

Sermon Title: **Looking Backward with Gratitude (All Saints Day)**

Bible: Isaiah 25:6-9 & Revelation 21:1-6a

Where & When: Sunday Worship at Gilroy UMC on November 4th, 2018

Audience: about 32 English Speaking Church Members

Opening Prayer

Let us pray! Everliving God, All Saints Day revives in us memories of loved ones who are no more. We want to see them now with the eye of memory, their faults forgiven, their virtues grown larger. So does goodness live, and weakness fade from sight. We want to remember them with gratitude and bless their names. In Jesus' name. Amen!

1. Hide and Seek

Do you like Hide and Seek? Who is the master of Hide and Seek? When was your last time to play Hide and Seek? Have you ever played Hide and Seek with children? When we were little children, we hid ourselves like this (hiding our eyes, or faces only, while showing the body). We thought that if we did not see others, they were not able to see us. As we grow up, we become the master of Hide and Seek. Sometimes, the one who is It gives up finding other players. Sometimes, when we hide, we might be afraid of others forgetting about us. It is a joy when no one can find us. At the same time, it is a big concern when no one can find us.

November 1st, or the first Sunday in November, is All Saints Day or All Saints Sunday. It is a day of remembrance for the saints. Saints in this context of the New Testament mean all Christian people of every time and place. I would like to play Hide and Seek with you and all saints.

Let us start with the easy Hide and Seek. Have you seen this plaque (#1 photo)? This displays “UMC” in the center, “EST. (established) 1853” at the bottom, “Looking Backward with Gratitude” on the left side, “Looking Forward with Faith” on the right side. Which church displays this? (It is our church, Gilroy UMC). Where can we find this? It is in front of our church building, on the right side. In 2019, I plan to talk about



“Looking Forward with Faith.” Today, I want to talk about “Looking Backward with Gratitude.”

2. Seeking Members Removed by Death for 2018 Annual Church Conference

After I came to the Gilroy United Methodist Church, the first thing that I did was to check out the membership. That’s because I would like to meet all of our church members. Somehow, it became my second version of Hide and Seek. Thankfully, I was able to discover four members who hid themselves for some years. Every local United Methodist Church holds an Annual Church Conference at the end of the year. In this Annual Church Conference, there is a time for a membership report. Every year those who passed away are remembered. As you might notice, four saints have not been honored in this way yet, even though they were our church members. Even though I never met them, as a pastor, I want to remember their names in our 2018 Annual Church Conference. Our 2018 Annual Church Conference will be on Saturday, December 1st, at 10 am. I would like to say the names of those four in worship today, as well as our two saints who passed away this year. We remember these six church members with gratitude and bless their names:

DONALD THOME (April 29, 2012)

LILLIE REUTLINGER (Dec.22, 2013)

ROGER BLAKEWAY (March 13, 2015)

MARLIN HISSIM (Oct. 29, 2017)

SUE HICE (Jan 11, 2018)

JANICE KRAHENBUHL (Sep. 22, 2018)

3. Seeking All of Our Saints (Loved Ones who are no more)

Now it is your turn to play Hide and Seek (Photo - Lily Stained Glass Window). Our saints, our loved ones, are hiding in our hearts. Can you seek your loved ones who are no more? Please close your eyes. And let us open the eye of memory. In our hearts, we still feel the presence of our loved ones. The links of life are broken, but the links of love cannot break. I remember my grandfather, ChanKwon Hong, who died with



lung cancer. I still remember his smile and the food that he cooked for me.

I would like to invite you to say your loved ones' names. Can you say the names of your loved ones? I will start with my loved one: Hong ChangKwon (each church member says their loved one's name. And then there is a chime sounded to remember them).

4. Hope and Joy through the Holy Communion

All saints are our blessings. The Lord will make a feast for all people, for us and our loved ones. This table is our hope and our joy! Our Lord, Christ has died, and Christ is risen, and Christ will come again. The Lord will swallow up death forever. Mourning and crying and pain will be no more. On that day, we all together will be glad and rejoice in God's salvation and God's table.

Closing Prayer

Gracious God, We give you thanks that our loved ones now live and reign with you. Their memory is a blessing to us. Their souls are bound up in ours. They are alive in you and us. In Jesus' name. Amen!

* Reference

The United Methodist Book of Worship #413, #414, #415, #548