

## A RESURRECTION COMMUNITY

Adapted from Rob Moll "A Culture Of Resurrection" *Christianity Today*. June 2010, p.p. 34 – 36

**Text:** Revelation 7.9 - 17 (in pew Bible p. 1220 / in large print Bible p. 1894)

### **Intro:**

-today's text captures a heavenly scene where God's people are assured that life's hardships and set-backs were not in vain.

- vision of victory and perfection.

-although "All Saints Day" is a church festival that is held on November 1, today this is a fitting theme for our 22<sup>nd</sup> anniversary.

- reminds us what we are all about and where we belong by God's grace.
- **illust.** Heaven's Switchboard.

### **Take Home Point:**

-knowing Christ and making him known enables us to both live well and to die well.

- here are three important aspects of All Saints Day & Anniversary.

## **1. DEATH OF OUR BELOVED**

-Ruth Murray, Donald Jackson, Ernie Klingenberg, Dick Achen, Allan Gossen, Alvin McMulty, Wilma Smith, Dean Ross, Elsie Stephenson, Lloyd Strouts, Annie Dawe, Jean Umpherville, Debra Warkentin, Karen Dean.

-one of the benefits of funerals = spiritual formation.

- "North Star" for taking our bearings.
  - coordinates for positioning your life.
  - eulogies cause us to question ourselves to see if we measure up.
- teaches us to number our days.
  - science & medicine help us to put off natural death.
  - church has fallen down in preparing Christians for the inevitable.
  - church needs to teach people how to live well by measuring their days.

-the passing away of our beloved from this life into heaven makes us a Resurrection Community.

- death is inevitable but it doesn't triumph.
  - with Christ (those who belong to Christ (1 Corinthians 15.23) / no sting – second death (1 Corinthians 15.55 - 57) / works follow (Revelation 14.13)
  - before the throne of God / never again hunger & thirst / all tears will be wiped away (Revelation 7.15 – 17).
- living well = taking the last day of our life and making it our "company keeper."

## 2. SIGNIFICANCE OF OUR BELOVED

-mark significance of our Church Family:

- infant dedication, S.S. promotion, Bible upon graduating from High School, water baptism & communion, anniversary services, Christmas dinners for older seniors.
- memorial gift plaque.

-significant milestones of our Founding Members.

- choosing to leave the United Church of Canada *to return to spiritual roots*.
- forming a new congregation *22 years ago*.
- leap of faith purchasing this present facility *for a church home*.
- hosting National Conference *in early 1990's*.
- sharing this present facility *with other faith communities*.
- helping to plant 4Cs churches *in Rocanville and north Saskatoon*.

-on-going milestones of our Church Family.

- seeing people go into Christian ministry – Amber MacDonald / Jordan.
- financial miracles of:
  - elevator, roof replacement, windows, and furnace.
- outreaches into community:
  - Alpha, V.B.S., Reading Buddies, GriefShare.

-truly a resurrection community.

- provide our seniors with a vision of a good life *in the seasons of fall & winter*.
  - up-coming sermon series of Gift of Years.
- have congregation stand in *age brackets*.
  - teens / 20 to 29 / 30 – 50 / 50 – 64 / 65 – 79 / 80 –
  - passing torch on to up-coming generations.

-challenge of keeping kids in church.

- Sunday School ministry with Linda Glendenning & team *is excellent*.
  - **character formation by time child is 7.**
  - bring children to church / not sports complexes on Sundays.
    - a child brought up in Sunday School is seldom brought up in court.
- intergenerational activities.
  - **70% of church kids leave church by age of 21 & 80% by age of 30.**
  - Corporate Sundays = ministry with kids / *not to or for kids*.
  - Family party = extension of S.S. & *threshold into youth ministry*.

-sense of belonging with God, as we near end of a life, *does not change*.

- God is still with us – right to our final breath.

### **3. UNIVERSAL ASSOCIATION OF OUR BELOVED**

-connection of our Church Family with the wider *Body of Christ*.

- across geography:
  - in Haiti with St. Joe's Boys Home & Angeline.
  - in Ethiopia with the Riegerts (Afar radio & feeding stations).
  - in Thailand with Bev Kalnin (theological training & Barefoot Doctors).
  - in Saskatoon's inner city with Hosanna House & Bridge on 20<sup>th</sup> Street.
  - 4Cs spring rally & national conference (exposure to wonderful like-minded Canadian Christians).
- across the ages:
  - Ordinances of baptism, communion, burial.
  - Apostles Creed.
  - Evangelical doctrine.
  - Church calendar.

-remember that we are part of a far larger body of Christ that extends 2,000 years and also includes Old Testament saints.

-remember we are a Resurrection Community.

- care and carry the elderly.
- teach the young and old to live and die well in the Lord.

#### **Conclusion:**

-knowing Christ and making him known enables us to both live well and to die well.

- goals of *All Saints Day & Anniversary*.
  - cherish memory and legacy of our Beloved who have died.
  - cherish the community of Christ's Body world-wide and age-wide.

-today we celebrate 22 years of life together as a Resurrection Community.

- Gospel appeal to receive Christ, to grow in Christ, and to serve Christ *until we go to be with Christ*.

Almighty God, our heavenly Father, we remember before thee all Thy servants who have served Thee faithfully in their generation, and have entered into rest; asking you to give us grace so to follow in their steps, that with them we may be partakers of thy heavenly kingdom; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen (*The Book Of Common Prayer* Toronto Anglican Book Centre, 1962, p. 302).

**-Closing Hymn:** Bind Us Together Lord (all verses).

## Heaven's Switchboard

Thank you for calling "Heaven's Gates" – your multi-church, multi-denominational hotline.

Amish, please walk to the nearest Mennonite and have them press "5."

Methodists, please press "1" and your call will be transferred to the nearest potluck.

Catholics, please go to the altar and have the priest press "2" for you.

Lutherans, please press whatever number you wish, because, after all you are the ONLY ones who use this line.

Pentecostals, press 3-3-3-3-3-3-3-3-Hallelujah and throw the phone onto the ground.

Calvinists, please do not press anything. If you were meant to be connected it will happen.

Jews, if it is a holiday, please hold the line until after sundown.

Congregationalists, please form a committee. If there's a quorum present, and a 2/3 majority vote in favour of the motion is achieved, please press 4.

Pastors, in closing, verily I say unto thee that thou shouldst pressest two keys. And yes, I shall speak unto thee and tell thee what keys thou shouldst press. So to close, pressing the "9" button should bring thee great joy in seeing the work completed and after the "9" button, thou shouldst also press "1."