

The Lutheran Church of the Covenant
“Reaching Out, Reflecting Christ, Renewing Lives”



All Saints Sunday
November 1, 2020



Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

God's work. Our hands.



We welcome you to worship here at the Lutheran Church of the Covenant! We continue to do our best in providing the safest environment possible for you to worship our Risen Lord with your whole heart, even during these COVID-19 times. Here are the precautions we are taking on behalf of our whole community of faith, so that we best care for one another and those we are around during the week.

- We ask you wear a mask the entire time you are in the building, unless you have a medical condition preventing you from doing so.
- Bulletins and individual Communion elements are available for you to pick up as you enter from the back of the sanctuary. The Communion elements are available in wine and grape juice form as well as wheat and gluten-free wafers. We will partake of the body and blood of Christ together from our respective seats.
- There will not be a separate time for an offering to be collected for supporting our congregational and wider-church ministry, and so an offering basket is placed beside the bulletins and Communion elements, for those who wish to give this day.
- We are asking you to refrain from singing, as we do our best to minimize the spread of droplets and aerosols around our masks. You may do so in your heart, where we believe God hears just as well as if spoken or sung aloud. We, also, ask that you continue participate throughout the worship by speaking the **bold** print, but doing so in a whisper voice.
- There will not be a time for sharing of the peace, but we encourage you to do so with one another before or after the worship (while maintaining the physical distancing recommendations of six feet).
- There will not be a processional or recessional of the cross, nor will there be a receiving line with the pastor after the worship. If you wish to speak for Pastor Brad, for any reason, please do not hesitate to contact him through email, text or calling him directly.

We thank you for your patience and understanding as we will always err on the side of caution for those with pre-existing health conditions and compromised immune systems.

All Saints Sunday

All Saints celebrates the baptized people of God, living and dead, who are the body of Christ. As November heralds the dying of the landscape in many northern regions, the readings and liturgy call us to remember all who have died in Christ and whose baptism is complete. At the Lord's table we gather with the faithful of every time and place, trusting that the promises of God will be fulfilled and that all tears will be wiped away in the new Jerusalem.

Prelude *Sonatina in F* (BEETHOVEN)

*Thanksgiving for Baptism

All may make the sign of the cross, the sign marked at baptism, as we remember our calling as living saints through the waters of baptism.

Blessed be the holy Trinity, † one God,
the fountain of living water,
the rock who gave us birth,
our light and our salvation.

Amen.

A reading from Romans: Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? Therefore, we have been buried with him by baptism into death, so that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life. For if we have been united with him in a death like his, we will certainly be united with him in a resurrection like his.

Holy God, holy and merciful, holy and mighty, you are the river of life,
you are the everlasting wellspring, you are the fire of rebirth.
Glory to you for oceans and lakes, for rivers and streams.
Honor to you for cloud and rain, for dew and snow.
Your waters are below us, around us, above us: our life is born in you.
You are the fountain of resurrection.

Praise to you for your saving waters:

Noah and the animals survive the flood, Hagar discovers your well.

The Israelites escape through the sea, and they drink from your gushing rock.

Naaman washes his leprosy away,
and the Samaritan woman will never be thirsty again.

Praise to you for the water of baptism and for your Word
that saves us in this sacrament.
Breathe into all who are gathered here and into all creation.
Illumine our days. Enliven our bones. Dry our tears.
Wash away the sin within us and drown the evil around us.

Satisfy all our thirst with your living water, Jesus Christ, our Savior,
who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.
Amen.

Gathering Hymn *Ye Watchers and Ye Holy Ones*

#424

Text: J. Athelstan Riley, 1858-1945

- 1 Ye watchers and ye holy ones,
 bright seraphs, cherubim, and thrones,
 raise the glad strain: “Alleluia!”
 Cry out, dominions, pryncedoms, pow’rs,
 archangels, virtues, angel choirs:
 “Alleluia! Alleluia!” Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia!
- 2 O higher than the cherubim,
 more glorious than the seraphim,
 lead their praises: “Alleluia!”
 Thou bearer of the eternal Word,
 most gracious, magnify the Lord:
 “Alleluia! Alleluia!” Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia!
- 3 Respond, ye souls in endless rest,
 ye patriarchs and prophets blest:
 “Alleluia! Alleluia!”
 Ye holy twelve, ye martyrs strong,
 all saints triumphant, raise the song:
 “Alleluia! Alleluia!” Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia!

