

**What Do We Know?  
Revelation 7:9-17; 1 John 3:1-3  
November 2, 2008  
All Saints Sunday  
Rev. Steve McCoy  
First United Methodist Church  
Marquette, MI**

I don't know." I hear it from my kids all the time. How did this happen? I don't know. How did your dirty clothes end up hanging there? I don't know. Why does the dog have ice cream on him? I don't know? Comedian Bill Cosby has a much funnier routine on this subject as well. It's not an acceptable answer to us parents because we know there is more to the story, and they are just not telling us to avoid getting in trouble. We did it as kids, my children's kids will do it too. It is part of growing up. But as we grow up we somehow get it ingrained in our minds that "I don't know" is still not an acceptable answer even when we actually don't know. Saying I don't know can get one fired from their job, bounced from an organization or worse. Somehow we are just supposed to know. So worse trouble is created by making things up or taking half truths and assuming that they are whole truths hoping those answers will suffice and we make up the rest as we go along. But this is no way to live life. Part of training when I worked as a guide at Greenfield Village was it was okay to say I don't know, but I would be happy to look it up for you. This was hard for people to embrace. We want answers not excuses, but of course the wrong answer, is no answer at all.

At times when people die or are suffering with life threatening illness, we want answers, and some of the most well meaning Christians fumble through trying to supply some answer. As I sat in the Duke Medical Center and listened with another pastor as a family grieved the sudden loss of a loved one, they were looking for answers. "Why would God allow this they asked?" Before I could say anything the other pastor said: "I don't know. I don't know why this happened. I'm pretty sure God didn't cause it, but I don't know why. Maybe that's why it's called suffering." After a few minutes of silence I added I do know this, "God is with us."

The first letter of John reminds us that we may not know much, but we do know that we are children of God now. What we do know is

that when Jesus is revealed once again we will be like him for we will see him as he is. On that day all will be revealed. Today we remember those who were God's children then, and are Gods' children now. We do know that for them there is no more hunger or thirst, because the lamb at the center of throne is guiding them, just as we are guided by the holy spirit and every tear shall be wiped away from our eyes for we have this promise too of what we do not know will be revealed, as it already has been for them.

We remember the things they taught and did for us so that we would know. So that we can learn and love and grow just as they did with the saints that have gone before them and the saints that will come after us. We don't know what the future will bring for them, but we do know that what has yet to be revealed to us will be made fully known to all because of God's love. So let us no longer mourn, but let us celebrate the saints we remember this day for who they were to us, who they now are to God and who we have the eternal hope in being, One with Christ who is our shepherd and our guide. We do not know the journey, but we do know that he will lead us home. Thanks be to God.