What the Bare Trees Show Us

Rev. Jane Willan · November 2026 · The Parsonage Desk



Every November, after the last leaves come down, I notice the nests. All summer they were up there in the trees on Church Street, and I walked under them every day without a clue. Now the branches are bare and there they are, one after another, as if someone had been quietly building a neighborhood over my head while I wasn't looking.

That is more or less how I feel about the saints.

On All Saints' Sunday we read the names of the people we lost this year. It always takes longer than I expect. Then I look around the sanctuary and start seeing their work everywhere. Someone painted these walls. Someone argued at a long-ago council meeting for the ramp by the side door, and won. Someone taught a Sunday school class of second graders who are now the grandparents in our pews. Most of them never put their names on anything. They just built.

November is a month for gratitude, and it is easy to keep that general. The turkey, the family, the food. All good. But this year I'd like us to try something more specific. Look up. Notice who built the nest you are sitting in.

And then think about the people who will sit here after us. They won't know our names either. That's fine. Someone will be happy in what we built.

The trees show us everything once the leaves are gone. We just have to look up.

See you in the pews!
Rev. Jane