Vigil of All Hallows

Known by Name, Sent to the Lost

Saturday, October 31, 2026 · 5:30–9:00 PM · 280 Pine Mdw, Spring Branch, TX

“Your names are written in heaven.” — Luke 10:20 (CSB)

The Night at a Glance

5:30–6:45	Food & fellowship — witness cards set out around the eating area
6:45–7:00	Transition — settle in
7:00–8:10	The Vigil — five movements (chat + scripture + hymn)
8:10–8:30	The Remembrance
8:30–9:00	Dessert & fellowship — dismiss as people are ready

Prep checklist: witness cards printed (one per witness, plus spares) and set out around the eating area; printed hymn lyrics (projection may not work outside); fire pit lit early (it's slow to catch, especially if damp — light it well before guests arrive); dessert ready; a rain plan (garage, canopy, or the house).

Food & Fellowship — The Cloud of Witnesses (5:30–6:45)

Casual backyard meal. Set the witness cards out around the eating area — on tables, benches, wherever people gather — and let folks pick them up and read them as time allows. No formality required: all evening, people are quietly *surrounded by a cloud of witnesses*, and in the Movement 2 chat you get to point back to them.

The fire pit is just atmosphere tonight — light it early (it's slow to catch when damp) and let it be a warm backdrop, not a focal point.

The Vigil (7:00–8:10)

Opening welcome (1 min, from the front):

> “Welcome, and thank you for being here. Tonight is a vigil — All Hallows' Eve, the evening before All Saints' Day. For over twelve hundred years, Christians have kept this night with prayer and firelight, remembering the holy ones who went before us: the famous, the forgotten, and the ones only heaven remembers. *Hallow* simply means *holy*. So tonight we slow down, and we remember.”

MOVEMENT 1

Whose Night Is This?

Scripture: John 1:1–5 · **Hymn:** “Holy, Holy, Holy”

JOHN 1:1–5 · CSB

Prologue

[1]In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. [2]He was with God in the beginning. [3]All things were created through him, and apart from him not one thing was created that has been created. [4]In him was life, and that life was the light of men. [5]That light shines in the darkness, and yet the darkness did not overcome it.

CHAT (3–4 MIN)

“Every year somebody asks if Halloween is off-limits for Christians. Here's a better question: what if the night was never the world's to begin with? Like I said — All Hallows' Eve is the evening of the holy ones, and the church has kept it for centuries with prayer and firelight. Why light in the dark? Because of something John wrote down: 'The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.' Hear that right — it doesn't say the light shines in *spite* of the darkness. It shines *in* the darkness, and the darkness has never once put it out. That's the whole reason for a vigil on the darkest night of the year: not to hide from the dark, and not to pretend it isn't there — but to keep a light burning right in the middle of it and remember the One the dark could never swallow. Tonight we're doing what the church has always done on this night: keeping a light and remembering.”

LEAD-IN

“Before we sing, settle it in your heart: tonight is not the darkness's night. It never was. It's the Lord's — and you're keeping it.”

MOVEMENT 2

The Witnesses (Remembrance of the Martyrs)

Scripture: Acts 7:54–60; Hebrews 12:1–2 · **Hymn:** “It Is Well With My Soul”

ACTS 7:54–60 · CSB

The First Christian Martyr

54 When they heard these things, they were enraged and gnashed their teeth at him. 55 Stephen, full of the Holy Spirit,
gazed into heaven. He saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God. 56 He said, “Look, I see the
heavens opened and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God!”
57 They yelled at the top of their voices, covered their ears, and together rushed against him. 58 They dragged him out of
the city and began to stone him. And the witnesses laid their garments at the feet of a young man named Saul. 59 While
they were stoning Stephen, he called out, “Lord Jesus, receive my spirit!” 60 He knelt down and cried out with a loud
voice, “Lord, do not hold this sin against them!” And after saying this, he fell asleep.

HEBREWS 12:1–2 · CSB

The Call to Endurance

1 Therefore, since we also have such a large cloud of witnesses surrounding us, let us lay aside every hindrance and the
sin that so easily ensnares us. Let us run with endurance the race that lies before us, 2 keeping our eyes on Jesus, the
pioneer and perfecter of our faith. For the joy that lay before him, he endured the cross, despising the shame, and sat
down at the right hand of the throne of God.

