

This guide and its resources are also
available at www.umf.org

Celebrating our Saints

and encouraging legacy giving

ALL SAINTS DAY RESOURCE GUIDE
FOR UNITED METHODIST CHURCHES



Where Faith and Money Come Together



ALL SAINTS DAY

*Every time we recite The Apostles Creed,
we profess belief in the communion of saints.*

All Saints Day is held on November 1 each year. Congregations usually schedule the celebration for the first Sunday of November or on the last Sunday of October, depending on church schedules.

Your Foundation has assembled this resource guide to help church leaders and pastors plan and celebrate All Saints Day as part of their Sunday morning worship services and to help them combine All Saints Day with a Planned Giving invitation.

All of our members have an impact on the church; most give their time and financial gifts for its benefit. Some give more than that; they make a legacy gift that comes from their estate after their lifetime. All Saints Day should celebrate and recognize these saints, whether they have passed on or have made a planned gift for the future.

Feel free to call on us to help with your legacy giving materials. We can provide a myriad of generosity stories from saints all over our great state of Louisiana– what inspired them, what impact their gifts made, how they did it and the benefits of the gifts. These stories are a great tool to be used to encourage generosity in others.

Read on for more inspiration as you plan your All Saints Day celebration!



OUR MISSION

*To be a catalyst that strengthens and preserves our current ministries
while meeting the needs of a diverse and rapidly changing society.*

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WHY DO WE CELEBRATE THIS DAY?

All Saints Day is *not* one of the most celebrated Sundays in the life of the average United Methodist Church. That could be because when our founder John Wesley revised the calendar and lectionary for Methodists in North America, he did not include it. However, in 1789, he called it “a day that I particularly love.”

United Methodists believe in saints, but not in the same manner as the Catholic Church. Wesley believed we have a lot to learn from the saints, but he did not encourage anyone to worship them, no persons are elected to sainthood, we do not pray to saints and we do not believe they serve as mediators to God. We call people “saints” because they exemplified the Christian life. Theoretically, every Christian can be considered a saint.

All Saints Day is a time to remember the Christians who went before us, honoring those who lived faithfully and shared their faith with us. We should also honor and recognize those who left a legacy of faith through planned gifts, or gifts made from their estate after their lifetime.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

All Saints Day grew out of the early church’s practice of remembering the martyrs of the church. Special days to recognize Saints developed over time. By the late 300s, general observance of a day to honor all Saints was in place. In the 400s such a day was often held on the Sunday after Pentecost.

By the mid-700s, All Saints Day became connected with November 1.

With the coming of the Protestant Reformation, many reformers had grown uncomfortable, not so much with All Saints Day, but with their perception of the way Saints were venerated. It seemed to many that the Saints were worshipped in place of God. Lutherans and Anglicans held on to the celebration of All Saints Day, seeking to refocus the worship toward God.





MINISTRY PLANNING RESOURCES

The following is a suggested list of ministry ideas to use to enhance your church’s celebration of All Saints Sunday. Church leaders can customize a plan using these ideas as inspiration. The table of contents below indicates where in this booklet you can find a sample or more information, or you can find all the resources in downloadable format on our website at www.umf.org.

The staff at the Foundation is ready to help if you have questions or need help with resources.



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ADVANCE LETTER TO CONGREGATION

Two to three weeks before All Saints Day, send a letter to families in your congregation announcing the celebration and encouraging them to consider leaving a “legacy gift” to the church. Enclose gift cards and envelopes in case the family would like more information or will be absent on All Saints Day. Also, let them indicate if they have already made a legacy gift to the church so you can thank them.

SAMPLE LETTER



Your Church Name

(Date)

Dear Brothers & Sisters in Christ,

On Sunday, November 7, during all morning worship services, we will be celebrating All Saints Day. This Sunday closest to November 1 is an occasion to remember those in our church family who have passed on to eternal rest in the past year.

During worship, we will celebrate all of these lives and also honor those who have left a “legacy gift” to the church. A legacy gift is distinct from regular giving to the church and can take many forms:

- Bequest in your will
- Charitable gift annuity– income for life and a gift to your church
- Beneficiary designation on your life insurance or retirement plan
- Charitable trust– income for you, then others, and a gift to your church

Throughout the life of (*church name*), our members have left these types of gifts enabling many great ministries, as well as the maintenance and upkeep of our beautiful and historic facility. We will recognize many of those donors on November 7.

Please prayerfully consider making a legacy gift to the church. The enclosed brochure explains more about legacy gifts and their benefits. If you have any questions, feel free to contact me or (*endowment chairperson*), Chair of (*church name*)’s Endowment Committee, at (*email address*) or (*email address*).

