

**Weekend of Sunday, February 10, 2019**  
**4<sup>th</sup> Sunday after the Epiphany/Lectionary 4/Proper 4/Year C**  
**Primary Text: 1 Corinthians 12:4-27**  
**Sermon Title: “Love and Unity”**

**Theme**

**Text**

<sup>4</sup>Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit; <sup>5</sup>and there are varieties of services, but the same Lord; <sup>6</sup>and there are varieties of activities, but it is the same God who activates all of them in everyone. <sup>7</sup>To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good. <sup>8</sup>To one is given through the Spirit the utterance of wisdom, and to another the utterance of knowledge according to the same Spirit, <sup>9</sup>to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healing by the one Spirit, <sup>10</sup>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. <sup>11</sup>All these are activated by one and the same Spirit, who allots to each one individually just as the Spirit chooses.

<sup>12</sup>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. <sup>13</sup>For in the one Spirit we were all baptized into one body — Jews or Greeks, slaves or free — and we were all made to drink of one Spirit.

<sup>14</sup>Indeed, the body does not consist of one member but of many. <sup>15</sup>If the foot would say, "Because I am not a hand, I do not belong to the body," that would not make it any less a part of the body. <sup>16</sup>And if the ear would say, "Because I am not an eye, I do not belong to the body," that would not make it any less a part of the body. <sup>17</sup>If the whole body were an eye, where would the hearing be? If the whole body were hearing, where would the sense of smell be?

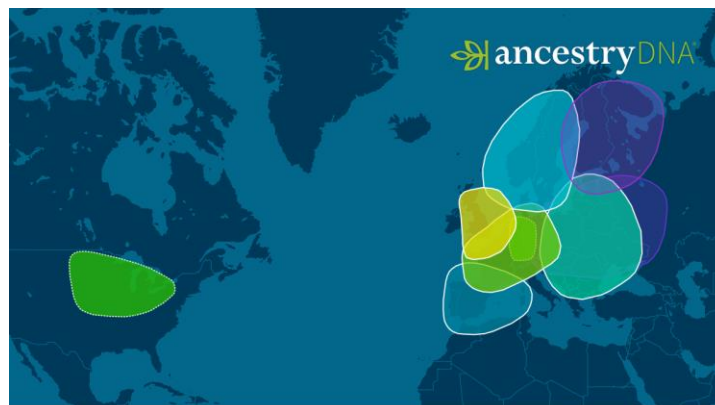
<sup>18</sup>But as it is, God arranged the members in the body, each one of them, as he chose. <sup>19</sup>If all were a single member, where would the body be? <sup>20</sup>As it is, there are many members, yet one body. <sup>21</sup>The eye cannot say to the hand, "I have no need of you," nor again the head to the feet, "I have no need of you." <sup>22</sup>On the contrary, the members of the body that seem to be weaker are indispensable, <sup>23</sup>and those members of the body that we think less honorable we clothe with greater honor, and our less respectable members are treated with greater respect; <sup>24</sup>whereas our more respectable members do not need this. But God has so arranged the body, giving the greater honor to the inferior member, <sup>25</sup>that there may be no dissension within the body, but the members may have the same care for one another. <sup>26</sup>If one member suffers, all suffer together with it; if one member is honored, all rejoice together with it.

<sup>27</sup>Now you are the body of Christ and individually members of it.

## Sermon

A couple of Christmases ago I requested a DNA test from Ancestry. You see, I was proud of my 100% German ancestry. I knew that I was 100% German because both sets of my great-grandparents were from Germany and their first language was German. I never met them, they were deceased before I was born, but this is the story I was told. As I recall the story, my ancestors immigrated before the Second World War – this was always an important fact, because they didn't want to be associated with Hitler and Nazism, though, as I understand it, there was prejudice against anyone whose first language was German during those World War II years.

Well, I got my Ancestry DNA results and for the first time I am going to reveal them to you.



