

78th Annual Reunion Service, Central Mine Methodist Church – July 29, 1984

Minister: The Reverend S. Daniel Rosemergy

Organ Preludes Donald M. Ross
***Introit:** Cornish Hymn
Greetings: R. Charles Stetter
Hymn: From All That Dwells Below the Skies

Invocation and Lord's Prayer

***Anthems:** Let My Prayer Come Up Into Thy Presence (Henry Purcell)
O Be Joyful in the Lord
Trumpet Solo by Dr. F. W. Bryant

Responsive Reading: Selection No. 51

Hymn: All Hail the Power of Jesus Name (Diadem)

Scripture Readings: Ecclesiastes 1:1-11; Ephesians 2:17-22

Pastoral Prayer & In Remembrance James H. Rosemergy, 1893-1983

Announcements and Remarks R. Charles Stetter

Offering and *Offertory Anthem: Seek Ye the Lord (Dr. J. V. Roberts)
Tenor Soloist: Silas Rosemergy

Doxology

Sermon: **The Communion of Saints** (Abridged)

God works in strange and mysterious ways. Here I am. Being here recalls the many times I walked these streets and hiked the hillsides of Central, explored and climbed on the foundations of fallen mine buildings—the times of play and the time of just sitting, thinking—being aware of those who lived their lives here in the late 1800s. I remember times of listening to this wonderful choir rehearse, and then the moving experiences of the Sunday Reunion Services—singing the *Diadem*, worshipping with all present that hour but deeply aware of the many who worshipped in this church in years past, and those who will worship in the years ahead.

Prayer. Dear God, make us aware of Your presence. May we feel the power of Your love and be made more sure than ever that Your spirit binds all generations in a community and in faith. Guide us in our faith, that we might join the company of all those living and dead who trust in the love of God—the Communion of Saints.

The sense of our unity with God, of the Spirit uniting us in covenant with peoples of all ages, races, and creeds, is fundamental to our faith. In the Old Testament, “saint” is applied to any Israelite as among the chosen people of God. In the New Testament, it applies to members of the Christian Church. Paul’s

letters are filled with references to members of the early churches as saints. With Paul, I call to all God's beloved here in Central Mine, to all of us, to be saints.

Can you be comfortable being called a saint? That's a bit heavy. But that's what our faith is about—and that is our collective relationship with God, the love that binds us in community through the ages—past, present, and future. I feel a greater sense of that here, in this small church in Central, than anywhere else, because we are celebrating the life and faith of those who have lived here in the past. That same faith is alive for us in the present, and we need to make sure it lives for those in the future.

By looking at the past, we can get a glimpse of the power that each of us receives as a gift of life. It is a power we receive from the faith of the early settlers here in Central who worshipped in these very pews. It is a power based on God's steadfast love to all generations, which binds us together as a "Communion of Saints."

In his book *More Copper Country Tales*, Alfred Nichols relates memories about living in or visiting Central. This time, he was staying at the "big boarding house." After supper, he took a stroll out alone. He passed the church—it was the hour of prayer. The windows were open—and out upon the still of that evening came this song, "A charge to keep I have a God to glorify." Nichols write, "for a moment I stood spell-bound...I felt the blood stir in my veins as those rich voices continued their hymn of devotion...that after all the toils and cares of the week, they felt it was a good thing to give thanks unto the Lord."

I often turn to "Peanuts" for insightful comments about life. Schroeder is talking to Charlie Brown's little sister Sally. He says, "Life is peculiar..." And then, raising his arms, asks the familiar question: "Wouldn't you like to have your life to live over if you knew then what you know now?" There is no reply. Finally, Sally turns to Schroeder and asks, "What do I know now?" What do I know now? That's a good question for us. What is it you're doing here today? What meaning does it have for your lives when you leave?

How important it is to understand our past, where we are from. If we don't, it's difficult to understand who and what we are in the present, and almost impossible to look to the future with trust. It's our confidence in a love that reveals God's purpose. That worked in Central in the mid- to late-1800s, works in our lives now wherever we live, and will be there for future generations.

It has been suggested that love is the center of Christ's disclosure of our humanity. God has shown love for us in the action told in the Christian story of Jesus. To love, then, in the New Testament sense, means to participate in this action. Our action is a response to what God has done for us. We are called to be Christ-like for one another. We are called to be a member of the Communion of Saints. This Communion—of Spirit and Church—marks a new order of humanity, a new kind of relationship with one another. [The church] is a place where we are released to live a new life, a fuller life.

"To dwell in love is to dwell in God." I recently received a letter from a fellow minister who wrote, "Once I thought the goal is to become a saint. Now I know that 'saints' are only people becoming in God's sight what God intended . . . I begin now to be content with becoming genuinely human. That is a task worth a lifetime." And I would add—that places you in the Community of Saints.

Hymn: Our God, Our Help in Ages Past

Benediction and Response

Postlude: Trumpet Tune (Henry Purcell) [Organ and Trumpet]

Organist: Donald M. Ross

***Choir Members:** *Sopranos:* Mary Henderson, Pearl Halkanen, Betty Martin, Patricia Mitchell, Esther Rosemergy, Mary Rowe, Carol Waisanen, Deanna Martin

Altos: Flora Graham, Carolyn Meyer, Elsa Mugford, Kathleen Thomas

Tenors: Robert Bryant, Dr. Stanley Martin, Silas Rosemergy

Bases: Dr. Fred Bryant, Jr., Jack Porritt, Harry Vine, David Waisanen, Jay Martin

Executive Committee Members: Dr. Fred W. Bryant, Gary A. Bryant, Ward E. Bryant, Henry Cox, Jeffrey Nicholls Curto, David C. Heikka, Dr. Kenneth Nicholls, Hollace G. Roberts, Silas Rosemergy, Donald M. Ross, R. Charles Stetter, David H. Thomas, John E. Wilson