

November 1 is All Saints Day. It is not nearly as well known as the day before, All Hallows' (Saints') Eve, better known as Halloween, but is far more important in the life of the church.

John Wesley, founder of the Methodist movement, enjoyed and celebrated All Saints Day. In a journal entry from November 1, 1767, Wesley calls it "a festival I truly love." On the same day in 1788, he writes, "I always find this a comfortable day." The following year he calls it "a day that I peculiarly love."

This may sound odd. Don't United Methodists believe in saints?.

First of all we need to ask, who is a saint?

Originally, All Saints Day was to honor the martyrs that were not known to the church in general, and later the dead of the church, whether martyred or not.

However, the early church thought of themselves as saints. Anybody that had believed in Jesus Christ and been baptized was considered as a saint. When Paul wrote the letters to the churches, he used the word 'saints'. One example is in Philippians 1:1

Paul and Timothy, servants of Christ Jesus, To all **the saints** in Christ Jesus at Philippi, together with the overseers and deacons:

A saint is one who believes in God through Jesus Christ and lives as the disciples of Jesus. When we celebrate All Saints Day, we are recognizing that all of us are saints in God's sight through Christ. It is not how we live that makes us saints, but how Christ lived for us, died for us and rose for us.

In Revelation 21:5-6 the Lord said, "See, I am making all things new ." "It is done! I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end."

As believers in Christ we are made new through our Baptism and that means that Jesus is the beginning and the end of our lives. Our lives begin in Christ in our

Baptism and our lives end in Christ when we dwell in the heavenly home he has prepared for us.

The following poem says who a saint is :

A saint is a sign of contradiction - a living symbol of the Cross. He or she is a person who: believes the unbelievable, bears the unbearable, forgives the unforgivable, loves the unlovable, is perfectly happy not to be perfect, is willing to give up his or her will, becomes weak to be strong ... and finds love by giving it away.

We who are saints are people who reach one hand up to the Lord so that we may always be in His grace, and we reach another out, out toward those who stand next to us in the body of Christ, the church and to those who are not here but who could be it we reach out a hand to them.

As we gather together on All Saints Sunday, we remember and pray for our sisters and brothers in Christ who faithfully followed Jesus Christ. Let us give thanks for both the saints in glory and those on earth, who have led us to Jesus. As they have shared the gospel with us, may we add our voices so someone else may hear about the grace and love of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

Lord, we gather here this day in praise and thanksgiving for all the wonderful things you have done for us. Help us to be faithful disciples in all that we think, do and say, that your great love may be revealed and offer healing to all people. AMEN.