



**MORRISON ZION EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH**  
**AND**  
**IMMANUEL EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH**  
[www.mzluth.org](http://www.mzluth.org) and [immanuelshirley.com](http://immanuelshirley.com)

September 7, 2025

Pastor James Enderle

13<sup>th</sup> Sunday after Pentecost

First Lesson: [Romans 12:1-5](#)

Psalm of the Day: Psalm 1 (*Red Hymnal*)

Second Lesson: [Matthew 20:20-28](#)

Gospel Lesson/ Sermon Text: [1 Corinthians 12:12-13:13](#)

**I'M A CHURCH MEMBER**  
**I WILL BE A FUNCTIONING CHURCH MEMBER**

1. We function best \_\_\_\_.
2. We are all \_\_\_\_ of the body \_\_\_\_.
3. \_\_\_\_ hurts the \_\_\_\_.
4. \_\_\_\_ because of \_\_\_\_.

Welcome to worship today at Morrison Zion Lutheran Church. We exist to glorify God. We have set out to do this by gathering around the Gospel so that we may grow in the Gospel and go to others with this Gospel.

**CHILDREN'S DEVOTION**

Good morning everyone. I have a little picture for you. See if anyone knows who this guy is. Is this movie too old? Anyone know what movie he is from? Yes, Monsters Inc. This is Mike Wazowski, one of the monsters in Monsters Inc. Does he look a little strange? Why does he look a little strange? What is his body? Why does he look strange? He has one eye. He has a green tongue. He has green teeth. He's kind of funny looking.



In our Scripture today, Paul writes and he says "What if the whole body were an eye?" Mike Wazowski, he actually has arms and things but it almost looks like his whole body is an eye, doesn't it? He is like one big eye with little hands and stuff. We look at that and we're like, "That's weird!" That's what Paul says. "If our whole body was just an eye or an ear, where would the other functions of our body be?" That would be kind of weird. You need all those body parts.

What he is encouraging is us that each one of you is different. Some of you are shorter. Some of you are taller. Maybe school is really easy for some of you and for some of you, maybe school is hard. Maybe you love sports and maybe some of you love art.

God has given you many different gifts and talents. He has made us all very different. If I'm better than someone else at a certain thing, should I go "Oh, I'm better than you. You're no good at that." Is that what you should do? No! We understand that God has gifted us all with different gifts and that we're all important.

This is the first weekend of football. Maybe you'll watch football. There are 11 people out there, but what if it was just the quarterback out there against 11 people? Would he do very well? No! All those big guys would tackle him. He needs those other people in his team. It's the same thing as you and me. We need all the people on our team working together, and we can encourage them to use their gifts, the gifts that are different, and we don't have to say "I'm so good at this." We want to encourage people to grow their gifts and understand they all have special gifts and talents.

God has made each and every one of you to be His children of God and has given you very important gifts. He loves us all. We can use those gifts He has given us because He loves us, and we can glorify God with all our gifts. Then we don't have to look at the Church body and look like Mike Wazowski, with just a giant eye. We can be the full body of Christ, with all the different gifts, all working together, all encouraging others to serve God and to serve others because He died for us. Pretty neat, isn't it? Let's say a prayer.

*Heavenly Father, we know that we are part of the body of Christ. Each one of us has different gifts and talents and you want us to help and encourage one another to use those gifts to your glory. Help us to not be proud but to encourage others and to think our gifts and others' gifts are just as important. Help us to serve and love you because you have loved us, you've come and served us by dying on the cross and forgiving all our sins. We pray this in Jesus' name. Amen.*

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## **SERMON**

Grace and peace to you from God our Father and from Jesus Christ, our Lord:



I don't know if any of you know what this little thing is here. It's a Costco Executive Membership Card. This is a special thing that we got a few years ago. We were talking to some friends and they were sharing a little bit about Costco and we said "We're not members of Costco." They said "You're not a member of Costco?!" and they gifted us a membership to

Costco for Christmas. It was kind of busy, so we didn't get in there until January, but then we went in and got our pictures and now we have the card. If you're a member of Costco, you know all the benefits you get—the nice cheap food, the nice chicken, all the

special deals, the mailings you get with all the awesome discounts, and now if you're an Executive Member, you get to go in and shop earlier than everyone else. Membership has its perks.

This is a lot of what we think about with membership. We pride being a part of something. Often you pay those membership fees to get special perks and benefits and you are served. If it's not a wholesale club, maybe it's some other thing that will save you money. Maybe it's a gym that you can go to and use their facilities and you get the use of their coaches and their equipment. But membership in our world so often means I pay something or I sign up and then I get served. I get the perks and benefits.

