

# **Worship with McClure United Church**

~ All Saints' Day ~

November 1, 2020

## **Welcome**

Welcome

Thank you

Welcome and mission – Treaty land

Outreach Bottle Drive and Honey Sale – Thank you

Phoning tree – let us know if you didn't receive a call.

Connecting with Laura and Debra Berg

Board met via zoom – hard decision not to open for in-building worship

Good news – refugee family has arrived.

Mohammad Swid and Majed Khireddin and their two daughters

Loujin (14yr) and Sham (11yr)

Originally from Syria and were in Saudi Arabia.

The family arrived in Saskatoon on Thursday morning.

The family has relatives here who will help them begin their new lives in Canada. They are in quarantine right now.

We are not sure at this point what they will need.

As we move into worship, I want to thank Sacred sounds for their music Leadership.

Our scripture lessons are being read this week from tree spaces which I consider Holy Ground. Wildwood cemetery, St. John's Columbarium and Hillcrest memorial gardens.

## **Opening Prayer**

As we gather this morning for worship, we light this candle once again as a reminder of the light of Christ shining around us, through us and within us. May this light offer us hope as it shines even into the darkest places of our lives and of the world.

Let us pray... In all our weakness and strength, with our youth-filled spirits and aging bodies... Strong in faith and eager with questions, singing our praise and whispering our prayers... Filled with saintly determination yet mindful of our human limitations... Made strong in your endless love for us, we know ourselves to be yours... We come to be your people, O God. May it be so. Amen.

## **Scripture**

### *Psalm 46*

1 God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble.

2 Therefore we will not fear, though the earth should change,  
though the mountains shake in the heart of the sea;

3 though its waters roar and foam, though the mountains tremble  
with its tumult.

4 There is a river whose streams make glad the city of God, the  
holy habitation of the Most High.

5 God is in the midst of the city; it shall not be moved; God will help  
it when the morning dawns.

6 The nations are in an uproar, the kingdoms totter; he utters his  
voice, the earth melts.

7 The LORD of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our refuge.

10 "Be still, and know that I am God!"

### *Romans 8:38*

38 For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor  
rulers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, 39 nor  
height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to  
separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

## Hebrews 12:1-2a

“Then he says, &quot;Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight, and sin which clings so closely, and let us run with perseverance the race that is set before us, looking to Jesus the pioneer and perfecter of our faith”

### **Reflection**

*“Then he says, “Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight, and sin which clings so closely, and let us run with perseverance the race that is set before us, looking to Jesus the pioneer and perfecter of our faith”*

Prayer: May the words of my mouth and the meditations of our hearts be acceptable to you O God, our strength and our redeemer. Amen.

I’m not really a fan of Halloween. I don’t decorate my house and I don’t wear a costume, and I haven’t been to a wild party in years, however I do enjoy the excitement children bring to the whole process. And then there is that classic little movie *It’s the Great Pumpkin, Charlie Brown* – which is pretty adorable and fun. But I’m not much of a fan of Halloween.

My boys don’t like it either – they tell me I ruined it for them. I wouldn’t let them dress up in scary costumes like their friends – like I said I ruined it for them. Isaac started off his Halloween career as a little pink pig then he moved to a cute stuffed panda suit, and concluding with an eagle costume with wings and a beak that stuck out of the top of his head. Matthew followed along behind- inheriting his brother’s menagerie of costumes. There would be no Dracula or ghosts in my life – I’m pretty sure the motivation to go out Halloween night was not to show off their costumes – it was all about the candy.

I was an adult when I learned where Halloween came from. All Hallows' Eve marks the night before All Hallows' Day, or All Saints' Day, when Christians celebrate those who have preceded us in the faith. Some churches honor great heroes of the faith, the "saints" of the past. Other churches emphasize that all believers are "saints," not because we are

especially virtuous but because we are made holy simply by God's love. Still other churches simply don't observe the day at all, it certainly hasn't been a particularly strong tradition within the United Church. Perhaps the church has reflected societies unease with the realities of death and the messiness of grief. Perhaps the Church has missed an important observance.

I have come to appreciate All Saints day personally as an important time to remember the Saints I have lost. I have also buried the Saints of others over my 25 years of ministry and what I hear from these who grieve is how much they long for an opportunity to speak the name of their loved one again. To tell the stories – some silly, some serious, some falling somewhere in the middle. Stories that bring to mind the light of the one who is lost. To speak the name and tell the stories is an act of resurrection. I have come to appreciate All Saints Day because it gives us permission to remember.

It is good to remember our Saints.

What makes a saint?

Let me tell you a story.

Jeremy was out shopping with his mother one morning, feeling a bit bored he happened to look up to the windows of the nearby cathedral. He wasn't very impressed. From the outside they look drab and dull and a bit grimy. He said as much to his mother when she came out of the store.

Let's go inside, she said to him, so they went into the cathedral and his mother took him to where the big stained-glass windows were. At first Jeremy was entranced by the magical coloured patterns on the stone floor of the ancient church, they seemed to dance in front of him as the morning light streamed through the mighty windows. Look at that he pointed to the dancing image on the stone floor, "what is it mum"? Well, his mother replied, actually that's a Saint, see the window up there, which looks so dull from the outside, there is a Saint up there in the stained glass and the light is shining through her and making her picture dance for us here on the stone floor.

