

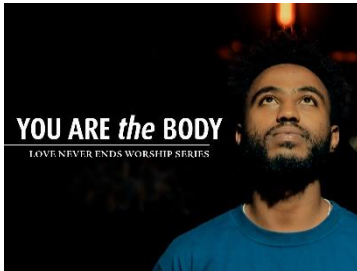
*As we unite in worship today, we extend a warm welcome to each one present.
May we together experience the presence of God*

*****.

We Gather to Prepare Our Hearts to Meet Our Lord

Prelude

Welcome



“Love Never Ends: “You are the Body of Christ”

Week 3

Today Paul brings our focus directly onto ourselves. He says - “You are the body of Christ and individually members of it.” (vs. 27.) Individual members, meaning you are important, you the individual, you the person, you matter. But we know that best when we engage in the whole, when we act as a part of the community and not just lone rangers. “You are the body,” and the best way to hear that phrase is in the true Southern plural: “All y’all are the body.”

There are so many gifts in our faith community and so much work that is being done behind the scenes. There is no job too small and all that each of you do is important to this body, this church community. So often we think that our contribution to the whole isn't worth a whole lot, or that we don't measure up to the leaders of the congregation, or the ones up front week after week. “I'm just me,” some might think, “nothing special, nothing crucial.”

So today let us stop and shine a light on each of your dedicated gifts of service. God's truth is that “you matter because the body won't be the body without you, without the gift that you bring, without the person that you are.”

We are talking about the seen and the unseen works of service:

The unofficial greeters or hosts, those who make even first timers feel like they belong?

Those who lend a hand when something needs done at church.

Those who always helps meet budget.

Those who wield a mean paintbrush or brings cookies for coffee hour.

Those who are the last ones out the door because they make sure that chairs are put back and lights turned off.

Those who clean, who organize who share their gifts of creativity.

Our tech experts

Our administration specialists

Leaders of bible studies and those who participate

The commit you offer God to show up and worship Him each week.

Each of you share your gifts in ways that even you might not recognize, but God see's you and He acknowledges that there are many tasks that need doing and because you step up to share your gifts the strength of this faith community, this body of the church thrives. There is no gift that cannot be used to build up the body.

Let us unite in worship today and celebrate "You".

"You matter because the body won't be the body without you, without the gift that you bring, without the person that you are."

A Call to Worship

*Adapted from a post on the United Church of Christ's Worship Ways Archive. <http://www.ucc.org/>
Reposted: <https://re-worship.blogspot.com/2013/01/call-to-worship-we-have-come.html>.*

We have come to worship God, the living God,

Who calls prophets and teachers to bear witness.

We have come to praise God, the almighty God,

Who answers the forces of hatred and hurt with the power of grace.

We have come to worship God, all-gracious God,

Who chooses even you and me,

to receive and carry the Word of life and hope.

All glory to God!

PRAYER OF ADORATION AND PRAISE

*Written by Moira Laidlaw, and posted on Liturgies Online, <http://www.liturgiesonline.com.au/> Reposted:
<https://re-worship.blogspot.com/2013/01/prayer-of-praise-1-corinthians-12.html>.*

Spirit of the living God, we praise and adore you for empowering us to claim membership of the body of Christ, a gift received through the fullness of your grace. Empower us anew, we pray, with tongues of fire and hearts of love to proclaim the reconciling word among people. Remind us that we are all members of the one body and if one member suffers, we all suffer. May we, as the body of Christ in this place, be the best evidence of your love by declaring and witnessing to this as the year of the Lord's favour for all people. We give thanks that all of us are Christ's body, and rejoice in each one being a part of it. Accept our adoration and praise for these great gifts, we pray, in Jesus' name. Amen.

Praise Hymn UMH #333 "I'm Goin' a Sing When the Spirit Says Sing"

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**1 I'm goin'a sing when the Spirit says
sing,
I'm goin'a sing when the Spirit says
sing,
I'm goin'a sing when the Spirit says
sing,
and obey the Spirit of the Lord.**

**2 I'm goin'a pray when the Spirit says
pray, I'm goin'a pray when the Spirit
says pray, I'm goin'a pray when the
Spirit says pray, and obey the Spirit of
the Lord.**

**3 I'm goin'a moan when the Spirit says
moan, I'm goin'a moan when the Spirit
says moan, I'm goin'a moan when the
Spirit says moan, and obey the Spirit of
the Lord.**

**4 I'm goin'a shout when the Spirit says
shout, I'm goin'a shout when the Spirit
says shout, I'm goin'a shout when the
Spirit says shout, and obey the Spirit of
the Lord.**

We Hear God's Word

New Testament Reading..... 1 Corinthians 12:12-31

New Revised Standard Version

One Body with Many Members

12 For 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. 13 For in the one Spirit we were all baptized into one body—Jews or Greeks, slaves or free—and we were all made to drink of one Spirit.

