

**McCabe United Methodist Church**  
**Pastor Rick Fossum**  
**“Pork and Bean Theology**  
**Matthew 12:22-28 \* Romans 12:3-8: July 18, 2010**

A little boy asked his mother what was the highest number she had ever counted to. She didn't know, but she asked him about his highest number. He said, **“It was 5, 372.”**

**“Oh,”** the mother said, **“and why did you stop there?”**

**“Because,”** he replied, **“the sermon was over.”**

Well, I hope my message today won't be that painful. If it is, you can start counting now.

1. Introduction
  - Nancy and myself
  - Thank you (Knute)
  
2.
  - Art and Gary (Recognize grief)
  - We are also grieving
  - We'll grieve together (call me Art or Gary, if I can call you Vincent)
  
3. MUMC
  - Your Home
  - Ray and I will minister to McCabe to the best of our ability
  - Goals: Attendance and Membership
  - Please call if you want visit

Erasmus was a 17<sup>th</sup> century Christian scholar. He was committed to making the church better. He especially wanted Christians to take up the *‘Torch of Christ’* as he called it. In his view, too many Christians had become too indifferent when it came to their faith. Serving Christ was not a high priority for them. It sounds like a lot of Christians today, doesn't it?

Erasmus liked to tell this story about Jesus. After Jesus was resurrected and went back to heaven, the angels all gathered around him to hear his stories. Jesus told them about the people he'd met, the friends he had made, the place he'd seen, his death on the cross and his resurrection.

The angel Michael raised his hand and asked Jesus, **“Jesus, what happens to the earth people now that you’re gone? And what about the church? What about their faith? Who’s in charge?”**

Jesus answered, **“I’ve left behind my disciples, both men and women, who have been faithful to me. They will keep my message alive and will keep building my church.”**

**“But,”** Michael pressed, **“But, what if these people you’ve left behind ... these disciples fail? What other plans do you have to spread the faith and keep the church growing?”**

Jesus said, **“I have no other plans! The people I left behind are my only options.”**

It’s our turn today. We are the body of Christ. We are the ones that Christ left behind. We are the ones Christ is relying on today. There is no plan ‘B’. We’re it!

Now, the church isn’t perfect and that’s OK. Some of you are tall and some short. Some of you are young and some not so young. Some of you have lots of hair and some of you don’t. Some of you are book smart and some of you are street smart. You get the picture. We’re all different. Yet, God has given each one of us our own set of unique and individual gifts and talents. God gives them to us with these orders, **“Here,”** God says, **“I want you to have these gifts. I want you to use them to make my world better. I want you to use them to grow faith and to grow the church. Do you understand?”**

It’s why we’re here today and it’s why the this and every church exists.

Paul defines the church like this:

**For as in one body we have many members, and not all the members have the same function, so we, who are many, are one body in Christ, and individually we are members one of another. We have gifts that differ according to the grace given to us.**

The church is filled with people who are different, with different gifts. This is the beauty of God’s plan. The challenge is this: we have to be willing to use our gifts as God intends us to use them.

One of the things you'll see in my office is this can of *Van Camp's Pork and Beans*. I've had it for quite a while. Today, you can buy a can for about 60 cents.

There's a story behind this can of *Van Camp's*. A long time ago, I was shopping with my wife. We happened to be walking down the bean aisle when all of a sudden I had this revelation. I don't get revelations very often, but I had one that day.

For reason, I noticed this can of *Van Camp's Pork and Beans* that day and I realized that it was like the church.

Let me explain. Do you realize all the people who helped make this can of pork and beans? We have the people who mined the iron and the people who processed the iron into this can. We have all the people who helped make the label including those who made the colors and the paper and printing. We have all the farmers who grew the beans and produced the pork. Plus, we have all the people who advertised it and shipped it and stocked it and sold it and sacked it. 100s and 100s of people worked together to make this can of pork and beans a reality. One or a few persons couldn't do it ... not for 60 cents a can.

The church is exactly like that. The church is you and you and you. It's all of us taking our many and varied gifts and talents and working together to build a strong church, a better world and to spread the faith. The church is all of us. One or a few people can't be the church. The church is at it's best when we all work together.

In the church, everyone is special and important. What would happen if the pork producers would say, "**Well, we're not raising any more pork to sell to Van Camps?**" Or, if the truckers stopped hauling it around from store to store? The whole process would be affected, wouldn't it? It wouldn't be the same. Everyone is needed.

And not only are all people special and important, but also all of our gifts and talents are important. Regardless of how big or how small we think our gifts are, they're all necessary when it comes to being the church. The church works together. We work together!

I look forward to meeting you and working along side of you. I can't remember who said this, but I remember it was someone who was running for president. He said, "**The best is yet to come.**" He meant those words for our country.

I think the same words can be applied to McCabe Church. Our best is yet to come and the reason is because of you and you and you and your willingness to work together. It will take all of us to make this church into the church we're meant to be.

There's a world out there waiting for what McCabe Church has to offer. May God bless all our efforts.