



**ATONEMENT  
LUTHERAN CHURCH**

**November 2025**

**WEEKLY WORSHIP:**

**Wednesdays: 6:30pm**

**Sundays: 9am**

**OFFICE HOURS:**

**Monday-Friday: 8am-4:30pm**

**Welcome, Worship, and Serve  
in the name of Christ**

**Consecration of Pledges November 5<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup>**

You are invited to return your pledge card  
during worship on either date.

Your pledges help us prepare the 2026 budget.

On Wednesday Nov. 5<sup>th</sup>, meal and education will be per usual.

On Sunday, Nov. 9<sup>th</sup>, brunch will follow worship.

**WELCOME TO NEW MEMBERS**

David & Bonnie Shingler, Susan Hoornstra, Vicki Davis and Grace Weitz: We are glad you are here.

**WELCOME TO THE NEWLY BAPTIZED**

We are excited to welcome Rosabelle Ann Robertson and Sienna Elizabeth Jablonicky to the family of God.

**BLESSINGS FOR CONFIRMED STUDENTS**

During the week of Reformation Sunday, Arlo Gabrielson, Owen Janni and Bo Parker were confirmed. Those who weren't able to hear the boys' faith statements live can watch them on our Youtube channel.

**YOUTH PROGRAMS**

***Wednesday School and Confirmation Students***

+ Pizza will be served 5:15 to 6:15pm

+ Class for 3-year-olds – 5<sup>th</sup> grade at 5:45pm

+ Worship at 6:30pm

+ Class for Confirmation at 7:15pm

Cost \$1 per slice of pizza; also, at no cost there is fruit, vegetables, salad and cookies. All are welcome.

## WEDNESDAYS, 5:45PM

We welcome any adults to join 3-year-olds - 5<sup>th</sup> grade students as they learn Bible Stories. You can read the story, help students with projects. You are welcome to share stories. Please let Mata know if you would like to do this. For the 3-year-olds through 5<sup>th</sup> graders, we will have lessons from the Old and New Testament this year:

November 5<sup>th</sup>: David Wins,  
November 12<sup>th</sup>: The Fiery Furnace,  
November 19<sup>th</sup>: Daniel in the Lion's Den.

## COMMUNITY PACKING PROJECTS

Each month Confirmation students and members of the congregation assemble a project that addresses a need in the community. The community packing project for November is Lutheran Social Services' Pathways 4 Youth. This is a resource center for youth ages 16-24 who are experiencing or at risk of homelessness. They offer a safe, secure, nonjudgmental space and services to meet individuals' needs and to support their growth. We will be packing 50 bags with cleaning supplies that will be given to them as they are moving to their own housing. This packing will be done following worship services **November 12<sup>th</sup>**. If you want to assist or learn more join us immediately following Wednesday worship.

**Thank you** to businesses that have donated toward the cost of these projects: DJ Bitzan and PleasureLand.

## TRUNK N TREAT

Thanks to all who helped with this event for children in our congregation and neighborhood!!

## GINGERBREAD BASH

Please put on your calendar Gingerbread Bash December 13<sup>th</sup>, 9-11am. This for children ages 3 - 10. Each child will make a Nativity Scene using graham crackers, frosting, candy and cutout figures. They will take their creations home. We ask that you bring a non-perishable food item that will be given to McKinley School food shelves. We will furnish juice and rolls. Must pre-register on line or tell Mata by December 5<sup>th</sup>.



## COUNCIL COMMITTEES

Committees generally meet on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Thursday of each month. Finance Committee meets by zoom. You do not need to be a member of a committee to join the conversation of any committee.



The following committees will meet **November 13<sup>th</sup> at 7pm**: Children/Youth Ministry, Adult Ed, Evangelism, Stewardship Committees.

Mission Committee will meet on Tuesday, **November 11<sup>th</sup> at 10am**.

Property and Worship committees will meet next on **November 13<sup>th</sup> at 2pm**.

**\*\*If you are willing to serve on the council, please see the Nomination Committee: Kris Boyle, Debbie Grzybowski, or Linda Schreiber.**



## ADVENT TEA CELEBRATION

**Saturday, December 6<sup>th</sup>**

**10am – Noon**

Join us for coffee, tea, punch.

Baked goods including lefse,  
white elephant items, craft items available for purchase.

