

The Lily Pad

“I am a rose of Sharon, a lily of the valleys.”

Solomon 2:1



AN ALL SAINTS THANKSGIVING REFLECTION

Grace and Peace,

Thanksgiving Day is a formal secular holiday for giving thanks and sharing community with family and friends.

Gratitude, however, isn't just for the season of Thanksgiving, it's part of a healthy spiritual life. It's everywhere in the Bible, from the Psalms (“Enter his gates with thanksgiving, and his courts with praise! Give thanks to him; bless his name!” Psalm 100:4), to the Gospel of Luke (17:1-19) where Jesus cured the 10 lepers — and only one returned to thank him and praise God.

Some of us live close enough to our immediate families that sitting down with them and sharing a meal on this one day is less about family and more about gratitude. Others who live far from family, who for one reason or another can't celebrate with family, bond with friends and neighbors, giving thanks for them being in your life.

The month of November begins with All Saints Day. This observance has always been a time for people to remember and pray for the those who have passed away. Its history is long and deep in terms of where the origins arise, how it plays into Halloween, and what various cultures do to celebrate the day.

All Saints Day, also known as All Hallows' Day, or Hallowmas, is a Christian celebration in honor of all the saints from Christian history. In Western Christianity, it is observed on November 1st by the Roman Catholic Church, the Methodist Church, the Lutheran Church, and other Protestant denominations. The Eastern Orthodox Church and associated Eastern Catholic churches observe All Saints Day on the first Sunday following Pentecost.

The Christian festival of All Saints Day comes from a conviction that there is a spiritual connection between those in Heaven and on Earth. In Catholic tradition, the holiday honors all those who have passed on to the Kingdom of Heaven. It is a national holiday in numerous historically Catholic countries. In Methodist tradition, All Saints Day relates to giving God earnest gratitude for the lives and deaths of his saints, remembering those who were well-known and not.

<https://www.christianity.com/church/church-history/all-saints-day>

The scriptures say *"As for us, we have all of these great witnesses who encircle us like clouds. So, we must let go of every wound that has pierced us and the sin we so easily fall into. Then we will be able to run life's marathon race with passion and determination, for the path has been already marked out before us."* (Hebrews 12:1 The Passion Translation (TPT)).



We have been surrounded by great clouds of witnesses, the saints who have gone before us and who have laid a foundation of faith for us. We have been influenced (negatively and or positively or a combination of both) by those who have shared their faith: ***with us, with others on the mission field, with people in their faith communities, and beyond.*** For all the ways that the church at time falls short, the saints who have gone before us, are the torch bearers that helped lay a foundation for all individuals to see Christ for themselves.

Who is a person who witnessed Christ to you? Who showed you the hands and feet of Christ in real and practical ways? Who was/is that person who helped you in your walk of faith?

All Saints Day is a day of remembrance and celebration for the gift of hope that we have in Christ as we reflect on and think about those who have walked with us in our faith journey. **November** for many of us is also a time of **GRATITUDE**. A time when we consciously think about the many blessings in our lives and give thanks. Yes, we should be grateful at all time, but November with its secular observance of **Thanksgiving Day** celebration, sparks an added measure of **Thankfulness** in everyone's life and heart. It is fitting then to reflect on and give thanks for those for whom have shared the life of faith with us. It is an opportunity for us to think about the ways in which others have impacted our faith journey and offer up prayers and praise for their life.

For all the pastors/Sunday School teachers/faithful saints/grandmas/grandpa/ aunts/uncles/friends, who have shared faith with us we give thanks! For all those who spent any time on the mission field sharing God's love with others, we give thanks! For the quiet ones and the loud ones who shared their testimony with us, we give thanks!

On this All Saints Sunday, November 3, 2019, it is especially a day of remembrance and gratitude as I celebrate the life of a mighty faithful saint, **Reverend Willie F. Griffin** (Husband, Dad, Brother, Papa, Uncle) who was a revelation of God to us. I learned to love God because my Dad loved God. I passionately and reverently love God our Father today and I know my trust of God was ignited because my Dad showed me what having a Father means, unconditional love, kindness and rich compassion! You are forever in my thoughts and prayers Daddy.

Also, on this day, a virtuous woman was born, **Ms. Betsy Winqvist**. May God richly bless you Ms. Betsy and fill your days with goodness, warmth and heart full of joy and hope. Happy Birthday, keep living the gospel.

This day and everyday moving forward I give thanks and pray, "O Lord let your people of Fifth Avenue United Methodist Church be the hands and feet of Christ to the next generations who are seeking faith and understanding. Help us O Lord to remember the ways in which others have witnessed to us and lead us in ways we can witness to others. May today mark a day of deep gratitude and the being of a thankful life."

Brother David Steindl-Rast writes, "The root of joy is gratefulness ... For it is not joy that makes us grateful; it is gratitude that makes us joyful."

Wishing you the gift of faith and the blessing of hope this Thanksgiving Day!

***Pastor Clarissa, Bro. Martín,
Marissa, Biancha, Sophia, Nicolás, Cookie, Hachi, and Sadie***