

A WORD FROM REV. HINMAN

GETTING TO KNOW YOU

“Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit; and there are varieties of services, but the same Lord; and there are varieties of activities, but it is the same God who activates all of them in everyone. To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good. To one is given through the Spirit the utterance of wisdom, and to another the utterance of knowledge according to the same Spirit, to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healing by the one Spirit, to another the working of miracles, to another prophecy, to another the discernment of spirits, to another various kinds of tongues, to another the interpretation of tongues. All these are activated by one and the same Spirit, who allots to each one individually just as the Spirit chooses. For just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though many, are one body, so it is with Christ.”

1 Corinthians 12:4-12 (New Revised Standard Version)

Last month, I managed to get a whole newsletter article out of introducing myself to the congregation. It was an efficient way to help you get to know me a little better. However, these types of introductions are not a one-way street. What I really want is to get to know you and to get to know this church and this community. Alas, that's not really something that I can do in a newsletter article.

I have already started getting to know many of you. You have introduced yourselves to me on Sunday morning. You have stopped by the office to say hello. You have taken me up on my offer to get breakfast or coffee or lunch. If you haven't done so, I really hope that you will. You can sign up for a time online (<http://tinyurl.com/meetkaty>), email me (katy@cpfirstumc.org), or call the church office (404-766-6294) to set up a time to get together.

Part of the reason I want to get together with as many people as I can is, of course, to get to know you. I want to begin to get connected with our church family and to learn what you love about College Park and what you'd like to see happen with this church. But I also want to know about you – what are your gifts and passions? What do you love to do? Because as much as this church is the congregation as a whole, it is also the individuals that make up the congregation. This body has many members, and we all have different gifts.

When I was in seminary at Candler School of Theology, I took a course in community ministry. In that course, we learned about an approach called asset-based community development (ABCD). ABCD is a strategy for developing communities based on their strengths and potentials rather than on their needs (which is the more traditional way to approach community development). So instead of going into a community and saying “this community needs better schools” or “this community needs more public health resources” or something like that, you go into the community and ask the people who live there “what does this community have? What are the strengths of this community? What are your strengths? What do you love to do? What are you so good at that you could teach others to do it?” The answers to those questions then shape the direction that community development takes. It uses the gifts and assets of the people who live there to guide what happens.

To me, that's a great model for doing church (and a biblical one as well). 1st Corinthians tells us that there are a variety of gifts and a variety of services and a variety of activities within the body of Christ. God gives us all different gifts and strengths. How can we use those to build up the body – the body of Christ and the body of College Park First UMC? We have gifts in abundance. How can we use that abundance to help spread the love of God in College Park and beyond? How can we be involved in our own ABCD – Abundance-Based Church-Doing?

I hope you will join me as we work to discover our gifts together and discern how God will lead us in being a light of the kingdom in College Park.

Many blessings,

Katy