

Pastor Brian's
Mid Week Message
January 15, 2020

“JUST LIKE YOU...ONLY DIFFERENT”

What a great blessing it is for me to be able to stand before this congregation in our Sunday morning worship services and see all the different faces looking back at me. Now that it's January that means just about all of us in the TLC family. On a superficial basis, you might say we all look pretty much the same. Just about all of us are well past the half century point in terms of our time on this earth. We generally have white hair, if we have hair at all. We are of European descent. Maintaining or returning to good health is a top priority in our lives and we love our Lord Jesus Christ and being together with His people, the family of God here at Trinity Lutheran Church of SW Florida. But if you peel back the skin (wow...that would hurt!) you'll find a tremendous diversity within all of us. We are wired differently from one another and what a blessing THAT is! I mean, if all of us were totally the same it would be pretty boring and really hard to get much done. We all have different things that bring us joy, different things that we are passionate about and still different things that drive us to take action when they happen; things that get UNDER our skin so to speak. On our journey of life, we have all been given differing gifts and talents; acquired different skills and experiences and been mentored by different "coaches". All of this comes together as we gather as God's people here at TLC, and that is what God (through the Apostle Paul) is talking about when He describes His Church as "The Body of Christ". *Now you are the body of Christ, and each one of you is a part of it.* (1 Corinthians 12:27) We, the Church, and in particular THIS church, are the physical presence of Jesus in the world; in this place... SW Florida. YOU, as an individual member are a "body part", one that is vital to the health, vitality and mission of the church, which is the mission that Christ gave us in worshiping and glorifying God and reaching out to the lost with the good news (Gospel) of Jesus Christ. Each one of us, no matter our age and health status, are gifted by the Spirit of God with unique gifts that are for the good of the church...the good of all of us members and especially the good of our mission. As those gifts come together and are put in action we move forward and accomplish that which God has called us to do...all empowered by the Holy Spirit (His Spirit) that God has placed within us. God will then bless that action according to His purpose and plan, which isn't necessarily always our purpose and plan. The truth is that we all are just like each other, only different. We are all poor miserable sinners in need of God's mercy and grace, and we all receive that grace and mercy, forgiveness and eternal salvation by faith in Jesus. Before God not a one of us is any better or worse than another, we are all loved and cherished equally by our heavenly Father. But each one of us is uniquely gifted and blessed so that we can join together into a healthy, active and effective body (congregation) to do the work that our Lord has called us to do, whether we have blonde hair, dark hair, white hair or no hair at all.