

**SERVICE INFORMATION: November 5, 2023**

**All Saints Sunday; Pastor Tom Olson; Minnesota Valley Free Lutheran Church**

PRAISE AND WORSHIP SONGS: Ruth Antal-send them to Marretta for PowerPoint

ACCOMPANY HYMNS: Ruth Antal (Osthus Sing)

READER: Justo Pillman

COMMUNION LEADER: Dave Fischer (He can choose helpers)

THEME: The Celestial City

PRELUDE: Ruth Antal

CALL TO WORSHIP: *Psalm 149*

LEADER: *Praise the LORD.*

ALL: *Sing to the LORD a new song, his praise in the assembly of the saints.*

LEADER: *Let Israel rejoice in their Maker;*

ALL: *let the people of Zion be glad in their King.*

LEADER: *Let them praise his name with dancing*

ALL: *and make music to him with tambourine and harp.*

LEADER: *For the LORD takes delight in his people;*

ALL: *he crowns the humble with salvation.*

LEADER: *Let the saints rejoice in this honor*

ALL: *and sing for joy on their beds.*

**HYMN #164 “For All the Saints”**

**CONFESSION OF SIN:** *Almighty God, our Maker and Redeemer, we poor sinners confess to You that we are by nature sinful and unclean, and that we have sinned against You in thought, word, and deed.*

*Therefore, we flee for refuge to Your infinite mercy and ask You for Christ’s sake, grant us forgiveness of all our sins, and by Your Holy Spirit increase in us true knowledge of You and of Your will and true obedience to Your Word, to the end that by Your grace we may come to eternal life, through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.*

**PRAYER**

**CHILDREN’S MESSAGE**

**Reader: Justo Pillman**

**FIRST LESSON:** *Revelation 7:9-17 After this I looked and there before me was a great multitude that no one could count, from every nation, tribe, people and language, standing before the throne and in front of the Lamb. They were wearing white robes and were holding palm branches in their hands. 10 And they cried out in a loud voice: "Salvation belongs to our God, who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb." 11 All the angels were standing around the throne and around the elders and the four living creatures. They fell down on their faces before the throne and worshiped God, 12 saying: "Amen! Praise and glory and wisdom and thanks and honor and power and strength be to our God for ever and ever. Amen!" 13 Then one of the elders asked me, "These in white robes-who are they, and where did they come from?" 14 I answered, "Sir, you know." And he said, "These are they who have come 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 spread his tent over them. 16 Never again will they hunger; never again will they thirst. The sun will not beat upon them, nor any scorching heat. 17 For the Lamb at the center of the throne will be their shepherd; he will lead them to springs of living water. And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes."*

**EPISTLE LESSON:** *1 John 3:1-3 How great is the love the Father has lavished on 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. 2 Dear friends, now we are children of God, and what we will be has not yet been made known. But we know that when he appears, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is. 3 Everyone who has this hope in him purifies himself, just as he is pure.*

**CONFESSION OF FAITH:** *I believe in one God, the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth, And of all things visible and invisible.*

*And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the only-begotten Son of God, Begotten of His Father before all worlds, God of God, Light of Light, Very God of very God, Begotten, not made, Being of one substance with the Father, By whom all things were made; Who for us, and for our salvation, came down from heaven, And was incarnate by the Holy Spirit of the virgin Mary, And*

*was made man; And was crucified also for us under Pontius Pilate, He suffered and was buried; And the third day He rose again according to the Scriptures, And ascended into heaven, And is seated on the right hand of the Father, And He shall come again with glory to judge both the living and the dead; Whose kingdom shall have no end.*

*And I believe in the Holy Spirit, The Lord and Giver of Life, Who proceeds from the Father and the Son, Who with the Father and the Son together is worshiped and glorified, Who spoke by the Prophets. And I believe one holy Christian and apostolic Church, I acknowledge one Baptism for the remission of sins. And I look for the Resurrection of the dead, And the Life of the world to come. Amen*

**GLORIA PATRI: Ambassador Hymnal p. 4 (please put on screen)**  
*Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost; As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen, Amen.*

#### **ANNOUNCEMENTS AND PRAYER FOR OFFERING**

**PRAISE SONGS:** songs chosen by Ruth Antal (“He is Lord” would be a possibility)

**SERMON TITLE: “THE CELESTIAL CITY”**  
**Matthew 5:1-10; Pastor Tom Olson; November 5, 2023**

*Grace to you and peace from God our Father and our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen*

