



From The Desk Of...

Lou Piel

Pastor Emeritus

**Mount Zion UMC - Finksburg
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From time to time in our weekly worship handout we raise some important “local church” issues that confront us at Mount Zion. We often call them “faith issues.”

One of those is: *“when was the last time you invited someone to worship with you?”* The Christian “gospel” is not a “Lone Ranger” type of faith, That is - I hold on to it and do not share it. It’s all about me! The truth of the “gospel” is once we have been “blessed” by the power of the Holy Spirit we want to share our faith with others. Someone wrote “love isn’t love unless you are able to give it away!” Remember the words *“we have been blessed to be a blessing.”*

We can put out all the ads we want in the local newspaper or have the pastor send out of 3

mailing after mailing promoting the church but the truth of the matter is when a member or friend of Mount Zion invites someone it makes a real difference. In a recent article the author wrote *“one of the failures of the Christian church today is that the people do not share the message of salvation and do not invite others to experience it for themselves. No wonder in far too many places the institutional church is dying.”*

It does no good to bemoan the failure of the local church. It does no good to sadly say the church isn't what it used to be. If we want the church to grow spiritually or bodily we must accept the responsibility that we are the hands & feet of Jesus. So we ask the question once again *“when was the last time you invited someone to worship God with you?”*

Another of those local church issues is this: *“It is amazing what we can do when we all work together.”* Those words sound “easy” but in our often divided culture today they can be very difficult. We often speak of the “unity” we have in Jesus the Christ. But sadly that “call for unity or oneness in Christ” is often broken, sometimes in very nasty ways.

The Apostle Paul in a letter to the Corinthian Christians (I Co 12.12ff) stresses that in the Body of Christ there is only one “head” and that is Jesus. At the same time, he admits that the Body of Christ is often broken into hands & feet, ears & eyes, and feet & arms.” That is “different parts” each having value especially when they work together. When they don't work together the “body is in pain.”

I believe in the “unity in Christ” but I also do not believe in “uniformity, that is “we all must believe in the same thing or translate the Bible in the same way, or have the same faith experience. Differences as long as they do not tear the “Body of Christ” apart can actually build up the church (ecclesia = the people of God). We can learn from one another.

The key word for me is “love.” Love that binds us together “with cords that cannot be broken” is a song we often sing. Paul (I Cor 12.5) writes that “love” (true God's love) *“does not insist on its own way.”* It recognizes diversity (differences of thought or opinion) but never allows that diversity to tear up the unity we are called to have in Christ Jesus.

There are many other Weekly Faith Concerns like *“Is someone you know missing from worship this morning.”* But we will hold that one for a future letter.

Thank you for being faithful! Thank you for being “the church!”

Sunday service starts at 9:55am
3006 Old Westminster Pike
Finksburg, MD 21048
Accessible Friendly Building



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Grace and peace
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