### DNA Story for Duane

● Great Britain	56%
● Europe West	12%
● Germany & the Midwestern United States	
● Europe East	11%
● Scandinavia	11%
● Iberian Peninsula	7%
● +2 Other Regions	

So, as you can see for yourself, I am not 100% German at all. In fact I am majority British, and a minority of almost everything European.

I am devastated! I mean,

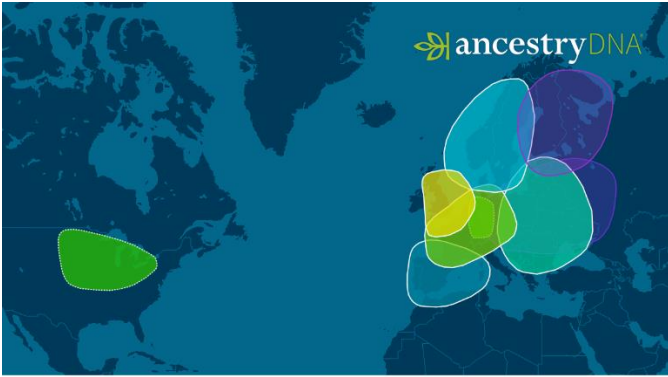
- I love a meal of bratwurst and German potato salad and beer.
- I don't consider a Mercedes Benz or a Volkswagen an import automobile.
- We have a coo coo clock from the Black Forest in our home.
- I am a Lutheran pastor!

I don't know who I am anymore!



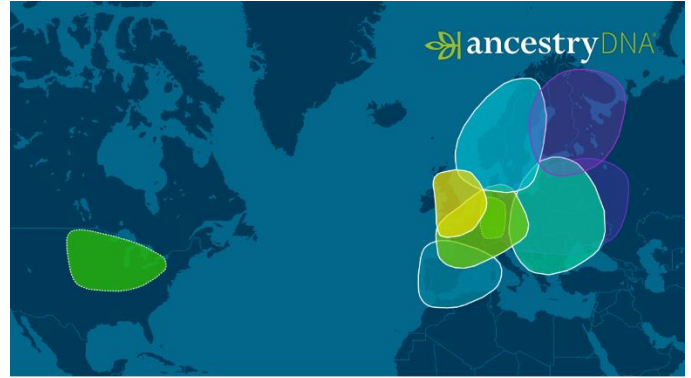
So, I've decided to trade my lederhosen in for a three piece suit and bowler, and will begin to watch the series Downton Abbey to learn more about my people!

And now that I know that my ancestry is majority British, I am expecting an invitation to the next royal wedding!



### DNA Story for Duane

Great Britain	56%
Europe West	12%
Germany & the Midwestern United States	11%
Europe East	11%
Scandinavia	11%
Iberian Peninsula	7%
+2 Other Regions	



### DNA Story for Melvin

Great Britain	56%
Europe West	12%
Germany & the Midwestern United States	11%
Europe East	11%
Scandinavia	11%
Iberian Peninsula	7%
+2 Other Regions	

Now, I asked Pastor Trent if he had his DNA tested and he had and he was willing to share the results with me.

Notice that our DNA is identical! We are not "like" brothers, we "are" brothers!

You know there was a day, not that long ago that ignorant people who sometimes didn't know any better and sometimes did, imposed barriers that separated races. But over the years, wisdom and love has prevailed and those things that have separated one people from another have continued to fade away. And though we have a lot of work to do, and our progress ebbs and flows, and I doubt it will ever be done, we who have been infected by the wisdom and love of Christ, just see each other as people, not separate peoples, but just as people.

I love to donate blood through the Red Cross. I started when I became a pastor twenty-one years ago and the previous community I served hosted a drawing every sixty days or so. I hate to miss and over the years I have made over 60 donations.

And the thing about me and my blood is that I am O+ which means that I am a universal donor, which means my blood can be used in anyone's body, should they need it.

And by the way, I am also a registered organ and tissue donor, so that when I am done using this body, if there is anything worth harvesting, the lives of others, whom I will never know, might be made better.

