

Monday, 11/2 St. Maybe (Pastor Mandy)

1 Cor. 1:1-2 "From Paul, called to be an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, and Sosthenes, our brother, to the church of God that is in Corinth, to those who are sanctified in Christ Jesus, and called to be saints, with all those in every place who call on the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, their Lord and ours."

St. Maybe is the title of an Anne Tyler novel from the 1990's about a family in turmoil. I never read the whole novel, but I've always liked the title. It resonated with me whenever people would talk about our call to be saints. It's less about our perfection and more about what God has done for us...if you are a baptized person, you are called to be a "saint" and God's grace works in us and through us in unlikely ways to make us look more like Jesus as we grow as disciples. It's not linear or perfect. Someone once said that a saint is someone who falls down and gets back up, over and over again.

Today, I invite you to consider the people in your life who would stand for you on some All Saint's Day very far from today. People who would point to you as someone who loved them with a love that reminded them of Jesus. Co-workers, family, church friends, neighbors....think of people much older or younger than you. Whether we agree or not, these are people we are "saints for." Pray for them, and for your own discipleship. Ask God to make you more like Jesus. Pray about what God would have you do to take the next faithful step on the Mission Possible journey.

For bonus points, draw a picture of yourself as a "saint." You might want to add pictures of things that you love or things that you think represent who you are. Share it with Pastor Mandy or on our Facebook page if you would like to.

Tuesday, 11/3 Stir it up! (Pastor Anna)

"And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near." Hebrews 10:24-25

One of my favorite things about fall is making soup. Each year, the recipe box comes out with all the tried and true cards; some yellowed and stained from many years of use. Then, I check online for new recipes to add to this season's repertoire. Soon, the house is filled with the smell of something good on the stove and it's time to invite family and friends to the table. We share laughter, conversation, and something hearty to eat. We always leave warm, full and so glad we took the time to be together sharing. It isn't complicated or fancy, yet it is the time of year I love the most.

Until this year, when Covid-19 came along and changed all the ways these gatherings happen. Somehow Zoom soup just isn't the same. Do we skip it? Do we try to Zoom with relatives and friends we can't see in person? Do we mask up and invite a couple of people over anyway?

Perhaps participating in our favorite aspects of church are feeling the same kind of weary frustration. Worship can seem to grow tired when we are gathering online. It just isn't the same. The novelty of recording for choir may have worn off by now. And, how many masks can one person sew anyway? Maybe I should just skip it. After all, God knows my heart.

Well, not so fast, this writer might say. Now is the time when we need each other more than ever. Now is the time when we should be stirring up things in each other! Stirring up encouragement on a dreary day. Stirring up good conversation. Stirring up love. It can be a cold and unpredictable world out there. This writer seemed to know that. He seemed to know that we cannot abandon the gathering, the talking, the looking after and praying for one another. We need each other more now than ever. And, God is in our midst.

Challenge: Reach out to one other person today and give them an encouraging word. Then, don't neglect to show up in worship - somehow - this weekend.

Prayer: Faithful God, your presence never leaves me. Help me to trust you in this uncertain season. Free me to respond to your grace by reaching out to someone else today. For the sake of your name, Jesus. Amen.

Wednesday, 11/4 The Uncelebrated Teammate (Pastor Melaina)

"Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles. And let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us, fixing our eyes on Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of faith."
Hebrews 12:1-2a

What feels to my body to be many, many years ago, I was once on the track team. I remember being terrified at track meets despite my teammates being there. They all seemed so much better than me; they were faster, better trained, and seemed aerodynamic. Planting my fingertips on the gravel, I scanned where the goal was and mentally prepared for the means to get there. Then you hear the sound that says it's time to go. You can hear your teammates cheering you on and that always felt great but it was the cheering from the stands that helped most. There always comes a point in the meet when you're in your lane and the goal seems too far and the finish line seems outside of your reach. Then you hear someone say your name from the stands. They may stand up, have signs, or just crazily cheer you on until you begin to believe that the finish line is in grasp and even though you don't have the energy you can persist. They are the unofficial teammates; they are our great crowd of witnesses. They cheer us through our tough times, celebrate us as we cross the finish line, and coach us to victories. They are often uncelebrated.

I love this passage because it speaks to my experience running track. From the way that we start, choice in clothing, methodology of running; all of it aids in our running without hindrances; those things that slow us down. Scanning other lanes slows us down. When we keep our eyes fixed on our goal and finish line we get there sooner. Our great crowd of witnesses aid in that process. They help us along our faith journeys. Perhaps they are our Friends in Faith, sponsors, prayer groups, and accountability partners. They may have been our Sunday School teachers, our school teachers, our family members, non-biological family, and/or friends. They are those people who remind us to keep our eyes on Jesus.

Listen – Hear God as you listen to "When the Saints Go Marching In" by Mahalia Jackson or any of the versions that speak to you.

Challenge: The saints in our lives are those unmentioned, uncredited, and uncelebrated members of the team that is our lives. Take time to write the names of the saints in your life (currently and/or over your lifetime). Take time to thank God for those saints and pray for them.

Pray: Heavenly Father, we thank you for our great crowd of witnesses. Those persons that have reminded us of your love of us. Those persons who helped us reminded us of our purpose and to keep our eyes fixed on you. Help us to be a part of the crowd of witnesses for others. Amen!

Thursday, 11/5 Putting the heart back in it. (Pastor Anna)

"I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me." Philippians 4:13

I was reminded today that the word encourage comes from the Old French word encouragier. It means to put the heart back in or to make strong. Conversely, to discourage is to take the heart out or to weaken.

