

ALL SAINTS' DAY

November 6th, 2022



CHRIST LUTHERAN CHURCH

140 Russell Avenue
St. Catharines, Ontario L2R 1W1
Church: 905-685-8294
www.christlutheransc.ca



Remembrance Day 2022

Christ Lutheran Church recalls and praises God for the willingness and the sacrifice of those who have served both God and country. The list of these people is on a plaque in the narthex area. Those in *italics* are still currently members.

George Berger	John Nunnenmacher
Edward Brunsch	Edward Overholt
Herbert Brunsch	Stephen Harrison
William Ebert	Gustav Reimer
Emil Erling	Henry Rempel
Ernest Erling	Ernest Roepke
Howard Fritsch	Ernest Schappert
Howard Henemader	Philip Schappert
Orval Jansen	Carl W. Schwenker
Lloyd McKean	Gordon Skrydstrup
Cyril Mitchell	Walter Skrydstrup
James O. Kaufman	LeRoy Skrydstrup
Percy Dagesse	William Weaver
Henry Windecker	Edward Youngblut
Fred Pappel	Claire Gottinger
Donald Frick	Henry Fuchs
Kenneth Primmer	Stanley Thompson
<i>James Hyatt</i>	<i>John Mewhinney</i>
<i>Brandon Honey</i>	Bert Mitchell
<i>Dave Coghlan</i>	Frank Wickson
WW1: Carl F. Schwenker Sr.	Russ Mosher

Serving in the Axis forces:

Erhard Olbeter Erich Klose
German Army WW1: George Schneikart

The Lord bless these individuals and their families as we remember them, their dedication and willingness to serve. Of those listed above, the first one listed, George Berger, died in action.

Office Hours: Tuesday to Friday—9 a.m. – 12 noon
Bulletin Announcements: Please send to secretary@christlutheransc.ca.
Deadline for submission is Thursday at 9 a.m.

Pastor: Pastor Todd Hoeffs (289-362-0113) pastortoddhoeffs@gmail.com
Parish Assistant: Louise Gondosch (905-329-8579) parish.assistant@christlutheransc.ca
Business Manager: Karen McCumber business.manager@christlutheransc.ca
Secretary: Pat Kimpel secretary@christlutheransc.ca
Facebook: Lisa Gall www.facebook.com/ChristLutheranChurchSC
Bulletin by email: Judy Mason chairman.outreach@christlutheransc.ca

A recording of Sunday's service will be uploaded to YouTube at:
https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCpING_TKTi9c_OIBbMqGwLw

Prayer: O Almighty God, by whom we are graciously knit together as one communion and fellowship in the mystical body of Jesus Christ, our Lord, grant us so to follow Your blessed Saints in all virtuous and godly living that we may come to those unspeakable joys which You have prepared for those who unfeignedly love You; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

DAILY SCRIPTURE MEDITATIONS:

Monday: Exod. 20: 2-3 Wednesday: Rom. 3: 21-28 Friday: Gen. 15: 1-6
Tuesday: Rom. 1: 13-17 Thursday: John 8: 31-36 Saturday: Psalm 46

Musician: 10 a.m. – Mayumi Munoz
Reader: 10 a.m. – Paul Mason
Greeters: 10 a.m. – James & Wendy Hyatt

EVENTS THIS WEEK:

Today: 9:00 a.m. – Sunday School
10:00 a.m. – Worship
Monday: 10:00 a.m. – Luther Manor Bible Study
Tuesday: 9:30—11:00 a.m. – Precious Moments
Wednesday: 7:00 p.m. – Church Council Meeting
Thursday: 10:00 – 11:30 a.m. – SOUL
Friday: Remembrance Day
5:30 p.m. – Christmas Urn/Fundraiser Workshop
Next Sunday (Nov.13th): 9:00 a.m. – Sunday School
9:10 – 9:45 a.m. – Confirmation Class (see note)

SUNDAY SCHOOL: 9:00 a.m. (before service) the **first 2 Sundays of each month**. Our focus this year is on *"God's Good Rules, His 10 Commandments"*. Parents are welcome to stay for a coffee and time to read their own devotions or join in Christian conversation.

PRECIOUS MOMENTS: We are thrilled to have our Precious Moments up and running again. If YOU or a "caregiver" you know has little ones (even babies), we invite them to join us. We meet at the church on Tuesday mornings between 9:30 - 11 a.m. The coffee and tea are always on (thanks to Judy!) and lots of playing, singing, stories, snack and a craft. Hope to see you!