Yours in Christ,

(*signature*)

(*pastor name*)

Senior Pastor



LEGACY GIVING BROCHURE

Your Foundation has a multitude of literature on legacy gifts or planned giving available to churches at no charge. However, for simplicity's sake, we recommend enclosing a "Planned Giving Overview" brochure with your advance letter or inserting it in the bulletin on All Saints Sunday.

This trifold brochure can be customized with your church's name and photos and sent back to the church ready to print. Just ask for a sample or download it from our website at www.umf.org. Then use it "as is" or we can customize it for your church.

Planned Giving Overview
The goal of planned giving is to help donors plan their estates and charitable giving in ways that benefit both family and the church. The federal tax code allows for several trusts and gift agreements that are used in making these planned gifts to charity and that provide some tax benefits for donors. Therefore, the study and practice of planned giving is crucial. It involves knowledge of people and their needs as well as knowledge of taxation and the gift agreements available to fill those needs.

I have enclosed your brochure on Planned Giving and:
 I would like to speak with someone who can provide additional giving information.
 I would like to receive information on other charitable giving methods.

Name _____
 Street _____
 City _____
 State/City _____
 Home Phone _____
 Work Phone _____
 Email _____
(Please complete and return. All requests are treated with complete confidentiality.)

8112 Jefferson Hwy,
Baton Rouge, LA 70809
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Email: info@umf.org

Putting the Pieces Together
A Guide to Planned Giving

YOUR GIFT	YOUR GOAL	HOW IT WORKS	YOUR BENEFITS
Bequest	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maximize control of your assets during life Make a gift to church at your death 	Designate a United Methodist church as a beneficiary in the beneficiary of your will, trust or other instrument.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Enter tax charitable deduction Life you and generosity of your people
Charitable Gift Annuity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Receive fixed income for life Avoid capital gains tax on the sale of your appreciated property Receive a charitable deduction now 	Transfer your cash or appreciated property to the Foundation to exchange for our promise to pay you fixed income (with rates based on rates set) for the rest of your life.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Charitable tax deduction Fixed income for life Partial income of capital gain Flexible payout payment
Charitable Remainder Trust (CRT)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use appreciated property without paying capital gains tax Enjoy regular income for life or a term of years Receive a charitable deduction now 	Transfer your cash or appreciated property to fund a trust. The trust sells your property (with no capital gains tax) and provides you with income for life or a term of years.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Charitable tax deduction Income for life or a term of years Flexible payout payments over time Absence of capital gains tax
Beneficiary Designation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maximize control of the account or policy during life Make a gift to your church at your death 	Designate your church as the beneficiary of an insurance policy, bank account or retirement account.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ease to do things contact your account or policy holder You can change it or not Keep your gift private until you want the beneficiary to know
Life Estate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Receive a fixed income for life Receive a charitable income tax deduction now 	Transfer income or property to the Foundation for your life (with the right to use or change your life).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Charitable tax deduction Lifetime use of property

SAMPLE GIFT CARD ENCLOSURE

Don't forget the envelopes if you use this as an enclosure with the letter.

Your Church Name

Name _____

Address _____

Phone Number _____

Email Address _____

Please contact me, I'd like more information on how to leave a Legacy Gift.

I have already arranged for a Legacy Gift to the church.

I am willing to share more information about this gift to encourage others.
Feel free to contact me.

Please mail this card to the church or place it in the offering plate on Sunday.



BULLETIN INSERT MATERIAL

Below are some ideas for bulletin briefs on All Saints Day, identifying saints and related programs, such as an endowment fund.

- Remembering members of our congregation who have died since All Saints Day last year. (List Names)

“For all the saints, who from their labors rest,
Who Thee by faith before the world confessed,
Thy name, O Jesus, be forever blest.
Alleluia! Alleluia!”

- Remembering members of our congregation who have made a legacy gift. (List names)
- In church tradition, November 1 has been called “All Saints Day.” On the first Sunday of November, this congregation honors its Saints who have died in the past year, and those who have made legacy gifts.
- (If your church has an endowment fund) An Endowment Fund is a growing resource that enhances and extends the ministry of our congregation. Gifts received for the Endowment Fund, which could include memorial or honorary gifts, are invested through the United Methodist Foundation of Louisiana, and income is used annually. In the past year, the perpetual funds were increased through a bequest from the estate(s) of (*list donor names*).
- List how income from the Endowment Fund was used in the past year and the impact contributions to it made.
- We encourage you to contribute to the Endowment Fund through gifts, bequests and other planned giving programs. If you have questions about these ministries, please speak to (*chairman’s name*), chair of the Endowment Fund Committee, or our pastor.



“Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles.”

Hebrews 12:1



LEGACY GIVING AND THE WORSHIP SERVICE

In All Saints Day worship services, we honor the saints who have gone before us. Most of these people had an impact on our church; they gave their time and financial gifts for the church's benefit. Some gave more than that; they gave a legacy gift– a gift that comes from their estate after their lifetime. This could be a bequest in their will, a beneficiary designation or another gift from appreciated assets.

Recognizing legacy gifts in the service is important because it builds awareness and inspires generosity in others. Below are some suggestions for incorporating the legacy giving component into the service. We suggest that you use more than one method.

LEGACY MOMENT IDEAS

1. Tell stories. Find out what legacy gifts, from either the deceased or those who have made a planned gift to benefit your church in the future, your church has received. Pick one or two and let the congregation know what *inspired* the donors. More importantly, explain the *impact* the gift had or will have on the church. This can be done in many ways:

- Video
- Printed Material
- Pastor, donor or family member talking from the pulpit

If a legacy gift was made through the United Methodist Foundation of Louisiana, let us help you tell the story! We may have already written a story about your saint and are happy to share with churches.

2. Prepare printed materials. Hand out a printed brochure like the one on page 6 to encourage gifts and explain the ways to give. Include a giving card like the one on page 6 for people to place in the offering plate. Your Foundation has a multitude of literature that we can use to design a customized brochure for your church.

3. Ask for a legacy gift. Refer to the materials you've presented in church and ask the members of the congregation to prayerfully consider making a legacy gift.



The flyer above explains how the late Virginia Worley of First Baton Rouge made a planned gift that provided income to her for life, and now benefits her church forever. May we create a flyer for a "saint" in your church?



WORSHIP SERVICE IDEAS

The following are suggestions for use in worship with an All Saints Day theme. One of the first things to decide is whether to devote the entire worship service or only a portion, to celebrating the saints. Worship leaders may feel free to use and adapt these resources as fits their church's worship setting. All the materials are available on our website at www.umf.org.

CALL TO WORSHIP

L: We remember, O God...

P: The countless saints of history who have blazed a trail of courage through time.

L: We remember, O God...

P: The tender touch of loved ones, the example of heroes, the healing words of comforters, the remarkable acts of fearless ones.

L: We remember, O God...

P: The gentle strength of grandmothers, the loyalty of friends, the kindness of strangers, the joy of children, the sacrifice of parents.

L: We remember, O God...

P: The supreme love of Jesus, the blessing of his Spirit, the reminder of his words, the sharing of his suffering, the glory of his resurrection shown forth in the lives of his disciples, young and old, dead and living, articulate and silent, strange and familiar, brilliant and ordinary.

L: We remember in every time and place the saints of God who have shown us the Lord.

P: Since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses... let us worship God with joy!
AMEN.





PRAYERS

Prayer of Confession

L: Our lives are full of mistakes and errors– places where we follow self-generated idols instead of the One True God. Let us come before God, just as generations of believers have done, and pray for God’s forgiveness and grace.

P: Beloved God, who was known to our mothers and fathers, and even to our spiritual forebears, have mercy on us. We do not always love as you would have us love. We do not always do as you would have us do. In our stubbornness, we turn from you when we should turn toward you. Hold us, dear One– comfort us when we mourn the passing of friends and family, and help us to know that they are rejoicing in your presence.

We praise you for the grace you shower on us, constantly forgiving our errors, especially the ones that we don’t share with any but you. Hear now the silent fears and worries of our hearts.

A time of silence

L: Friends, hear the good news! Though thousands upon thousands of our ancestors did not follow God’s ways perfectly, we have hope in the one who did! Jesus, a man of a particular people in a particular time, taught through his words and deeds that God has already forgiven us. Thus, we and all who have come before us are rightly known as saints– the holy ones of God! Thanks be to God! AMEN!

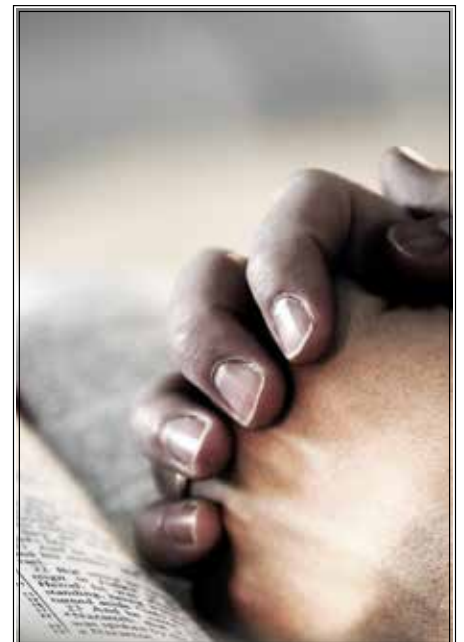
Pastoral Prayer

Living God, in whom there is no shadow or change, we thank you for the gift of life eternal, and for all those who having served you well, now rest from their labors.

