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# Saint Andrew's Anglican Church

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November 2009

*O Almighty God, who has knit together your elect in one communion and fellowship, in the mystical body of your Son Christ our Lord; Grant us grace so to follow your blessed Saints in all virtuous and godly living, that we may come to those inexpressible joys that you have prepared for those who unfeignedly love you; through the same Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.* (The Collect for All Saints Day)

Dear Friends,

It is not all that often that a major feast day falls upon a Sunday, but this coming Sunday is one such day, for November 1<sup>st</sup> is All Saints Day – a high and holy feast day in the Church. On this day we celebrate all the Christian saints, known and unknown. The Church has kept this feast day from her earliest days: Our first record of it is in a sermon by St. Gregory the Wonder-Worker (d. c. 270) who lived in Asia Minor. We also know that the feast was kept in East Syria by at least 360, as is evidenced by the fact that St. Ephrem Syrus (d. 373) mentions it in a hymn. And at about the same time, in the great city of Antioch, All Saints was being celebrated on a fixed day each year, as indicated by St. John Chrysostom (d. 407).

The emphasis of All Saints Day is upon looking to the example of all those who rejoice with us but upon another shore and in a greater light, that multitude that none can number, whose hope was in the Word made flesh.

This is one of the few days of the year in which a Proper Preface is appointed to be read in the liturgy (listen for the preface this Sunday, just before the singing of the Sanctus (Holy, Holy, Holy Lord, God of power and might . . .)). The preface for All Saints is the part not italicized: . . . *give thanks and praise to you, O Lord, Holy Father, Almighty, Everlasting God.* Who, in the multitude of your Saints, have surrounded us with so great a cloud of witnesses that we, rejoicing in their fellowship, may run with patience the race that is set before us, and, together with them, may receive the crown of glory that fadeth not away. *Therefore with angels and archangels, and with all the company of heaven . . .*”

Who are the Saints about whom the Preface and the Collect (above) speak?

A saint is someone who is holy, someone who is being sanctified by the working of the Holy Spirit. It is good and right to honor and to commemorate particular individuals whose lives manifested holiness in a particularly powerful way. It is appropriate, in other words, that some of the saints are honored as Saints (like St. Andrew the First-Called Disciple, after whom our mission takes its name). But let us not lose sight of the fact that every member of Christ's Church is a saint – one who is holy.

And thus All Saints Day is a day in which we should not only call to mind particular Saints (like St. John the Baptist or Sts. Anna and Simeon, see Matthew 14; Luke 2:36 and Luke 2:25), giving thanks to God for their holy lives and godly examples, but it should also be a day on which we call to mind those saints of God who are less well known to the larger Church, but who have made an impact on our lives by means of their faithfulness and devotion to the Lord Jesus and the powerful working of the Holy Spirit within them. If we have been blessed with having Christian family members who have impacted our lives, we should remember them before the altar this Sunday and give thanks to God for their faith and witness. We should do likewise in respect to our godparents and friends and mentors and the perfect strangers whose holy lives and Godly admonitions have been used by God to encourage, challenge and instruct us. It is those saints, as well as the Saints, whom the writer to the Hebrews had in mind when he wrote:

*Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight, and sin which clings so closely, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, <sup>2</sup> looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God. <sup>3</sup> Consider him who endured from sinners such hostility against himself, so that you may not grow weary or fainthearted.* (Hebrews 12:1-3).

During our service this Sunday we will pause from our sermon series in 1 Peter and consider the texts appointed for All Saints Day, namely Revelation 7:2-17 and Matthew 5:1-12. I commend these passages to you for your consideration between now and then.

We will also be singing a wonderful hymn, the text of which is included below. Meditating on these rich images might also be an excellent way for you to prepare yourself for worship on Sunday.

For all the saints, who from their labors rest,  
who thee by faith before the world confessed,  
Thy Name, O Jesus be forever blest.  
Alleluia, alleluia!

And when the strife is fierce, the warfare long,  
Steals on the ear the distant triumph song,  
And hearts are brave again, and arms are strong.  
Alleluia, alleluia!

Thou wast their rock, their fortress, and their might:  
Thou, Lord, their Captain in the well-fought fight  
Thou, in the darkness drear, the one true light.  
Alleluia, alleluia!

The golden evening brightens in the west;  
Soon, soon to faithful warriors cometh rest;  
Sweet is the calm of paradise the blest.  
Alleluia, alleluia!

O may thy soldiers, faithful, true, and bold  
Fight as the saints who nobly fought of old,  
And win, with them, the victor's crown of gold  
Alleluia, alleluia!

But lo! there breaks a yet more glorious day;  
The saints triumphant rise in bright array;  
The King of glory passes on his way.  
Alleluia, alleluia!

O blest communion fellowship divine!  
We feebly struggle, they in glory shine;  
Yet all are one in thee, for all are thine.  
Alleluia, alleluia!

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,  
Alleluia, alleluia!

## Upcoming Events in November, December & Beyond

- **Community Group:** A discussion about the Mission, Vision and Values of our mission church will continue every Sunday immediately following the service, until November 29<sup>th</sup> (the first Sunday in Advent).
- November 1<sup>st</sup> marks the start of **Children's Church**. Please keep this important ministry in your prayers!
- Sunday, November 29<sup>th</sup> is the 1<sup>st</sup> Sunday of **Advent** and will mark our return to the Sunday lectionary (stay tuned for more about the meaning of Advent).
- We will have a **Lessons & Carols** service on Sunday, December 6<sup>th</sup> (5 pm). Invite a friend!
- **Christmas Eve:** Just prior to our worship service, we will have a **Celtic Christmas Music Concert** (7:30pm) followed shortly thereafter with a candlelit service of **Holy Communion** (8:00 – 9:15 pm).
- **Christmas Day** Holy Communion service at 10:30 – 11:15 am (no choir).
- The Anglican Mission in America will hold its **Winter Conference** in Greensboro on January 27-30. Visit the website (<http://www.theamia.org>) for more information.

## Kudos

- Many thanks to Sharon, Amanda and the choir for all the extra time and effort that they have invested in preparing our additional service music!
- I am very grateful to those who have agreed to serve as Servant Team leaders: Pauline Urban (hospitality & fellowship), Frank Sefcik (finances) and Debbie Vruwink (children's church).
- There are *lots* of people to thank this month! Thanks to Liz DeCarlo for volunteering to type hymns and prepare the bulletins each week, to Dick and Myra Markvart for the wonderful nametags, to Sara Patterson for looking after the children each Sunday in October as we awaited the start of Children's Church, to everyone who came out and helped us paint the back room (especially Dick and Myra who came back later in the week to finish everything) and to the individuals who generously gave funds for the purchase of a printer and ink for the church. And many thanks to everyone for your help each week in cleaning up and setting up the tables!

In Christ,  
