

“Blessed Saints”

Revelation 7:9-11, Matthew 5:1-12

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From the Pulpit

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A communion meditation delivered by The Rev. Dr. Timothy C. Ahrens, Sr. Minister, The First Congregational Church, United Church of Christ, Columbus, Ohio, November 5, 2020, All Saints Sunday, dedicated to the memories of Dorothy M. Horn, Betty Jean Cobb, Dr. Beth Hunker, Glenn Bardis, Bob Monahan, Joanne K. Morse, Jenkins Smith, Betsy Zahn, Pat Groseck, Rick Henderson and Loa David Edwards and always to the glory of God!

Today we remember – with great love – eleven Blessed Saints of First Church who entered eternal life since All Saints Day 2022. As we take time to hear their names and their stories, let us remember each one with love. Please listen carefully as you give a few minutes of your lives to salute and remember these 11 remarkable men and women who together lived more than 997 years – three in their mid-70s, one in his mid-80s, five in their mid to late 90s, and one over one hundred years old – averaging 90.6 years old between them.

They were sisters and brothers. Spouses and beloved partners. Mothers and Fathers. Grandmothers and Grandfathers, beloved aunts and uncles – and some were great-grandparents, too. They were our friends. Each one was a blessed child of God. They were ours and we were theirs.

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Let us pray: May the words of my mouth and the meditations of my heart be acceptable in your sight, O Lord, our rock, and our salvation. Amen.

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Dorothy M. Horn – was 99¾ when she entered eternal life last January. Born in Akron, Ohio in 1923, Dottie spent most of her life in Upper Arlington and in later years in Stuart, Florida. Graduating from The Ohio State University in 1947, she taught at Beck Street Elementary School in German Village for five years. She was active in community service especially through TWIG 107 for 50 years and Buckeye Ranch – of which she was a founding member in 1958 and supporter ever since. She enjoyed cooking, making hand-dipped dark chocolate candies, entertaining, traveling with family, OSU Football games (a ticket holder since 1940) and playing tennis. She was a member of First Church for more than 60 years and actively supported our stewardship, our ministry, and mission until the end of her life. Dorothy loved her family and First Church! **For Dorothy Horn – Thanks be to God!**

Betty Jean Cobb was 97 years old when she entered eternal life in February. Betty Jean (Williams) Cobb died peacefully at home on February 6, 2023. Born in Milton, WV, Betty’s family moved to Ohio, and she graduated from Worthington High School. She worked for 35 years at Borden Dairy where she met the love of her life, Sam. They worked at Borden together for many years and Sam and Betty were married for more than 63 years before Sam passed away. Since retiring, Betty enjoyed spending time with her grandchildren and great grandchildren. She taught them to

sew, crochet and bake. Her famous oatmeal raisins cookies even won awards. She donated her time to Touching Little Lives and contributed over 350 afghans for babies. Betty was a contributing member of First Church for more than 60 years. **For Betty Cobb – Thanks be to God!**

Dr. Beth Hunker entered eternal life at 96¾ in March. Beth Hunker was an educator – through and through. She believed that teaching was the profession that saved lives. She lived this sacred belief all her life. She taught at Columbus East High School, Columbus State Community College, and Ohio State University in English and Comparative Literature, and as Adjunct Associate Professor in the School of Public Policy and Management before her retirement in 1994. She continued to serve children and volunteer in retirement – here at First Church on the Downtown Playschool Board and as teacher to our children; as a charter member of Friends in Action (Action for Children); as a phone-friend for latch key children; member of Twig 50 of Children’s Hospital; and as a docent for the Columbus Museum of Art. Married to Henry for 64 years, Beth loved her home, her sons and family, friends, students, cats and dogs, and she loved gardening and reading – particularly English fiction and poetry. An avid reader, you could always find a stack of books beside her “reading chair.” Beth was also a world traveler and a cancer survivor. **For Dr. Beth Hunker – Thanks be to God!**

Glenn Roger Bardus was 84½ when he entered eternal life in April. Glenn Roger Bardus was a beloved husband to Sharon for 62 years and a beloved father, and grandfather. Glenn was a curious, determined, creative and fun man. He was fair-mindedness, honorable, and a true gentleman. He had a passion for science –

particularly nature and astronomy. Starting in childhood, his keen observation skills allowed him to notice and appreciate the tiniest creatures, flowers, and fossils while walking in the forest and to see the vast heavens as a lover of the constellations and the wonders of the night skies.

