

Notes from the Music Director (No. 16)

Grace Evangelical Lutheran Church, Rochester, Pennsylvania

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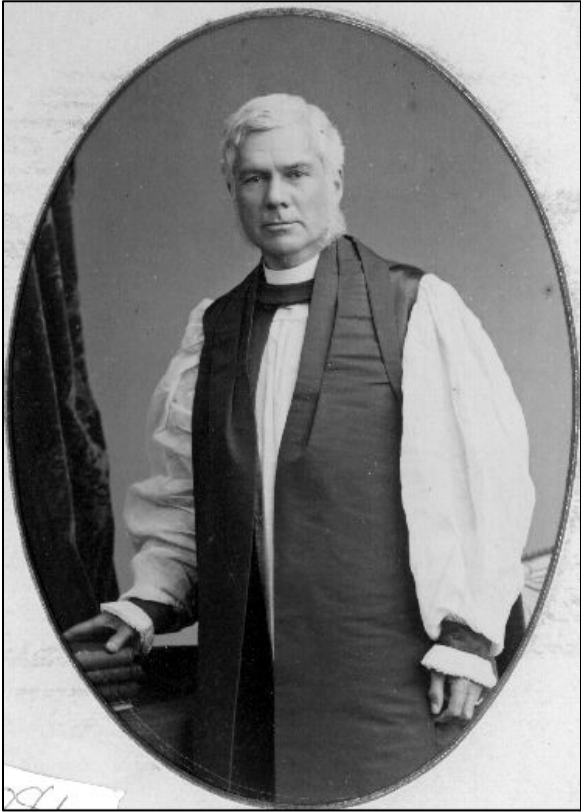
November 1, 2015—All Saints' Day



"All Saints Day," a painting by Fra Angelico (1395-1455).

The custom of honoring the faithful deceased is said to have originated in the ancient Roman holiday of the Feast of the Lemures (May 13), in which malevolent and restless spirits of the dead were propitiated. By the eighth century, the festival commemorating all saints had been moved to November 1 by the Christian churches in England and Ireland in order to Christianize the Celtic harvest festival of Samhain, which marked the beginning of winter and communal attention to the dead. In current Christian use, All Saints' Day is dedicated to thanksgiving for all the named and unnamed who have died in the Lord. At Grace Lutheran, as in many assemblies, the names of members who have died over the previous twelve months are read aloud.

Our Hymn of the Day is “For All the Saints” (LBW 174), with text by the Right Reverend Bishop William Walsham How, and music by the celebrated English composer Ralph Vaughan Williams.



The Right Reverend Bishop William Walsham How

William Walsham How (1823-1897), the son of a Shrewsbury solicitor, studied at Shrewsbury School, Wadham College, Oxford and University College in Durham. He was ordained as an Anglican priest in 1846, and soon began a ministry as curate at the Abbey Church in Shrewsbury. In 1851 he became Rector of Whittington and was at one point Rural Dean of Oswestry. In 1879 he became a suffragan bishop in London, under the title of Bishop of Bedford.

In 1888 he was made the first bishop of Wakefield, and in the north of England he worked tirelessly, especially for the poor. One source claimed, “His sermons

were straightforward, earnest and attractive; and besides publishing several volumes of these, he wrote a good deal of verse.” How was the author of many well-known hymns, such as “O One with God the Father” (LBW 77), “O Word of God Incarnate” (LBW 231), “We Give Thee but Thine Own” (LBW 41), and “For All the Saints” (LBW 174).

How’s text for “For All the Saints” suggests an immediate paradise for the dead in stanza six:

*The golden evening brightens in the west;
Soon, soon to faithful warriors comes their rest;
Sweet is the calm of paradise the blest.*

Stanza eight describes the final resurrection:

*From earth’s wide bounds, from ocean’s farthest coast,
Through gates of pearl streams in the countless host,
Singing to Father, Son and Holy Ghost.*

The composer of the hymn tune for “For All the Saints” (*Sine Nomine*), Ralph Vaughan Williams (1872-1958), was a celebrated English conductor, lecturer and editor, but is best known as a composer of nine symphonies, six operas, chamber music, choral music, and film scores. Young Ralph was exposed at an early age to church music as his father, the Reverend Arthur Vaughan Williams (1834–1875), served as vicar at All Saints Church in Down Ampney, Gloucestershire.



1972 United Kingdom postage stamp commemorating the 100th anniversary of the birth of Ralph Vaughan Williams.

Vaughan Williams studied history and music at Trinity College, Cambridge, and composition at the Royal College of Music in London. One of his fellow pupils at the RCM was Gustav Holst, who became known for his symphonic suite, *The Planets*, and Leopold Stokowski who became the conductor for the Philadelphia Orchestra. Vaughan Williams is best known for his violin concerto *The Lark Ascending* (1914), and orchestral works such as *Fantasia on a Theme by Thomas Tallis* (1910), and *Fantasia on Greensleeves* (1934).

Vaughan Williams was extremely active in church music, and composed at least sixteen different hymn tunes, including *Sine Nomine*, the tune for “For All the Saints.” He wrote or arranged the tunes for many hymns found in Grace Lutheran hymnals, such as:

- “When Jesus Came to Jordon” (WOV 647),
- “Blessed Be the God of Israel” (WOV 725),
- “My Soul Proclaims Your Greatness” (WOV 730),
- “As Man and Woman We Were Made” (WOV 751),
- “O Chief of Cities, Bethlehem” (LBW 81),
- “O Christ, our King, Creator, Lord” (LBW 101),
- “Hail Thee, Festival Day!” (LBW 142),
- “Now All the Vault of Heaven Resounds” (LBW 143),
- “Rejoice, Angelic Choirs, Rejoice!” (LBW 146),

“A Hymn of Glory Let Us Sing!” (LBW 157),
“Ye Watchers and Ye Holy Ones” (LBW 175),
“At the Name of Jesus” (LBW 179),
“Praise and Thanksgiving” (LBW 191),
“God, Who Made the Earth and Heaven” (LBW 281),
“Oh, Sing, My Soul, Your Maker’s Praise” (LBW 319),
“O God of Earth and Altar” (LBW 428),
“Come Down, O Love Divine” (LBW 508),
“Come, My Way, My Truth, My Life” (LBW 513),

and the famous

“All Creatures of Our God and King” (LBW 527),

not to mention eleven tunes in the *Evangelical Lutheran Worship* hymnal.

To hear the Mormon Tabernacle Choir singing *For All the Saints*, with text by William Walsham How and music by Ralph Vaughan Williams, go to <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bL65dMLHBw0>.

Resources

Holy Bible, New Revised Standard Version (Zonderfan: 1989)
LBW: Lutheran Book of Worship (Augsburg Publishing House: 1978)
WOV: With One Voice (Augsburg Fortress: 1995)
W&P: Worship & Praise Songbook (Augsburg Fortress: 1999)
ELW: Evangelical Lutheran Worship (Augsburg Fortress: 2006)
Wikipedia: <https://en.wikipedia.org>
Hymnary.org: <http://www.hymnary.org>
GIA Publications: <http://www.giamusic.com>
Hymntime.com: <http://hymntime.com>
Singers.com: <http://singers.com>

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