4 O friends, in gladness let us sing,
supernal anthems echoing:
“Alleluia! Alleluia!”
To God the Father, God the Son,
and God the Spirit, Three in One:
“Alleluia! Alleluia!” Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia!

Thanksgiving for the Saints of the Lutheran Church of the Covenant

O God of the pilgrim’s way, we give thanks for those in generations past who have been examples for us of God’s love at work in the world. As we pray, we know that we are surrounded by this great, rejoicing cloud of witnesses. Yet even as we name our beloved ancestors, we thank God for others whose names we never knew or have forgotten, who showed us the meaning of life in Christ.

Dorothy Devorak
Greta Kause
Margaret Kriynovich
George Lautanen
Marion Lick
Richard Nemeth
The Rev. Omar Stuenkel

We give thanks.

Holy God, we honor these, our ancestors in faith
and members of our family.
We, too, seek to do your will: guide us.
We, too, desire to be your servants: strengthen us.
We, too, long to know you clearly: teach us.
And in time, bring us to our eternal home of peace and joy.
Amen.

First Lesson

Revelation 7:9-17

The book of Revelation is written to seven churches in western Asia Minor during a time of great oppression. Today’s reading is a response to the question asked in 6:17: “Who is able to stand?” The writer gives the faithful the assurance of God’s protection and a vision of victory.

⁹After 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. ¹⁰They cried out in a loud voice, saying,

“Salvation belongs to our God who is seated on the throne, and to the Lamb!”

¹¹And 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, ¹²singing,

“Amen! Blessing and glory and wisdom

and thanksgiving and honor

and power and might

be to our God forever and ever! Amen.”

¹³Then one of the elders addressed me, saying, “Who are these, robed in white, and where have they come from?” ¹⁴I 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.

¹⁵For 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.

¹⁶They will hunger no more, and thirst no more; the sun will not strike them,

nor any scorching heat;

¹⁷for 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.”

Word of God, word of life.

Thanks be to God.

Psalm

Psalm 34:1-10, 22

¹I will bless the Lord at all times;
the praise of God shall ever be in my mouth.

²I will glory in the Lord;
let the lowly hear and rejoice.

³Proclaim with me the greatness of the Lord;
let us exalt God’s name together.

⁴I sought the Lord, who answered me
and delivered me from all my terrors.

⁵Look upon the Lord and be radiant,
and let not your faces be ashamed.

⁶I called in my affliction, and the Lord heard me
and saved me from all my troubles.

⁷The angel of the Lord encamps around those who fear the Lord
and delivers them.

⁸Taste and see that the Lord is good;
happy are they who take refuge in God!

⁹Fear the Lord, you saints of the Lord,
for those who fear the Lord lack nothing.

¹⁰The lions are in want and suffer hunger,
but those who seek the Lord lack nothing that is good.

²²O Lord, you redeem the life of your servants,
and those who put their trust in you will not be punished.

Second Lesson

1 John 3:1-3

A saint is one who has been set apart by God for God's purposes. God, out of divine love, set us apart to be the children of God. Our holy hope is that we shall see God as God really is.

¹See 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. ²Beloved, 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. ³And all who have this hope in him purify themselves, just as he is pure.

Word of God, word of life.

Thanks be to God.

Gospel

Matthew 5:1-12

In the Beatitudes, Jesus provides a unique description of those who are blessed with God's favor. His teaching is surprising and shocking to those who seek wealth, fame, and control over others.

¹When Jesus saw the crowds, he went up the mountain; and after he sat down, his disciples came to him. ²Then he began to speak, 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 will be comforted.

⁵“Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth.

⁶“Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled.

⁷“Blessed are the merciful, for they will receive mercy.

⁸“Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God.

⁹“Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God.

¹⁰“Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness’ sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

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

This is the holy Gospel of our Lord.

