

Devotion for First Church Women July 8, 2024

This evening, we are all honoring our heritage with foods from other states and countries. This makes me think of all those past generations who have not only shared food traditions with us but have led us into our Christian Walk. We can think of them as our “cloud of witnesses” awaiting us in Heaven.

This devotion is from *Mornings with Jesus*.

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Scripture verse – Since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles. Hebrews 12:1

A much-loved minister at my church recently made her transition from earth to her final reward in heaven.

Reverend Gunn was one of the most faith-filled people I've ever known. She faced many difficult times in her life- sickness, pain, loss – but through it all, she always declared the goodness of God. With a dazzling smile and booming voice, she often offered encouraging, wise words to me and many others. Her life spoke volumes. She was a real cheerleader for Jesus.

Reverend Gunn is now one of my “cloud people”, the folks whom the writer of Hebrews talked about, folks who have shown us what faith is all about. The writer points to how Noah, Abraham, Joseph, Moses, and Rahab, among others,

exhibited faith during their lifetimes. "All these people were still living by faith when they died. They did not receive the things promised; they only saw them and welcomed them from a distance, admitting that they were foreigners and strangers on earth" (Hebrews 11:13)

I'm certain that Reverend Gunn is with Jesus in heaven and that she's meeting my other cloud people - my dad and grandparents and other dear friends and family who are no longer with me here on earth. Because of this great cloud of witnesses, I have wonderful examples of what it means to persevere through trials and know that, as a believer in Jesus, heaven waits for me too.

Prayer: Dear Lord, thank for each lady here tonight. Thank you for each group of Cloud People who have shown us the way and helped us in our faith. Thank you that they also shared recipes for the foods they loved here on earth so that we can continue to remember and honor their lives. Bless our time together as we share fun and fellowship. In Jesus name we pray. Amen