Sermon for Sunday 1 November 2026 @ Bethesda United Methodist Church

Sunday 1 November 2026

Twenty-fourth Sunday after Pentecost/All Saints Sunday

Scriptures: First Lesson: Revelation 7:9-17; Psalter (*Insert)* Leader/**people:** Psalm 34:1-10, 22; Second Lesson: 1 John 3:1-3; Gospel: Matthew 5:1-12

Sermon: It's beyond my capacity to preach today.

The only reason I'm up here is because the church does its best to train me in scripture and leadership and then asks us as a group to listen, and reflect, and love ourselves and one another in demonstration of what life is all about and where we are headed.

Read over each of these sacred passages and ponder with hope in your heart about where we are all headed, both together and as individuals.

How would you look for the beautiful, as the old hymn says? Each of us is entitled to our own dreams and descriptions; don't be ashamed or critical.

I told Isazetta yesterday in the hospital that it's not that God aims at our being poor, or

in pain, or in any other deprived condition, but rather than behind all sadness and suffering we are able to imagine, and gradually to believe, that nothing can come between any of us and heaven. Nothing but our own hesitation.

That is what Jesus spells out beyond the Old Testament stories we get up to and through before he comes on stage as our brother and example and guide. We simply work at trusting his promises, his confidence, his presence among us, time after time, by ourselves and when we get together. This is the evolution of all things that he trusted and demonstrated. I promise you that comes to me year after year and time after time, and ask you to trust such good news. Just the other day I was down enough to think of falling apart, even as you have, each in our own time and way. It may be we lean toward getting angry, or falling apart, or in other ways deal with blankness and hopelessness. Again and again, we find out that all that comes to is a setback in our progress as developing creatures of love; and

once more we get up and get going and loving ourselves and our neighbors as God insists and supports our doing so..

This day simply says the truth, one more time, and we profit from its reminder in various ways. as All Saints Day comes around again and again.

Let us pray: Dear Lord, we are here hearing another time how precious we are to each other and to you. We hear differently every time this day comes around, and thanks be, we find all these images individually helpful year by year. We resist, we doubt, we brush aside the future in all our human ways, but you beautifully interrupt and re-set the images and the beauties our fellow believers and doubters, each in their own ways, have down through the ages. Thank you again for your blessings all year. Use each of us as inspirers of one another, even as they uniquely so that for us. Lead us on towards glory, in all the ways we find helpful as time goes forward; and thank you for using us as instruments of glory beyond anything we can predict or even discover; in our blessed Savior's name we pray, Amen.