Praise to you, o Christ.

Sermon

Hymn of the Day *For All the Saints*

#422

Recording from the St. Edmundsbury Cathedral Choir (United Kingdom).

Choir master James Thomas. The New English Hymnal: No. 197, For All the Saints.

Album The Complete New English Hymnal, Vol. 12.

Absolute Label Services, Naxos of America (on behalf of Priory Records)

Text: William W. How, 1823-1897

- 1 For all the saints who from their labors rest,
who thee by faith before the world confessed,
thy name, O Jesus, be forever blest.
Alleluia! Alleluia!
- 2 Thou wast their rock, their fortress, and their might;
thou, Lord, their captain in the well-fought fight;
thou, in the darkness drear, their one true light.
Alleluia! Alleluia!

- 3 Oh, blest communion, fellowship divine,
we feebly struggle, they in glory shine;
yet all are one in thee, for all are thine.
Alleluia! Alleluia!
- 4 And when the strife is fierce, the warfare long,
steals on the ear the distant triumph song,
and hearts are brave again and arms are strong.
Alleluia! Alleluia!
- 5 The golden evening brightens in the west;
soon, soon to faithful servants cometh rest;
sweet is the calm of paradise the blest.
Alleluia! Alleluia!
- 6 But then there breaks a yet more glorious day:
the saints triumphant rise in bright array;
the King of glory passes on his way.
Alleluia! Alleluia!
- 7 From earth's wide bounds, from ocean's farthest coast,
through gates of pearl streams in the countless host,
singing to Father, Son, and Holy Ghost:
Alleluia! Alleluia!

**Prayers of Intercession*

Let us remember all the saints who have served the church and the world as we offer our prayers to God, responding to each petition with the words, "Save us from all our troubles."

A brief silence.

We praise you, O God, for all the saints who have ministered in your church. Continue to give us leaders who will guide your people in the way of truth. Bless all who minister during this difficult time. Hear our prayer, O God, **save us from all our troubles.**

We praise you, O God, for all the saints who lived in communion with animals, with the earth and the seas. Bless the earth, that all creatures will live out your intention for their place in creation. Hear our prayer, O God, **save us from all our troubles.**

We praise you, O God, for all the saints who were peacemakers. Empower those who strive for peace between and within their nations. Guide us during this election week; protect those who vote; and preserve our nation from all forms of civil discord. Hear our prayer, O God, **save us from all our troubles.**

We praise you, O God, for all the saints who ministered to the needy. Continue to give us people who will care for those who struggle. We lift up all those in any need: the war-torn, the unemployed, those who experience discrimination, those who are weighed down with anxiety, and those whose needs are known only to you. Hear our prayer, O God, **save us from all our troubles.**

We praise you, O God, for all the saints who nursed the sick. Strengthen physicians, nurses, and all medical staff, especially as they confront the continuing crisis of the coronavirus. Hear our prayer, O God, **save us from all our troubles.**

We praise you, O God, for all the faithful who have suffered in body, mind, or spirit. Give wholeness to all the sick, including those with the coronavirus. Send your healing power on those whose names we call out to you from the depths of our hearts...Hear our prayer, O God, **save us from all our troubles.**

We praise you, O God, for all the saints, both the famous and the forgotten, who lived in faith and now live in you. We thank you for the witness of your precious children: Dorothy, Greta, Margaret, George, Marion, Richard, Omar and all those we lift up in our hearts...Bring us at the last with them to be in your triune presence. Hear our prayer, O God, **save us from all our troubles.**

Blessing and glory and wisdom and thanksgiving and honor and power and might be to you, O God, forever and ever. **Amen.**

*Thanksgiving at the Table

With all the saints of Africa and Asia, India and the islands, Europe and the Americas, we praise you, O God, for you create the worlds. With all the baptized, the old and the young, the weak and the strong, the famous and the forgotten, we bless you, O God, for you provide us with water and food.