But is that Christian membership? Is that what it means to be a member of the body of Christ? We pay offerings. If you're a member of this church, a baptized member or an adult member, a confirmed member, does that mean that you get your way and it's all about you being served? That's what we are going to talk about in the next few weeks. That's what the book, I Am A Church Member, discusses. We are going to discuss a lot of those concepts and different ways our church membership, biblical membership of the Church, is very different than what the world says membership is all about.

So today, we begin by focusing on **I will be a functioning church member**. When we look at that, we want to look at what Paul says to the church in Corinth. The church in Corinth, if you know 1 Corinthians, they had been struggling with many different things. There were disputes and people in sin. So he writes to them about what it means to be part of the Church. He begins by saying: ***Just as a body, though one, has many parts, but all its many parts form one body, so it is with Christ.*** You're a member of this Church, this body of Christ. ***For we were all baptized by one Spirit so as to form one body—whether Jews or Gentiles, slave or free—and we were all given the one Spirit to drink.*** Notice what he begins to talk about, why we are part of this body of Christ is we are given something—that Christ has done something for us. We were baptized and we were given one Spirit to drink.

When we think about functioning, what is one of the most important things for your body to function well? **We function best with nourishment.** Have you ever been dehydrated? It's important that we get the right food and the right drink but we talk about how many, many people in the world are habitually dehydrated. But if you're really dehydrated, it can cause big problems.

My brother went to Mexico for his friend's wedding and he was standing up in rehearsal and he fainted. They didn't know what was wrong. They actually gave him a spinal tap in Mexico. Can you imagine being in Mexico and getting a spinal tap? But the whole problem was that he was dehydrated. It probably had to do with what you can drink and not drink, the water there.

If you are not hydrated, if you are not getting the nourishment you need, can you function? If you don't eat the right food, if you are only eating snacks and the sugary stuff, will you function in the way that your body needs to?

As we look at the body of Christ and functioning, we want to look at how we can even function in the right way. It all starts out by saying you need to drink of that Spirit. You need to see that you are baptized. You need to be in the Word. If we don't get that nourishment, if we don't get that fuel, what happens? We can't move. We can't run on anything. It's like having a car with no gas and wanting to get to your destination. It's not going to move anywhere.

So as much as we are going to talk about what it means to be functioning and serving and being in worship, being in worship is such an important thing, being in God's Word and Bible Study and devotions, because how can you function if you're not being fed and nourished?

But do you always like the nutritious food? If you've had kids or have kids, do your kids like the broccoli? Do they like the nutritious food? Or what do they do? Or even the foods that they usually like, sometimes they're just like "I don't want to eat this." They pick at their food. Do we, because of our sinful hearts, pick at that nourishment that we get? Often because it's the Law and we're hard and hardened and we say "I don't want to hear this." The Law can beat us down and we can say "I don't need this. I don't want to hear it!" Or "It's the same thing. I've heard that hymn before. I just don't like how that was said" or "I don't like how they do that." And instead of being fed and nourished, we get picky about what God is giving us and blessing us with and what He is trying to nourish your soul with. But as we look at this, we see we need to function and be fed all the time because of who we are.

As Paul writes, he says: ***Now if the foot should say, "Because I am not a hand, I do not belong to the body," it would not for that reason stop being part of the body. And if the ear should say, "Because I am not an eye, I do not belong to the body," it would not for that reason stop being part of the body.*** The truth is, as we heard in our Children's Devotion, ***we are all important parts of the body of Christ.*** I don't want to say "Oh, because I don't have the job of teaching or I don't have the great skills of telling others about Jesus, then I'm not important." God has blessed you with so many important gifts. If you're alive and moving, God has given you gifts. Those gifts are to serve the Church.

Have you thought about those gifts? It doesn't matter how old you are. You can be young and God has blessed you with gifts. You can be old, you can be retired, and God has a purpose for you; a purpose to bless others or maybe even to encourage others to find their gifts and to say "How can you serve? How can you serve others in the body of Christ, not just here but in your community and those around you, to serve and love?"

As we look at this, when we talk about the functioning body of Christ, if you read the introduction to this on the front of the Service Folder, it says only one-third of most churches are functioning. So if your church membership is about 300, that means about 100 are in church and worshipping and functioning—serving out of love. And we say “Is that our church?” When we look at this and we talk about us being nourished and look at our gifts, we can easily just say “Well, we’re functioning. It’s those people that are the problem.” But who are you in control of? We’re not in control of them and the problem isn’t saying “We just have to fix those people.” We always want to focus on ourselves and how we can be serving and how I can maybe encourage others to be nourished and to be fed.

