

NOVEMBER 2, 2025

NEVER ALONE

By Pr. Beate Chun

A Quiet Disaster

Grace to you and peace
from the one who is
and the one who was
and the one who is to come.

Almost six years ago,
a terrible disaster unfolded.
Quietly.
Far away.

A virus began to multiply.
To spread.
No one could see it at first.
No one could imagine what was coming.

Later we came to know it.
Covid-19.
By the time it reached the United States,
it had already claimed many victims.

On January 30, 2020,
the World Health Organization declared it
a public health emergency of international concern.
And on March 11, 2020,
it was declared a pandemic.

Lives changed overnight

San Francisco acted early.
February 25, 2020,
a local emergency was declared.
One of the first major cities in the United States.
March 16, 2020,
a shelter-in-place order closed nonessential businesses.
Public gatherings were restricted.

Overnight,
our lives changed.
Our routines vanished.
Our in-person worship stopped.

Many among us,
especially our seniors,
were already living alone.
They had managed.
Even if it was lonely.

Weekly worship.
Weekly fellowship.
These were lifelines.
And suddenly,
they were gone.

Isolation became real.
Loneliness became stark.
We all came face-to-face
with the truth:
humans are created to live in community.
To thrive together.
Isolation is not natural.
It is contrary to God's design.

The Challenge of Modern Community

And yet,
community is harder to find than ever.
Families are scattered.
Friendships are stretched thin.
Technology connects,
but sometimes it only reminds us how far apart we are.

Covid revealed our isolation.
The gaps.
The empty spaces.

But there is hope.
Because we are people of faith.
We have resources.
Powerful ones.

We can be families of faith.
We can create bonds
that are strong and life-giving.

Jesus Shows the Way

At the foot of the cross,
he looked upon his mother, Mary.
He saw the grief in her eyes.
The sorrow in her heart.

And he looked at John, the beloved disciple.
The one who had walked with him.
The one who had loved him,
and had been loved by him.

And Jesus spoke.
Simple words.
Profound words.
“Here is your mother.”
And to Mary,
“Here is your son.”

A new family was born
in that moment of suffering.
A family not defined by blood,
but by love.
By care.
By the will of God.

Jesus also spoke to those around him,
and to us through them:
“Who is my brother? Who is my sister?”
He answered:
“Everyone who does the will of God.”
Everyone.

We Are Not Alone

Some of you may feel alone.
You may believe no one understands.
But look around.
Others are alone too.
All around you.

What might it take
to reach out?
To hold each other's hands?
To form bonds of loving care?
To live as family,
as Jesus intended?

And there is more.
We are not alone.
Not ever.

There is the communion of saints.
A cloud of witnesses.
They surround us.
They strengthen us.
They comfort us.

Who Are the Saints?

In the Lutheran tradition,
a “saint” is not a spiritual superhero.
A saint is a member of the Body of Christ.
The living and the dead.
Even those yet to be born.

This cloud carries us.
Even when we cannot see it.
It includes those we have loved.
Beloved relatives.
Teachers. Mentors. Friends.

It also includes strangers.
People whose lives built up the Body of Christ.
People we have never met.
But who left a mark on the world.

Recently, one of our members, Andrea, reminded us of the life of Jane Goodall, who has died recently.
Jane Goodall led such an inspiring life.
That’s what I mean when I speak of saints.
It doesn’t always have to be a very spiritual or holy person.
Sometimes it’s someone who has made the world a better place.
Someone who, when we think of them,
our hearts are warmed and lifted,
and our lives are expanded.

Personal Saints

In moments of loneliness,
we can lean on this cloud.
We can draw strength from it.

And there are personal saints too.
Our heroes in faith.
Those who inspired us.

Who lifted our spirits.
Who whispered courage into our hearts.

Some of you might picture them.
Some have rituals to remember them.
Some keep their images nearby.
Some read their words.
Some pray to them.

Ask yourself:
Who is your hero in faith?
Who has inspired you?
Who comforts you in times of distress?
Who reminds you of God's love?

Eyes of the Heart

Ephesians- our text for today - gives us words to hold close in these times.

“I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened.”
Not your physical eyes,
but your heart.
The place where God sees you.
The place where God dwells.

That your eyes may be enlightened
to see the hope to which God has called you.
The riches of his glorious inheritance.
In his holy people.
In the saints.
In the body of Christ.

And the power,
incomparably great,
is available to us.
The same power
that raised Christ from the dead.
The same power
that seated him at God's right hand.

Far above all rule and authority,
power and dominion.

That power is ours too.
Not because of what we have done.
But because of what God has done.
We are chosen.
We are marked with the Holy Spirit.
We are promised a place
in the great family of God.

Ever since God heard of our faith,
ever since God saw our love for all his people,
he has not stopped giving thanks for us.
Ever since, he remembers us in his prayers.
He asks for wisdom.
He asks for revelation.
He asks that we might know him better.
That our hearts may be enlightened.

Community Post-COVID

Post-COVID,
we know more deeply
how fragile human connection can be.
We know the pain of isolation.
We know the yearning for touch.
For laughter.
For singing together.
For worship together.

And yet, the pandemic also revealed something else.
It showed us the power of community.
How small acts of care matter.
How reaching out can change a life.
How even one phone call, one meal delivered,
one shared prayer
can hold someone from falling apart.

The communion of saints,
the community of faith,
is a gift not just for our own sake.
It is a gift to the world.
The world is desperate for connection.
For hope.
For love.

We, as Christians, are called
to be makers of community.
To be builders of bonds.
To bring hope where despair lingers.
To gather those who are lost.
To carry the lonely.
To love the forgotten.

A Witness to Hope

We are saints, yes.
We are part of the cloud.
We are witnesses.
We are witnesses to hope.
To love.
To God's incomparably great power.

Even in the quiet.
Even in loneliness.
Even in suffering.
We are never alone.

Because God is with us.
Because the saints are with us.
Because we are with each other.

And because we go into the world
to create community,
to bring love,
to be family
where it is needed most.

Amen.

Sermon for November 2, 2025

All Saints Sunday Year C

Presented at St. Matthew's Lutheran Church San Francisco

Text: [Ephesians 1:11-23 NRSVue - In Christ we have also obtained an - Bible Gateway](#)

Tags: Ephesians 1:11-23 | All Saints Sunday Year C | Saints | Community | Covid 19