TRADITIONAL CHRISTMAS URN FUNDRAISER/WORKSHOP: We are excited to be going to the **Watering Can in Vineland** (3711 King St), to make our **"own traditional urn"** through step by step instructions. It will take place **Friday, November 11th**. Fellowship starts at 5:30 p.m., bring your own wine or other beverage (goodies supplied). Cost is \$75.00 (\$10 going towards Haiti Lutheran Missions Society School feeding program). Friends are welcome to join us. Secure your spot by giving your registration money to Wendy Shook (905-380-6544) by Sunday, November 6th.

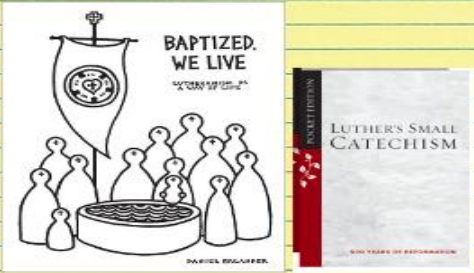
YOUTH CATECHISM CLASS 2022 with Pastor Todd is a time for young people to see their own unique place in God's Story of love, acceptance, and new life in Jesus Christ. Scripture-rich lessons focus on our identity as Jesus' brothers and sisters through our Baptismal faith. Preparation for receiving Jesus' Body and Blood in the Bread and Wine for Holy Communion makes for a meaningful life-long faith journey. Part of Catechism class is learning how to participate in Sunday worship and undertake opportunities to serve and "live their faith" in small local outreach projects. Altar candle lighting, ushering and training for assistance in Sunday services will be an integral part of class. Regular attendance during our Sunday worship is a requirement of all students. Young people who are beginning grade 5 through grade 9 are welcome to join. The start date and time will be set in the near future. Please email PastorToddHoeffs@gmail.com to let him know your intention for class. Feel free to ask any and all questions you may have about this. *Your servant in Christ, Pastor Todd*

9-10 Youth Catechism Class 2022
LEARNING & GROWING ON SUNDAYS 9:10 - 9:45 AM

Learner booklet & Luther's Small Catechism provided
Bring your own Bible from home
QR use one from the church

STARTING ON NOVEMBER 13TH!

See Pastor Todd this Sunday for your materials!



TREE TRIMMING: Please mark on your calendars that the **"Tree Trimming"** will take place on Sunday, November 20th at 4:30 p.m. Dinner to follow. Please sign up for attendance in the narthex

LMWL-C/MARY MARTHA:

This is such an exciting time to welcome back and extend an invitation to everyone for our new Fall/Winter program. Please mark your calendars so that you may be able to join us:

Tuesday, November 15th - 7 p.m. Assembly of ***Warm Feet for the Streets*** sock blessings.

Saturday, November 26th, 9:00 am – 2:00 pm - CHRISTMAS BAZAAR

Tuesday, December 20th - 5:30 p.m. Advent/Christmas Dinner

We look forward to seeing familiar faces at our meetings and welcoming new faces! If you have any questions or suggestions, please feel free to call Lorraine at 905 964 5837!

¹⁴ And above all these put on love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony. ¹⁵ And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in one body. And be thankful. ¹⁶ Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, teaching and admonishing one another in all wisdom, singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, with thankfulness in your hearts to God. Colossians 3: 14-16



LWML-C / MARY MARTHA PROJECT

“Warm Feet for the Street” Kits for “Out of the Cold”

Place in the box in the Narthex from now until November 13th.

We will make up the Kits at our November 15th meeting.

We would appreciate your help by contributing any of the following:

- LARGE SOCKS
- Warm gloves (adult size)
- Hand-warmers
- Scarves
- Toothpaste & Toothbrushes
- Lip Balm
- Hand & Body Lotion
- Deodorant
- Shampoo (travel size)
- Kleenex (little pkgs.)
- Band-aids
- Combs (pocket size)
- Small Soaps
- Portals of Prayer (*or similar, from any month or year*)
- UNDERWEAR (new)

Remember that everything needs to be small enough to fit into the socks!!!

If you would like to help, but prefer for us to do the shopping, a donation of money would be terrific too.

Contact Person: Wendy Hyatt



SAMARITAN'S PURSE SHOEBOX GIFTS

Operation Christmas Child has become a Holiday tradition for many of us here at Christ Lutheran. The love and care put into every shoebox gift has changed the lives of children worldwide, and I think we can say it has changed us as well.

Together, let's continue to make these children an important part of our Christmas celebration by extending Christ's love and compassion.

www.samaritanspurse.ca

HOW TO PACK YOUR SHOEBOX:

1. Pick up a designated shoebox from the narthex.
2. Decide on the category and age. Girl/Boy 2-4; 5-9; 10-14
3. Fill the box, and put an elastic around it. Mark if for gender/age.
4. Place a \$10.00 cheque in the offering basket and the congregation will send a combined donation. You will be tax receipted by CLC.
5. Drop the box off at the Church by Sunday, November 13th.

