

## All The Saints

This past Sunday was All Saints Sunday. In the United Methodist Church, it is the Sunday we honor those that have left us for the glory of heaven in the past year. It is a time of remembrance, a time of respect and gratitude for those who have gone to their glory. I thought of those who had passed this year and the times we had shared together but then I thought of the other saints that have touched my life in my 73 years as a Methodist and then United Methodist and the saints still with us who touch or have touched our lives. Some of them still with us and still doing God's work. There have been so many. So many pastors have increased my faith from the age of 15 to 88. From Earl Downing to Jack Harnish to Ken Callis to Jeff Regan to Chris Cowdin to Dave Diamond, to Weatherly Verhelst to Don Gotham. All have taught me, and Pastor Don continues to teach me, and they have all been an example to me of Christian love and service. The lay people who lifted me up as a teenager, some whose names I have forgotten but they influenced me in their friendships. People like Shirley and Art Flanders. When I thank God for them and the way they treated me he knows who I mean for they were some of his angels. Jane Wright taught me what it means to be a member of the body of Christ in her unwavering support of the church and the decisions made by the majority. There are many saints in our midst, the saints that helped me when my husband was suffering from Alzheimer's. The saints that called me and offered to take him out or stay with him so I could get out. The saints who came and talked to him on Sunday. Alzheimer's can be a lonely disease both for the one who has it and the caregiver. Then there were the times I had surgery and then came the meals and the visits, so appreciated and needed. I realize I have been surrounded by saints for much of my life. When I had cancer and had just come home from the hospital here came Della Salter and another woman who sat with me, I was in my robe and slippers, and they brought tea pots and scones and other desserts and served me a proper English tea. It was like a gift from Angels. Let us remember the saints still with us as well as those who have gone on to glory. Thanks be to God for those who have touched our lives and those saints who continue to touch our lives.

Ephesians 6:17-18 Take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the spirit, which is the word of God, and pray in the spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the saints.

Thank you, Lord, for this day and for all the saints who have touched our lives, those who have gone on to glory and those that are still among us. Thank you, Lord, for the times they have been by our side. Be with those in our midst who are ill or grieving, comfort them, help us to reach out to others who need to feel your love and your comfort. May we be your messengers. Be with our church Lord, help us to know it is your church and we are your workers. Be with Pastor Don, guide him and grant him safety always. Be with his family. Be with our staff and leaders, give them your inspiration and guidance in all they do. Our country needs you Lord, help us to be as one and undivided. Be with those who suffer war, Lord help them to find peace. Help the people in Haiti who suffer from lawlessness. In Jesus name, we pray. Amen

Grace Epperson