

Sunday 31 October 2021

All Saints' Day



The communion of saints
Tapestry by John Nava

Sermon © Rosie Kingham.

Liturgy and prayers of intercession © 2000 The Archbishops' Council.

Bible readings © the publishers of the NRSV translation.

- The liturgy assumes the service is Eucharistic. The prayers of consecration appear at the end.
- The hymns are YouTube links. To hear the hymns please hover the mouse over each link, press Ctrl and then return.
- To see service transcripts from previous weeks, please visit the page, <http://www.medlockhead.co.uk/resources/index.htm>

Introduction and welcome

HYMN 1 For all the saints

(please click on this link to hear the hymn)

The Welcome

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit

All Amen.

The Lord be with you

All And also with you.

The Preparation

**All Almighty God,
to whom all hearts are open,
all desires known,
and from whom no secrets are hidden:
cleanse the thoughts of our hearts
by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit,
that we may perfectly love you,
and worthily magnify your holy name;
through Christ our Lord. Amen.**

Our Lord Jesus Christ said:

The first commandment is this:

'Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is the only Lord.

You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart,
with all your soul, with all your mind,
and with all your strength.'

And the second is this: 'Love your neighbour as yourself.'

There is no other commandment greater than these.

On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.

All Amen. Lord, have mercy.

Christ calls us to share the heavenly banquet of his love with all the saints in earth and heaven. Therefore, knowing our unworthiness and sin, let us confess our sins in penitence and faith, firmly resolved to keep God's commandments and to live in love and peace with all.

All Almighty God, our heavenly Father,
we have sinned against you
and against our neighbour
in thought and word and deed,
through negligence, through weakness,
through our own deliberate fault.
We are truly sorry
and repent of all our sins.
For the sake of your Son Jesus Christ,
who died for us,
forgive us all that is past
and grant that we may serve you in newness of life
to the glory of your name.
Amen.

Almighty God,
who forgives all who truly repent, have mercy upon you,
pardon and deliver you from all your sins,
confirm and strengthen you in all goodness,
and keep you in life eternal;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

All Amen.

The Gloria

This Gloria is sung to the tune of 'Cwm Rhondda'. Click [here](#) for the tune.

All Glory be to God in Heaven,
Songs of joy and peace we bring,
Thankful hearts and voices raising,
To creation's Lord we sing.
Lord we thank you, Lord we praise you,
Glory be to God our King:
Glory be to God our King.

Lamb of God, who on our shoulders,
Bore the load of this world's sin;
Only Son of God the Father,
You have brought us peace within.
Lord, have mercy, Christ have mercy,

**Now your glorious reign begin:
Now your glorious reign begin.**

**You O Son of God are Holy,
You we praise with one accord.
None in heav'n or earth is like you,
Only you are Christ the Lord.
With the Father and the Spirit,
Ever worshipped and adored:
Ever worshipped and adored.**

The Collect for All Saints'

Almighty God,
you have knit together your elect
in one communion and fellowship
in the mystical body of your Son Christ our Lord:
grant us grace so to follow your blessed saints
in all virtuous and godly living
that we may come to those inexpressible joys
that you have prepared for those who truly love you;
through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord,
who is alive and reigns with you,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.

All Amen.

First reading

A reading from the Book of the Prophet Isaiah

On this mountain the Lord of hosts will make for all peoples
a feast of rich food, a feast of well-matured wines,
of rich food filled with marrow, of well-matured wines strained clear.
And he will destroy on this mountain
the shroud that is cast over all peoples,
the sheet that is spread over all nations;
he will swallow up death for ever.
Then the Lord God will wipe away the tears from all faces,
and the disgrace of his people he will take away from all the earth,
for the Lord has spoken.

It will be said on that day,

Lo, this is our God; we have waited for him, so that he might save us.

This is the Lord for whom we have waited;

let us be glad and rejoice in his salvation. *Isaiah 25:6-9*

This is the Word of the Lord

All Thanks be to God.

Second reading

A reading from the Revelation of St John the Divine

Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more. And I saw the holy city, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying,

‘See, the home of God is among mortals.

He will dwell with them;

they will be his peoples,

and God himself will be with them;

he will wipe every tear from their eyes.

Death will be no more;

mourning and crying and pain will be no more,

for the first things have passed away.’

And the one who was seated on the throne said, ‘See, I am making all things new.’

Also he said, ‘Write this, for these words are trustworthy and true.’ Then he said to me, ‘It is done! I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end.

Revelation 21:1-6a

This is the Word of the Lord

All Thanks be to God.

