

# ALL SAINTS CHURCH

## Church Begins a New Year

This past Sunday was called Christ the King Sunday. This was, officially, the last Sunday of the liturgical church year. The sermon emphasized how Christ's "kingdom" is not like the kingdoms of this world. There is no use of violence and the greatest ones, are those who serve the least. Instead of sacrificing people to keep the peace, the members of Christ's kingdom side with the victims, by substituting forgiveness and mercy for sacrifice and revenge. Our ideal is Jesus washing the feet of his disciples and suffering next to the world's outcasts on the cross.

We are called to participate in this kingdom by proving ourselves to be neighbors, just as the Good Samaritan did, even when it meant breaking religious and cultural norms. In this kingdom we prove that God is present in the compassionate human response to human need. Indeed, it seems for the most part Jesus was a radical humanist, he proclaimed that the divine was active in the lives of real human beings. Every time he was asked about heaven, he turned the attention back to serving one's fellow human beings and challenging all systems that diminished the sacredness of one's full humanity.

This Sunday we begin a new Church year. As the days become shorter and darkness seems to descend upon with an ever greater insistence, we hear lessons about the moon and the sun and the stars being rattled in the heavens. We know this is both political and personal. We learn that the worlds we have constructed for ourselves and each other are transitory, passing phenomena. Nevertheless, we are called to seek the things that are above as we await the full revelation of God's majestic love.

So the church understands that the foundations upon which this world are built, are not the way things are meant to be. Through crisis or mystical insight, we are a people who challenge appearances. We are a people who seek, who knock, who ask, who implore with a dogged determination. We are a people who have faced a crisis of faith in this world that crucified the Christ and continues to mark others as necessary victims. We are a people who challenge injustice and demand dignity for every sentient being. We are, to quote scripture, "a peculiar people" but also gathering of saints as we celebrate the priesthood of all believers.

We are not primarily here to save ourselves, that is to say, our faith is not a personal self-improvement course or a system of hell-fire insurance. Rather, our faith is a process whereby we expect to experience a death of self and the birth of Christ consciousness which finds itself active in communion-with and in service-to others. We experience the word and sacraments as signs and symbols of this new way of life. We see the testimony of the saints as encouragement to persist despite adversity. We embrace the Orthodox axiom, that Christ became human so that humans might become divine. He may be the first-fruit of this redemption, but he is certainly not the only one. Towards the end of his ministry, Jesus said, I no longer call you disciples, but I call you friends. We are called to walk in the long history of prophets and saints as we seek to manifest this authentic calling to be truly human.

**The Levy Children's Choir will join us for worship on  
Sunday, December 9th at our 10:00 Service!**

Please join us as we once again welcome the children and their parents to join us at Church on this Second Sunday of Advent. They will be singing "O for a Closer Walk with God" by Charles Villiers Stanford, with the adult choir. It brings great joy to see the children enliven our service with the energy of the next generation.

**Bishop Dietsche's Visit**

It was a great joy to welcome Bishop Andrew Dietsche to All Saints this past November 4th to celebrate All Saints Day with us. The Bishop encouraged our church to continue to preach the gospel and bear witness to Christ through our worship and our service to the poor. It was encouraging to see so many of you at church at the same time! Sometimes I think, if everyone would increase their attendance by an extra Sunday per month our congregation would truly show off the grace and gifts that God has blessed us with.



**Stewardship:**

Now is a good time for each person to show their ongoing support for the Church by filling out a pledge card for 2019. It says God loves a cheerful giver, but it is also true that it makes one's heart cheerful to give to the church where the Word is preached the Sacraments are administered and where you participate in the ministry of love and mercy.

**We are Under Construction** 🛠️

The holes you see on the left and right side of the nave are the foreshadowing of the renovation of our church's interior. Several years ago we planned to paint the interior of the church, but we discovered that faulty gutters were saturating our walls. So the money for the painting went into fixing our roofs. It is hard to imagine all the work that goes into maintaining our 124 year old buildings, but our church has been really faithful, prudent and diligent in preserving this sacred space.