Children's Church: Children of God

Rev. Cameron D St.Michael – November 1 2026

All Saints Day

Readings: Revelation 7:9-17; 1 John 3:1-3; Matthew 5:1-12 CEB

Reflection: Psalm 34 CEB

Call to Worship: See the love the Father has for us that we should be called the children of God. We come as God's children with the sure faith that we are known and loved. We turn to our Heavenly Father to comfort us and guide us as we remember those who have gone before. May we remember the blessing of those whose lives we honor in Christ this day!

Prayer: Blessed God, we gather before you as your beloved children. We seek your grace and your blessing in our lives this day. We come to you that you may guide us and lead us in all things, to help us to know which way to go and what to do. We pray that you will help us in our weakness and our confusion, that you may strengthen us and give us hope. For you are our salvation. We celebrate our Heavenly Father who watches over us in our daily lives. We celebrate the Son, our Risen Savior whose great love for us inspires us every day. We come together to celebrate the Holy Spirit, whose guidance we follow and whose presence reminds us that we are loved and cared for. May your grace continue to work through us so that all may know of your comfort and your care. Help us to be the best we can be and to do all the good that we can. May we sing your praises and glorify your name. And may we celebrate that we are your children, oh Lord, called to follow you. We are thankful for all that you have done, are doing, and will do for all of your people. Amen.

Reflection: Psalm 34

> *11 Come, children, listen to me. Let me teach you how to honor the Lord: 12 Do you love life; do you relish the chance to enjoy good things? 13 Then you must keep your tongue from evil and keep your lips from speaking lies! 14 Turn away from evil! Do good! Seek peace and go after it! 18 The Lord is close to the brokenhearted; he saves those whose spirits are crushed. (Psalm 34:11-14,18 CEB+)*

We read the words of Psalm 34, and we hear about what we can do to honor the Lord. That as the children of God we should love life and enjoy what God has done. That we know we should seek peace and avoid lies. That God will always lift up the broken and the lost. Do you turn to God when you are in need? Do you try to do the best you can because of God's great love for you? Who can you be lifting up in your prayers this week? Who can you reach out to in the coming days? How can we treat one another as God's children as we work together?

Prayer: Most merciful God, we seek your grace and your mercy in our lives this day. We come to you with the joys and the concerns that we have, lifting them up in prayer to you. We ask for the strength to do what is right and good in your sight, Lord. May we gather as your children, thankful for all that you have done for us. Help us with the prayers that we have spoken aloud and help us with the silent pleadings from within our hearts. May you help us with the good, the bad, and the unknown so that we may follow you in all that we are. Help us to remember that

your love is with us no matter what. That we find you in our laughter and in our tears. That your love is with us in our sorrow and in our rejoicing. May your grace be there in both celebration and in mourning. And may your steadfast love and faithfulness guide us all the days of our lives. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

Now let the words of our mouths, and the meditations of our hearts be acceptable in your sight, O Lord, our Rock and our Redeemer. Amen.

Sermon:

Our scripture readings for today come from the Common English Bible. Our first reading is from Revelation chapter 7 verses 9 through 17.

9 After this I looked, and there was a great crowd that no one could number. They were from every nation, tribe, people, and language. They were standing before the throne and before the Lamb. They wore white robes and held palm branches in their hands. 10 They cried out with a loud voice: "Victory belongs to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb." 11 All the angels stood in a circle around the throne, and around the elders and the four living creatures. They fell facedown before the throne and worshipped God, 12 saying, "Amen! Blessing and glory and wisdom and thanksgiving and honor and power and might be to our God forever and always. Amen." 13 Then one of the elders said to me, "Who are these people wearing white robes, and where did they come from?" 14 I said to him, "Sir, you know." Then he said to me, "These people have come out of great hardship. They have washed their robes and made them white in the Lamb's blood. 15 This is the reason they are before God's throne. They worship him day and night in his temple, and the one seated on the throne will shelter them. 16 They won't hunger or thirst anymore. No sun or scorching heat will beat down on them, 17 because the Lamb who is in the midst of the throne will shepherd them. He will lead them to the springs of life-giving water, and God will wipe away every tear from their eyes." (Revelation 7:9-17 CEB+)

Our second reading is from 1 John 3 chapter 3, verses 1 through 3.