## MORE VOLUNTEERS NEEDED IN WORSHIP MINISTRY

All worship roles, like ushers, readers, sound and video booth, prayer leaders, assisting ministers, and holy communion set up/serving/and clean up team, need more volunteers. Signup for ushering and reading is on the easel in the Narthex; sound booth is online; for the others, contact the office and they will forward your name to the person coordinating that ministry. Training is available. We have faithful volunteers, but can always welcome more hands and voices.

## ADULT EDUCATION

November features three Adult Education sessions! Join us in the southeast corner of the Fellowship Hall after worship. Coffee and treats will be waiting for you there, so please come right in. Please join us!

**November 2<sup>nd</sup>: The Dream Center:** Pastor Michael Laidlaw founded Overcomers International Fellowship / The Dream Center, 30 years ago due to his own struggle with chemical dependency, homelessness, and criminal justice. The Dream Center provides services and housing for men who are struggling with mental health issues, chemical dependency, traumatic brain injury, learning disabilities, and physical disabilities, as well as men recently released from jail or prison. At the Dream Center they receive three meals a day, services, job and education coaching, and more. They also network with social workers, probation officers, and aftercare providers. Come to learn about this bridge to the future where over 14,000 people have been housed, and 2,500 meals have been served.

**November 9<sup>th</sup>: It is Consecration Sunday!** There is no Adult Ed but join us for the breakfast buffet in the Fellowship Hall.

**November 16<sup>th</sup>: When to Give Up the Keys?:** Giving up driving is often a hard decision for older adults. Our own Mata Carlson will tell us why she decided to give up driving in her seventies, what people need to think about when considering the decision, and the advantages of not driving. Mata will explain Dial-A-Ride, a community transport option she has used since 2019. Do you have concerns about a family member or a friend who is driving but shouldn't be? This session will give you tips about the conversation you need to have. Come to learn about this challenge and to discuss.

**November 23<sup>rd</sup>: Christ the King Sunday:** Christ the King is a relatively new holy day, instituted in 1925 by Pope Pius XI. Most Roman Catholics, Lutherans, and other Protestants observe it on the last day of "ordinary time" following Pentecost. This year, on the 100th anniversary of the festival's institution, we will reflect on the significance of a festival that proclaims the kingship of Jesus Christ in a world that remains riven by human and demonic forces in rebellion against the Prince of Peace. After an introduction to this festival in worship, join us in Adult Education to learn more.

**November 30<sup>th</sup>:** Celebrate Thanksgiving Weekend! Adult Ed will not meet and will resume on December 7<sup>th</sup>.

**NOV. 1, SATURDAY**

10am NA Anonymous  
6:30pm NA Anonymous

**NOV. 2, SUNDAY****9am Worship**

10am Adult Ed: Dream Center  
10am Coffee & Conversation  
10am Unity Spiritual Center  
10:30am Lefse Making  
2pm Por Su Gracia Worship  
5pm NA Anonymous  
5pm Gamblers Anonymous

**NOV. 3, MONDAY**

1pm Bible Study with Pastors  
4:00pm Lefse Rolling

**NOV. 4, TUESDAY**

9:30am Men's Group  
11:30am TOPS  
6:30pm Bells Practice  
6:30pm NA Anonymous

**NOV. 5, WED**

8am Bread Makers  
8am Bible Online-Men  
9am Quilters  
Noon Al Anon  
2pm Prayer Shawls Group  
5:15pm Pizza etc  
5:45pm Wednesday School  
**6:30pm Worship**-Consecration  
7:15pm Confirmation Class  
7:15pm NO Choir Practice

**NOV. 6, THURSDAY**

9:45am Bible Online-Men  
12pm Bible Study-Women  
1pm Pieces of Love Quilters

**NOV. 7, FRIDAY**

6pm Bible Study (Por Su Gracia)

**NOV. 8, SATURDAY**

10am NA Anonymous  
6:30pm NA Anonymous

**NOV. 9, SUNDAY****9am Worship**- Consecration

10am Brunch!  
10am Unity Spiritual Center  
2pm Por Su Gracia Worship  
5pm NA Anonymous  
5pm Gamblers Anonymous

**NOV. 10, MONDAY**

11am Service at The Sanctuary  
1pm Bible Study with Pastors  
5:30pm Book Club

**NOV. 11, TUESDAY**

9:30am Men's Group  
10am Mission Committee  
11:30am TOPS

6:30pm Bells Practice  
6:30pm NA Anonymous  
6:30pm Stamp Club

**NOV. 12, WED**

8am Bible Online-Men  
9am Quilters  
11:30am Elizabeth Circle  
Noon Al Anon  
5:15pm Pizza etc  
5:45pm Wednesday School  
**6:30pm Worship**  
7:15pm Community Packing  
7:15pm Choir Practice