SUGGESTED GIFTS:

- Toys: slinky, yo-yo, kazoos, animals, stickers, dolls, balls, cars
- School Supplies: pens, paper, stamps, markers, calculators, pencil crayons & sharpener, colouring books
- Hygiene Items: soap, toothbrush, comb, washcloth, NO toothpaste or shampoo
- Other: hard candy only, sunglasses, ball caps, socks, flip flops, watches, hairclips, T-shirts, underwear, small picture books, flashlights, batteries

Please DO NOT include: used items, war related items, medicines, cosmetics, breakable items, perishable foods, liquids (shampoo, etc.), gum

Boxes are available in the Narthex. Please return your filled box by November 13

Christmas Bazaar

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 26, 2022

9 a.m. to 2 p.m.

Come...and invite your Friends!

Help support various Mission Projects around the world and at home!

- Canadian Lutheran World Relief
- Haiti Lutheran Mission Society
- Nicaragua
- Lutheran Bible Translators
- Lutheran Medical Missions
- SOUL Ministries
- Refugee Assistance Fund
- Out of the Cold

FEATURING:

- Baking
- Deli
- Crafts
- Nearly New Table
- Silent Auction
- Hot Lunch (*Dine-in and Take-out*)

DONATIONS:

Please consider making donations to the Bake, Deli, or Craft Tables or Judy's Silent Auction. As in previous years, donations may be brought in on Friday, Nov. 25, 9:00 am - 8 p.m. You may price your own, or we will price it on the Friday after it's brought in, your choice. Thank you in advance.

Last Sunday Attendance: October 30th, 2022

Attn: 10 a.m. – 75

	<u>Budget</u>	<u>Weekly Need</u>	<u>Last Sunday</u>	<u>Year To Date</u>	<u>+ or - (--)</u>
Current:	283,291.00	5,554.73	2,351.90	168,772.58	(70,935.19)
LCC Missions	20,000.00	392.16	157.00	12,703.50	(4,219.58)
Property Improvement:			41.00	5,414.50	

FELLOWSHIP COMMITTEE: Tim Reck, Fellowship Chairman, needs volunteers for Events. Please contact him if you can help.

DUE TO SCHEDULING CONFLICTS we have had to postpone the Pastor Appreciation dinner till sometime in the new year.



Positive Living Niagara needs assistance helping the vulnerable in our community. Bear Paws™ snacks are a welcomed food item given out to clients daily.

"Bear"ing Burdens

Please donate a box or two of Bear Paws™ to help "Bear" another's burdens. A box will be in the narthex area for drop off. Any questions or comments please see Pastor Todd.

GOSPEL SONGS SERVICE OF THE WORD

Adapted from the Lutheran Church of Australia Worship Materials

ALL SAINTS' DAY

November 6, 2022 + 10 AM Worship

GOD WELCOMES US

BEGINNING HYMN:

"For All The Saints"

OCP.com

**For all the saints who from their labors rest,
all who by faith before the world confessed,
Your Name, O Jesus, be forever blest. ! A----Ileluia, Al-----leluia.**

**You were their Rock, their Fortress and their Might;
You, Lord, their Captain, in the well-fought fight;
And You, in the darkness drear, their One true Light! A----Ileluia, Al-----leluia.**

**O blest communion, fellowship divine! We feebly struggle, they in glory shine;
Yet all are one within your great design. ! A----Ileluia, Al-----leluia.**

**From earth's wide bounds, from ocean's farthest coast,
Through gates of pearl streams in the countless host,
Singing to Father, Son and Holy Ghost! A----Ileluia, Al-----leluia.**

William How, 1823-97, alt. public domain

CONFESSION & FORGIVENESS:

In the name of the Father and of the Son + and of the Holy Spirit.

Amen.

Since we have such a great High Priest Who has passed through the Heavens, Jesus Christ our Lord,

Let us with confidence draw near to God,

That we may receive mercy

And find grace in time of need.

[Brief silence for prayerful reflection]

Let us then confess our sins to God our Father:

Have mercy on me, O God, according to Your loving kindness. In Your great compassion, blot out my offenses. Wash me through and through from my wickedness and cleanse me from my sin. For I know my transgressions and my sin is ever before me. Indeed, I have been wicked from my birth; against You have I sinned and done what is evil in Your sight. Purge me from sinful stains and I shall be pure; wash me, and I will be truly clean. Hide Your face from my sins and clear away all my iniquities. Create in me a clean heart, O God and renew a right spirit within me. Cast me not away from Your presence and take not Your Holy Spirit from me. Restore to me the joy of Your salvation and uphold me with Your bountiful Spirit. Make me hear of joy and gladness and give me the joy of Your saving help again. Amen.

