

THE MESSENGER



"For all to know and share the Love of Christ"

November 2020

The Newsletter of First United Methodist Church Surgoinsville, TN
Elaine Ruth, Pastor Church: 345-2279

Pastor's Corner

What Is the Communion of Saints?

By Katie Shockley

When we gather in worship, we praise God with believers we cannot see. When we celebrate Holy Communion, we feast with past, present, and future disciples of Christ. We experience the communion of saints, the community of believers—living and dead. This faith community stretches beyond space and time. We commune with Christians around the world, believers who came before us, and believers who will come after us. We believe that the church is the communion of saints, and as a believer, you belong to the communion of saints.

The apostle Paul uses the Greek word *koinonia* for communion. The subtleties of *koinonia* embrace community and fellowship. He describes a community bound together in faith and common experience. *Koinonia* richly depicts believers coming together in the hopes of harmony and worship of God. This is the deep and rich unity we celebrate as the communion of saints.

Authors of the Hebrew Scriptures use two words that we translate as saint: *khawseed* and *kawdoshe*. The first speaks to one who is godly, holy, and merciful. The godly person reflects God's character in his or her actions and life. In other words, a saint becomes a living testimony to God. *Kawdoshe* and the Greek word *hagios*, used by New Testament authors, mean "sacred" or "set apart." Putting these ideas together, the Bible tells us that saints are people set apart by God who live their lives as a witness to the glory of God.

United Methodists understand saints to be believers who exemplify the Christian life. Hence, all Christians strive to be saints in how we live our faith. United Methodists recognize early followers of Jesus to be saints. For example, you may know many United Methodist churches named St. Paul, St. Andrew, or St. Peter. United Methodists do not pray to or worship saints. We also do not think of saints as those who serve as mediators to God on our behalf. All believers enjoy unmediated access to God. The United Methodist Church has no canonization process for sainthood. The church does not set saints apart as a separate group of specialized believers. Rather, it calls all believers saints.

What Are the Attributes of a Saint?

Make no mistake; God makes us saints. We do not make ourselves saints; it is God who does the work. Two attributes of a saint are holiness and righteousness. God calls us to a holy and righteous life. We call this process sanctification. Sanctification is God's work of grace that helps us live according to God's will and strive toward holiness.

According to the website Biblestudytools.com, to be holy is to be "set apart." God sets us apart to be holy, to be sacred. As noted in the Common English Bible Study Bible, 1 Peter 1:15-16 quotes Leviticus 19:2 to encourage early followers of Christ to be as holy as God is holy. Through our relationship with Christ, the Holy Spirit works in us and through us throughout our lives to make us holy. Our response to this process of sanctification is to live a holy life, a life set apart by and for God.

To be righteous is to be in right relationship with God, which leads us to follow God's laws of justice and mercy. This relationship is possible through the gift of salvation in Jesus Christ. God calls us into relationship with God, so God calls us to righteousness. As Christians, we live a righteous life by doing the will of God in our lives, by following Christ's teachings. For me, Christ's teachings in Matthew 25:14-30 and 31-46 give us the best direction for living a righteous life. When we use the gifts that God has given us to further God's kingdom by serving others in need, we live in right relationship with God.

Holy and righteous living encompasses many attributes of a saint, including acts of mercy and piety. God makes us holy and righteous. How we live that out in our daily lives is how God makes us saints.

Holy Communion

During the sacrament of Holy Communion, the communion of saints becomes more palpable. Both ancient and modern liturgies include "with your people on earth and all the company of heaven." We join our voices to sing God's praise with all the saints, living and dead.

The last scene in the classic movie *Places in the Heart* portrays the communion of saints during Holy Communion. The audience sees Sally Field surrounded by people from her life. Some are alive and join her in worship. Some in the scene have moved out of town. Some have passed away yet appear in the scene as they did in life. All sit together, side by side, and participate in the passing of the bread. The visual reminds us that all believers of all time celebrate together the gift of God's mercy and grace in Jesus Christ.

