



# For All the Saints

*"For all the saints, who from their labors rest..."* — William W. How, 1864 · ELW 422

## READ

Revelation 7:9–17 · Psalm 34:1–10, 22

1 John 3:1–3 · Matthew 5:1–12

## REFLECT

John sees a multitude no one can count, from every nation, robed in white. On the mountain, Jesus calls the poor in spirit, the mourners and the meek blessed. Neither picture describes people who earned their place. Both describe people God has claimed.

That is what we mean by saints. Not the spiritually accomplished, but the baptized: ordinary people made holy by God's promise. On Sunday we will speak the names of those from St. John's who died this year, and we will remember them alongside more than 280 years of faithful people who worshiped on this hill and rest in our churchyard.

All Saints holds grief and hope together. We give thanks, we lament, and we trust the One who will wipe away every tear from their eyes.

## PRAY

Gracious God, we give you thanks for all your saints: for those who taught us to pray, who carried us to the font, and who now rest from their labors. Hold our grief in your hands. Keep us faithful in the communion that death cannot break, until we gather with them around your throne; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

## Lutheran Insights

### Saint and sinner at once

Luther taught that we are *simul iustus et peccator*: holy not by our own goodness, but by Christ's righteousness given to us.

### The communion of saints

In the Large Catechism, Luther reads this creed phrase as the church itself: one holy community the Spirit gathers, the living and the dead together.

### Remembered, not invoked

The Augsburg Confession (Art. XXI) honors the saints as examples of God's grace and faith to imitate, while Christ alone is our mediator.

### A baptismal festival

Every saint begins at the font. All Saints is one of the church's great days for Holy Baptism.

## THIS WEEK

Pray by name for the saints who handed you the faith.

Walk the churchyard and read a few of the stones.

Each morning, make the sign of the cross and remember your baptism.