(Based on Psalm 51)

Almighty God in His mercy has given His Son to die for you and for His sake, forgives you all of your sin. As a called and ordained servant of Christ and by His authority, I therefore forgive you all of your sins in the name of the Father and of the Son + and of the Holy Spirit. **Amen.**

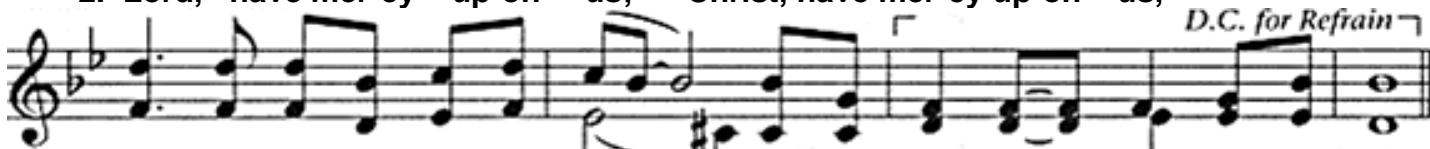
SUNG KYRIE

"To The Lord We Pray"

(Tune: "Just a closer walk with Thee")



1. To the Lord we pray for peace, for the peace sent from a-bove,
2. Lord, have mer-cy up-on us; Christ, have mer-cy up-on us,

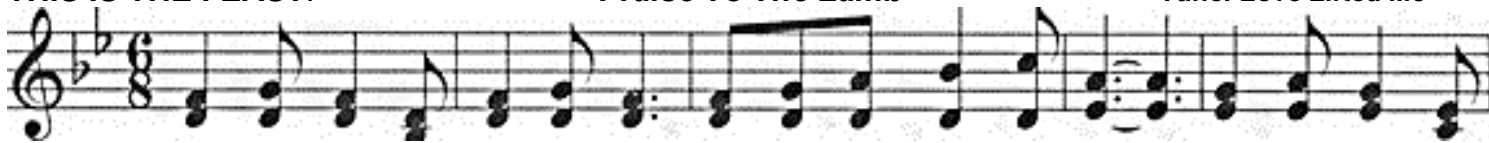


For the hope of this our world, for the church, please bless with Your love:
Lord, have mer-cy up-on us, give us peace, O Lord, give us peace.

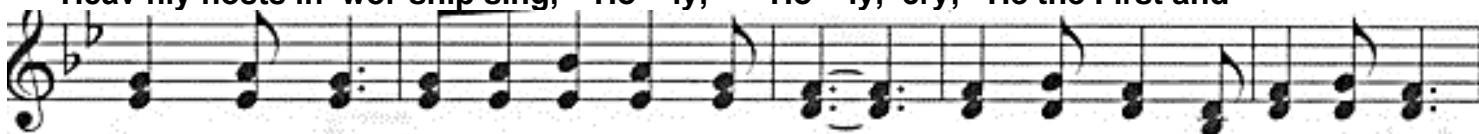
THIS IS THE FEAST:

"Praise To The Lamb"

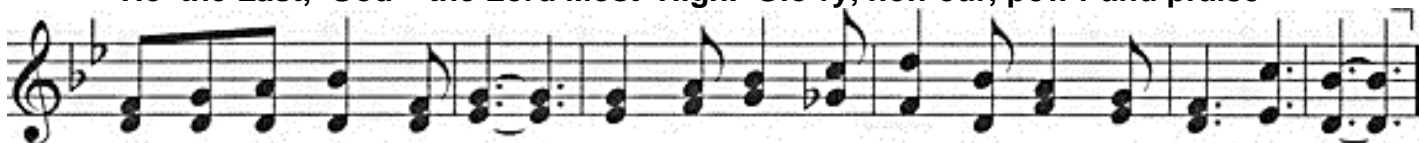
Tune: Love Lifted Me



Heav'nly hosts in wor-ship sing, Ho - ly, Ho - ly, cry; He the First and



He the Last, God the Lord Most High. Glo-ry, hon-our, pow'r and praise



be to Him al-one! We, with all cre-ation fall, be-fore His throne.



