

Gray Weekly News



Week Leading to Sunday, January 23, 2022

The Body of Christ

By John Mathis, www.ministrymatters.com

It has always amazed me how many different types of people make up the body of Christ. We gather together each week in our individual congregations to study, to fellowship, and to worship God. In one pew sits a lawyer, while in one pew up sits a farmer. Wealthy businessmen sit with poor widows. Together we are the body of Christ.

Paul calls us out of our everyday routines to serve one another for the greater good. God equips the saints for service and gives us the ability to serve Jesus in ways that glorify Jesus' name. Many pastors become discouraged when someone leaves their church for another.

Perhaps God leads individuals to the places where they can serve the body of Christ to the utmost of their abilities. After many years of poor church attendance, I decided it was time to return to the weekly worship routine. I attended a large church in my city that was known for being an active force within the community.

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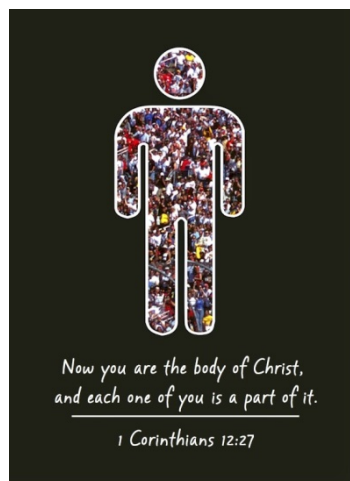
Third Sunday After Epiphany

Nehemiah 8:1-3, 5-6, 8-10

Psalm 19

1st Corinthians 12:12-31a

Luke 4:14-21



“Something to Celebrate”

News and Notes

THIS WEEK

Sunday, January 23

Please join us on Sundays at 11 am. If you don't feel comfortable coming in person, you can watch our livestream at graymemorialumc.org/facebook.com or graymemorialumc.org/youtube, at 11 am or any time after that at graymemorialumc.org/



If you have prayer requests, please contact Norma Adams, Jennifer Skinner or Gail Teems.

You may also call the church office at 850/385-6441 or send a text to 850/933-8469.

Prayer Requests

Patsy, Betty and Doris

George, John and Patty

Dawn's children and family

Brenna, Bella and Joyce

Sam Adams and family

Joe, Tracie's stepdad, who has bladder cancer

All those who are suffering from accidents, illnesses and surgery

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In this large congregation, I found myself lost in the pews. It is difficult to lay blame for this occurrence; it is just something that happened. The people of the church were good people. There were just too many of them, and it was easy for someone to slip through the cracks.

One day as I prepared to go to the large church, a friend called me and invited me to her church. Her church was actually closer than the big church in town, but it was quite small, and there were not a lot of folks my age. I decided to attend church with her. Something from that very first day drew me to the church. The people were gracious, the pastor spoke of God's love for me, and I left that day feeling I had found my place of worship. The church provided many opportunities for me to grow in my walk of faith and develop God's call in my life to become a pastor.

One of the greatest gifts I received from the pastor at the church was this: we need to worship and attend church where we feel closest to God. I have tried to remember that to avoid disappointment when someone leaves the congregation. God places people where they can truly serve the body of Christ to their fullest.

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Anyone who has had a broken appendage knows exactly what Paul writes about in his letter to the church at Corinth. As a teenager, I broke my right thumb. As a right-handed person, I struggled through several long months of doing almost everything with my left hand. God creates each of us with an incredible machine called the body. The parts work together to do some of the simplest and some of the most incredible things imaginable.

To a child, holding a fork or a spoon seems quite impossible, but as they grow and practice, this becomes routine and the difficulty is quickly forgotten. As individuals in the body of Christ, it seems difficult, at first, to trust Jesus in all we do, but with practice and spiritual discipline it may even become commonplace. A church runs best when everyone serves God using the spiritual gifts they have been given, gifts that align with our deepest joys and passions. In general, people seem to be happier when they are doing something they enjoy. It is ironic that we understand this to be true when seeking employment, but struggle with it when volunteering for or answering the call to ministry within the congregation.

It is important for Christians to remember that one church is no greater a part of the body of Christ than another. God equips each congregation to serve their community in various and unique ways. The large church I spoke of earlier has become quite adept at serving the poor in the city that surrounds it, while the smaller church does a wonderful job nurturing new Christians and helping individuals distinguish God's call in their lives. Both are important members of the body of Christ, but each serves God in different ways.

The Corinthians seemed to be worried about who possessed the best gift or gifts for ministry. They were concerned about religious power and prestige. Churches today should see this as a valuable lesson as to what is really important in their missions and visions for the future. Paul writes, "But strive for the greater gifts. And I will show you a still more excellent way" (1 Corinthians 12:31), and then begins his discourse on love.

The term "unity in diversity" has always been a favorite of mine. Whether an organization is a church or a secular business, the more diverse and different the individuals who make up the larger body, the stronger it will be. A dissenting voice requires the body as a whole to consider every aspect of a decision. For God can be heard in the still, small voice just as easily as in the loudest thunderclap or crescendo.

Basketball and Bible Ministry



Thanks to everyone who helped with the installation of the new professional-quality basketball goal. Gray Memorial UMC has provided a basketball goal and benches to the community for many years. The new basketball goal will be a tremendous improvement over the current portable one.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Wednesday, Jan. 19	7 pm	Zoom Bible Study led by Todd Clark- Book of Acts
Thursday, Jan. 20	10 am 5:30 pm	Bible Study Choir Practice
Sunday, Jan. 23	11 am 1:30-4:30	Worship Service St. Luke's Anglican Church meets at Gray Memorial
Monday, Jan 24	7 pm	Town & Country Neighborhood Assoc. Meets at Gray/Zoom
Tuesday, Jan. 25	5:30 pm 7 pm	Yoga Class Board of Trustees Meets
Wednesday, Jan. 26	7 pm	Zoom Bible Study led by Todd Clark- Book of Acts
Thursday, Jan. 27	10 am 5:30 pm	Bible Study Choir Practice

NOTE: New weekly dates for the calendar:

Beginning January 20, Choir Practice will move to Thursdays at 5:30 pm

Beginning January 25, Community Yoga Class will move to Tuesdays at 5:30 pm