United in Christ

“Make my joy complete by being of the same mind, maintaining the same love, united in spirit intent on one purpose.” Philippians 2:2

1. Paul’s relationship to the Philippian Church
2. Paul’s letter to the church at Philippi reveals the depth of his emotions toward the congregation he founded on his second missionary journey.
3. They have been strong supporters of Paul’s ministry and

continued to provide financial support and encouragement to him.

1. Paul’s concern for the church at Philippi reveal his care and concern for the congregation. Philippi was a city under Roman rule, and the believers were surrounded by Roman culture, customs, and values that were quite different from those of the early church. In Philippians 1:27, Paul calls the believers to live together in a manner worthy of Christ’s gospel. To stand firm, united in one spirit, and mind as they struggle to remain faithful to the gospel in their daily lives.
2. This call to unity continues in chapter 2 as Paul offers words of encouragement to the believers, reminds them of their common bond, and calls them to pattern their lives after Christ.
3. Appeal to Unity
4. “Therefore, if there is any encouragement in Christ, any comfort in love, any sharing in the Spirit, any tenderness and compassion…” Philippians 2:1.
5. Paul opens chapter 2 with reminders of the blessings they have experienced through their relationship with Christ.
6. If there is any encouragement… Believers would have known the encouragement to be found within a personal relationship with Christ, and within the Christian community. Paul himself had indeed experienced this church’s encouragement in his own life, and it was a tremendous blessing for him, especially during his imprisonment. In turn, Paul maintained contact with this community of believers to encourage their faith and work for the kingdom of God.
7. If there is any comfort…The believers at Philippi could take comfort in the promise of God’s love-a love so deep that God would send His only Son to die on the cross. It is that same love that Christ calls his followers to extend to others. It can also be an invitation to remember the comfort that they have received from the Holy Spirit and fellow believers during difficult and uncertain times.
8. If there is any sharing in the Spirit…the sweet fellowship that believers experience in meeting together, praying together, worshipping together as they are united by the work of the Holy Spirit in their lives.
9. If there is any tenderness or compassion…If they have experienced the compassion of Christ, and/or have shown that compassion to others in the church/community, then Paul concludes make my joy complete by being united in faith and living lives modeled after Christ.
10. An attitude of unity
11. After reminding the believers of the blessings of a relationship with Christ, Paul calls them to be united in mind, love, spirit, and purpose.
12. Paul calls the believers to have the same mind as Christ. The Greek word that Paul used is phroneo that is defined as a pattern of thinking, feeling, and acting. Paul isn’t asking them to think alike, but to have the same attitude-the attitude of Christ. Paul calls them to allow Christ to shape and mold their way of thinking, their emotions, and the way they live out their faith in the world. To value what Christ valued. To love as Christ loved. To be united in developing an attitude of Christ-like values and love for each other and their neighbors.
13. Paul calls them to have the same love as Christ. Throughout Jesus’ life and ministry, He modeled a life filled with love for God and love for neighbor. In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus taught his followers how to live in the world. He taught his followers to love their neighbor and their enemy, and to go the extra mile for others. He also called his followers to be salt and light in the world, to reflect His love and light through their words and actions. In Matthew 25, Jesus called his followers to feed the hungry, give water to the thirsty, welcome the stranger, to clothe those with no clothes, to visit the sick and imprisoned, and to care for the least of these. The believers at Philippi are being called to follow the example of Christ and be united in their love for God and neighbor. To love as Christ loved.
14. Paul calls them to be united in spirit. The Greek word that Paul used here is sumpsuchoi. It means of one soul; having your souls joined together. It is the only time the word is used in the New Testament. It speaks to a deeper sense of unity and harmony among the believers that is rooted in Christ.
15. Paul calls them to be united in purpose. This is the culmination of being united in attitude, love, and spirit. The church is called to be united in Christ as they serve God. That can mean putting aside individual pursuits and desires to come together to reflect the love of Christ in their community. To be united in their service to God as they seek to be the hands, feet, and presence of Christ in the world.
16. Paul’s message for us today
17. In an ever increasingly divided world, Paul’s message is relevant today. As we seek to be the Church, we are called to follow Christ’s example. To be united in attitude, love, spirit, and purpose by allowing Christ to shape our values, our love for God and neighbor, and our mission.
18. One way to be united in love and mission is through the Alma Hunt Offering. As we give, we support ministries that are united in sharing the love of Christ in their communities and world.
19. Serving Together is a movement to bring people together in the Eastern Shore to address challenges caused by generational poverty by developing connection points to strengthen relationships and unify various resources. We can also be united in prayer as we pray for people and churches to join this movement, for strongholds of poverty to be broken, and for additional resources and services to come to the Eastern Shore and bring positive change.
20. Light International Church was originally started as the African Christan Community Church to address the needs of African immigrants arriving in the area. With the support of the Alma Hunt Offering, WMU of Virginia was able to equip and inspire church leaders as they sought training. We can pray for Pastor Birch and the Light International Church in Glen Allen, VA as they reimagine ministry to today’s world.
21. CrossRoads Camp-Through the years of ministry, CrossRoads has helped campers deeply connect with Jesus through their experiences in Bible study, worship, and missions education. This ministry has also helped countless young adults discern their call to missions and ministry. The Alma Hunt Mission Offering continues to support the ministry of CrossRoads as it impacts lives such as Kristen White, pastor at Antioch Baptist Church. “It began when I was seventeen while standing in the field singing praise songs just before walking into worship in the vesper garden one evening. I looked at the ten campers who were in my cabin that week, along with all the other campers and staffers gathered in that place. The voice wasn’t audible, but in the strongest way I’ve ever heard God speak came the words ‘This…this is what I want you to do for the rest of your life.’’ Since 1985, your gifts to the Alma Hunt Offering have sustained the ministry of CrossRoads Camp and Conference Center, helping young adults like Kristen discern their callings to the mission field and pastorate. We can pray for the ministry of CrossRoads, as well as the campers and young adults continuing to experience God there.

Closing: As we seek to serve God in our communities, let us be mindful of Paul’s words. May we seek to be united in the attitude of Christ, the love of Christ, the Spirit of God at work within us, and in our mission. We have the opportunity to support many wonderful ministries through the Alma Hunt Mission Offering, and may it inspire us to seek ways to be the hands and feet of Christ in our communities, our state, and the world. Amen.