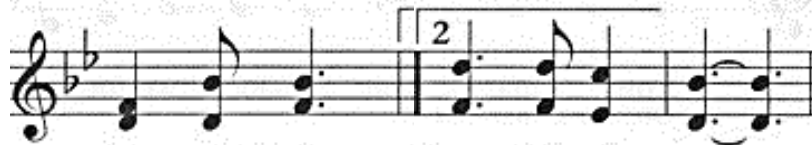
Praise to the Lamb, praise to the Lamb; By His great



off-er-ing, we are set free!



Praise to the Lamb, praise to the Lamb; Now and for-



ev - er - more! --- Praise to the Lamb!

Words: paraphrase of Revelations 7, ESV © 2006

GREETING & PRAYER OF THE DAY:

The Lord be with you -- **And also with you.**

Let us pray: Almighty and everlasting Father, You knit together Your faithful people of all times and places into one holy communion, the mystical Body of Your Son, Jesus Christ. Help us so to follow Your blessed saints in all virtuous and godly living that, together with them, we may come to the unspeakable joys You have prepared for those who love You; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, Who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, One God, now and forever. **Amen.**

THE WORD

The First Reading: *St. John's Revelation 7:9-17*

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, robed in white, with palm branches in their hands. They cried out in a loud voice, saying, 'Salvation belongs to our God who is seated on the throne, and to the Lamb!' And all the angels stood around the throne and around the elders and the four living creatures, and they fell on their faces before the throne and worshipped God, singing, 'Amen! Blessing and glory and wisdom and thanksgiving and honour and power and might be to our God for ever and ever! Amen.' Then one of the elders addressed me, saying, 'Who are these, robed in white, and where have they come from?' I said to him, 'Sir, you are the one that knows.' Then he said to me, 'These are they who have come out of the great ordeal; they have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. For this reason they are before the throne of God, and worship him day and night within his temple, and the one who is seated on the throne will shelter them. They will hunger no more, and thirst no more; the sun will not strike them, nor any scorching heat; for the Lamb at the centre of the throne will be their shepherd, and he will guide them to springs of the water of life, and God will wipe away every tear from their eyes.' This is the Word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

CHOIR ANTHEM: ***"How Deep The Father's Love"***

How deep the Father's love for us, how vast beyond all measure
That He should give His only Son, to make a wretch His treasure
How great the pain of searing loss, the Father turns His face away
As wounds which mar the Chosen One, bring many sons to glory

How high, how wide, how deep The Father's Love for us.
Behold the Man upon a cross - my sin upon His shoulders
Ashamed I hear my mocking voice, call out among the scoffers
It was my sin that held Him there -- until it was accomplished

His dying breath has brought me life I know that it is finished
How pure, how strong, how deep the Father's love for us.
I will not boast in anything -- no gifts, no pow'r, no wisdom
But I will boast in Jesus Christ His death and resurrection

Why should I gain from His reward I cannot give an answer
But this I know with all my heart, His wounds have paid my ransom
How high, how wide, How pure, how strong.
How deep The Father's love-----for us.

The Epistle:

1 John 3:1-3

See what love the Father has given us, that we should be called children of God; and that is what we are. The reason the world does not know us is that it did not know him. Beloved, we are God's children now; what we will be has not yet been revealed. What we do know is this: when he is revealed, we will be like him, for we will see him as he is. And all who have this hope in him purify themselves, just as he is pure. This is the Word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

GOSPEL VERSE

"To God Be The Glory"

hymnary.org/text/to_god_be_the_glory_

1. To God be the glo - ry, great things he has done! So loved he the world that he gave us his Son, who yield - ed his life an a - tone - ment for sin, and o - pened the life - gate that we may go in. Praise the Lord, praise the Lord, let the earth hear his voice! Praise the Lord, praise the Lord, let the peo - ple re - joice! O come to the Fa - ther thro' Je - sus the Son, and give him the glo - ry, great things he has done!

Fanny J. Crosby, 1875; alt.
Mod.

TO GOD BE THE GLORY 11.11.11.
William H. Doane, 1875

The Holy Gospel: *St. Matthew 5: 1-12*

The Holy Gospel, according to St. Matthew, the 5th chapter:

Glory to You, O Lord.

When Jesus saw the crowds, he went up the mountain; and after he sat down, his disciples came to him. Then he began to speak, and taught them, saying: 'Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. 'Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted. 'Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth. 'Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled. 'Blessed are the merciful, for they will receive mercy. 'Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God. 'Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God. 'Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. 'Blessed are you when people revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely* on my account. Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you. This is the Gospel of the Lord.

Praise to You, O Christ.

THE APOSTLES' CREED:

I believe in God, the Father Almighty, Maker of Heaven and earth. And in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried. He descended into hell. On the third day he rose again from the dead. He ascended into heaven, and sits at the right hand of God, the Father Almighty, from thence he will come to judge the living and the dead. I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy Christian church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life + everlasting. Amen.

