

# From Pastor Marissa Becklin

## The New Revised Standard Version Updated Edition (NRSVue): A Lutheran Perspective

There are all sorts of different translations of the Bible available in the world these days—from the King James Version to the New International Version to the New Revised Standard Version and everything in between, there are a lot to choose from. You might even have a favorite version, and if so, I bet your favorite has something to do with what language you were used to hearing while growing up. I'll always love the KJV of Psalm 23 the best due to the sentimentality of the language, but as a whole, my favorite version is the NRSV (New Revised Standard Version).

The NRSV is the version of the Bible that we use in worship here at Faith United, and that's because it is the best researched, most rigorously reviewed, and most faithfully accurate translation of the Greek and Hebrew original text in this modern era. **However!** There is a new version of this text out now, called the NRSV Updated Edition, and in upcoming months we will hear this version sporadically during worship.

When the New Revised Standard Version Updated Edition (NRSVue) was introduced in recent years, it was the first significant update to the NRSV since 1989. As Lutherans, a tradition that values the liturgical, historical, and theological nuances of Scripture, this updated edition offers both exciting opportunities and thoughtful considerations for us.

For decades, the NRSV has been widely embraced in Lutheran churches, seminaries, and homes as a reliable, scholarly, and ecumenically accepted translation. The translation is often appreciated for its faithfulness to the original languages. Lutherans, with their emphasis on "sola scriptura" (Scripture alone), have long valued translations that balance academic rigor with accessibility for personal and communal devotion.

The NRSVue continues in the tradition of the original NRSV but reflects the latest advancements in biblical scholarship. The Translation Committee, which included a broad range of scholars from various denominational backgrounds, aimed to incorporate the latest discoveries in biblical studies, archaeology, and linguistics.

Here are some of the key updates in the NRSVue:

### **Scholarly Accuracy**

One of the primary goals of the NRSVue is to reflect updated manuscript evidence. Since 1989, new discoveries, including Dead Sea Scrolls fragments and advancements in the study of ancient languages, have provided more insight into the biblical texts. For Lutherans, who uphold the inspiration and authority of Scripture, this commitment to ongoing refinement based on sound scholarship aligns with the Lutheran view of continually studying the Bible for deeper understanding.

### **Gender Inclusivity**

The NRSVue continues the NRSV's mission of providing gender-inclusive language where appropriate. This is especially important for Lutherans, given our understanding of the equality of all believers as expressed in Galatians 3:28: "There is no longer Jew or Greek, there is no longer slave or free, there is no longer male and female; for all of you are one in Christ Jesus." By striving to remove gender bias that comes from the limitations of the original language, the NRSVue reflects the Lutheran conviction that the Gospel is for all people.

### **Clarity And Accessibility**

The updated edition seeks to clarify language that may have been archaic or difficult to understand for modern readers. As Lutherans emphasize the priesthood of all believers, having a translation that is accessible to everyone, from scholars to laypeople, is crucial. The NRSVue aims to remove barriers to understanding, making the text more readable without compromising accuracy.

## **Liturgical And Devotional Use**

For Lutherans, Scripture plays a central role in both corporate worship and personal devotion. The NRSVue continues to support liturgical reading, with language that is clear enough for proclamation in worship while maintaining the depth needed for private study and meditation. This balance makes it a valuable resource for pastors, congregants, and those engaging in daily devotional practices.

Lutheran theology emphasizes the literal sense of Scripture, meaning the clear and plain meaning of the text should be the primary guide for interpretation. The NRSVue's updates contribute to this goal by offering a text that more closely aligns with the intent of the original authors as understood by contemporary scholarship. Lutherans also value the distinction between Law and Gospel, and the updated translation retains this theological clarity.

The NRSVue represents a thoughtful continuation of the NRSV's legacy, making it a valuable resource for Lutheran study, worship, and personal devotion. It reflects Luther's own approach to Bible translation—one that values both faithfulness to the original text and the need for the Word of God to be accessible to all people. As we engage with this updated edition, it provides an opportunity to deepen our understanding of Scripture while remaining rooted in the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

I'm excited, because the NRSVue offers a fresh opportunity to engage with God's Word, confident that it faithfully conveys the message of salvation, grace, and life in Christ.

*In Christ's Love, Pastor Marissa Becklin*