

PLANNING AHEAD

Adult Bible Study – continues each Sunday at 9:45 a.m. on the topic of *A Shepherd Looks at the 23rd Psalm* by Phillip Keller.

Thanksgiving Day – Nov. 24th

First Sunday in Advent – Nov. 27th

Second Sunday in Advent – Dec. 4th

Decorating the Church for the Holidays with refreshments – Dec. 4th

Miller's Christmas Open House – Dec. 10th

Third Sunday in Advent – Dec. 11th

Fall Congregational Meeting – Dec. 11th

Fourth Sunday in Advent – Dec 18th

Christmas Eve Candlelight Service with Communion – Saturday, Dec. 24th, 7 p.m.

Christmas Day Carol Service (no Holy Communion) – Sunday, Dec. 25th, 11 a.m.

New Year's Eve – Saturday, Dec. 31st

New Year's Day – Sunday, Jan. 1st, Service at 11 a.m.

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**It's the Season for Wellness Checks** – Visiting senior family members over the holidays is always a great opportunity to assess their needs in the areas of safety, security and wellness. This time may also be used to discuss their options for long term care, whether it be an assisted living facility or by bringing some supportive services in the home that will allow them to continue to live independently.

Senior Resources of Guilford has caregiver libraries at both of their corporate offices where you can find information to assist you. Also, you can request a consultation with one of our social workers or our caregiver specialist.

*Call SeniorLine in Jamestown or High Point (336) 884-6981 or (336) 333-6981 anywhere else in Guilford County for assistance this holiday season.*



## WEEKLY ATTENDANCE AND RECEIPTS

November 6<sup>th</sup> through 20<sup>th</sup>, 2011

|          |    |        |
|----------|----|--------|
| 11/06/11 | 29 | 798.00 |
| 11/13/11 | 28 | 438.00 |
| 11/20/11 | 22 | 930.00 |

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From the Altar Guild

If you wish to purchase poinsettias for placement on the altar for our Christmas Eve service, feel free to do so. Please sign your name to the sheet on the bulletin board in the hallway and add if the plant(s) are in memory or in honor of someone you hold dear. Poinsettias may be brought in after December 18th for the Christmas Eve service.

Anne MacArthur, Altar Guild co-chairperson

Advent Devotional Calendars

In addition to the quarterly *Christ in Your Home*, there are devotional booklets specifically for Advent in the lounge off the Narthex. Please take one for your daily use during Advent.

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**Christmas Angel** – Won't you be a Christmas angel this year? Please make the possibility of opening up a present this Christmas a reality by taking the name tacked up on the board in the hallway of one of the children of incarcerated adults in the High Point area. Please gift wrap your present and place it under the tree in the sitting room off the Narthex by the end of November. Just take one or more of the tags with a name on it and write your name on the label/labels on the wall.

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Thanks to all the Saint Michael women who helped make the new Chrismons ornaments for our tree. We will be blessing these ornaments during the worship service on December 4th. Decorating the Church for Christmas will take place after worship on Sunday, December 4th, with coffee and refreshments to follow. Please see the signup sheet in the hallway to bring light refreshments. We will forego the Koffee Klatch before the worship service for December 4th only and resume on January 1st, 2012.

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**Miller's Christmas Open House** – Come join in the fun! Dennis and Kathy Miller have graciously offered to open their house on Saturday, December 10<sup>th</sup>, at 6:00 p.m. for a Holiday gathering, featuring appetizers and desserts.

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Fall Congregational Meeting – to approve the 2012 budget and for the nominations and election of new Church Council members on December 11th following morning worship. Nominations should be submitted to the Council President as soon as possible

Advent, year B, exemplifies the Revised Common Lectionary's practice of proclaiming four gospels over three years, with epistle lessons illuminating the season or complementing the gospel. The Advent epistles prepare us for the coming of Jesus Christ and the arrival of a new heaven and new earth. The Advent gospels announce this as well.