We thank you for all the saints remembered and forgotten, for those dear souls most precious to us.

Our God, mindful of all the souls who have gone on ahead of us, teach us, and each twenty-first century disciple of every race and place, to follow their example to the best of our ability:

- to feed the poor in body or spirit,
- to support and comfort the mourners and the repentant,
- to affirm those who hunger and thirst for righteousness,
- to be humbled by, and stand with, the peacemakers.





Let us clearly recognize what it means to be called the children of God, and to know we are to be your saints neither by our own inclination nor in our own strength, but simply by the call and the healing holiness of Christ Jesus our Savior. AMEN!

LITANY OF PRAISE

L: Gracious God, you are to be praised for the women and men whose faithful witness to your love inspires each generation of your people.

P: Mindful of all those who have gone on ahead of us, teach us to follow their example:

L: To feed the poor; to support and comfort those who mourn;

P: To cherish and learn from the merciful; to be humbled by, and stand with, the peacemakers.

L: Let us clearly recognize what it means to be called the children of God, and may we know we are to be your saints.

P: Neither by our own choosing nor in our own strength, but simply by the call of Christ Jesus our Savior.

L: Loving God, the generations rise and pass away before you.

P: You are the strength of those who labor; you are the rest of the blessed dead. We rejoice in the company of your saints.

L: We remember all who have lived in faith, all who have peacefully died, and especially those most dear to us who rest in you, whose names we remember before you now.

(Reading of names)

- *Ask family members to stand as names are read*
- *Have a worship leader light a candle as each saint's name is read*
- *Have someone ring a bell as each saint's name is read*

Give us in time our portion with those who have trusted in you and have striven to do your holy will.

P: We bless you for their lives and love, and rejoice for them that “all is well, and all manner of things will be well.” AMEN.





SERMON IDEAS

BE A TRUE SAINT

By Rob Fairly

SCRIPTURES

- Psalm 78:6
- Matthew 22:36-40
- Romans 12:6-8
- II Corinthians 9:6-15



Know what November 1, 1966, was? All Saints Day. It is especially remembered in Louisiana because the National Football League awarded its 16th franchise to New Orleans on that date. No surprise– the team was named the “Saints.”

The first team included three future Hall of Famers, Paul Hornung, LSU great Jim Taylor, and defensive end Doug Atkins. The average attendance per game was a remarkable 75,463 that first season, in Tulane Stadium.

But they did not win a lot. Archie Manning was the quarterback in the late ‘70s when they went 1-15. The fans started wearing paper bags over their heads and called the team the “Aints.” Earl Campbell and Mike Ditka weren’t able to change things, but the fans kept coming. Their faithful support kept the team playing.

Ever thought of yourself as a saint?

We place the concept of sainthood on an elevated moral pedestal. We like to think of saints as heroes, right? Is that because it absolves us of responsibility? Those kinds of Saints are out of touch with real lives. What does a Saint know about paying the mortgage on time? What hero ever had a flat tire, or has gone through a divorce or was diagnosed with cancer? Saints don’t know what real life is like.

This is what we tell ourselves to keep a safe distance from sainthood. But the original use of the term “saints,” particularly by Paul, was meant to indicate all the faithful gathered to worship God.

Today is not just about mystic heroes of the faith. This is not “Some Saints Day.” This is “All Saints Day.” We celebrate those who keep our church serving.



Scripturally speaking, the “saints” are the body of Christ. We Christians are saints by our connection with Jesus Christ. Those who call Jesus the Christ are called saints, and those who claim Jesus as God’s way for the world are set apart to live the Jesus way. It is a different way of living.

The Bible is full of guidance about how the people of God are called to live. The Bible mentions prayer 289 times, love 363 times, and giving 1,043 times. God has put a tremendous emphasis on giving in His word. Why? Because we are naturally selfish as we worry about the future, so giving is hard for us. But God challenges us to give. Give our time, our talents, our money– to be generous. to keep ministry going.