14 Indeed, the body does not consist of one member but of many. 15 If 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. 16 And 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. 17 If the whole body were an eye, where would the hearing be? If the whole body were hearing, where would the sense of smell be? 18 But as it is, God arranged the members in the body, each one of them, as he chose. 19 If all were a single member, where would the body be? 20 As it is, there are many members, yet one body. 21 The 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." 22 On the contrary, the members of the body that seem to be weaker are indispensable, 23 and those members of the body that we think less honorable we clothe with greater honor, and our less respectable members are treated with greater respect; 24 whereas our more respectable members do not need this. But God has so arranged the body, giving the greater honor to the inferior member, 25 that there may be no dissension within the body, but the members may have the same care for one another. 26 If one member suffers, all suffer together with it; if one member is honored, all rejoice together with it.

27 Now you are the body of Christ and individually members of it. 28 And 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. 29 Are all apostles? Are all prophets? Are all teachers? Do all work miracles? 30 Do all possess gifts of healing? Do all speak in tongues? Do all interpret? 31 But strive for the greater gifts. And I will show you a still more excellent way.

The word of God for the People of God, **Thanks Be to God**

Children's Message

Faith Hymn UMH 600 "Wonderful Words of Life"

Author: Philip P. Bliss (1874)

Publication Date: 1989

Composer: Philip P. Bliss (1874)

**1. Sing them over again to me,
wonderful words of life;
let me more of their beauty see,
wonderful words of life;
words of life and beauty
teach me faith and duty.**

Refrain:

**Beautiful words, wonderful words,
wonderful words of life.**

**Beautiful words, wonderful words,
wonderful words of life.**

**2. Christ, the blessed one, gives to all
wonderful words of life;
sinner, list to the loving call,
wonderful words of life;
all so freely given,
wooing us to heaven.
(Refrain)**

**3. Sweetly echo the gospel call,
wonderful words of life;
offer pardon and peace to all,
wonderful words of life;
Jesus, only Savior,
sanctify forever.
(Refrain)**

Meditation

A Pastoral Prayer for Human Relations Day

Speak, Lord,
For your children are listening
For a word of encouragement, for a word of instruction
About how we ought to live in these troubled lands.

Speak, Lord,
For your children are listening,
As we drift off to sleep in down-covered beds
In marble palaces
Or in sawdust padded pallets
On dusty floors.
We are listening, rich and poor
We are listening, young and old
For a word from you that will heal our lands.

Eternal God,
Lover of our souls, we come to you this morning hungering for something from you that will change the rest of our lives. We come hungering for honesty instead of corruption; for generosity instead of greed; we come hungering for integrity instead of intrigue. We come hungering for our neighbors to be fed and for all to have enough honest work to provide for the basic needs of their families. We come this morning hungering for

righteousness to flow like rainwater and for the justice like an ever-flowing stream described by the prophets.

We come hungering and we come listening for your words to us, describing how we can participate in your great work of re-creation. We come listening for ways that we can become part of the solution and not part of the problem. We come listening in fear and trembling, praying that we will have the courage to respond and act if we hear a clear word of instruction from you.

Lord, we come to you this day extending our hands and praying for your guidance as we live our days to your glory. Shine your light of love on your children and hear our prayers of outreach, as we unite in the prayer your beloved Son taught us to pray, Our Father...

Departing Hymn #672 "God Be with You till We Meet Again"

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1. God be with you till we meet again;
by his counsels guide, uphold you,
with his sheep securely fold you;
God be with you till we meet again.

Refrain:

Till we meet, till we meet,
till we meet at Jesus' feet;
till we meet, till we meet,
God be with you till we meet again.

2. God be with you till we meet again;
neath his wings securely hide you,
daily manna still provide you;
God be with you till we meet again.
(Refrain)

Benediction

May you experience peace that passes understanding,
no matter what tomorrow brings,
may you feel God close at hand,
no matter what this week brings,
may the world see in you
hope
peace
and love
no matter what this year brings.
Amen