

**GAYLORD UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST**  
**318 4<sup>th</sup> STREET, BOX 385, GAYLORD, MN, 55334**

**All Saints Day    November 1, 2020**  
**Communion Service**



*In preparation for this communion service, you may want to prepare some bread, a slice or a small loaf of any kind of bread or cracker. Prepare a cup of juice or wine. Remember, in John's gospel, Jesus' first miracle was to turn water into wine. If all you have is a glass of water, it's enough.*

**MORNING MEDITATION**

Charles de Montesquieu, 18<sup>th</sup> century

"To become truly great, one has to stand with people, not above them."

**PREPARATION FOR WORSHIP**

**WELCOME AND NEWS OF THE CHURCH**

**NO MATTER WHO I AM, NO MATTER WHERE I AM ON LIFE'S JOURNEY, I AM WELCOME HERE.**

**NO MATTER WHO YOU ARE, NO MATTER WHERE YOU ARE ON LIFE'S JOURNEY, YOU ARE WELCOME HERE!**

**STATEMENT OF PURPOSE**

ONE: WHO ARE YOU?

**ALL: I AM A BELOVED CHILD OF GOD!**

ONE: WHAT DOES THAT MEAN?

**ALL: I AM A PERSON OF WORTH TO BE VALUED!**

ONE: THEN WHAT WILL YOU DO?

**ALL: I WILL LIVE A LIFE OF LOVE AND ACCEPTANCE OF MYSELF  
AND ALL GOD'S PEOPLE**

**THE CALL**

Psalm 107:1-7, 33-37

O give thanks to God, for God is good; for God's steadfast love endures forever.  
Let the redeemed of God say so, those whom God redeemed from trouble and gathered in from the lands, from the east and the west, from the north and the south. Some wandered in desert wastes, finding no way to an inhabited town; hungry and thirsty, their soul fainted within them. Then they cried to God in their trouble, and God delivered them from their distress; God led them by a straight way, until they reached an inhabited town. God turns rivers into a desert, and springs of water into thirsty ground, God turns a fruitful land into a salty waste, because of the wickedness of its inhabitants. God turns a desert into pools of water, a parched land into springs of water. And there God lets the hungry live, and they establish a town to live in; they sow fields, and plant vineyards, and they get a fruitful yield.

**PRELUDE**

Sandy Wentzloff

**OPENING SENTENCES**

One: Bless the Sovereign at all times.

**All: Salvation belongs to our God.**

One: The Sovereign heard our cry and delivered us from our fear.

**All: Salvation belongs to our God.**

One: All who take refuge in the Sovereign will be comforted.

**All: Salvation belongs to our God.**

**GATHERING HYMN**

*"For All the Saints"*

## OPENING PRAYER

One: Sovereign of Creation, all that we have comes from you.

Physically distanced, we gather in your presence, surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, people from every tribe and nation, every kindred and tongue, to lift our voices in praise, to be transformed into your saints, to be sent out to gather others to share the eternal banquet. Hear the praise we offer, work in us and through us.

You alone are holy, you alone are the Most High, you alone are worthy of our praise.

Glory to you O God, and to the Lamb, our Shepherd, and to the Spirit that unites us all, today and ever more.

**Amen.**

## LECTIONARY TEXT

### Revelation 7:9-17

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. They cried out in a loud voice, saying, 'Salvation belongs to our God who is seated on the throne, and to the Lamb!' 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 worshipped God, singing, 'Amen! Blessing and glory and wisdom and thanksgiving and honor and power and might be to our God for ever and ever! Amen.' Then one of the elders addressed me, saying, 'Who are these, robed in white, and where have they come from?' 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. 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. They will hunger no more, and thirst no more; the sun will not strike them, nor any scorching heat; 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.'

## SERMON

### "Everyday Saints"

The first president George Bush had a favorite story that he told about visiting his mother in a nursing home. He paused on his way down the hall to her room to help a very elderly man make his way back to his room. The elderly man seemed a bit confused by all the fuss, so the president said to him, "Sir, do you know who I am?" "No", the man replied, "but if you ask the nurse at the desk, she can tell you."

