

**GATHERING**

**Remembrance of All Saints**

Let us remember all the saints before God.

We praise and bless you, O holy Trinity. You have taught your church that it is an ageless communion of saints. We thank you for gathering those who faithfully waited in hope for the redemption you promised, and now for adding us who celebrate the love of Christ for the redemption of the world. Prepare a place for us among those who are already with you. Help us remember them as an encouragement to saintly living, exciting us to love, in anticipation of an eternal reunion.

In our parish, we remember the lives of:

Beryl (Lofquist) Nyberg, Cedrick "Rick" Dering, Janice Marie (Bamgart) Simone, Neil Raynold Carlson, Donna Rae (Haubert) Nelson, Merle Minnie Caroline Tervi, Pamila Jean (Esterholm) Baker, James Roland Koch, William Robert Heninger, Gloria Faith Jacobson, Gary L. Westberg, Ralph H. Lucht, Dr. Robert "Bob" L. Carlson, June A. Larson and Ray W. Kantola. With them we praise and bless you, O holy Trinity. **Amen.**

Jesus says, Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me; for I am gentle and humble in heart, **and you will find rest for your souls.**

For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.

**And you will find rest for your souls.**

**Gathering Song "For All Your Saints, O Lord" ELW 427**

1. For all your saints, O Lord, who strove in you to live, who followed you, obeyed, adored, our grateful hymn receive.
2. For all your saints, O Lord, who strove in you to die, who counted you their great reward, accept our thankful cry.
3. They all in life and death, with you, their Lord, in view, learned from your Holy Spirit's breath to suffer and to do.
4. For this, your name we bless and humbly pray anew that we like them in holiness may live and die in you.
5. To God, the Father, Son, and Spirit, ever blest, the One in Three, the Three in One, be endless praise addressed.

Text: Richard Mant, 1776-1848, alt. Public Domain

**Greeting**

Beloved of God, called to be saints: Grace, mercy, and peace be with you all.

**And also with you.**

**Prayer of the Day**

Let us pray...**Almighty God, you have knit your people together in one communion in the mystical body of your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord. Grant us grace to follow your blessed saints in lives of faith and commitment, and to know the inexpressible joys you have prepared for those who love you, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen**

**WORD First Reading: Revelation 7:9-17**

<sup>9</sup>After this I looked, and there was a great multitude that no one could count, from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, robed in white, with palm branches in their hands. <sup>10</sup>They cried out in a loud voice, saying, "Salvation belongs to our God who is seated on the throne, and to the Lamb!"

<sup>11</sup>And all the angels stood around the throne and around the elders and the four living creatures, and they fell on their faces before the throne and worshiped God, <sup>12</sup>singing,



**WORD First Reading: Revelation 7:9-17 (CONTINUED)**

"Amen! Blessing and glory and wisdom and thanksgiving and honor and power and might be to our God forever and ever! Amen."

<sup>13</sup>Then one of the elders addressed me, saying, "Who are these, robed in white, and where have they come from?"

<sup>14</sup>I said to him, "Sir, you are the one that knows." Then he said to me, "These are they who have come out of the great ordeal; they have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.

<sup>15</sup>For this reason they are before the throne of God, and worship him day and night within his temple, and the one who is seated on the throne will shelter them.

<sup>16</sup>They will hunger no more, and thirst no more; the sun will not strike them, nor any scorching heat; <sup>17</sup>for the Lamb at the center of the throne will be their shepherd, and he will guide them to springs of the water of life, and God will wipe away every tear from their eyes."

The word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

**Psalm: Psalm 34:1-10, 22 (Read Responsively)**

<sup>1</sup>I will bless the LORD at all times; the praise of God shall ever be in my mouth.

<sup>2</sup>**I will glory in the LORD; let the lowly hear and rejoice.**

<sup>3</sup>Proclaim with me the greatness of the LORD; let us exalt God's name together.

<sup>4</sup>**I sought the LORD, who answered me and delivered me from all my terrors.**

<sup>5</sup>Look upon the LORD and be radiant, and let not your faces be ashamed.

