

Devotion, Week of October 29, 2023

Rev. Jeanne Simpson

This week we celebrate another special holy day in the church – All Saints’ Day. It is a time when we remember those of the faith that have passed before us. This past year, we had no deaths in our church family, but our members had a number of deaths in their families, so we remember them in our prayers. It is also a time to remember our ancestors who died in the faith. I think of my grandparents who almost single handedly kept Walkers Chapel Baptist Church near Morganton, NC alive and growing, and Jim’s grandparents who did the same for Pleasant Grove Baptist Church near Carrollton, Ga. These faithful people served wherever they were needed – Sunday School Superintendent, Deacon, Sunday School teacher, Ladies’ Mission Board Chair, usher, and other duties. Both sets of grandparents made it a point to feed the minister after church, and my grandmother made the communion bread and canned the grape juice for those times when the Lord’s Supper was celebrated. Church was an integral part of their daily lives, and they expected their children to be involved in those activities as well. As a result, all their children grew up to be leaders in their own churches, as well as most of their grandchildren.

This past Sunday I talked about the Deuteronomy text where Moses instructs the Hebrew people about God’s commandments prior to their entry into the promised land after over 400 years of slavery in Egypt. He had three primary admonitions: remember, instruct, and obey. All Saints’ Day is a time when we are called to remember our ancestors in the faith and their example of faithfulness, to instruct our descendants in God’s commandments to love him and each other, and to follow those commandments in our everyday lives.

Jesus summed up all of this when he was questioned by a lawyer about the greatest commandment: “‘You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind.’ This is the greatest and first commandment. And the second is like it: ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’ On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.”

As we remember those loved ones who have gone before us this week, let us remember that we are called to love, because God first loved us.

Jeanne