Jeremy stored up this information in his heart and the two of them went home for dinner. A few days later Jeremy was at church enjoying his

Sunday school class, the teacher was talking about Saints. "What do you think makes a Saint," the teacher asked. Jeremy's hand shot up; a Saint is someone the light shines through.

What Saints are you remembering this day? How did light shine through them?

**(PICTURE)** One of the Saints I am remembering today is Darren Schwartz. I remember our last conversation. Darren was looking forward to a weekend away to rest and relax – he was off to the Spa in Moose Jaw. As I went out the office door that Friday afternoon; I wished him a great weekend at the Spa. He promised he would have a good time - he teased that he might have such a good time that he might not come back. I warned him that he better come back because I needed him. /// He didn't come back. **(OFF)**

I keep Darren's Superman water mug on my desk – and sometimes the light from the window shines just right and I enjoy a blue smudge reflected through it. I miss him – he was a good friend to me and to so many of us. Presiding at his funeral was the hardest thing I have ever had to do – and though I cry sometimes when I remember him, I don't ever want to forget him. I am so grateful for all that shone through him; kindness, patience, generosity, loyalty, humour and faithfulness. He wasn't perfect but he was perfectly human. And I need that little blue smudge from his cup, to make its way on to my desk every now and then, because it reminds me of Darren's light – which brightens and inspires my own light.

What Saints do you remember today? How did light shine through them?

**(PICTURE)** In recent years we at McClure have invited folks to a special All Saints worship service where through prayer, song and ritual they are invited to remember those they have loved and lost.

Here is a picture of our set up from last year. White tables were set out around the sanctuary and people brought pictures and items to help them remember. You can see Darren's cup and name plate from his desk on one of the spots. **(OFF)**

**(PICTURE)** The next photo is of the memorial I made for my Mother, one of her teacups, her butterfly pin and a picture of her and her grandson. It is wonderful to watch the tables fill with memorials. Pictures of loved ones

and other special items; a quilted bag, a stethoscope, a Rotary award, well worn bible. **(OFF)**

As part of the worship we turn to a neighbour and we talk about the one we want to remember. We speak their name – we tell a story – we talk about what we miss about them – we talk about what they taught us and how this person has made an impact on our lives.

It is hard to tell the stories sometimes, but it is so very good too. Often the sanctuary is a buzz with conversation, every now and then there is laughter, sometimes tears, sometimes holy silence. Always there is this there is a peace about the space and a deepening of gratitude.

It is rather funny – or maybe sad. Many of us who lose a loved one find it quite an isolating experience. Folks seem to know what to do at the time of a death. Bring a casserole, send a card, show up at the funeral, express sympathy when moving through the receiving line at the reception. And then we become rather stuck from there on. Should we call, should we drop by, what if we say something to upset them and make them cry. We decide to give the grieving time. When our paths do cross it is at best awkward. We are so programmed to be an are Easter people – joy and lilies and coloured eggs many of us don't know how to do the garden of gethsemane, the cross, the burial, the dark.

All Saints Day gives everyone permission to acknowledge the reality of loss and sadness and grief within community – so that the burden of grief might be shared and together we might roll the stones away.

I invite you today to find a person you trust and ask them if they could listen to a story about Your Saint. For we are all in need of the light that shines through them. Especially now.

Today we remember our Saints without fear because of the one who taught us that death is not the final word. Jesus taught us the power of love and that light is stronger than darkness.

Who do you remember today? Whose story will you tell?

Always remember how short life is and how little time we have to gladden the hearts of those who travel with us.

So be quick to love and make haste to be kind.

And the rich and abundant blessing of God be with you always.

### **Prayers of the People**

Holy One, Creator of all to You, we give thanks for every blessing,  
Thank you for your generosity and abundant love

Form within us, wisdom, sustained and nurtured by your Holy Spirit that we  
might have the grace to listen deeply and respond with compassion.  
May we be filled with gratitude for every gift of life, for family, friends, and  
the Saints who have gone before us.

From those who are peacemakers, may we learn, and follow their example.  
From those who are pure in heart may we become likewise, Christ-like.  
For those who suffer, we ask for comfort  
For those who are ill, we ask for healing  
For those who struggle, we ask for peace  
For those who worry, we ask for guidance  
For those who are anxious, we ask for solace  
For those who are hungry, may we give food  
For those who are homeless, may we provide shelter  
For those who are poor, may we bring sustenance  
For all the worries and cares of this earth,  
May we be your heart and hands  
May we be generous as You... as abundant in our love.

God of every nation, tribe, people, and language, God of all creation, this  
great multitude of life  
We give you thanks.

Bless us, that we may be a blessing in return.

And now let us join our voices... with all the saints from every time and  
every place... as we say together that prayer that Jesus taught his friends  
and disciples.

Our Father/Mother...

## **Blessing**

Always remember how short life is and how little time we have to gladden the hearts of those who travel with us.

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