With all the faithful in cities and on farms, in mansions and huts, past and present, we worship you, O God, for you shelter the generations. With all your holy people, those who ministered in the church, those who served the poor, and all who walked the way of the cross, we glorify you, O God, for in Jesus you journeyed with us on earth. With Paul and the evangelists, we remember the meal of your Son:

In the night in which he was betrayed, our Lord Jesus took bread, and gave thanks; broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying: Take and eat; this is my body, given for you. Do this for the remembrance of me.

Again, after supper, he took the cup, gave thanks, and gave it for all to drink, saying: This cup is the new covenant in my blood, shed for you and for all people for the forgiveness of sin. Do this for the remembrance of me.

With Peter and all the martyrs, we honor Christ's death. With Mary Magdalene and all the apostles, we proclaim his resurrection. With John and all the theologians and mystics, we look for his returning.

With Mary and all who sang of your greatness, we pray for the power of you as the Holy Spirit. Continue to enliven this gathering in this bread and this cup as the holy presence of the body and blood of Christ.

Form us into a communion of service, and infuse your earth with the wholeness we seek. With grandparents and godparents, with the church universal, lead us to a future we cannot yet see, and at the end draw all humanity to yourself.

Now with all of the family you saved by your love, we proclaim blessing, glory, wisdom, thanksgiving, honor, power, and might, be to you, o God, forever and ever. **Amen.**

**Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your name,
your kingdom come,
your will be done,
on earth as in heaven.
Give us today our daily bread.
Forgive us our sins
as we forgive those
who sin against us.
Save us from the time of trial
and deliver us from evil.
For the kingdom, the power,
and the glory are yours,
now and forever. Amen.**

Communion

Music Interlude *Arietta in A* (HAYDN)

Please use this time to meditate or pray for those dear to your heart.

Prayer after Communion

Lord Jesus,
in this simple meal you have set a banquet.
Sustain us on the journey,
strengthen us to care for the least of your beloved children,
and give us glad and generous hearts
as we meet you on the way.
Amen.

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 *Rejoice, Ye Pure in Heart*

#873

Text: Edward H. Plumptre, 1821-1891, alt.

- 1 Rejoice, ye pure in heart!
Rejoice, give thanks, and sing;
your festal banner wave on high,
the cross of Christ your king.

Refrain

Rejoice! Rejoice!
Rejoice, give thanks, and sing!

- 2 With voice as full and strong
as ocean's surging praise,
send forth the sturdy hymns of old,
the psalms of ancient days. *Refrain*
- 3 With all the angel choirs,
with all the saints on earth
pour out the strains of joy and bliss,
true rapture, noblest mirth. *Refrain*
- 4 Still lift your standard high,
still march in firm array,
as pilgrims through the darkness wend
till dawns the golden day. *Refrain*

5 At last the march shall end;
the wearied ones shall rest;
the pilgrims find their home at last,
Jerusalem the blest. *Refrain*

6 Praise God who reigns on high,
the Lord whom we adore:
the Father, Son, and Spirit blest,
one God forevermore. *Refrain*

Dismissal

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

Postlude *Sonatina in C Major* (LYNES)

Praying Together

... for those who are homebound, ill, hospitalized or recuperating: Gayle Agg, Bob Buettner, Alexis Carr, Joan Clarke, Barbara Fossa, John Crawford, Nicole Crawford, Steve Dobush, Carolyn Frajter, Ken Frajter, Nealie Gage, Barb Gaglione, Michelle Garnett, Rosa Garnett, Alex Hohenstein, Judy Jones, Tom Juhasz, Ralph Kane, Dylan King, Jason Lanese, Andrea Lanzalaca, Sara Mendes, Phyllis Nemeth, Bernice Novak, Don Rusher Jr., Claudia Senderak, Arlene Stoltz, Marie Storms, Tim Susaneck, Tom Susaneck, Phyllis Treichel, Phyllis Welker, Linda Wright, Wilma Dancy, Bill Helmick, Nancy Helmick, Robert Lambrecht, Kim (Novak) Leonhardt, Laura Mele, Judy Morgan, Kris Sandor, Bill Wilkens, Eugene Winfrey, the Copeland/Lane Family

LAST WEEK

General Fund receipts for week ending 10/25/2020: \$2007.00



Our semi-annual congregational meeting is tentatively scheduled for immediately after worship on November 15, and will be conducted in the sanctuary. We hope you can join us!