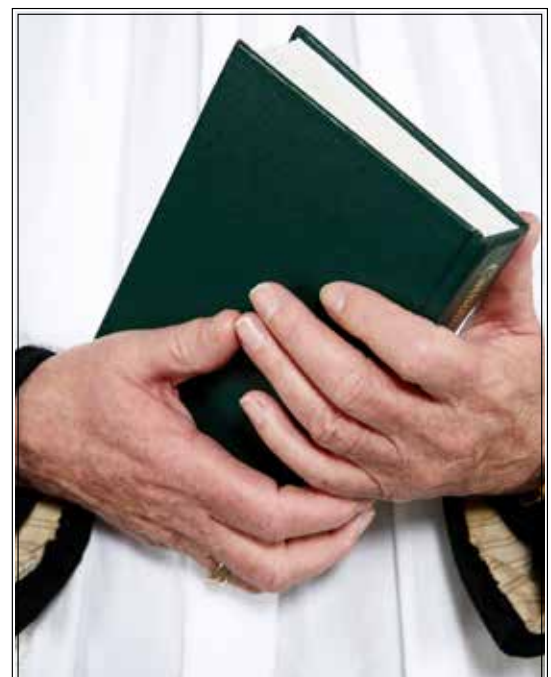
There is a close relationship between faith and generosity. When we trust in God, truly trust, we can act boldly. Abraham is the ultimate example of acting on his faith, even to the point of sacrificing his son. God provided him something else to sacrifice.

In his second letter to the Corinthians, Paul speaks of generosity in terms of sowing and reaping. Andy Stanley, author of what I think is one of the best books on generosity, *Fields of Gold*, calls it the Law of the Harvest.

- 1) We reap after we sow. We don’t plant a seed and look for a plant the next day. It takes water, sunshine and time. So it is with our generosity.
- 2) We reap more than we sow. Plant an apple seed– that yields an apple tree. That apple tree produces apples that all have many seeds in them.
- 3) We reap in proportion to what we sow. “Remember this from II Corinthians: Whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows generously will also reap generously.” There is a correlation between how much we give and how many blessings are produced.

I go to a downtown First Church. For almost 200 years people have worshipped God there. Like many, my family sits in the same pew each week as we have for decades. There is a plaque on the end of the pew celebrating the person whose financial gift made that comfortable pew possible. It is not our family name.

I never knew him. Back when money was truly hard to come by, his generosity made sure my family had a welcoming place to come hear about God and the way we are supposed to live. He was a true saint. He left a legacy.





The people we are remembering today lived differently. They did not put themselves first, they put God and others first. They did not all leave a legacy of a pew, but some of them did leave other financial legacies.

These people served us, taught us, encouraged us, showed mercy to many of us and gave. They gave during their lives and they gave at the end of their journey so that this community of saints could continue to serve the cause of Christ after their lifetimes.

We can too. Do you have a will? You should, for your family's sake. And you could leave a legacy of faith by leaving a financial gift after you no longer need it, to support your favorite ministry.

What money we spend down here on Earth– in some sense, is lost forever. The money we give to God's purposes, the seed we sow into God's work has eternal results. The harvest may come later, but it will be multiplied.

Have you thought about your legacy? On future All Saints Days after your lifetime, how will you be remembered? Do something now to make an impact on the next generation of the church.

Be a true saint.



Rob Fairly retired in 2021 as president and CEO of the United Methodist Foundation of Louisiana, where his primary role was to guide churches in their planned giving efforts. He and his wife Pam are long-time members of First United Methodist Church of Baton Rouge.



GOD'S LIVING WILL

By Richard J. Hull, II

SCRIPTURES

- Ephesians 1
- Luke 6

In the spring of 1969 during my junior year in college, I served as a student interim pastor of a rural church. One Sunday, I made some comment about accepting that death is part of life.

A nursing student in that congregation called me the next week and asked me to participate in a panel of experts to talk about what we now call “the right to die.” There I was, 20 years old, on stage with a compassionate nun, an experienced priest and a medical doctor talking about medical matters and matters of life and death, as if I had some idea of what I was talking about. I didn’t.