He was an entrepreneur. When personal computers were invented, he saw an opportunity to start his own business. In collaboration with his wife, he created and sold educational software under the name of B5 Software and then opened one of the earliest computer stores in Columbus. But Glenn's heart always belonged to his family with whom he cherished spending time. In the words of his family, "He was incredible." **For Glenn Bardus – Thanks be to God!**

Robert Monahan was 93 $\frac{1}{4}$ when he entered eternal life in June. Bob left behind his beloved wife, Jane Carter and many family members and friends who loved him deeply. Bob Monahan was a magnificent man. He was kind, fun and funny, gentle, and loving. His smile could light up a room and your life. He was an engineer by profession, but his love of nature and humanity guided his daily life. He was always up for anything and loved traveling. He was inquisitive, and open to anything new all the while cherishing what was past. His family and Jane were Bob's most precious gifts. Truly, Bob and Jane were genuinely and deeply in love with one another. Jane told me, "He was the best man I have ever known."

Bob was always a special and unique blend of Christian doubter, questioner, and believer all at once. Our last words to each other were, "I love you." We sealed it with a goodbye kiss. I will forever miss Bob Monahan. **For Bob Monahan – Thanks be to God!**

Joanne K. Morse had just turned 98 when she entered eternal life in August. She was born in Pittsburgh, PA in July 1925. Although she passed away peacefully at home on Bainbridge Island, WA, she was a Columbus resident until 2016. Here at First Church, she was active in Women's Fellowship, the Pretiola Shop, Mission Commission, BREAD, book studies, and always passionate and support of all the missions of this church. She was well read and always compassionate, kind and gentle. With others, I shared memories of Joanne's quiet and steady voice and presence. Her mind, spirit and daily actions were always focused on the care of others. For those in central Ohio who have missed her here, we await her return to be buried beside Ben in Greenlawn Cemetery. **For Joanne Morse – Thanks be to God!**

Jenkins Smith was 75³/₄ years old when he entered eternal life in September. Jenkins was a member of our church for four years and was a beloved member of our staff from June 2022 until his death – working as our weekend custodian. Even before he was on staff, Jenkins was here most Sundays. Each Sunday, you would find him sitting with his dear friends, Rev. Larry Miller and Jan Miller. Born in Birmingham, Alabama, Jenkins spent many years in Cleveland, Ohio. He was a state championship basketball player from East Tech High School in Cleveland and a Navy Veteran from the Viet Nam War. He was a boxer and an all-around great athlete – training boxers through the years. He had an associate degree from Columbus State Community College earned in the last few years – and then he was employed by the Columbus State Food Bank. But, for all of us who knew him, it was his electric smile, his loving presence, his wise and kind words, The Jenkins Way – truth spoken with love – that guided his way. **For Jenkins Smith – Thanks be to God!**

Betsy T. Zahn had just turned 98 years old when she entered eternal life one month ago today, October 5th. Betsy was an actress, a stewardess, an early TV personality in Central Ohio, and along with John, an active member at First Church since April 1955 – 68+ years. At church she was active with our Youth Group, Sunday School teaching, (she served as Commissioner of Education), refugee resettlement, the women's fellowships, as a Deacon and a Stephen Minister in the 1990s, and attended most of the early BREAD meetings. She was also active conducting tours all over the world and is remembered by many for leading those tours with church members traveling along.