**NOV. 13, THURSDAY**

8:30am Lefse Making  
9:45am Bible Online-Men  
12pm Bible Study-Women  
1pm Pieces of Love Quilters  
2pm Worship/Property Committees  
7pm Council Committees

**NOV. 14, FRIDAY**

8:30am Lefse Rolling  
6pm Bible Study (Por Su Gracia)  
7:30pm Amadeus Symphony

**NOV. 15, SATURDAY**

10am NA Anonymous  
6:30pm NA Anonymous

**NOV. 16, SUNDAY****9am Worship**

10am Coffee & Conversation  
10am Adult Ed: Give up Keys  
10am Unity Spiritual Center  
2pm Por Su Gracia Worship  
5pm NA Anonymous  
5pm Gamblers Anonymous

**NOV. 17, MONDAY**

1pm Bible Study with Pastors

**NOV. 18, TUESDAY**

9:30am Naomi Circle  
9:30am Men's Group  
10am Dementia Support Group  
11:30am TOPS  
6:30pm Bells Practice  
6:30pm NA Anonymous  
6:30pm Stamp Club

**NOV. 19, WED**

8am Bible Online-Men  
9am Quilters  
Noon Al Anon  
2pm Prayer Shawls Group  
5:15pm Pizza etc  
5:45pm Wednesday School  
**6:30pm Worship**  
7:15pm Confirmation Class  
7:15pm Choir Practice

**NOV. 20, THURSDAY**

9:45am Bible Online-Men  
11am Youth Card Ministry  
12pm Bible Study-Women  
1pm Birthday Card Ministry  
1pm Pieces of Love Quilters  
6:30pm Executive Committee  
7pm Council Meeting

**NOV. 21, FRIDAY**

1pm Prayer Beads  
6pm Bible Study (Por Su Gracia)

**NOV. 21-23**

SWMN Synod Jr High Youth

**NOV. 22, SATURDAY**

10am NA Anonymous  
6:30pm NA Anonymous

**NOV. 23, SUNDAY****9am Worship**

10am Coffee & Conversation  
10am Adult Ed: Christ the King  
10am Unity Spiritual Center  
2pm Por Su Gracia Worship  
5pm NA Anonymous  
5pm Gamblers Anonymous

**NOV. 24, MONDAY**

1pm Bible Study with Pastors

**NOV. 25, TUESDAY**

9:30am Men's Group  
10am Naomi Circle  
11:30am TOPS  
6:30pm Bells Practice  
6:30pm NA Anonymous  
6:30pm Stamp Club

**NOV. 26, WED**

8am Bread Makers  
8am Bible Online-Men  
9am Quilters  
Noon Al Anon

**6:30pm Worship**

7:15pm Pie Social

**NOV. 27, THURSDAY**

THANKSGIVING-Office Closed

**NOV. 28, FRIDAY**

Office Closed

**NOV. 29, SATURDAY**

10am NA Anonymous  
6:30pm NA Anonymous

**NOV. 30, SUNDAY****9am Worship**

10am Coffee & Conversation  
10am Unity Spiritual Center  
2pm Por Su Gracia Worship  
5pm NA Anonymous  
5pm Gamblers Anonymous

# ATONEMENT'S



# OF THE MONTH

November Mission: Homeless Youth Agencies

On any given night in the state of Minnesota, more than 6,000 unaccompanied youth are experiencing homelessness. Of these youth, 35 percent are age 17 and younger.

## Supportive Housing for Youth Program (SHY)

This specialized program of Catholic Charities helps homeless youth build stability in their lives, as well as find and maintain affordable housing. SHY offers housing counseling and financial assistance for young people, ages 16 to 24, who are experiencing homelessness, near-homelessness, or aging-out of foster care. There is no cost to youth in the program.



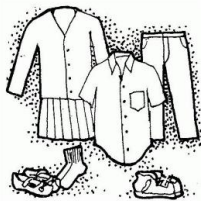
### 180 Degrees

This organization operates the St. Cloud Youth Shelter, the only 24-hour emergency youth shelter in Central Minnesota serving youth. Services include emergency shelter, on-site education, mental health services, parent support, and case management. The recently renovated shelter can accommodate up to twelve youth in residence at a time. Services disrupt, prevent, and end youth homelessness.