All the readings emphasize the shape faith should take as Christians wait for the day of our Lord Jesus Christ. In fact, the readings are like a list of "best practices" for a waiting church. *Keep awake. Be enriched and strengthened. Lead lives of holiness. Wait patiently. Be at peace. Prepare the way of the Lord. Repent. Rejoice always. Pray without ceasing. Give thanks. Test everything. Abstain from evil. Give glory to God. Do not be afraid. Let it be.*

The Latin *adventus* is a translation of the Greek term *perousia*, often translated as "coming" (see 2 Peter 3:12; 1 Thess. 5:23). Advent is an invitation to celebrate both our hopeful anticipation of the *second* coming of Christ, as well as our commemoration of the Messiah's first advent, announced by Gabriel in Nazareth to Mary.

Keeping time according to the church year is a grace, not a requirement. The grace of Advent is best received in community. Congregational study of the lectionary texts, in combination with liturgical and preaching focus on them, offer an opportunity to awaken to the gift of time provided by the celebration of Advent.

- Week 1 (Nov. 27th): Be Enriched and Strengthened (1 Cor. 1:3-9; Mark 13:24-37). We are awake and strengthened, because Jesus Christ gives all the various gifts necessary for the church as it waits for his revealing.
- Week 2 (Dec. 4th): Wait Patiently (2 Peter 3:8-15a; Mark 1:1-8). The church is called to listen patiently to the proclamation of God's promises through preachers and prophets, regarding the patience of God as our salvation, so that all might come to repentance.
- Week 3 (Dec. 11th): Repent and Prepare the Way of the Lord (1 Thess. 5:16-24; John 1:6-8, 19-28). Like John the Baptist, who rightfully receives considerable attention during Advent, we are called to repent and proclaim Christ as we await his coming.
- Week 4 (Dec. 18th): Paul and Mary Glorifying God through Jesus Christ (Rom. 16: 25-27; Luke 1:26-38). Sometimes Paul tries to say everything in one sentence, as he does in this final sentence of Romans, maybe imitating God, who does succeed in saying everything in one human being, Jesus Christ. Mary receives word in her very body.

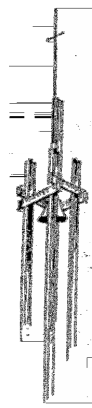
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The Bell Tower

December, 2011

On the evening of July 16, 1505, a law student at the University of Erfurt, Germany, gathered his university friends to give them his books and bid them farewell. This dramatic departure from law school was followed the next day by the young man's acceptance of the cowl of a novice monk in the Augustinian monastery at Erfurt. He was 21 years old. Through his teachings and writings, Martin Luther would help to change the course of human history and initiate that renewal of the Christian Church that we have come to know as the Reformation.

Luther lived during a period of growth and change that affected all Europe. His contemporaries included Henry VIII of England, Christopher Columbus, John Calvin, Erasmus of Rotterdam, Ulrich Zwingli, Lucas Cranach and his son, the artists, Emperor Charles V, Pope Leo X (of the Medici family), Pope Hadrian VI and Pope Clement VII. No matter what branch of Christianity we belong to, we have been influenced by Luther's life and work, It is, therefore, important that we know more about this man whose goal was not to divide the church but turn it to a clearer understanding of the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

Martin Luther was baptized in the Christian faith on November 11, 1483, nine years before Columbus landed in America, receiving the name (Martin) of the saint whose festival was celebrated on that day in the Roman Catholic Church. At that time, there were only two major branches of Christianity: the Eastern or Orthodox Church, and the Western or Roman Catholic Church. Luther came from a religiously conservative peasant background, though his parents, Margareta and Hans Luther, had risen by hard work to a level we might call "middle-class" today.

Discipline was the order of the day whether at home, in school or in church. The towns and cities of Europe were full of churches and monasteries, and universities were springing up everywhere. In 1484, Luther's family moved from Eisleben, Germany, where he was born, to Mansfeld, where he began his schooling. In 1497, at the age of 13, he was sent away to school in Magdeburg and the following year to a school in Eisennach.

Most of the places to which Luther traveled during his life, with a few exceptions such as his journey to Rome as a monk, are in what we used to call East Germany.

By the time he was 19, he had received his bachelor of arts degree (1502) from the University of Erfurt and his master of arts (1505) before he was 22. Within two years of becoming a monk, Luther was ordained a priest and soon thereafter a professor at the University of Wittenberg, where he received his doctor of theology degree in 1512 (one month before his 30th birthday). During the next five years of teaching and studying the Holy Bible, Luther began to formulate the theology which would cause him to attack the corruption of the church in 1517.

