**MODIFIED SERVICE- All Saint’s Sunday- November 1, 2020**

**ZION EV. LUTHERAN CHURCH, PHLIPSBURG**

Welcome to everyone on this All Saint’s Sunday, where we continue to gather safely from the comfort of our homes as a reminder of our love for one another.

In Prepandemic times we would gather and remember the saints of Zion who passed away this year by inviting family members to light a candle of remembrance. Because we are not gathering in person I invite each of you gather three candles at home to light during our litany as a sign of remembrance and love.

I ask that you please keep Denise and Rory Haffner in your prayers, Rory’s grandmother Carol Otterbein passed away peacefully on Friday afternoon. Also, our neighbour’s daughter Alea Fletcher was diagnosed with a progressive form of Leukemia a week and a half ago, please keep Alea, her husband, her daughters and her extended family in your prayers as she begins treatment.

The Messenger will be available hopefully by Tuesday or Wednesday of this week,

Our GotoMeeting Coffee hour meets at 11:00, please join us!

Please remember that Zion relies on your continued support each week to meet our monthly expenses. Thank you to all who support and pray for our congregation.

**GATHERING**

The Holy Spirit calls us together as the people of God.

**All Saints Day Litany\*** adapted from Rev. Mindi Welton-Mitchell

We remember the great ancestors of our faith, from Abraham and Sarah, to Paul and Phoebe: **ancestors of the faith, we remember you.**

We remember the prophets and priests, the ministers and teachers who have taught us the way of God: **teachers of the faith, we remember you.**

We remember our grandparents and parents, aunts and uncles, those who have gone before us in our lifetime: **family of our faith, we remember you.**

We lift up the memories of children and grandchildren, brothers and sisters, husbands and wives and parents, whose lives ended too soon: **those close in our heart, we remember you.**

We hold in our prayers all who have died of Covid 19 over this past year. We remember all who have fought cancer, heart disease, strokes and the many other diseases in the world that have claimed hundreds of thousands of lives: **freed from pain and struggle, we remember you.**

We lift up to you, O God, the names of those we have lost in this past year from our lives, knowing that they are with your heart forever. As we read these names, we will pause after each name to light a candle, to remember, pray, and give thanks for their life. Ruby Doering and Harold Seyler

We light a third candle to remember family and friends who live with the saints and are never forgotten.

Loving God, we celebrate the lives of those we have named, and lift up many more names in our hearts.

Family of God, we remember you, and we honor you. We know you are with us in the spirit of worship, And you will not be forgotten.

We give you thanks, O God, for all who have gone on to join with you beyond this life. We trust in the hope of resurrection and the promise of new life in Christ, and we know that you are with us in our grief and celebration, we are never alone.

In the name of Christ, in whom love lives forever, we pray. **Amen.**

**GREETING**

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God,

and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

**And also with you.**

**PRAYER OF THE DAY**

Let us pray.

Almighty God, you have knit your people together in one communion in the mystical body of your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord. Grant us grace to follow your blessed saints in lives of faith and commitment, and to know the inexpressible joys you have prepared for those who love you, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **Amen.**

**GATHERING SONG*Give Thanks for Saints* (ELW 428)**

1 Give thanks for those whose faith is firm  
when all around seems bleak:  
on God's good promise they rely,  
so while they live and when they die  
how forcefully they speak--  
the strong, who once were weak!  
  
2 Give thanks for those whose hope is clear,  
beyond mere mortal sight:  
who seek the city God has planned,  
the true, eternal promised land,  
and steer on toward that light,  
a beacon ever bright.  
  
3 Give thanks for those whose love is pure,  
a sparkling precious stone:  
they show by what they say and do  
an inward beauty, warm and true,  
for God's concerns they own--  
God's love through them is known.  
  
4 Give thanks for saints of ages past  
and saints alive today:  
though often by this world despised,  
their hearts by God are richly prized.  
Give thanks that we may say  
we share their pilgrim way.

**WORD**

God speaks to us in scripture reading, preaching, and song.

**FIRST READING: Revelation 7:9-17**

A reading from Revelation.

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.  
 15For 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.  
 16They will hunger no more, and thirst no more; the sun will not strike them, nor any scorching heat;17for 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.”

**PSALM: Psalm 34:1-10, 22**

1I will bless the Lord at all times; the praise of God shall ever be in my mouth.  
2I will glory in the Lord; let the lowly hear and rejoice.   
3Proclaim with me the greatness of the Lord; let us exalt God’s name together.  
4I sought the Lord, who answered me and delivered me from all my terrors.  
5Look upon the Lord and be radiant, and let not your faces be ashamed.  
6I called in my affliction, and the Lord heard me and saved me from all my troubles.   
7The angel of the Lord encamps around those who fear the Lord and delivers them.  
8Taste and see that the Lord is good; happy are they who take refuge in God!  
9Fear the Lord, you saints of the Lord, for those who fear the Lord lack nothing.  
10The lions are in want and suffer hunger, but those who seek the Lord lack nothing that is good.  
22O Lord, you redeem the life of your servants, and those who put their trust in you will not be punished.