CHAT (3–4 MIN)

“When the church first started setting aside days to remember the holy ones, it wasn't about famous people. It was about the martyrs. And here's the thing about that word: *martyr* isn't a religious word at all. In Greek it just means *witness* — someone who tells what they saw. The martyrs didn't set out to be heroes. They just refused to stop saying what they'd seen. The first was a young deacon named Stephen. He was dragged outside the city, and as the stones came, the Bible says he looked up and saw heaven open — he saw Jesus standing at the right hand of God. And his last words were a prayer for the people killing him: 'Lord, do not hold this sin against them.' Stephen didn't win an argument that day. He won a witness. And Hebrews says that's why we can run with endurance today — because we are 'surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses.' If you've been reading the cards tonight, you've been getting to know some of them. Look around — the cards on the tables, the names scattered among us. You are surrounded by witnesses. And when the writer of Hebrews says we're surrounded by witnesses, he means they're watching — and they're cheering.”

LEAD-IN

“As we sing, remember: people sang this hope before you — some of them on their way to die for it. Verse six is about them. Sing it for them.”

MOVEMENT 3

Known by Name

Scripture: Acts 1:21–26; Luke 10:17–20 · **Hymn:** “Blessed Assurance”

ACTS 1:21–26 · CSB

21 “Therefore, from among the men who have accompanied us during the whole time the Lord Jesus went in and out
among us— 22 beginning from the baptism of John until the day he was taken up from us—from among these, it is
necessary that one become a witness with us of his resurrection.”

23 So they proposed two: Joseph, called Barsabbas, who was also known as Justus, and Matthias. 24 Then they prayed,
“You, Lord, know everyone's hearts; show which of these two you have chosen 25 to take the place in this apostolic
ministry that Judas left to go where he belongs.” 26 Then they cast lots for them, and the lot fell to Matthias and he was
added to the eleven apostles.

LUKE 10:17–20 · CSB

The Return of the Seventy-Two

17 The seventy-two returned with joy, saying, “Lord, even the demons submit to us in your name.”

18 He said to them, “I watched Satan fall from heaven like lightning. 19 Look, I have given you the authority to trample
on snakes and scorpions and over all the power of the enemy; nothing at all will harm you. 20 However, don't rejoice
that the spirits submit to you, but rejoice that your names are written in heaven.”

CHAT (3–4 MIN)

“All Saints' Day has a beautiful phrase at its heart: the church remembers the saints *known and unknown*. Think about what that means. History records maybe a few thousand names from the early church. Heaven recorded all of them. There's an old writer who said of the faithful departed: 'there are some who have no memorial, who have perished as though they had not lived.' The world's books are full of gaps like that. Heaven's book has none. My favorite person in the book of Acts might be a man named Joseph Barsabbas. He was with Jesus from the very beginning — from John's baptism to the ascension. When they needed someone to fill Judas's place, they put forward two men: Joseph Barsabbas and Matthias. The lot fell to Matthias. Joseph missed it. The most famous thing about him is that he wasn't chosen. And here's what the church remembered about him: he kept serving anyway. One early tradition says he drank poison meant to stop his witness and, by the grace of God, was unharmed. No title, no fanfare, no book of the Bible — and Jesus says at the end of Luke 10 what matters about people like him: 'Do not rejoice that the spirits submit to you — rejoice that your names are written in heaven.' History forgets. Heaven doesn't. If nobody knows what you've carried for Jesus, One Person does — and He's keeping the record in a book that never loses a name.”

LEAD-IN

“As we sing, let the Lord remind you of the deepest fact about you: your name is written in heaven, and nothing can erase it.”

MOVEMENT 4

Sent to the Lost

Scripture: Luke 15:1–7; Acts 15:36–39; 2 Timothy 4:11 · **Hymn:** “Great Is Thy Faithfulness”

LUKE 15:1–7 · CSB

The Parable of the Lost Sheep

1 All the tax collectors and sinners were approaching to listen to him. 2 And the Pharisees and scribes were complaining,
“This man welcomes sinners and eats with them.”

