

MIDWEEK DEVOTION AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

OCTOBER 21, 2020

DEVOTION All Saint's Day and the "Cloud of Witnesses"

All Saint's Sunday is Nov. 1 this year, and on some years our Scriptural texts for All Saint's Day include these words from Hebrews 12: "Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, ...let us run with perseverance the race that is set before us." The scene portrayed in these words is based on large athletic competitions in the ancient world, where runners in a race finished up the final leg of their marathon in a stadium, filled with cheering spectators. Not unlike how we may line the road for the runners in Grandma's Marathon, cheering them on towards the finish line. This athletic metaphor is then extended to remind us that those who have died in the faith are like that crowd of spectators, cheering us on, as we continue to run our race in this time and place. It's a powerful image of connection between this world and the next as we celebrate All Saint's Day.

One of the many ways that the pandemic has impacted our lives these days relates to sporting events. Some are cancelled, some are postponed, some are happening, but often with very limited or no spectators----no "cloud of witnesses" cheering on the athletes. As one who enjoys watching NFL games, I've noticed this phenomenon numerous times, although an effort is made to recreate some of the crowd noise artificially. Sadly, as our own team, the Vikings, have been doing so poorly, there hasn't been much to cheer about anyways! Yet, I remember the words of my football mentor, Audrey Carlson; I asked her what to do when our team was struggling, and she replied, "Cheer louder!".

I think of this when I consider the state of our present times. It feels to me as though so much is fraught with anxiety and peril, and that the general state of humanity is one of a struggling team. It's comforting to imagine those saints around the world, in heaven and on earth, cheering us on, all the more loudly, as we continue to persevere and run our race, uncertain though the race course may seem. Within our All Saint's worship service, one of the ways we acknowledge that "cloud of witnesses" is to speak out loud the names of those in our community that have died since our last All Saint's observance, November 3 of 2019, while tolling the church bell. This year, we will be naming Nick Ojard, Skip Bissell, and John Safstrom. We also generally have had photographs of those who have died on a table near the front, as a visual reminder of that "cloud of witnesses". In addition, all of us have had a chance to come forward and light a candle in memory of someone who has died recently, as an act of committing them to God's care and honoring their impact upon us.

Things are different this year, obviously, but we will do our best to recreate these opportunities in our virtual worship. We will still ring the church bell as we name those who have died since last All Saint's Day. We will seek to include photographs of those people on our congregational list, as well as make a space within our virtual worship for photographs of loved ones you may have lost and would like included, who would not be on our congregational list. This means you should be sending such photographs to Scott Shelerud by October 28 at all4scott@gmail.com . Please be sure and include the name of the person in the picture! We will encourage the lighting

of candles in your home, as we would normally do together in church, in memory of those we love who have died. If there are several people for whom you would like to light a candle, I would encourage you to have that many candles in front of you, ready to be lit, during that portion of the service.

Holy Communion is especially meaningful on All Saint's Day. Were we worshiping in our building, this would be a Sunday we would receive Holy Communion at the altar. And I would remind us all that our altar is intentionally in the shape of a half-circle; the other half extends around the world and into heaven. So, we commune with All the Saints, in one unbroken circle. Again, this isn't possible this year, but we will share in Holy Communion within our homes, so you'll want to have those supplies available as well on Nov. 1. And although the symbolism won't be as obvious, the "circle will still be unbroken". If you are interested, you may pick up communion cup/s and packet/s of wafers from the church for use in your home throughout the duration of the pandemic. You may certainly continue to use whatever you already have been using, but if the thought of this tangible reminder of our church home seems meaningful to you, by all means come and pick up these items on Wednesday mornings from 9:30-10:30 AM.

Among the things that have to be done differently this year, each of us will have particular happenings that we miss the most. For me, worshiping in person on All Saint's Sunday is one of these. I always find it one of the most significant and meaningful services in any given year. Nevertheless, the promises and comfort of All Saint's Day hold true for us, just as God holds true for us. And the "clouds of witnesses" will continue to cheer us on.

