

Sunday, January 16, 2022 – Easter Hill United Methodist Church

**Bible Study – 1 Corinthians 12:1-11
“Varieties of Gifts”**

Open with a word of prayer

Gathering Time (5-10 minutes) Are you aware of the spiritual gifts? Are you aware of your spiritual gifts? Try and guess other participants’ spiritual gifts before they reveal theirs. Have you ever taken a spiritual gift inventory? If not, please contact your pastor today so that you can be added to the list of others taking the next spiritual gift inventory.

1 Corinthians 12:1-11 Context. Paul had a long and complex relationship with the congregation he founded in the city of Corinth around 50 AD. The "first" letter to the Corinthians that we possess is already the second: Paul refers to a letter he had already sent them – now lost – in 1 Corinthians 5:9. Paul wrote the present letter from Ephesus in 53 or 54 in response to some confusion that had arisen as a result of his previous letter, as well as in response to the internal controversies and dissensions that characterized the Corinthian congregation. The city of Corinth itself was a Roman colony and the premier city of Greece in Paul's day, eclipsing Athens. It was a crossroads of competing cultures (Roman, Greek, Egyptian), and had the reputation of being "Sin City." This week's reading addresses the competition that seems to have arisen among the Corinthian Christians over their spiritual gifts: just as in the general culture everything and everyone was arranged in a hierarchy, so too, they thought, some spiritual gifts (and those possessing them) were more important than others. Paul writes to remind them that variety does not equal hierarchy: all gifts are gifts of the same Spirit.

Read 1 Corinthians 12:1-11

What touches your heart, what do you hear in the scripture, what questions do you have, or what doesn't make sense to you in the story?

Write down your thoughts or share your thoughts with the person or group you are with.

Read 1 Corinthians 12:1-11 again.

Some reflection questions – Write down your thoughts or share your thoughts with the person or group you are with.

- Count the number of times the word “Spirit” is used in the passage. What might this reveal about the emphasis of this passage?
- Read Ephesians 4:11-13 and Romans 12:6-8. What might these other lists of gifts suggest about the number of spiritual gifts? [Not limited just to those mentioned here.] What other gifts would you add that are not listed?
- Who benefits the most when we are operating out of our giftedness? Us? Others? Both?

- Do you think our spiritual gifts can change over time?
- How might we over focus on our spiritual gifts such that practicing them is self-centered as opposed to being for the “common good” (v. 7)?
- Have participants tell of a time when they operated out of their giftedness and/or when they had to do something they were not gifted to do. Is it always wrong to do only what we’re gifted for?

Practice: Find one way to use your giftedness this week and be ready to report about it next session.

Closing Reflection Question

How is this scripture calling you to change, to see, to be or what might it be calling you to do?

Prayer (10 minutes). Share prayer requests and respond appropriately.

Sending Forth (2 minutes). After all, have shared, pray the closing prayer. Ask for a volunteer to lead the group or read the following prayer in unison:

Father, Son, and Spirit, you model for us a community of mutuality and an essence of love. You have given us a diversity of gifts for the building up of the community. Give us the eyes of appreciation, instead of envy, for the giftedness that others add to the community. Give us the eyes to see the needs of others and the courage to be empowered by the Holy Spirit to be the “hands and feet of Christ.” **Amen.**

And now we pray The Lord’s Prayer....

Our Father who art in Heaven

hallowed be thy name.

Thy kingdom come, thy will be done,

on earth as it is in Heaven.

Give us this day our daily bread and forgive us our trespasses,

as we forgive those who trespass against us.

Lead us not into temptation

but deliver us from evil.

For thine is the kingdom, the power

and the glory, for ever and ever. Amen.