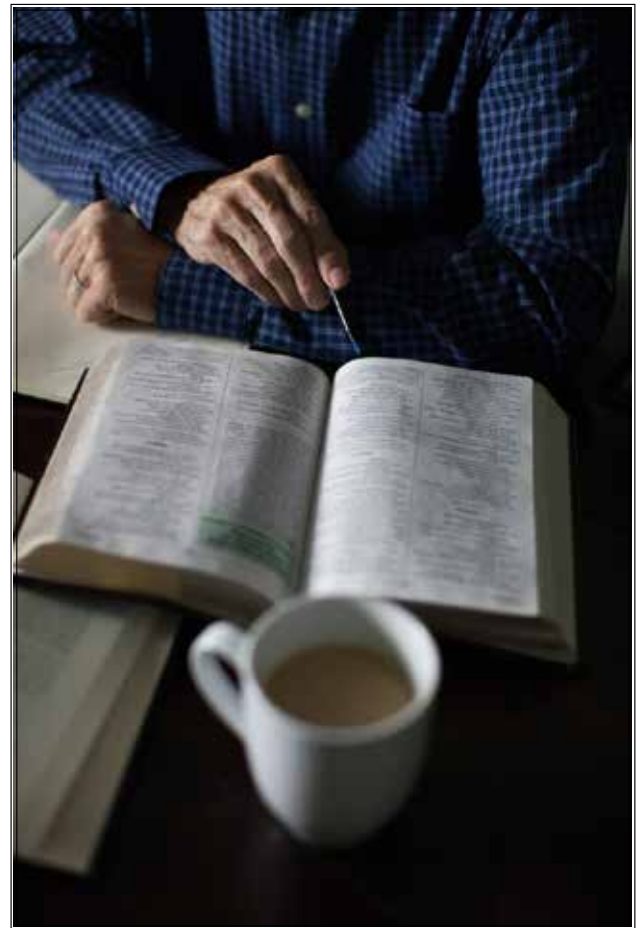
I would no more speak on such a panel in public today than I would discuss rocket science. It isn’t that I know less than I did then. I now know how much I don’t know.

The issue back then was sustaining life on a respirator. To turn it off or not to turn it off; that was the question. Over the years, that issue has been fairly well resolved.

Respirators are used well to bridge a person from illness to health, but most of us have come to accept that sometimes life should be allowed to take its course even if that course is death.

This whole issue has created a new legal document that is commonly called a “Living Will”.

They read something like this: “I willfully and voluntarily make known my desire that my dying not be artificially prolonged under the circumstances set forth, and if my attending or treating physician and another consulting





physician have determined that there is no reasonable medical probability of my recovery from such condition, I direct life-prolonging procedures be withheld or withdrawn when the application of such procedures would serve only to prolong artificially the process of dying.”

Many of us who are gathered here today, remembering loved ones, faced these issues in the past year or two. Coming here today brings us joy as we rejoice in memories of that loved one, and hope as we celebrate Christ’s victory over death.

But let’s be honest, a tear of sadness returns also. We are to be commended for the days and months, even years of grieving that we have endured. We have cast our burden upon the Lord, and he has sustained us. Tears and sadness are part of God’s care. They are expressions of love.

Perhaps the death that you faced was a difficult one. If you were aided in any of your decisions by a pastor, a friend or doctor, tell someone about it. And if your loved one had a living will, legally signed or discussed intimately with you, tell people about that also.

A will, any will is a device to describe how we want things to go in the future. In addition to “living wills” that strive to direct our “end of life” future, we also have “property” wills which tell how we want our resources distributed among our heirs in the future.

If you don’t have a “property” will, get one!

In this age of anti-government sentiment, the fact is that if you don’t have a will and you leave assets, the government will decide how they are distributed.

And I urge you to consider the church in your will. We have celebrated the endowment funds of this congregation today, funds created by saints of this congregation. Thanks to the saints, our church’s mission has prospered through those funds.

But, in addition to living and property wills, there is what I would call our “personal” will.

A personal will is an attempt to control things in the future over which we have no real control. You often hear sportscasters talk about an athlete’s “will to win.”

Bobby Knight, the infamous Indiana basketball coach used to say, “Everyone has a will to win; what most people lack is a will to practice.”

In the book of Ephesians, we hear Paul describe a way of understanding what could be called “God’s Living Will”.

God has a will; an intent, a desire. And that will is made known according to Chapter 1, “In Christ.” Some dozen times in one chapter, the author uses the phrase, “In Christ.”





Before we look at that passage, let me quickly summarize: There are three distinctions about the will of God:

1. God's Intentional Will– God's desire and dream for all creation
2. God's Circumstantial Will– God's adaptations when circumstances change
3. God's Ultimate Will– toward which God moves in all circumstances

(Read Ephesians 1 and Comment beginning with v. 5 5)

“God destined us for adoption as God's children through Jesus Christ, according to the good pleasure of God's will.”

Because of the resurrection of Jesus Christ, I call it God's living will, and it was that we be God's children. The people in Ephesus and also, you and me.

When my children were born, my wife and I created a will that said if something happened to us, Linda's sister would be their guardian. If that had happened, a judge would have made sure our will was carried out. So God's will that we be God's children was carried out by Jesus; Jesus is in a sense the trustee of God's will.