HYMN 2 O when the saints go marching in ([click on this link to hear the hymn](#))

Gospel reading

Hear the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to John

All Glory to you O Lord.

When Mary came where Jesus was, and saw him, she knelt at his feet and said to him, ‘Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died.’ When Jesus saw

her weeping, and the Jews who came with her also weeping, he was greatly disturbed in spirit and deeply moved. He said, 'Where have you laid him?' They said to him, 'Lord, come and see.' Jesus began to weep. So the Jews said, 'See how he loved him!' But some of them said, 'Could not he who opened the eyes of the blind man have kept this man from dying?'

Then Jesus, again greatly disturbed, came to the tomb. It was a cave, and a stone was lying against it. Jesus said, 'Take away the stone.' Martha, the sister of the dead man, said to him, 'Lord, already there is a stench because he has been dead for four days.' Jesus said to her, 'Did I not tell you that if you believed, you would see the glory of God?' So they took away the stone. And Jesus looked upwards and said, 'Father, I thank you for having heard me. I knew that you always hear me, but I have said this for the sake of the crowd standing here, so that they may believe that you sent me.' When he had said this, he cried with a loud voice, 'Lazarus, come out!' The dead man came out, his hands and feet bound with strips of cloth, and his face wrapped in a cloth. Jesus said to them, 'Unbind him, and let him go.'

John 11:32-44

This is the Gospel of the Lord

All Praise to you O Christ.

Sermon

Today we celebrate All Saints Day (which is strictly speaking on the 1st November, but the Church of England allows us to mark it today), when we remember and give thanks for all the saints of God. What do you think of when someone talks about 'saints'? It seems to me that the nuances of the word 'saint' have shifted slightly. We might say (sorry guys) 'her husband is so annoying, she must be a saint to put up with him'; or if someone has done us a favour we might call them a saint; or we might use it with sarcasm if someone has been particularly badly behaved.

And the images we have of saints don't help much, either. We are told of all their wonderful deeds, and we know we should follow their example, but we've just sung a hymn that says 'we feebly struggle, they in glory shine'—doesn't sound very encouraging, does it! And if we look at the saints as portrayed in most stained-glass windows, they are all so solemn, white, dour and unapproachable. You can't imagine any of them having a laugh or a joke. Not good models in the modern diverse world. They are influencers for Christ, but why would we follow the example of someone we can't relate to, when there are so many other examples and influencers on YouTube, Instagram, TikTok, etc?

However, none of these views of saints give us the full picture. We usually only get to hear about the things that we are supposed to admire, which is a bit one-sided. Sure, they did amazing feats of Christian love/compassion/faith, and they now live in the eternal Kingdom of God which is so wonderfully portrayed in the Isaiah and Revelation readings. But let's look at some of the saints in more detail. First, they came from many different backgrounds and races, just like us. Take St Peter. He was an ordinary Jewish fisherman, and said and did some silly things, and even denied Christ—but Jesus built His church around Peter. St Paul persecuted early Christians—then he became one, and went out to spread the gospel, and wrote stirring and encouraging words that are still relevant today. St Thomas would only believe the evidence of his own eyes. All the saints set off as ordinary people, just like you and me, so the stained glass version is a bit unfair. They encountered difficulties and doubts in their faith, the same as us. St Augustine of Hippo, in his Confessions, sets out his spiritual wrestling very clearly—and the wrestling never stops! The whole point is that the 'glory' came after the feeble struggles. So we really can relate to the saints, and use them as examples to follow and inspiration in our dark moments.

The really wonderful thing about saints is that we are **all saints**. 'Saint' comes from the word 'sanctus'. Which means holy, and has the same Latin root as sanctified, made holy. We are saints because we have been baptised into the Christian faith, we believe in Jesus so like the crowd in the Gospel, we too will see the glory of God. We have been made holy by the grace of God shown in the death and resurrection of Jesus, by our baptism in the name of Jesus, by the sacraments we take every Sunday. We are sanctified, God's holy people, saints of God, influencers for Christ. We proclaim the everlasting Kingdom and try to live as Jesus did. We are probably never going to be canonised and remembered officially as saints but our lives are just as valuable to God as St Peter's, and we are saints like him. When doubts surface, or it's hard to pray, or we are tempted to do something un-Christian—we can remember that we are saints, made holy, and be comforted. We may feebly struggle now, but we will shine in glory! Amen

The Creed

Do you believe and trust in God the Father,
the source of all being and life,
the one for whom we exist?

All We believe and trust in him.

