

11/11/2018

## “Thankful for Those Who Serve”

Scripture: 1 Peter 4:7-11

Series: Month of Thankfulness

Veterans Day

Consecration Sunday

**Although we may not be putting our lives in harm's way, it is important that we offer not only prayers, but also our service, as followers of Jesus Christ -- striving to make the world in which we live a place of true peace (Shalom) for all people.**

1 Peter 4:7-11 (NIV)

*“The end of all things is near. Therefore be alert and of sober mind so that you may pray. <sup>8</sup> Above all, love each other deeply, because love covers over a multitude of sins. <sup>9</sup> Offer hospitality to one another without grumbling. <sup>10</sup> Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others, as faithful stewards of God's grace in its various forms. <sup>11</sup> If anyone speaks, they should do so as one who speaks the very words of God. If anyone serves, they should do so with the strength God provides, so that in all things God may be praised through Jesus Christ. To him be the glory and the power for ever and ever. Amen.”*

Today we observe Veteran's Day (formerly Armistice Day), declared by an act of Congress in 1954, changing its purpose and scope. President Eisenhower called on the nation to remember the sacrifices of those who fought in all our nation's wars, to celebrate the contributions of all veterans of military service, and to rededicate ourselves to the task of promoting an enduring peace. It is Eisenhower's call that remains the three-fold purpose of Veterans' Day: remembering those who fought and died, celebrating all veterans, and promoting an enduring peace. (from Suggestions for Observing Veterans' Day (November 11) in Worship by Dean McIntyre, Dan Benedict, and Taylor Burton-Edwards)

As Oakley Blair shared with me earlier this week: “The Armistice was signed at approximately 05:00 in the morning on November 11th, however it would not take effect until 11:00 that morning. This meant that the fighting and killing went on for 6 more hours. This was by design for it gave the allies 6 hours to take land that the Germans held. I have read that during this 6 hours over 10,000 soldiers, both allied & German, became casualties. How truly sad.

“I'm sure that many members of this congregation had relatives that served in the military during WWI. Both my wife & I had grandfathers and great uncles that served. Across the Town Hall of Chesapeake City is a monument listing the men from the area who served during the war, my great uncle, Walter Blair, is among those listed.

“The 11th month, the 11th day at the 11th hour the Great War - the “war to end all wars” came to a close. It changed Europe forever, empires gone, new boundaries drawn, and humans' lives were changed.

“Human kind keeps repeating its mistakes and wars continue to this day. We pray for the return of Jesus, our Lord and Savior, to bring ever lasting peace to the world. Our Christian faith will keep us strong and steadfast until His second coming.”

We are indeed thankful for all those who have, or do, serve our country.

I am also glad in the position held by the United Methodist Church:

Although we oppose war and urge nations to find peaceful means of conflict resolution, The United Methodist Church “honors, supports, and upholds in our prayers those men and women who serve in our armed services and, in addition, honors and supports those United Methodist clergy who serve as chaplains.” (Resolution 5061, “Prayer and Support for Members of the Armed Forces and Veterans,” Book of Resolutions.)

We, also, are committed to providing pastoral ministry to members of the armed forces and their families both during their service and after their return home. Congregations are encouraged to support those serving through prayer and to welcome their participation in the ministry of the church once they return.

The church also advocates on behalf of veterans, particularly those who are suffering from physical and emotional injuries, for medical care and benefits to promote their healing and successful return to civilian life. ([Ministry With Those Who Serve, umc.org](http://MinistryWithThoseWhoServe.umc.org))

Indeed, we pray for the return of Jesus and to establish everlasting peace. And too, until then, we seek to promote an enduring peace. That is also our call as followers of Jesus here and now.

**That is why it is so important that we offer not only prayers, but also our service, as followers of Jesus Christ -- striving to make the world in which we live a place of true peace and well-being (Shalom) for all people.**

† **We do that by using the gifts given to us by the Holy Spirit.**

Remember the words of Saint Peter (v. 10) . . . *“Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others, as faithful stewards of God’s grace in its various forms.”*

And the words of Saint Paul, who wrote to the believers in Corinth . . .

*“Now about the gifts of the Spirit, brothers and sisters, I do not want you to be uninformed . . . Therefore I want you to know that no one who is speaking by the Spirit of God says, “Jesus be cursed,” and no one can say, “Jesus is Lord,” except by the Holy Spirit. There are different kinds of gifts, but the same Spirit distributes them. There are different kinds of service, but the same Lord. There are different kinds of working, but in all of them and in everyone it is the same God at work. Now to each one the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good.”* (1 Corinthians 12:1-7)

As you give of your time, talents, and gifts of the Spirit, you are serving God. And, when we serve others, even the least of God’s children, we are serving Jesus, our brother.

When we think of veterans who have passed recently and may come to mind because of their dedication and service to our country, in both war and peace, we might think of John McCain and Brent Taylor. And, you may know of others.

And, when we think of those who have dedicated their lives in service to God and Jesus, we may think of Billy Graham who has also gone home to be with the Lord, or others who are still with us.

I am indeed thankful for all those who serve God and our Savior Jesus Christ. I am thankful for all those here and in this congregation, who give generously of their time, talents, and other gifts, to further the mission and ministries of our church.

### † **None who serve the Lord are insignificant**

And, as significant as these men and women who come to our minds might be, we should realize that none who serve the Lord are insignificant. None go unnoticed by God.

As Zully Taborda of New York recently shared with readers of The Upper Room, “**No One is Insignificant**” (UR 11/7/18) He says . . .

“I had recently arrived in the United States and didn’t know anyone. For a year, I worked for a telemarketing company in a low-paying, entry-level job, and it was difficult for me to make ends meet. I hoped that this job would be temporary, because talking daily on the telephone with customers who insulted me made me feel insignificant.

“Then one evening while I was making a routine call, the woman who answered the phone was crying and pleaded with me to call 911. She had been injured by domestic violence. Immediately, I dialed 911 and gave all her call-list information to the operator. I left my work station to take a few moments to compose myself and began to pray for God’s strength and for the woman and her situation.

“In that moment, I realized that God can use each of us wherever we are. Because I was at my “insignificant” job, a woman in need was helped. I learned that no person is unimportant when serving God by helping a neighbor — or a stranger.”

Whether you serve God here, in or through our church, in our community, or beyond, you are making a positive difference in the lives of others and our world!

Take a few minutes now if you haven’t already, to prayerfully consider how you would like to serve in and through our church, using whatever gift you have received. And, if you are still not sure what those gifts are, please let me know. I’d be glad to help you discern them. Then, fill out a Ministry Menu and bring it forward during our Responsive Hymn.

I encourage you to also make an estimate of giving or commitment of giving for the coming year as well, so that you and the church can better plan and reach the goals of faithful stewardship set for next year.

And, may God bless you in every endeavor striving to make the world in which we live a place of true peace for all people!