All Saints Day

November 1, 2020

22nd Sunday after Pentecost 21st Sunday after Trinity Proper 26 (31) Lectionary Year A – the Gospel of Matthew

Living the Lutheran Lectionary

A weekly study of the Scriptures for the coming Sunday since May 4, 2014.

An opportunity to make Sunday worship more meaningful and to make the rhythms of the readings part of the rhythms of your life.

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- ★ www.bethlehemlutheranchurchparma.com/biblestudies
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Gather and be blessed:

- **→ Thursdays at 10 AM (5pm Kenya/Uganda):** At Bethlehem Lutheran Church, 7500 State Road, Parma, OH 44134 and on line through https://zoom.us/j/815200301
- ★ Wednesdays at 7 PM in a house church setting: For details, contact Harold Weseloh at puritaspastor@hotmail.com
- → Thursdays at 1:00 PM (8pm Kenya time) via Zoom to the Lutheran School of Theology -Nyamira, Kenya
- → On Facebook through Messenger in a discussion group shared by people throughout the United States, Kenya and Uganda. Contact Harold Weseloh on Facebook Messenger.



https://www.fumcalvord.org/2016/saints-day-november-1-2016/

Hymn of the Day

Lutheran Service Book (LSB) 677 The Lutheran Hymnal (TLH) 463 "For All the Saints"

"William Walsham How (1823–1897) was born into a solicitor's family and grew up in the historic market town of Shrewsbury, England. He spent his years of ministry in rural areas and the impoverished East End of London. In such challenging places How became known as the "children's bishop." This title of endearment reflected his great love and attention shown to an often-overlooked group of God's kingdom. His published works include sermons, poetic verse and a still used volume on Holy Communion. How's most well-known work, is the hymn "For All the Saints."... Originally this hymn was eleven stanzas long, but the three stanzas which reflected the ancient Te Deum are traditionally omitted. The remaining eight stanzas of "For All the Saints" give to the worshiper a well- developed theology of both the Church Triumphant, which is comprised of the saints now gathered into heaven, and the Church Militant, the saints still fighting here on earth...." study by Shawn L. Kumm

- https://www.lcms.org/worship/hymn-of-the-day-studies
- https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Rgwq7f2FpNk Sung by the Plymouth Choir and Congregation of First Plymouth Church, Lincoln Nebraska
- https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WbPshOGxpew Hymns for All Saints: Adoration, Praise, Comfort © 2004 Concordia Publishing House
- https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KIFAu9LLgsE Mark Dwyer plays the hymn For All the Saints of Sine Nomine on the pipe organ. "There are far too many vain 'Youtube' organists who upload their inaccurate, un-rhythmic, over-fast and pulse-free playing and then there are the likes of Mr Dwyer and others who are superb organists, and who place their skills at the service of the hymn and its music and the result is a musical and spiritual delight." wurlitzer895

Commentaries have been chosen because the author has written in a way that compliments the reading. Not all of the commentaries are from Lutheran sources. They have been edited for length and in some cases for additional content that is not in keeping with a Lutheran understanding of Scripture. Links are provided for those who wish to read the entire commentary.

The Holy Bible, English Standard Version. ESV® Text Edition: 2016. Copyright © 2001 by Crossway Bibles, a publishing ministry of Good News Publishers.

O.T. - "a great multitude that no one could number"

Psalm - "Praise the LORD! (Hallelujah!)"

Epistle – "See what kind of love the Father has given to us"

Gospel-"Blessed are... Blessed are ... Blessed are ... Blessed are ... "

All Saints Day, Revelation 7:(2-8), 9-17; Revised Common Lectionary (RCL), the same reading (Next week: Amos 5:18-24; RCL, Joshua 24:1-3a, 14-25 or Wisdom of Solomon 6:12-16 or Amos 5:18-24)

"...few Bible passages are as radiant with hope as Revelation 7 itself. Having begun the chapter with a curious gathering of 144,000 people representing 12,000 from each of the original tribes of Israel, John then tells us he sees a far vaster multitude—beyond the counting of it in fact—that fulfills what God promised to Abram way back in Genesis 12: through Abram's offspring (Israel), ALL nations would be saved. And indeed, John sees before him every ethnicity ever known. People of every shape and color, of every language and nationality form one gargantuan choir. Diverse though the choir is, their purpose is singular and unified: they are there to sing praises to the one true God and to the Lamb of God seated on the throne (and who John first spied in chapter 5). The accolades are heaped up higher and higher and on a constant basis.

