CHRIST THE KING LVTHERAN CHVRCH

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ALL SAINTS DAY

November 1, 2026

Revelation 7:9-17; Psalm 234:1-10, 22; 1 John 3: 1-3; Saint Matthew 5:1-12

In nomine Jesu!

You've heard me say this a hundred times, but especially on All Saints Day, it bears repeating: In baptism, God puts the only death we have to fear behind us. Jesus Christ has overcome the death that could finally separate us from God. Baptized into Christ's death, we belong to Christ's resurrection: his victory is our gift, not our achievement. That's the promise of All Saints Day—not that dying is easy, grief disappears, or Christians never fear. The powerful may threaten us with death, but cannot take away Christ's gift of life. Their threats need not silence our witness or have the last word.

Today we celebrate eight children of God baptized this past year and remember eight beloved congregation members who died, along with many family and friends outside this parish, and an equally significant group of military personnel, citizens, and undocumented persons who died violently this past year. We honor them as saints: those welcomed through water and the Word and those whose earthly lives have ended. Not two classes of Christians—beginners and graduates—but one communion held by one Lord. Saints are not flawless people, but people God has claimed. Their "saintliness" is Christ's gift before it is anyone's achievement.

John puts it simply: we are God's children now—not after proving ourselves. *What* we will be is not yet revealed, but *whose* we are is settled. We proclaim this at today's and every baptism. God does not wait for accomplishments to give life its deepest identity: beloved child, joined to Christ, welcomed among the saints.

Jesus calls mourners blessed, not telling them to stop mourning but promising comfort. Those who have died leave real absences: voices we miss, empty places, love reaching for someone beyond our touch. Faith does not ask us to pretend otherwise. Tears are not a failure of baptism, but among the things our baptismal Lord promises finally to wipe away.

Revelation shows where that promise leads: an uncountable multitude from every nation before the Lamb. They have come *through* suffering, not around it. Living faithfully and courageously, they did not escape the world's wounds. But Christ—crucified, dead, buried, and risen—is their shepherd. Hunger, thirst, scorching heat, pain, and tears do not have the last word. The God who raised Christ does, and that word is life on either side of the grave and gate of death.

The psalm invites us to taste God's goodness. Today, in Eliana's baptism, that goodness comes through water and a promise every baptized person may hear again: you belong to Christ, crucified and risen. The grave cannot cancel that belonging. Death breaks our hearts, but not Christ's hold on us.

We celebrate those baptized, commemorate those who died, and welcome Eliana within the same holy communion. Christ, crucified and risen, joins us to his death and resurrection in baptism and gives us his body and blood at this Table. We do not merely remember Christ's victory; we eat and drink as participants in the life Christ won for us. Through this meal, God gives us the Holy Spirit, strengthens our bond with the saints in glory, and makes us one with them in Christ. Our meal participates in the unending celestial feast of angels and saints. Those we miss remain within Christ's reach: in Christ, we share one feast, one life, one communion. We need not hurry past sorrow or earn our place. Fed by Christ, we are free to love our neighbors, comfort the grieving, and live boldly. In baptism, God puts the only death we have to fear behind us. As our Stewardship theme from Hebrews charges us: Surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses—including the beloved ones we remember today—let us lay aside every weight and entanglement, and run our race with endurance, looking to Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who *for the joy* before him endured the cross, disregarded its shame, and is seated at the right hand of God's throne. Looking to Christ, rejoicing in God's saints, and remembering our baptism we do not grow weary or lose heart: ahead of us is Christ, and Christ never lets us go. Amen.

Amandus J. Derr
Interim Pastor