**Sunday, November 1, 2015, the All Saints' Day/Reformation Sunday**

**Call to Worship (please see insert)**

**Prayer of the Day**

Lord, we come into your presence thanking you and praising you. We rejoice in the thunder rolling across your skies, the cold drops of rain which remind us that fall is on the way, the colorful last harvests of summer. You created this world and share it with us, and we thank you. May we also partake of your Word today, read and proclaimed, that when we also receive the bread and the cup, it be truly a communion with you. In Christ Jesus, your Word made flesh. Amen.

**Call to Confession**

**Prayer of Confession (please see bulletin)**

**Assurance of Pardon**

 People of God, hear the good news: In the name of Jesus Christ, we are forgiven.

 **Thanks be to God.**

 Christ is our peace. The peace of Christ be with you all. **And also with you.**

**PSALM 24:1-10 Red Hymnal p 473 Reading #6**

**TIME OUT FOR TEACHING: Bible Genres - Oracular Disclosure**

When the saints of old needed a word from God and they didn't have priests and kings to tell them what they should do, God gave them prophets. In times such as when they were in Exile in Babylon and Israel was dispersed and scattered. Prophets came along such as Jeremiah, Ezekiel and Daniel and Isaiah. Being a prophet was no popularity contest. Prophecy meant disclosing words from God and they were not always comfortable words.

Prophets also could give advice and offer hope. Ezekiel is shown a vision of the New Temple in Jerusalem, not built with human hands. It doesn't appear actually in front of him, but it is such a real vision he is told by an angel to walk about it and take measurements of this Temple God promises to build and the size of it boggles the mind. God tells Israel that they are going to be in Exile for 70 years - sounds like bad news at first - but the promise is God will remember them and gives them permission to put down roots, have families and make the most of their time while they are scattered from their homeland.

God uses the prophets of the Old Testament and the New - like John of Patmos - to speak to us. It reveals that God has a bond to us. It shows us that God made a promise to humanity and that is to guide us and care for us, even when we have been sorely disobedient. That promise goes a long way back to the covenant He cut with Abraham. I think next Sunday the teaching time will be about covenant language. Come back next Sunday. It will blow you away.

**Prayer for Illumination**

Teach us, O God, by your Word and Spirit. Help us to hear, know, and live the gospel, so that we might proclaim in word and deed the good news that you offer us this day— a message of peace to the whole community, and love with faith through Christ our Lord. Amen.

**Ruth 2:1-12, 17-20** Now Naomi had a relative on her husband’s side, a man of standing from the clan of Elimelek, whose name was Boaz.

**2** And Ruth the Moabite said to Naomi, “Let me go to the fields and pick up the leftover grain behind anyone in whose eyes I find favor.”

Naomi said to her, “Go ahead, my daughter.” **3** So she went out, entered a field and began to glean behind the harvesters. As it turned out, she was working in a field belonging to Boaz, who was from the clan of Elimelek.

**4** Just then Boaz arrived from Bethlehem and greeted the harvesters, “The Lord be with you!”

“The Lord bless you!” they answered.

**5** Boaz asked the overseer of his harvesters, “Who does that young woman belong to?”

**6** The overseer replied, “She is the Moabite who came back from Moab with Naomi. **7** She said, ‘Please let me glean and gather among the sheaves behind the harvesters.’ She came into the field and has remained here from morning till now, except for a short rest in the shelter.”

**8** So Boaz said to Ruth, “My daughter, listen to me. Don’t go and glean in another field and don’t go away from here. Stay here with the women who work for me. **9** Watch the field where the men are harvesting, and follow along after the women. I have told the men not to lay a hand on you. And whenever you are thirsty, go and get a drink from the water jars the men have filled.”

**10** At this, she bowed down with her face to the ground. She asked him, “Why have I found such favor in your eyes that you notice me—a foreigner?”

**11** Boaz replied, “I’ve been told all about what you have done for your mother-in-law since the death of your husband—how you left your father and mother and your homeland and came to live with a people you did not know before.**12** May the Lord repay you for what you have done. May you be richly rewarded by the Lord, the God of Israel, under whose wings you have come to take refuge.”

**17** So Ruth gleaned in the field until evening. Then she threshed the barley she had gathered, and it amounted to about an ephah.**18** She carried it back to town, and her mother-in-law saw how much she had gathered.

Then Ruth told her mother-in-law about the one at whose place she had been working. “The name of the man I worked with today is Boaz,” she said.

**20** “The Lord bless him!” Naomi said to her daughter-in-law. “He has not stopped showing his kindness to the living and the dead.” She added, “That man is our close relative; he is one of our guardian-redeemers.”

**JOHN 11:32-44**

33When Jesus saw her weeping, and the Jews who came with her also weeping, he was greatly disturbed in spirit and deeply moved. 34He said, "Where have you laid him?" They said to him, "Lord, come and see."35Jesus began to weep. 36So the Jews said, "See how he loved him!"37But some of them said, "Could not he who opened the eyes of the blind man have kept this man from dying?"38Then Jesus, again greatly disturbed, came to the tomb. It was a cave, and a stone was lying against it. 39Jesus said, "Take away the stone." Martha, the sister of the dead man, said to him, "Lord, already there is a stench because he has been dead four days."40Jesus said to her, "Did I not tell you that if you believed, you would see the glory of God?" 41So they took away the stone. And Jesus looked upward and said, "Father, I thank you for having heard me.42I knew that you always hear me, but I have said this for the sake of the crowd standing here, so that they may believe that you sent me." 43When he had said this, he cried with a loud voice, "Lazarus, come out!" 44The dead man came out, his hands and feet bound with strips of cloth, and his face wrapped in a cloth. Jesus said to them, "Unbind him, and let him go."

