**First Presbyterian Church, Tucumcari**

*The Church With the Holy Spirit Window*

**Sunday, November 1, 2020 All Saints’ Day**

**Rev. Amy Pospichal, Pastor Accompanist, Marjorie McKenzie**

**Hymns:**

**RH 368 My Hope is Built on Nothing Less**

**RH 304 O Master, Let Me Walk With Thee**

**RH 338 He Leadeth Me, O Blessed Thought!**

**Prayer of the Day/Litany for All Saints**

**We remember**

teachers and storytellers who made God’s stories come alive for us and

**we give thanks!**

**We remember**

choir members, praise bands, organists, and all the musicians who sang and played your praises and

**we give thanks!**

**We remember**

One-preachers and lay leaders who led our worship through the years and

**we give thanks!**

**We remember**

parents, grandparents, aunts, uncles, cousins, sisters, and brothers who sat with us on Sundays and lived out their faith all week long and

**we give thanks!**

**We remember**

our church families-this one and others we have loved. We remember all those who have been a part of this faith family and

**we give thanks!**

**We remember**

our ancestors in the faith whose courage enables us to be here today. For our sisters and brothers in the faith whose names are remember only by God

**we give thanks!**

**Prayer:** We thank you, Almighty God, for the people who have lived and died in the faith and the examples they set for us. In our worship here and our daily living, may we too seek to exemplify holiness. Remind us to take time out to be holy, that we might become saints to one another, so that this world know what it means to be loved by you. Through the gracious name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

**Call to Confession**

Our lives are full of mistakes and errors – places where we follow self-generated idols instead of the One True God. We are not alone in these mistakes – all of those who have come before us also were plagued with temptation and sin. Let us come before God, just as generations of believers have done, and pray for God’s forgiveness and grace.

**Prayer of Confession**

**Beloved God, who was known to our mothers and fathers, and even to our spiritual forebears, have mercy on us. We do not always love as you would have us love. We do not always do as you would have us do. In our stubbornness, we turn from you when we should turn toward you. Hold us, dear One – comfort us when we mourn the passing of friends and family, and help us to know that they are rejoicing in your presence. We praise you for the grace you shower on us, constantly forgiving our errors, especially the ones that we don’t share with any but you. Hear now the silent fears and worries of our hearts.**

*A time of silence*

**Assurance of Forgiveness**

Friends, hear the good news! Though thousands upon thousands of our ancestors did not follow God’s ways perfectly, we have hope in the one who did! Jesus, a man of a particular people in a particular time, taught through his words and deeds that God has already forgiven us. Thus, we and all who have come before us are rightly known as saints – the holy ones of God! Thanks be to God for God’s mercy, grace, and love! **Amen!**

The peace of the Lord be with you.

**And also with you.**

**Psalm 34:1-10, 22**

I will bless the Lord at all times;
his praise shall continually be in my mouth.
**My soul makes its boast in the Lord;
let the humble hear and be glad.**O magnify the Lord with me,
and let us exalt his name together.

**I sought the Lord, and he answered me,
and delivered me from all my fears.**Look to him, and be radiant;
so your faces shall never be ashamed.
**This poor soul cried, and was heard by the Lord,
and was saved from every trouble.**The angel of the Lord encamps
around those who fear him, and delivers them.
**O taste and see that the Lord is good;
happy are those who take refuge in him.**O fear the Lord, you his holy ones,
for those who fear him have no want.
**The young lions suffer want and hunger,
but those who seek the Lord lack no good thing.**

The Lord redeems the life of his servants;
**none of those who take refuge in him will be condemned.**

**Presentation of Offering and Offertory**

**Time out for Teaching: “What is a Saint?”**

A contemporary theologian by the name Frederick Buechner once wrote his own definition of a “saint.” He says (in Wishful Thinking: A Theological ABC) “In His holy flirtation with the world, God occasionally drops a handkerchief. These handkerchiefs are called ‘saints.’”

What do you think of such a definition?

So what do you consider the definition of a “saint?”

In the Roman Catholic Church, as you know, there are canonized saints. These are holy handkerchiefs of God (I guess!) who have, in a nutshell, pass the following steps:

1. **Step** one: Wait five years - or don't. ...after the person has died so that emotions calm down about the person.
2. **Step** two: Become a 'servant of God' ...
3. **Step** three: Show proof of a life of 'heroic virtue' ...
4. **Step** four: Verified miracles. ...this includes the answers of the saints prayer. You could be exempt from this step if you die for your faith. This is the step of beatification. Mother Teresa of Kolkata is reached this step, but has not yet been canonized as a saint.
5. **Step** five: **Canonisation**….This is the final step to being a canonized saint in the Catholic Church. This requires another verified miracle attributed to the person after their death. Then they are formally recognized by the church.

It sounds like a long process, and it seems rather bureaucratic. I cannot knock it. The positive side of it is these holy people are lifted up as examples for us and as people to venerate and honor. A drawback to this is when we look at them as people who are so great compared to us, that we might risk thinking that we will never be able to attain such a purified life of faith for ourselves.