## Pathways 4 Youth

This program of Lutheran Social Services is a resource center for youth, ages 16 through 24, who are experiencing homelessness. Services include food pantry, clothing closet, education planning, housing referrals, case management, connections to area resources and more.

## KIDS' CLOTHING



When you have the opportunity to purchase kid's clothing or to donate gently used clothing, there is a bin in the Donation Center where you can drop them off. We will add to the clothing available at Catholic Charities. This is a year-round need, so if you take advantage of clearance sales anytime, items will be taken to Catholic Charities.

## ATONEMENT & UNITY PARTNERSHIP FOR LINCOLN CENTER

In collaboration with our friends from Unity Spiritual Center, we are designating **shelves** in the Donation Center for the ongoing collection of food and other specific items needed at Lincoln Center/Homeless Helping Homeless. Daily lunch and dinner meals are provided for only 25 individuals, but that leaves many folks without a meal. They can always use breakfast foods as well as hygiene items, including laundry soap. Unity and Atonement will be helping with food donations to fill that gap. A "shopping list" can be found on the Lincoln Center shelves in the Donation Center, please take one to refer to when grocery shopping. Thank you for your commitment to helping ensure our unhoused neighbors have enough to eat. *"Carry each other's burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ."* **Galatians**

**6:2**



## PLASTICS COLLECTION FOR V-REC



LDPE

There has been a great response to this appeal! The plastic collected includes **Clean and Dry** grocery bags, bread sacks, newspaper sleeves, salt bags, bubble wrap, dry cleaner bags, bulk cereal bags, ice bags, case over-wrap, plastic shipping envelopes (like Amazon uses), pallet wrap and stretch film. **Remove any labels.** **Does NOT INCLUDE:** Paper envelopes with bubble wrap, items that are wet or have food residue. Please place these donations in the designated tall black container in the Donation Center. Thank you!

## FUTURE MISSION OF THE MONTH (MOM)

December - God's Global Barnyard (ELCA)

## FARE FOR ALL



**The next sales will be Thursday, October 30<sup>th</sup>** (not November 6<sup>th</sup>) **and December 11<sup>th</sup>** (not December 4<sup>th</sup>) **from 3-5pm.** You do not need to "qualify", there is no registration and there is no limit to purchases.

We are finding the need for more volunteers for clean up at the end of the sale at 5pm. Please consider coming to shop during the last half hour and stay for clean-up.

Questions can be addressed to Kathy Matthies and Jan Keavney.

Website: <https://www.thefoodgrouponmn.org/groceries/fare-for-all/>

## COLD NIGHTS, WARM HEARTS WINTER SHELTER 2025

To address shelter and the upcoming winter, Faith in Housing, a local group working on homelessness and housing, is recruiting volunteers and financial assistance for sheltering people from the cold this winter.

Last winter there were close to 40 people on the streets each night. To accommodate those on the streets this year, Place of Hope and Salvation Army will again be hosting guests from 6 pm-8:00 am each night. In order to provide this service, Faith in Housing is calling upon our area community to offer assistance.

### Recruiting Volunteers . . .

Volunteers are needed for things such as transportation, serving meals, handing out breakfast bags, supervision and preparation of the sites. Volunteers must be 18 years of age or older. Younger volunteers must be accompanied by an adult. For more information contact: [faithinhousing@gmail.com](mailto:faithinhousing@gmail.com) or Place of Hope at 320-203-7881.

### Financial Assistance . . .

It costs about \$40 for a mat and \$25 per night to house a guest. If you'd like to donate you can send a check made out to one of the three shelters: Place of Hope, Homeless Helping Homeless or Salvation Army to Atonement Lutheran Church. Please designate Cold Nights, Warm Hearts Winter Shelter in the memo line on your check and on the mailing envelope.

**Together we can help to ensure our neighbors are protected from the harsh realities of our winter weather.**



## PRAYER LIST AT ATONEMENT



Patsy M.  
Pat and Brian R.  
Angie F.  
Family of Tom Bevans  
Family of Neil Perry  
Family of Barb Meyer

Mark A.  
Traci N.  
Jane A.  
Baby Kalha  
Mindy  
Dennis D.

Lainey M.  
Kitty R.  
Deon C.  
Christopher  
Barb B.  
Jeffrey A.

