Cedar Heights Community Presbyterian Church Rev. Johnny Janssen
All Saints' Day—*(Eternal) Life Abundant*
11/01/2026

Old Testament Lesson—Psalm 34:1-10, 22

I will bless the Lord at all times; his praise shall continually be in my mouth. My soul makes its boast in the Lord; let the humble hear and be glad. O magnify the Lord with me, and let us exalt his name together. I sought the Lord, and he answered me, and delivered me from all my fears. Look to him, and be radiant; so your faces shall never be ashamed. This poor soul cried, and was heard by the Lord, and was saved from every trouble. The angel of the Lord encamps around those who fear him, and delivers them. O taste and see that the Lord is good; happy are those who take refuge in him. O fear the Lord, you his holy ones, for those who fear him have no want. The young lions suffer want and hunger, but those who seek the Lord lack no good thing. The Lord redeems the life of his servants; none of those who take refuge in him will be condemned.

New Testament Lesson—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 worshiped God, singing, "Amen! Blessing and glory and wisdom and thanksgiving and honor and power and might be to our God forever 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 center 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."

Well, by now you should've received this year's stewardship brochure in the mail. I can't express enough how grateful I am to our finance committee and our treasurer. Thank you to everyone who had a hand in putting those materials together. It looks incredible! Bravo!

If you didn't know the focus of this year's campaign, you've certainly come across it by now. For the past few weeks, we've zeroed in on the abundance God's given us throughout Creation. By any reasonable metric, human beings are blessed beyond measure.

Of course, that incomparable blessing is rooted in an even greater love. We're blessed with such abundance because of the love God has for us. From that love, God made a world where no one should go without what they need.

It's why the psalm-writer this morning can't keep the praise inside. He's got to express his gratitude. He's got to unleash his joy or it's just going to burst out of him. There's no choice, really! God's abundance surrounds him—blessings on all sides!

Here's how he puts it: *I sought the Lord, and the Lord answered me, and delivered me from all my fears*. *This poor soul cried, and was heard by the Lord, and was saved from every trouble.*

O fear the Lord, you his holy ones, for those who fear God have no want… those who seek the Lord lack no good thing.

Now, I want you to notice how God's abundance doesn't just mean stuff that we need and get. It's not just material things God provides—though it certainly includes that. No, the psalmist has much more in mind.

In fact: Our understanding of life's blessings is woefully tragic if we reduce them to just things we can see and touch. God is so much bigger than that—something to be reminded of during stewardship season, especially.

No, our life is made abundant by gifts we can barely put words to: gifts like deliverance, like salvation, like new mercies every morning. *These* are the gifts that last—that don't perish—the gifts that sustain and bring new life.

And it's *those* gifts—the ones we can't grasp and transcend our senses—the ones that make little sense to us—those gifts are staring us in the face on a day like All Saints' Day.

Yesterday was Halloween—which means today is All Saints' Day. And every year on this day, I usually feel a bunch of different emotions at once. There's a certain solemnity to it—a kind of grief that keeps peeking around the corner. But that grief is rooted in a profound gratitude for the gift of life and the gift of life eternal in Jesus Christ.

It's a solemn kind of hopeful defiance. It's "hallelujah" with an undertone of mourning. It's lament laced with joyful thanksgiving.

Traditionally, this day's about celebrating those we love that've come before us—those who've been called home to God—those who prepared the way for us. Today we give thanks for those who helped lay the foundations of our faith—for those who showed us how to live like Christ—who sat with us and reminded us of God's love when we struggled to feel it.

We celebrate how much their lives blessed ours—all the ways they made God's abundance real—as present as the shirt on our back.

Friends: I know that, even as we celebrate their ministry, many of us still clutch our chests in pain over their absence. And trust me, I get it. I feel it, too. After all: a great comic book character once asked, "What is grief, if not love persevering?"

You see: Our love persists. It presses on. It doesn't stop. Death does not and cannot stop love. The love poured into us by the saints as they lived continues to express itself as we live and pour that same love—their same love into others.

On a special day like this one, the good news of the gospel is obvious: We are surrounded by a great cloud of witnesses. We are nurtured—guided by the communion of saints—saints and witness we'll meet in spirit at the Lord's Table.

Make no mistake. Their place at the table doesn't go away just because they've gone home to be with God. Absolutely not! Their seat at Christ's table is a reservation that never expires. We are reunited at this table. Here, we become the Church Universal. It's an abundant guest list. That's for sure.

And, as you might expect, that abundance isn't limited to this earthly life. No, the staggering graciousness of God's blessings are known even more fully in the life to come.

The author of Revelation says it this way: *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…*

In all its beautiful diversity, humanity comes together in praise of the One who continues to bless them abundantly.

The author goes on, saying that *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 center 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."*

Yes, God is *still* blessing the saints that've gone before us. God continues to be in relationship with them. Our loved ones—those who've already inherited everlasting life—they are with the Source of love itself. And in a different way, so are we.

Siblings in Christ: The saints are sheltered. They hunger no more—thirst no more. God is bringing them to life-giving waters. And the only tears shed will be the ones filled with joy.

And, by God's grace, they are called by name to join us at this Table. Not even death takes their place away. Christ's love made sure of that.

And so, this isn't just the Table of grace—not just a table where we remember, but a table where reunion happens. At this Table, as a foretaste of the heavenly banquet, we are reunited with all the saints.

Every time we celebrate the Lord's Supper, I meet my mom here. Who do you get to be reunited with today?

Oh friends, how profoundly we are loved! That is made abundantly clear at the table. And if there's any greater evidence of God's love than what happens at Communion, here among the saints…I'd love to know what it is.

Blessings to you, and to all the saints who, from their labors, rest. Thanks be to God.

Amen.