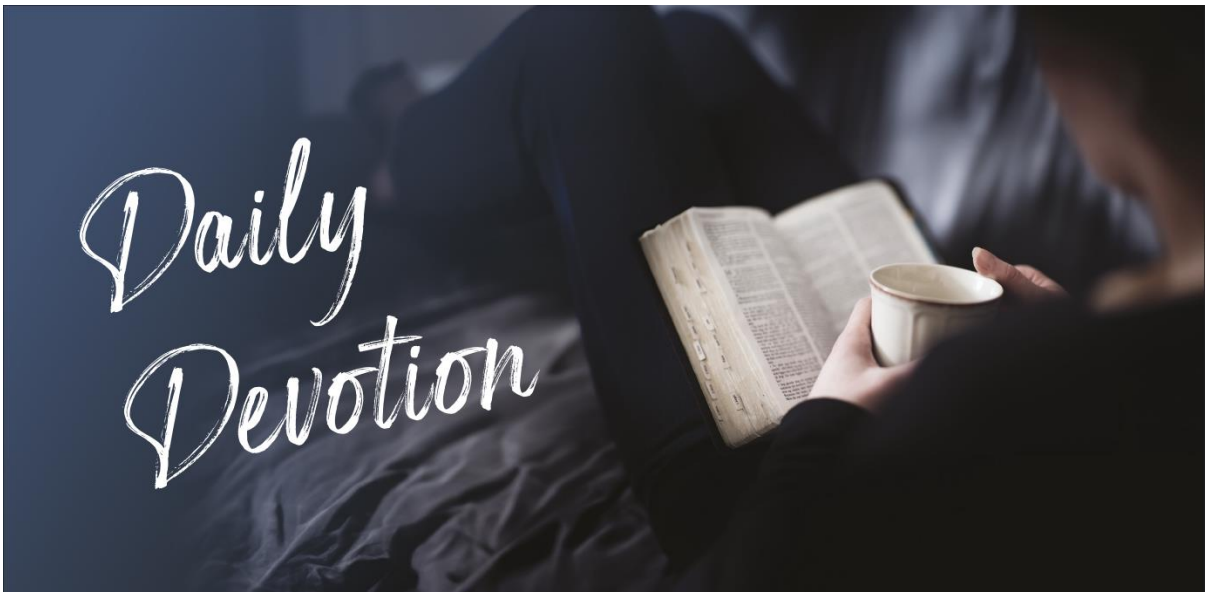

Sunday 1 November 2026 to
Sunday 8 November 2026

LUTHERAN CHURCH
OF AUSTRALIA

Sunday 1 November 2026

Vanity vs humility

by Faye Schmidt

For those who exalt themselves will be humbled, and those who humble themselves will be exalted (Matthew 23:12).

Read Matthew 23:1–12

This passage describes how a skin-deep religiosity exists to give its bearer standing in the community, generating authority, respect and awe. It is there to feed their vanity – 'Look at me!'

It is important to note here who Jesus is speaking to when he raises this issue. 'Then Jesus said to the crowds and to his disciples …' Yes, Jesus speaks to the crowds so they are aware of this matter, but the message's strength is directed at his disciples (us, the church). Jesus is speaking about the behaviour of the Pharisees, the religious leaders.

Their actions include expecting others to do what they themselves are unwilling to do; doing things only so others will observe and take note of them; assuming the place of honour at events, even in the synagogue; being acknowledged as leaders and desiring to be called 'Rabbi'.

The greatest danger to God's kingdom here on earth is the way we, as his followers, represent him. Do we take on the mantle of the Pharisee? Do we puff ourselves up and consider ourselves more worthy than others? Do we seek recognition or praise? Is it all about me?

Or do we, through acknowledging our sin and with praise and gratitude to God for his saving grace through Jesus, live lives of humility and service? Do I look to others and see their need?

The lesson to take from this passage is: How can I be a better servant? How can I love God more deeply and my neighbour more genuinely?

Heavenly Father, help us serve in humility and show the love of Jesus through our actions. This is how the world can see God on earth. Amen!

Faye Schmidt continues her diaconal calling through governance, having served on the Vic–Tas District Church Board, the General Church Board and currently as chair of the Standing Committee on Constitutions and her congregation, Bethlehem Lutheran Church, Adelaide. Having lived and worked in many locations in Australia and overseas, Faye has a heart for the stranger and the newcomer and for being open to new ideas, learning from others and responding to needs.

