**, to see, hear and honor the full gifts of each one of us, to liberate us from what are considered socially accepted gender roles?

In August 2019, the ELCA Churchwide Assembly voted to adopt a social statement called [Faith, Sexism and Justice: A Call to Action](#). As a Church, we are publicly recognizing the ways that patriarchy and sexism are found within our own faith tradition and our society.

*We believe that all people are created equally in the image of God. We recognize patriarchy and sexism are "a mix of power, privilege, and prejudice." They prevent all human beings from living into the abundant life for which God created them. We reject patriarchy and sexism as sinful because they deny the truth that all people are created equally in God's image.*

*Too often behaviors and decisions rooted in patriarchy and sexism cause overt harm, inequities, and degradations – including gender-based violence, pay inequality, human trafficking, objectifying portrayals of women in media...and the list goes on.*

So we are called to action. Each one of us can make a difference – creating change within our own minds, within our homes, churches, and society as a whole.

**Lord, we pray for your mercy and for the courage to challenge harmful structures. May we work to carry out the belief that all are created equally in your image. Amen.**

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Written by Joy McElroy, Cherish All Children Executive Director, and community advocate for racial justice.