

Sermon Title: **“All Saints Sunday”**

Bible: Revelation 21:1-6a

When: on All Saints Sunday, November 7th, 2021

Where: about 30 people (plus YouTube live streaming viewers) at Gilroy UMC

Opening Prayer

Gracious God, thank you so much for giving us this congregation. Thank you so much for your presence in our daily lives. Thank you so much for your people in our lives. Let the words of our mouths, and the meditations of our hearts, be acceptable in your sight, O Lord, our Rock, and our Redeemer. Amen.

1. All Saints Sunday

Last Sunday was Halloween. How was it? Did you wear any costume? Did you have any Halloween decorations? Did you prepare some candies for treats or tricks? The word “Halloween” means “the evening of Hallows.” “Hallows” is an older English way of saying “saints.” So, Halloween is the evening of the saints. The day in many ancient cultures near the Middle East starts with sunset, not with sunrise. But in Western Christianity, it falls on November 1st, not October 31st. November 1st is All Saints Day. And many churches observe the first Sunday of November as All Saints Sunday.

2. Who are Saints?

Then, who are Saints? Many Protestant churches, including the United Methodist Church, do not have “official saints.” We call people saints who inspire us on our faith journey. They

have the same challenges that we have. They have the same weaknesses that we have struggled with. They are not perfect, but they have faith, hope, and love. They are loved by us, and they love us. In this sense, every Christian can be considered a saint. As we are Christians, we are the saints who are the living body of Christ.

3. My Saint: My Grandma

Do you have any saints in your life? Anyone who loves you, and who is loved by you? My maternal grandma is one of my saints. She is still alive. The last time I saw her was when I got married in Korea in 2012. One of my prayers was that I would like to celebrate her life when she passes away. Because of my never-ending immigrant process, I thought that I could not visit Korea. I had prayed a lot before. Now that there is a global pandemic, it is challenging to visit Korea, but I hope to celebrate her life, when God takes her fully. When there are Korean holidays, we do facetime with each other, and thankfully, she still recognizes me, and calls my name.

When I was in elementary and junior high school, I went to my grandma's house to spend my summer vacations. At that time, she was a great cook. I really loved all of her food. As she got older, her eyesight got worse. Likewise, she could not taste very well. Sometimes, I needed to help her when she cooked. She advised me to eat well when I was young. Our founder, John Wesley, advised people to "eat a little less than you desire." Instead of John Wesley's advice, I followed my grandma's advice, to eat well and to eat a lot. In the United

States, I really enjoy a lot of food from different cultures that I cannot imagine having in Korea.

She has been a faithful Christian. My faith came from her. She is a prayer warrior. In Korea, there is an early morning prayer time before sunrise. At 5:00am every day, she bows down and she prays. I tried to follow her to pray in the early morning, and I did a couple of times, but eventually I found that it was not my spiritual practice. My grandma faithfully prays every early morning. When my faith was shaken many times, thanks to my grandma's prayers, I am still able to be here now.

4. Communion with our Saints

I believe that we have our own saints in our lives. The saints who loved us and whom we loved. Even though some of our saints have passed away, they are still somewhere in our minds. Their love, their struggle, and their presence are in us. We can still feel their presence through our smiles and our tears. That's because now they dwell forever with our Lord.

Today, we will have communion. Communion represents the heavenly banquet with all people of God, with our saints who are with us, and who were with us in the past. When Christ comes in final victory, we will all together feast at his heavenly banquet. We will also join the unending hymn with our saints to praise our Lord.

Before the communion, we will have a time to remember our saints. As a pastor, I will remember our saints who passed away this year. And there will be a time to remember our

own saints. When we lift up their names, let us remember our saints in God's peaceful arms.

And let us remember that just like our saints, we are people of hope, faith, and love.

Closing Prayer

Gracious God, we remember your love and grace. We remember our saints who were with us. We remember our saints who are with you now. Your grace and love is overflowing upon us through your saints and our saints. As you were with our saints, please be with us. In Jesus' name. Amen.