Richard Nemeth (February 14, 1942 - October 29, 2019)

Richard Nemeth was very dedicated to and active in the church. He was vice-president of the church council, a Eucharistic minister, and you could often find him at the Farmers' Market volunteering. He was the ultimate family man. He loved his wife more than anything on earth and was the best father any two children could have. He then became the proud grandfather of his three beloved grandchildren. He passed away peacefully in his sleep surrounded by his family. We miss his laughter and love daily, but find great comfort knowing he is at peace, finding relief from the pain his illness caused, lovingly cradled in God's compassionate arms.

- Laura Mele

Dorothy Devorak (April 7, 1921 - December 8, 2019)

Dorothy Devorak was a wonderful woman. She was a nurse and very devoted to family. After she graduated from nursing school, she began her nursing career in California working for a doctor there. When her father passed away, and her mother needed assistance, she returned to Cleveland to take care of her. It was at this point she began working at the Cleveland Clinic for Dr. Burkfeld in the sports medicine center. She loved telling us stories about the Cleveland Browns when they would come in.

Dorothy loved to travel, and she especially loved to go to New York and see the Broadway plays. She enjoyed Ireland and visiting all the villages there. She was quite the conversationalist and loved to talk to people of all ages. She kept in contact with many friends throughout the years and loved writing to them as well as speaking on the phone. When Dorothy retired, she volunteered for the Arthritis Foundation, and also volunteered to work at church for the rummage sale.

- Roni Basler

Marion Lick (April 28, 1925 - February 8, 2020)

Marion Lick (nee Haller) was born on April 28, 1925. She married Edward Lick on May 19, 1945 and had three children Denise, Lori and Nancy. She had three grandchildren, Matthew, Lindsey, Michael and six great grandchildren, Lucas, Landon, Lorelei, Mischa, Mattelyn and Delphine. She was a devoted member of Lutheran Church of the Covenant and served on Altar Guild, in the nursery, Directress of Vacation Bible School, Sunday School Secretary, on the Miriam Circle and Assistant Financial Secretary.

Greta Kause (August 10, 1922 - March 10, 2020)

Greta May Kause (nee Hart), was born on August 10, 1922, in Sandelheath, England. The Hart family was a very Christian family and brought their children up in the Methodist faith. When Greta was in her teens, she finished her schooling and got a job as a kitchen maid in a large manor house. Greta would ride her bicycle over 20 miles to go home and visit her family.

World War II had begun, so she got a job closer to her home as a house maid at a doctor's home. During this time is when she met her soon-to-be husband, Adelbert, who was stationed in the same town. In 1944, Greta and Del were married and soon there was a newborn son. Del was sent to France for D-Day and later fought at the Battle of the Bulge, where he was wounded and sent back to the United States, but not before visiting his new wife and son. Greta's faith and prayers and her family gave her strength during this time of her life.

In 1946, Greta, now a "war bride", made the trip over to the United States with her 18-month-old son. She brought with her the Methodist hymnal that she was given as a gift. She left behind all she ever knew of her life in England to her new life with a new family in Cleveland, Ohio. This was very difficult for her, but her love for her husband and family and a lot of prayers kept Greta going. They proceeded to have three more children and managed to buy a home in Maple Heights in 1952. Greta had to find a church to bring her family, and Zion Lutheran Church was up the street so they all could walk there if there was no transportation available. They all became members and were confirmed at Zion. Greta was so proud of her voice and singing her hymns loud and clear. Maybe not choir material, but it didn't matter. She also was very active with their Dorcas Society.

Greta kept close to her English family and friends all through her 74 years in America and made many visits back to her homeland. Those trips always included every Sunday going back to the Methodist chapel. After retiring from Rockside School and Benjamin Moore where she worked as a cook in the kitchens, Greta and Del moved to Florida for six years. In 1986, they returned back to their children where they settled into their apartment in Bedford, Ohio. Greta, then, joined The Lutheran Church of the Covenant and looked forward to attending with her daughter, Karen.