GOSPEL HYMN:

"Blest The Children Of Our God"

www.hymnary.org/hymn/GPS1982

1 Blest the chil - dren of our God, They are bought with
2 They are jus - ti - fied by grace, They en - joy the
3 They are lights up - on the earth, Chil - dren of a

Christ's own blood; They are ran - somed from the grave,
Sav - ior's peace; All their sins are washed a - way,
heav'n - ly birth; One with God, with Je - sus one;

Life e - ter - nal they will have:
They will stand in God's great day: With them num - bered
Glo - ry is in them be - gun:

may we be Here and in e - ter - ni - ty!

*Text: Joseph Humphreys, b. 1720, alt.
Tune: Voller Wunder, Johann G. Ebeling, 1637-76*

MESSAGE

GOD RECEIVES OUR GIFTS & HEARS OUR PRAYERS REMEMBRANCE DAY observances

THE OFFERING *is received*
REMEMBRANCE DAY *video offering*

NATIONAL ANTHEM: "O, Canada!"

**O Canada! Our home and native land!
True patriot love in all of us command.
With glowing hearts we see thee rise,
The True North strong and free!
From far and wide, O Canada, we stand on guard for thee.
God keep our land glorious and free!
O Canada, we stand on guard for thee.
O Canada, we stand on guard for thee.**

PRAYERS:

Dear heavenly Father, you have freed us from the condemnation of your law, and from slavery to sin by the saving work of your Son. Keep us in step with the Spirit, always trusting in Christ for our salvation, struggling against our waywardness, showing the fruit of the Spirit in our lives, looking in hope to Your Son's Heavenly Feast.

Hear our prayer, **And give us peace, O Lord;**

We pray for all who suffer as a result of conflict, and ask that God our Father through Jesus Christ may give us peace: for the service men and women who have died in the violence of war, each one remembered by and known to God;

Hear our prayer, **And give us peace, O Lord;**

for all members of the armed forces who are in danger this day, remembering family, friends and all who pray for their safe return; hear our prayer,

Hear our prayer, **And give us peace, O Lord;**

for civilian women, children and men whose lives are disfigured by war or terror, calling to mind in penitence the anger and hatreds of humanity;

Hear our prayer, **And give us peace, O Lord;**

for peace-makers and peace-keepers, who seek to keep this world secure and free;

Hear our prayer, **And give us peace, O Lord;**

We pray for our enemies, and those who wish us harm, that you may turn the hearts of all to kindness and friendship;

Hear our prayer, **And give us peace, O Lord;**

We pray for the wounded and the captive, the grieving and the homeless, that in all their trials they may know your love and support;

Hear our prayer, **And give us peace, O Lord;**

for all who bear the burden and privilege of leadership, political, military and religious; asking for gifts of wisdom and resolve in the search for reconciliation and peace;

Hear our prayer, **And give us peace, O Lord;**

For our parish, for Lutheran Church-Canada, for her pastors, people and leaders, for all Lutherans and Christians around the world, for those enduring persecution for the name of Christ, for our members in need of help and healing and all the sick and sorrowful, especially remembering today.....[names added here]..

Hear our prayer, **And give us peace, O Lord;**

O Lord and God, on this All Saints' Day, where we rejoice in the mystical communion of the church on earth with the church in Heaven, we honour the supreme sacrifices made by all people during the thunders of war. We remember, O Father, those who were willing to make the same sacrifices and we honour them for their courage and self-sacrifice. Help us, today, to `never forget` the cost and bring peace in our time, through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

GOD SAVE THE KING:

God save our Gracious King, long live our noble King,
God save the King. Send him victorious, happy and glorious,
Long to reign over us –God save the King.

THE LORD'S PRAYER: *“Our Father, Who art in Heaven, hallowed be Thy name...”*

GREETING & BLESSING

Let us praise the Lord:

Thanks be to God.

May the blessing of Almighty God, the Father, Son + and Holy Spirit, be with you always.
Amen.

