

Good afternoon and welcome. This is the first of an attempt to create some devotions throughout our separation due to the coronavirus. Today will include a scripture reading and reflection, followed by some announcements. Hear these words from 1 Corinthians 12:12-27:

¹² Just as a body, though one, has many parts, but all its many parts form one body, so it is with Christ. ¹³ For we were all baptized by one Spirit so as to form one body—whether Jews or Gentiles, slave or free—and we were all given the one Spirit to drink. ¹⁴ Even so the body is not made up of one part but of many.

¹⁵ Now if the foot should say, “Because I am not a hand, I do not belong to the body,” it would not for that reason stop being part of the body. ¹⁶ And if the ear should say, “Because I am not an eye, I do not belong to the body,” it would not for that reason stop being part of the body. ¹⁷ If the whole body were an eye, where would the sense of hearing be? If the whole body were an ear, where would the sense of smell be? ¹⁸ But in fact God has placed the parts in the body, every one of them, just as he wanted them to be. ¹⁹ If they were all one part, where would the body be? ²⁰ As it is, there are many parts, but one body.

²¹ The eye cannot say to the hand, “I don’t need you!” And the head cannot say to the feet, “I don’t need you!” ²² On the contrary, those parts of the body that seem to be weaker are indispensable, ²³ and the parts that we think are less honorable we treat with special honor. And the parts that are unpresentable are treated with special modesty, ²⁴ while our presentable parts need no special treatment. But God has put the body together, giving greater honor to the parts that lacked it, ²⁵ so that there should be no division in the body, but that its parts should have equal concern for each other. ²⁶ If one part suffers, every part suffers with it; if one part is honored, every part rejoices with it.

²⁷ Now you are the body of Christ, and each one of you is a part of it.

“You are the body of Christ and each one of you is a part of it.” We are the body of Christ at Lockport. As we face the unknown that is coronavirus and the implications it will have on our community and our life together we hold to this basic fact, “You are the body of Christ and each one of you is a part of it.”

As Paul talks about in 1 Corinthians 12 and this image of the body to illustrate what it is like to be a follower of Christ he explains our need for each other. In fact, counter to what we are used to, and certainly counter to the people of his time in the 1st century, Paul says, “Those parts of the body that seem to be weaker are indispensable, and the parts that we think are less honorable we treat with special honor...If one part suffers, every part suffers with it; if one part is honored, every part rejoices with it.”

This is really the heart of Christianity. Christianity, following Jesus is not about you or me. It is not about our personal preferences or desires. Christianity is about becoming more like

Jesus. It's about aligning our lives with God's will, and about following the pattern of Jesus who gave up his life for the whole world.

As we wrestle with the restrictions that are being put on us due to the spread of the coronavirus, I am challenged to see this as part of the Lenten season that we are in. This is a challenge to practice what we preach and believe. We give up things that we may enjoy or find life giving so that others can live. Christianity is not about me, to think it is, is a form of idolatry because I become the object of worship. Christianity is about being the body of Christ here and now. In this case, it means limiting ourselves so that others can live. It means becoming a servant to others so that they too can experience the love of Jesus and find life. The weaker become indispensable, the less honorable receive more honor, we suffer and we rejoice together, as we model our lives on the life of Jesus.

“Will you let me be your servant”

Will you let me be your servant
Let me be as Christ to you
Pray that I might have the grace
To let you be my servant too

We are pilgrims on the journey
We are travelers on the road
We are here to help each other
Walk the mile and bear the load

I will hold the Christ light for you
In the nighttime of your fear
I will hold my hand out to you
Speak the peace you long to hear.

I will weep when you are weeping
When you laugh, I'll laugh with you
I will share your joy and sorrow
Till we've seen this journey through

When we sing to God in heaven
We shall find such harmony
Born of all we've known together
Of Christ's love and agony

Will you let me be your servant
Let me be as Christ to you
Pray that I might have the grace
To let you be my servant too

Announcements/Updates:

We are looking for volunteers who would be willing to help get groceries, and other essential items for those most at risk of complications from the coronavirus. If you would be willing to help out the church community in that way please contact the church office.

Another way we are looking for volunteers is for people who would be willing to provide childcare for school age children while schools are closed and parents are still working. If you are willing to help out in that capacity please contact the church office.

Knowing that these are the ways we are looking for volunteers if you could use help getting groceries or other necessities, or could use help finding childcare please contact the church office and we'll help you get you matched up with a volunteer.

Alongside these devotionals, we are looking at creating a weekly newsletter in place of the bulletin that will be printed and posted on Fridays. Printed copies will be delivered to those who do not have internet access. If you have ideas for the newsletter let us know.

We are also exploring the potential of an online Bible Study/Sunday School type of interaction with daily scripture reading, input and reflection questions. This would be done via a Facebook group and/or via email. If you are interested in being a part of either of those let the office know.

Finally, Pastor Steve is back in the area after being in Colorado with his mom for his Aunt's funeral. Steve will be working from home for the next two weeks just to be safe, but can still be reached through email or his cell phone.

Thanks for your flexibility. Please check back on Thursday for more.

Grace and Peace to you all,

Matt