Next up we discover just who these people are. They are the faithful of God who have passed through all the sufferings of life and all the persecutions the world could dish out. They have known hunger and want, pain and suffering, fear and death. History has seen the mighty river formed by their tears.

But no more! They will not know such things again, John is assured, because God has wiped every tear from every eye and those former things are over and done with, once and for all..."

https://cep.calvinseminary.edu/sermon-starters/easter-4c/?type=lectionary_epistle_Scott Hoezee

The 144,000 of Israel Sealed Verses 1-8

... ²Then I saw another angel ascending from the rising of the sun, with the seal of the living God, and he called with a loud voice to the four angels who had been given power to harm earth and sea, ³ saying, "Do not harm the earth or the sea or the trees, until we have sealed the servants of our God on their foreheads." ⁴And I heard the number of the sealed, 144,000, sealed from every tribe of the sons of Israel:

*12,000 from the tribe of Judah were sealed, 12,000 from the tribe of Reuben, 12,000 from the tribe of Gad, *12,000 from the tribe of Asher, 12,000 from the tribe of Naphtali, 12,000 from the tribe of Manasseh, *12,000 from the tribe of Simeon, 12,000 from the tribe of Levi, 12,000 from the tribe of Issachar, *12,000 from the tribe of Joseph, 12,000 from the tribe of Benjamin were sealed.

A Great Multitude from Every Nation Verses 9-17

⁹ After this I looked, and behold, a great multitude that no one could number, from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages, standing before the throne and before Lamb, clothed in white robes, with palm branches in their hands, 10 and crying out with a loud voice, "Salvation belongs to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb!" 11 And all the angels were standing around the throne and around the elders and the four living creatures, and they fell on their faces before the throne and worshiped God, 12 saying, "Amen! Blessing and glory and wisdom and thanksgiving and honor and power and might be to our God forever and ever! Amen."

¹³ Then one of the elders addressed me, saying, "Who are these, clothed in white robes, and from where have they come?" ¹⁴ I said to him, "Sir, you know." And he said to me, "These are the ones coming out of the great tribulation. They have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.

15 "Therefore they are before the throne of God, and serve him day and night in his temple; and he who sits on the throne will shelter them with his presence.

16 They shall hunger no more, neither thirst anymore; the sun shall not strike them, nor any scorching heat.

¹⁷ For the Lamb in the midst of the throne will be their shepherd, and he will guide them to springs of living water, and God will wipe away every tear from their eyes."

Cited from:

Revelation 7:15 : ch. 22:3

Revelation 7:15 : ch. 21:3; [lsa. 4:5, 6]

Revelation 7:16 : Isa. 49:10 Revelation 7:16 : Ps. 121:6

Revelation 7:17: Ps. 23:1, 2; [Matt. 2:6]; See John 10:11

Revelation 7:17: ch. 22:1; [Ps. 36:8, 9; John 4:14]

Revelation 7:17 : ch. 21:4; Isa. 25:8

"The 144,000 saints of today's passage from Revelation 7 represent nothing less than "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" (Rev. 7:9). Here is no chosen few, but rather a vast, uncountable multitude, all praising the slain lamb, dressed in white robes, made white by the actions of the lamb, not by their own power and victories, by right belief or rejection of those who think differently.

John's Revelation is a great book of the promise of God to create a world where all have a place, where hierarchies disappear, where all live together in harmony and peace. Do not allow anyone to make this book into a thing of scary fear, of partisan choice, of believing rightly lest you end in fire. No! It is a book of hope, founded in love, and the gift of the lamb for all of the people of God..."

https://www.patheos.com/progressive-christian/reflections-on-revelation-john-c-holbert-10-24-2014.aspx?p=2 John C. Holbert... has been a local church pastor in Louisiana, professor of religion at Texas Wesleyan University in Fort Worth, and was Lois Craddock Perkins Professor of Homiletics at Perkins School of Theology... He retired from this faculty position in May, 2012.