Monday 2 November 2026

The tree of life

by Faye Schmidt

This is what the Sovereign Lord says: I myself will take a shoot from the very top of a cedar and plant it (Ezekiel 17:22a).

Read Ezekiel 17:22–24

Ezekiel 17 was written in beautiful poetry, as a message for a people who have had their lives upended and homes destroyed, a people who have been taken into captivity in Babylon. A people who have seen their young, 18-year-old king – Jehoiachin – taken as a prisoner of war to a foreign city. A people who have had their God-given place of worship, sacrifice and renewal of God's promises and covenant, torn down and left in ruins.

In Scripture, various images are applied to God to help us understand who God is and his nature – shepherd, landowner, father (prodigal son), vine, etc. Here Ezekiel uses the imagery of a tree. The tree is fundamental to life. It provides shelter, safety, promise of fulfilment and fruit. This is our God.

The text also tells of God's promises to the people of Israel – and to us. That the ways of the world are not God's ways. That though we may be oppressed and feel small, he will make us tall. If we are weak, he will give us strength. And if we are weary and worn down, he will give us life.

The message is also one of inclusion. Birds of every kind and every tree in the forest are included in God's promise. This promise is fulfilled in Jesus Christ, through whom we receive the gift of eternal life in the sanctuary of the Tree.

Heavenly Father, send your Holy Spirit to be my guide so that I may be a fruitful branch of your tree and serve you and my neighbour to your glory. Amen.

Tuesday 3 November 2026

How great is God

by Faye Schmidt

Sitting down, Jesus called the Twelve and said, 'Anyone who wants to be first must be the very last, and the servant of all' (Mark 9:35).

Read Mark 9:33–37

There are many in our society who have authority within the context of their role, and they exercise this authority when seated: the king from his throne, the judge from their chair, the Speaker in Parliament from the Speaker's chair.

We know that Jesus has been given all authority on earth and in heaven by his Father, and he is *seated* at the right hand of God.

Therefore, when we read that Jesus 'sits down' to speak to the 12 disciples – that is, to people in the church – we recognise that he speaks from a position of authority. What he says bears all the strength of that authority, and we should take heed.

The contrast between the disciples' question and Jesus' response could not be starker. The disciples had not yet grasped the nature of Jesus' kingdom about which he spoke. They were still thinking of an earthly kingdom and, therefore, looking for where they fit in and who would take over when Jesus died – and Jesus had spoken of his death.

The disciples were measuring themselves against each other – greatness was relative to one another. Their greatness was a product of themselves.

But Jesus embraces a child, holds that child close, and demonstrates that the prime relationship is with him. For this child has nothing to offer in a contest for greatness. Jesus reminds us that we are all created in God's image. In seeing the child through Jesus' eyes, we see the Creator of all.

Each of us is great in Jesus' eyes, as we are part of God's creation. We, therefore, should welcome each other as equals under God and co-heirs of his kingdom through his grace.

Heavenly Father, send your Holy Spirit to help me to see you in others and serve you as I serve them with love, dignity and grace. Amen.

Wednesday 4 November 2026

Humility or humiliation?

by Faye Schmidt

For all those who exalt themselves will be humbled, and those who humble themselves will be exalted (Luke 14:11).

Read Luke 14:7–11

In our text, Jesus mentions a man who was invited to a wedding and sat in 'a place of honour' (verse 8). He was not told to sit there, but simply assumed that was where he belonged. By doing so, he conveyed to everyone at the wedding that he was one of the most important people there.

However, having exalted himself, he was humiliated when the host came and said, 'Give this person your seat' (verse 9), because another guest was considered more deserving of that place. The proud man was humiliated as he moved to a lower seat. Consider Proverbs 11:2: 'When pride comes, then comes disgrace.'

What does Jesus require of us? He says, 'When you are invited, take the lowest place, so that when your host comes, he will say to you, Friend, move up to a better place.'

When the person sits in the lowest place, he shows everyone that he does not consider himself any better than anyone else. In this parable, the host comes and moves him to a higher seat and honours him before others. It is the host who determines honour.

How do we practise humility? A saying often attributed to CS Lewis is, 'True humility is not thinking less of yourself; it is thinking of yourself less.' One way to foster humility in your life is to stop thinking of yourself so much. Sadly, so much in our society today emphasises the individual, their wants and desires, and the importance of self.

God does not call us into his kingdom to set us up as kings and queens but servants. The amazing thing is that once you stop thinking of yourself all the time, your mind will begin to think more about others. It is the humble person who does not focus on what they do not have, but considers what others lack. Pride says, 'I want!' and humility says, 'You need!' True humility thinks about others more often than about oneself.