SENDING HYMN:

“Leaning On The Everlasting Arms”

www.hymnary.org



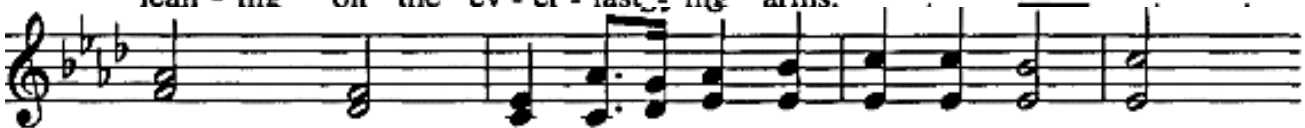
1 What a fel-low-ship, what a joy di-vine, lean-ing on the ev-er-
2 O how sweet to walk in this pil-grimway, lean-ing on the ev-er-
3 What have I to dread, what have I to fear, lean-ing on the ev-er-



last - ing arms; what a bless-ed-ness, what a peace is mine,
last - ing arms; O how bright the path grows from day to day,
last - ing arms? I have bless-ed peace with my Lord so near,



lean - ing on the ev - er - last - ing arms. Lean - ing,
lean - ing on the ev - er - last - ing arms. Lean - ing on Je - sus,
lean - ing on the ev - er - last - ing arms.



lean - ing, safe and se-cure from all a - larms; lean -



ing, lean - ing, lean-ing on the ev-er-last-ing arms.

WORDS: Elisha A. Hoffman (1839-1929)
MUSIC: Anthony J. Showalter (1858-1924)

SHOWALTER
10.9.10.9.Ref.

Reprinted with permission from: *“This Far By Faith: An African American Lutheran Hymnal*

www.hymnary.org/hymn/ELW2006/page/919

REV. TODD HOFFS
All Saints' Day
Scripture: 1 John 3 & Revelations
November 6, 2022

At the atheist coffee group I attended for 7 out of 8 years in WPG, one of the more senior members of the group had been hospitalized... which spawned a discussion on funerals. "What happens when we die...?" one of them asked. Well, the dead body goes into the ground (or cremated) and the soul goes to be with God in Heaven.....or ...goes to the devil's place....One of them piped up, "so, I'd be bound to the eternal fire-place wouldn't I....???!!! ☺ Not necessarily I said...a short pause...and then I asked -- "you believe in Jesus?!?...well...yes...he admitted, but not in a going to church kinda way..." Which made me ask, "well...do you have to go?" Another pause....the guy thought.... and responded..."I suppose I should want to go..."....well...our door is always open.... We never DO know where we will find faith...It's always a pleasant amazing surprise. Faith fuels our lives, moves us forward, out there into the space where everyday people dwell. This grows hope for the life in Heaven waiting for us, hidden away, safely guarded. Ist wonderful to see that faith in Christ does exist in so many different ways and in unexpected places and in so many faces!!!

Economic troubles, war, hospitalization, illness, death, makes all people wonder. But without faith that wondering either continues seeking or ignores it and gets buried in the mind or with the Holy Spirit, the wondering rests confidently in Jesus. In an episode of the old 70s' All in the Family show regarding death, Archie commented -- "hey, we all fear death until the day it happens...then...ya never give it another thought..." ☺ Apostle John, close to his own death, exiled on the Isle of Patmos, is given a heavenly vision by God (Revelation 1:9-11) Imagine the sight!

Angels, Jesus, light, maybe even his fellow brother apostles, who died for the faith. How comforting seeing his friends now safe. To see their suffering turned into joy. To see Jesus, the Lamb upon His throne. All His promises made, fulfilled, complete. And so for us, too. A large multitude no one could count. Family, friends, neighbours, strangers, famous people, Hollywood stars, singers, homeless, wealthy, politicians, queens, children, babies, aged, not to mention the number of faithful men and women from the Scriptures dating back to Adam and Eve. Even people we'd think are in hell are rather in Heaven, with the multitude. These **coming out of the great tribulation**.

That word tribulation means pressure, like when wheat is ground under a milestone, from a seed to fine powder. Sometimes life feels like that kind of heavy, relentless pressure. For life in this world is seldom easy.

There's hunger, thirst and tears. There's trouble, trials, and temptations. There's weakness, fear, and death. And we're a small remnant church across the globe, hunted and hounded by devilish

elements, harassed by people, cares, concerns, even by our own inner turmoil.

And we often fail. We often fall. We are often overcome. And we look at our lives we don't see peace or joy or blessing. We see trouble, difficulty, and decay. Yet, we live in hope.

Hope continues. Hope is outside of us yet penetrates our hearts where it does a lot of good.

There is much more than what our eyes see. Which is why John writes in his 1st letter, that ***we are God's children now, so what we will be has not yet been fully revealed.*** Who we are and what we will be is hidden now in this world. Our identity in Christ is not always visible.

Only God sees the cross of His Son on our foreheads and hearts. Our earthly resumes mean little in Heaven. When Jesus comes again, John's vision will be our reality. All God's promises, fulfilled, complete. That's why we as saints (all who believe and have life in Jesus) don't often look like saints on earth. The blessed don't often look blessed. In fact, they may look exactly the opposite.

