

Sunday's in November – Worship themes and message points

November 4 – This is All Saints Sunday – during our worship we focused on remembering the Saints of the past, present and the future. We of the faith are all Saints working here in the kingdom of God. A special candle lighting time was held as we remembered those in our congregation who have passed from this world this past year. We lit candles for all those in our lives who are gone onto their heavenly reward. We also lit candles for us who walk this day and for those who are yet to come as saints in God's kingdom. The message of the day from John 11: 32-44 focused on the raising of Lazarus from the dead. This is a story of hope: the hope that Martha showed when Jesus didn't come right away when he was told of Lazarus being ill and his impending death. Lazarus did die, Jesus came four days after the burial, Martha believed that her brother would live again at the day of resurrection. Jesus tells Martha and all people that He is the Resurrection and the Life. It is life we die once and in Christ we are live twice – in our baptism and in our resurrection. What a blessing of hope for those who have gone on before us and we are reminded of the hope that we the saints of the present take with us as we walk the life God has called for us to be about. We are reminded of the hope for those saints yet to come for God's arms are open to all. It is with that hope we share the good news of Christ with all we meet.

November 11 – This Sunday is clergy exchange and we welcomed Pastor Scott Johnson of the Ira United Methodist Church as our Pastor led worship at the First United Methodist Church in Mexico. Pastor Scott's theme was, "Who gives from their heart?" Here we focused on how we give and not what we give. The message of the day from Mark 12: 38 – 44 the story of the Widow's mite or we might say the Widow's trust. Trusting in God to take care of all her needs she gave all she had, two mites, the smallest of the Roman coins, hardly worth a penny. She didn't even need to tithe because she was a widow but she knew what God had given her and trusted that God would continue to do so.

November 18 – This is our Thanksgiving Service – during worship we focused on the many blessings we have received over the year and throughout our lives. Our focus was on how we are blessed to be a blessing to others from the bounty we have been given. We dedicated Operation Christmas Child Shoeboxes and Thanksgiving Dinner Bags that had been collected and made over the past month that are going to those who need that extra brightness in their lives this year. The message of the day from Matthew 6: 25-33 focused on the many blessings we have, that this is the season for giving thanks to our God for those blessings and that we should not just give thanks one day a year. It is about giving thanks for God being there with us in our times of plenty and want and joy and sorrow. In Matthew Jesus tell us, "Do not worry what you shall eat, or what you shall drink, or with what you shall clothe yourselves, for your Father in heaven knows that you have need of all these things." It is not pie-in-the-sky theology that exhorts us to run foolishly into the future. It does not suggest that our lives will be free from burden and filled with prosperity. It is, rather, this: that whatever bounty or blessing your table holds -- or doesn't hold -- the God of grace is already there. Matthew also tells us the one of the great promises in all of scripture is found when Jesus says, "Seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all the other stuff will be taken care of." So we are not to worry and God will provide all that is needed and we need to thank our God with 'our hearts, and hands and voices."

November 25 – This is Christ the King Sunday – the last Sunday in the church liturgical year. Our focus this day is on Jesus Christ, our Redeemer and Savior, the King of Glory. We remember that He came to save all and is King of All. The Scripture reading is from John 18: 33-37. We will look at the church year and how Christ is center in each and every day of the year. We will look at how Christ lives in our lives, not just on Sunday mornings but each and every day. Christ gave his life so that we may never be separated from God again. Our

life is not our own, because Jesus lives in us. When Christ is king of our lives, we don't need to worry. Since God is busy providing for our needs, we are free to be busy living for others, free to invite others to meet the God who meets us in Word and Sacrament. As we proclaim, "Christ is King!" we need to look at what that is like in our lives. Is it seen through how we: Worship; Study God's Word; Pray; Serve our neighbors in need; Give of our resources; Encourage others as we are Christ's hands and feet in this world; and Invite others to "Come and see" the God who meets us? These are questions that each of us needs to answer.