

**SERVICE INFORMATION: November 3, 2024**  
**All Saints Sunday; Pastor Tom Olson;**  
**Minnesota Valley Free Lutheran Church**

**PRELUDE:** Rebekah Olson (filling in for 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: Carol Hoikkala**

**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."*

**GOSPEL LESSON:** *Matthew 5:1-12 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, 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 be shown mercy.*

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

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

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

11 "Blessed are you when people insult you, persecute you and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of me. 12 Rejoice and be glad, because great is your reward in heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you.

**READER: Here ends the reading of God's Word.**

**CONGREGATION SINGS: God be praised, for His glad Tidings!**

**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**

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

**SERMON TITLE: "THE LIFE OF A SAINT"**

**I John 3:1-3; Pastor Tom Olson; November 5, 2023**

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

**PROGRESSIVE:** Our son was telling us that his company he works for, Progressive Insurance, has a two-year plan for the company. They are looking ahead as far as they practically can and making adjustments to get to their goals in two years. There are even companies that make tentative plans for the next 100 or 200 years!

**PLANS:** As believers we make such plans for our earthly life too. Some of our plans are for this afternoon or this week. Some of our plans are for the next year or two. Some plans of younger people may even be for the next several decades.

**PERSPECTIVE:** Today, we will be reminded that our plans, as believers in Christ, should also be made in light of what we will be doing for the next million years! We have life that never ends with God in heaven. Our Epistle Text for this All Saints Sunday helps us get a proper plan in place for our temporary life on earth in light of our eternal life we have in Christ. Let's look at THE LIFE OF A SAINT from 1 John 3:1-3.

**I. DECLARATION: A CITIZEN OF HEAVEN AND ALIEN ON EARTH**

*1 John 3:1 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.*

**CONCEPT:** Is there a guiding concept that can transform your thinking. Is there a perspective that can elevate you out of the most mundane tasks into ecstasy? Yes, there is. A very helpful outlook to remember is right in this verse. *"I am loved by my Heavenly Father," "He has lavished that love on me through Jesus," "God calls us His children,"* That is what we are. That is

why the world does not know us. To the world, we are outsiders, we are not one of them. We are the children of the God.

**ILLEGAL:** The ungodly are the illegal aliens on this earth. They have created systems that are contrary to the one who created all things. Believers are aliens to their world system, even though we are the ones who will inherit the earth, after the ungodly are removed forever. Our presence on earth is a constant reminder of their impending doom. That is why the world hates us. We hate sin, the world loves sin.

**SAINTS:** We are saints. Not in the sense of being some sort of perfect person that a church leader declares to be a saint. We are saints by virtue of God's declaration of forgiveness, adoption and separation from the devil and His followers. Saint means set apart.

**DAILY:** This is actually a **DECLARATION**. Declarations in Scripture are objective and important. They are like laws of nature we count on, we build on, we trust without wavering. Every morning we need to look into the mirror and resight the content of this verse;

- God is my Father
- He loves me dearly
- He lavishes his love to me through Jesus
- My sins are forgiven and I am on my way to heaven
- I am a joint heir, with Christ, of all the wealth of God
- My future is secure
- The world will hate me because I am not a part of them
- They hated Jesus too
- The way the world treats me is only temporary
- God's kindness is eternal
- I am a citizen of the Kingdom of Heaven
- My treasures are stored in heaven, not upon the earth.

All of these truths flow from this one amazing verse of 1 John 3:1. If you trust Jesus you are a child of God.

***Psalm 107:1-2 Oh, give thanks to the LORD, for He is good! For His mercy endures forever. 2 Let the redeemed of the LORD say so...!***

A believer is a **SAINT**. The second aspect of the **LIFE OF A SAINT** is...

