Good morning. I'm Mary Hinson. I've been a member of Grace for over 45 years, having served in many areas of Grace's ministry during this time, and I'm currently serving on your church council.

Hear God's words that Paul initially shared with the Corinthians, and years later, with us as well:

There are different kinds of gifts, but the same Spirit distributes them. There are different kinds of service, but the same Lord. There are different kinds of working, but in all of them and in everyone it is the same God at work. Just as a body, though one, has many parts, but all its many parts form one body, so it is with 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. Even so the body is not made up of one part but of many. Yet in fact God has placed the parts in the body, every one of them, just as he wanted them to be. If they were all one part, where would the body be? As it is, there are many parts, but one body.

We, the members of Grace, are all here as individuals because we love this church and the people here, because we have each found our reasons to stay here and worship together and enjoy fellowship with one another. We are all a part of the body called the church, and God has made us part of his body through our Lord Jesus. Some of us may be eyes or ears, some of us may be feet, and some of us may be hands. God gave each of us unique gifts so we can use them together. And so, in this way, we are not just a group of individuals. Together we are one body: many parts, working together. When we're connected, when we're serving together, encouraging one another, and showing up for each other, that's when church becomes alive. It takes all of us to be the living body of Grace Lutheran Church.

Remember a time when you connected with another person here at Grace. Maybe it was over a bowl of soup around a table during Lent or a plate of BBQ at an annual picnic, or saying hello after a Sunday morning worship service, or enjoying the youth enjoying our annual Fall Fest, which will be next weekend, in the church parking lot and Fellowship Hall right after the second service. Remember how good it feels to know you are part of a group with a singular purpose: to be the body of the church doing God's work together.

Each one of us has been given unique gifts by God. Your personality, your passions, your experiences, your talents, none of that is random. God gave you gifts on purpose, for a purpose, and that purpose isn't just to benefit yourself. It's for the common good of all. These gifts are meant to be used to bless others. We can do so much good for each other.

Which part of the body are you? Are you a hand? You can prepare a meal for the WELCM students on Tuesday evenings, or for another church member who is sick or grieving, or help with the property maintenance here at Grace, or write a note to someone you haven't spoken with for a while. Are you a foot? You can travel to a homebound member's house and share the gift of Holy Communion with them, or walk the church recycling bins out to the street for pick-up, or carry donations to HOPE, Bethel Men's Shelter, or Better Bound Bookstore. Are you an ear? You can sit and listen to your fellow church member as they share what's happening in their life, or volunteer for Youth Group to get a better idea of how the lives of our younger members are going, or come to church on Sunday to hear the talents of our music programs or be a part of them. Each part of the whole body is needed and loved. Each part is important and sacred.

Each part of this body is connected through the love of God and by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, and each one of us was led here to be a part of this faithful body and equipped by God to do this work. We all have a special role, and it takes all of us to make it function, to continue to be this body called Grace Lutheran Church, and with God's help we can do it. Join me in being God's living body here at Grace and out in our greater community. Thank you.