

**Sunday November 1, 2020 – Easter Hill United Methodist Church**

**Bible Study – Revelation 7:9-17**  
**“All Saints: These Are They”**

Open with a word of prayer

**Gathering Time** (5-10 minutes). In pairs or groups of three, discuss the following: “Who was the greatest person you’ve met?”

**Revelation 7:9-17 Context:** The Revelation (or Apocalypse) was given to a seer named John (not the evangelist) exiled on the island of Patmos off the coast of Asia Minor (modern day Turkey) towards the end of the first century, probably during the persecution that took place during the reign of the Roman Emperor Domitian. Much of the book of Revelation exhibits the literary form of “apocalyptic,” that is, a vision that is cosmic, dramatic, and symbolic. As John observed the cosmic drama unfold before the throne of God, he watched as the Lamb came forward to receive the scroll sealed with seven seals. As each seal was broken, another “plague” was unleashed upon the earth: conquest, war, famine, death, etc. With the unsealing of the sixth seal, a great earthquake was unleashed that convulsed the world. The focus of the drama then shifted back to heaven where an angel announced a “time out” to “seal” (protect) God’s servants, beginning with 144,000 from Israel, 12,000 from each of the 12 tribes. Then follows this week’s reading. The fundamental message of apocalyptic is hope for God’s people in a time of chaos and uncertainty. The conversation between the seer and one of the elders explaining the meaning of the vision echoes the similar conversations between the prophet Daniel and the angel Gabriel (Daniel 8-12).

**Read Revelation 7:9-17**

What touches your heart, what do you hear in the scripture, what questions do you have, or what doesn’t make sense to you in the story?

Write down your thoughts or share your thoughts with the person or group you are with.

**Read Revelation 7:9-17 again**

**Some reflection questions – Write down your thoughts or share your thoughts with the person or group you are with.**

- The author of Revelation draws on a lot of images from the Old Testament that would have been familiar to his audience. Read [Isaiah 4:2-6](#) and [Isaiah 40:10-11](#) before reading the passage from Revelation one more time. How do the Isaiah passages help illuminate the Revelation passage? [They connect Isaiah’s vision with John’s vision. This is the work that God has continued to do.] What is similar? What is different?

- How would you define a “saint”? How might this passage contribute to your definition? [From verse 9: “standing before the throne and the lamb” = focus on what is important; robed in white = having been cleansed by the forgiveness offered through Jesus; palm branches = also a symbol of cleansing, victory, and celebration; from verse 10: tell about God’s salvation; from 12: they sing about all that God has done; from verse 15 and following: they look forward to experiencing God’s abundance.]
- It is common to think about “saints” as holier-than-thou and as the rare few. By virtue of our baptism, we are all called toward being saints. Do you think of yourself as called to be a saint? Why or why not? What difference would it make if you thought of yourself as a saint?
- How would washing robes “in the blood of the Lamb” (v. 14) make their robes white? [It wouldn’t! It is just another hint that throughout the book John is using symbolism to convey his message.] Blood, as indicated in Leviticus, represents life. These “saints,” as represented by their clothing, are those who have “put on” Jesus to use the apostle Paul’s words. What might it mean to put on Christ? What might it look like to live as those who “wear white robes” in our everyday lives today?
- On this All Saint Day, who do you remember who put on Christ for you or displayed the life of Christ?
- How might you continue to live into your call to be a saint? How can this group help?

**Read Revelation 7:9-17 again**

**Closing Reflection Question**

How is this scripture calling you to change, to see, to be or what might it be calling you to do?

**Prayer** (10 minutes). Each person prays sharing their answer the following statements:

I ask God for....

I thank God for.....

**Sending Forth** (2 minutes). After all, have shared, pray the closing prayer. Ask for a volunteer to lead the group or read the following prayer in unison:

God of our fathers and mothers in the faith, you have been a refuge to those in distress. Through your Holy Spirit, many have been empowered and strengthened to praise you when all else seemed dark and chaotic. May that same Holy Spirit breathe new life into us, that we might be your witnesses to those we come in contact with this coming week. **Amen.**

And now we pray The Lord’s Prayer....

Our Father who art in Heaven  
hallowed be thy name.

Thy kingdom come, thy will be done,  
on earth as it is in Heaven.

Give us this day our daily bread and forgive us our trespasses,  
as we forgive those who trespass against us.

Lead us not into temptation  
but deliver us from evil.

For thine is the kingdom, the power  
and the glory, for ever and ever. Amen.