

It's a Beautiful Baby¹

Ephesians 4:1-6, 15-16

Ephesians 4:1-6, 15-16 (NRSV)

¹ I therefore, the prisoner in the Lord, beg you to lead a life worthy of the calling to which you have been called, ² with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love, ³ making every effort to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. ⁴ There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called to the one hope of your calling, ⁵ one Lord, one faith, one baptism, ⁶ one God and Father of all, who is above all and through all and in all.

¹⁵ But speaking the truth in love, we must grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ, ¹⁶ from whom the whole body, joined and knit together by every ligament with which it is equipped, as each part is working properly, promotes the body's growth in building itself up in love.



There are a few things I will remember my entire life

seeing the birth of my sons.

babies are miracles

Anyone who has ever seen a newborn baby, there is no question: men & women are part of the process, but babies come from God.

The author of Ephesians calls the church a "body."

There is no question in my mind. This new body of OPC, like babies, comes from God.

Considered in 1958 and discussed about 1964.

Many asked "why 2 PCs in Oakmont?"

It was a dream for some, an impossible dream.

But God's Spirit was poured out on members from 1st United and Riverside Presbyterian Churches and they began to see a vision.

It was a bold vision of 2 strong churches becoming stronger by being one church.

¹ Inaugural Sermon, October 4, 1992, Oakmont Presbyterian Church

This new church was conceived 9 months ago.

It grew and matured w/ a healthy diet of study and discussion.

There was a question whether it would ever reach full term & be delivered.

After intense labor, this new body was born 3 weeks ago, and we bring it home today.

As I look around I think "it is a beautiful baby church".

Ephesians speaks powerfully to us of God's plan for this new body of Christ.

"God chose us in Christ before the foundation of the world...."

"Christ has made known to us in all wisdom & insight the mystery of God's will....to unite all things in him, things in heaven & things on earth."

As we bring it home, we are not naive about what newborns require and what this new church requires.

Several days after bringing baby home, you feel that you'll never sleep again and that you'll be feeding junior and changing diapers for the rest of your life.

1st week is traumatic.

I was never so thankful to see anyone as I was to see my mother-in-law arrive a week after delivery.

At birth of the new OPC we acknowledge this newborn brings challenges and requires the same kind of loving care.

2 histories

2 traditions

Developing into 1 new identity

There is little time for admiration. Committees need formed. The sick need to be visited. The baby's budget needs changed.

Ephesians seems like the first letter written to this newborn OPC:

"I therefore, a prisoner for the Lord, beg you to lead a life worthy of the calling to which you have been called, with all lowliness and meekness, with patience, forbearing one another in love, eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace."

We stand and see a miracle.

Friends, this is a miracle and it is up to us to nurture it that it may grow and mature.

Lowliness & meekness will help us avoid pride which divides rather than unites.

It helps us remain flexible when great flexibility is needed.

Forbearance is important.

Some have said, it feels strange. It does.

New relationships need to be established, trust developed, and respect built.

We don't understand everything about each other and some things seem odd.

I noticed a gurney in the room where the offering is counted. I assume treasure is greatly affected by your offering.

Recently, I saw a member standing next to a pew. She was inspecting the padding on the pew. I fully expected that she would kick the pew to see if it were solid. I could not tell if she was planning to sit in it or buy it?

Lowliness, meekness, & forbearance will help this new body grow.

We are as responsible for its well-being as are parents of a baby. Sometimes Don and I have felt like parents - we're not sure who's the mother and whose the father, but I'm glad that we're working together and we do work well together.

Former RPC members take time to get to know this man. He has great experience and the highest commitment to the new church.

Former FUP members - you got a new church and a second pastor.

lets sit down for coffee & talk.

We are all the members of this new body with the same goal in mind - the health & growth of this new church.

That was evident at the 1st staff meeting - confident that we'll develop into a real team.

quality of people working for the good of this church.

I'm encouraged about our taking care of this new body.

- dedicated & talented staff who serve
- committed members
- guiding hand of God who encourages us to live in lowliness & meekness forbearing one another

Oh yes - the woman so helpful in the transition time of our newborns, my mother-in-law arrives Tuesday.