Epistle 1 Corinthians 12:12-31a

12 For just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though many, are one body, so it is with Christ.

For in the one Spirit we were all baptized into one body
 Jews or Greeks, slaves or free—and we were all made to drink of one Spirit.

14 Indeed, the body does not consist of one member but of many.

¹⁵If the foot were to say, 'Because I am not a hand, I do not belong to the body', that would not make it any less a part of the body.

¹⁶And if the ear were to say, 'Because I am not an eye, I do not belong to the body', that would not make it any less a part of the body.

¹⁷If the whole body were an eye, where would the hearing be?

If the whole body were hearing, where would the sense of smell be?

18 But as it is,
God arranged the members in the body,
each one of them,
as he chose.

¹⁹If all were a single member, where would the body be?

²⁰As it is, there are many members, yet one body.

²¹The eye cannot say to the hand, 'I have no need of you',

nor again the head to the feet, 'I have no need of you.'

the members of the body
that seem to be weaker
are indispensable,

and those members of the body
that we think less honourable
we clothe with greater honour,
and our less respectable members
are treated with greater respect;

²⁴whereas our more respectable members do not need this.

But God has so arranged the body, giving the greater honour to the inferior member, ²⁵that there may be no dissension within the body, but the members may have the same care for one another.

²⁶If one member suffers, all suffer together with it; if one member is honoured, all rejoice together with it.

> 27 Now you are the body of Christ and individually members of it.

²⁸And God has appointed in the church first apostles, second prophets, third teachers:

then deeds of power, then gifts of healing, forms of assistance, forms of leadership, various kinds of tongues.

²⁹Are all apostles? Are all prophets? Are all teachers? Do all work miracles? ³⁰Do all possess gifts of healing? Do all speak in tongues? Do all interpret?

Gospel *Luke 4:14-21*

14 Then Jesus,
filled with the power of the Spirit,
returned to Galilee,
and a report about him
spread
through all the surrounding country.

¹⁵He began to teach in their synagogues and was praised by everyone.

16 When he came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up, he went to the synagogue on the sabbath day, as was his custom.

He stood up to read, ¹⁷and the scroll of the prophet Isaiah was given to him.

He unrolled the scroll and found the place where it was written:

The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to bring good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind,

³¹But strive for the greater gifts.

to let the oppressed go free, ¹⁹ to proclaim the year of the Lord's favour.'

²⁰And he rolled up the scroll, gave it back to the attendant, and sat down.

The eyes of all in the synagogue were fixed on him.

to say
to them,
'Today
this scripture
has been fulfilled
in your hearing.'

Reading the Epistle This Week

This is 2nd of 3 weeks of one long train of thought
Imagine Corinthians as excerpts from correspondence,
One side of conversation with context and partners
Last week, framing one Spirit, Lord many gifts, service, goods
This week, one body, many members
Next week: greater gifts, hymn to love/charity

We've so adopted the diction of 'members and body'
To apply it to collections of humans,
We may forget its crude primary meaning:
Body 'parts', as at least NIV renders *melos*

How big a group do you imagine as 'body'?
Is it the local active congregation in Corinth?
Is it all the emergent communities of faith Paul knew?
Today, is it Trinity Annan, UCC, Christians, globally?

The comic imagery is powerful –
Body parts claiming too much for their gifts,
Or denying the necessary interdependence with others
With a side allusion to the taboo parts for waste disposal

The selected text ends with enumeration or roles:
Apostles, prophets, teachers,
Healing, assistance, leadership, tongues (interpretation)
Are they ranked? Mutually exclusive? Recognizable?

The tantalizing hinge ends the reading –
You know where it's going –
But that's next week!

Reading the Gospel this Week

After a very long nativity, baptism and temptation, Luke launches Jesus with a sermon in synagogue, Not with miraculous acts or calls to disciples yet, Though the Isaiah text lays out an active program in lyrics:

The Spirit of the Lord is upon me
Because God has anointed me
To preach good news to the poor
God has sent me to proclaim release to the captives
And recovery of sight to the blind
To set at liberty those who are oppressed
To proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord

That's Luke's summary of Jesus' job – Loosely derived from Isaiah 61:1-2, Hints of Isa 58.6 and Lev 25 Jubilee traditions

Jesus starts in 'their' synagogues, 'the' one in Nazareth, 'as was his custom' – so why not 'his-our' synagogue? It's a place of assembly, not just worship/learning, A community centre beyond Temple Was Jesus literate, in Hebrew and/or Aramaic?
Did Luke's community in Syria start in synagogue and leave?
This quote is not a regular *haftorah* reading,
More like the song lyrics I quoted above

The old patterns of rhetoric include variations on this: `1 .Tell `em what you're going to tell them. 2. Tell `em.

3. Tell 'em that you told 'em.'
Luke this week is giving you #1,
Summing up the 'overture to the opera' so far,
Laying out the plot in a 'peroration'

Watch for how this summary gets unpacked,
In the narrative which follows —
Luke's Jesus heading
up to Jerusalem,
up to the cross
up to the sky
beginning in Judea,
to Galilee,
into all the world
a 'launchpad' gospel