

Washington church of Christ

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The Washington Messenger

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February 16, 2014

Order of Services Sunday February 16, 2014

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|---------------------------|-----------------|
| Song Leader | Cameron Wydro |
| Prayer | Scott Thompson |
| Preaching | Bob James |
| Lord's Supper | |
| Prayer for the Bread | Dan Wydro |
| Prayer for the Cup | David Osinski |
| Prayer for the Collection | Arnold Thompson |
| Assisting at the Table | Bob DeGrado |
| Scripture Reading | Bob James |
| Morning Closing Prayer | Derald Sanchez |
| Evening Opening Prayer | Stan Thompson |
| Announcements | Brian Jeffries |

Schedule of Weekly Services

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|---------------------------------|----------|
| Sunday Morning Bible Classes | 9:30 am |
| Sunday Morning Worship | 10:30 am |
| Sunday Evening Worship | 6:00 pm |
| Wednesday Evening Bible Classes | 7:30 pm |
| Thursday Morning Bible Study | 11:00 am |

Keeping Unity Among Christians...

One of the undeniable attributes of the church in the first century was its growth...

Then the word of God spread, and the number of the disciples multiplied greatly in Jerusalem, and a great many of the priests were obedient to the faith. (Acts 6:7 NKJV)

But the word of God grew and multiplied. (Acts 12:24 KJV)

So mightily grew the word of God and prevailed. (Acts 19:20 KJV)

An integral part of this growth seems to be associated with their unity...

Now all who believed were together, and had all things in common, ... So continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, they ate their food with gladness and simplicity of heart, (Acts 2:44-46 NKJV)

It's interesting that the first documented internal threat to their unity could be attributed to the diversity that existed among them ...

In those days when the number of disciples was increasing, the Grecian Jews among them complained against the Hebraic Jews because their widows were being overlooked in the daily distribution of food. (Acts 6:1 NIV)

In the time when the gospel was first preached, there were mainly two classes of Jews ... those who remained in Palestine and used the Hebrew language. These were appropriately called "Hebrews". The other group consisted of those who were scattered among the Gentiles, who spoke the Greek language, and were called "Hellenists," or, in some translations, "Grecians." This latter group used the Greek translation of the Old Testament, the Septuagint.

On the potential for there to be issues among these Christians, Albert Barnes wrote; "Dissensions would be very likely to arise between these two classes of people. The Jews of Palestine would pride themselves much on the fact that they dwelt in the land of the patriarchs and the land of promise; that they used the language which their fathers spoke, and in which the oracles of God were given; and that they were constantly near the temple, and regularly engaged in its solemnities. On the other hand, the Jews from other parts of the world would be suspicious, jealous, and envious of their brethren, and would be likely to charge them with partiality, or of taking advantage in their contact with them."

When we look at the New Testament churches in Rome and Corinth we can again see diversity among the Christians which could have fostered some pretty interesting challenges to unity.

To use a Joe Works phrase, "I won't argue long", that while this may not be the direct context of 1 Corinthians 1:12, I feel that the application is sound in that the diversity of the Corinthian Christians might have been the basis for their divisive gravitation towards certain "preachers".

Those proclaiming "I am of Paul" were probably the charter members of the church and were most likely Gentile converts. One of the tenets of their faith would center on the freedom they had in Jesus Christ. They took great pride in the fact that they were in the church from the beginning. Those proclaiming "I am of Cephas" were most likely made up of the Jewish Christians who had deep roots in the faith of their fathers and valued greatly the fact that Peter focused his preaching to the Jews. Members of this group were probably not too comfortable with the church members who had been converted out of paganism and who paid no attention to Jewish customs. The issue of eating meat that had been sacrificed to idols could have most likely been a conflict between these two groups.

It is no wonder that Paul used the comparison of the church to the physical body ... many members of differing capability and knowledge, demonstrating varying levels of "comeliness", but yet **one** body. (Romans 12:5; 1 Corinthians 12:12).

It is also understandable that he addressed their behavior towards each other from the inside out...

Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility consider others better than yourselves. Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others. Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus: (Philippians 2:3-5 NIV)

For I say, through the grace given unto me, to every man that is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think; but to think soberly, according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith. (Romans 12:3 KJV)

Much like the first century Christians we here at Washington possess some elements of diversity that, as we work to grow this congregation, may from time-to-time challenge our unity ... this is neither good or bad ... it's just fact. However, there are things that we all have in common ... we should all be encouraged by our union with Christ, comforted from His love, have fellowship with the Spirit, and have tenderness and compassion (Philippians 2:1). If these are in us, "and abound", any challenges to our unity that may arise from differences in matters of "judgment" will not be with the end objective ... but rather with a route proposed to get there ... for in everything we do, our end objective is to strengthen, grow and edify the body.

If in our quest to maintain unity, our thoughts and deeds begin, and end, with the application of Philippians 2:3-5 ... and Ephesians 4: 2-3 ...

Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love. Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace. (Ephesians 4: 2-3)

We can truly overcome and resolve any issues that may arise through the love demonstrated by our care one for another ... the world will see that we are disciples of Jesus (John 13:35) ... and our actions will be pleasing to the Lord.

And that is what matters most!

Our Prayer List...

For Spiritual Responsiveness – All of our wayward members

For Physical Healing – Jordan Thomas Matt Grimaldi ...
John Baxter ... Britta Commans ... Everett Guyton

For Wisdom and Good Judgment – The Leaders of our congregation ... the leaders of our nation

For God's Care and Good Providence – Our young people away at college ... Our young people here at Washington ... our members who are traveling ... the men and women in military service ... our congregation.

The Evangelist and Teachers We Help Support – Jon Focht –
Tim Bunting – Scott Smelser – Dan Wydro

EVENTS AND NOTES

UPCOMING EVENTS THAT WE ARE AWARE OF ARE ...

- ▲ ON SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 23RD, WE WILL HAVE A FOCUS ON THE LORD'S SUPPER LEAD BY STAN THOMPSON.
- ▲ WE WILL HAVE A CONGREGATIONAL MEETING ON SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 23RD, DIRECTLY AFTER MORNING WORSHIP. ALL MEMBERS ARE ENCOURAGED TO ATTEND THIS MEETING.
- ▲ THE NEXT MEN'S BUSINESS MEETING AND LADIES BIBLE STUDY IS SCHEDULED FOR MARCH 2ND.
- ▲ MONTHLY UPDATES FROM THE EVANGELISTS THAT WE ASSIST ARE POSTED ON THE BULLETIN BOARD.