**JOURNEY:** We all are on a journey to a destination called “life after death.” Some people know for certain where they are going after death and others don’t have a clue. In the famous book called “The Pilgrim’s Progress,” the main character, named Christian, sets out on a journey to that blessed “CELESTIAL CITY.” **SHOW CLIP:** <https://reelchristian.com/collections/pilgrims-progress-journey-to-heaven/products/pilgrims-progress-journey-to-heaven-christian-movie-dvd> Knowing where you are going really makes a tremendous difference in how you live. On this “ALL SAINTS” Sunday, Jesus gives us a picture the “atmosphere” of our heavenly home in the “BEATITUDES” from the SERMON ON THE

**MOUNT.** They really make me desire to get to THE CELESTIAL CITY. **Matthew 5:1** “*Now when he saw the crowds, he went up on a mountainside and sat down. His disciples came to him, 2 and he began to teach them.*” In THE CELESTIAL CITY...

#### **I. SORROW OVER SIN IS A PREREQUISITE**

**Matthew 5:3** “*Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.*”

**SALVATION:** To be poor in spirit is to know that your salvation is a gift of God and all of grace. Some people like to take credit for their salvation, but that is not correct. Jesus paid for it in full by his death on the cross.

Ephesians 2:8&9 states: “*For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith-and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God- 9 not by works, so that no one can boast.*”

**PROUD:** The kingdom of God is for those who humbly confess their sins and believe that Christ’s death on the cross is the full payment for their salvation. Proud people who think they have a standing before God on the basis of their own good deeds will not be a part of the heavenly kingdom. Also, in THE CELESTIAL CITY...

#### **II. GRIEF WILL BE BANISHED**

**Matthew 5:4** *Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted.*

**LOSS:** Many of us here are at the age where are parents and even friends are dying. Some have already lost their spouse or a child. Our mourning is strong. We also mourn the loss of our home, our car, our ability to walk well or even think clearly. We look forward to our heavenly home where death, pain and grief are taken away. It is a place where the “garment of praise replaces the spirit of heaviness.” Jesus began his ministry by quoting from Isaiah 61 where we read that He was appointed to give THOSE

WHO GRIEVE: *“a crown of beauty instead of ashes, the oil of gladness instead of mourning, and a garment of praise instead of a spirit of despair.”* The CELESTIAL CITY will have:

### **III. NO MORE PUSHING TO GET AHEAD**

*Matthew 5:5 “Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth.”*

COOPERATION: Many people rightly call the business world a, “dog eat dog” world. In the Kingdom of God, the meek will inherit the earth. It will be a place where we serve and honor one another, rather than be served by others. Some of the most humbled people in this life will be the greatest in that day. It will be good to live in a place where everybody tries to help the other person to get ahead? In Revelation 20 we are told that the rulers in that day will be the martyrs who have given their lives for the sake of Christ. They will be great leaders for sure. Also, in THE CELESTIAL CITY...

### **IV. PURITY WILL BE HONORED**

*Matthew 5:6 Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled.*

PORN: We are living in a day of extreme immorality. Pornography is a many billion-dollar business. Thousands of children are abducted and sold to rich, evil men as sex slaves. Just watch the “Sound of Freedom” movie to find out how big that is. Our politicians are using their influence to receive millions of dollars in kickbacks for political favors. Children are being groomed for immorality.

PURITY: When Christ returns, the ungodly will be cast into the lake of fire and He will usher in a kingdom where righteousness and purity are natural. As we fight to keep our hearts pure and free from lust and the love of money, we long for that place don’t we? Hang on, it is coming. Also, in THE CELESTIAL CITY...

### **V. KINDNESS WILL PREVAIL**

*Matthew 5:7 Blessed are the merciful, for they will be shown mercy.*

ABUSE: I was listening to an interview with a British man who attained great status as an athlete. His fame brought him in contact with some of the richest and most powerful men on earth. He reflected on the sad fact that he found out that these rich and powerful men were very cruel and very evil. The wealth of this world is currently held by people with very hard and cruel hearts. They use and abuse people to get ahead.

HEAVEN: In the heavenly kingdom it will be the opposite. Merciful people will receive mercy from the Lord. The evil will receive no mercy, they will be excluded. Heaven will be a place where kindness will be the law of the land and the natural condition of the hearts of the residents there. No cruel people will be allowed into that place to molest the souls of the meek. In the CELESTIAL CITY...

