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Letter from the Chairman

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Letter From the Chairman

Grapho's theme this year, "One Body in Christ", encourages us to meditate on the ways our faith unites. By our Lord's sacrifice, all believers are bound together with the resurrected body of Christ. Inspired by the great love God shared with the church as seen in Paul's letters (Romans 12:4-5; 1 Corinthians 12:12-13), we are freed from sin, death and the power of the devil, and empowered to a life together. Our theme this year invites Christians to consider how our unity is found scripturally, sacramentally, and liturgically.

Scripturally, the unified body is the reality of the church here in time and there in eternity. St. Paul, in addressing divisions among Christians, encourages our life together to be founded in Christ. This reality is simultaneously ecclesiological, belonging to the active reign and rule of God, but at various times also experienced here in time. "For as in one body we have many members, and the members do not all have the same function, so we, though many, are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another". It is because you share the same saving faith that you belong to the glorious resurrected body of Christ and his church (Ephesian 4:4-6).

Sacramentally, the body directs Christians to Christ's gift of Holy Communion. "Because there is one bread, we who are many are one body, for we all partake of the one bread" (1 Corinthians 10:17) United in faith at the altar, we receive his true body and blood for the forgiveness of sins. Yet not only communion, but also baptism reminds Christians of what we share. "We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life" (Romans 6:4). That same salvation first revealed in Christ's own resurrection has been promised to the whole body of the church. Though this body should die, we await the resurrection at the end and the life of the new creation.

Liturgically we remember the hope and Joy we share in Christ through our time of worship and fellowship. By reading scripture, proclaiming God's word and gathering in prayer, congregations are formed in the faith. As Christians have done from the days of the church of Acts (Acts 2:42), we continue to boldly confess together a living faith. We share a faith, we share God's love, we share one body of all believers, called God's church. "Rather, speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ, from whom the whole body, joined and held together by every joint with which it is equipped, when each part is working properly, makes the body grow so that it builds itself up in love" (Ephesians

4:15-16).

The Publications Committee was overjoyed by the passion of our authors this year. Our first essay begins with extensive research into the history of our Synod.

Moving to our reflections, The first shows the blessing of our church calendar in living the faith. A second reflection celebrates the hope Christ gives, especially when our own bodies feel frail. The next reflection remembers how baptism marks us all as one family through Christ. A final reflection gives thanks for our Campus' free book shelf and the ways in which all saints are connected through Christ.

Our devotion this year considers how even in the midst of division, the church remains united in our one saving faith.

We featured two poems this year. The first paints in vivid detail the beauty of our chapel, the center of community here at St. Louis. The second Poem brings us to the Altar to remember the peace we receive in the assembly of all believers.

We were also blessed this year to publish 2 hymns. The first Hymn inspires us with the story of Christ's salvation. Our Final hymn is accompanied by an original score composed by the author of the text and confesses our unity shared in faith.

The Grapho Publication Committee prays this journal encourages readers in the faith and points to the blessed unity we count through Christ.