## CHORAL CELEBRATION FOR THE FOOD SHELF



Mark your calendar! A community choir concert will be held Saturday, November 22<sup>nd</sup>, at 7pm at St. Mary's Cathedral in St. Cloud. This free event brings together local choirs - including our own Atonement Choir - and supports Catholic Charities Food Shelf.

## CARD MINISTRY

Please join us on November 20<sup>th</sup>! We will at 11am prepare cards for 3-year-olds to 23-year-olds. At 1pm, we complete birthday cards for members having birthdays the next month.

## HELP US MAKE LOTSA LEFSE!

God's work. Our hands. Covered in flour.

It's lefse time at Atonement! Come join the fun this October and November as we roll, cook, and mix lefse to sell at our Advent Celebration. Whether it's your very first time or your hundredth, we'd love for you to be part of this wonderful Scandinavian—and Atonement—tradition. Sign up for one shift or several, and know that all proceeds benefit local non-profit social service organizations.

Questions? Call Eric Vollen at 651-272-9132 or Jon Ness at 651-472-4628, or email [nessvollen@gmail.com](mailto:nessvollen@gmail.com).

### 2025 Lefse Making Dates

Sunday, November 2 – 10:30am: Cooking & Mixing

Monday, November 3 – 4pm: Rolling

Thursday, November 13 – 8:30am: Cooking & Mixing

Friday, November 14 – 8:30am: Rolling



## ADVENT 2025

Now is the time to get ready for the season of Advent. At Atonement we will be using arrangements of greenery and flowers to celebrate this wonderful season. You will have the opportunity to help with the decor by donating money "in honor of" and "in memory of" the special people in your lives. Look for the donation envelopes on the ushers table, the welcome station and in the office. Please give your envelope and desired amount in cash or check to the person in the office.

Thank you for your contribution to enhancing our worship space.  
Worship Environment Team

**GIVING TREE** – Watch for the tree in the Narthex before Thanksgiving. We will need all gifts by December 14<sup>th</sup>.

# FINANCIAL GIVING

## SIMPLY GIVING

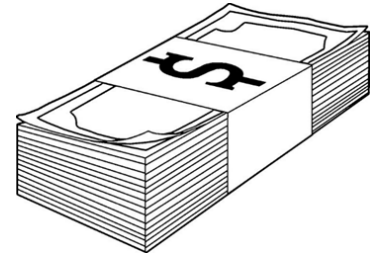
For those who use the Simply Giving plan for automatic withdrawals for your pledge donation, **please be sure to check the Simply Giving authorization box on your signed pledge card.** Without signed authorization, Atonement cannot make changes to your automatic withdrawal amount.

Reminder: Please make checks payable to Atonement and write on the memo line what it's for (Mission of the Month, packing projects, VBS, memorials, flowers, etc).

## CAPITAL CAMPAIGN

Mortgage was \$363,405.92 on 01/01/2024;  
**Now \$9,830.46** as of 09/30/2025.

Total pledged: over \$353,000  
Cash received through 9/30/2025: \$294,682.31



## MISSION OF THE MONTH CONTRIBUTIONS

**The September Mission of the Month,** Place of Hope received \$5,789. Thank you. Your support for this Mission of the Month has been incredible.

\* \* \* \* \*

## DEMENTIA CAREGIVERS SUPPORT GROUP



This group will be meeting at Atonement once a month on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Tuesday, from 10–11:30am. When needed, they also provide respite care for loved ones. This support group had it start at Dr. Patrick Zook's clinic, D-CAN, but due to a lack of funding the clinic had to close. This support group is now through Vivie. Vivie has an integrated set of services and specialized programs. Whether the need is for skilled home health care, vibrant senior living, or meaningful hospice support, they surround the people they serve with whatever kind of care they need. To learn more about Vivie go to: [Vivie.org](http://Vivie.org)



**Friday, November 14<sup>th</sup>  
7:30pm**

**at Atonement**

Free will offering.



# LETTER FROM YOUR PASTORS

We're approaching the final month of the current liturgical year, with Advent—and a new year of worship (Year A)—beginning on November 30<sup>th</sup>. This shift kicks off a season of new beginnings: the secular calendar resets on January 1<sup>st</sup>, and our congregational budget and leadership year follow closely behind, with new leaders elected and a new budget approved in late January at our annual meeting.

