



the Source

Let anyone who is thirsty come to me...

My favorite image of the Body of Christ is one that comes from First Church. Never have I been in a church with such a talented and extensive Handbell ministry. I love to watch them play...almost like they're dancing. They feed off not only the energy of the others, but also literally the notes that the others play.

When I first learned handbells I was a little crestfallen: "You mean I only get to play two notes?!" Two notes that sit side by side, two notes that you generally can't even play together. And not only that but I had to wait and wait for the time to play my note while other people played. And if I were to play those notes by myself, it would be a dull song indeed. The same note, "Ding, ding, ding..." over and over again. How boring!

But I have seen what comes when one person, one note begins to play in time and key with another and another and another. What happens can be masterful. A beautiful reflection of our need for one another. On our own we can do some wonderful things. But it's not until we come together that the music begins to fill out and become all it could be, all it's meant to be.

This is the Body of Christ. Each of us plays a role because we recognize both that we need others to create the fullness of life and community, and that the whole needs us too.

So during this series we're going to ask you the question: "How are you a part of the larger thing that God is doing?" It's not are you going to have a place, be involved, belong; but where and how are you going to find your place, belong, serve? Be thinking of where you want to serve—one place inside the church and one place outside. Through volunteering in an age-level ministry, by becoming an usher or Andrew Minister, through serving one of The Villages (more coming on that on January 15)...? The opportunities are all around. What will be the music you play this year?

— Rev. Katie Meek, Associate Pastor

A Family Affair

What if you were no longer able to use one of your body parts? You can choose which one. Would you pick an eye or a nose? What about a foot? Share as a family what part of your body you would choose and why.

Read 1 Corinthians 12:12-20 together as a family. In this scripture, the apostle Paul is writing to one (or more) of the early churches. Like the parts of a physical body, each member of the church is an important part of the body of Christ. The pastor or teacher is not more important than the children. All the members are important and work together to serve as the body of Christ: some teach, some sing, some may help with greeting or ushering. Even young children can help serve in worship, like at our 5 pm Christmas Eve service.

The Body of Christ, the church, is to share God's love to all, not just those inside the church. Spend some time talking about how each of you could serve God, by sharing his word and his love. Can you serve inside our church? How about outside the church?

Dear God, thank you for affirming each one of us as an important part of your family. Be with us as we share you love with others. In Jesus name, Amen.

— Jennifer Hall, Director of Children's Ministry

Monday: 1 Corinthians 12:12-13

How Christ relates to the body is of utmost importance in this passage. We understand that Christ is the head of the body, made up of many parts.

- The phrase "with Christ" refers not to the Christian church but Christ himself. What does it mean that the Body of Christ is more than a metaphor but really, we together become Christ's body?
- Why does Paul so often use the word Christ rather than talking about Jesus the Christ? Is there a difference between the Jesus of history and the Christ described after his death and resurrection (either theological or literal)?

Tuesday: 1 Corinthians 12:12-13

- What does it mean to "drink from the same spirit"? How does this idea connect with communion? How does it connect with baptism?
- How does baptism indicate our belonging in something wholly greater?

Wednesday: 1 Corinthians 12:14-20

Let's talk about Christian unity. This section speaks to the unity of the Body of Christ, how we are each a part of the whole and a wholly diverse body.

- Where do you see diversity in the Body of Christ (functions, offices, gifts, people)?
- How is unity expressed in our church? How is it expressed in the global Church?
- How do we fail to balance unity and diversity? How have we struggled historically?

Thursday: 1 Corinthians 12:14-20

Now let's talk about you. What role do you play?

- Let's think symbolically. What are the gifts you see in yourself? What are the gifts others see in you (maybe ask some people today)? Where does this fit into the Body of Christ? If you were to connect it to a literal body part, what would it be?
- Let's think practically. Where are you involved and serving in the Body of Christ now? Inside the church? Outside the church? If you don't have an answer, where are you being drawn? Check the website to see what opportunities there are: <http://fumc-rr.org>.

Friday: John 15:1-8

This is another image of how Christ relates to his followers. Jesus said, "I am the vine, you are the branches."

- Place this scripture side by side with 1 Corinthians 12. How does this expand the idea that Christ is the head of the Body of Christ?
- As member of Christ's Body, how do we gain life from Christ? What does it mean to be connected to or disconnected from Christ? What are the consequences of each? For what purpose do we connect with Christ?