In his quest to please a judgmental God, which was the image put forth by the theology of his day, Luther rediscovered in the Epistles of Paul in the New Testament, the loving grace of God. In his attempts to restate the Pauline idea of "justification by faith," Luther came to the realization that a person is saved from sin solely by the grace of God as a free gift, solely through faith in that loving God (not by merit of the works performed as penance to that God), and that the Word of God as found in the Holy Bible was the only true authority for a Christian.

For four years, Luther would engage in various debates and presentation, stating his theological positions as based on the Word of God in his attempts to change the church, culminating in his famous stand before the Diet of Worms (a gathering of the ruling nobility of Germany in the city of Worms called by Emperor Charles V).

Following this, Luther was ex-communicated from the Roman Catholic Church and declared an "outlaw" by the emperor. Despite the threat of being killed, which hung over his head for the rest of his life, Luther continued to teach and preach, using his pulpit to promulgate his Gospel-based theology to the people Germany and the world.

Luther's talents were so varied that he had an impact on almost every area of human life. His translation of the Bible into German gave the Germans a common language for the first time. His musical abilities enabled him not only to translate the Mass (Order of Worship including Holy Communion) into the language of the people from Latin, but also to write many hymns forming the basis for the participation of the common people in the worship services which almost all Christians take for granted today. Luther believed that every Christian was a "priest" before God. His theology of the "Two Kingdoms" helped change the political face of Europe by supporting the nationalism which would later develop into the formation of European nations as we now know them.

Unlike some of his contemporaries in the Reformation, Luther was able to maintain a balance between the old and the new, keeping what was good and useful for the religion of the people from the traditions and practices of the first one thousand years of Christianity, while refining that which was incorrect and adding new ethical, theological and political elements.

For many years he would not give up his hope that the Roman Catholic Church would accept his ideas and, in fact, some of them have been received in a more favorable light in the 20th century. Nevertheless, the die was cast and the division between the Reformers and the Roman Catholic Church grew wider. In 1529, this movement would receive a new name, "Protestantism," taken from a protest made by the nobility against the emperor for usurping their

privileges as rulers.

Luther would continue to write and teach, retaining for posterity the basic teachings of the Reformation, for many years. As he grew older (he considered himself an old man at the age of 46), the rigors of his earlier life as a monk only compounded his existing physical maladies, and he was often ill. Life would have been even more difficult for him had he not married in 1525.

Luther never anticipated being married, for he thought that it would not be proper for a man under the constant threat of being killed. Gradually, his mind was changed and he was betrothed to Katherine von Bora, a woman considerably younger than he, who he had helped to escape from a convent in 1523. Many monks and nuns were leaving their orders under the influence of the Reformation theology, and Luther often helped find these people new homes and occupations. He helped most of the former nuns who came to him to find husbands.

Luther's hard-working wife and his children gave him the opportunity to revise his thinking about another very important religious institution: the Christian family. He would often write about his family in later years with great fondness. Many of his writings were produced for the purpose of being used to teach Christianity in the family.

On a trip to Eisleben, the city of his birth, in 1546, Luther died at the age of 65.

In some ways it was good that he did not live longer for he would have been saddened by what he saw. As is too often the case with humanity, the differences between the Lutherans (as they had been called by their enemies) and those who opposed them would involve political alliances resulting in wars. These wars, and the treaties which ended them, would redraw the political map of Europe for centuries. Not until the second half of the 20th century would the Christian Ecumenical movement begin to tackle the task of re-evaluating the Reformation principles as a way of putting aside the animosities of four centuries and enabling Christians of various denominations to deal with one another according to the gospel of love and forgiveness.

In many ways, we are only now beginning to understand what Luther was saying and trying to accomplish. As we mark the anniversary of his birth November 10th and, as Luther himself would prefer, the anniversary of his baptism as a Christian November 11th, let us pray that all people will be able to recognize the true importance of the accomplishments of this talented man in the pattern of God's plan for the salvation of humanity.