<sup>6</sup>**I called in my affliction, and the LORD heard me and saved me from all my troubles.**

<sup>7</sup>The angel of the LORD encamps around those who fear the LORD and delivers them.

<sup>8</sup>**Taste and see that the LORD is good; happy are they who take refuge in God!**

<sup>9</sup>Fear the LORD, you saints of the LORD, for those who fear the LORD lack nothing.

<sup>10</sup>**The lions are in want and suffer hunger, but those who seek the LORD lack nothing that is good.**

<sup>22</sup>O LORD, you redeem the life of your servants, and those who put their trust in you will not be punished.

**Second Reading: 1 John 3:1-3**

<sup>1</sup>See what love the Father has given us, that we should be called children of God; and that is what we are. The reason the world does not know us is that it did not know him. <sup>2</sup>Beloved, we are God's children now; what we will be has not yet been revealed. What we do know is this: when he is revealed, we will be like him, for we will see him as he is. <sup>3</sup>And all who have this hope in him purify themselves, just as he is pure.

The word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

**Gospel: Matthew 5:1-12**

The holy gospel according to Matthew. **Glory to you, O Lord.**

<sup>1</sup>When Jesus saw the crowds, he went up the mountain; and after he sat down, his disciples came to him. <sup>2</sup>Then he began to speak, and taught them, saying:

<sup>3</sup>"Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

<sup>4</sup>"Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted.

<sup>5</sup>"Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth.

<sup>6</sup>"Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled.

<sup>7</sup>"Blessed are the merciful, for they will receive mercy.

<sup>8</sup>"Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God.

<sup>9</sup>"Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God.

<sup>10</sup>"Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.



## Gospel: Matthew 5:1-12 (CONTINUED)

<sup>11</sup>“Blessed are you when people revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account. <sup>12</sup>Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you.”

The gospel of the Lord. **Praise to you, O Christ.**

Sermon      PRINTED ON LAST PAGE

## Hymn of the Day “Jerusalem, My Happy Home ” ELW 628

1. Jerusalem, my happy home, when shall I come to thee? When shall my sorrows have an end? Thy joys when shall I see?

2. O happy harbor of the saints, O sweet and pleasant soil! In thee no sorrow may be found, no grief, no care, no toil.

3. Thy gardens and thy gallant walks continually are green; there grow such sweet and pleasant flow'rs as nowhere else are seen.

4. There trees forevermore bear fruit and evermore do spring; there evermore the angels sit and evermore do sing.

5. Jerusalem, Jerusalem, God grant that I may see thine endless joy, and of the same partaker ever be!

Text: F.B.P., 16th cent. Public Domain    Arr. © 2006 Augsburg Fortress. ONE LICENSE #709391-A

## Nicene Creed

Let us confess our faith in the words of the Creed.

**We believe in one God, the Father, the Almighty, maker of heaven and earth, of all that is, seen and unseen.**

**We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only Son of God, eternally begotten of the Father, God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, of one Being with the Father; through him all things were made. For us and for our salvation he came down from heaven, was incarnate of the Holy Spirit and the virgin Mary and became truly human. For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate; he suffered death and was buried. On the third day he rose again in accordance with the scriptures; he ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead, and his kingdom will have no end.**

**We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son, who with the Father and the Son is worshiped and glorified, who has spoken through the prophets. We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic church. We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins. We look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come. Amen.**

## Prayers of Intercession

L: Longing for Christ's reign to come among us, we pray for the outpouring of God's power on the church, the world, and all in need. *(A brief silence.)*

L: Lord of all the saints, we praise you for evangelists and martyrs whose sacrifices witness to your gospel across time and space. Inspire us by their courage to carry our faith to new people and places around us. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

#1. Lord of every place, the universe proclaims your greatness from generation to generation. Bless the work of naturalists, conservationists, and park rangers who train our attention to the wonders of the world you have made. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

#2. Lord of every nation, guide this country—red states and blue states, rural voters and urban voters, young and old—as we share in another national election. Kindle hearts eager to understand our common needs and seek our common good. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**



