

All Saints Celebration
Luke 19:1-10 Habakkuk 1:1-4; 2:1-4
November 3, 2019

Today is a day we have set aside to remember our loved ones who have passed on. And while it can make us feel sad to bring them to mind, it is also good to have the opportunity to remember these people. When we tell a story about them, about their influence on us, it is a way of bringing them alive through our memories. When we share an experience that recalls the joy this beloved person brought into our lives, sometimes our joy bubbles up and is tangible again, giving us a wonderful moment of lightheartedness. When we recall the strength of their faith, it can inspire our own faith. In the midst of our grief, we often experience a whole range of emotions – anger and frustration, sadness and loneliness, guilt and pain – these feelings roll through us, at times leaving us exhausted in their wake. Sharing memories of our loved ones can help us get through the sadness. It can renew our energy in mysterious ways. What we are doing today is actually a ritual. It is a simple ritual, really, just speaking the name of someone we love who is no longer with us in a physical way, listening to the bell ring as their name sinks into our hearts, and then later perhaps lighting a candle in memory of them. But these things we do have a power that goes beyond the simple act and reaches out to touch our hearts, to heal our grief in ways we cannot fathom.

This, now, is our opportunity to say our loved ones' names aloud, bringing them close in the process, reminding them of our deep, deep love for them.

(Sharing our saints.)

We can feel alone when we are grieving. And so it can help to join with others on a day like this. It can help to share some little part of what we are feeling, to say something aloud so that other people who care about us can hear us and hold us in their circle of care. This is what we are doing here today. We are living out our faith as we honor those who have passed on. We are showing how much we care for one another as well as for our loved ones who are no longer with us. And despite how hard it may be to speak through our tears, we are expressing our trust in God's love that holds us all, always.

Let's pray together - Loving God, we offer our deepest gratitude for those whom we have spoken of today, as well as for those whose names are difficult to say aloud. We offer our thanks for those whom we have lifted up today by name and for those whom we hold in our hearts. Ease our grief, Lord, and help us to feel in some way today, the deep connection we share with these loved ones and with you, in the realm of your love and in the life of Christ. Amen.

****After you have received communion, you are welcome to light a candle on the altar table in memory of a loved one who has died. Lighting a candle reminds us all of our loved one's light, bringing it into the world for us to see and experience in a physical way.****