

Call to Worship 1 Corinthians 12:12-13

Christ is just like the human body—a body is a unit and has many parts; and all the parts of the body are one body, even though there are many.

We were all baptized by one Spirit into one body, whether Jew or Greek, or slave or free, and we all were given one Spirit to drink.

Prayer of Invocation

Creator God, source of life and lover of every soul, we lift our voices in praise and thanksgiving for the evidence of your presence in this world, and your caring for all things and all persons you have brought into being. Lord, continue to enlighten us through your Word. Overcome our resistance, our inability to hear, so that we might receive your word when spoken to us, so we might be brought forth from darkness to light. Amen.

The Word 1 Corinthians 12:14-22,26; Romans 12:1-2

Certainly the body isn't one part but many. If the foot says, "I'm not part of the body because I'm not a hand," does that mean it's not part of the body?

If the ear says, "I'm not part of the body because I'm not an eye," does that mean it's not part of the body?

If the whole body were an eye, what would happen to the hearing?

And if the whole body were an ear, what would happen to the sense of smell?

But as it is, God has placed each one of the parts in the body just like he wanted. If all were one and the same body part, what would happen to the body?

But as it is, there are many parts but one body. So the eye can't say to the hand, "I don't need you," or in turn, the head can't say to the feet, "I don't need you."

Instead, the parts of the body that people think are the weakest are the most necessary.

If one part suffers, all the parts suffer with it; if one part gets the glory, all the parts celebrate with it.

So, brothers and sisters, because of God's mercies, I encourage you to present your bodies as a living sacrifice that is holy and pleasing to God. This is your appropriate priestly service.

Don't be conformed to the patterns of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your minds so that you can figure out what God's will is—what is good and pleasing and mature.

Living the Word

This week God and I worked on the sermon topics, scriptures and titles from now into January. As I pray, for what this congregation and I need to explore, God gives me direction in my work. It is always amazing to me that when I ask God to help me as I work on a sermon, examples are presented to me.

At the beginning of the week, I was thinking: Lord, what were you thinking? 'What makes your nose twitch?' This is a much more difficult, less interesting topic than "What makes your mouth water or your face smile..." God's reply came in the form of a bunny in the church yard, an expert nose twitcher, a reminder of what the great Spirit can do to remind us who I am, and who the Creator is! Be careful what you ask for, it can be a bit humbling at times...

So I checked my sources to see what the answer is. Here is what I found - from the Understanding Life website: "*It is true, the twitch, twitch of a rabbit's nose is a very obvious characteristic, and very important to*

its survival. Not only does it draw air in to fill its lungs and breathe, in the same way as we do, but it also helps the rabbit detect danger, and identify friends and potential mates."The answers weren't in the bunny, but seeing the bunny was a subtle reminder of who is in charge of what I do, when I am willing to pay attention and ask for some help!

I next went to check on the Human Nose – Wikipedias says: *The visible part of the human nose is the protruding part of the face that bears the nostrils or nares.* Now you can impress your friends by throwing the word 'nares' into your vocabulary and conversations.

In humans, the nose is located centrally on the face and serves as an alternative respiratory passage especially during suckling for infants. The nose has an area of specialized cells which are responsible for smelling (part of the olfactory system). Another function of the nose is the conditioning of inhaled air, warming it and making it more humid.

Hairs inside the nose filter incoming air, as a first line of defense against dust particles, smoke, and other potential obstructions that would otherwise inhibit breathing, and as a kind of filter against airborne illness. In addition to acting as a filter, mucous produced within the nose supplements the body's effort to maintain temperature, as well as contributes moisture to integral components of the respiratory system. The small blood vessels of the nose warm and humidify air entering the body; During exhale - the same blood vessels then aid recovery of some moisture, mostly as a function of thermal regulation.

Here is the (too short) list of answers that I received from you this week to the question: 'What makes your nose twitch?'