**Sermon:**  "This is Our Story"

The image of Lazarus emerging from a tomb wrapped in strips of cloth sounds a little like a half dozen mummy movies! I'm not entirely sure why they chose this story to be among the lectionary texts for All Saints' Day. The story of Lazarus is probably a foreshadowing of Jesus' raising us from the dead.

This story probably has some sort of significance to our friends South of the Border, who celebrate of the Day of the Dead. El Dia de los Muertos celebrates the ancestors who have died and are in some respects still very much alive to them. In Mexico, people build private altars to their deceased families and place there candy skulls, special breads and foods their loved ones enjoyed eating, as a means of honoring their ancestors.

As we live and breathe, the saints and ancestors who have made an important impact on us are very much alive to us too.

All Saints' Day can be a way to remember the saints who have had an important impact on our lives and faith. Saints of the Scripture and as well as those saints who we have known personally. Being saint involves becoming a blessing to another. This happens in today's Old Testament reading.

In fact it's a chain of blessing. Ruth blesses Naomi when both of them become widowed and travel back to Naomi's homeland. Ruth promises Naomi she will never leave her. And, Boaz blesses them, impressed with Ruth's promise and commitment to Naomi. The chain of blessing continues as Boaz and Ruth marry and have a child, that child is a part of a blessing which ultimately impacts the entire world, through the genealogy of Jesus Christ.

But remember how this blessing starts - it comes out of complete destitution. Ruth and Naomi's husbands were dead and they had no children to carry on the property. Economically, legally and socially they were as good as dead. As Naomi said in chapter 1: "No longer call me 'Naomi' for the Lord sent me away full and returned me empty."

This wasn't just the greatest love story ever told because this nice strong man shows generosity to this poor foreign woman and saves her from poverty. It's more than that. It is about the commitment of three people to one another and to doing what was best for the whole family. And that commitment revolves around loving-kindness.

In Hebrew the word is "chesed." It's used again and again in this book. The best translation for it is "loving-kindness," also translated as compassion, grace or just love. Ruth didn't have to remain with her mother-in-law after their husbands died. But she did because of "chesed." Boaz didn't really have to care about Ruth because she was a foreigner and not a blood relative. But he did it because of "chesed" too. He is moved by the way she has committed to Naomi and so he invites her to remain in his field to glean all she needs. He protects her from harm by telling the other field hands to leave her alone. And he gives her space and dignity to go about her work. Naomi too contributes by offering Ruth the sage advice she needs to do the things that will make the best of a difficult situation.

This is saintly behavior. Ruth, Boaz and Naomi make commitment to each other. Look what God does with commitment. Sounds like church at its best, don't you think? People helping people. People showing and teaching dignity. People, working together to make the most of a bad situation. People, adopting each other out of compassion, as if they were their very own flesh and blood. That's the story of Ruth, Naomi and Boaz. That should be our story too. I give thanks to God for human moments in Scripture, which show us how to be blessings to another, and therefore saints, as we seek to live out Good News of Jesus Christ in our everyday lives, as the Word which makes you and me family. Amen.

**Service of Holy Communion (Sharon, this is a different, responsive Communion Liturgy)**

This is the joyful feast of the people of God!
Men, women, and children will come from North and South,
and from East and West,
and sit at table in the kingdom.
**They will come wearing traditional clothing from the cultures of the world,**
**in kilts and kimonos and in seersucker suits,**
in mumus and cowboy boots, lederhosen and caftans,
**and they will come wearing rags,**
and they will sit at the table together.
**They will gather, and God will serve them bread, and wine,**
and rice, and kim chee, and quesadillas, and curries
**and fish stew, and cheeseburgers, and all manner of things that are good to eat,**
and in that feast they will eat as much as they like,

**TOGETHER: and never hunger again**.

The kingdom of God is not far away –
**it is here, among us,**
**and God invites us to join that feast now.**
Come, for all is ready.

**Prayer of Thanksgiving**

The Lord be with you.

**And also with you.**

Lift up your hearts.

**We lift them up to the Lord.**

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

**It is right to give our thanks and praise.**

We do praise you, O Lord, at all times,

and our souls boast in you.

From the beginning, you have reached down to the depths

and lifted your people into new relationship with you.

You shine your light on the world, and we are radiant with your joy.

When we cried out to you, drowning in our sins,

you heard us and came to us in Jesus Christ.

Through his life, death, and resurrection,

you have delivered your people from every trouble.

Therefore, we join with the faithful of every nation,

singing joyfully to the glory of your name:

**Holy, holy, holy…**

You are great and holy, O God, and blessed is our Lord Jesus.

By his grace, you have provided for all your people,

and we have all we need.

Pour out then your Holy Spirit upon these gifts of bread and cup

that we have taken from your bounty,

that as we eat and drink in Jesus’ name,

we might taste and see that the Lord is good indeed.

Prayers are now lifted high to you for:

Let your eyes remain on your people, and listen to our prayer.

More than that, walk with us as we take refuge in you,

so we might carry your good news to the brokenhearted

and lift up those who are crushed in spirit.

Bind us to you and to all your people, now and forever,

in the name of Jesus, with whom we pray, saying together:

*The Lord’s Prayer*

**Words of Institution - please use the responsive version, Sharon. Thanks!**