

Sermon notes (Michele Rizoli)

June 13, 2021 - Membership Sunday (Crazy Quilt)

As the psalm says, It is good to give thanks to the LORD, to sing praises to your name, O Most High; to declare your steadfast love in the morning, and your faithfulness by night. Ps. 92

This morning I do indeed give thanks to God for being good to us, TUMC. At the tail end of a pandemic, I would like to name God's faithfulness to us.

I would like to offer you two things:

- an image
- an exercise to do together.

I often choose Romans 12: 4-18 for membership Sunday.

- highlights the scriptural image that we have for ourselves, which is a body. We live in bodies and so we understand the metaphor.

Different image: crazy quilt.



Caption

- old form of quilt
- Find them curious

“The simple definition of a ‘crazy quilt’ is a quilt that is composed of unrepeated shapes. Plain, fancy and in-between, if a quilt is made of random-shaped pieces of any fabric, it is known as a Crazy Quilt.”

The term “crazy” does not imply that the makers were bonkers: It most likely derives from pottery. During the 1876 Philadelphia Centennial Exposition, the hugely popular Japanese pavilion shocked and fascinated viewers with displays of pottery finished with glazes that “crazed” or split and cracked into glass like shards. Crazing became a craze!

<https://www.mercurynews.com/2017/03/22/whats-it-worth-7/>

- Consulted quilter Carolyn Loewen: pieces are placed together to form beauty.
- women would collect scraps of brocade, velvet, different fabrics, different shapes and sizes.
- Random patterns. Not an overall planned pattern — in the typical sense of quilts, but many patterns within patterns.

As a church we're an ongoing quilting project.

- How do we fit in the next beautiful piece
- Having members that are not geographically present is one of the beautiful pieces.
- Crazy quilts have embroidery and embellishment at the seams, speak of the ways we are stitched together in relationship
- Might be a way to envision our church together.
- Zoom screen has a “quilt” feel to it.

(Invite to turn on screens)

Turn to Romans passage, find descriptions of gifts and behaviours that characterize the body of Christ.

Read Romans 12: 4-18

- observe gifts or traits that are mentioned here (put in the chat)
- Scroll through the gallery and pick one person to match with one of the traits or behaviours
- If you don't know someone be curious about what the person brings to our church.
- We will not say this out loud. Marvel at our crazy quilt and all the beautiful things we see in it.

- Take a minute to scroll and see the beautiful little patches on our quilt.
- Ask yourself what you bring or have brought to the church.

Purpose of a quilt is to bring warmth and to bring beauty. The purpose of our church is to live out God's vision for the world. To embody a little instance of the reign of God and to bear witness to it in the world.

Vision of what the church is and can be — a set of people and gifts, equipped by the Holy Spirit to bear witness to God's love in the world. God's love through peacemaking, justice seeking, kindheartedness, compassion, and all the means that Jesus taught us.

We end with a song that mentions the Beatitudes, and so a blessings for us.

Can we be a place and a people where

Humble in spirit have a place and help lead the way

Where those who mourn find others with whom to be comforted and supported

Where meekness is valued rather than mocked, because it is there for the long haul

Can we be a place where

The desire for justice is like a hunger and a thirst, justice even for enemies? Where we seek it until we are filled?

Can we be a place and a people who show mercy rather than judgement? Where purity of heart is not tainted with malice?

And the hardest of all, persecution. According Dave Wallace is the idea that [we would] rather feel suffering ourselves rather than inflict suffering on others.

Can we be such a place where we live out the reign of God in this crazy quilt that is TUMC?

Blessings to all of you.