

KAILUA CHRISTIAN CHURCH
SUNDAY, JANUARY 19, 2025
SERMON “A SHAMELESS PLUG FOR THE CHURCH RETREAT”
SCRIPTURE: 1 CORINTHIANS 12:1-11

1 Corinthians 12:1-11

12 Now about the gifts of the Spirit, brothers and sisters, I do not want you to be uninformed. **2** You know that when you were pagans, somehow or other you were influenced and led astray to mute idols. **3** Therefore I want you to know that no one who is speaking by the Spirit of God says, “Jesus be cursed,” and no one can say, “Jesus is Lord,” except by the Holy Spirit.

4 There are different kinds of gifts, but the same Spirit distributes them. **5** There are different kinds of service, but the same Lord. **6** There are different kinds of working, but in all of them and in everyone it is the same God at work.

7 Now to each one the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good. **8** To one there is given through the Spirit a message of wisdom, to another a message of knowledge by means of the same Spirit, **9** to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healing by that one Spirit, **10** to another miraculous powers, to another prophecy, to another distinguishing between spirits, to another speaking in different kinds of tongues,^[a] and to still another the interpretation of tongues.^[b] **11** All these are the work of one and the same Spirit, and he distributes them to each one, just as he determines.

*****May the Lord add his blessing to the reading of His Word.*****

Sermon: A Shameless Plug for the Church Retreat

This sermon is a shameless plug for the Church Retreat coming up March 14-16. The reason why the retreat is a topic for discussion today is because this section of scripture, 1 Corinthians 12, will be the focus of that weekend.

The retreat isn't only for church members, but our friends as well – and those friends will have an opportunity to become members through their attendance at the retreat, although it's not a mandatory outcome of participation.

So let me begin by addressing an understandable hesitation some of you might feel about this. The primary purpose of the retreat is for us to more deeply know ourselves in relationship to each other and Jesus, but the secondary purpose is church membership, which may be unsettling to some of you who are considering spending the weekend with us but don't want to feel pressured. Maybe the idea of membership feels like a heavy chain, a commitment to endless meetings, extra responsibilities, and the inevitable exhaustion of “church maintenance.” Maybe you're thinking, *I just want to enjoy worship, help out here and there when I can, and not get bogged down with another layer of obligation.*

But I want to gently challenge that assumption today. Membership shouldn't be about endless commitments, night meetings, or draining energy—in fact, if that's been your experience of church leadership, the retreat could be a meaningful opportunity to explore a fresh perspective and discover how church can truly nourish your spirit. Instead, church membership is about discovering the life-giving gifts God has placed in you. Paul lays it out clearly in today's passage: membership in the body of Christ isn't about maintenance; it's about awakening to the Spirit and embracing the unique ways God wants to work through you.

That's exactly what this church retreat is designed to help you do. Whether you're a current member, a potential member, or someone who just wants to explore your faith more deeply without any strings attached, the retreat will provide an opportunity to listen for God's Spirit, to discern the gifts He has placed within you, and to imagine how those gifts might come alive in your life.

We'll offer workshops and activities specifically aimed at helping you get to know yourself better—your strengths, your passions, and how God has uniquely called you to be part of His work in the world. It's not about signing up for committees or checking off another box; it's about stepping into the fullness of who God created you to be.

Imagine what this church could look like if every person here was fully aware of and awake to their spiritual gifts. Picture ministries continuing to grow in creativity, spaces filled with even more joy and belonging, and a community where the love and support we already excel at are revitalized and overflowing. This church is truly a place where people care for one another deeply and embody Christ's love in meaningful ways. However, it's natural for even the most dedicated community to experience seasons of weariness. I think in some ways, our church is coming out the other side of one of those normal seasons of weariness right now – which makes now the perfect time to spiritually “reset” together in an intentional space.

This is the vision Paul is describing—a body of Christ alive with the Spirit's power, where each member contributes in a way that is fulfilling and inspired. And that vision is what this retreat is all about. Membership, at its core, isn't about tasks or obligations; it's about committing to this group of people and saying, *I want to work with you to nurture the gifts God has given each of us*. Membership is an act of love—it's a way of saying, *I see the Spirit's work in you, and I want to be part of helping it flourish*. It's about drinking from that living water of Jesus and finding ourselves strengthened and renewed not only in what we do together here, but every aspect of our lives that we touch by purposefully taking a weekend to refresh ourselves together.

The topics of the retreat will progress thematically through 1 Corinthians 12. Friday, we will do some activities together that awaken curiosity about yourself and the individual gifts that the Spirit has given you personally (1 Cor. 12:8). Saturday, we will focus on the part of Corinthians that encourages us to use these gifts “for the common good,” (1 Cor 12:7) and what it means for these gifts of the Spirit to come together in our shared community as a church. Together, we'll explore how the Spirit leads our individual and community gifts into a deep conviction in our souls that Jesus is Lord. (1 Cor. 3) Finally, on Sunday after worship, we'll finish our time together with renewed, purposeful energy to discuss what our community is preparing to do together in the coming months, mainly the next cycle of our internship program.

Let us commit to being a church where everyone lives into their God-given purpose, supporting one another in faith and service. Let us commit to making intentional space of the Spirit to inspire us and propel us toward Jesus. Today's scripture reminds us that our gifts are meant for the body of Christ, building something greater than ourselves. This is what the body of Christ is: a community of Spirit-filled individuals reflecting God's love and power. That's the heart of this scripture, the heart of this message, and to end my shameless plug: it's the heart of what we're inviting you to experience together at the retreat.

Amen.