**Hillside UMC Sermon Prep Sheet**

***Pastor Chris Neikirk***

**Date: Sunday, November 5, 2017 – All Saints Day**

**Sermon Title: Imagine**

**Scripture: 1 John 3:1-3** 1See what great love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God! And that is what we are! The reason the world does not know us is that it did not know him. 2Dear friends, now we are children of God, and what we will be has not yet been made known. But we know that when Christ appears, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is. 3All who have this hope in him purify themselves, just as he is pure.

**Revelation 7:9-17 (*NIV*)** 9After this I looked, and there before me was a great multitude that no one could count, from every nation, tribe, people and language, standing before the throne and before the Lamb. They were wearing white robes and were holding palm branches in their hands. 10And they cried out in a loud voice: “Salvation belongs to our God, who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb.” 11All the angels were standing around the throne and around the elders and the four living creatures. They fell down on their faces before the throne and worshiped God, 12saying: “Amen! Praise and glory and wisdom and thanks and honor and power and strength be to our God for ever and ever. Amen!” 13Then one of the elders asked me, “These in white robes—who are they, and where did they come from?” 14I answered, “Sir, you know.” And he said, “These are they who have come out of the great tribulation; they have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. 15Therefore, “they are before the throne of God and serve him day and night in his temple; and he who sits on the throne will shelter them with his presence. 16‘Never again will they hunger; never again will they thirst. The sun will not beat down on them,’ nor any scorching heat. 17For the Lamb at the center of the throne will be their shepherd; ‘he will lead them to springs of living water.’ ‘And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes.’”

**Call to Worship: (8:30 only)**

Leader: We give you thanks, O God, for all the saints who ever worshiped you
Whether in brush arbors or cathedrals,
Weathered wooden churches or crumbling cement meeting houses
Where your name was lifted and adored.

**People: We give you thanks, O God, for hands lifted in praise:
Manicured hands and hands stained with grease or soil,
Strong hands and those gnarled with age
Holy hands
Used as wave offerings across the land.**

Leader: We thank you, God, for hardworking saints;
Whether hard-hatted or steel-booted,
Head ragged or aproned,
Blue-collared or three-piece-suited
They left their mark on the earth for you, for us, for our children to come.

**All:** **Thank you, God, for the tremendous sacrifices made by those who have gone before us.
Bless the memories of your saints, God.
May we learn how to walk wisely from their examples of faith, dedication, worship, and love.**

**Amen.** *(umc.org -- A Prayer for Meditation on All Saints Day by Safiyah Fosua)*

**Basic Theme:On All Saints Day we remember all those—famous or obscure—who are part of the “communion of saints” we confess whenever we recite** [**The Apostles’ Creed**](http://www.umc.org/what-we-believe/apostles-creed-traditional-ecumenical)**. We tell the stories of the saints “to glory gone.” Alongside the likes of Paul from the New Testament, Augustine, Martin Luther, and John and Charles Wesley, we tell stories of the grandmother who took us to church every Sunday. We remember the pastor who prayed with us in the hospital, and the neighbor who changed the oil in the family car. We give thanks for the youth leader who told us Jesus loved us, the kindergarten Sunday school teacher who showered us with that love, and the woman in the church who bought us groceries when we were out of work. Retelling these stories grounds us in our history. These memories teach us how God has provided for us through the generosity and sacrifice of those who have come before us. The stories of the saints encourage us to be all God has created us to be. *(UMC.org Feature by Joe Iovino)***

**Sermon Snapshot (Key Points): Imagine what heaven will be like! The Kingdom of Heaven Jesus spoke of is both now and not yet. It is both a present reality and a future promise. Our physical bodies are only temporary, but our spiritual bodies are eternal. As believers, we are called to live in the tension between the here-and-now and eternity. We grieve the loss of loved ones while at the same time celebrate the impact they had on our lives and on our faith. We truly are surrounded by a great cloud of witnesses whom we lift up as imperfect people used by a perfect God. Although we celebrate the saints, we worship our Lord who is the object of our praise!**

**So What? Who are the saints in your life who guided you down the path of faith in God? Who are the saints who blessed you? Are you guiding others down a path of faith in God? Are you a blessing to others? Imagine the difference you can make.**