**SECOND READING: 1 John 3:1-3**

A reading from 1 John.

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.

**GOSPEL: Matthew 5:1-12**

The holy gospel according to Matthew.

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.”

**SERMON**

On November 1, many Christians around the world gather to commemorate All Saint’s Day. On this day we gather to remember the saints of the Bible, the saints of faith who have ministered throughout time and history, like St Patrick, St. Francis of Assisi, and Mother Teresa. We also pause to remember those in our congregation who passed on into life eternal during the past year. We remember the blessings they gave us and the lives they lived in faith as beloved children of God.

Our gospel reading today is a well known one. They are the Beatitudes from Jesus’ Sermon on the Mount. Jesus had been traveling throughout Galilee, teaching, proclaiming the good news, and healing every disease and sickness of those who followed him. The crowds grew as he traveled. Everyone wanted to see and know this man who was changing the world with the good news and unconditional love of God. Jesus saw the crowds and decided to travel up the mountain, perhaps so all could hear and see him better. He then sat down and began to teach those who had gathered around him, reinterpreting the old law of Moses into a new law of blessings and love. The blessings were not the usual blessings one would expect. Jesus was blessing the poor, the meek, the hungry, the persecuted, and those who mourned. When we think of blessings we usually think of those who have wealth, status, or health as being blessed in our world. But Jesus was blessing those of the exact opposite lot in life. He contradicted conventional wisdom and thought.

When Jesus speaks the words of verse 4, “Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted,” he was alluding to Isaiah 61, where God comforts the Israelites after the destruction of the temple. The spirit and good news of God was with the Israelites and the spirit and good news of God is with us in our struggles, our mourning, and grief when a loved one dies. In this good news we find hope, strength, and comfort.

When a loved one dies, the year following is a time of firsts. Events like birthdays, Thanksgiving, and Christmas are usually times of celebration and joy. But, in that first year after the death of our loved one, these events feel subdued, leaving a sense of sadness and grief. These “firsts” are hard. On these days, memories are more present in our minds. We remember the little things, like a favourite sweater that our loved one wore, a song they liked to sing, or a certain food they loved to eat. We are aware that a chair is left empty. It is okay to acknowledge that these days are hard. It is important to acknowledge all of the emotions that we feel whether they are tears of sadness or times of laughter when a funny story is shared. God is present in all the emotions one feels, in all of the memories, in the feeling of grief and loneliness, in the laughter and the tears. You are not alone.

Today we lit 3 candles in memory of our loved ones who have gone before us this past year. We remembered our congregation members Ruby Doering and Harold Seyler who were faithful saints of Zion. Ruby married into the Zion congregation and was a faithful member who had a deep love for family and friends. She loved coming to church and attending church events. Her favourite hymn was Amazing Grace. I remember Ruby from my time as a placement student, she was a quiet lady who had a beautiful smile. I wish I would have gotten the chance to reconnect with her. Ruby was a role model who taught her girls much of what they know today. She is sadly and lovingly missed by her husband David, and their daughters Lorraine, Yvonne, Donna, and their families.

Harold was a lifelong member of Zion who served on church council, the property committee, and was a communion assistant. He played an integral role in the yearly Arbour Day’s at Zion. He nourished his faith through his passion for farming in both caring for animals and the land. Harold was a steadfast, generous, and hardworking member of the community who lived out the gospel in loving his neighbours. I went to visit Harold when he was in the hospital, not knowing if he would remember me or not. I need not have feared, as he had a big smile on his face when I walked in the room, asking if Greg was still trucking. Family was so important to Harold. He is sadly and lovingly missed by his wife Isabel, daughters Jane, Jackie, Nancy, and their families.

Ruby and Harold are at rest with the saints, they are at rest from their labours, they live in the light of God, they are blest, and they were a blessing to many in their earthly lives. Their memories and the memories of all of our loved ones remain steadfast and constant in our lives. These memories offer us peace and comfort, hope, and promise, knowing that we too will join them one day in the eternal light of God’s loving presence.

When a loved one dies, as we work through the grief and sorrow, we have an opportunity to reflect on their presence in our lives. We are given the opportunity to acknowledge the blessings they gave to us throughout their lives, and how their lives impacted our lives. We come to realize how they embodied and lived out their faith and how the presence of God was made known in their lives, and how that can transform our lives.

