Recap of 11/15/26 message by Joe Ricchuiti
("God is Putting Things Together") Ephesians 3:1-13

1.Though Paul was a prisoner of the Roman government, he calls himself "the prisoner of Christ Jesus" in Ephesians 3:1. We will see ourselves as victims of circumstances or of others or we will see ourselves as servants of Jesus Christ who is Lord of our circumstances. "One's point of view makes all the difference in the world." (Wm. Barclay).

2. Lessons we can learn about ministry from Paul's ministry:
-the empowerment for ministry must come from God. If we seek to minister in our own strength we will tire, become discouraged, and quit.
-the attitude of ministry must be one of humility. Pride leads to competition with others and separation from them, true biblical humility is attractive to others, especially non-believers.
-the scope of ministry is the privilege of reaching out to Jew and Gentile alike with the good news when one receives Christ, they are accepted on an equal footing and receives the exhaustible spiritual riches of relationship with God through Christ.
-the purpose of ministry is to demonstrate to the watching world of men and of angels the wisdom of God in uniting in one body all who trust Christ as Savior.
-the sufferings of ministry, though Paul is in prison he is not the one discouraged but instead encourages the Ephesians not to quit. Ministry brings conflict and suffering. When we feel the least productive and the most near failure, we must persevere in faith knowing that God's works in our weakness (Habakkuk 3:17-19).

3. The Old Testament made it clear from the very beginning of the Jewish people that God intended to bless Gentiles (Gen. 12-1-3). The unexpected aspect of God's plan was that Jew and Gentile would be united in Christ's church with each welcomed alike on the basis of faith (Eph. 3:6). The unity of Jew and Gentile in one body is an unexpected revelation (3:1-13) [the Mystery, something previously unknown which is now being revealed]. They are one body unified by love…) (Richards)

4. Paul writes to spur believers on to unity born of love (two of the key words of Ephesians [love and unity] As Wiersbe says it, "God is putting things together."