#3. Lord of every venture, anoint us with the missionary spirit of the early church. Bless all new missions of our synod. Empower testimony from new communities of faith to shape a diverse witness to your saving power. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

#4. Holy One, we give you thanks that you hold all the baptized to be your saints, no matter our age, education, work, politics— sinners all, and saints in your eyes. Help us in the congregations of Northwoods STaR Ministries to see one another as you see us. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

L: Lord of every blessing, your Son's blessing came to those living with poverty, grief, hunger, thirst, and persecution. Shape our vision of the saints to match his own. Awaken in us your call to serve all who suffer. We especially pray for all those on the prayer list — Dorothy, Todd, Mary, Phil & Janice \_\_\_\_\_ and all those we name before you now, out loud or in our hearts. *(pause)* Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.** *(Other prayers added here)*

L: Receive our prayers in the name of Jesus Christ our Savior, until that day when you gather all creation around your throne where you will reign forever and ever. **Amen.**

## THANKSGIVING

**Offering** (The offering plates are near the sanctuary entrance. Please place your offering there as you depart. Thank you for your faithful support.)

### Offering prayer

Let us pray...**God of all goodness, generations have turned to you, gathered around your table, and shared your abundant blessings. Number us among them that, as we gather these gifts from your abundance, and give thanks for your rich blessings, we may feast upon your very self and care for all that you have made, through Jesus Christ, our Sovereign and Servant. Amen.**

### The Lord's Prayer

Lord, remember us in your kingdom and teach us to pray.

**Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name, thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever and ever. Amen.**

## SENDING—

### Announcements

### Blessing

May the God of all creation, in whose image we are made, who claims us and calls us beloved, who strengthens us for service, give you reason to rejoice and be glad!

The blessing of God, Sovereign, † Savior, and Spirit, be with you today and always. **Amen.**

### Sending Hymn “Shall We Gather at the River” ELW 423

1. Shall we gather at the river, where bright angel feet have trod, with its crystal tide forever flowing by the throne of God?

*Refrain:* Yes, we'll gather at the river, the beautiful, the beautiful river; gather with the saints at the river that flows by the throne of God.

2. On the margin of the river, washing up its silver spray, we will walk and worship ever, all the happy golden day. *Refrain*

3. Ere we reach the shining river, lay we ev'ry burden down; grace our spirits will deliver, and provide a robe and crown. *Refrain*

4. Soon we'll reach the shining river, soon our pilgrimage will cease; soon our happy hearts will quiver with the melody of peace. *Refrain*

## **Mission Statements**

### **Northwoods STaR Ministries**

*"United in Christ, Sharing God's Love"*

### **Zion Brantwood**

*"We are disciples of Christ: Growing in faith, sharing our faith stories, serving others."*

### **First Prentice**

*"We are Jesus' disciples: Welcoming every sinner, sharing Jesus' love and teachings, encouraging all to live Christ-centered lives."*

### **First Ogema**

*"We are called and gathered to share Christ as we minister to all, bringing an unchanging God to a changing world."*

### **First Westboro**

*"Feeding bodies, minds and spirits through Christ."*

## **Dismissal**

Beloved of God, go in peace to love and serve the Lord.

**Thanks be to God.**

## **SERMON** Sermon for November 1, 2020 ~ Pastor Steve Weston

Today we celebrate All Saints Day. A saint is, by definition, a holy person. Holy means set apart for God's purposes. Every time saints are mentioned in the Bible, it always refers to living people. Being a saint is not something one achieves by behaving in especially holy ways. It's a status God bestows on us. God set you apart as a holy person, a saint, in your baptism. It's not an achievement but a calling – something we strive to live up to. God has set you apart for holy purposes, to be an agent of God's goodness in the world.

We make a mistake if we think of "saint" and "sinner" as mutually exclusive. It's not true that if you're a sinner you're not a saint, and if you're a saint you're not sinner. As long as we live in this world, we Christians are both: flawed, fallible people (sinners) and saints (people set apart for God's work). In this life, we are forgiven sinners, not former sinners. On the other side of the grave, we will be former sinners, but that's not yet.

