

NEW SCANDINAVIA LUTHERAN CHURCH NEWSLETTER 2023



“After this I looked, and there was a great multitude that no one could count, from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages, standing before the throne and before the Lamb.” Revelation 7:9

November 1st – it’s a day we zoom past and don’t give it another thought. Growing up, November 1st was the reminder that snow would be flying soon. November 1st meant 14 days until the opening day of deer hunting (Michigan). That meant less than 14 days before I was responsible for all that happened on the farm including cleaning stalls, feeding all animals, and the occasional disposal of dead animals like the random raccoon that gets stuck in places and can’t escape. Oh, and we can’t forget the gathering on Thanksgiving Day, when the family got together and ate too much, took naps while watching football, and wondered if there was more pie. For me, November 1st had me looking ahead to all that happened within my family over the next 30 days. As I have gotten older, November 1st has changed how I look at family and family events.

This year, November 1st causes me to look back and both smile and feel sad. This is the 25th “All Saints Day” without my mother. It is the 2nd “All Saints Day” without my brother, Rusty. It is the 1st “All Saints Day” without my father. And this changes all the rest that happens throughout the month of November, including hunting and meals (the farm isn’t my problem as that was sold years ago). But isn’t that how life goes?

Now while all of that can be sad, the gift of “All Saints Day” is more about the gifts of the past through the saints who came before us. It is a day when we get to celebrate our faith through the saints in our lives. We look back and remember those who have loved us into who we are and that love will always be a little piece of us. We look around us today and notice the saints who walk with us in our joys and sadness. We share our faith with those around us and wonder if it will bring them the same hope it brought us. And while we remember Luther’s description on how we are all simultaneously saints and sinners, somehow the sinner part gets pushed aside for just one day.

Last month on Facebook, a cousin posted a picture that was taken back in the mid 70s with the realization that all 6 people in that photo had died. As cousins, we began to talk about those in the picture and what they all brought to our lives. We have been touched by each one of our saints in ways we never imagined 45 years ago, and our faith has grown because of who they are and the love they showed us.

On this “All Saints Day”, I encourage you to take some time to visit the saints in your life, those gone and those still with you. Maybe this means going through old pictures. Maybe it involves,

calling or having dinner with family and telling stories. Maybe it means spending some time at the cemetery with the “great cloud of witnesses”. Find the gifts they have given you and how their faith has molded you into the person you are today. And then thank God for your loved ones and the knowledge that God’s grace has woven all of us together.

The day is coming when Christ will return. The dead will rise and we, the living and the dead, will join God at the heavenly banquet, where the multitude from all nations and every language will celebrate God’s grace together. We celebrate the saints in our lives and remember them on the first day of November and the whole year. And for all the saints, we say “thanks be to God.”

God’s peace to you

Pastor Sara