When I recall the most important people in my life, to a person, they were encouragers. This was the teacher in my childhood that made me feel as though I could accomplish the task. These were the family members and friends that held me together when times were tough, reminding me that I could get through the tough spot and that something better was coming my way. These were the mentors from my church who said they saw gifts of God in me.

All of this came at a time when I might not see it, feel it, or believe it for myself. They put the heart in. Their words made me strong. In each of these exchanges, the love of Jesus was shown and the spirit of God made my impossible possible.

God places us in faith communities for this very reason, knowing there will be times in each of our lives when we have been thoroughly discouraged. When events beyond our control have effectively taken the wind out of our sails, weakened our resolve and distorted our view of the future. The Spirit of God knows there will be days like this and desires that we live in community so that we can be buoyed up by someone else who knows and trusts the Lord. Someone who is not afraid to put the heart back in.

I call these people ordinary saints.

Challenge: Make a trip through your mental contact list and find someone who has encouraged you. If possible, reach out to that person to say 'thank you'. Let them know that they have made a valuable contribution in your life. Or, if you can't contact that person, pay it forward. Surely, there is someone in your contacts that could use an encouraging word from you today.

Prayer: Loving God, thank you for knowing me, loving me and setting me in community. Encourage me in the times when my faith and strength are weak. Speak to me, through the power of your Spirit, that I might be an encourager to someone else. For the sake of your name, Jesus. Amen.

Friday, 11/6 The Art of Falling (Pastor Melaina)

"For the righteous falls seven times and rises again, but the wicked stumble in times of calamity." Proverbs 24:16

When we moved into a development after having lived in a beautiful house that had no sidewalks around it and gravel for a driveway, we were excited to finally teach our son how to ride his bike. We told him last month that we were going to teach him how to ride the bike that

we had gotten him for Christmas. He thought that he would learn in one day. He put all of his protective gear on to ride and was excited to get started. As he hopped onto his bike with great anticipation; he quickly realized that he was afraid. As we asked probing questions, we discovered that he was afraid of falling. I realized that this is a very real fear that we can all relate to in some way. I believe that it is a fear that intensifies over time. Yet it's a very real part of development. How many times does a baby fall as they learn to walk?

I remember watching both children learn to walk. They were both early walkers that learned around 10 months old. They wobbled as they took each step and PLOP they landed on their bottoms. I wanted to put pillows all over the house to prevent them from feeling the hard floor when they fell. These were my own fears of falling that my babies did not have. With each step or two they fell. They did not stay on their bottoms but quickly popped back up to take another step. To learn to walk, falling is a byproduct of the tasks. The most important part was learning the art of falling. The art of falling is not the fall at all but the ability to get back up over and over again. The better we learn to rebound from those falls, the better we begin to walk and eventually run.

In the song by Donnie McClurkin entitled "We Fall Down," he says that a saint is someone that falls but gets back up again. A saint has learned the art of falling and therefore have learned to walk in their faith and perhaps run in the faith. They know that even as they stumble or fall that their loving parent, God, is there with them. God helps us to get back up. A person that has learned the art of falling knows this fact and is not immobilized by the fall. They can get back up over and over again. When we have not learned the beauty in our falls, falls that help us to learn of God's grace, love, and presence then we become immobile; stuck in our fall. I'm not suggesting that we deliberately fall or fall many times to test God's grace but that faith journey is not linear. There may be times when we fall and stumble and God is with us. Let us remember that we are saints because we have learned the art of falling [and getting back up again] with God's help.

Listen: Hear to God through the song, "We Fall Down" by Donnie McClurkin and remember that we may fall down but we can get up with God's help.

Challenge: Journal about the art of falling; those times when you may have fallen down but were picked up by God.

Pray: Gracious God, we thank you for teaching us the art of falling; the reminder that you are with us every time we fall; and pick us up in our times of struggle. Continue to strengthen our faith so that we may continue to not only walk but run to you.

Saturday, 11/7 [Make Me An Instrument--Mission Possible \(Pastor Mandy\)](#)

Tomorrow is Commitment/Celebration Sunday for Mission Possible! I invite you to join Eric and me and our brothers and sisters at Glen Mar in prayer of gratitude for all God has given to us personally and to us as a church, and asking how God would have us share our resources as part of Mission Possible. Use the Prayer of St. Francis, praying slowly...God has answered, and does answer, and will answer, and this prayer, for us and for our church.

Lord, make me an instrument of your peace

Where there is hatred, let me sow love
Where there is injury, pardon

Where there is doubt, faith
Where there is despair, hope
Where there is darkness, light
And where there is sadness, joy
O Divine Master, grant that I may
Not so much seek to be consoled as to console
To be understood, as to understand
To be loved, as to love
For it is in giving that we receive
And it's in pardoning that we are pardoned
And it's in dying that we are born to Eternal Life
Amen

This is so much like "Blessed to be a Blessing!" As we pray about your financial giving, in preparation for worship tomorrow, I ask that each would give as God is calling us to give, and if we do that, there will be "more than enough." If you can only give to one of the two funds (Capital or Mission/Ministry), I'd ask that you give to our Mission and Ministry fund, and if giving to both means lowering what you have given to Mission and Ministry Fund, only give to the Mission and Ministry Fund. (And if you have questions or need help, contact [Bob Henry](#)). I'm so grateful for when God's people pray, and I'm so grateful for the folks who have already joined us on this Mission Possible journey. I'm so proud to be the pastor of a church where... all things are possible with God.