The word saint has roots in Latin and you can hear it in Spanish and Portuguese “san” or “santo” or “santa.” Like the ship “Santa Maria”. It is related to “sanctified” and “sanitized”. The word “saint” therefore has something to do with salvation, purity and holy.

In German, saint is “heilige” – meaning “holy one” and is similar to the word for “health”

In Greek it is “hagios” such as “Hagia Sophia” meaning “holy wisdom.”

The saints in the Book of Revelation are described in today’s reading. There are multitudes of people from “every tribe and nation and tongue” around the throne of Jesus the Lord, praising God forever from heaven. The explanation of who these people are is as follows: “These are they who have come out of the great ordeal; they have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. 15  For this reason they are before the throne of God, and worship him day and night within his temple, and the one who is seated on the throne will shelter them. 16  They will hunger no more, and thirst no more; the sun will not strike them, nor any scorching heat; 17  for the Lamb at the center of the throne will be their shepherd, and he will guide them to springs of the water of life, and God will wipe away every tear from their eyes.”

Saints come through tribulations and ordeals while staying true and close to the one who is at the center of all of our lives. Everyone has the opportunity for this. You and I have all come through trials during this life. Sainthood has a lot to do with how we not only “survive” but how our faith can thrive and grow under the pressure. Can you think of a time when this has happened to you?

**Prayer for Illumination**

Holy and Mysterious God, open our eyes to see you in our midst, open our ears to hear your word afresh, open our hearts to know your grace. Give us understanding minds and willing spirits, that we might be continually made new by your love. In the name of the living Word we pray. Amen.

**Gospel Matthew 5:1-12**

1When Jesus saw the crowds, he went up the mountain; and after he sat down, his disciples came to him. 2Then he began to speak, and taught them, saying:

3“Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

4“Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted.

5“Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth.

6“Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled. .

7“Blessed are the merciful, for they will receive mercy.

8“Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God.

9“Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God.

10“Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness’ sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

11“Blessed are you when people revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account. 12Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you.”

**Epistle 1 John 3:1-3**

1See what love the Father has given us, that we should be called children of God; and that is what we are. The reason the world does not know us is that it did not know him. 2Beloved, we are God’s children now; what we will be has not yet been revealed. What we do know is this: when he is revealed, we will be like him, for we will see him as he is. 3And all who have this hope in him purify themselves, just as he is pure.

**Revelation 7:9-17**

9After this I looked, and there was a great multitude that no one could count, from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, robed in white, with palm branches in their hands. 10They cried out in a loud voice, saying,
     “Salvation belongs to our God who is seated on the throne, and to the Lamb!”
11And all the angels stood around the throne and around the elders and the four living creatures, and they fell on their faces before the throne and worshiped God, 12singing,
     “Amen! Blessing and glory and wisdom
     and thanksgiving and honor
     and power and might
     be to our God forever and ever! Amen.”

13Then one of the elders addressed me, saying, “Who are these, robed in white, and where have they come from?” 14I said to him, “Sir, you are the one that knows.” Then he said to me, “These are they who have come out of the great ordeal; they have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.
15  For this reason they are before the throne of God,
          and worship him day and night within his temple,
          and the one who is seated on the throne will shelter them.
16  They will hunger no more, and thirst no more;
          the sun will not strike them,
          nor any scorching heat;
17  for the Lamb at the center of the throne will be their shepherd,
          and he will guide them to springs of the water of life,
     and God will wipe away every tear from their eyes.”

**Sermon: “I Can See Clearly Now” Rev. Amy Pospichal**

The snow is gone. I can see the roads better, the trees and sidewalks have been rinsed clean, except for the sludge of sand on Rt 66. A good 3-day snowstorm certainly can help clean things up and refresh the air, maybe even quash those allergies. It’s nice to be able to see clearer skies, and hope also that the snow helped firefighters up north of us. Thank God for the refreshing snow.

I know that some of you dislike snow an awful lot. It affects our arthritis. Many of us dislike driving in snow. But we needed it. And some good moisture, though it doesn’t fix the drought, can be such a relief.

Disasters of many kinds, including a bad snowstorm, can reveal who your real neighbors are. If your car gets stuck in a snowdrift, it warms the heart to have someone you barely know come along and pull you out. Saints come out to help in terrible times. Their work in times of trouble to help another takes compassion and perseverance and helps us all see a little more clearly what true faith can look like. Full of compassion for a neighbor in need, or for someone on the other side of the world who needs bread and clothing. They’re God’s messengers.

Today we remember the faithful ones, saints, whose lives we admire and respect. These are ordinary people living extraordinary lives of faith. Some have performed amazing acts that change the world. But ordinary saints are also right under our noses, living out their faith in quiet ways, doing things that make their own little corner of God’s world better, moment by moment. People who know better than to advertise their own greatness. And that’s what makes them even greater in my mind. The saints take their faith as seriously as the need for regular exercise. Every time we exercise our faith, we become stronger. And, whenever we face a hardship or any kind, the tool for persevering is faith.

