

Drawn In: Living Out the Creative Life with God, Series by Marcia McFee
“Creating Together As One Body”

Message by DD Adams

Kempton Providence U.M. Church

February 24, 2019

The New Testament lesson for today is taken from 1 Corinthians, chapter 12, verses 12 through 19. “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. 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.

Indeed, the body does not consist of one member but of many. If the foot were to 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. And if the ear were to 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.

If the whole body were an eye, where would the hearing be? If the whole body were an ear, where would the sense of smell be? But as it is, *God arranged the members in the body*, each one of them, *as he chose*. If all were a single member, where would the body be?” This is God’s word for God’s people.

Let’s pray together. God who is our head, be among us with your spirit. We seek to be increasingly connected to you and each other. You have called us to work together, yet we’re all different? Give us your love for each other, help us to

walk in a manner worthy of the calling to which you've called us. Grant us humility and gentleness, patience and love that compels and empowers us as a body of believers. Amen.

This is the 5th part of the series “Drawn In: Living Out the Creative Life with God.” We are all creative beings. We are created in the image of God and because God is creative—we are! Creativity is important and because God creates so do we, but we must nurture this innate quality as we work with God as co-creators.

Think about it, everything God has created is in relationship with all other things. God's creation of birds is linked with the creation of air and on and on. Nothing God has created is by itself—so isolation isn't a choice! Humankind is made to be in relationship with each other, therefore the way we relate and respond to one another is paramount because *we all affect each other*. That being the case...

Are we willing to reintegrate, revise, and revision our lives? We all are restored at times to a position that fits easier into the body of Christ. When that happens, that's the body's members reintegrating! When others come into the church, a revision of one's original self is changed. With God, we revise our original self and adapt to the body. That's what co-creating with God means. God asks us again and again to change our hearts and lives.

All this is co-creating with God. We adapt, reintegrate, and re-vise, our lives. What we find is that all kinds of exciting opportunities pop up as we rub-up against

others—because God arranges the members of the body in a very precise kind of way. Certain people are the hands, others the feet, others the arms and so on.

The challenge for believers in the body is to allow ourselves to be vulnerable and remain willing to be changed by those interactions—and some aren't comfortable. But that's what change and allowing God to revise who we are is all about. With many members that God has arranged in the body, influence and power come from many, so we need to encourage and nurture our ability to accept, learn from, and love each member unconditionally.

To be willing to be changed by the relationships God has made for us is a risk. We might be rejected and disliked. Others might say untrue things about us, but the bottom line is, we insist on loving them anyway. It takes wrestling and struggling with ourselves and each other.

We can find ourselves stumbling because things are changing all around us. And a new terrain requires a new footing before we learn how to work and create together, but this is what God requires and it takes courage and faith.

Paul encourages the Corinthian congregation to keep in mind the importance of the oneness of the body, *because it's Christ's body*. We may stumble along, but our goal is to learn from each other, support and pour a heavy dose of love onto each member. It doesn't matter who is right or who is wrong. There's no winners or losers, because we're all on the same side.

Good mentors and teachers will tell you, pay attention to your fear and pain. Step into it knowing that Christ is teaching you with this lesson. Move toward what you think is painful, and give it to God. Don't run or miss opportunities to engage peaceably with one another. Let your physical body be at peace, and be where Christ wants you placed for it's there you'll be truly changed.

All this is part of being the body of Christ together—to not avoid the pain of change, but to work through it. Find a way to love the person as Christ loves you. Always seek to strengthen the body or the members around you that seem weaker. Pour love and prayer on that weaker member and just watch what God does.

Why would a weaker member, say a hand, think it could possibly be as effective in the body to divide and separate itself from the foot? The hand isn't able to receive and move to what it needs and where it wants to go without the mobility that the foot provides. When members of the body are in conflict—stay in relationship. That's the love of Christ that emerges when peace is seen by others.

It's certainly true, that through the ages there's been a constant struggle that has always existed to reject those who look and think differently than ourselves. But knowing the damage conflict in the body causes, and knowing that it's not flesh and blood that is our enemy, it should be our united purpose here at Providence to operate in godly love and peace. Blessed are the peacemakers.

We should always seek to accept each other. Those who is different, or new to us, or used, or abused, or tattooed, or strange in some way to us..... because we know that Christ has put them beside us in the body so we might learn to love as God loves. To understand that diversity within the body of Christ is a strength not a weakness. God arranges and places us in the body as he pleases.

In the words of St. Teresa of Avila, “Christ has no body but yours, no hands, no feet on earth but yours. Yours are the eyes with which he looks compassion on this world. Yours are the feet with which he walks to do good, Yours are the hands with which he blesses all the world. Yours are the hands, yours are the feet. Yours are the eyes, you are his body. Christ has no body now but yours. No hands, no feet on earth but yours. Yours are the eyes with which he looks compassion on this world. Christ has no body now on earth but yours.”

Let’s pray together. Lord, we have many parts but one body, and we all have different roles. There’s many of us, yet we’re one thing, and we belong to each other, and you have intentionally put us in relationship. Those you send to us have an obligation to you and to one another—to love one another, to be closely knit together intimately, and to know that there are no strings attached except to love and support. Help us love each other so we might build a strong, healthy, and nourished body here at Providence. To God be the glory. Amen.