

Devotions – November 3-9, 2019

By Pastor Lee Goodwin

November 3, 2019 – All Saints' Sunday

This is a perfect day to remember that we in the church have alternative ways of numbering our days. Like all those around us we measure time by a clock and a calendar. In the church we also have other means by which we mark the seasons. Advent, Christmas, Epiphany, Lent, Holy Week, Easter and the time after Pentecost, sometimes known as ordinary time, are seasons that orbit around the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus of Nazareth. We also have a less commonly noticed calendar - the sanctoral calendar - which is measured by days of commemoration of those we call saints.

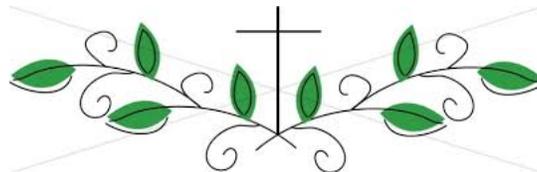
Obviously, All Saints is a day to acknowledge the whole company of saints in heaven and on earth. But scattered throughout the year are days of acknowledgement for others whose lives have been marked by God's grace in particular ways. For example, today, November 3 is the day to remember Martin de Porres, who died in 1639. A Dominican priest who was known for his care of the sick, he is remembered as a renewer of society.

Each day this week will provide the occasion to remember particular individuals commemorated during the entire church year. You are also invited to recall the saints in your own life who have shaped who you are and who you hope to become.

(The calendar of all commemorations can be found in ELW beginning on page 15 or in LBW starting on page 10. The prayers for these and others can be found in ELW beginning on page 54 or in LBW beginning on page 30.)

Here is a prayer for this day in remembrance of Martin de Porres and all who serve their neighbors in need:

O God, your Son came among us to serve and not to be served, and to give his life for the life of the world. Lead us by his love to serve all those to whom the world offers no comfort and little help. Through us give hope to the hopeless, love to the unloved, peace to the troubled, and rest to the weary, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.



Monday, November 4, 2019

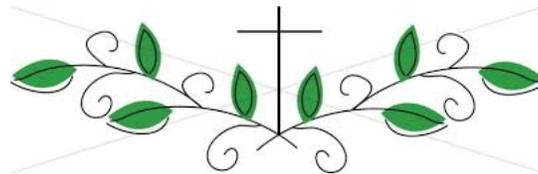
There is no specific commemoration for this day, but we'll borrow from next week's calendar to remember Martin of Tours, born November 11, 397. (Martin Luther born on November 10 was

named for Martin of Tours). He is remembered because of his work as a bishop in Gaul - modern France. He is known for his missionary work particularly in rural areas. He lived in a cave and his office was in a hut.

Who do you know or remember whose life was exemplary in the way they dedicated themselves to the church? It could be a church school teacher, a camp counsellor, a pastor or that usher that's always there to fill in, the dedicated musician, and on it goes.

Here's a prayer for the day to remember those like Martin of Tours who have given generously to the life of the community of faith.

Almighty God, we praise you for your servant Martin of Tours (*and whomever you may want to add to this prayer*) through whom you have called the church to its tasks and renewed its life. Raise up in our own day teachers and prophets inspired by your Spirit, whose voices will give strength to your church and proclaim the reality of your reign, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.



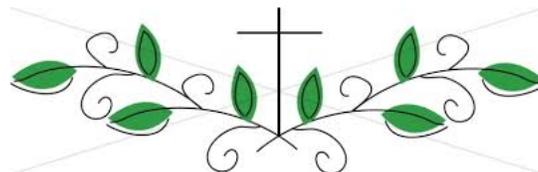
Tuesday, November 5, 2019

Today we will remember different kinds of saints - theologians and teachers. There are a number of teachers held up for our memory in the calendar of saints. Along with Martin of Tours who we remembered yesterday, the church also commemorates Soren Kierkegaard, the Danish theologian and teacher. Others who are remembered through the year include the great 13th century Roman Catholic theologian and teacher, Thomas Aquinas, as well as Teresa of Avila and 20th century teacher Dietrich Bonhoeffer.

Lutherans are famous for the high value we place on education. We have always prized an educated and well-trained clergy and the Norwegian, Danish, German, Swedish and Finnish immigrants who came to North America were as committed to establishing colleges as they were congregations. Finlandia University (formerly Suomi College) is such a sign of how we value education as part of the church's ministry.

Here's a prayer not only for the famous teachers whose names are remembered in a church calendar, but all those who were so influential in our own lives. Remember your favorite teacher.

O God of wisdom, in your goodness you provide faithful teachers for your church. By your Holy Spirit give all teachers insight into your holy word, lives that are examples to us all, and the courage to know and do the truth; through your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.