Greta's life ended on March 10, 2020. She left behind four children, eight grandchildren and 17 great grandchildren. Her husband, Del, passed on June 6, 2003. Greta was such a strong, Christian woman, which helped her through her last days of her life. She was at peace with herself and was looking forward to meeting her Lord Jesus Christ. During those days, we would sing her favorite hymns to her out of her Methodist Hymnal and pray with her. Her family is such a great example of the Christian life she lived. We all are the people we are, because of our loving mom.

- Karen Zack

Margaret Kriynovich (November 26, 1926 - May 1, 2020)

The daughter of Hungarian immigrants, raised on the East side of Cleveland, she married her husband Ernest and settled in Maple Heights, raising three sons and a daughter. This is the cornerstone from which our family has grown. She developed an innate strength that came from experiencing life events such as the Great Depression, World War II, the loss of 12 siblings and her own parents, sending her oldest son to Vietnam, her husband's passing and surviving a stroke in her early 60's. Her resilience resulted in a beautiful and full 93 years of life of which we all have been privileged to be a part of. Her life was centered around her devout faith and she dedicated over 50 years to teaching children every Sunday morning at Lutheran Church of the Covenant, touching thousands of lives who passed through her classroom. She also was a devoted wife and mother, who eventually became a grandmother to seven and great grandmother to 10. She was most proud of the fact that all seven of her grandchildren were college graduates. We have no doubt that, as a faithful servant of our Lord, she is resting peacefully with him.

- The loving family of Marge Kriynovich

George Lautanen (May 30, 1923 - August 27, 2020)

George was born in New Lyme, Ohio and met Eleanor at New Lyme High School. They married in 1943 and then were separated by World War II. When George came home, uninjured but having lost a brother in the war, they set up housekeeping in a government apartment. George attended Fenn College (now evolved into Cleveland State University) and earned his bachelor's degree in engineering. The two of them were now a family of five. They purchased a house in Warrensville Heights and provided a cozy home and fun yard and neighborhood for daughters Janet, Linda and Nancy (Anna). George commuted downtown each day, moving up in his career and becoming a projects manager for H.K. Ferguson, specializing in HVAC (heating, ventilation and air conditioning.) The next house was a ranch on 1.5 acres in Walton Hills. All three daughters graduated from

Bedford High School and went on to get college degrees. George had a number of interesting projects for his company, including those for Frito-Lay in Texas, several for Anheuser-Busch, and one that had him up on the roof of the collapsed Pontiac Silverdome in Detroit.

Through the years he provided a place for his dying mother-in-law and later welcomed his father-in-law to live in their home and continue his vegetable gardening. For fun, he played golf, and the family took vacations in various places in the eastern United States, including the Great Smoky Mountains and the 1965 New York World's Fair. He and Eleanor twice visited Europe and made numerous trips to Florida to visit relatives or play golf with his buddies. He was also a dedicated bowler. He drove himself to the bowling alley every Tuesday until late last fall. This past May, he was on the championship team.

George was an attentive host, always making sure family get-togethers and special events were welcoming. Most of all, he was the guy who was there for his family, his friends, his church and the larger world. He gave a variety of assistance to older family members and to many charitable organizations. When people talk about "a life well lived," they are talking about George. We, his family, are grateful that he was in our lives for so many years. He has been a rock and an inspiration to us. He remains in our hearts.

- Linda Glover

The Rev. Omar Stuenkel (July 20, 1920 - June 12, 2020)

He was born near Concordia, Missouri, on July 20, 1920. His education was in Lutheran schools and colleges. He graduated from Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, and was ordained a Lutheran pastor in Dayton, WA in 1945. On February 5 of that year he had married Elaine Schulz of Faribault. Their union resulted in four children: David Carl (and Judy), Omar T. Jr. (and Joy), Rita Marie (and Dennis Schmidt), and Edward Lewis (and Mary Beth). In November 1979 Omar married Pearl Rueber of Owatonna, Minnesota. Her children, Lynn (and Kerwin) Palan and Roger, became cherished stepchildren. Omar has nine grandchildren and eleven great-grandchildren plus two step grandchildren, six step great-grandchildren, and two great-great grandchildren.