3 So he told them this parable: 4 “What man among you, who has a hundred sheep and loses one of them, does not leave
the ninety-nine in the open field and go after the lost one until he finds it? 5 When he has found it, he joyfully puts it on
his shoulders, 6 and coming home, he calls his friends and neighbors together, saying to them, 'Rejoice with me, because
I have found my lost sheep!' 7 I tell you, in the same way, there will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents
than over ninety-nine righteous people who don't need repentance.”

ACTS 15:36–39 · CSB

36 After some time had passed, Paul said to Barnabas, “Let's go back and visit the brothers and sisters in every town
where we have preached the word of the Lord and see how they are doing.” 37 Barnabas wanted to take along John who
was called Mark. 38 But Paul insisted that they should not take along this man who had deserted them in Pamphylia and
had not gone on with them to the work. 39 They had such a sharp disagreement that they parted company, and Barnabas
took Mark with him and sailed off to Cyprus.

2 TIMOTHY 4:11 · CSB

11 Only Luke is with me. Bring Mark with you, for he is useful to me in ministry.

CHAT (3–4 MIN)

“Here's the second half of tonight's theme. If your name is known in heaven, it's not so you can sit on it. Jesus once sent out seventy followers — no names given, not one — two by two, to every town He was about to visit. That's the witness job description: go ahead of the Shepherd and prepare the way for Him to arrive in somebody's life. And when He told the story of the lost sheep, He said the shepherd doesn't wait for the sheep to find its own way back. He leaves the ninety-nine, and He seeks *until he finds* — and then he carries it home rejoicing. The best comeback story in the whole theme might be John Mark. He quit on the mission field, mid-journey. Paul refused to take him again. But a man named Barnabas — whose name means *Son of Encouragement* — wouldn't quit on him. They split over it: Barnabas took Mark and gave him a second chance. Years later, Paul is writing from prison: 'Get Mark and bring him with you, for he is useful to me.' The quitter wrote the second Gospel. Here's what that means for you: some of you are the wanderer — there's a way back, and the Shepherd is not staying with the flock tonight. Some of you are the encourager — there's a Mark in your life that needs somebody to believe God's not finished with them. And every one of us knows a lost sheep.”

LEAD-IN

“One name. As we sing, let the Lord put one lost sheep on your heart. Hold onto it — you'll need it in a few minutes.”

MOVEMENT 5

Carry the Light

Scripture: Matthew 5:14–16 · **Hymn:** "How Great Thou Art"

> MATTHEW 5:14–16 · CSB
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> 14 "You are the light of the world. A city situated on a hill cannot be hidden. 15 No one lights a lamp and puts it under a basket, but rather on a lampstand, and it gives light for all who are in the house. 16 In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father in heaven."

> CHAT (3–4 MIN)
>
> "On this night, for centuries, Christians remembered the faithful departed — and they did it with light, because light is the sermon this night preaches. Not because the dead need light; because the living do. Every flame said the same thing: *the light of Christ has not gone out.* Not in that family. Not in that town. Not in this world. Jesus said it plainer than any tradition ever could: 'You are the light of the world. A city on a hill cannot be hidden. No one lights a lamp and puts it under a basket, but on a stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house.' Then He said the words that turn the whole night outward: 'Let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father in heaven.' The church has never answered the dark by hiding from it. Tonight you've been remembering the light-bearers who went before us — and the whole point of remembering them is to become one."

LEAD-IN

"So sing this next one like a people who are not afraid of the dark."

The Remembrance (8:10–8:30)

Setup: No props needed. No assigned seats — people stand or pull up chairs. Keep it quiet and unhurried; a soft instrumental in the background helps if you have one.

