

Reflection for Christ & Grace Church Petersburg, VA
All Saints' Day Remembrance Service, November 1, 2017
The Rev. Bill Queen
"The Communion of All Saints"

good afternoon, saints; today, on All Saints' Day, even though you may not feel like a saint, and you may or may not feel that the loved ones we remember today were always saints, you and they are all saints; I don't mean saints in the Roman Catholic definition of a Saint, but in the Episcopal and biblical definition of a saint

in the biblical definition, you are saints because you are baptized Christians and children of God; you have each been given the gift of God's grace and the gift of the Holy Spirit to live within you from the moment of your Baptism; you didn't earn your title of saint because of your own works or because of your own holiness; you are saints because you accepted the gift of holiness from God and because you allow the holiness of God to work in you, to work through you, and to work around you; the same is true of all those whose lives we remember today

when we look at the Bible passages that use the term 'saints', they always mention entire groups of people, such as the whole membership of the churches in Jerusalem, Rome, Corinth, Ephesus, Philippi, and Colossae; were all of these churches' members perfect Christians?; no; we know that for sure because Paul specifically takes the Corinthians to task in both of his epistles; he criticizes them about their disagreements and divisions, their immorality and drunkenness, and worst of all about their uncharitable and unloving attempts to outshine each other with their holier-than-thou claims of spiritual gifts—similar to the kinds of things you and I stumble into on a fairly regular basis, right?; yet again and again, he addresses his letters "to the saints" in each of these locations; if Paul were to send one of his epistles to us today, he'd address it "to the saints in Petersburg and the Tri-Cities Area"

we use the Nicene Creed in Communion services, but you probably recall the words from the Apostles' Creed: "the Communion of Saints"; this idea is a belief that all who have known Christ, past, present, and future, are united with him in a mystical way, and that, through Holy Communion, we join with that group; so remember, every time you receive Holy Communion it is an

opportunity to share, a bit, in that heavenly banquet in which your deceased loved ones and all others of the faithful departed are also now partaking; your closest connection to any deceased loved one will always be through your connection to God

remember, because you are saints, to keep allowing the holiness of God to work in you; keep allowing the holiness of God to work through you; and keep allowing the holiness of God to work around you; and remember how Holy Communion will continue to connect you not only to God, to Christ, and to the Holy Spirit, but also to all the other saints who have preceded and will follow us; All Saints' Day is a celebration of and for all of us saints