

**A Sermon for The Third Sunday after the Epiphany
January 26, 2025**



New Life Episcopal Church, Uniontown, OH

Rev. Barbara Bond

Click Here for today's Readings:

[Third Sunday after the Epiphany – The Episcopal Church](#)

1 Corinthians 12:12-31a, Luke 4:14-21

Beloved in Christ,

As Saint Paul would greet the communities in his care, I greet you on this day of our Annual Meeting with Good News! This is also the feast day of Timothy and Titus, companions of Saint Paul, and I feel that in many ways, we are also companions with Paul and with them, serving God, loving God and our neighbors, and spreading the Good News of God in Christ. We announce the joys of New Life with our prayers, our actions, and our love of each other.

Paul would travel to a place, establish a community, and move on, and then he would write letters back to the previous community, checking in on them. Famously, he wrote to the community in Corinth, at least twice, and we have those wonderful letters in our canon. Today's reading from Paul's first letter to the Corinthians deals directly with issues of community. Let's listen in to other people's mail:

Apparently, this group of Christians is having some problems of organization. Paul offers them a lovely example, using the metaphor of the human body, to illustrate the interconnected quality of Christian community. Not everyone can do everything. We all have different gifts, and those gifts work together for the greater good. Remember the old joke – My nose is running and my feet smell – I must have been built upside down! Paul makes sure we know the appropriate attributes of the body – the nose smells, the feet run, and all other parts of the body work to form the whole body of Christ.

You are an extraordinarily gifted group. All of you have gifts – different gifts – that work together. Our Annual Report is brimming with reports from all the member groups that get the job done, supporting one another and reaching out to the wider world.

When Jesus began his ministry, he made a major announcement. The Gospel of Luke shows Jesus taking the stage, as it were, in the synagogue, reading an exciting portion of Isaiah, and (drum roll!) announcing that he was the fulfillment of the prophet. Isaiah's proclamation announced bringing good news to the poor, release to the captives, recovery of sight to the blind, letting the oppressed go free, and proclaiming the year of the Lord's favor, which was a jubilee celebration cancelling all debts. Jesus read all that, and then said, "I am going to do all this." And of course he did, demonstrating to the world that the Kingdom of God is come on earth. Jesus Christ, our Lord, Liberator and Sustainer, leads the way into New Life.

Our annual report tells of the things we have done, in the past year, fulfilling our mandate to love God and our neighbor. And, like Jesus, we have lots of things we will do in the coming year, (1) to bring good news to the poor, (2) to bring actual goods to the poor, (3) to open the eyes of those blinded by the commercial world by bringing them new perspectives, and (4) to bring mercy to those in misery. Our new vestry will devise ways to accomplish the will of God, and we will have a plan, foremost to make

ourselves more visible to the outside community and invite them inside. We will also look to the outside: join in efforts that are already underway, like FISH food pantry and library book collections; we will find new efforts to help others and fill our hearts with joy, and we will make greater efforts to shout out the good news in Jesus Christ. Despite what may be going on in the secular world, we will present a vision of God's peace on earth, as it is in heaven.

We are one body, one Spirit in Christ, and we have a mission to make a difference in the world. It is the year of the Lord's favor!