

**From the Pulpit - November, 2017 - Seasons of the Spirit**

**November 5 - What Should I Do? -- Matthew 5:1-12; 23:1-12**

**All Saints Sunday**

Along the journey of faith, we seek guidance and look for models of holy living. We look to leaders in our faith communities to provide such guidance - and we are leaders ourselves. In this week's focus scripture, Jesus tells his disciples and the crowds around him to be discerning in whom they follow. Our leaders should be humble. They should live authentically and practice what they preach. We should look for the qualities of "servant leadership" in others - people who are willing to serve and care for others without seeking attention or striving for fame along the way. Jesus says, "The greatest among you will be a servant. People who exalt themselves will be humbled, and all who humble themselves will be exalted."

**November 12 - Be Ready - Matthew 25:1-13**

**23<sup>rd</sup> Sunday after Pentecost**

Jesus tells a story about bridesmaids and a bridegroom, lamps, and oil. His lesson for listeners is one about the importance of nurturing our faith and relationship with God. When we feel disinterested or even bored with faith, we must continue to seek God and practice God's love in our lives. Our daily actions should reflect "keeping faith"; these actions can be the oil that fuels our lamps. Our participation in a community of faith is one way to encounter God and deepen our faith through relationship with one another.

**November 19 - Investing What Is Offered - Matthew 25:14-30**

**24<sup>th</sup> Sunday after Pentecost**

In this week's focus scripture, Jesus sends a message about being ready for the coming of God's realm. The sense of urgency is represented in the three slaves who have been given money from their master, a wealthy landlord, and await his return. In the meantime, the three slaves make choices about how they will invest their master's money. Our faith lives are a series of choices. If we choose to be complacent and content, we might fall into behaviors and patterns that don't put God or the children of God first. Our choices should reflect God's justice and compassion.

**November 26 - Christ Is Among Us - Matthew 25:31-46**

**Hanging of the Greens**

The description of God's judgment in this week's focus scripture might leave us with the frightening image of an all-powerful ruler. But the true image of Christ as ruler emphasizes compassion. Throughout this season, we've heard stories of how God desires for us to live - closer to God and closer to one another. The choice is ours. Our actions and response to the most vulnerable are important. Our devotion to the one who made us and who will make the judgment of our lives is crucial.