- originally written by The Rev. Robert W. Busch, to be printed in *The Vinton Messenger*, November 9, 1983

LUTHER'S GERMANY



MARTIN LUTHER



Jesus Christ is the living and abiding Word of God. By the power of the Spirit, this very Word of God, which is Jesus Christ, is read in the scriptures, proclaimed in preaching, announced in the forgiveness of sins, eaten and drunk in the Holy Communion, encountered in the bodily presence of the Christian community ... God gives the Word and the sacraments to the church and by the power of the Spirit thereby creates and sustains the church among us... God calls the church to exercise care and fidelity in its use of the means of grace, so that all people may hear and believe the gospel of Jesus Christ and be gathered into God's own mission for the life of the world.

The Use of the Means of Grace, principles 1 and 2

The Lutheran confessions describe the church in terms of the worshipping assembly. "It is also taught that at all times there must be and remain one holy, Christian church. It is the assembly of all believers among whom the gospel is purely preached and the holy sacraments are administered according to the gospel" (*Augsburg Confession*, 7). *Assembly* expresses well the nature of the church as *ekklesia*, a biblical term for the church that has at its root the meaning "called out." The common pattern for worship underscores this understanding of the church: The Holy Spirit gathers the people of God around Jesus Christ present in the word of God and the sacraments, so that the Spirit may in turn send them into the world to continue the ingathering mission of God's reign.

Worship takes place in particular assemblies within particular contexts. Yet every assembly gathered by the Holy Spirit for worship is connected to the whole church. Worship unites the people of God in one time and place with the people of God in every time and place. We use patterns, words, actions, and songs handed down through the ages to express this unity and continuity. The Lutheran confessions affirm this commitment to the treasury of Christian worship: "We do not abolish the mass but religiously keep and defend it ... We keep traditional liturgical forms" (*Apology to the Augsburg Confession*, 24).

The Christian assembly also worships in the midst of an ever-changing world. And because the worship that constitutes the church is also the fundamental expression of the mission of God in the world, worship is regularly renewed in order to be both responsible and responsive to the world that the church is called to serve.

At the beginning of the twenty-first century, we continue the renewal of worship that has taken place over the three centuries Lutherans have been on the

North American continent and in the Caribbean region. During this time, renewal efforts have been marked by a movement from a variety of Lutheran immigrant traditions toward a greater similarity of liturgical forms and a more common repertoire of song. The liturgy set out in 1748 by Henry Melchior Muhlenberg and the Common Service of 1888 are two earlier milestones along this path. In the twentieth century, the consolidation of various immigrant Lutheran church bodies and those more established on this continent was reflected in the primary worship books used by mid-century, namely *Service Book and Hymnal* and *The Lutheran Hymnal*. In 1978 *Lutheran Book of Worship* was published, the fruit of an ambitious inter-Lutheran project that sought to unite most North American Lutherans in the use of a single worship book with shared liturgical forms and a common repertoire of hymnody.

The years since the publication of *Lutheran Book of Worship* have seen many changes within the church and the world. Advances in communication and technology have led to the increasing use of electronic and digital resources within the church and its worship. A growing awareness of the interrelatedness of the world, coupled with new understandings of the world's diverse cultures, has had implications also for the church as the one body of Christ throughout the world. The use of language continues to develop in response to context and societal change, as does the use of more than one language in worship. Forms of musical expression have blossomed, and churches have embraced many of these forms for use in worship.

-From the new *Evangelical Lutheran Worship Hymn Book*



WEEKLY ATTENDANCE AND RECEIPTS		
August 28th through October 30th, 2011		
08/28/11	27	504.00
09/04/11	27	777.15
09/11/11	24	565.00
09/18/11	24	839.00
09/25/11	26	307.00
10/02/11	22	1,004.00
10/09/11	31	664.27
10/16/11	22	789.25
10/23/11	22	918.00
10/30/11	22	460.27

PLANNING AHEAD FOR THE FALL

Adult Bible Study – continues each Sunday at 9:45 a.m. on the topic of *A Shepherd Looks at the 23rd Psalm* by Phillip Keller.

Monthly Coffee Hour – Nov. 6th before Worship

All Saints Sunday – Nov. 6th. Please inform the Office of the names of any persons deceased since last year that you wish to include in the prayers.