"When Revelation 7:9-17 is read as an isolated unit, much of its meaning is lost.

To grasp the passage's fuller meaning we need to go to chapter 6, where the first six seals on the scroll are opened. After the sixth seal is opened (verse 12), the physical foundations of creation are rattled. Destruction reaches such a pitch that all people hide. Key is their question in 6:17. Now that the day of wrath has come, "'Who is able to stand?'

When John the Seer reaches that point in his visions, he stops. The suffering and destruction of the first six seals are overwhelming, and so he introduces a break, a timeout that he uses to lift the vision of God's people from the difficulties of the present to the glories of the future. In 7:1-8, the angels of God seal the 144,000. The sealing, with a likely reference to baptism, sustains the church on earth. The designation of twelve tribes times twelve thousand people per tribe envisions the church in this world as part of God's army in battle with the powers of evil. The opening vision of chapter 7, then, is of the church militant.

The fulcrum on which the passage balances is the difference between verse 4 and verse 9. In verse 4 John "heard the number." In verse 9 he "looked." What he sees is a vast international, multi-racial, multi-lingual throng of people so great that no one could count it. Although scholars differ in their understanding of how the people in 7:1-8 relate to the people in 7:9-17, I think that in the latter verses we have the church in heaven, or what we sometimes call the church triumphant..."

https://www.workingpreacher.org/preaching.aspx?commentary_id=568_Walter F. Taylor, Jr. Ernest W. and Edith S. Ogram Professor of New Testament Studies, Trinity Lutheran Seminary, Columbus, OH

Psalm 149; RCL, Psalm 34:1-10, 22 (*Psalm 70; RCL, Psalm 78:1-7 or Psalm 70*)

"What sets the book of Psalms apart from other Scripture is the sacramental nature of its songs, their ability to mold and transform the believer. Reading or singing the psalms, we lift them to God as our prayers, as though we are speaking our own words rather than recalling an ancient litany. **Sing to the Lord a New Song...**"

https://www.baylor.edu/ifl/christianreflection/SingingOurLivesStudyGuide3.pdf
Robert B. Kruschwitz, the author of this study guide, directs The Center for Christian Ethics at Baylor University.

149 Praise the LORD! (Hallelujah!)

Sing to the LORD a new song,

his praise in the assembly of the godly!

² Let Israel be glad in his Maker;

let the children of Zion rejoice in their King!

- ³ Let them praise his name with dancing, making melody to him with tambourine and lyre!
- ⁴ For the LORD takes pleasure in his people; he adorns the humble with salvation.
- ⁵ Let the godly exult in glory; let them sing for joy on their beds.
- ⁶ Let the high praises of God be in their throats and two-edged swords in their hands,
- ⁷ to execute vengeance on the nations and punishments on the peoples,
- ⁸ to bind their kings with chains and their nobles with fetters of iron,
- ⁹ to execute on them the judgment written! This is honor for all his godly ones.

Praise the LORD! (Hallelujah!)

"We are almost at the last Psalm, and still among the Hallelujahs. This is "a new song", evidently intended for the new creation, and the men who are of new heart. It is such a song as may be sung at the coming of the Lord, when the new dispensation shall bring overthrow to the wicked and honour to all the saints. The tone is exceedingly jubilant and exultant. All through one hears the beat of the feet of dancing maidens, keeping time to the timbrel and harp..."

https://www.christianity.com/bible/commentary.php?com=spur&b=19&c=149
Charles H. Spurgeon's Treasury of David

"The exhortation to "Sing to the Lord a new song" kicks off three of the 150 Psalms. Psalm 96:1 clarifies that the "whole earth" is exhorted to sing a new song. Psalm 98:1 states the reason why a new song is to be sung: because the Lord "has done marvelous things." While here in Psalm 146, it is the locale of the new song that receives initial emphasis: "in the assembly of the faithful." On All Saints Day--the feast that gives "The Communion of Saints" it is

due--it is good to draw attention to the new song being sung by the full "assembly of the faithful."