## **II. EXPECTATION: EAGERLY AWAITING OUR NEW LIFE**

***1 John 3:2 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.***

**QUESTION:** If someone asked you what you are like, what would you answer? Would you use the words like, happy, smart, grouchy, fun, quiet, funny, serious? What is your personality? The real answer to that question according to this verse could be: **"I don't know yet, I don't clearly know what the real me is like!"** You could say that currently you are affected by your body, your upbringing, your genetics, the culture you were raised in, your friends and family, your work associates and so on. But the answer to "what am I like" is this: **I WON'T KNOW THAT UNTIL JESUS APPEARS AGAIN.**

**TRANSFORMED:** This verse tells us that when we enter into the presence of Christ that we will be "transformed." We will be rescued from who we have been programmed to be in this world and we will be made into the person God intended us to be. It says in this verse, **"WE SHALL BE LIKE HIM."** We will be transformed by immersion in the presence of Christ.

**HEAVEN:** When someone dies, I often tell their living spouse, "You will not be married to that person in heaven. But you will be better friends than you ever were in this life. You will like them more than you ever did in this life. They will be the person God

intended them to be. You may have seen glimpses of it, but you can't imagine how amazing your spouse is, now that they are freed up from the negative effects of this life. You will also be amazed at how handsome or beautiful they are when you see their bodies, unaffected by the curse of sin."

**IMAGO DEI:** We are saints, forgiven, set apart, children of God. On the basis of this verse, we have the right to say to the question, "Do you want to know what I am really like?" We can say, "Study the life of Jesus. Study the character of God. I have shortcomings for the few brief years of my earthly existence, but for all eternity I will be like Christ. That is who I really am."

**LONGING:** We eagerly long for the moment when we are transformed by God into his likeness and we are finally free from the effects of this fallen world. That is our great expectation. In a few weeks we will sing the Advent hymn that puts it this way *"Our hope and expectation, O Jesus now appear. Arise Thou Son so longed for, O'er this benighted sphere, With hearts and hands uplifted, we plead O Lord to see. The day of earth's redemption, that brings us onto Thee."*

**PROCLAIMING:** I trust that you are "EXPECTING!" That you are **EAGERLY AWAITING OUR NEW LIFE**. That is one of the aspects of Holy Communion, "proclaiming His death and resurrection until He comes again." Finally, **THE LIFE OF A SAINT IS**

### **III. CHANGING: DESIRING TO HONOR GOD WITH A PURE LIFE**

*1 John 3:3 Everyone who has this hope in him purifies himself, just as he is pure.*

**RESULT:** There is natural result of focusing on our adoption as children of God and our amazing life we will have forever in heaven. It is the desire to live a pure life as we wait for the return

of Christ. By pure, we don't mean just morally pure. We mean purity of motives. We mean transformation of our thoughts from anger to love, from greed to generosity, from bitterness to kindness, from impatient demanding to gracious understanding.

**PURITY:** I believe this idea of purity is expressed so well by David in **Psalm 51** *"create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a RIGHT SPIRIT within me."* If our heart is clean and our spirit is right, beautiful actions will flow from that. A mind filled with gratitude, praise, understanding, empathy and kind intentions will become a river of life that flows from our tongues, our hands and our entire being.

**SUMMARY:** This is the **LIFE OF A SAINT**, a life of one that is constantly aware that they are a child of the King and a citizen of heaven. This is the life of one who is longing to see Jesus "face to face" and be transformed by His presence. It is a life that desires purity and holiness in all areas.

**COMMUNION:** It is the reason we regularly come to the Lord's table to partake of His body and blood. Communion strengthens our assurance that our sins are forgiven, that we are children of God and that Jesus is coming back to make things right. Hopefully soon. We are currently in "THE CHURCH MILITANT." We are in a battle with the world, our flesh and the devil. But soon we will pass into "THE CHURCH TRIUMPHANT" and experience life as it is meant to be...no more sin, no more sickness, no more sorrow, no more pain and no more death.

Think about your loved ones who have died in Christ. Our opening hymn said, "WE FEEBLY STRUGGLE, THEY IN GLORY SHINE." That is what Jesus purchased for us on the cross. We long for that great day! Amen

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

**HYMN #625 "He the Pearly Gates Will Open"**

**HOLY COMMUNION**

**DOXOLOGY:**

**POSTLUDE: Rebekah Olson**