

Dear Friends in Christ:

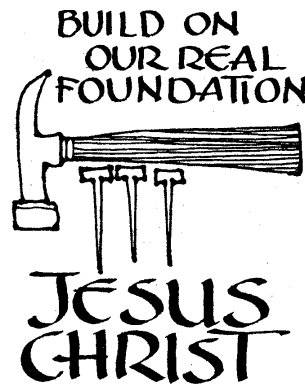
¹²For just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though many, are one body, so it is with Christ. ¹³For in the one Spirit we were all baptized into one body.

¹⁴Indeed, the body does not consist of one member but of many. ¹⁵If the foot would say, "Because I am not a hand, I do not belong to the body," that would not make it any less a part of the body. ¹⁶And if the ear would say, "Because I am not an eye, I do not belong to the body," that would not make it any less a part of the body. ¹⁷If the whole body were an eye, where would the hearing be? If the whole body were hearing, where would the sense of smell be? ¹⁸But as it is, God arranged the members in the body, each one of them, as he chose. ²¹The eye cannot say to the hand, "I have no need of you," nor again the head to the feet, "I have no need of you."

²⁷Now you are the body of Christ and individually members of it. ²⁸And God has appointed in the church first apostles, second prophets, third teachers; then deeds of power, then gifts of healing, forms of assistance, forms of leadership, various kinds of tongues. ²⁹Are all apostles? Are all prophets? Are all teachers? Do all work miracles? ³⁰Do all possess gifts of healing? Do all speak in tongues? Do all interpret? ³¹But strive for the greater gifts. And I will show you a still more excellent way.

Over the course of my ministry I have come to appreciate this marvelous picture Paul paints in this 12th chapter to the church at Corinth. Here was a church struggling for identity on the one hand and wrestling with division on the other. In some ways the competitive spirit was strong as each thought of themselves as better or more important. This problem has still not gone away in our present day. In fact there are added issues today related to race, gender and social and political positioning. These have divided people, put friendship and family at odds and even resulted in some instances to divorce not only in marriages. People have divorced themselves from other and the church.

A number of years ago the main reason given why 75% of unchurched people would rather form into a new congregation than join an existing one is because they often do not feel welcome, accepted or an important and integral part of the congregation. Unfortunately in some cases the result was "bird of a feather flocked together" rather than commonality in diversity.



That is why this text is so powerful in our present day and time. Using the body Paul describes how each member is needed and necessary in order for the body to function. When one part suffers it is felt by other parts as well, so to when one part rejoices. You and I are the body of Christ, yet we are individuals.

When couples in the marriage ceremony light a unity candle, pour different colored sand or braid a rope we are reminded that while we remain individuals our oneness and common goal and purpose is to glorify and serve our Lord. No one can say to another that they are not needed, anymore than the eye can say to the hand I don't need you.

As we embark on the year 2022 it is good to remind ourselves that we are each gifted. Then use that gift to build up the body. Paul concludes this chapter by telling us he will show us an even more excellent way. With this he launches into the beautiful chapter on love where the word Christ or Jesus can be substituted wherever the word love appears.

Strive for the excellent way and in love work together for good of the whole body.

Yours in Christ,

Pastor Hal

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CONTACT INFORMATION

Pastor Hal.....715-828-1112

Email..harkihear@gmail.com

If you are hospitalized, know someone who is, need pastoral assistance, a prayer request, home visit, private communion or other pastoral service contact Pastor Hal at any of the above.

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Second Sunday of Christmas
January 02, 2022
John 1: 1-18
"In the Flesh"

Baptism of our Lord
January 09, 2022
Luke 3: 1-7, 21-22
"Walking Wet"

Second Sunday of Epiphany
January 16, 2022
John 2: 1-11
"Water to Wine"

Third Sunday of Epiphany
January 23, 2022
Luke 4: 14-21
"Hometown Boy Returns"

Fourth Sunday of Epiphany
January 30, 2022
Luke 4: 21-30
"Hometown Boy Meddles"

WORSHIP WITH US!

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ANNUAL MEETINGS
February 06, 2022

Our meetings will again be held after an abbreviated worship on that day. Because that is a Communion Sunday we will celebrate the Sacrament at Barum on January 30, 2022. There will be no Holy Communion at either parish on February 06, 2022. **NOTICE TO ALL WHO SUBMIT REPORTS Please have them in by January 09, 2022 copy ready if possible!**
THANKS!

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BIBLE STUDY WILL RESUME ON JANUARY 1, 2022 AT BIG ELK CREEK LUTHERAN AT 7:00 p.m.

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CONFIRMATION CLASSES RESUME
January 05, 2022
Big Elk Creek Lutheran
6:30 p.m.

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So help me God

No matter how firm our resolutions, we can't make ourselves better people by ourselves. God empowers our good works when we rely on his aid.

H.P. Nichols, a 19th-century poet, wrote:

If I resolve, with the new year,
a better child to be,
'Twill do no good at all, I fear,
but rather harm to me,
Unless I try, with every day,
no angry word to speak;
Unless, each morn, to God I pray
to keep me mild and meek.
Then let me try with all my might,
and may God help me too,
Always to choose the way that's right,
whatever act I do