The fragrance of blooming 'lillies of the valley' growing wild in the yard * Rain settling the dust after a dry spell * Fresh cut grass * Spring hyacinths * In a good way, pork roast & sauerkraut. * This week, Tuesday and Wednesday, my nose twitched as pulled pork for the community dinner was slow cooked, prepared and even after it was removed from this building, the scent lingered on Thursday. * Someone said my nose twitches "When I smell the Backroads coffee beans roasting as the breeze comes our way."(Good smell or bad?) * Pepper * Pollen * Getting ready to sneeze was another response- Here is the technical answer: *A sneeze, or sternutation, is a semi-autonomous, convulsive expulsion of air from the lungs through the nose and mouth, usually caused by foreign particles irritating the nasal mucosa. A sneeze expels air forcibly from the mouth and nose in an explosive, spasmodic involuntary action resulting chiefly from irritation of the nasal mucous membrane. Sneezing is possibly linked to sudden exposure to bright light, sudden fall in temperature, breeze of cold air, a particularly full stomach, or viral infection, and can lead to the spread of disease.*

Sneezing cannot occur during REM sleep which is a bodily state wherein motor neurons are not stimulated and reflex signals are not relayed to the brain. Sufficient external stimulants, however, may cause a person to wake from their sleep for the purpose of sneezing.

Our Creator has made us so intricately, that the nose is an amazing apparatus, "located centrally on our face." It is there for many joyful and exciting interactions in our lives. Even so, there are times when it isn't as enjoyable...

Someone's response was * smoke.(good or bad?) After our house fire, we found that somehow, miraculously, my husband Bob's gun cabinet had survived. Everything inside was intact, but the wood of the cabinet had soaked up the smell. If I open it today, 36 years later, I can still smell the smoke from the fire.

Do you remember the Biblical story of Shadrack, Meshack and Abednego from the book of Daniel? They were told that they would be thrown in the fiery furnace if they would not bow down to King Nebuchadnezzar. They

professed the one true God and wouldn't obey. The story goes that they were thrown into the fiery furnace, the King then saw four, not three and then the three - Shadrack, Meshack and Abednego, stepped out:

Daniel 3:27

The chief administrators, ministers, governors, and the king's associates crowded around to look at them. The fire hadn't done anything to them: their hair wasn't singed; their garments looked the same as before; they didn't even smell like fire!

Smell memory can be very powerful. Even imagination smell can be a strong influence on making your body react. Another less than favorable scent that makes my nose twitch is * Skunk. Although it is a sure sign of Spring each year. That is not a smell you want to linger with...Here is a few smelly verses from the Plagues that God sent to encourage Pharaoh to let the Hebrew people leave Egypt and slavery.

Exodus 7 and 8

The First Plague: The Nile River – the main water source for everyone was turned into Blood – Moses warned Pharaoh: *"The fish in the Nile are going to die, the Nile will stink, and the Egyptians won't be able to drink water from the Nile."* And so it happened.

Pharaoh did give in, but then went back on his word, so God sent frogs all over the land. *"Then Pharaoh called for Moses and Aaron, and said, 'If you pray to the LORD to get rid of the frogs from me and my people, then I'll let the people go..."*

Moses said to Pharaoh, 'Have it your way. Just as you say! That way you will know that there is no one like the LORD our God. After Moses and Aaron had left Pharaoh, Moses cried out to the LORD about the frogs that the LORD had brought on Pharaoh. The LORD did as Moses asked. The frogs died inside the houses, out in the yards, and in the fields. They gathered them together in big piles, and the land began to stink.' The next eight plagues get even more awful, so, we won't go any farther with that.

Instead we move to the gospel of John 11:39. The story of Lazarus, who was sick and died before Jesus could arrive to heal him. This is what happened when Jesus finally got there: *Jesus said, 'Remove the stone.'* Martha, the sister of the dead man, said, *"Lord, the smell will be awful! He's been dead four days."* Jesus replied, *"Didn't I tell you that if you believe, you will see God's glory?"* So they removed the stone. Jesus then called for Lazarus to come out of the tomb and as with Shadrack, Meshack and Abednego, Lazarus came out alive, probably not smelling as bad as everyone thought he might!

Some days, the only smells you seem to remember are the bad ones. Other times, the light, airy scent of flowers or the crisp bite of fall keep wafting by you at just the right moment. While the researchers from Bates College and the University of Pittsburgh present 10 basic categories, they concede that natural smells are likely a mixture of many different scents. Their category breakdown includes 10 *general* scents the human nose can readily detect.

1. Fragrant - The research team lumped fragrant smells in with perfumery, floral, cologne, and rosy smells. Fragrant scents are the ones that seem light and natural, what is typically described by perfume and cologne manufacturers as "grassy" or "herbal."
2. Woody/Resinous - These smells are distinct to nature, which makes them easily recognizable. The team included with woody/resinous scents of musty, moldy, heavy, burnt, and smoky.
3. Non-Citrus Fruity Scents- the light, fresh scents associated with strawberries, banana, and certain perfumes that draw upon these natural aromas. Unlike the sharp, bitter freshness of lemon, non-citrus fruit smells may feel more "smooth" or "silky" to the nose.