Well, maybe that is how John the writer of the book of Revelation felt when in his vision, he found himself standing before the throne of God. He saw an innumerable multitude of people of every age, race, and tribe, and they were all dressed in white robes. The writer's guide then asks, "Who are they, and where did they come from?" John didn't know who they were and there was no nurse for him to ask!

Well, the person who was guiding John gave him a beautiful answer: ***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. For this reason, they are before the throne of God and worship day and night within God's temple, and the one who is seated on the throne will shelter them. They will hunger and thirst no more; the sun will not strike them, nor any scorching heat; for the Lamb at the center of the throne will be their shepherd, and will guide them to springs of the water of life, and God will wipe away every tear from their eyes.***

These words from our Revelation reading for today are a beautiful description of those the church calls "Saints". But still you may be wondering who are saints and where do saints come from?

Sometimes we use the word "saint" as a title that one must earn through good works or strength of faith. We sometimes refer to a particularly good person as a saint. Or as a person who is particularly strong in faith. We sometimes use the word "saint" as if it signifies entrance into a Christian Hall of Fame. You know-- St. Peter, St. Paul, St. Augustine, St. Theresa. So often we may refer to the "greats" of the Christian tradition as saints.

But did you know, that this teaching, to be a saint is to reach a higher level of Christian perfection, this teaching is not biblical. Not at all! The New Testament never uses the term saint as referring to a special Hall of Fame of Christians. No! Rather the New Testament always uses the term "saint" to refer to the whole church and to every believer.

So, the apostle Paul addresses his letter to the church in Rome, to the saints in Rome. And he addresses his two letters to the church in Corinth as "to the saints in Corinth" and so on. In reading this simple grammatical fact, that saint refers to EVERY BELIEVER. The term saint or sanctification is a free gift from God. It is given by the grace of God. Sainthood is not a status to be earned, it is a free gift from God. It is bestowed on us from God.

If you are ever in Willmar, MN, you will want to stop at Vinge Lutheran Church and see their sanctuary. This is in a congregation whose sanctuary is in the form of a circle- it was built in the round. And when the congregation was built, they commissioned the great MN sculptor Arnold Flatten to carve wooden relief into the church sanctuary. Flatten carved two rows in the round above the pews, encircling the entire congregation. The first row quotes Hebrews 12 referring to saints as a cloud of witnesses. And it says circling around the sanctuary, "Therefore since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witness, let us lay aside every weight and sin that clings so closely to us and let us run with perseverance the race that is set before us, looking to Jesus the pioneer and perfecter of our faith. And then beneath that is another row of text and it contains the names of saints. The saints that are engraved on the wall were not chosen because they earned sainthood but because God bestows sainthood sinful people. Luther once said "that a saint is a forgiven sinner!" And so the names inscribed on the wall and circling the sanctuary of Vinge Lutheran, start with Adam and Eve and other Old Testament figures, Noah, Abraham, Sarah, Moses. Then there are the disciples of Jesus, with Mary and Martha, followed by great persons from church history like Paul, Augustine, Thomas Aquinas, and Luther. The list finishes with modern Christians like Dietrich Bonhoeffer and a Danish man by the name of Burggraaf. The last name on the list is Ordos, the Lutheran bishop of Communist-ruled Hungary. But after his name there is an empty space. The circle of names is not complete-there's an empty space that keeps the circle broken. If you ask the people of Vinge Lutheran church why?...Why is there an empty space? They will tell you that in that empty spot there is just enough room for two more names, "yours" and "mine". The designers of the church intended that we would know that there's just enough room for the words "you" and "me". The designers wanted you and me to know the biblical promise that we celebrate today which is that WE TOO are by God's grace Saints. We too have been clothed with Christ and our names are added. And when that happens, the circle continues unbroken.

Revelation gives us a vision of those who have gone on before us. They are referred to as the church triumphant. We as the church today are still fighting the good fight of faith. Revelation offers a picture of the church gathered around the throne of God. And what is the church in heaven doing, they are worshipping God, singing and praising God. We honor and praise God in our weekly worship now, but one day we will worship God in all fullness. What a wonderful forever God has for us!