With all of these fresh starts on the horizon, we, your pastors, want to step back from the deeper, perhaps more intense, topics of the last few newsletters. Instead, we simply want to offer a sincere "Thank You" for your generous sharing in this congregation's mission and ministry. We believe that God continues to work in and through Atonement, principally through the Holy Spirit's guidance of you, the Body of Christ, and for that we give thanks.

We are grateful to everyone who prays for the sisters and brothers and strangers listed on our prayer chain. We are grateful to the folks who come and sing your hearts out—even, and especially when, you don't know or particularly like the music! Your voices are a vital part of our weekly worship. We are grateful for the building that this congregation shares with so many partners. We are grateful for the rest of the staff here, whose unique gifts complement ours and allow the whole congregation to serve God more fruitfully.



We are grateful for all of the support and encouragement that we, your pastors, receive from you. We appreciate the questions and constructive challenges you offer, as it pushes us to grow and helps us to improve our leadership. We are grateful for your generosity. Your gifts of time, talent, and treasure are essential; they enable the work of the church—including supporting the staff—but, most importantly, they serve the mission of God in the world. Your giving testifies to the truth that all the world is God's in the first place!

We are grateful for all of the support and encouragement that we, your pastors, receive from you. We appreciate the questions and constructive challenges you offer, as it pushes us to grow and helps us to improve our leadership. We are grateful for your generosity. Your gifts of time, talent, and treasure are essential; they enable the work of the church—including supporting the staff—but, most importantly, they serve the mission of God in the world. Your giving testifies to the truth that all the world is God's in the first place!

We are also deeply grateful for the leaders in this congregation, particularly its Council and executive teams. As some of these good and faithful servants end their terms and others continue, we ask you to pray for and offer your support and thanks to all of them—whether they serve on formal committees or informal groups—and to the God who has given them the calling and ability to serve.

☐ YES  
☐ NO  
☐ MAYBE

And as the new year approaches, we ask you to prayerfully consider saying "Yes!" to a call or email from the Nominating Committee or any other ministry team. Whether it's a full year or just a season, there's always room to share your unique gifts in God's work here. 'No' is always a complete answer, but we're praying for a whole lot of 'Yeses' this year!

\* \* \* \* \*

PASTOR TIM'S BIRTHDAY IS IN NOVEMBER.



# ELCA SOCIAL STATEMENT:

## “Faith and Civic Life: Seeking the Well-being of All”

This summer at the annual ELCA churchwide assembly, representatives voted to approve this social statement. Atonement attendees at the SW Synod meeting included Bruce Broman, Susan and Rev. Chimezie Ukauno. Following the meeting, Chimezie wrote a summary of the statement which I have included below. If you would like his study guide (11 pages), please contact [newsletter@atonementlutheran.org](mailto:newsletter@atonementlutheran.org). If you would like to read the full statement, please go to <https://resources.elca.org/faith-and-society/faith-and-civic-life-seeking-the-well-being-of-all/>

**Word and Sacrament as Source of Civic Vocation.** The ELCA statement ends by grounding civic engagement in the means of grace: Word and Sacraments. In hearing the Word, Christians are reminded of God’s justice and mercy, and they are equipped to discern truth in a confusing world. In Baptism, Christians are named as children of God and sent into the world to serve. Baptismal vows explicitly call believers to strive for peace and justice in all the earth. In Holy Communion, Christians receive Christ’s body and blood, which nourishes them for service. The dismissal - “Go in peace, serve the Lord” - is a commissioning for civic as well as spiritual life.

**Micah 6:8 as a Roadmap.** The prophet Micah summarizes God’s expectations in three clear imperatives: 1) Do justice – Actively work for fairness, equity, and protection of the vulnerable. 2) Love kindness (hesed) – Practice steadfast love, compassion, and mercy in daily interactions. 3) Walk humbly with God – Recognize that civic life requires humility, not arrogance or domination. These imperatives frame civic participation as discipleship. They provide a spiritual roadmap for navigating polarization, injustice, and division.

**Living the Lord’s Prayer in Public Life.** Each time Christians pray “Your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as in heaven,” they commit themselves to action in the public sphere. This petition calls for justice, peace, daily bread, forgiveness, and deliverance from evil—all of which have civic dimensions. To pray the Lord’s Prayer is to ask God to transform both hearts and systems. Thus, civic engagement is not separate from spiritual life—it is an expression of prayer in action.