4. Sharp/Pungent - You know it the moment you smell it. These smells include sour milk, manure, sweat, and the natural smell of things that have turned putrid or foul. These scents make you reel the instant you detect them. Oniony and garlicky smells also fall into this category.
5. Chemical Smells – your noses ability to detecting synthetic smells. Even the most realistic perfume has its limits. It's for this reason you're able to quickly sniff out bleach and gasoline, or paint and felt tip markers. Researchers also included alcohol and disinfectants in the category.
6. Minty/Peppermint - Described as cool, fresh, exhilarating, the minty/peppermint smell has perhaps no rivals in the scent world. It's become synonymous with cleanliness. The researchers also include spicy in this category.
7. Sweet - Diverging from sweetness detected in fruit, the researchers classified as "sweet" the aromas of things like chocolate, vanilla, almond, and malty scents. They're warm, and often light. Oftentimes they'll be sold as "creamy" or "rich."
8. Popcorn - was grouped with other distinct smells, such as peanut butter, burnt, nutty, heavy, and warm. It's that earthy smell that isn't quite grass or wood.
9. Sickening - Sickening and decaying smells are a step beyond sharp/pungent smells. It's sewage, burnt rubber, sulfuric acid, and household gas. They aren't merely "unpleasant;" they're usually insufferable.
10. Lemon - Used in cleaning products for decades, the scent of lemon and citrus connotes freshness — like mint — with a hint of sweetness and sharpness that makes it unique from the others. It's light and acidic, and the nose knows it instantly.

Each of these smells, the researchers argue, reveals a component of the human condition that alerts you to your environment. Chemical smells signal danger; nutty, popcorn smells tell you there is food nearby. Each plays a role in ensuring your survival.

Moving on to some sweeter smells: Interestingly, even though you use it every day, none of you mentioned deodorant or perfumes. We sweat for a reason. And yet, we spend \$18 billion a year trying to stop or at least mask the smell of our sweat. Yes, that's \$18 billion a year spent on deodorant and antiperspirants. According to the New York Times, ancient Egyptians "invented the art of scented bathing" and took to applying perfume to their pits.

Possibly the nose is an under-valued part of the body. God doesn't think so. Listen to the amount of detail that God uses describing to Moses about how important the incense for the Temple is.

Exodus 30:1-8; 34-38 Make an acacia-wood altar for burning incense. The altar should be square, eighteen inches long and eighteen inches wide. It should be three feet high. Its horns should be permanently attached. Cover the altar with pure gold, including its top, all its sides, and its horns. You should also make a gold molding all around it. Make two gold rings and attach them under the molding on two opposite sides of the altar. They will house the poles used to carry the altar. Make acacia-wood poles and cover them with gold. Place the incense altar in front of the veil that hangs before the chest containing the covenant, in front of the cover that is on top of the covenant document where I will meet with you. Aaron will burn sweet-smelling incense on the incense altar every morning when he takes care of the lamps. And again when Aaron lights the lamps at twilight, he will burn incense. It should be a regular incense offering in the LORD's presence in every generation.

The LORD said to Moses: Take an equal amount of each of these spices: gum resin, onycha, galbanum, and pure frankincense. Like a skilled perfume maker, carefully blend them together and make incense, seasoned with salt, pure and holy. Beat some of it into a fine powder and put part of it in front of the covenant document in the meeting tent where I will meet with you. You should regard it as perfectly holy. When you make incense according to this formula, you shouldn't make any of it for your own use. You should regard it as holy to the LORD.

In New Zealand, "hongi" - nose pressing, is a traditional greeting amongst Maori people. However it is now generally confined to certain traditional celebrations. It is done by pressing one's nose and forehead, at the same time, to another person. When Māori greet one another by pressing noses, the tradition of sharing the breath of life is considered to have come directly from the gods. In Māori mythology, woman was created by the Gods moulding her shape out of the earth. The god Tane embraced the figure and breathed into her nostrils. She then sneezed and came to life, creating the first woman in Māori legends.

We are not Maori, yet listen to this part of **our** God's Creation story: Genesis 2:7 *the LORD God formed the human from the topsoil of the fertile land and blew life's breath into his nostrils. The human came to life.*

And this reference from the gospel of John 20:21-23 Jesus said to them again, "Peace be with you. As the Father sent me, so I am sending you." Then he breathed on them and said, "Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive anyone's sins, they are forgiven; if you don't forgive them, they aren't forgiven."