### **VI. GOD WILL BE PRESENT**

*Matthew 5:8 Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God.*

PARENT: For a child, there is nothing more comforting than having a loving mother and father present during a frightening time, like a storm. In heaven, the presence of God will fill the place and we will be immersed in the comforting presence of God. King David was the shepherd boy that had a heart for God. He said in Psalm 27 that his one desire is to see the Lord:

*Psalm 27:4 One thing I ask of the LORD, this is what I seek: that I may dwell in the house of the LORD all the days of my life, to gaze upon the beauty of the LORD and to seek him in his temple.*

PRESENCE: My great heart’s desire when I get to heaven is to see the beauty of the Lord. I won’t be surprised if I spend my first one hundred years there just captured by the beauty of the Lord. We

can stand strong in life if we walk in the presence of the Lord. In  
THE CELESTIAL CITY...

## **VII. WAR WILL BE BANISHED**

*Matthew 5:9 Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called sons of God.*

WARS: This really hits home, doesn't it. We went through four years under President Trump with no wars. He is outspoken about not having these wars and promises to do everything he can to stop them. And now we have a war in Ukraine where tens of thousands of innocent young men on both sides have died fighting for their rulers. And we have a war in Israel and Gaza where thousands are dying. But there are no peace makers. There are no peace talks. There is no getting the issues out on the table. The cost in terms of human lives and destruction is tragic. There are very few voices calling for real peace. At the present time it doesn't seem possible.

HEAVEN: One of the great joys of heaven will be that there is no more war. The Psalmist says that the Lord "makes wars to cease, he breaks the bow and shatters the spear." Isaiah says that when the Lord returns the weapons of war will be forged into implements of agriculture. Even the animals will be at peace and the lion will eat straw like an ox. There shall be no more killing. There will be no more abortion. God is the author of life, abundant life.

EXALTED: God will highly exalt peacemakers in His kingdom. He will call them the sons of God. And finally, in THE CELESTIAL CITY...

## **VIII. THOSE WHO SUFFER IN THIS LIFE WILL BE HONORED**

*Matthew 5:10 Blessed are those who are persecuted because of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.*

It is hard to see people suffering from persecution for their faith. Communism and Islam continue to persecute believers. In the United States and Western nations, Christians are being persecuted for their views on marriage and morality. But those who suffer for the truth will be blessed in the kingdom of God, forever. It will be worth it all, when we see Jesus.

SUMMARY: Christian, in Bunyan's book "The Pilgrim's Progress," longed for a better place than any city of this world. He was looking for "The Celestial City."

ABRAHAM: Abraham of old, had no interest in the earthly promises of God of the land of Israel, he too, was looking for a place that this world did not offer... "A BETTER CITY."

HEAVEN: There is such a place. God dwells there. Jesus is preparing us a home there. The ticket is paid in full by the blood of the Lamb. In that land, we will experience the fullness of our inheritance as princes and princesses of God, children of the king. Don't be discouraged. Great things are ahead for the children of God. Put your faith in Jesus, crucified, risen and coming again and you will become a child of God, even today! Amen

*Now may the peace of God that passes all understanding guard your hearts and minds through faith in Christ Jesus. Amen*

**HYMN** "I'm a Child of the King"

My Father is rich in houses and lands,  
He holdeth the wealth of the world in His hands!  
Of rubies and diamonds, of silver and gold,  
His coffers are full, He has riches untold.

Refrain

I'm a child of the King, a child of the King:  
With Jesus my Savior, I'm a child of the King.

My Father's own Son, the Savior of men,

Once wandered on earth as the poorest of them;  
But now He is pleading our pardon on high,  
That we may be His when He comes by and by.

Refrain

I once was an outcast stranger on earth,  
A sinner by choice, an alien by birth,  
But I've been adopted, my name's written down,  
An heir to a mansion, a robe and a crown.

Refrain

A tent or a cottage, why should I care?  
They're building a palace for me over there;  
Though exiled from home, yet still may I sing:  
All glory to God, I'm a child of the King.

Refrain

**LORD'S PRAYER:** *Our Father, Who art in heaven, hallowed be Thy Name. Thy Kingdom come. Thy will be done on earth, as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those that trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For Thine is the kingdom, The power, and the glory, for ever and ever. Amen*

## **HOLY COMMUNION**

**CHORAL BENEDICTION:** *Tune "Edelweiss" May the Lord, Mighty Lord, Bless and keep you forever-- Grant you peace, Perfect peace, Strength in every endeavor. Lift up your eyes and see His face, Feel His grace forever. May the Lord, Mighty Lord, Bless and keep you forever.*

**POSTLUDE: Ruth Antal**