After his pastoral service in Dayton, WA, Omar successively served Concordia College, Portland, OR; Calvary Church, Portland, OR; Zion Church, Fairbanks, AK; the Lutheran Witness, St. Louis, MO; Lutheran Church of the Covenant, Maple Heights, OH; Prairie Church, Eden Prairie, MN; and an editor at Augsburg Publishing House, Minneapolis, MN. After retirement in 1986 he served as interim pastor at various times at Trinity Church, Owatonna; Oakland Church, Oakland; and Trinity Church, Albert Lea; all MN.

Omar is the author of several books and many articles and sermon studies published by Concordia Publishing House, St. Louis and by Augsburg Publishing House, Minneapolis. He was an avid reader, a good gardener, and eager fisherman and small game hunter. For 17 years he and his wife, Pearl, owned a lake cottage in northern Minnesota. After retirement they lived successively in Owatonna, MN; Bella Vista, AR; and Coeur d'Alene, ID and Spokane Valley, WA.

Lectionary Blog: What Makes a Saint?

As we mark All Saints Sunday and think about those who have joined the church triumphant, I wonder, “What is it that makes a saint?”

On the one hand, of course, the only answer that matters is God’s grace. But when we think about saints in the more common usage of the word—a person who is an uncommon blessing to her or his neighbors—who stands out in your memory? They are probably people who care about others more than themselves, right? Someone who made other people feel loved. This is in accordance with Jesus’ words, from both of the Gospel readings for All Saints Sunday and for Ordinary 22.

The Gospel for All Saints is from the opening of the Sermon on the Mount. Jesus recited nine conditions that are causes for happiness in the kingdom of heaven. Many of us memorized these when we were growing up. I think it can still be profoundly disorienting to recall what causes happiness and blessedness, according to Jesus. Happy are the poor in spirit, those who mourn, the meek, those who hunger for righteousness, the merciful, the pure in heart, the peacemakers, those who have been persecuted for their righteousness and, finally, those who are insulted and persecuted because of Jesus.

This list doesn’t leave room for triumphalism against or over neighbor. Jesus lifts up the persecuted, the mourners and the mild. He calls his people to be merciful peacemakers who always pursue righteousness. There is an assumption that truly following the way of Jesus will lead to mocking and persecution, rather than power or comfort with the status quo. Jesus celebrates those who lean into the sadness and difficulty that lead to righteousness. This reading tells us what Jesus celebrates in his community. But what does Jesus warn against?

This week's other Gospel reading is a warning against hypocrisy. And just like the beatitudes, there is another list of things—in this case, things that Jesus warns against. He warns against those in positions of power who burden people and don't help them. He warns of those who flaunt their supposed religiosity publicly, especially when they use the material culture of religion in an attempt to demonstrate piety ([Matthew 23:5](#)). Jesus says to beware of those who jockey for position, who love to be honored and demand to be called “great” (rabbi literally translates as “my great one”). He cautions against hierarchy and even terms of respect because the kingdom of heaven demands radical siblinghood. The one who is truly greatest among us is the one who serves. In the Jesus community, the one who exalts himself will be brought low, and the one who humbles herself will be raised up.

I write these reflections months in advance of when they go online. It just occurred to me that by the time you read this, the U.S. election will be a little over a week away. Congratulations! You made it through what is sure to have been a difficult, divisive campaigning season. The following week will be a perfect time, after all is said and done, to practice being the nonpartisan, but highly political, Jesus community. No matter which party wins which offices, we must remember that we are called to be saints and Jesus' body. Let us be known by our mercy, our peacemaking, our willingness to serve, our hunger for righteousness. And let us reject hypocrisy and grasping for honor. Pointing out the faults of others and feeling self-satisfied feel good. It's fun to win, after all! But that's not the way of Jesus.

Whatever happens this week, this month and this year, Jesus' call remains the same: take up our crosses and follow him. We are called to humble service to the neighbor—all of our neighbors, not just the ones who look, think or pray like us. God's love makes us saints. And Jesus' words tell us how to live like saints: by humbly loving and serving our neighbor, rather than ourselves.

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