

**First Presbyterian Church**  
**Psalm 90, “For All the Saints”**  
**by Pastor Matt Johnson, 11/1/2020**

This has been a year packed with so many changes, upheavals, and unwelcome surprises that many of us have a tough time keeping up with it all.

It’s a challenge and difficulty when we can’t meet in person for worship, but I think the most upsetting factor of the past 8 months have been the memorial services that we have missed out on.

There are a lot of wonderful people who have gone to be with the Lord this year, and so this All Saints Sunday I want us to take some time to consider them individually, remember them, and give God thanks for them.

To set the stage for that, I’d like to reflect on Psalm 90 with you for a few minutes.

This is a psalm with a title.

The title says, “A prayer of Moses, the man of God.”

Now this psalm isn’t included in the Pentateuch, the first five books of the Bible said to be written by Moses. So I’ll assume that this is a later poet-theologian who said, “You know, I wonder what Moses would have prayed as he stood on the top of the mountain east of the Jordan River and looked over into the promised land? I wonder how he would have reflected on the lives of all his friends who died over the 40 years they wandered in the desert, and all the people he knew as slaves in Egypt before that, but who were no longer alive. What kind of prayer would Moses pray?”

And the prayer starts out with an amazing line, “Lord, you have been our dwelling place throughout all generations.”

Here we are about to enter into our promised homeland, behind us we look back on the desert we’ve marched through for so long, behind that is the global superpower where we slaved away for 400 years, but no matter where we’ve been placed physically, *you, the Lord* have been our enduring place of residence.

From there Moses turns to the fragile and momentary nature of human life. Here one minute, gone the next. Like grass that springs up in the morning and is withered by the hot sun in the evening.

For most people over most of human existence, this is what life is like. Most people don't get the creature comforts that we take for granted. Life is hard work, aches & pains, some laughter and times of celebration, more hard work, and then you're done. If you're lucky people will remember your name and tell some stories about you.

That's just what it's like. In the big view of things, we just don't live that long. And so we should, as the prayer suggests in v. 12, number our days that we may gain a heart of wisdom.

The fool thinks they'll be here forever. The fool thinks they've got time to do what needs to be done tomorrow. The wise person realizes that there's no time like the present and does not assume that the future is something to be easily predicted.

And mixed into all that, especially for Moses, is wrestling with the wrath and anger of God over disobedience. I mean, this is the guy who was handed the 10 Commandments inscribed by the finger of God. He went back to camp and saw the people worshipping a golden calf and he got so mad ... *he broke the 10 Commandments*. So yeah, Moses knew something about rage issues.

But the psalm doesn't stay there. The anger and indignation of God over human sin are not the last word. God's character is ultimately one that bends toward mercy and restoration. This is seen clearly in this psalm, but even more clearly in the person of Jesus.

"Have compassion on your servants! Satisfy us in the morning with your unfailing love!" the prayer cries out.

And then the benediction in v. 17: "May the favor of the Lord our God rest on us; establish the work of our hands for us—yes, establish the work of our hands."

Though life is fleeting and hardship is plentiful, if God is with us then the work of our hands may endure to bless the generations that come after us.

We who are here today are those who bear witness to the work done by the wonderful saints we remember today. God has established the work of their hands that we may remember them well and know that they are now at rest in the eternal Sabbath of their Creator.

**[Organ music starts here]**

Vaughan Palmore      1/6/2020



- Wonderful man who I was honored to know and serve with at this church.
- Had a great service for him at the beginning of the year.
- What sticks out to me about Vaughan was how interested he was in other people, the world, and Scripture.
- A man of principle and planning whose word was his bond.

Lonnie Myers

1/26/2020



- Lonnie was such a sweet lady who came often to our Hillside communion and was friends with so many.
- She became a member of this congregation while out there at Hillside in that circle of worship we had created there.