In Christ, Pastor Susan

ANNOUNCEMENTS

KNIFE RIVER PRAYER LIST:

In need of healing: Veronica Persons, Susan Anderson, Elsa Keeler, Becca Kuechle, Les Bolen, Fred Wright, Reid Carson, Kayla Davidson, Archie Moore, Pastor John Reppe, Gary Swanson, Faith Swanson, Seth Goodnature, Pat Hovis, Sarah Monaghan, Emily Coolidge, Melyssa Bloom, DeWayne and Maurine Rubedor, Emma Durward, Bill Crandall, Becket Lundgren, Ella Jackson

Special circumstances: Jacques Basson (Anne Lu's brother, who is working with Covid-19 patients in Dubai.)

Long Term Concerns: Sue Sigel, Laurie Jackson, David Pierce, Jan Moon, Pat Hanson, Pat Levenske, Dani Mattson, Lyle Northey, Leif Zmolek, Kane Bolen, Aspen Winbigler, Deb Allert, Peggy B., Corine Sutherland

SCHEDULE THIS WEEK

Today: Midweek devotion sent out

NO quilters today!

Sunday: Virtual worship for Reformation Sunday

Tuesday: 9:00 AM-Lectio Divina/Dig Deeper online

Wednesday: 9:00 AM-Quilters at church

Next Sunday: All Saint's virtual worship.

10:00 AM -Smart Team meets

NEW OPTION FOR ONLINE OFFERING – Do **YOU** still need offering envelopes???

We are now offering the option to submit your weekly offerings online. Simply click on the link on the church's home page that states "NEW: Make online donation here via Subsplash" and watch for the link on upcoming YouTube videos. Make a one-time donation, or set up a recurring offering that allows you to support the church even when you're away. If you've decided to use Subsplash on a regular basis and **WILL NOT NEED** offering envelopes for 2021, please let Melanie know!!

PHOTO REQUESTS FOR ONLINE WORSHIP

We are asking people **NOT** to submit pictures of children without parents' permission. It is also important **NOT** to submit pictures from magazines, websites or sources that may be under copyright or ownership of others. Original photos preferred. Thank you!!

SPECIAL OFFERING OPPORTUNITY FOR THE DURWARD FAMILY

The Durward family of Knife River recently experienced a terrible accident, in which their four year old daughter, Emma, was run over by a vehicle in a church parking lot in Duluth. Emma was hospitalized and is now recovering at home for the most part. Our Council voted to give an immediate gift of \$500 to the family out of local outreach monies within our budget, but we also want to give individual members an opportunity to contribute to a further gift. **Through November**, we will receive checks to Knife River Lutheran Church with the designation "for the Durward family" as a part of this effort. Thank you for caring about our neighbors!

WHO ARE WE MISSING?

We are attempting to cast our net wide in sending out these emails, along with postings on Facebook and our church website. Additionally, we are sending snail mail copies to those who are without online resources. If you know of someone we are missing, please let us know, so we may include them too!

MASK MESSAGE FROM JOANIE LEE We continue to make masks, and realize that masks wear out from wearing and washing. Please don't hesitate to ask for replacements. We have plenty. Contact at joanielee14@gmail.com.

CHURCH WINDOWS

Custodian Sharon Shelerud has cleaned the insides of all of the church windows on the lower level and the main level, and the outside windows on the lower level. David Grong has volunteered to clean main level outside windows. Thank you, David! If you are able to clean the upper level (attic) windows, please let Melanie or Sharon know if you are willing to help out! The snow will soon be flying!

COMMUNION

Nov. 1 will be another "virtual communion" Sunday. If you would be interested in having wafers, and perhaps a pottery communion mug to use in your home, you may pick up a packet outside of the lower level garden entrance at church. The packets will be available on Wednesday mornings from 9:30 - 10:30 am, starting October 14!

A THANK YOU FROM THE PASTOR

I would like to express her deep thanks for all the cards and gifts given in honor of Pastor Appreciation this month! I am so blessed to serve here and love you all! Again, thanks!