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Pastor's Corner Continued

When we celebrate Holy Communion, we do so with all the saints. I celebrate with my grandparents who are among the company of heaven, and I celebrate with my parents and my brother’s family who live out of state. I celebrate with my congregation, those in attendance and those not. I celebrate with past, present, and future believers in the communion of saints. My belief in the communion of saints reminds me that God’s gift of salvation is for everyone, everywhere.

In this day of social media and Internet connectivity, the question of offering Holy Communion online has come to light. The General Board of Higher Education and Ministry recently hosted a meeting of church leaders to discuss the possibility. Reverend Greg Neal of Northgate United Methodist Church in Irving, Texas, has offered Holy Communion online since 2003. Neal recognizes that receiving Communion “within a physically localized community of believers” is better. He notes that most people receiving online do so to “supplement and amplify” their experiences in local faith communities. Would offering Communion online enhance or detract from a sense of the communion of saints? While nothing can replace physical touch and physical presence, the communion of saints certainly extends to believers in cyberspace.

All Saints Day

Many churches will celebrate All Saints Sunday, when we publicly recognize and honor in a variety of ways those saints who have passed away. Many churches read the names of their saints aloud. Some congregations stand as the names are read, and some congregations ring bells or place flowers to mark the occasion.

How do we honor our present and future saints? Every time we baptize someone, we honor a future saint. Every time we celebrate confirmation, we honor present and future saints. We encourage our future saints when we give children their first Bibles. Even openly welcoming children and youth in worship honors our present and future saints.

Saintly Inspiration

When we honor our saints, we recognize that they inspire us to live a saintly life. My father serves as the biggest saintly motivation in my life. My love of Scripture comes from him. He raised us not only to attend worship but also to participate actively as members of a local faith community. He serves the needy and spreads the love of Christ. All of his coworkers and clients knew he was a Christian. He never hides his faith. My father inspires me to live a Christ-centered life, just as his parents inspired him to do the same.

I also draw inspiration from future saints. My niece demonstrates the ease of evangelism. She has a friend who is not from the United States and has not been taught the stories of Jesus. My niece tells her friend all about what she learns at church. Now, her friend’s mother wants to know the stories of Jesus. Children are natural evangelists. They love to retell the stories they have heard, and they have no concerns or fears about inviting their friends to church. We all can learn from these future saints.

We believe in the communion of saints. We believe that we encounter and worship with a community of faith that knows no bounds of space and time. When we receive Holy Communion, we partake at Christ’s Table with past, present, and future saints. The saints in our lives inspire us to live in holiness and righteousness. On this All Saints Sunday, remember those who came before you in this Christian journey. But remember, too, the saints who surround you every day. How can you be a saintly example to them?

Grace and peace,
Pastor Elaine



Give thanks unto the Lord,
for he is good: for his mercy
endureth forever.
Psalm 107:1

Sermon Series: Practical Christianity

Beginning October 25, we will be studying the Letter of James. A good subtitle for James would be "A Manual of Practical Christianity." Isn't that what we all need? There is a sense in which the Letter of James is a how-to book. The possibility of a how-to manual for the Christian life is appealing. We hear a lot in church about what we should do, but perhaps not enough about how to do it.

Martin Luther called the Letter of James "an Epistle full of straw." He felt there was nothing evangelical about it. Others have called it the Epistle of Reality or the Epistle of Common Sense. The purpose of this letter is not to proclaim the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus, but it contains much wisdom and guidance for those of us who want to be faithful followers of Jesus.