Verse 6: “To the praise of God's glorious grace that he freely bestowed on us in the beloved. God's will that we be God's children was by grace. We don't earn our



inheritance, it is given by God's kindness, grace. This is the way it is with all wills. What we inherit is by the grace of the benefactor. The means of grace, the way God's will was carried out was through Christ. By Christ's life, death and resurrection.

Next, Ephesians provides several references now to what has happened in Christ.

Verse 7: "In Christ, we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses." Redemption and forgiveness, similar but not the same.

Redemption: Set free, a slave granted freedom, was redeemed, a slave could be bought and declared to no longer be a slave. We could say that we have been slaves to sin and have been bought by blood.

Forgiveness: One can be a free person yet bound by the past. A prisoner set free still has a record that can be used against him.

Forgiveness overcomes the past. Let me explain it in terms of inheriting stocks that have a growth in value:

Bought Company ABC for \$100, and it is now worth \$1,000. If you were to sell that stock, it would be a redemption because it had usable worth.





However, under current tax laws, you would owe on the \$900 of profit or capital gain. Also, if you die and your child inherits the stock, they inherit it at what is called the stepped-up value or at \$1,000. No one owes tax on the \$900.

Your death forgives the tax that is due if the stock is redeemed.

By the way, this is a good way to make gifts to the church. Christianity talks about the will of God this way. Jesus is the expression of the will. Jesus both redeemed us and made us useful. And forgave us, responsibility for our “past taxes” is overcome.

Verse 8: “Jesus has made known to us the mystery of God’s will, . . . set forth in Christ, as a plan for the fullness of time, to gather up all things in him, things in heaven and things on earth.”

God has shown us His will, intention, in Christ. In Christ, we have a plan for all time, and it is to gather up all things to God.

The author understands that we might think Christ is all about me. I’m saved, I’m redeemed, I’m forgiven. We need to remember we are, but one of the heirs of the living will of God.

God’s plan is to include all things. We are to be “In Christ.”

Don’t forget Luke 6: “Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, give to everyone who begs from you, do to others as you would have them do to you.”

We see that it’s not about me, it is about God.

Verse 9. “In Christ, we have obtained an inheritance . . .”

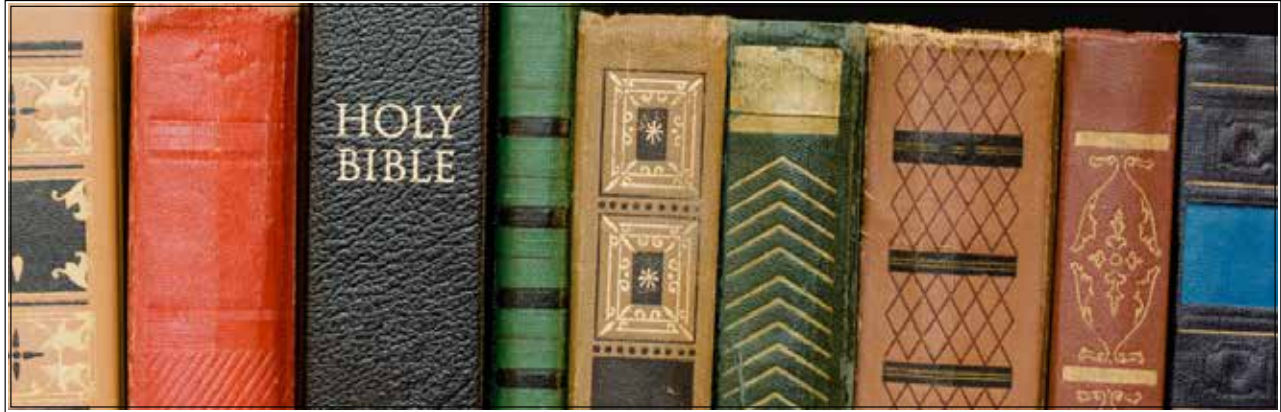
The passage continues the metaphor of adoption as children. One thing we get when we become a child is an inheritance.

I’m an only child. I got it all. My parents were gracious. But my inheritance was distributed long before my parent’s death.

Because of Christ’s death, by which we become God’s children, we are already receiving the inheritance. A difference is being made now.

I always understood that my inheritance from my parents was already paying dividends before they died. When my kids were small and I was earning a modest starting pastor’s salary, I had a sense that my inheritance was already in place.

If something would have happened to me, my parents would have seen to it that my kids were taken care of; they would have had a home and food and money for college.



The inheritance had value long before I received it. We have been adopted as Children of Christ, and we are already receiving the benefit of our inheritance.

In verse 14 it is called the pledge of our inheritance.