There are many examples of sainthood, as described in every one of our readings today. For example, Jesus describes the sainthood of the early Christians, as the church was being persecuted for their faith. These beatitudes bless those who are persevering in many ways. Some are trying to stay meek, some trying to persevere with a poverty of spirit, some are being reviled by others yet remain faithful. Each of the beatitudes describe people who are blessed, not because of how hard life has been for them, but for how they manage their hardships in faith and perseverance. Some of these describe people who are willing to get down and dirty with the complex troubles of another person’s life, who enter the pain of another out of compassion. I see that in those whom I consider the most successful nurses and doctors, who, despite their superior educations, are willing to go the extra mile with their patients, feeling for their fear and pain, instead of just delivering treatment. It takes true faith and perseverance to sit with another, knowing that you cannot do much to fix the situation.

In St. Mark’s Presbyterian Church in Lomita, California, the Reverend Billy Song welcomed a new visitor. His name was John. John became a frequent attendee at their church. Then, he stopped coming so often. Word got around that John had been living in his car, and then he lost his car and ended up in a homeless encampment. A church member, named Nancy, located him and started bringing him food. Becky, another church member, invited Joan and Julie, saying, “Let’s go to the homeless encampment.” So Joan, Nancy, Becky and Julie started to go there, bringing people food and water. Becky said that her compassion just swelled up in her heart to see people living there. The people were thankful for their help. The 5 women who began this ministry earned a nickname: “Mighty Women of Faith.” These Mighty Women helped the people get mental health appraisals, by going to see them regularly and assisting them with getting to doctors’ appointments. Some of them now live in apartments, now that they have been able to get connected with society again. This is just one more example of saints of the church. People who do not ignore, but move with compassion to start new relationships and ultimately, help transform lives for the better. In LA County, they estimate 60,000 homeless people. Not only do they lose connection with the rest of the world and their families, homelessness is a burden on society.

Sainthood, as you can see, invariably includes the call to perseverance in all things through faith. You can be a saint too. Amen.

**Service of Holy Communion**

**Invitation and Great Prayer of Thanksgiving**

We gather at this table
not for God’s benefit but for our own.
We recall the story of salvation,
because we are the ones who need to know it again.
Remember, beloved, the goodness of the One
who day by day calls the world into being;
who life by life calls humanity into loving relationship;
who is always and everywhere faithful.
Rejoice, children of God, in the life of Jesus Christ,
who is born into our lives;
who teaches us the way of righteousness;
who walks with us through the gates of suffering and death;
who is our resurrection life.
Gather at this table
to share in these gifts of bread and cup;
to receive the Holy Spirit;
to be made new and united with all God’s people,
the redeemed of every time and place.
At this table and in all our lives,
Jesus is yet with us – even to the end of the age.

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.**

In the midst
of our lives:
our gratitude and concerns,
our hopes and longings…
grant us an abiding sense of Your Comfort.

and be especially gracious to these we name before you…

Tom Anderson and Jean Corey

Glenda Coles

For our church and its leaders

For Teresa Brake’s daughter, Kathy and her family

For Susie Martinez, that she find transportation and help

For Amber, who lives in Washington

For Derwin Dobbs, radiation therapy for cancer (Ronni Wright’s son-in-law)

For Pat Sieglen, recuperating from surgery

For Jonah after his accident

For Jerry Jaramillo, recovering from massive wounds from motorcycle accident

For Karim, at the loss of two family members

Jessica and Leslie in their grief for their mom, and for Leslie’s growing baby, that her child be healthy

For those anxious about going out in public

For those living in fear of or with COVID

For students, teachers and families

For our leaders local and distant

For the little grandson of Ruby Blea

For our dear church members and friends who are alone or who privately suffer from infirmity

For our nation as we vote for what we believe and think

For local business owners and their clientele as we endure changing restrictions on our movements

In silence, we now lift high our prayers to you…

With thanks and praise, we trust that God knows all our needs.
There is nothing else to say,
so let us join in the prayer Jesus taught:
*The Lord’s Prayer*

**Words of Institution**

**Prayer After Communion**

God, you have been our dwelling place for many generations. Now, you make us your dwelling place, with the gifts of your Holy Supper. Strengthen us always with the knowledge of your power and presence, that as we leave this place we may shine the light of your faith, hope and love. Through our savior Jesus Christ, Amen.

**THE LIFE OF THE CHURCH**

**Social Distancing and Personal Protection.** Please respect one another’s space, observing the 6-foot distancing between one another. Please remember to wash your hands on the way out today. If you need a protective face covering, please notify the pastor and she can help you.

**The Next Session Meeting will be after church on Sunday, November 8th.**

**Operation Christmas Child boxes are due on Sunday, November 8th.** As per the usual, if you get them to church on Sunday, Rev. Amy will get them turned in to Center Street UMC. There are 6 boxes left. One has your name on it!



Matthew 25: Eradicating Systemic Poverty