Those suffering don't look blessed. Those crying or hungering don't look blessed. The humble meek don't look blessed. The poor in spirit and all who thirst for righteousness don't look blessed.

The merciful are often taken advantage of. The peacemakers, too. The pure in heart are mocked, and those who dare to speak of a unique Christ-centered way to live in this world, they can expect persecution. TRUTH & HONESTY is a much needed commodity today. With much upheaval here and in various nations. Yet, Jesus calls us all ***blessed***. Over and over He says it.

BLESSED --- is a poetic Bible term. It's any one whom God looks upon with the eyes of divine favour and love. The Blessed are you and all whom God sees through His Son Jesus.

That sounds weird, maybe too overly positive. Isn't blessed to mean all my prayers are answered and God makes life easy? Isn't blessed when you win the \$65 million dollar lottery?

Isn't blessed supposed to look happy and have all you want. Blessed shouldn't suffer but be full and satisfied. Blessed is to have a great life, to be well-liked, *to have all your dreams come true.*

Blessed never means having an easy, stress free life or being popular or liked by all. Maybe it's time to realize that we don't know what blessed is, and need to learn from Jesus.

The blessed ones are ALL who believe in Christ, who trust His way, who are shaped by the cross and have life in His name. God's dear children. Blessed are those tortured, mocked, whipped, beaten, hand-cuffed and imprisoned faithful men and women and children.

The persecuted. *How could they do what they did? How could they stand firm?*

They dreamed bigger. They hoped, they trusted, for more than just his life, they had Christ...just as you do. North American persecution is far different – we face DISINTEREST, APATHY & INDIFFERENCE...there's just way too many forms of gods in our world to choose from...

to take precedence over the One True God...which need not make us afraid, but MAKE US MOVE OUT IN FAITH AND ENGAGE THE PEOPLE WE MEET-- for there is a better, blessed way.

And this helps us stay focused that the church's mission, the purpose of our faith – which is -- **witnessing to the blessed life we have in Christ which helps us look forward in faith to a blessed death also in Christ.** John's vision and the saints who have gone before us testify to that. The blood of the Lamb, the blood of Jesus, gives us the power to die a blessed death every day to our own sinful ways. It's also the blood of the Lamb, the blood of Jesus, that causes tribulation in this life. For the cross will always reveal a way of suffering before glory. That makes this life seem, at times, anything but blessed. But ***blessed*** are you, Jesus says. Even if you don't feel like it. Jesus didn't always look blessed either. Born with animals and laid in their feeding trough. Forced to flee a king who wanted to kill Him. Growing up in poverty. Second-guessed and harassed every step of the way. Arrested as a threat. Mocked, beaten, whipped, crucified. Jesus makes you blessed by dying as a cursed criminal. He died for all of us and then rose up from the dead to make sure you and I could die a blessed death and rise to blessed life. With Him. In Him. Made new and whole again. That is how got ***washed in the blood of the Lamb*** A complete makeover, sin-cleansed by Jesus' blood that flowed from His pierced side. A forgiving Blood. A life-giving Baptismal Blood. Life that is your life now. And you're washed anew when you're forgiven or hear the Gospel or confess your faith. Jesus Himself gives you His life when you eat His Body and drink His Blood. All of that makes you blessed. It's a way of living, not a marker to prove you believe. Here and now and for forever. Because living in Jesus, all that's His is yours. Even if it is hidden under suffering, tribulation, and death. But that doesn't make it not real. For hidden means it's here and real, now, today as it was then; you just can't see it. Apostle John saw it. And we believe it. For we, *see it* . . . by faith. Blessed is hidden in Jesus. And blessed is hidden in you, for He is in you. And ***when He appears***, John says, ***we will be like Him***. And this HOPE PURIFIES – because its from our LORD, beyond our knowing or ability, WHO sets us free and refocuses our eyes on JESUS Who has achieved our freedom, our blessedness. With this gift comes the joyful welcome of an entire gathering of the family of faith, on earth and in Heaven. In fact Heaven and earth meet right here in the church. At this altar. We worship with all the blessed dead who lived and died in the Lord and now rest in Heaven – hidden on the other side of this altar whom we see with eyes of faith and the loving memory. And when we dine upon Jesus' Holy Communion feast we dine with our loved one and all the great multitude of Saints no one can count. They join us every week. We are never alone. They rest, we struggle. So on All Saints day we remember this. As with Remembrance Day in view the same saints who gave their last full measure In fighting wars to end suffering and terror and oppressive governments. We give thanks for this. This is a blessed hope. As we are the blessed still. Amen.