

Greetings from God the Father and from our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, and from the Holy Spirit. Amen

Sermon Title: You are part of the Body of Christ.

Epistle: 1Corinthians 12:12-31

The Epistle reads: ***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 one Spirit we were all baptized into one body—Jews or Greeks, slaves or free—and all were made to drink of one Spirit. For the body does not consist of one member but of many.*** God's Word is speaking to you, me, and all at Trinity Lutheran Church in San Bernardino. You are the body of Christ. The complete body of Christ, in this place at this time, here and now! Christ is the head and we are the body. The relationship between Christ and the church, the body of Christ, is spoken of in many places in God's Word as the relationship between a Bridegroom and the Bride. The bridegroom is the head of the wife and he is willing to die for his wife, for the safety and good of his wife. Christ has died for His bride, **for** you. Christ died on the cross and rose on the third day to present you, His bride, holy, righteousness, spotless and

victorious to His Father in heaven. You became a member of the church, the bride, when you were made a child of God in your baptism. You all were made to **“Drink of one Spirit,”** St. Paul says, where He gives you faith in your baptism; and in John 7:37 we read - **Jesus stood up and cried out, “If anyone thirsts, let him come to me and drink. Whoever believes in me, as the Scripture has said, ‘Out of his heart will flow rivers of living water.’ ”** Now this he said about the Spirit, whom those who believed in him were to receive. God has placed each one of you and all members to be the complete body of Christ here in San Bernardino. It is not just one person, it all members, is the body of Christ. Trinity lacks nothing as the body of Christ. He has placed each one here with a gift, each member of the body to work together as a body of Christ. God feeds you and all with His Word and Sacraments. Christ is here always to serve you and give you His Blessings and His gifts.

GOD CALLS YOU TO BE PART OF THE BODY OF CHRIST, TO BE
IN THE BODY OF CHRIST AND THEN FINALLY BE WITH CHRIST!

The Epistle continues: ***If the foot should 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 should 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 be the sense of hearing? If the whole body were an ear, where would be the sense of smell? 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? As it is, there are many parts, yet one body. We at Trinity are like members at Corinth, your sinful flesh has caused you to feel (at times) that you are not part of the body of Christ because I am not what I want to be or do. For sometimes you want to be an eye rather than the ear. How would your body function if you only have an eye? You could see but not smell or hear. And the body could not function or stay alive if one part does not do its function or use its gift; like the heart if it decides to not work, what would happen to the body. If the foot decides it is a hand or stops working as foot, the body of Christ could not walk. Christ has given you a gift to use here and now for the body of Christ at Trinity. And it is a sin to not use the gift or gifts as God has given you to use – since it is essentially a denial of what God has created you to be.

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.” On the contrary, the parts of the body that seem to be weaker are indispensable, and on those parts of the body that we think less honorable we bestow the greater honor, and our unpresentable parts are treated with greater modesty, which our more presentable parts do not require. But God has so composed the body, giving greater honor to the part that lacked it, that there may be no division in the body, but that the members may have the same care for one another. If one member suffers, all suffer together; if one member is honored, all rejoice together. And other members of the body of Christ cannot tell the other parts that they do not need of them. Members in Corinth must have thought that certain gifts or members of the body of Christ were more important than others. You must keep on guard that he, the devil, your sinful flesh or the world do not grab onto you and make you think that you are greatest member of the church and there is no need for the others. Oh what a great deceit it is and sin which could cause a great fall for that member. For all members are to care for each one, to look after each other needs in the love of Christ. When one member suffers, we, the body of Christ, suffer. When one member rejoices, we, as the body of Christ, rejoice – at least we

should, God says. You are to support and encourage each other using ones gift given by God. Christ enables you to do so for He is walking with you and with the body of Christ. And need be He, Christ, will carry you and body of Christ.

God's Word pictures the church as the body of Christ, and it is a beautiful image. The Church is truly beautiful; since God makes His body, the Church in the image of Christ in righteousness, holiness and spotlessness, a beautiful bride on her wedding day. The body has a head and Christ is always and will be forever the Head of the Church. You are the body of Christ for you are in Christ – connected to Him through Baptism and faith. Christ's love flows from Him into you and through you overflows to others. We are fed and nourished and sustained as the living body of our Lord by Christ and His Word. The church draws its life and existence from Christ Himself. The church is body to be in the world, to be used by God as His hands, His mouth and His feet. To hear, the cries for help ... To see the suffering in the world To hold in its arms the broken-hearted, the discouraged, and the lonely .. to go and to tell of Christ's love to the world. The church is not to be of the world but be in the world, to show Christ's Love to the world. We **are** by God's design and gracious purpose an

extension of our Lord's own fleshly existence in the world— now that He has ascended in His body to heaven – as He abides in us and we in Him. (As an aside, that is what we see in the Book of Acts – the **continuing** work of Christ Himself ... but now through His Church ... **through us**.)

Christ has called you by name in your baptism and made you His own. You are part of the body of Christ, not just one member but one of many members. Christ has made you His by His dying on the cross and rising on the third day for you to be called righteousness, God's Righteousness. God feeds you with His Word and Sacraments to strengthen and sustains your faith. He will bring you, by His strength and His Word and His Forgiveness, to heaven to be with Him forever, perfectly. Christ has made you the body of Christ by His Works. Christ keeps you in the Body of Christ by His works. And Christ will bring you to Himself by His Works to be with Him forever.

And may the peace of God, which is beyond all human comprehension, keep your hearts and minds through your faith in Christ Jesus. Amen