1 See what kind of love the Father has given to us in that we should be called God's children, and that is what we are! Because the world didn't recognize him, it doesn't recognize us. 2 Dear friends, now we are God's children, and it hasn't yet appeared what we will be. We know that when he appears we will be like him because we'll see him as he is. 3 And all who have this hope in him purify themselves even as he is pure.
(1 John 3:1-3 CEB+)

Our final reading is from Matthew chapter 5 verses 1 through 12.

1 Now when Jesus saw the crowds, he went up a mountain. He sat down and his disciples came to him. 2 He taught them, saying: 3 "Happy are people who are hopeless, because the kingdom of heaven is theirs. 4 "Happy are people who grieve, because they will be made glad. 5 "Happy are people who are humble, because they will inherit the earth. 6 "Happy are people who are hungry and thirsty for righteousness, because they will be fed until they are full. 7 "Happy are people who show mercy, because they will receive mercy. 8 "Happy are people who have pure hearts, because they will see God. 9 "Happy are people who make peace, because they will be called God's children. 10 "Happy are people whose lives are

harassed because they are righteous, because the kingdom of heaven is theirs. [11] "Happy are you when people insult you and harass you and speak all kinds of bad and false things about you, all because of me. [12] Be full of joy and be glad, because you have a great reward in heaven. In the same way, people harassed the prophets who came before you. (Matthew 5:1-12 CEB+)

This is the word of God for the people of God. Thanks be to God.

This Sunday marks the beginning of a new series called Children's Church, and our first message is about how we are children of God. This is a message for All Saints Sunday, and on this Sunday we think about those who have gone before us. We think about the impact they have made on our lives, and we think about the rest they have found in our Savior. I wanted to think about this idea of being children of God because of the way that it speaks to the love and the care that we find with our Savior, and the hope that we have for those who have gone before.

It's a hope that we hear in our reading from Revelation. It's a hope that describes those who have made it through the trials of life. They will be shepherded, they will be loved, and they will be cared for. It's a thought that brings me peace of mind, because when I think about all those people that I love that have left this mortal life, it gives me a great comfort to know that they are with a Savior that loves them, willing to wipe away tears, to give them rest. And it's a hope that lets me remember that I am a child of God as well. That God cares for his children, his people. I think it's important that we're able to remember that when we think about all those saints who have gone on before us. Because it can be a difficult time, and much of the difficulty comes from the longing that happens when we are separated from those that we love. Because we are separated by time from those that we love, from those saints who have gone on before. But we will never be separated in love, because as long as we share in the love of Christ together. That we are children of God, and we are joined together in the love that God has for all of his children. We share the presence of our Heavenly Father, and we may rest assured because of that.

It's what we hear in 1 John. Because we are called to remember the kind of love that the Father has for us, his children. That it is a blessing that we should even be called God's children. It's a reminder that as God's children, what we will be is not known. Sometimes that's a lot to take in. The comfort I take though is that whatever happens, it'll be done in love. Because of the love the Father has given to us. That we should be called God's children. That we can rest assured in that promise. That no matter what it is that comes, no matter where we end up, and what it's like, it'll be good because we reside in the love of our Heavenly Father. That we can rest assured that he will care for his children. And I do take a great comfort in that because of how much is unknown. I know how much we struggle with the unknown, with the things that we can't describe. I know how hard it is when we deal with the loss of a loved one. I know how hard it is when we don't have clear answers. That's where I let faith carry me. By faith I trust that our Heavenly Father has good in store for us. And because of that, I don't worry. Of course, I do miss those who have gone on ahead. I miss those people that are not sharing this mortal life with us right now. But I can trust that they are in loving arms, and that they are in good care. I can trust that the example they have given me to live by is a gift worth having. That I remember the example that the saints have set for us. I remember that we will be the example for those who come after. I think it's important that we remember that we are all

God's children together in love, so that we can support each other. That we can lift each other up. That we can celebrate that connection that we share with all those who have gone before, and all those who will come after. Because that's one of the things I think about, is that connection that we share together as God's children in our Heavenly Father's care.

