

**“Communion Of The Saints”  
Ephesians 1:11-23  
Rev. Steven McCoy  
Nov. 4<sup>th</sup> 2007  
All Saints Sunday  
First United Methodist Church  
Marquette, MI**

Today on this special day and as one could argue Holy Day, I wanted to talk about a subject that many of you have asked me to address... Green Bay Packers Football! No I haven't fully converted, but it is important to mention this as it pertains to this Sunday. You see, my grandfather John Hogan, was a huge Green Bay Packers fan. He was born and grew up in Menominee, MI as I've shared before. He shared my passion for sports, and the Packers with Bart Starr, Ray Nitschke, and coach Vince Lombardi, were his ultimate passion. He used to negotiate with my mother and aunt and uncle when he knew the Packers were going to be on TV so he could watch the games, when it would be their turn to watch the movie of the week. He would get so excited sometimes that my grandmother would yell at him that if he didn't calm down she was going to turn the TV off. I've been threatened with that a few times. He also liked hockey and

baseball, had a love for his children and family and cared very much about the world around him. These are just some of the things that made my grandfather who he was. Here's the thing. I never met him! My grandfather also had Parkinson's disease and like actor Michael J. Fox was diagnosed with it at an early age. It debilitated him to the point where he had to retire from J.L.

Hudson's (known today as Macy's) in his early forties. In those days they did not have the treatments like they do now and with his severe case it made it worse. He eventually succumbed to the disease and died in 1968 the year the Packers won the first two Super Bowl's. Five years later, I was born. All that I know of my grandfather comes from black and white pictures and the stories that have been told to me, much like the one I just shared with you. But I know of his deeds and his acts and of his interests because they were told to me with such passion and love it is like I knew him. His life goes on even though he no longer lives.

We Christians practice this same thing. We not only remember the saints on this day, because of what they meant to us, we

commune with the saints because they are still as much a vital part of our lives and our faith even though they are no longer here with us. Consider Paul's words in the 1<sup>st</sup> Chapter of Ephesians here when he says in verse 15: "I have heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love toward all the saints, and for this reason , 16 I do not cease to give thanks for you as I remember you in my prayers" (NRSV). When we speak of our faith in Christ we cannot really do so without honoring the saints who have gone before us and have taught us in the ways of the faith, they who lived in an example of being called Children of God.

It does not change the fact that they are missing fully in our lives today. We cannot replace the conversation, the handshake or hug, the wisdom that they brought. But we can honor that and learn from that so that in teaching others, as they have taught us, we will commune in glory.

Now a mistake we make on All Saints day too is that we tend to sentimentalize our lives. We must also remember that they are human. My grandfather was not a church attendee in his adult years for various reasons. He maintained a healthy sense of humor about it however. When people would ask him where he went to church he would respond St. Mattress of the Springs, or Holy Couch. They would laugh and move on. So too we know that those who went before us, just like us, are only human. They had their quirks, and things that got them or us upset. We know that that is what it means to be human. What makes us different than the rest of the world is that we believe and we trust in the promise which was accomplished in the resurrected Christ. We continue as Paul said to pray for that spirit and wisdom and revelation as we come to know God and we cannot come to know God through the resurrected Christ and his body which Paul goes out of his way to say is the church. Those who went before us, those who are among us now and those who will come after us, we are all a part of the communion of saints, which included the

worst of sinners in Paul, and even included Elmer, Roger, Ralph, Ken, Mabel, Lyle, and Jeanette ....

Tell the story, tell of the saints who are now in glory, and tell of the promise that they taught you and us, so that others will know them, as God knows each of us. As we tell that story we cannot stop giving thanks to God who calls all of us to commune together with all the Saints in Glory.

Thanks be to God for the communion of the Saints.

Amen.