Jesus is our example: 'And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to death – even death on a cross!' (Philippians 2:8).

Send your Holy Spirit, Lord, that I may consider others more and be more selfless so that I may serve you as I serve my neighbour. Amen.

Thursday 5 November 2026

What a difference!

by Faye Schmidt

He would not even look up to heaven, but beat his breast and said, 'God, have mercy on me, a sinner' (Luke 18:13b).

Read Luke 18:9–14

Jesus told this parable to help the disciples better understand how to approach God, reaffirm that the Lord sees all and knows our spiritual state, illustrate righteous behaviour and show whom God justifies.

Jesus surprised his listeners by presenting the Pharisee as a self-righteous hypocrite and the typically despised tax collector as a good person who returned home justified.

This parable was shared to show that pleasing God, finding God and being in right standing with God is not about outward or overt piety, but about worshipping God in truth and love, believing in his promises and obeying God's law as best as possible.

Redemption for transgressing the law is possible. Jesus says that those 'even like this tax collector' can leave and return home justified, not by their own goodness or their own righteousness, but by God's mercy and the sacrificial work of Jesus Christ. Hebrews reminds us: 'Let us then approach God's throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need' (Hebrews 4:16).

Scripture states that God 'despises the proud' but 'lifts the humble'. Self-righteous people may know how to pray eloquently and appear righteous, but God knows our motives and the condition of our hearts. When we live and approach God in humility, we recognise that Jesus is our only hope for salvation.

The divide between a holy God and a sinful humanity is too great for any human to bridge. Therefore, God sent Jesus to be a 'light' that leads to heaven and to our right standing before God.

Jesus lived a sinless life and became the final and perfect sacrifice on Calvary. Because Jesus shed his blood on Calvary and rose again on the third day, we, like the unlikely tax collector, can find justification and redemption.

Heavenly Father, thank you for sending your Son, Jesus Christ, to be the sacrifice for my sin. Help me always to know that my salvation is through your grace, not my doing. Amen.

Friday 6 November 2026

To God be the glory!

by Faye Schmidt

… so that all the Gentiles might come to the obedience that comes from faith – to the only wise God be glory forever through Jesus Christ! Amen (Romans 16:26b,27).

Read Romans 16:17–27

Paul thought highly of the church in Rome. He states, 'Everyone has heard about your obedience, so I am full of joy over you' (verse 19). However, no matter how good a church is, it should never become complacent. In this closing passage, Paul delivers a strong warning about the possibility of false teachers deceiving and damaging the church (verses 17,18). This could happen in any church. It can happen to us. We are not immune. Paul's advice is clear. He tells the church to 'watch out for them; avoid them'. He says, 'I want you to be wise as to what is good and innocent as to what is evil' (verse 19b).

Paul assures us there is an answer to the one who is the author of discord, division and deceit. We are not to be victims of defeat or despair. We are to confidently affirm God's victory over Satan. Satan has already been decisively defeated at the cross, but he has not yet conceded his defeat. We need to proclaim Christ's victory over Satan. We need to take the battle up to Satan by believing in God's word, trusting in God and resisting Satan. Such victories would be impossible, however, apart from grace.

God never meant us to fight the fight of faith alone. We are to assist each other. His will for us is that we should be in a community of faith. Paul was no lone ranger. He always seemed to gather – or seek out – those who could sharpen and help him. In this final greeting, Paul acknowledges some of those who partnered with him in his ministry. He practised what he preached.

We must never forget that in our baptism, God adopts us as his children through Jesus. He abides in us. He sends his Holy Spirit to strengthen us in our faith and to remind us that he will never leave us nor forsake us. To God be the glory!

O God, who has been the refuge of many generations, be my refuge today in every time and circumstance of need. Be my guide through all that is dark and doubtful. Be my guard against all that threatens my spirit's welfare. Be my strength in time of testing. Gladden my heart with your peace; through Jesus Christ, my Lord. Amen.

Saturday 7 November 2026

God's timely aid

by Faye Schmidt

But as for me, I am poor and needy; come quickly to me, O God. You are my help and my deliverer; Lord, do not delay (Psalm 70:5).

Read Psalm 70

Psalm 70 is one of those psalms that express longing for God to act. It's an urgent prayer for help. It expresses a feeling of being short on time and long on need. In a few short words, it describes a plethora of feelings.

