

February 16, 2020 Teamwork in Action

So today we find ourselves at a pinnacle point in the life of our congregation. We have heard about the life and work of various committees the last few weeks, and some more today. And today we have our AGM. The key question is: How are we to be Christ-like disciples in the midst of others? How many of you have been watching the Olympics? I think of these athletes, who, when younger, were nowhere near ready to compete at the global level, but with trainers, coaches, mentors, financial support, and fans, they were able to rise to the top and succeed.

That's the same about our faith. We don't wake up one day and know what we believe. We don't wake up one day with strong convictions. We don't wake up one day, as an infant and all of a sudden eat solid food. Infants start on breast milk or formula, and after months we gradually introduce new foods, in palpable, digestible formats. Athletes take time to reach their peak performance. Christians take time to create their faith. Paul teaches us that today. For many of us are still not yet ready for solid food. And so these past few weeks we realize we might not know everything about Deer Lake United Church and thus we've introduced to you the bits and pieces of the workings of this congregation in palpable, digestible formats; to give you a gentle taste of how things works, and perhaps to help whet your appetite for more, in a way you can manage. I mean, that's our calling as we grow as Christians – to be disciples of Christ supporting mission, liberation, justice, compassion and faith formation of our brothers and sisters here and elsewhere. We are not alone; we live in God's world.

Presentation #2

In our passage today we learn a lot from Paul and his church in Corinth. His journey has not been easy and he says some challenging things, but there is still a lot to digest. He tries to explain to us the aspect of true wisdom, maturity, and the work of the Holy Spirit, but the people

can't digest it all, they are so new at being followers they just can't make sense. So Paul helps them by saying it's not about following laws and ordinances, it's about following the Holy Spirit and remember the outcast, the downtrodden, the dismissed and the displaced. It's about showing compassion, care and the face of Christ to others through our actions. These actions are what tell the world, and God, what kind of Christian we are and who we intend to be. It's not about focusing on ourselves, it's about helping the other. But, some of us aren't there yet, some of us just don't get it and are not on solid food – that's OKAY! we need to nurture our brothers and sisters who may be new to this journey and accept where they are on their Christian path, for the key spiritual gift is the Christ-like virtue of love.

Presentation #3

The passage continues to talk about growth and that the seed is planted and we follow Jesus, but it is God that helps the growth. We have to remember, in our spiritual and faithful community of Deer Lake, that God is at the centre, that our faith in God is imperative, that we are a national group of believers supporting the love, care and compassion of neighbours here and abroad, of similar and differing views, for in that growth we see fruits of our labour. When you ask yourself: Why do you come to The United Church? Why do you come to Deer Lake? I hope the answer has something to do with gifts you offer (financially and spiritually), as well as the gifts bestowed upon you (love, grace, hospitality, acceptance, hope, and identity).

The passage also offers an invitation to reflect on the priorities of the church's ministry as it seeks to make new disciples and strengthening existing ones. This ties in with exploring our own mission and vision statements here at Deer Lake, and we must ask ourselves, how are we living them out? If the Spirit is the real agent in conversion, our primary approach to inquiries and those on the margins of the faith should be to draw them into ministries of Christ-like love

and mercy, to pray to God to give them the Holy Spirit that grows and waters good disciples. It is about serving those around us in a Christ-like way and remembering the point of it all. Let's own a podium that puts Christ in the golden light, remembering our service, outreach and commitment to our church. Amen.