The words of 1st John that were read by Chris this morning offer us hope in knowing that those who have died before us, died in the faith, that they were beloved children of God, and that we too are beloved children of God. Our departed loved ones were and are a continued blessing in our lives. May we continue to honour them, and may we continue to live in the faith that God gives to us, as God gave to those who have left this earthly world, through the death and resurrection of God’s only Son, Jesus Christ our Lord. Let it be so. Amen.

**HYMN OF THE DAY*For All the Saints* (ELW 422)**

[**https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1OaBgaMcOvM**](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1OaBgaMcOvM)

**PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION**

Longing for Christ’s reign to come among us, we pray for the outpouring of God’s power on the church, the world, and all in need. *A brief silence.*

Lord of all the saints, we praise you for evangelists and martyrs whose sacrifices witness to your gospel across time and space. Inspire us by their courage to carry our faith to new people and places around us. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

Lord of every place, the universe proclaims your greatness from generation to generation. Bless the work of naturalists, conservationists, and provincial and national park staff who train our attention to the wonders of the world you have made. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

Lord of every nation, guide our countries to be led with fairness and justice. Be with our neighbours to the South as they exercise their democratic rights by voting in their national election this coming week. Kindle hearts eager to understand our common needs and seek our common good. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

Lord of every blessing, your Son’s blessing came to those living with poverty, grief, hunger, thirst, and persecution. Shape our vision of the saints to match his own. Awaken in us your call to serve all who suffer from illness or injury of the body, mind, or spirit. We especially remember Eddie, Elaine, Susie, Ruth, Donelda, Lynette, Barb, Sarah, Alea, Denise and Rory Haffner as they mourn the loss of his grandmother Carol, and the victims of the church stabbing in Nice, France, and those we name in the stillness of our hearts. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

Lord of every venture, anoint us with the missionary spirit of the early church. Bless new missions of our synod and empower testimony from new communities of faith to shape a diverse witness to your saving power. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

Lord of every time, countless are the multitudes you have called by name and gathered to yourself. Comfort us as we grieve those who have died in the past year, especially Ruby Doering and Harold Seyler. We also lift up Eric Engel, Doris Schwartzentruber, Muriel Gernhaelder, Jerry Ziegler, Ray Hodgin, Barbara Jack, Melba Honderich, Jan Lapsley, Shirley Thom, and Carol Otterbein . In faith, may we join with them in ceaseless praise. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

Receive our prayers in the name of Jesus Christ our Savior, until that day when you gather all creation around your throne where you will reign forever and ever.

**Amen.**

**PEACE**

The peace of Christ be with you always.

**And also with you.**

**THANKSGIVING FOR THE WORD**

Let us pray.

O God of justice and love, we give thanks to you that you illumine our way through life with the words of your Son. Give us the light we need, awaken us to the needs of others, and at the end bring all the world to your feast; through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, to whom, with you and the Holy Spirit, be honor and glory forever. **Amen.**

**LORD’S PRAYER**

Gathered into one by the Holy Spirit, let us pray as Jesus taught us.

**Our Father, who art in heaven,**

**hallowed be thy name,**

**thy kingdom come,**

**thy will be done,**

**on earth as it is in heaven.**

**Give us this day our daily bread;**

**and forgive us our trespasses,**

**as we forgive those**

**who trespass against us;**

**and lead us not into temptation,**

**but deliver us from evil.**

**For thine is the kingdom,**

**and the power, and the glory,**

**forever and ever. Amen.**

**SENDING**

God blesses us and sends us in mission to the world.

**BLESSING**

May the God of all creation, in whose image we are made, who claims us and calls us beloved, who strengthens us for service, give you reason to rejoice and be glad.

The blessing of God, Sovereign, +Saviour and Spirit, be with you today and always. Amen

**DISMISSAL**

Beloved of God, go in peace to love and serve the Lord.

**Thanks be to God.**

**SENDING SONG*Shall We Gather at the River* (ELW 423)**

1 Shall we gather at the river,  
where bright angel feet have trod,  
with its crystal tide forever  
flowing by the throne of God?  
  
Refrain  
Yes, we'll gather at the river,  
the beautiful, the beautiful river;  
gather with the saints at the river  
that flows by the throne of God.  
  
2 On the margin of the river,  
washing up its silver spray,  
we will walk and worship ever,  
all the happy golden day. Refrain  
  
3 Ere we reach the shining river,  
lay we ev'ry burden down;  
grace our spirits will deliver,  
and provide a robe and crown. Refrain  
  
4 Soon we'll reach the shining river,  
soon our pilgrimage will cease;  
soon our happy hearts will quiver  
with the melody of peace. Refrain

\*All Saint’s Day Litany- Liturgy created/adapted by Rev. Mindi Welton-Mitchell, rev-o-lution.org.”

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