

“GIVING THANKS”
“Thankful for the Saints”

November 1 is All Saints in the Western Christian Calendar. November 2 is All Souls Day. Traditionally, November 1 was the day that the “recognized” saints were honored and November 2 was the day all believers were honored. In the Protestant tradition, All Saints is often celebrated on the first Sunday of November.. This week, we begin a new sermon series for November, “Thankful 24/7.” Throughout the month, we will give thanks as a way of loving God and living out our discipleship. During this week we will spend some time being thankful for those saints in our lives: teachers, preachers, parents, friends, mentors, all those who have made a significant impact on who we are and who we are becoming. Those who have gone before created a path for us to follow and their light still shines on us today. May the love and grace they have shared make an impact on our church in this time and in the time to come. ---Pastor Cindy

Things I’d like to remember from today’s sermon: **“Thankful for the Saints”**

Prayer for the Week

We give you thanks O God, for all the Saints. We thank you for their words, deeds, character, strength, faithfulness and obedience. We thank you for the Saints who lived their faith every day, visiting the hospital rooms, prison cells, working the food pantries, volunteering at the homeless shelters, calling on the shut-ins, checking on the mourners, singing in the choirs, and teaching our Sunday Schools. We thank you for the Saints who lived their faith every day. Amen.

(taken from a prayer written by Reverend Stephen Brown)

Study Guide

Monday, November 5, 2018 Hebrews 12: 1

We didn't read from the twelfth chapter of Hebrews in worship, but it is the perfect scripture as we ponder our saints as part of the great cloud of witnesses. The eleventh chapter of Hebrews lists names that those familiar with the Hebrew Scriptures (the ones we often call the Old Testament) would recognize. Those who went before were faithful to their calling in God and they were faithful even though they had not seen the fulfillment of the promise of God. In the words of the author, "...that they would not, apart from us, be made perfect." Somehow, God is not content with only some being part of the kingdom, God wants everyone to be part of that great reign of justice and peace. Those who have gone before are surrounding us. *So, who belongs in your cloud of witnesses? List those whom you see as a saint in scripture, those in history and those in your personal history and say a prayer of thanks for the church of the past.*

Tuesday, November 6, 2018 Hebrews 12: 1-3

Here are words of encouragement for a people who were afraid, distressed and persecuted. These words have been a great help for generations. It reminds all believers that God in Jesus has known shame, distress and persecution. This memory, this great strength of those who have gone before and those who now walk the path of strength enables believers to step out in faith. List those "saints", those witnesses who you rely on in your life. *Think of all the ways they have a difference in your life. If it is possible today, write an e-mail or note, pick up the phone and call and say how "thankful" you are for your relationship with them.*

Wednesday, November 7, 2018 Luke 6: 27-31

From the strength given, believers are called to live out their faith. "Love your enemies, do good, bless, and treat people the way you want to be treated." Obviously I am paraphrasing Jesus, and these verses are found in alternate forms in other gospels. Yet, these are verses that reminded the disciples and followers of Jesus throughout the ages of what discipleship meant and what it looks like to be a saint of God. Not only are believers strengthened by others, they are called to be the saints to others, to live as Jesus lived. In our culture right now, people are struggling and angry with each other. *How do we love our enemies and do good to those with whom we disagree? Today, ask God to help you be a witness and a saint in the lives of others.*

Thursday, November 8, 2018 Revelation 21: 1-3

Obviously we are not the first generation that longs for a new heaven and new earth. For hundreds, thousands of years, people have longed for God to create a place of joy and love. Death comes to every people and every generation. Some deaths come after a long and eventful life, others come far too quickly or tragically. These verses give voice to the grief and sorrow of death and the longing and hope for a time when all will gather together in joy in that "new" place, a holy city in the presence of God. *How do you imagine that new heaven and that new earth? How does your faith help you experience that promise in this time and place?*

Friday, November 9, 2018 Revelation 21: 4-6

God will wipe away all the tears from their eyes. There will be no more sorrow, death or sadness. This is the promise believers long for, the time when tragedy no longer strikes, where there is no more war or violence, no more pain or sickness. Where God reigns in love and grace and peace. We can on occasion get glimpses of that reign of peace and justice. As believers we are called to give thanks and to call upon God who will help us live a life of thanksgiving, faith and hope. *Today, spend some time giving God thanks for the glimpses of the kingdom and for all the people that help you see, hear and participate in it.*