

**“A Healthy Body”**  
**Meditation for Service of Wholeness**  
**September 9, 2020**  
**Rev. Joy W. Laughridge**

**Scripture Reading**

I Corinthians 12:20-27

**<sup>20</sup> As it is, there are many parts, but one body.**

**<sup>21</sup> The eye cannot say to the hand, “I don’t need you!” And the head cannot say to the feet, “I don’t need you!” <sup>22</sup> On the contrary, those parts of the body that seem to be weaker are indispensable, <sup>23</sup> and the parts that we think are less honorable we treat with special honor. And the parts that are unpresentable are treated with special modesty, <sup>24</sup> while our presentable parts need no special treatment. But God has put the body together, giving greater honor to the parts that lacked it, <sup>25</sup> so that there should be no division in the body, but that its parts should have equal concern for each other. <sup>26</sup> If one part suffers, every part suffers with it; if one part is honored, every part rejoices with it.**

**<sup>27</sup> Now you are the body of Christ, and each one of you is a part of it.**

**Meditation**

One thing I’ve learned over these last few months about living through a pandemic is that it has made me more attentive in some ways to my body. For example, I used to push the grocery cart or push the keys on the debit card reader and then go on with my day without giving a thought to what germs might have attached themselves to my fingers when I pushed those buttons, but by the beginning of April, I was thinking about my hands like I never did before. Where have they been? What am I doing with them? Don’t shake hands. Now that I picked up this apple and see a spot on it, am I allowed to put it back? I touched that door handle. Where’s my sanitizer?

I’ve also thought about my ears a lot during the pandemic because it took me a long time to find a mask that didn’t hurt my ears. For the first few months, every time I had to wear my mask for more than 5 minutes at a time, I was very aware of my ears because they started to feel sore from the elastic around my ears.

I've also been aware of the shape and size of my body during the pandemic. I've been trying to keep an eye on it to make sure that my body isn't growing wider and heavier from all of the extra snacking that came with being at home more with nowhere to go. Back in April I kept saying, if I make it to the other side of this without transforming into a 300 lb. woman it will be a miracle!

And, of course, with the concern about picking up the virus, I feel like I've been much more tuned in to any and every sign or symptom of illness. The slightest scratch in my throat, or headache, or fatigue I've noticed right away, and while I would normally assume those things were allergies, during Corona I've wondered if those things could be the first symptoms of the virus. I think we have probably all been paying attention to our bodies in different ways than we did before the pandemic began, and we've all been trying our best to stay safe and healthy.

I have been thinking about my physical body, and maybe you have, too, but throughout the pandemic, I've also been thinking about the Body that Paul refers to in the Scripture that we just heard. The church is a living, breathing, connected organism that Paul likens to the human body, and I've been thinking about the different parts- the parts that are isolated in care facilities; the parts that have experienced additional stress at home because of changes to the ordinary patterns of work and school; the parts that have experienced the loss of loved ones or the loss of jobs; the parts that have been anxious and angry about politics; the parts that have been hurt by the racial injustices that have bubbled to the surface of our consciousness again during the pandemic; the parts that are tired, and depressed; the parts that have felt invisible and overlooked and uncared for. As I've been thinking about the parts of Christ's body, I feel aware that some parts of the body are in need of special grace, and compassion, and healing.

When something is not right with our physical bodies, we typically make a trip to the doctor to let them check us over, to give us a diagnosis, and to treat our sickness. Tonight, gives us the opportunity to do something similar for the spiritual Body of Christ. If this body is hurting and in need of healing, it affects our ability to do and be all that Christ calls us to do and be. In the same way that it is difficult to keep up on housework, or to go to work or school when you are physically sick, our ability to thrive as a church in worship, and mission, and witness is hindered if our body is not well, and the wellness of our whole body is directly related to the wellness of its parts. As Paul says in the Scripture, the parts are connected. When

one part suffers, the whole suffers with it. If one part rejoices, so does the whole body.

Our purpose tonight, then, is to tell God about the places that are sick, or sore, or broken in this body and to ask for healing through Jesus Christ. As one of the parts of this body, you may have a particular need. Whether it's related to what we have experienced in these last months of the pandemic or not, there may be something – a physical infirmity, an enslaving habit, and emotional wound- that needs to be healed. You may also want to ask on behalf of the other parts for healing so that the whole Body of Christ would be strong, and healthy, and free, and empowered to do God's mission in our community and in the world.

The important thing is that we do ask for the grace, and compassion, and healing that Christ offers, and God has promised that we can be healed and made whole individually and collectively. Scripture assures us that *by his wounds, we are healed*. Christ has done the work that makes our healing possible. He has the authority and the power to deliver us from all forms of evil. All we have to do is ask. Amen.