



*But God has so arranged the body, giving the greater honor to the inferior member, that there may be no dissension within the body, but the members may have the same care for one another. If one member suffers, all suffer together with it; if one member is honored, all rejoice together with it. (1 Corinthians 12:24b-26)*

It's been almost a year since we closed up the church because of the coronavirus. Nobody, including myself, thought we would still be doing pretty much everything virtually. The Greek philosopher, Plato, said, "Necessity is the mother of invention." Finding a lot of truth in that, we adapted and evolved. We figured out creative ways to keep sharing the gospel and serving our neighbors. People were generous. God blessed us.

But I'm not so sure that folks are buying in anymore to what Paul said in today's focus verse. The whole concept of unity is called into question every day. This idea that we are bound together (whether through Christ or country affiliation or something else), and that we are actually accountable to and for one another, has been sorely tested.

A year later people are still squabbling over wearing a mask. The veracity of reliable science and research continues to be debated. Conspiracy theories about the vaccines abound on social media. As of this writing (which could change by the time you read this), six states have dropped mask mandates, and in eleven states masks are no longer required. In some states, any size social gatherings are once again permitted, and they are fully "open for business."

There's a lot of hope that things will get better, especially as vaccine distribution increases and supply inches closer to meeting demand. Conversations about reopening for in-person worship have reignited. As we move closer and closer to the finish line, let's hang in there. Let's not get wrapped up in things that could cause *dissension within the body*, and let's *have the same care for one another* despite differing perspectives.

As is so often the case, the Church has an opportunity to set an example, by loving our neighbors and becoming a stabilizing force in the communities we serve. If we're going to make it through this we're going to have to do it together, remembering that we are called into the ONE body of Jesus Christ. We've come so far, so let's continue to express patience and perseverance, trusting that God is walking with us.

Pastor Chuck

Let us pray. Gracious God, let there be no dissension in the body of Christ, and let us have the same care for one another that you have for us. We all suffer together; we all rejoice together. As members of the church, help us to set an example by loving our neighbors and being patient, confident of your presence on the journey. Amen