My point is that God, in God's wisdom, has seen to it that under our varied exteriors, we are all the same. Isn't God an amazing biologist?

Did you know that in the United States of America it was against the law for a black person to marry a white person until a Supreme Court decision in 1967? In bringing that up, I'm not advocating *for* or *against* interracial marriage. I think love ought to be able to bloom wherever it takes root.

Did you know that though Moses was a Middle-Eastern Hebrew, he married a Cushite, a woman from Cush, a region south of Ethiopia, where the people are known for their beautiful dark brown skin? Moses met her and was attracted to her and fell in love and they were married. Love prevailed and aren't we glad it did or we might not be here worshipping together today.

Welcome again one and all. This weekend Pastor Trent and I are both going to preach, and our theme is "Love and Unity". I am supposed to preach on Unity and he is going to preach on Love.

I would have killed to preach on love. (I know, not funny)

I have a question for us. Who came up with the terms "black and white" to identify us? I am far from white and Pastor Trent is far from black. I think we're are both shades of khaki. But black and white are polar opposites and so someone has decided to use those terms to identify people because it divides. Well, I am not okay with that.

Anthropologists have determined that the fossils of the oldest hominids ever found have been found in Ethiopia, so we all have roots in mother Africa, and so we truly are brothers and sisters.

It's okay to be knowledgeable and proud of our ancestral heritage. But we cannot forget that we are all the beautiful and perfect creation of our one Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

In John's gospel he wrote that:

<sup>1</sup>In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. <sup>2</sup>He was in the beginning with God. <sup>3</sup>All things came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being.

We are all the beautiful and perfect creation of our one Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. We look different because God revealed in Jesus Christ is creative. And in our beautiful and perfect created diversity, we are blessed by God with the gift of intellect to be a blessing to each other and to be a blessing back to God.

Pr Trent and I came up with some texts that we thought would be appropriate for this day of celebrating "Love and Unity". I picked First Corinthians chapter 12 where the apostle Paul tried to convince the Corinthians that they were one people, united by the love of Christ.

Corinth was a diverse multicultural community. As a people, they had fourteen castes, classes of people. These castes were developed to keep people among their own kind. But Paul said that Christ who created them all, didn't create them that way, and so Paul used the human body as an illustration of what he was talking about.

You heard it a few moments ago. The ear cannot say that because it is not an eye, it cannot be a part of the body. And the eye cannot say to the hand I have no need of you, and so on. Paul wrote that God arranged the members in the body, each one of them, as he chose. And the same goes for us as members of the Body of Christ.

I look out at this beautiful diversity of color and shape and see and appreciate it all. Some of us have accomplished a lot, and our youngest members are just little bundles of potential. But we are all members of the Body of Christ just the same. According to Paul, one member cannot tell another member of this *body* that they are not wanted here, or not needed here.

"But pastor, that person is just always needy and just takes from us." Yes, and that causes us to work on our spiritual gifts of mercy and compassion. We should thank God for them.

"But pastor, that person never contributes of their time and talent." Yes, and that causes us to go over and actually speak to them and find out something about them and see if we cannot find a way to plug them into some useful ministry. It is a gift to belong, Amen?

"But pastor, that person (and their type) just doesn't fit in here." Yes, well, they must think more highly of you than you do of them because they keep coming back.

You see, it is true what we sang,

I need you, you need me.  
We're all a part of God's Body  
Stand with me, agree with me.  
We're all a part of God's Body.  
It is his will, that every need be supplied.  
You are important to me.  
I need you to survive.

Our created-ness, the way in which God created us, which none of us had anything to do with, is an expression of God, so how can that be a bad thing.

God and I have been working on this for several months and I have been expressing it to the fellowship here at Zion. And it is manifested itself in a very simple expression. NBOM, just listen to this. Zion, don't let me down now.

"You belong here. We belong together."

That's right, we do. And that is not just Zion members belonging here and belonging together in this institution called Zion Lutheran Church, but all of God's beloved creation, all brothers and sisters, united by the DNA of Christ. We are one body, the body of Christ.