NOVEMBER 1
Scripture Isaiah 25:6-9
Sermon "Let's Be Glad and Rejoice"

NOVEMBER 8
Scripture James 1:12-15
Sermon "Temptation"

NOVEMBER 15
Scripture James 2:1-9
Sermon "Partiality"

NOVEMBER 22
Scripture James 3:13-4:8
Sermon "Wisdom from Above"

What's Happening

- Mondays at 6:30 p.m.**
Boy Scouts meet in the Ministry Center
- Tuesdays at 6:00 p.m.**
Webelos Scouts meet in the Ministry Center
- Wednesdays at 6:30 p.m.**
Wednesday Night Bible Study
- Thursdays at 6:00 p.m.**
Girl Scouts meet in the Ministry Center

- Tuesday, November 10**
10:00 a.m. Administrative Board Meeting
- Monday, November 16**
7:00 p.m. Charge Conference - virtual

Charge Conference Rescheduled

With the rise in coronavirus cases in our area, District Superintendent, Jeff Wright, has made the decision to hold all charge conferences virtually. Ours will be held on Monday, November 16, at 7:00 p.m.

Thank You

We would like to thank everyone who sent cards and flowers and called, and we thank our pastor who visited us in the hospital during Reese's sickness and death. We thank you and love our church family.

Sis & Glenda Bailey

Spares and Pairs

The Spares and Pairs Sunday School class will begin meeting again on Sunday, November 29, at 10:00 a.m.

Financial Report

We appreciate the continuing financial support by our church family during these difficult times. Even though we have reduced salaries and other expenses to minimal levels, we still have other fixed expenses.

Offering Report for October

Received towards the budget	\$10,100.00
Jimmy Luster Christmas Fund	\$350.00
Cookbooks Sold	\$12.00





11/3
Charlie & Patti Henige

*In All Things,
Give Thanks*
I Thessalonians 5:18



In Memory of Reese Bailey

- *For the budget*
By Ron & Jean Keirsey
By Gaynell Reed
- *For Jimmy Luster Christmas Fund*
By Rudy & Patty Alvis

Sis requested that in lieu of flowers, the flower fund transfer money to the budget. That transfer has been made in memory of Reese.



11/1
Larry Southam

11/4
Dennis Bellamy
Pam Anderson

11/8
Brett Clark

11/14
Jim Ross

11/15
Aidan Williams

11/17
Bob Ruth

11/21
Michelle Crowder

11/22
Dante Collins

11/24
Tim Hogan

11/27
Chuck Anderson
Andrew Skelton

Jimmy Luster Christmas

With December quickly approaching, it is time, once again, to start planning our annual Jimmy Luster Christmas for the Children party. If you are comfortable to shop for Jimmy Luster Christmas, please notify Pastor Elaine or Gina, in the church office. If you would rather make a monetary donation you may do so by placing your donation in the "Little Church" which is located in the narthex.



Please note on your check "Jimmy Luster Fund".

Trustees Report

The Trustees have been busy trying to get needed projects finished. The church property is like projects at our homes. You start one project to find out another problem has to be addressed before completing the original problem. Hopefully, you have noticed the parking lot has been repaved. Jack Pierce and Jerry Dykes oversaw this project. Before it could be done, the tile had to be laid along the south side of the church to carry water away from the church. Jack Pierce oversaw this project.

The Sanctuary Improvement Committee have met several times. It has been decided to hire Hammond Church Interiors, Inc. located in Wartburg, TN. We are on their schedule to begin the renovation.

The men's restroom in the church has a new sink, vanity, mirror, and commode. All we lack is painting the walls and a new ceiling light fixture. This project was paid for by undesignated memorial.

Ford Systems have exchanged all the paper towel and toilet paper dispensers in the church and ministry center. No batteries are necessary for the towel dispensers now. The former dispensers are for sale at \$25.00 each with a roll of paper towels included. Call the church office if you are interested.

Jim Ross repaired the commodes and faucets in the ministry center. Anytime you are in the ministry center, check to make sure a commode is not running.

The Trustees are getting estimates on new guttering for the church. The old gutters are not carrying the water off the church as needed. This is part of the problem we have with the basement walls.

As the Trustees have found out, nothing is simple!!

PRAYER PAGE

As you pray this week please remember:

Gerri Pierce
Vicki Linderman
Ed Bryant
Amber Randolph
Rheanne Hanson
Mike Smith
(Wes Smith's brother)
Erika Bellamy
The Family of Reece Bailey

Names on the prayer list will remain there for a month. To keep a name on the prayer list after a month, please contact the church office.