But now, as we come together and worship God, we are not cut off from those who have gone on before us. Not at all. Because we are, in our faith, linked to those who have gone before and those who will follow in a communion that binds us all. It transcends time and eternity. This communion includes you and me and all believers around the world. And so, as we gather for weekly worship, we are joined by all those who have gone on before us in Christ Jesus. When someone in a congregation

dies, we have not lost them. They are still part of the faith community- because we are all part of the communion of saints. And the saints that are part of the church triumphant are cheering us on- “keep on keeping on for God” and “keep on fighting the good fight of faith”- they are saying to us. And as we gather in worship, we are so close to them- this is the communion of saints.

Friends there is joy and music and song in heaven and this is good news. And so, on this All Saints Sunday as well as every Sunday as we gather for weekly worship, we the church praise God. And as we do, we join those who have gone on before us. We join believers around the world and we give praise in a song that goes something like this: ***“Blessing and glory and wisdom and thanksgiving and honor and power and might be to our God forever and ever! Salvation belongs to our God. Jesus is Lord. The home of God is among mortals. And God will wipe away every tear from our eyes!”***

So, glory...glory be to God...the Creator, Christ and Holy Spirit...for now and forever more. Amen.

## **PASTORAL PRAYER AND LORD’S PRAYER**

### **OFFERTORY INVITATION**

Our mission is to engage in God’s mission to  
feed the hungry,  
give drink to the thirsty  
and wipe the tears from every eye.

This is accomplished through our gifts of time, talent and treasure.

Give generously so that God’s will might be done on earth as it is in heaven.

### **OFFERTORY DEDICATION**

**Living God,**

**we are your people, we carry your presence.**

**Use us and our gifts to accomplish your mission in the world.**

**Multiply our effort to meet every need.**

**This we pray in the name of Christ, whom with you and the Holy Spirit,  
reign in our hearts and lives, one God now and forever. Amen.**

## **HOLY COMMUNION**

One: God be with you.  
Lift up your hearts  
Give thanks to God.

All: **And with your spirit.  
We lift them up to God.  
It is right to give God thanks and praise.**

## **CONFESSION OF SIN**

The chorus of an old hymn, echoing today’s passage from Revelation, asks,

“Are you washed in the blood, In the soul cleansing blood of the Lamb?

Are your garments spotless?

Are they bright as snow?

Are you washed in the blood of the Lamb?”

We may not use that particular imagery anymore, but the truths of the questions remain.

Does the experience of sin weigh on you?

Have you surrendered to God all that you have done or left undone that would separate you from God or God’s creation?

Have you been forgiven?

I invite you to take these moments of quiet reflection to cast your cares upon God. Let the river of life refresh you and carry your sin as far from you as the east is from the west. Let God wipe the tears from your eyes and welcome you home.

Let us pray.

*Time for personal reflection and confession.*

**Salvation belongs to you, O God. Forgive us our sin. Renew us, refresh us and help us rebuild our lives so that they are reflections of your love for all people. We pray in the name of the Lamb that was slain. Amen.**

### **ASSURANCE OF PARDON**

Salvation belongs to our God. Our sins are forgiven.

### **RESPONSE**

**Amen! Blessing and glory and wisdom and thanksgiving and honor and power and might be to our God forever and ever! Amen.** (Rev. 7: 12b)

### **PIANO RESPONSE**

*“GLORIA”*

### **PRAYER OF CONSECRATION**

One: Holy God, descend your Spirit upon these gifts of grain and grape, whether on this table or in the homes of your people, that they might be for us the presence of the living Christ. Pour out your Spirit upon us so that we might be reflections of your likeness in a hurting world so that others might know the blessings of living in communion with you and one another. Through Christ, with Christ and in Christ, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, all glory and honor are yours Almighty God, now and forever.

**All: Amen.**

### **THE WORDS OF INSTITUTION AND DISTRIBUTION**

#### **PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING**

One: Let us pray.

**All: Thank you most Holy God, for meeting us in this simple meal. May your presence within us ripple beyond us, ever expanding, until the day when you gather all your saints from the four winds to share in your eternal banquet. In all our words and actions may your name be praised now and forever more. Amen.**

### **SENDING HYMN**

*“Go Now In Peace”*

### **SENDING**

One: Go forth from this time of worship  
as a flowing stream through a parched desert,  
pouring the love of God upon the hearts and lives  
of all you meet so that hope might take root and blossom.