Script:

1. *"Let's take a quiet minute. Hold two names in your heart. First: someone who shaped your faith who is now with the Lord — a saint known to you. Second: one lost sheep — someone He may be asking you to go find this season."* (Silence, 1–2 minutes.)
2. *"If you're willing, say the name of your saint aloud — first names only are fine, or just hold them in your heart. We remember them tonight."* (Invite names one at a time; after each, the leader simply says, *"We remember."*)
3. Sing **"In Christ Alone"** — all verses, or just the first and last.
4. **Closing collect:**

> *"Father, we thank You for every name spoken tonight, and for the countless names known to You alone — You have not lost one, and You have not forgotten one. We thank You that our names too are written in heaven. And now, Lord — for the lost sheep on our hearts, the ones still out there in the dark: send us. Make us witnesses who go ahead of the Shepherd, carrying Your light, until every lost sheep is found. In the strong name of Jesus, Amen."*

5. **Benediction: Numbers 6:24–26**

> NUMBERS 6:24–26 · CSB
>
> [24]"May the Lord bless you and protect you; [25]may the Lord make his face shine on you and be gracious to you;
> [26]may the Lord look with favor on you and give you peace."

Note before dismissal: invite everyone to grab one of the witness cards on their way out — a saint to carry home and pray through this season.

Closing & Fellowship (8:30–9:00)

Dessert and unhurried conversation. Dismiss with no pressure.

Appendix: Witness Cards

Print one per witness — set them out around the eating area for people to read as time allows.

Stephen — *The First Witness.* A deacon full of faith and the Spirit, he was dragged before the council and stoned — the first to die for the name. As he died he saw heaven open and prayed for his killers. "Martyr" literally means "witness." He is both. (Acts 6–7)

Mark — *The Comeback.* He quit the mission field mid-journey. Paul refused a second chance; his cousin Barnabas wouldn't give up on him. Years later Paul wrote: "He is useful to me." Mark wrote the second Gospel. (Acts 13:13; 15:36–39; 2 Timothy 4:11)

Barnabas — *The Encourager.* His name means "Son of Encouragement." Church tradition says he was one of the seventy Jesus sent out. He's the man who went after wanderers — including a deserter everyone else had written off. (Acts 4:36; 15:37–39)

Joseph Barsabbas (Justus) — *The Almost-Apostle.* He walked with Jesus from the beginning, from John's baptism to the ascension. He was one of two men nominated to replace Judas. He wasn't chosen — and kept serving anyway. Tradition says he drank poison meant to silence him and was unharmed. (Acts 1:23; Eusebius, Church History 3.39)

Matthias — *The Twelfth.* With Jesus the whole way, unnamed until the day a lot fell on him. Afterward he's never mentioned again in Scripture — yet heaven recorded every day he walked with the Lord before anyone knew his name. (Acts 1:21–26)

Peter — *The Restored.* He denied Jesus three times in one night, wept bitterly, and was restored by the sea. Jesus told him: "When you have turned back, strengthen your brothers." The lost sheep who became a shepherd. (Luke 22:31–32; John 21)

The Women — *The Faithful Unnamed.* Mary Magdalene, Joanna, Susanna, "and many others" provided for Jesus out of their means, and they were the first witnesses of the empty tomb. Many of them the Gospels never name at all. (Luke 8:1–3; 24:1–10)

Polycarp — *The Eighty-Six-Year Witness.* A disciple of the apostle John, bishop of Smyrna. Told to deny Christ or burn, the old man answered: "Eighty-six years I have served Him, and He has done me no wrong. How can I blaspheme my King who saved me?" (Martyrdom of Polycarp, c. AD 155)

Want more cards? Good. Eusebius, the first church historian, admitted there is no full catalogue of the faithful — and there never has been. There's always room for one more name. (Add a card for a saint from your own church's story — someone known to God alone, or known to you.)

Honesty Notes

(For you, not from the platform.)

- The Barsabbas poison story is a tradition preserved by Eusebius from Papias (early 2nd century) — say “one early church tradition says,” not “the Bible says.”
- Barnabas among the Seventy comes from Clement of Alexandria via Eusebius — same treatment.
- The “no memorial” line quoted in Movement 3 is from Sirach 44:9 (Apocrypha) — quoted in the chat simply as “an old writer,” which is accurate and enough.
- The claim “the church has kept this night for over twelve hundred years” is solid: the November 1 feast and its vigil were fixed in Rome in the 8th century and across the Frankish empire by 835.
- The line about candles at graves on All Hallows' Eve reflects long-standing Allhallowtide practice; keep it in general terms (“for centuries, Christians…”) and it stands.