



## Wednesday Prayer

20<sup>th</sup> Sunday after Pentecost – Grace in time of need

**Since, then, we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus, the Son of God, let us hold fast to our confession. For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who in every respect has been tested as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore approach the throne of grace with boldness, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need. Hebrews 4:14-16**

This lesson from Hebrews shares that Jesus understands us in our weaknesses, and that we are welcome to come forward boldly in our times of need. There is no reason to fear because God knows us and freely provides mercy and grace.

Can you remember a time when you feared talking to your parents or another adult about something – maybe something uncomfortable, or a vulnerability you held, or a situation you had been involved in? I'm guessing we each have circumstances we look back on and wish we'd have come forward boldly in our time of need. For youth today, 24/7 social media and gaming chats multiply the potential situations in which they may need open, caring, and safe support – mercy and grace.

In our newly released [Safe and Healthy Relationships Youth Guide](#), we open and close the four sessions with a reflection on Psalm 139:1-14.

**You have searched me, LORD, and you know me...  
I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made.**

Throughout the sessions, leaders are given the opportunity to reinforce the youth's value as children of God and deepen their understanding of God's love and grace. Too often, young people are dealing with a situation that's happening online, in their school, or with friends, and no one has talked openly with them to share messages of mercy and grace, supporting them in finding the help they need. If a young person has sent a sexual photo and it turns into a situation of sextortion\*, do they have a safe, supportive adult to talk with to help them navigate solutions? Further, connecting with youth to talk through scenarios *before* they occur provides skill building to *prevent* a potentially harmful outcome. Having these conversations in the safe space of their church's Confirmation class or Youth Group, while encouraging open dialogue at home, provides youth with a network of love and support. Raising healthy generations free from sexual exploitation requires us adults to come forward boldly for young people.

**Gracious God, you know each one of us. Help us to praise you through our bold actions to love and support the young people in our communities. Amen.**

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\*Sextortion as defined in the youth guide – When a catfish or other predator threatens to spread sexual images of you unless you do as they say (a form of blackmail).