As you go, know that the  
God who created you,  
the Christ who redeems you  
and the Spirit who empowers you  
is with you today and ever more.

**Amen.**

### **POSTLUDE**

Sandy Wentzloff

## **GUCC ADVENT DEVOTIONAL BOOKLET**

On November 29<sup>th</sup> we enter the church year season of Advent.

Advent is a “Season of Hope.”

If there ever is a time when we need hope, it is this year! Will you help nourish your fellow congregational members in hope? I need 27 people to write a devotion centered on *hope* of about two paragraphs in length. You might want to write about a scripture or what is renewing your hope at this time or what is the basis of your hope, or whatever you feel would be of benefit to members of the congregation. Please email me at [dmckee545@gmail.com](mailto:dmckee545@gmail.com) soon and share that you are willing to share a devotion. **I will need to receive your devotion via email or at the church office by November 15 so that the booklet can be compiled before the beginning of Advent. Thank you for being a part of this project of Hope!**

---

**Remember in Prayer:** Pastor Dennis, Greg Armstrong (Howard’s brother), Dick Carlson, Ewald Keller, Bill Cowell, Eunice Gasow, and Aggie Schue. We pray for others who have been ill or are home bound and others at Oak Terrace and Golden Hearts. We pray for health and healing for all people everywhere. Pray for the ministries of our church. Pray for those serving in the military and for our local and national leaders.

If you have a prayer request or would like to receive a call from Pastor Dennis call his office at 237-2595 (leave a private voice mail) or his cell 763-258-3371

Pastor Dennis is usually in the office each Tuesday and Wednesday from 9:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. He can be reached at the office, 237-2595 (private voice mail) or his cell: 763-258-3371. E-mail: [dmckee545@gmail.com](mailto:dmckee545@gmail.com) • Website at [listen2god.org](http://listen2god.org)

### **Giving our Gifts to God:**

Tithes, Offerings and Pledges can be sent to Gaylord United Church of Christ P.O. Box 385 Gaylord, MN 55334. *You can also donate on our website or drop off at the church office on Wednesday between 10 a.m. – 4 p.m.*

- ❖ Our **From the Heart Offering** in November goes to ***Santa’s Helpers***. Deposit your donation in the Heart Basket near the Sanctuary doors.
- ❖ **Men’s Fellowship** meets every **Wednesday at 2:00 p.m. in church in the Fireside Room.**
- ❖ **Women’s Fellowship is again selling dish cloths.** There are multiple colors and the cost remains at \$1.00 each. They will be on the table in the Fellowship Hall.

### **Mark your Calendar:**

- **All Church decorating** in preparation for Advent – **Sunday, November 22 after church.**
- **Hanging of the Greens Celebration Service** – **Sunday, November 29 at 9:30 a.m.**

## Stewardship 2021 - Love



The words of 1 John 4:7-21 boldly announce and pronounce what we need to hear. What our world needs to hear today. What we as the Church, we as the people of God, need to embody today. **God IS love!** In the United Church of Christ, we hear God calling us to Three Great Loves.

**Love of Neighbor. Love of Children. Love of Creation.**

***And this love is our hope. This love is our calling. And this love is our mission.***

To proclaim “God is love” is a bold confession that demands a bold faith and bold faithful action. For how will anyone believe this unless they see this in us? How will anyone be convinced that beneath the all too often crushing burden of everyday life flows divine love unless we **give love?** How will anyone know unless **we live** love?

That's what 3 Great Loves is about. The amazing stories of our faithful and transformative ministries as we live out God's love and help make a just world for all.

Friends, go and fill the world with God's love through 3 Great Loves!  
***For what the world needs now...especially now...is love.***

In the United Church of Christ we give ourselves to answering God's call to love.  
**We hope that as you consider your giving for the coming year, you will take a step towards greater generosity in your pledge.**

**You should have received your 2021 Pledge letter and Time and Talent sheet in the mail or email. Please take a minute to fill it out and return via mail, email, or turn in to the church office as soon as possible. Thank you.**

**Stewardship Sunday is November 15 as we give thanks for the gifts that have been given.**