There are many moments in every Christian's life when this psalm sums up our deepest need. We want God to act, and we want it now! Yet we are asked to wait. We feel the need to be vindicated. We want those who have hurt us to be exposed and justice done. In those moments, Psalm 70 provides a scriptural basis for lament, airing our grievances, asking for help and acknowledging that life isn't always warm and fuzzy.

However, there are moments when our days are easy. We may hear Psalm 70 but not really feel connected to it in our daily routine. We may be more interested in 'What's for lunch?' or the news of the day. Our days may simply not have room for lament.

Yet it is perhaps on those days we might benefit most from hearing Psalm 70. After all, the psalmist's urgent cry ('O Lord, make haste to help me!') is someone's cry, if not our own. The psalm can serve as a powerful reminder that even when our lives are rolling along as usual, that is not necessarily the case for everyone. Others might be hurting, calling out for help or awaiting deliverance. Others might be crying out but hearing no response.

This psalm calls us to stop and listen. Who around us is living in this psalm's reality? Who is desperate for help but waiting for God to intervene? Who might be crying, even though there are no visible tears? Who needs our love and reassurance while they wait upon the Lord?

Dear God, our creator and sustainer, help us to turn away from our self-reliance and instead rely on you for everything we need each day. Remind us especially of our need for your forgiveness and grace, and help us to be thankful that you offer this freely in the death and resurrection of your Son, our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

Sunday 8 November 2026

Live ready

by Jim Strelan

The virgins who were ready went in with him … (Matthew 25:10b).

Read Matthew 25:1–13

Over the years, someone or another has proclaimed certainty about the day Christ will return. And faithful followers have sold their possessions (no need for them) and gathered on a hilltop, singing hymns and praying as they waited. They wanted to be ready.

Is that what being ready means? The bridesmaids in this parable wanted to be ready, and some prepared themselves, while others didn't. They knew the bridegroom was coming, but they didn't know exactly when. When he did come – at a most unexpected time, midnight – they were surprised. Some had their lamps lit and brought extra oil. Some didn't. Some ready, some not.

In the following verses of Matthew 25, we first have the parable of the man who entrusts his property to his servants. When he returns, he wants to know what they did with what they were given. And then we have the account of the final judgement when some are directed to the right and some to the left. And the criteria? How did you respond to the one in need: the hungry, the thirsty, the stranger, the one short of clothes, the sick, the prisoner? Those who responded with love and care weren't aware that, by doing so, they were serving Jesus. They just did it. It was their lifestyle and pattern of behaving.

A line attributed to Martin Luther (although the attribution is unproven) goes something like this: 'Even if I knew that tomorrow the world would go to pieces, I would still plant my apple tree.' In other words, he would go about his day-to-day activities because he knew that he and the world were in God's hands.

So maybe being ready means 'living ready'. Not like those gathered on the hilltop with particular actions on a particular day, but living ready, trusting in God's ongoing goodness. Wisely using the gifts given to us. Meeting the needs of those around us as best we can because that's just what God's people do. Living ready.

Lord, help me live each day so that, no matter when you return, I am ready, trusting in your goodness, aware of your presence, focused outward rather than inward. And so, I pray with great calmness: come, Lord Jesus. Amen.

Jim is a retired pastor living with his wife Ruth in Deception Bay, Queensland. He spends his retirement making space to add more Lions' Premiership posters to the six (3+3) he already has on his garage wall.

Sermon All Saints Day Light Lutheran Church – Freeling & Rosedale November 1st, 2026

1 Jn. 3:1-3; Rev. 7:9-17 – "Who wants to be a child again?"

Introduction

Grace, mercy and peace to you from God our Father and our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

Who wants to be a child again?

Being a child has its advantages. You don't have to worry about paying the bills, filling the car with fuel, or wondering whether the next harvest will be a good one. Someone else takes care of those things.

But childhood also means growing up. You don't understand everything, you depend on others, and you face things you can't control.

As we grow older, we might wish we could be young again. We might long for the days when our parents were still with us, when family gathered around the table, and when life seemed simpler.

Today, on All Saints Day, we remember those who have gone before us in faith. We remember loved ones, friends and fellow Christians who once sat beside us in church. We miss their familiar faces, their voices and their presence in our lives.

We know death comes to everyone, but our society rarely wants to talk about it. We tuck death and grief away, mentioning them only in quiet conversations.

All Saints Day gives us permission to speak openly about death, grief and the hope we share in Jesus Christ. We remember those who have died, but we also celebrate God's promise that death will not have the final word.

