All Saints' Sunday **November 1, 2026**
Text: Rev. 7:9–17; 1Jn 3:1–3 **Children of God, Now and Forever**
Trinity Lutheran Church **Rev. Tom Boeck**

In the name of Jesus, who has made us His own and given us the promise of everlasting life. Amen.

There's something wonderful about being part of a family. Of course, families aren't perfect. Sometimes we disagree. Sometimes we disappoint one another. And sometimes we wonder how in the world we could possibly be related! Belonging to a family gives us a sense of identity. We know where we come from, who we are, and hopefully, that there are people who love us.

Today, on All Saints' Day, we're reminded that we belong to a family much bigger than the people gathered around our Thanksgiving tables or appearing in family photographs. We're part of God's family.

The Apostle John tells us: **"See what kind of love the Father has given to us, that we should be called children of God; and so we are." (1 John 3:1)** I love those last four words. **"And so we are!"** John doesn't say we might become God's children if we're good enough. We don't have to earn our place in the family. He says we ARE God's children. Right now. Today. Because of Jesus Christ.

And that's worth celebrating! God's family extends far beyond the people we can see sitting around us this morning. It includes Christians throughout the world, those who lived centuries before us, and those who have finished their earthly lives and are now with the Lord.

In Revelation, John gives us a glimpse of that family gathered together. He describes **"a great multitude that no one could number, from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages, standing before the throne and before the Lamb." (Revelation 7:9)** Can you imagine that scene? People from every generation gathered in God's presence. And they're not standing around quietly wondering what happens next. They're celebrating!

They're praising God with a loud voice, saying, **"Salvation belongs to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb!" (Revelation 7:10)** What a wonderful picture of heaven!

And yet, those people aren't standing before God's throne because they were particularly good. They didn't earn their place through church attendance, generous contributions, or acts of kindness. They were sinners, just as we are. When John asks who they are, he's told, **"They have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb." (Revelation 7:14)**

We know the Lamb. Through His death on the cross, Jesus paid the price for our sins. Through His resurrection, He defeated death. And through faith in Him, we receive the forgiveness and everlasting life He won for us. That's what makes us saints. Not our goodness, but His grace. Not our accomplishments, but His sacrifice.

In Holy Baptism, God joined us to Christ's death and resurrection, washing away our sins and giving us new life as His children. That's why John can say, "We are God's children now."

Of course, being God's children doesn't mean life is always easy. We still experience disappointment, illness, hardship, and sorrow. And unless Christ returns first, every one of us will face death. That's the reality of living in a world affected by sin.

Here at Trinity, we've been reminded of that reality many times this year. We've said goodbye to members of our church family. People who worshiped alongside us, prayed with us, shared conversations and meals with us, and became part of our lives. We remember their faces, their voices, and perhaps even the places where they used to sit. And we miss them.

Jesus understands that sorrow. When His friend Lazarus died, Jesus Himself wept. And in today's Gospel, He tells us, **"Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted." (Matthew 5:4)** Jesus doesn't tell us not to mourn or suggest that Christians should be immune from grief.

He promises comfort. And that comfort comes from knowing that death doesn't have the final word. Jesus does. For those who have died trusting in Christ, their earthly lives have ended, but their life with Him has not.

When we hear John's description of that great multitude before the throne, we can rejoice that those who have died in the faith are among the redeemed, praising the Savior who brought them safely home. What a wonderful promise!

But the promise doesn't end there. John tells us, **"Beloved, we are God's children now, and what we will be has not yet appeared; but we know that when he appears we shall be like him, because we shall see him as he is." (1 John 3:2)** We belong to Christ right now, but God has something even more wonderful prepared for us.

One day, Jesus will return. The dead will be raised, and all who belong to Him will live forever in His presence, free from sin, suffering, and death. Revelation

tells us that God will wipe away every tear from their eyes. No more sorrow. No more pain. No more funerals. No more goodbyes. And at the center of it all is Jesus, the Lamb who is also our Shepherd, leading His people to springs of living water.

Now, that's something worth looking forward to! But we don't have to wait until heaven to enjoy the blessings of belonging to Him. God has given us a life to live right now, filled with opportunities to love, to serve, to forgive, and to share the good news of Jesus Christ.

And on All Saints' Day, as we remember those who have gone before us, it's worth remembering something else. Most of us are here today because someone shared the Christian faith with us. Maybe it was a parent or grandparent who brought us to church. Maybe it was a Sunday school teacher who helped us learn about Jesus. Maybe it was a pastor, a friend, or someone who took the time to tell us about God's love.

They shared something precious with us, something entrusted to them by those who came before. And now, God gives us the privilege of sharing that same treasure with others. Think about the blessings God has given us over the years. The lessons we've learned. The prayers He's answered. The forgiveness we've received. The comfort He's provided during difficult times. Those experiences aren't simply memories to cherish. They're blessings to share.

There are children who need to hear about Jesus. Young families who need encouragement and support. People in our community searching for hope, purpose, and a place to belong. We have something wonderful to offer them. Not simply a church building or a collection of programs, but the good news that through Jesus Christ, they too can become children of God.

What a privilege it is to help another generation discover the same love and grace that have sustained us throughout our lives! We may never know how many lives will be touched by the faith we share today. But imagine the joy of knowing that something we helped begin might still be bringing people to Jesus long after our own earthly lives have ended.

That's a beautiful Christian legacy. And it reminds us that All Saints' Day isn't simply about looking backward. It's also about looking forward.

We remember the saints who have gone before us. We rejoice that we belong to Christ today. And we look forward to the day when we will join that great

multitude before His throne. Until then, we have people to love, neighbors to serve, and a Savior whose good news is simply too wonderful to keep to ourselves.

Because we are God's children. Not someday. Not maybe. Right now. And forever.
Thanks be to God! Amen.