



Exploring Membership: Part 1

Zion Evangelical Lutheran Church
Deerfield Beach, Florida

A Member of the Body of Christ

Paul writes in 1 Corinthians 12:12-14, that the body of Christ is one body made up of many parts and then he talks about the diversity of the parts. Why is it important that not all the parts of the body are the same?

The body of Christ needs to not have all the parts of the body being the same either. Different parts look differently and have different functions that help the body. Think of some people of the body of Christ. How do they look different from one another?

What functions, gifts, or skills do they have that are different from one another? Are there functions, gifts, or skills that they have in common?

Why is the health of the body important? Why does it matter that each part of the body is healthy? What might happen if each part isn't healthy?

What makes the body of Christ healthy? What could make it unhealthy? How healthy are you as a part of the body of Christ? What can others do to help you be healthier?

Paul, in Colossians 1:17-20, reminds us that the Son of God is the head of the body, the church. What does the head do in relation to the rest of the body? We have eyes, ears, nose, mouth. How do each of those parts help your body? How do they help the body of Christ?

What does the brain do in your body? In what similar ways does Christ, as the head of the body, function?

A Member of God's Family

What is called the Old Testament, out of respect for our Jewish sisters and brothers could be called *The Law, the Writings, and the Prophets* or *TaNaK* for short. Many people have been taught that those Scriptures were the Law and that the covenant God made with God's people in that time was not good enough and that it didn't have God's grace. That's not true. God's grace can be found throughout those Scriptures. Does that change your understanding of those Scriptures? If so, how is it changed?

Unless we have been Jewish, the promise given to Abraham is given to us as adopted children. We can read about it in Galatians 4:5 and Romans 8:15. What are the promises given to "the chosen people" that are also given to you and other Christians?

A Member of the catholic Church

We learn that the word *catholic* from the Greek *katholikos*, means universal or one. It means including a wide range of things. The Church began as one. Due to humans being human, there were soon divisions. A segment of the Church is now called the Roman Catholic Church. However, many congregations in proclaiming their faith in the Apostles' Creed, say "I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic church..." and in the Nicene Creed "We believe in the Holy Spirit...in one holy catholic and apostolic church." What other word could be used in its place? Why would we keep or replace the word?

The word *evangelical* comes from the Greek word also translated *gospel* or *Good News*. Why is that a good name to include in the name of the Church and congregations?

What difference does it make that it is the Holy Spirit that calls us rather than it being our decision to come to God?

The Bible is called the Word of God. Before it was written down, almost all of it was told and told orally. Prophets proclaim God's Word. What are ways God's Word is heard and known today? How does God's Word speak to you?

Credo means *I believe*. What would you say you believe about God? Try writing a statement of **your** faith.

In the Lutheran understanding of "Law and Gospel," the Law refers to God's expectation for us to be obedient to God's commandments while Gospel refers to God's love, forgiveness, and unconditional love. In essence, we can never be good enough, but we are loved enough. This is meant to motivate us to strive to do our best to love God, ourselves, and our neighbor, doing our best. What would you say to someone who says they need to earn their salvation?

What are the two sacraments we celebrate?

Luther said that we are "the priesthood of all believers." What does that mean to you?