The book of Revelation envisions the full company of Christian faithful singing a number of new songs, including: "Salvation belongs to our God who is seated on the throne, and to the Lamb!" This new song is sung by "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" (Revelations 7:9, 10). Image that. All Christians -- no matter their race, class, or culture; no matter the language, worship style, or music preference -- united in one voice, one verse, one lyric. All the conflicts and controversies, divisions and denominations are a thing of the past. That would be a new song indeed.

The exhortation to "sing to the Lord a new song" appears in one other place in scripture, this time in the book of Isaiah. Here's the passage (Isaiah 42:8-10):

"I am the Lord, that is my name; my glory I give to no other, nor my praise to idols. See, the former things have come to pass, and new things I now declare; before they spring forth, I tell you of them. Sing to the Lord a new song, his praise from the end of the earth! Let the sea roar and all that fills it, the coastlands and their inhabitants..."

https://www.workingpreacher.org/preaching.aspx?commentary_id=738
Hans Wiersma Augsburg College, Minneapolis, MN

1 John 3:1-3; RCL, the same reading (1 Thessalonians 4:13-18; RCL, the same reading)

Even faith can fall victim to present sufferings and tribulations. It happens all the time.

It is because of this ever-present danger that St. John wrote letters to Christians under his care who were experiencing the trials, tribulations, and sufferings of being a faithful Christian in a very unfaithful and dark world. In fact, John begins his first letter by immediately taking the people back "to that which was from the beginning." Then he goes on to say that he writes these things to the people so that they too can believe and have fellowship with him and the rest of the Christians; fellowship that will make faithful joy complete and fulfilled.

Think about that. Within the first four verses, John immediately lifts the people out of their present suffering by focusing their faith on the past reality and the future joy. Chapter three is no different. He begins by talking about the love the Father has already given us; love that made us His children. He also points the hearer to the future joy of the resurrection, when we will arise and be with Christ. Yet, in the midst of this John also directs the people to the present. "Beloved, we are God's children now."

Now, before we go on, it is important to understand what John is not saying here in directing the people to the present. He's not simply telling them to "count their blessings," as if things could be worse. How often these dreadful words come out of our mouths. We may say these words with the best intentions, but they still come across as cold and unloving.

So...if John is not telling the people to stop whining and remember to count their blessings, then why does he direct their attention to the present? Why does he draw them back into the midst of their suffering? My friends: Is Jesus Christ only a past-tense reality? Does the joy of Christ only reside in the unforeseen future? Absolutely not!..."

http://lcmssermons.com/?sn=2459 Pastor Jason Zirbel Grace Lutheran Church, Greenwood, AR

3 Verses 1-10

See what kind of love the Father has given to us, that we should be called children of God; and so we are. The reason why the world does not know us is that it did not know him. ² Beloved, we are God's children now, and what we will be has not yet appeared; but we know that when he appears we shall be like him, because we shall see him as he is. ³ And everyone who thus hopes in him purifies himself as he is pure...

Love One Another Verses 11-24

a. 1 John 3:2 Or when it appears

"The relationship between 1 John and the Gospel of John becomes evident across the first verses of the letter.

The Evangelist's language of love, knowledge, and the gift of truth for the children of God permeates these pages but culminate in a more grounded and direct plea for, scholars suggest, the same general community...

http://www.workingpreacher.org/preaching.aspx?commentary_id=3626
Sherri Brown
Associate
Professor of New Testament, Creighton University, Omaha, Neb.

A reasonable guess is that 1, 2, and 3 John emerge from the same community as the Fourth Gospel does, and they reflect theological and ecclesiological developments in that community.

"Indeed, it seems quite possible that the theological debates in the community of 1 John are debates about how they were interpret the Gospel of John, which was likely their central scriptural guide.