Martin Luther's Birthday – Nov. 10th

Veterans Day – Nov. 11th

Christ the King Sunday – Nov. 20th

Thanksgiving Day – Nov. 24th

First Sunday in Advent – Nov. 27th

Decorating the Church for the Holidays – Dec. 4th

Fall Congregational Meeting – Dec. 11th

Christmas Eve Service – Saturday, Dec. 24th, 7 p.m.

Christmas Day Service – Sunday, Dec. 25th, 11 a.m.

New Year's Eve – Saturday, Dec. 31st

New Year's Day – Sunday, Jan. 1st, Service at 11 a.m.

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**Say Thanks to a Veteran** – Veterans Day began life on November 11, 1919, as Armistice Day, to mark the end of World War I, the “war to end all wars.” In 1954 the name was changed to Veterans Day to honor all living veterans of our armed forces.



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Christ the King Sunday – Christ the King Sunday celebrates the all-embracing authority of Christ as King and Lord of the cosmos. Officially called the Feast of Our Lord Jesus Christ the King, it is celebrated on the final Sunday of Ordinary Time, the Sunday before Advent. In 2011, the feast falls on November 20th.

Pope Pius XI universally instituted The Feast of Christ the King in 1925 in his encyclical *Quas Primas*. Pope Pius connected the denial of Christ as king to the rise of secularism. At the time of *Quas Primas*, secularism was on the rise, and many Christians, even Catholics, were doubting Christ's authority, as well as the Church's, and even doubting Christ's existence.

Today, the same distrust of authority exists, although the problem has gotten worse. Individualism has been embraced to such an extreme, that for many, the only authority is the individual self. The idea of Christ as ruler is rejected in such a strongly individualistic system. Also, many balk at the idea of kings and

queens, believing them to be oppressive. Some even reject the titles of “lord” and “king” for Christ because they believe that such titles are borrowed from oppressive systems of government. However true these statements might be (some kings have been oppressive), these individuals miss the point: Christ's kingship is one of *humility and service*. Jesus said:

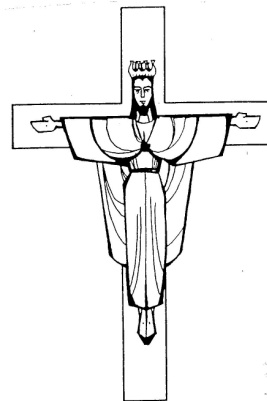
“You know that those who are recognized as rulers over the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great ones make their authority over them felt. But it shall not be so among you. Rather, whoever wishes to become great among you will be your servant; whoever wishes to be first among you will be the slave of all. For the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many” (Mark 10:42-45, NAB).

And

“Pilate said to Jesus, ‘Are you the King of the Jews?’ ...Jesus answered, ‘My kingdom does not belong to this world. If my kingdom did belong to this world, my attendants would be fighting to keep me from being handed over to the Jews. But as it is, my kingdom is not here.’ So Pilate said to him, ‘Then you are a king?’ Jesus answered, ‘You say I am a king. For this I was born and for this I came into the world, to testify to the truth’” (John 18:33b, 36-37).

Thus, Jesus knew the oppressive nature of secular kings, and in contrast to them, he connected his role as king to humble service, and commanded his followers to be servants as well. In other passages of Scripture, his kingdom is tied to his suffering and death. While Christ is coming to judge the nations, his teachings spell out a kingdom of justice and judgment balanced with radical love, mercy, peace, and forgiveness. When we celebrate Christ as King, we are not celebrating an oppressive ruler, but one willing to die for humanity and whose “loving-kindness endures forever.” Christ is the king that gives us true freedom, freedom in Him. *Thus we must never forget that Christ radically redefined and transformed the concept of kingship.*

Christ the King Sunday used to be celebrated on the last Sunday of October, but since the calendar reforms of 1969, the feast falls on the last Sunday of Ordinary Time, which is the Sunday before Advent. It is fitting that the feast celebrating Christ's kingship is observed right before Advent, when we liturgically wait for the promised Messiah (King).



At harvest time we join the psalmist in offering thanksgiving to God: "You crown the year with your goodness, and your paths overflow with plenty." We are grateful for the abundance of good things of God's creation. Paul reminds us that our thanksgiving overflows into generosity. As the body of Christ in the world, we give ourselves away as bread for the hungry.