Betsy was truly a citizen of the world. She was loving, outgoing, curious, brilliant, insightful in all things and deeply devoted and a practicing person of faith. She was fun and funny and truly a loving presence in our lives. We will remember her here tomorrow morning at 11am with a celebration of life, a reception to follow and a final rest in Mt Sterling, Ohio buried next to John, her beloved husband of 63 years. **For Betsy Zahn – Thanks be to God!**

Patricia (Pat) Groseck was a few weeks short of 77 years old when she entered eternal life on October 9th. The daughter of Ukrainian immigrants, Pat moved to Columbus in the early 1970s and became the assistant press secretary for Governor Gilligan. That launched a career in journalism, communications, fundraising, marketing and development. She was a brilliant leader in any area she touched. She was always a progressive Democrat and was proud to work for policies which made Ohio a better place for children and all who suffered here.

Pat loved people and people loved her. She was a member of First Church for nine years and was active in our worship life until she was no longer able to be with us because of mounting health concerns. However, she came to worship one last time on Legacy Sunday and was overjoyed to be with us celebrating our life together and our long-lasting commitment to social justice. Pat was a beam of light in God's world. We will have a celebration of life for Pat on Sunday, November 12th at First Church at 4 p.m. with wine and cheese to follow. **For Pat Groseck – Thanks be to God!**

Rick Henderson was almost 78 years old when he entered eternal life on October 20th. When you greeted Rick and asked how he was, he ALWAYS responded, SENSATIONAL. He always had a kind word for everyone, an open heart, a powerfully positive demeanor, and a faithful and loving attitude toward everyone. For years and years, Rick and Lourdes were regular worshippers at 9am worship. But he would stay on for the 11am service – helping however and wherever he could as an usher and deacon. When he was asked to serve as a Trustee of the church, he stepped up and served with joy – even becoming the chairperson of Trustees. Rick did this with pure joy – bringing a spirit of delight to each and every meeting. On Church Council – the same – a great sense of humor, a sense of faithful service and a truly joyful heart. With a joyous spirit, a strong handshake, a smile that could melt anyone's heart, his compassionate and friendly way, his deep faith in Jesus Christ – Rick was “SENSATIONAL.” **For Rick Henderson – Thanks be to God!**

Finally, our Matriarch – Lola Davis Edwards who was 100 $\frac{3}{4}$ years old when she entered eternal life 12 days ago. Lola or “Zimmy” as her family and friends called her was a beam of light. If sunshine

could be caught in a person and shine continuously, you would begin to capture her essence. What can be said about a mother of nine, grandmother of 26, and great grandmother of 35?

Three pounds at birth on February 24th, Lola was placed in a shoe box and placed by the radiator in her family's home to keep her warm through the winter of 1923. This feisty little survivor grew to be a busy and active child and a feisty lady. A surgical nurse in Paris immediately following WWII, Lola returned to Columbus, met Mel, fell in love and following their marriage, they had nine children who they raised at First Church. Here she served as one of the first female Deacons, a member of the House and Grounds Commission, and with two friends, started the Pretiola Shop, which sold fair trade goods that operated until 1999. She enjoyed sewing, making clothes and other items including costumes for the annual Christmas pageant at First Church. She sewed the communion clothes we have on the table today and fixed all of the communion elements by herself for many years. Last year she was named our Lay Leader Award recipient – an honor she shared with Jackie Dean.

Lola loved art, was an avid reader and she taught her children to appreciate learning, no matter the subject, and to do their best, no matter the job. They also taught their children to respect the dignity of a person for who they are, not by their race, religion, sexual orientation or social standing.

Zimmy was devoted to her family, and they were devoted to her in return. She will be remembered here in a service celebrating her life on Saturday November 18th at 2:00pm. I invite everyone to be present as we celebrate our church's beloved matriarch. **For Lola Davis Edwards – Thanks be to God!**

This morning, I see all our loved ones stopping by today to see how we are doing. I see them with hearts of gratitude and love checking on us to see if we are all okay. Now with the angels in glory, they are at peace with loved ones in their families and friendship circles who have gone before us. They are now our ancestors and the angels in glory who will guide our steps for generations to come. They inspire us to be thoughtful and kind, champions for peace and justice, generous and prayerful, active in our world and always working to make this world a better place. They are blessing us, today. May their memories always be for us a true blessing. For all the Blessed Saints – let us all say, **THANKS BE TO GOD!** Amen.

