

Here's what Martin Luther has to say about Psalm 133:

“The 133<sup>rd</sup> psalm is a psalm of instruction (in both the spiritual and worldly stations). We should live together harmoniously as friends, having one teacher, one authority, and that each should carry the burden of the other. The psalmist gives two comparisons: first, of the anointing oil which flows from Aaron's head over his beard and robes; second, of the dew which falls from Mt. Hermon onto Mt. Zion. Where things happen in this way, there God gladly dwells with all his grace, blessing, and life. But where disunity and faction prevail, there the devil dwells, and death, and all misfortune.”

So a little background might be in order.

The Hebrew word Psalm literally means “song” and here in Psalm 133 we have a song of unity among the family of God, God's people. David, shepherd, king, slayer of Goliath, is credited as the author of this song, and he may have been moved to write it by an occasion where after much conflict, the people of Israel come to Hebron to make him king. (2 Sam 5:1-3).

The first and last Hebrew lines frame the whole with the main theme of the Psalm

How very good and pleasant it is when kindred live together in unity!

For there the Lord ordained his blessing, life for evermore.

Then in the middle of the Psalm, we have two complementary similes

It is like the precious oil on the head,  
Running down upon the beard,

It is like the dew of Hermon,  
Which falls on the mountains of Zion.

The center line extends the first simile

On the beard of Aaron,  
Running down over the collar of his robes.

The oil used to anoint Aaron saturated his beard and ran down on his priestly robes, signifying his total consecration to holy service. In the same way, harmony between brothers and sisters in the congregation sanctifies God's people. Put another way, you and I are to live among God's faithful people. So what does this mean for you and me?

We worship together, in our case as an ELCA church, a specific Lutheran denomination, in a congregation that is confessional meaning we are in accordance,

as stated in our constitution, with the Lutheran Confessions, specifically the Unaltered Augsburg Confession as a true witness to the Gospel, acknowledging as one with it in faith and doctrine all churches that likewise accept the teachings of the Unaltered Augsburg Confession. We, as stated in our constitution, confess the Gospel, recorded in the Holy Scriptures and confessed in the ecumenical creeds and Lutheran confessional writings, as the power of God to create and sustain the Church for God's mission in the world.

We are one in mission, God's mission, sharing the Good News of Jesus Christ, caring for the world God made and all of God's people, caring in the form of monetary, material and spiritual support and care. Are we always in agreement about these things? Certainly not, we are people, fallen and saved, and we can disagree without being disagreeable. As God's people, we are not to insist on getting our own way, instead we support others in their walks with Christ, as individuals, and together with us.

So, even when we don't always get our own way with things, we continue to support our pastor, our congregation and our joint mission as God's people. We support in practical ways, with material goods, financial resources, our time, and with our voices, meaning we don't talk behind people's backs or bad-mouth others, (including your pastor!).

Our psalm this evening likens dwelling together in unity to good oil and dew, it celebrates the joy and goodness of dwelling together as brothers and sisters, and reminds us that our family relationship isn't established by blood ties, but by our sharing together in the community of God, blessed by God.

AMEN