Happy Thanksgiving!
November 24th, 2011

Thanksgiving baskets have been placed near the altar to receive your donations for the needy. Some suggested items would be: canned fruits, canned vegetables, canned meats, sugar, flour, noodles, spaghetti sauce, cereal, etc. These items will be taken to the food bank on Monday, November 21st. Thank you for your help with this special project.

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***SPEAK THROUGH YOUR***  
**PRAYERS – LIFESTYLE – ACTIONS**  
**- GIFTS**

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Nobel Peace Prize Awarded to Lutheran African Peace Activist - Leymah Roberta Gbowee, a Lutheran Liberian peace activist, has been awarded the Nobel Peace Prize. The announcement came Oct. 7 from Oslo, Norway. Gbowee, a member of the Lutheran Church in Liberia, is responsible for organizing a non-violent women's movement that brought an end to a 14-year civil war in Liberia.

Gbowee was awarded a scholarship from the International Leadership Development Program of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) in 2006-2007 to support her study in peace building at Eastern Mennonite University in Harrisonburg, Va.

The ELCA and the Lutheran Church in Liberia are members of The Lutheran World Federation -- a global communion of 140 member churches in 79 countries, representing more than 70 million Christians worldwide.

The Liberian women's movement led to the ousting of ex-President Charles Taylor and to the election of Ellen Johnson Sirleaf as president of Liberia -- the first African nation with a female president. President Sirleaf also has been awarded the Nobel Peace Prize.

The war in Liberia began in 1989, but "the women's movement, our protest, didn't begin until 2003," Gbowee said in a Sept. 19 interview at the ELCA churchwide organization.

The starting point of the women's movement was war fatigue, said Gbowee, a mother of six children. She grew tired of watching children die from hunger and "waking up every morning and not knowing whether a tomorrow was possible. You can't plan for the future." Along with thousands of other women from across Liberia, Gbowee wanted to dream of a better community.

She decided it was time to stop the war and called together women of all faiths -- Christian, Muslim, indigenous and others -- from across Liberia to "step out," recognizing that Liberian women can play a critical role in peace building.

"You always see your savior in someone else other than yourself," Gbowee said. "So for us women, having never been socialized to believe that we have powers to interfere in the politics of our country, were waiting for the bold men. (But) every time the bold men rose up, they rose up with guns and other things," she said, realizing that women needed to bring the much-desired peace "for ourselves."

But Gbowee does not take full credit for initiating and organizing the women's peace movement. "There were other women who came before us, emboldening us to take a stand," she said. "And we didn't just start from nothing."

Using the experiences of the women before them, Gbowee used prayer, picketing and silence to further their mission. Despite insults and other behaviors that came their way, Gbowee said, "We kept quiet because we had a sense of purpose and sense of direction." The women also put together statements of peace for African governments, engaged the media and initiated personal, one-to-one conversations with power brokers "to see how we could get the peace that Liberia was searching for," she said.

"These women showed the power of ordinary people who choose to stand together and say 'no' to violence and 'yes' to peace.

All Saints – All Saints Sunday, though often observed, is not always given the gravity it deserves, at least in the North American context. On this Sunday, we are reminded that the church is a communion not only of the living and local, but of the dead and distant as well. It is the day we celebrate that even death cannot divide us from the body of Christ, because Jesus Christ has conquered death.

The day therefore has a dual focus. We commemorate those who have died. But we remember them not for themselves and in themselves, but because of what God has done through them. “When the church praises the saints, it praises God himself, who has triumphed through them. Those who are still in the church on earth are supported and encouraged by the fellowship of a throng of witnesses, who fought their way with effort and pain, and who now in the company of the redeemed are watching and supporting the church on earth in its present struggle” (Philip Pfatteicher, *New Book of Festivals and Commemorations: A Proposed Common Calendar of Saints* [Minneapolis: Fortress, 2008], p. 533).



Did you know that Luther chose the eve of All Saints Day, October 31 to post his Ninety-five Theses on the Wittenberg church door, because he knew many people would come to church that next day and would see his posting? Many churches and communities in Europe, though possibly more secular than their North American counterparts, still make a trip to cemeteries on All Saints Eve to place candles, votives, and flowers at the graveside.

- *Sundays and Seasons, Year A 2011*

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