

"When we were baptized in Christ Jesus, we were baptized into his death. We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death, so that as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might live a new life. For if we have been united with him in a death like his, we shall certainly be united with him in a resurrection like his."

This paragraph is part of the liturgy for funeral services that we do here at Immanuel and it reminds us that when we are baptized in Christ Jesus, then we are also baptized into his death. And if we are baptized into his death, then we are also baptized into his resurrection which means that we will receive a new life. That new life is eternal life where we will be in God's presence in heaven.

Today is All Saints Sunday where we remember those who have gone before us and are now at rest in heaven. This day can be hard for many because it is the first time where they place a candle on the altar for their loved one. It can be a hard day because as we remember those who have died, it is a reminder that they are no longer physically with us.

For many there is still a pain or emptiness because our loved one has died and that is something that I cannot fix. No matter what I say or do, you will always have at least a little bit of pain or emptiness because if I tell you that one day it will all go away like it never happened, then I would be telling you that your loved one's death never really happened.

The bottom line is that when our loved one dies and we hurt, we hurt not because they died, but rather because they lived and touched our lives in a special way. Let's be honest on this one, if somebody died that we really didn't like, we probably would not hurt or miss them. But when we care about somebody who died, we will miss them; we will hurt because of how they touched us.

As we grieve, our goal is to not let the grief take over our lives because life for us does go on. Yes we will still hurt, but that does not mean that we will give in to that pain and let it control everything we do.

And as we remember those who have gone before us, we can rejoice because we know that they are completely healed and no longer suffering in any way. They have met Christ Jesus and have been in God's presence and all of that is something to be excited about for our loved ones.

So on this day, as we remember the saints in heaven, it is time to remember our loved ones. We will begin with those who have died within the last year and were members of Immanuel or whose services I presided over and then we will lift up those who died within

the last year but were buried outside of Immanuel. Once we have finished those who died within the last year, we will remember those who have died multiple years ago.

### Honoring of our Saints

So far today, we have been focusing on the saints in heaven. When we talk of saints, we often just think of those who have died and are in heaven. But saints are not just in heaven.

We too are saints here on earth. We are baptized in Christ Jesus and so we are also baptized into his death. We receive the same promise that our loved ones in heaven have received with the only difference being that they are living in the fulfilled promise and we are living in the hope of that promise.

It is because of our baptism that we are God's saints on earth. Mindy and I were talking earlier this week and she shared a conversation that she had with a friend about what they do on All Saints Sunday. They too recognize those who have died but they also recognize the new saints and I really liked that idea.

And so today, we too are going to recognize the new saints who have been baptized since January of this year. As I read off the names of those whom I have baptized, I ask that you would please come forward and place a candle on the altar. Following the baptisms that were done here, I will give the congregation an opportunity to honor a baptism that took place elsewhere during the last year.