Belinda Garrettson 2/5/2020



- A wonderful woman who engaged life in so many ways, as a mother, grandmother, friend, teacher, artist, elder, and Sunday School teacher, her love for God was always on display in her compassion for others.
- Belinda was the last person we had a memorial service for before the pandemic.

Dorothy Heida 3/1/2020



- Dorothy was the first person we were prevented from remembering together due to the pandemic, and she was our longest term member at the time.
- Her sense of humor endured all through her life. I'll always remember when she had a fall a few years back and was recovering in her room. I said, "Oh, Dorothy, I'm so sorry you fell down." Her response, "Who pushed me?"
- Her humor, service, kindness, generosity, and love for God and this congregation will be long remembered.

George Clunie

3/2/2020



George was not as famous as the actor who we know by the similar sounding name, but he was every bit as charming. He and his wife Audrie were among the first people I met when I came here, and they were so warm and welcoming. George was a regular at Hillside communions until his dementia became too much and eventually he was moved closer to his children in Portland. But he was not forgotten.

June Rogallo

5/15/2020



June was a kind and quiet woman, and I remember visiting and praying with her from time to time. She was trained as an organist and even taught organ earlier in her life. She lived at Hillside and loved her children, grandchildren, and the group of friends she played "Hand and Foot" with on a regular basis.

Pat Stires

6/13/2020

We're sad we couldn't find a photo of Pat, but she was a wonderful woman who was a regular presence in our worship services and activities. She is remembered and missed.

Marie Hewitt

7/8/2020

&

John Hewitt

10/4/2020



Marie and John Hewitt were a fixture of this congregation for so many years. Marie was always working as a deacon—and someone who was always present at memorial services for others. Both she and John worked the Harvest Sale and Rummage Sale year after year. Their love for God and each other was tremendous, and their faithful service to this congregation goes well beyond what could possibly be mentioned here.

Fred Koch

7/27/2020



Fred was quite a character in his day, and it was his vision that restored the church bell tower to its present location in the courtyard on the south side of the building. He was a businessman with a tremendous spirit and love of people. He and his wife Barbara (who now lives at Brookdale) served in countless capacities while they were able to be active participants in church life.

Sue Lekas

7/30/2020



Sue was the Secretary at First Presbyterian Church for many years, and she was also a member. She worked primarily with Pastor Randy Steele. She loved this church so much, and greatly missed being able to come and worship here after being largely confined to her home. She was a connector and truly had the gift of hospitality.

Chantha Thammaphouvong 9/12/2020



**THAMMAPHOUVONG, Chantha & Phoungphet**

Chantha and his family were immigrants sponsored by First Presbyterian Church. After arriving, they developed a long lasting relationship with the congregation and worshipped here regularly at the beginning and then less so as time went on. I only met Chantha once when I first arrived as his daughter was getting married and as the new pastor I was invited to participate. I know that many in the congregation have fond memories of Chantha and the Thammaphouvongs.





Joe Burgess is just about as nice a guy as you could ever hope to meet. Humble, unassuming, but highly intelligent, warm, insightful, and a gifted woodworker – there was more to Joe than meets the eye. I’m sad that he’s gone, but I’ll always remember that when I first came to the church and shared basically my life story at a men’s breakfast Joe asked the question, “What about the women in your life?” I thought – Joe, we’re going to need to find another situation for me to tell you about that! But he then clarified that I had made mention of many men who had formed me and been mentors to me, but that I hadn’t mentioned any women who had been important in my life journey. That was an incredible insight that showed me something of my own patriarchal frame of mind that I’ll never forget.

So these are the people we’ve lost this year. Amazing people. Each one made in the image of God and written into the Book of Life. Each one welcomed into God’s presence this year.

Like Moses they could see the promise of God during their lifetime, but only now have they received it in full. God has brought them into his kingdom of mercy, renewal, and love, and they are awaiting those of us who continue here on earth. But they won’t have to wait long. After all, a thousand years in the Lord’s sight are like a day that has gone by.