

All Saints Day Year A 2020

November 1, 2020

The Church of the Redeemer, Greenville, SC

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The Rev. Catherine L. Tatem

This is the day that the Lord has made – let us rejoice and be glad in it!

What a wonderful day; welcome to all who are here. Today is a great day for a baptism.

Welcome to all who are here especially for Kyle's baptism; thank you for supporting him in his Christian journey. In a few minutes everyone here will make a promise with God to help Kyle live into his Christian faith. Kyle is already a faithful participant at Redeemer; today we welcome him in a new way into the body of Christ.

It might seem strange that All Saints Day is a feast on which we baptize people into a life with Christ. On the feast of All Saints, we remember everyone who has died – all the saints.

We just heard about multitudes who have died, and whose robes are washed clean in the blood of the Lamb, Jesus. "From every nation, from all tribes and peoples and tongues" – these are God's people, and they are in heaven, protected by the Lamb who gained eternal life on their behalf. The Lamb Jesus is also the shepherd, tending the flock, leading the people to springs of water, and wiping away all their tears. Led by their Shepherd-Lamb, God's redeemed people will come through all of life's tribulation into God's Promised Land. We hear this intriguing passage today so that we can live in the assurance and hope that God of new life with Christ. The reading is about baptism, about being washed clean in Jesus, who brings us to new life in Him.

Our beautiful message of hope continues in the letter of 1 John, which identifies us as children of God. "Beloved, we are God's children now." We are God's children and saints of God now. In our baptized life we are called even now to wave palm branches of worship, of praising God and of giving our lives to service in the name of Christ.

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Jesus' words in the gospel of Matthew tell us what the kingdom of God in Jesus looks like. These statements – “blessed are” – are about bringing the kingdom here. Jesus is declaring that we are blessed, are happy because he says that we are. Our **character** is one of being blessed by God in all of our circumstances.

Kyle, this is beginning to sound like a very big day. I want you to know that you are not alone; we are all here to support you and to live our lives in Christ. In baptism, you – and we – respond to the love that God has already given us in Jesus Christ. God loved us first, and today you take that love into your heart in a new way. The Holy Spirit breathes that fresh, clean life into you and into all of us as we make/renew our own baptismal vows.

What a wonderful day for a baptism!