That's the primary meaning of the word, saint. But very early in the history of the church, the word took on a secondary meaning. People referred to those who were noteworthy in their Christian discipleship, who were heroes of the faith, as saints. And, in particular, it became a designation for someone who has died in the faith and now, we trust, is with God in heaven – former sinners.

Remembering those who have gone before us, who have set us good examples, is a worthy thing to do. Just like we remember certain special people or events in our national history on particular days, Christians have a long tradition of remembering and celebrating the lives of Christians who set particularly good examples of faithfulness. There are days set aside to remember Saint Peter, Saint Paul, Saint John, Saint Mary, Saint Patrick, and so forth. Saints' days usually commemorate the day the person died and entered into glory. By remembering those special people in Christian history, we can be inspired and encouraged in our own callings to live saintly lives.

Not long after Christians began celebrating saints' days, they ran into two problems. One was this: as the number of memorable heroes of the faith grew, the calendar started to fill up. They realized if they kept adding feast days for saints, there eventually wouldn't be enough days for work. The other was that they wanted to celebrate those saints whose names were not remembered. How many people have died as martyrs, or who have done really wonderful things because of their Christian faith, but never got noticed? Wouldn't it be good to celebrate those folks, too? And so, All Saints Day was invented.



All Saints Day, then, is an occasion for remembering departed saints who were not famous but may have been special to us, to give thanks to God for the blessings that came to us through them, to celebrate the promise of the resurrection, looking forward to a joyful reunion with them, and to resolve to follow whatever was good in their examples.

One saint I remember on All Saints Day is a woman named Gladys. I call her Saint Grandma. She inspired me as I grew in faith and was a blessing to me in many ways. She knew herself to be a sinner in need of forgiveness every day, but she was even more sure of God's grace through Jesus Christ. She is now a former sinner. Maybe you have a Saint Grandma, or Saint Grandpa, or Saint Uncle Fred, or Saint Aunt Millie, or some such person who was special to you. Right now, pause and silently give thanks to God for those people. (Pause.)

As we look forward to one day being reunited with those folks, we may find ourselves imagining what heaven will be like. The Bible does not give us a clear picture, but only images here and there. One of those images is in the reading from Revelation appointed for today. It's a vision of the great throng of former sinners gathered around the throne of God after God's final victory. Whatever heaven is really like, we won't know for sure until we get there. I think it's better than our minds can now imagine.

That picture from Revelation reminds us that our separation from those who have gone before is only temporary. In a sense, it's not even real. We believe and trust that our departed loved ones are still alive to God, and that though we no longer see them, they are still with us. The prayers they prayed for us while they were still in this life continue to be heard in heaven. Our partnership, our fellowship, our communion with them remains unbroken.

Many church buildings feature a semicircular altar rail. There's important symbolism in that. When you see a piece of a circle, what does your mind do? I imagine the rest of the circle. The semicircular altar rail invites us to imagine the circle continuing all the way around behind the altar, on the other side of the wall behind the altar. In a traditional church building, do you know what's on the other side of the wall behind the altar? The cemetery. Symbolically, on the hidden side of the altar rail, the side we can't see, are all those folks who have gone before us and entered God's glory.

When we gather around the altar and celebrate the Lord's Supper, Holy Communion, we do so not merely with those who are physically present, whom we can see beside us, but also with our departed loved ones. In fact, when we partake of the Lord's Supper, we do it together with Christians of every time and place, including those who lived long ago. More than that, we are also communing with Christians in the future – people who will one day remember us among those who have gone before. The altar rail may be a piece of a circle, but the circle of faith and fellowship is unbroken. Christ has made it so by his death and resurrection.

All of this is what we remember and celebrate on All Saints Day. May we continue to be inspired and encouraged by saints we remember and by saints whose names may be forgotten, to live up to our holy calling to be God's saints in the world today.