**Hopeful Realism.** Lutheran teaching holds together two truths: We live in a fallen world where sin corrupts systems, leaders, and ourselves. God’s grace is at work, renewing creation and empowering faithful action. This “hopeful realism” prevents both despair (“nothing will ever change”) and triumphalism (“we can fix everything ourselves”). Instead, Christians act boldly for justice, trusting that God is already at work in ways we cannot see.

**Sending into the World.** The conclusion emphasizes that civic participation is part of the church’s mission. Christians are sent not only to worship but also to vote, advocate, serve, and deliberate together. Congregations can host forums for dialogue, partner with community organizations, equip youth to be faithful citizens, and pray regularly for leaders and the common good. The vocation of Christians is to seek the neighbor’s well-being in every aspect of life, from family and work to community and government.

### For Reflection & Practice

- How do Word and Sacrament equip you for engagement in civic life?
- Which of Micah’s imperatives (justice, kindness, humility) feels most urgent for our community today?
- What does it mean to pray the Lord’s Prayer with civic life in mind?
- Where do you see signs of hopeful realism in your community—both the recognition of brokenness and the hope of renewal?
- What one practice might you commit to this week to embody justice, kindness, and humility in public life?

## **OCTOBER 29<sup>TH</sup>/NOVEMBER 1<sup>ST</sup>: ALL SAINTS**

### **Saintly Sinners, Sinful Saints**



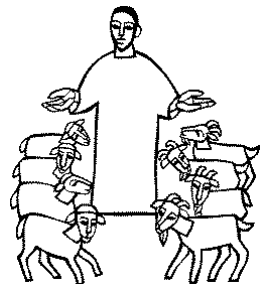
All Saints Day and the appointed readings are pregnant with themes of stark contrast: death and life, condemnation and redemption, sorrow and joy, suffering and relief, present life and future life. Such is life, too, as baptized children of God. The very nature of our lives is of stark contrast.

By virtue of our baptism into the death and resurrection of Jesus, we are made saints while we are still sinners. Every day in this nautically juxtaposed life we navigate through rough waters such as sin, evil, pain, heartache, addiction, abuse, hunger, disease, and war. But our bearing is always set, not by the North Star but by the Daystar, who has been the heading for the faithful of every generation. With the scriptures as our compass and the confessions our map, we sail as a part of the great flotilla of saints on the waters of baptism, with the wind of the Spirit at our backs, always pointed in the direction of our guiding Daystar.

Today we give thanks for the saints who have gone before us, for the saints still among us, and for the saints of God still to come. We give thanks for the examples of faithful living that the saints have given us as they navigated the stormy waters of life, and also for the faithful acts of service we are empowered by God's Holy Spirit to do in our own seas. We give thanks, too, for the fullness of eternal life in which the saints of God who have gone before us now partake and which we have yet to fully enjoy.

## **NOVEMBER 23<sup>RD</sup>: CHRIST THE KING**

On this final Sunday of the church year our gospel is Jesus' great story of judgment. In the end, the faithful are those who served Christ by ministering to those who are poor, hungry, naked, sick, or estranged. In the first reading God is the shepherd who seeks the lost, weak, and injured and feeds them with justice. We gather this day to celebrate the reign of Christ and his victory over death, yet we await the consummation of all things yet to come. Acknowledging Christ as our merciful ruler, we go forth that his reign may be known in our loving words and deeds.



## **NOVEMBER 30<sup>TH</sup>: ADVENT BEGINS**

Advent is the period beginning four Sundays before Christmas and observed as a season of prayer and fasting. It marks the beginning of a new church year.

Traditional Advent wreaths are circular, representing God's infinite love, and are usually made of evergreen leaves, which "represent the hope of eternal life brought by Jesus Christ". Within the Advent wreath are candles that generally represent the four weeks of the Advent season as well as "the light of God coming into the world through the birth of Jesus Christ" although each of the candles can be attributed its own significance as well. The four candles symbolize the Christian concepts of hope, peace, joy and love, with these candles being lit subsequently throughout each week of the Advent season.

The most popular colors for the four surrounding Advent candles are violet (or blue) and rose. Atonement uses blue candles as it represents hopefulness, reflective of the theme of Advent surrounding the First Coming of Jesus and Second Coming of Jesus. Rose is the liturgical color for the Third Sunday of Advent, known as Gaudete Sunday (from the Latin word meaning "rejoice ye"). The third candle, representing joy, is often a different color from the other three.

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