



Unfortunately, we lost our beloved Jan Halishak only a couple months ago. Her memorial service was when I saw this sanctuary as full as it has ever been since I started here: an overwhelming testament to the impact she made on so many people, including well beyond her own extended family. And for us here at Triune, she did her fair share of service and ministry to us and people beyond these walls, all with the sassiest sense of humor and most honest expression on

her face showcasing the broad range of our human emotions. Yet, the truth is, her impact continues in this very sanctuary, as I was reminded several weeks ago, of the many banners she made to be displayed on these walls for a variety of seasons throughout the church calendar year.

Come to think of it, that is often a most thankless job amidst the body of Christ, but it has been done by countless individuals over the centuries. They may put those beautiful banners together in their own basement at home, or they will gather with other talented individuals in fellowship halls over coffee intermixed with laughter and checking in with one another along with moments of silent intense concentration. For such often overlooked individuals over our history, I am forever grateful, because such craftiness, I will admit, seems boring to me. It's tedious. It requires the most immense patience and determined focus, well *well* beyond my capabilities, to say the least.

And from Jan's own loving patience and compassionate focus came the banner that we walk by every time we come into this sanctuary without even thinking about it: the one in that back corner, "and I will make you to become fishers of men." It has hung there for so long that it's almost become part of the wall, part of the very structure of this sanctuary, as if you take that work of art down the entire wall will come down with it. Because as much as precision to detail and seemingly days on end were put into building this very sanctuary, I have a feeling Jan Halishak could match that with her colorful banner. I do not even want to imagine how much precision to detail with every fiber and strand, how many days it must have taken to bring that masterpiece to life.

And Jan did not go to work on that awe-inspiring craft so that all of us would more notice her as a significant saint in our Triune family, or that we would walk by it every Sunday now and say, "Thank God for Jan Halishak!" No, Jan went to work in pulling every fiber and strand together so that we would notice God more in our life. Jan wanted us to notice the Great News proclaimed from all those fibers and strands: that God loves and believes in us so much, that our Lord would send *us* out to proclaim hope and new life to others in this world. That no matter what frustrations and disappointments we bring into this sanctuary, God still insists we have something to offer working with a fishing rod of Christ's never-ending grace.

But the Gospel isn't just proclaimed in the final product of Jan's work, and from the countless individuals over the church's history who will never receive their due recognition. No, the Good News is also brought to life in the process of bringing these beautiful banners together, because *God* has this mind-boggling precision to detail, this never-ending well of patience with all of us. Yes, in the grand scheme of the entire universe, we may seem like a random strand of life, but God thoroughly adores each of us anyway, as if in tiny us, there is immense beauty in the eyes of

God. And even from tiny us, a significant impact can be made on the lives of others, including others who may feel as if they are not worthy to be part of God's masterpiece, that they have nothing to contribute for the betterment of the world God still loves. God insists on interweaving us together with our unique gifts and talents to usher in a majestic work of art that may just end up being better than anything our beloved Jan Halishak came up with in her life. And no matter how much we may doubt, no matter how many times we question, no matter how often we mess up along the way, God's patience with us remains. Time and time, again, grace will win out. Mercy will be extended over and over again. God's love will make the greatest masterpiece for us all to enjoy, one that will hang from our hearts and will never be taken away.

So, on this All Saints Sunday, we give thanks for the saints who will never let us forget it, including our beloved Jan Halishak. The saints who are not out to show us just how talented and gifted they are, but only that we remember our own talents and gifts to use to the glory of God, the God who insists we are part of the eternal masterpiece, now and forevermore. For that Greatest News of all, we most certainly give thanks to God, indeed! Amen!