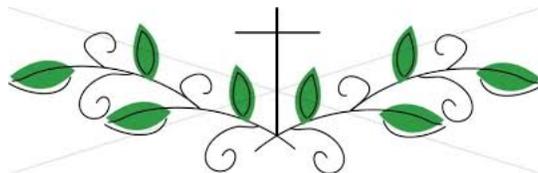
Wednesday, November 6, 2019

A significant number of those remembered in the church's calendar of the faithful were martyrs. The word martyr means witness. When we hear the word, we think of those who died for the sake of the faith. St. Stephen was the first martyr and he is remembered on December 26. Others we remember include William Tyndale, Olaf the King of Norway, Erik the King of Sweden, and perhaps most familiar to us, Martin Luther King, Jr. King was assassinated in 1968 after a remarkable life of courageous, non-violent protest for the sake of the civil rights of African Americans in the United States.

His proclamation of God's justice and mercy and his powerful preaching made him a witness. His death by the sniper's bullet made him a martyr. He is commemorated in our calendar of saints on January 15.

Here's a prayer in remembrance of Dr. King and all those who have died as martyrs of the church.

Gracious God, in every age you have sent men and women who have given their lives in witness to your love and truth. Inspire us with the memory of Martin Luther King Jr. and all the faithful martyrs of your church, whose faithfulness led to the way of the cross, and give us courage to bear full witness with our lives to your Son's victory over sin and death, for he lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

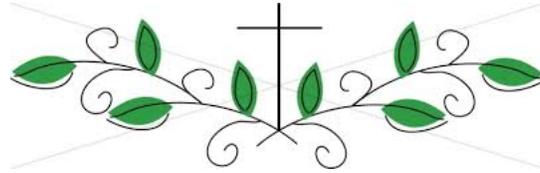


Thursday, November 7, 2019

There are three missionaries who are remembered on this day each year in our ELCA calendar - one from each of three centuries. John Christian Frederick Heyer – 1873, Bartholomaeus Ziegenbalg – 1719, and Ludwig Nommensen – 1918. Ziegenbalg was a Danish missionary to India. Nommensen was a missionary to Sumatra. And Heyer was a missionary sent to India from the Ministerium of Pennsylvania, an early American Lutheran synod. He was the first missionary sent from sent from the United States. After over twenty years of parish ministry Father Heyer, as he was called, learned Sanskrit and was commissioned a missionary establishing mission stations in India. After 15 years in India he returned to the United States and spent twelve more years reorganizing parishes and schools in Minnesota. He died in 1873 in Philadelphia at the age of 81 where he was serving as chaplain to the new seminary there.

Here's a prayer for these and all missionaries of the church.

God of grace and glory, we praise you for your servants, who made the good news known around the world. Raise up, we pray, in every country, heralds of the gospel, so that the world may know the immeasurable riches of your love, and be drawn to worship you, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.



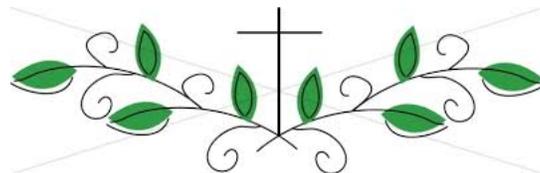
Friday, November 8, 2019

Yet another, perhaps somewhat unexpected, group of commemorated souls are artists and scientists and we can include musicians and hymn writers in this group. Perhaps the best known of these is Johann Sebastian Bach. But given the rich tradition of Lutheran music there are many other hymn writers and musicians in our annual calendar. Isaac Watts, Phillip Nicolai, Paul Gerhardt, George Frederick Handel. Artists we commemorate include Albrecht Durer, Matthias Grunnewald and scientists remembered includes Nicolaus Copernicus.

From the beginning we have been created in God's own creative image. So it really is not surprising that we acknowledge the gift of grace that creative musicians, artists and scientist share with the world.

Here's a prayer for these uniquely gifted people. You can include a prayer of thanks for the creative capacities of others you know and in yourself.

Almighty God, beautiful in majesty, majestic in holiness: You have shown us the splendor of creation in the work of musicians, artists and scientists. Teach us to drive from the world all chaos and disorder, that our eyes may behold your glory, and that at last everyone may know the inexhaustible richness of your new creation in Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.



Saturday, November 9, 2019

As the week draws to a close on this day of Sabbath, and as we prepare for the celebration of Christ's death and resurrection tomorrow, think of all the saints whose lives have intersected with yours, some famous, but most largely unknown to the rest of the world. Think of how you have been influenced, formed by their presence in your life. The large tapestry that is your life is made of numberless threads which are all the saints and sinners you have ever known personally, or those you have known through what you have read or been told. Remember the saints

commemorated by the church, as well as your pastors and teachers, your parents and grandparents and aunts and uncles, the whole cloud of witnesses who have shaped your life.

And then, this last prayer for this week of commemoration:

Lord God, you have surrounded us with so great a cloud of witnesses. Grant that we, encouraged by the example of your servants, may persevere in the course that is set before us and, at the last, share in your eternal joy with all the saints in light, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

