

# PRESIDENT'S OFFICE



Rev. Justin Panzer | District President



“See what kind of love the Father has given to us, that we should be called children of God; and so we are. The reason why the world does not know us is that it did not know him. Beloved, we are God’s children now, and what we will be has not yet appeared; but we know that when he appears we shall be like him, because we shall see him as he is.”

(1 John 3:1-2)

The first Sunday in November is the time that we “commemorate the faithful departed.” We remember before God those who have gone before us into eternal life. We thank God for their faith. We thank God for their life among us. We praise God that in Jesus they are now safely resting from their earthly labors. Our loved ones who have gone before us in the Christian faith are now home with the Father. Yes, their bodies now lie in the ground, but their souls are with Christ.

Now, let’s make absolutely sure just why they are with Christ, and why we will one day be there with them as well. Holy Scripture says that God “hates sin.” He can’t stand to be in the presence of sin, which is why He banished Adam and Eve from the Garden of Eden, the place of perfection and holiness. God’s holiness demands punishment for man’s sin. And because God hates sin, we must point in one direction — to Jesus. God, out of love for sinners, sent His Son to be our substitute on the cross. By doing this, the Father’s wrath and anger was

appeased. His wrath against the Christian’s sin has been turned away and directed toward Christ.

**We have before us the picture of the cross. As the final stanza of the hymn “Abide with Me” so beautifully says, “Hold Thou Thy cross before my closing eyes...” (Lutheran Service Book #878). Christ being the substitute for our sins on the cross is what saves. Jesus stretching out His arms and dying for the forgiveness of our sins is the message for all.**

What can we say about us who are still living today? 1 John 3:2 says “we are God’s children now.” But, we don’t make ourselves children by our own efforts. Our selfish actions that we often display and our lack of love for others indicate this very well. You see, it’s God who makes us His children. God reaches out to us in love and draws wayward children — sinners — to Himself. The Holy Spirit draws us and puts us into a right relationship with the Father by grace through faith.

**It’s the blood of Jesus that cleanses us from all sin (1 John 1:7).** That blood was given directly to us in the saving waters of Baptism. In Baptism, we were brought to faith in Christ. Our sins were forgiven, and we were made the very heirs of eternal life. But more than that, Baptism places us into fellowship with Christ and with one another. This is why we grieve as a body together when someone from the fellowship among us in the Christian faith dies. But, it’s also the same reason why we rejoice as a body together because we know that that person is now safely in the arms of Jesus!

Dear Christian brother and sister, rejoice in what Christ has done, still does, and gives to you through Word and Sacrament. Rejoice that your Christian loved ones now rest in Jesus. Rejoice that you are His children now. **And rejoice that God gives us the opportunity each day to share that same love with others through our very own words and deeds!**

*Devotions written by President Justin Panzer are the exclusive property of the LCMS Kansas District. Permission is granted to Kansas District congregations and schools to share these devotions with their members.*