

**PENTECOST:  
A TIME TO EXPERIENCE GOD'S HOLY SPIRIT ALIVE AND ACTIVE**

**All Saints Day  
November 1, 2009**

**Isaiah 25:6-9 (or Wisdom of Solomon 3:1-9)  
Psalm 24  
Revelation 21:1-6a  
John 11:32-44**

**Finding Saints in Everyday Places**

Our adult education class is studying "spiritual gifts" and using the curriculum called "The Thoughtful Christian." I liked the author's helpful description of some spiritual gifts being valued as "up front" gifts, while other gifts play out more "behind the scenes." The author stressed that whether in the spotlight or in the wings, those God-given gifts are of equal value to the church and those whom the church serves.

Certainly the same is true of the lives of all the saints. Some labor(ed) up front, *way* up front. We know well their works, their ministries, their witness and service. And their names. The best known, historically, have the word "Saint" forever attached. Those who may lack universal recognition nonetheless find their names on the stained glass window of the sanctuary, in a memorial book in a display case, or, in the hearts of those who heard them teach, sing, witness, preach, or counsel...or who saw them hammering, painting, feeding, visiting, serving, or otherwise keeping God's love the most active verb of all.

But other saints labor(ed) behind the scenes. Quietly, even anonymously, yet just as faithfully as those whose names and faces we may recall during our prayers on All Saints Day. They make an impact we perhaps overlook. The teenager who watches over the nursery. The retiree who sweeps up. The shut-in who phones her friends each morning to see if they're okay. You know them. They are busy even as I write and you read. Or, if they have died and now "see face to face," their busy-ness has left signs of creativity, courage, and selfless service that enliven (yes, present tense) the whole community of faith. Upfront or behind, spotlight or wings, past or present, all the saints are signs of God's investment in that cosmic transformation referenced in the Scripture passages for the day.

You see, all the present saints in dim streets and dark valleys are becoming, by the grace of God, the future "saints in the light."

If the earth is indeed the Lord's and all who dwell on it, if Lazarus is raised by the Lord's command and death loses both sting and odor, if the apocalyptic visions of prophet and

dreamer include the image of the all-powerful, compassionate God wiping away tears from all eyes and welcoming all humanity to joyful feast and God's eternally comforting Presence...well, God bless the saints whose lives give faithful, hopeful, and loving witness to all that is to come.

This week's Reflection was prepared by the Rev. Jeff Kellam who enjoys retirement in Owego, NY. A Presbyterian, he now writes, mentors, promotes the Presbybop Jazz Quartet, and enjoys playing with his grandsons.

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**Today we remember to pray for** all the blessed saints in our lives and for the great cloud of witnesses surrounding us in faith. We remember those most dear to us and give thanks for their lives.

**Activity Corner:** A Banquet for Saints

Supplies needed: Bible; candle (optional); writing paper; pens or pencils; drawing paper and crayons for younger children.

Gather members of your household together and light a candle (optional). Read Isaiah 25:6-9 and discuss the vision described by Isaiah of the banquet prepared by God. What is taking place on God's holy mountain? Read Revelation 21:1-6 and discuss the vision of a new heaven and earth. How does this passage compare with Isaiah 25:6-9? Young children may be encouraged to draw a picture of either of these two visions. Invite members of your household to remember loved ones who have died. Think about their favorite foods and plan a meal of these foods as a way to remember these "saints." Gather the names of these "saints" and offer a prayer of remembrance and thanksgiving prior to the meal.