Early on, some Christians maintained that the Jesus of the Fourth Gospel was barely human, not so much the Word become flesh as the Word pretending to be flesh. I John was written in part to combat that interpretation. "Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God. For many false prophets have gone out into the world. By this you know the Spirit of God: every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God" (1 John 4:1-2)...

Sometimes John's Gospel indicates that Christian hope is entirely realized in the present. When Jesus says to Martha, "I am the resurrection and the life" (John 11:25), the present tense of the verb is crucial to the Gospel's claim. Now is resurrection. Now is life.

At other times, however, John's Gospel points to a future hope. Sometimes that is a kind of individual future hope: "In my Father's house are many dwelling places... I will come and take you to myself" (John 14:2-3). At other times, there seems to be hope more like what we find in 1 Thessalonians, i.e., hope for a general resurrection at the end of time. "Do not be astonished at this; for the hour is coming when all who are in their graves will hear his voice and will come

out -- those who have done good, to the resurrection of life, and those who have done evil, to the resurrection of condemnation" (John 5:28-29).

Recognizing these tensions about the nature of Christian hope, 1 John tries to resolve them in two ways.

First, the epistle provides a word about now and then...

Here is what we do know now. "See what love the Father has given us, that we should be called children of God" (1 John 3:1).

We do not know for sure what God gives us at the end of life and what God gives those we love. But we do know for sure what God has given us now: astonishing love–love that makes us God's own children.

And having loved us to the end, surely we can believe that God loves us beyond the end as well.

We get Christian hope confused when we think that our hope is based on now nice we are, or how well we behave, or on some hidden piece of us called "the soul" that will survive through death and destruction.

We come closer to Christian hope when we contemplate the love of God that has made us and those we love, which is strong enough to keep us with God even in the face of death.

Second, our text also contains a word about hoping and seeing.

Saint John promises in his epistle, "Beloved, what we will be has not yet been revealed. What we do know is this: when he is revealed ... we will see him as he is" (1 John 3:2).

The verse echoes Paul in 1 Corinthians 13: "For now we see in a mirror dimly, but then we will see face to face" (1 Corinthians 13:12).

The epistle brings the two promises together to make it clear what we shall see face to face and whom we shall see. We will see God..."

http://www.workingpreacher.org/preaching.aspx?commentary_id=297
David Bartlett Professor of New Testament, Columbia Theological Seminary, Decatur, GA

Matthew 5:1-12; RCL, the same reading (Matthew 25:1-13; RCL, the same reading)

"And the All Saints Day Gospel lesson is always Matthew 5; the Beatitudes. Contrary to what many may think, these are not "Be-Attitudes" that we need to strive for and check off so that we can acquire blessings from God. These are descriptions and conditions of our Savior, which only become ours through faith in Jesus. This is why we are so blessed to receive them through our worship services: reminded of our Baptism in the Invocation; receiving absolution for our sins; hearing God's Word; eating and drinking His body and blood for life and forgiveness, and having God's name placed upon us in the Benediction. These same blessings of faith given through the reading and studying of God's Word..."

https://holycrosslutheran.net/saints-children-god-1-john-31-3/ Pastor Dan Myers Holy Cross Lutheran Church and School, Wichita, Kansas.

"The Holy Gospel beginning in the 5th Chapter of St. Matthew"

The Sermon on the Mount

5 Seeing the crowds, he went up on the mountain, and when he sat down, his disciples came to him.

The Beatitudes

- ² And he opened his mouth and taught them, saying:
- ³ "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.
- ⁴ "Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted.
- ⁵ "Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth.
- ⁶ "Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied.
- ⁷ "Blessed are the merciful, for they shall receive mercy.
- 8 "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.
- ⁹ "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God.
- ¹⁰ "Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.
- ¹¹ "Blessed are you when others revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account. ¹² Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you.

