

# ALL SAINTS COMMEMORATION

**P** Pastor

**L** Lector

**A** Assisting Minister

**P** All Saints' Day is a churchwide holy day celebrated on the first Sunday in November commemorating all saints, both known and unknown. Lutherans recognize these individuals as faithful witnesses whose lives are celebrated as an inspiration, and the day is a time to give thanks for God's work in their lives.

There is a lot of meaning packed into the word **all** in All Saints. Let's explore the day through this simple word.

**L** All includes those most beloved to us. All Saints calls to mind specific individuals: particular beloved faces, names and memories. We are all too aware of the particular names we are now carrying with us toward All Saints this year—names of those whom we have lost this year.

**A** *All* includes those beloved by others. All Saints creates a space that embraces with honor the individuals who were dear to us. We see their faces and say their names.. All Saints sets out a place for all of them—an assembly the book of Revelation describes as “a number no one could count” with saints “from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages” (7:9). All Saints brings into focus our own beloved dead while also stretching our imagination toward the whole company of saints, more diverse and populous than we can fully comprehend.

**P** *All* are saved by grace. Lutherans especially remember on this feast that it is God's grace, apart from our works, that makes us saints. We find lasting rest only in the mercy of God. We remain in communion with those who have returned to the earth ahead of us.

**L** We wait with all creation. All Saints is commemorated when much of our landscape appears to be dying down. Days are shorter, tree branches are becoming bare, the air is colder and fields have been stripped of their harvest. All Saints begins a season in which we contemplate the hopes and fears of all creation, watching and waiting for signs of a new day dawning for all of us.

**A** The themes of All Saints extend into all of Christian life. We call to mind every Sunday the great company of saints as we join their unending hymn around the communion table. We bear witness to new saints being born from the baptismal waters. Many congregations include every week a final petition in the intercessions giving thanks for the lives of saints who died during the week in this or a past year. And every time we see the sign of the cross or trace it on our bodies, we remember the one whose death and resurrection has formed this company of all the saints, hallowing all our lives and deaths.

**P** All Saints reimagines the world—all of it. Even in death, God is making all things new.

**P** We light this candle to commemorate all those we honor this past year as being such a vital and loving part of our lives. On the day of All Saints', we remember with thanksgiving the members of our church who have died during the past year since last All Saints: *Mark Melville and Ron Melville*

**P** We also remember friends and loved ones who have died during the past year: *Julie Pickard, Bob Evans, Wally Kleist, Bill Meador, Marie Brkljack, and Gibby Harris.*

**P** Let us Pray: We light candles to signify the light that Christ brings to our lives, the light of love and mercy handed to each of us in baptism, and the light we carry into the world in their honor. We mourn, we celebrate, and we remember those saints who have enriched our lives and blessed the world. Dear God, thank you for the example of the Saints. We desire to join in their company, worshiping you forever in Heaven.

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