That brings us back to our question: **Who wants to be a child again?**

John writes in our first reading:

"See what great love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God! And that is what we are!"

John doesn't say we might become God's children if we try hard enough. He doesn't say we must prove ourselves worthy.

He says, "That is what we are!"

God makes us his children through Jesus Christ. He doesn't adopt us because we've earned our place in his family. Through Jesus' death and resurrection, God forgives our sins and welcomes us home. In baptism, he joins us to Christ and gives us the promise of eternal life.

We belong to God now, not because we've earned his love, but because he freely gives it.

John also reminds us that, although we are God's children now, we haven't yet seen everything God has planned for us.

We still struggle with sin. We experience illness, loneliness and grief. Our bodies grow older, and eventually we die. Sometimes we wonder what lies ahead.

John points us towards Jesus. When Christ appears, we will see him as he really is, and we will be like him.

One day, we will see our Saviour face to face. We won't have to wrestle with doubts or wonder what heaven will be like. God will complete what he has begun in us.

That is the hope we celebrate today. The saints who have died trusting Jesus have not put their faith in vain. Their future, like ours, rests in the hands of the risen Christ.

Revelation gives us a wonderful picture of that future.

John sees a crowd nobody can count, gathered before God's throne and the Lamb. They come from every nation, tribe, people and language. They wear white robes and hold palm branches in their hands.

Who are these people?

They are God's people, brought through suffering into his eternal presence.

John tells us what has made their robes white: “They have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.”

That sounds strange, doesn't it? Blood normally stains clothes rather than cleans them.

But John wants us to understand something wonderful. Our sin stains our lives, and we cannot wash it away through good deeds or by pretending we've done nothing wrong.

Only Jesus can cleanse us.

The Lamb is Jesus, who gave his life on the cross for us. His blood speaks of his sacrifice for our sin. Through his death and resurrection, Jesus forgives us and clothes us in his righteousness.

The saints in heaven don't stand before God because they lived perfect lives. They stand before him because Jesus has made them clean.

That includes the people we remember today. Their hope rested not in their goodness, but in God's grace. The same grace welcomes us.

Look at what God promises his people. He shelters them. They will never hunger or thirst again. The Lamb will shepherd them to springs of living water, and God himself will wipe every tear from their eyes.

What a picture of God's love!

The Jesus who died for us is the same Jesus who lives for us. He doesn't simply rescue us from death; he brings us home to live with him forever.

We cannot explain every detail of what our departed loved ones now experience. We don't need to fill the gaps with guesses. God's Word gives us a better promise: those who belong to Christ will share his victory and see him as he truly is.

Death separates us from those we love, and that hurts. Jesus himself wept at the grave of his friend Lazarus. Tears don't mean we lack faith.

We grieve because we love, but we grieve with hope because Jesus lives.

So, what does All Saints Day mean for us?

First, we can stop trying to earn God's love. We already belong to his family through Jesus. Our love and service to others grow from the love he has freely given us.

Second, we can face ageing and mortality honestly. We may lose our independence, our friends and the familiar things that have shaped our lives. Yet none of these things can separate us from God's love in Christ.

Third, we can live with hope in a world that often doesn't recognise God or understand what it means to belong to him.

Our neighbours might not understand why we gather for worship or trust Jesus when life gets hard. Our congregations might feel small, and our future might seem uncertain. Yet our future doesn't depend on our strength, our numbers or our circumstances. It rests with our risen Saviour.

Through his Word and Sacraments, God continues to forgive us, strengthen our faith and sustain us. He sends us into daily life to love and serve others, not to earn his favour, but because he has already welcomed us into his family.

Today, we remember the saints who have finished their earthly journey. We give thanks for their lives, mourn their absence and rejoice in the promise they shared with us.

We are not yet all gathered together before the throne. We still live in a world of sorrow, uncertainty and death. Yet we share one Saviour, one gracious Father and one sure hope.

So, who wants to be a child again?

Perhaps we don't want to return to childhood as we once knew it. But through Jesus, we can rejoice that we are children of our heavenly Father.

We are God's children now. We are growing towards the day when Christ reveals the fullness of his promise. Those who die trusting him will see their Saviour face to face, and one day we will join them.

Then the Lamb will lead us home. God will wipe every tear from our eyes, and death will be no more.

Until that day, we trust the Father who loves us, the Son who redeemed us, and the Holy Spirit who sustains our faith.

We are God's children now. We belong to Jesus today. In him, our future is secure.

Amen.