I think about what it is that lets us call ourselves the children of God. It is God's love for his people and it is our love for God. That's what we hear about in our gospel reading. And I love the way that the Common English Bible words this. Because I feel this translation gives us something different to think about because of the way it uses the word happy. Happy are people who are hopeless. Happy are people who grieve. Happy are people who are humble. Happy are people who are hungry. Happy are people who show mercy. Happy are people who have pure hearts. And then there was this one that stood out as well. Happy are the people who make peace, because they will be called God's children. And it's not that by making peace we earn that title. It's that by making peace and embracing peace, people recognize who we are. Because we are already called God's children by our Heavenly Father. Because of his great love for us, we can think of ourselves as God's children. But it is when we do the will of our Father that others will recognize it. We have joy in that. I think of all those saints who have gone on before that taught us how to do these things and give us the strength of character to continue to do these things. Even when people insult or harass. When people say false things. We have joy because we are the children of God.

That's a joy that I hope we can all share together and that we can embrace fully. Because for me, it's that idea that we have a home. We have a place to call home with our Father. We always have a place where we belong. A place that we can go to for rest. A place where we will always find love as children of God. We find it when we can love God and love our neighbor as ourselves. When we can make peace. When we can do what it is God has called us to do to support each other in this life, remembering those who have gone on to the next. Because I don't think those who have gone on would want us to simply focus on what is to come. They would want us to focus on what is now and what it means now to be children of God. Because our mission is here. Our mission is not the rest. Our mission is the work that we do as children of God. Our mission is the way that we love our neighbors as ourselves. The way that we share hope. The way that we share peace. The way that we share love in the name of our Heavenly Father. Because it is what we do because we are called children of God. That we embrace that life together and we support each other in love. Because that is what God has called us to do. And as children of God, we need to think about how we support each other. In love and in mercy. How we share hope with one another. Hope in this life and hope in the life to come. But I know that what God has called me to do here and now is to live the best life that I can live in this one.

I think that's one of the things that I thought about when thinking about being children of God. What it means to be like a child is not to be so worried about tomorrow and tomorrow and tomorrow. But to appreciate today. Because as children of God, I think we are called to appreciate the here and the now. That we remember those who have gone on before and the example they give and the strength that they give. Because we are still together as one church. As one people. As God's children. To support each other and do all that we can. To continue to strive to be the best that we can. And do the most that we can. So let us remember those who have inspired us. Let us remember the love that we have in our hearts and to remember that

we will be together when this journey is done. But until that day comes, let us strive to do all that we can to serve the God who brings us in to his family. Amen.

Prayer of Confession and Pardon: God, you are with us even when we turn away from you. Guide us back into your loving arms. Judge us not by the perfection of our actions but show us mercy and love. We have strayed like lost sheep from your ways, failing both in what we have done and what we have failed to do. Bring us back into your fold that you may guide us and lead us in all things. For the sake of your Son, Jesus Christ, have mercy upon us and forgive us. May we walk in your love and trust your ways. Amen.

Almighty God have mercy upon you. May the Lord forgive all your sins and lift you up in love through Jesus Christ our Lord, and by the Holy Spirit keep you in eternal life. Amen.

Offering: If you are so moved to make an offering, you may send it to the church treasurer, or you may send it to the PO Box listed below. We are still the church, and the church still needs your support to keep doing all the important work that we do.

Lord's Prayer

Dismissal with Blessing: May we go forth reflecting God's love in our lives as we go forth in the peace of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Our Current Series – Like a Child

This is the last series before Advent. This one is called “Like a Child” and explores the way we are called to be the children of God. Each week touches on a different theme centered around that idea of being like a child. We will explore how we are the children of God, we will hear from our children, and think about what it means to be like a child. We should always be willing to turn to God with the heart of a child!

11/1: Children of God

11/8: Children Lead

11/15: Like a Child

Neoga Grace UMC
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Worship 10:30am

Toledo UMC
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Worship 8:15am

Etna UMC
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