Salt and Light Verses 13-16 Christ Came to Fulfill the Law Verses 17-20 Anger Verses 21-26 Lust Verses 27-30 Divorce Verses 31-32 Oaths Verses 33-37 Retaliation Verses 38-42 Love Your Enemies Verses 43-48

"This is the Gospel of the Lord" "Praise to You, O Christ"

"As baptized and redeemed children of God, we, too, are saints right now! It's not a future-tense thing. Through faith in God's grace alone because of Christ alone, we have the ever-present joy and peace of knowing that we have been declared "holy" in God's eyes. That's what it means to be a saint. That's what the Greek word hagios means: "holy one." That's what it means to be justified through faith alone in God's grace alone because of Christ alone. God declares us to be innocent and holy and righteous saints, not because we've earned it with good and saintly behavior, but because Christ Jesus earned it for us in His death and resurrection.

When you get down to it, that's really what All Saints Day is about. It's about Jesus Christ and our kinship to Him, because of Him. That's why the All Saints Day Gospel lesson is always the Beatitudes. All these Beatitudes—these promises of blessing—are about Christ first and then about the reality of our sainthood in Christ. Contrary to what the world believes, the Beatitudes are not "Be-Attitudes" that we need to strive for and check off so that we can acquire blessings from God. These are descriptions and conditions of our Savior, which only become our present-tense realities through our being in-grafted into Him. This is why He says, "Blessed are those (present tense) who are persecuted for my sake." People are not attacked by the devil, world and flesh for "being good," but for having a righteousness that is not their own. They are attacked because they cleave to Christ's righteousness alone. Are you hearing proper keeping of the First Commandment here (to fear, love, and trust in God above all things)? The fallen, sinful world and it's evil prince cannot stand those who trust in Christ alone and above all things. Believe it! If you are in Christ, then the world will hate you. The devil will target you, and your sinful flesh will give you no rest. "Have you done enough? Is there more you still need to do?" This is why John wrote to those early Christians. This is why he writes to us today. This is why we flee here to the Divine Service; to be with Immanuel, to hear God's Word, to receive absolution for our sins, to eat and drink His body and blood for life and forgiveness, and to be strengthened to live fearlessly and faithfully in our Baptismal reality. We flee here to receive Christ; a foretaste of the feast to come; a feast that all the faithful who have gone on before us are enjoying right now at that half of Lord's Table that's in heaven in all its fullness and splendor and glory.

> http://lcmssermons.com/?sn=2459 Pastor Jason Zirbel Grace Lutheran Church, Greenwood, AR



Angus Day appears with the permission of https://www.agnusday.org/

The Matthew Challenge Do you have a favorite verse?

Review thoughts to last week



"We confess it each time we say the Apostles' Creed: "I believe in the Holy Christian Church, the Communion of Saints." What do you understand all of this to mean? Who is included in your understanding of "the Communion of Saints" / in the celebration of All Saints' Day?

- A person with a halo above his / her head?
- Jesus' apostles: "St. Peter, St. James, St. Paul, St. Thomas?"
- Did you include a <u>grandparent</u> or other family member; your <u>spouse</u>; your <u>child</u>; what about the person sitting next to you; the people living in your neighborhood?
- Did you include <u>your name</u>? Would others include your name on their list of "saints?" <u>Our list is determined by the definition we use for a "saint."</u>
- The Roman Catholic church has a strict 5-point check-list before they canonize a "saint." It is all determined by what the person has done, whether they have lived a "heroically virtuous life" and if it can be proven that 2 miracles of healing occurred as a result of their intercession: all focused on the good deeds of the person. Quite obviously, if it depends on what we have done, none of us are saints. We truthfully confess that "we are by nature sinful and unclean... we have sinned by thought, word and deed." We know that on our own we are sinners, not saints!

And yet the Apostle Paul, writing God's Word, begins most of his 13 letters with the words: "To the saints in Christ Jesus at: Rome, Corinth, Ephesus, Philippi, etc." How can this be?...

https://holycrosslutheran.net/saints-children-god-1-john-31-3/ Pastor Dan Myers Holy Cross Lutheran Church and School, Wichita, Kansas.

One more time- For all the saints... not quite the hymnal accompaniment.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1gs88jBPzIM Felix Hell playing at Trinity Wall Street, NYC. Learn more about this organist at https://www.felixhell.com/about