Knowing that we inherit the promise of life eternal makes a difference in our life here and now. I spend no time worrying about what happens to me when I die. God's living will experienced in the resurrection of Jesus has provided me eternal hope. And that hope keeps me from anxiety today and frees me to live in the way of Christ. I am already receiving my inheritance.

Verse 11: "In Christ, we have received the word of truth and been marked by the Holy Spirit."

When somebody dies, their will has to be handled properly. A process is followed to confirm that the document is in good order and uncontested; that it is true. Then it is properly sealed or recorded, filed in the office of the clerk.

Ephesians declares the Will of God is authenticated by the word of truth. Sealed or marked by the Holy Spirit.

God's will is God's destiny for us. God has made a living will. Like every will it needed a witness. That witness is the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit affirms God has signed a living will for us. The Holy Spirit sees that the will has been signed properly and that God's mark is on God's will, and it is clear. And God's mark is the mark of a cross. The Cross becomes the signature on God's Living Will.



The Rev. Richard Hull is a retired Disciple pastor, serving Christian Churches in Pennsylvania, Indiana and Florida throughout his career. He has been an advocate for Legacy Fund policies in those congregations; gifts from Saints continue to help undergird and enhance those congregations' witnesses.



HYMNS

Charles Wesley, John’s brother, picks up on the All Saints Day theme in his hymn, “Come, Let us Join our Friends Above,” #709 in the United Methodist Hymnal. In the first verse, he offers a wonderful image of the Church through the ages:

*Let saints on earth unite to sing,
with those to glory gone,
for all the servants of our King
in earth and heaven, are one.*

This hymn tells us those “to glory gone” are joined by the “saints on earth,” whom we also celebrate on All Saints Day. We recognize that we are part of a giant choir singing the same song. It is the song Jesus taught his disciples; a tune that has resonated for more than 2,000 years; a melody sung in glory and on the earth.

Additional songs that carry the All Saints Day theme include:



Song Name	UM Hymnal Page
Amazing Grace	378
Beloved, Now We are the Saints of God	219
Blessed Assurance	369
Come Let us Join Our Friends Above.....	709
For All the Saints	711
Shall We Gather at the River	723



CHILDREN'S SERMON

Good morning. Today is a special day in our church. Of course, every day is special when we can be together. But some days are more special than others.

Today's special day is called All Saints Day. Can you say that with me? All Saints Day. Did you know that you are a saint? A saint, in the Bible, is what people in the church called each other.

"I am a saint, you are a saint, we are all saints together." Saints in the Bible are those who seek to follow Jesus. So, you see, I think you must be a saint because I know you try to follow Jesus: loving God, neighbor, and even your enemies.

But sometimes you will hear somebody called "Saint So and So." Or maybe you have friends who go to St. Matthew's Church. It is named after one of Jesus' disciples named Matthew. Sometimes famous people who did wonderful things get called saints.

And sometimes at church, you might hear someone talk about someone who died. They might say, "He was a real saint." This is a way of remembering someone that we really liked who followed Jesus.

Today we are remembering some saints in our church. We are remembering people who died in the last year. Did you ever know anyone who has died? When someone dies we usually feel sad. And we might cry because we loved them. Because they were saints, because they tried to follow Jesus and helped us to follow Jesus, we do things to honor them. And today, we will remember them by reading their names in worship.

I give thanks every week for the ways you show me how to follow Jesus. You are Jesus' saints. Yes, children are Jesus' saints, and Jesus knew you would be and he told adults, "become like children to enter God's kingdom."

Saint Children, please pray with me.





BENEDICTIONS

- God's people have celebrated all that God has done, from creation, to the cross, to the saints who have lived among us. Now we go from this place to the work place, the home place, the market place; every place living as God's own people. And may the love of God be with you as you go. AMEN.
- The blessing of God Most Wonderful, whom the saints have trusted as Father, Son and Holy Spirit, will be with you now and ever more. AMEN.
- Go into the world as the living body of Christ, bringing eternal life to all who seek God's face. AMEN.

A DAY TO REMEMBER

For United Methodists, there are many denominational resources for celebrating All Saints Day:

- The United Methodist Hymnal (p. 938)
- The United Methodist Book of Worship (#413-15)
- The Faith We Sing (Worship Planner Edition) (p. 157)
- www.umcdiscipleship.org/resources



“Where faith and money come together”

The Foundation exists to encourage and educate church leaders and individuals on planned gifts that can provide continuous income to churches or ministries selected by the donor. The Foundation also manages permanent funds for United Methodist churches and ministries and can establish life-income gifts, such as charitable gift annuities and charitable remainder trusts for donors at no cost.

More information is available by calling (225) 346-1535 or visiting
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