Why is that important? Why do we need all those other people? They are all important, but what happens when everyone isn’t functioning? In Verse 21 it says: ***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!”*** Later in Verse 26: ***If one part suffers, every part suffers with it; if one part is honored, every part rejoices with it.*** What happens when parts of the body aren’t functioning? What happens if there is hurt and pain or something isn’t right? When do you notice the parts of your body? If your body is healthy and functioning, do you notice your arms? Do you notice your feet? You don’t really think about them. It’s when they are hurt or when there is something wrong with them. So the first part of this is when someone is hurting, when there is a struggle or a suffering in their life. We’re not talking about this when we are going to say this next point, but if they’re not functioning, if they’re not in worship, then it’s hard for us to support them. It’s hard for us to see that part is hurting if they are no longer connected to the body.

But if you are connected to the body and you are here, when can this really hurt the rest of the body? **Selfishness hurts the whole body.** When we make it all about ourselves, when one body part says “I don’t need you,” that hurts the whole body. When we make it all about our ways and put others down, when we don’t forgive others, that hurts. And selfishness, making it all about our ways, or another way there could be selfishness is by inactivity, when I say “I’m not needed. You guys got it. I’m not important. You guys can all do it,” that hurts. How does it hurt?

Have you ever slept wrong on your arm or sat wrong and you’ve had a part of your body fall asleep. Then you try to do something but your arm is asleep and you try to pick it up, but it doesn’t work. Or your leg is asleep and you try to stand up too quickly. I knew someone whose leg was asleep and they almost broke their ankle. They tried to stand up on that ankle that was asleep. That inactivity of the body, it hurts the whole body. So when we say “I’m not important,” it hurts. When we put down others and we don’t encourage others to use their gifts, then we can’t function in the way that we need.

You can think about it in this question that if you are the body of Christ—and if you are a Christian, you are a part of the body of Christ—the question is not should I serve? Can

I serve? But how can I serve? It's not saying you have to do all sorts of things for the Church. It's also just thinking about how you can serve the body of Christ. Can you serve and share God's love? It doesn't have to be in a formal way but in the way that Paul encouraged, in the way that Jesus encouraged—how can I serve others and not think of myself too highly, but serve?

How can we serve? How can we function? This is why we included [1 Corinthians 13](#). This is the heart of it all. As Paul finishes [1 Corinthians 12](#), he lists all those different roles in the Church—the apostles, the teachers, people who do other works. Then he lists all these other gifts. But he says: ***Now eagerly desire the greater gifts...*** after he lists all those things and says: ***I will show you the most excellent way.*** What is the greater gift? It is love. When we look at this, it's important to see, as we function, we need to ***function in love because of God's love.*** So even if I am not serving in a formal way, how can I serve the greater Church? I can act in love.

What does that look like? When is this section of Scripture always read ([1 Corinthians 13](#))? Everyone should raise their hand and say "I know! It's spoken at weddings. This is the love that a husband and wife have for each other." Is that the context that Paul wrote this about? Is he talking about marriage when he writes [1 Corinthians 13](#)? It's smashed right in the middle of how the Church, the members of Christ's body, should act. So these words should be applied to ourselves and how we serve one another in the Church.

How do we do that? At a wedding, if people want this at their wedding, we often then substitute their name. Substitute your name in there. For me: *James is patient. James is kind. James does not envy. James does not boast. James is not proud. James does not dishonor others. James is not self-seeking. James is not easily angered. James keeps no record of wrongs.* How do you do when you put your name there? You probably read that and think "This is love? Have I loved anyone or anything if this is what love looks like?" This is what love does. This is what Christian love does, but we know we fall short. This is why we are so united, because we can't do it.

But who has done it? Whose name can we put in there? God's name, the name of Jesus, that Jesus is patient and loving and kind. Notice He is not self-seeking. He is the perfect Servant and humbled. And notice the beautiful words: He keeps no record of wrongs.

So when you have failed to serve, when you have failed to function, when you have failed to love, you are forgiven. You are loved and redeemed. And to think about how we can use these words, if these are the words that are to be how we serve one another, if you're in a fight with others, if there is this disagreement in the church and people are getting personal or really attacking, maybe just stop and read these verses and say, "Is this the way I'm supposed to love my brothers and sisters?" See the mighty power of

God's Word working in us and be motivated by the beautiful love. See it's not about us but He is the head and He is the one who enables us to serve in love.

So don't go out and try to function without being fed. Be nourished in the love of Christ, the forgiveness of Christ, the one who is perfectly loving. But see how every one of us is important. God has gifted every one of you with gifts to serve. If you don't know how you can serve, ask someone. Ask me. Ask another person and say "How can I serve? What gifts do I have?" Then if you just don't know that you can serve, serve in love. Give that forgiveness. Give that peace. Give that encouragement. And give Jesus, because you have been given Jesus. Now you can give that to others in love. Amen.

***And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.*** [\*\(Philippians 4:7\)\*](#) Amen.