Do you believe and trust in God the Son,
who took our human nature,
died for us and rose again?

All We believe and trust in him.

Do you believe and trust in God the Holy Spirit,
who gives life to the people of God
and makes Christ known in the world?

All We believe and trust in him.

This is the faith of the Church.

All This is our faith.

**We believe and trust in one God,
Father, Son and Holy Spirit.
Amen.**

Prayers of intercession

United in the company of all the faithful and looking for the coming of the kingdom,
let us offer our prayers to God, the source of all life and holiness.

Merciful Lord,
strengthen all Christian people by your Holy Spirit,
that we may live as a royal priesthood and a holy nation
to the praise of Jesus Christ our Saviour.

Lord, in your mercy

All hear our prayer.

Bless our bishop and all ministers of your Church,
that by faithful proclamation of your word
we may be built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets
into a holy temple in the Lord.

Lord, in your mercy

All hear our prayer.

Empower us by the gift of your holy and life-giving Spirit,
that we may be transformed into the likeness of Christ
from glory to glory.

Lord, in your mercy

All hear our prayer.

Give to the world and its peoples
the peace that comes from above,
that they may find Christ's way of freedom and life.

Lord, in your mercy

All hear our prayer.

Hold in your embrace all who witness to your love in the
service of the poor and needy;
all who minister to the sick and dying;
and all who bring light to those in darkness.

Lord, in your mercy

All hear our prayer.

Touch and heal all those whose lives are scarred by sin
or disfigured by pain,
that, raised from death to life in Christ,
their sorrow may be turned to eternal joy.

Lord, in your mercy

All hear our prayer.

Remember in your mercy all those gone before us
who have been well-pleasing to you from eternity;
preserve in your faith your servants on earth,
guide us to your kingdom
and grant us your peace at all times.

Lord, in your mercy

All hear our prayer.

Hasten the day when many will come
from east and west, from north and south,
and sit at table in your kingdom.

Lord, in your mercy

All hear our prayer.

We give you thanks for the whole company of your saints in glory,
with whom in fellowship we join our prayers and praises;
by your grace may we, like them, be made perfect in your love.

**All Blessing and glory and wisdom,
thanksgiving and honour and power,
be to our God for ever and ever. Amen.**

Merciful Father,

**All accept these prayers
for the sake of your Son,
our Saviour Jesus Christ.
Amen.**

The peace

May the God of peace sanctify you:
may he so strengthen your hearts in holiness
that you may be blameless before him
at the coming of our Lord Jesus with his saints.

The peace of the Lord be always with you,
All And also with you.

HYMN 3 All I once held dear

[\(click on this link to hear the hymn\)](#)

The liturgy of the Communion Service appears below

The Dismissal

May God,
who kindled the fire of his love in the hearts of the saints,
pour upon you the riches of his grace.
May he give you joy in their fellowship
and a share in their praises.
May he strengthen you to follow them in the way of holiness
and to come to the full radiance of glory.
And the blessing of God the Almighty, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit,
be with you now and remain with you always.

All Amen.

HYMN 4 Brother, sister, let me serve you [\(click on this link to hear the hymn\)](#)

Go in peace to love and serve the Lord.

All In the name of Christ. Amen.

The Liturgy of the Sacrament

Eucharistic Prayer (prayer E)

The Lord be with you

All and also with you.

Lift up your hearts.

All We lift them to the Lord.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

All It is right to give thanks and praise.

It is indeed right, our duty and our joy
that we should always sing of your glory,
holy Father, almighty and eternal God,
through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord.

For you are the hope of the nations,
the builder of the city that is to come.

Your love made visible in Jesus Christ brings home the lost,
restores the sinner and gives dignity to the despised.

In his face your light shines out,
flooding lives with goodness and truth,
gathering into one in your kingdom
a divided and broken humanity.

Therefore, with all who can give voice in your creation
we glorify your name,
for ever praising you and saying:

**All Holy, holy, holy Lord,
God of power and might,
heaven and earth are full of your glory.
Hosanna in the highest.
Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.
Hosanna in the highest.**

We praise and bless you, loving Father,
through Jesus Christ, our Lord;
and as we obey his command,
send your Holy Spirit,
that broken bread and wine outpoured
may be for us the body and blood of your dear Son.

On the night before he died he had supper with his friends
and, taking bread, he praised you.

He broke the bread, gave it to them and said:
Take, eat; this is my body which is given for you;
do this in remembrance of me.

When supper was ended he took the cup of wine.
Again he praised you, gave it to them and said:
Drink this, all of you;
this is my blood of the new covenant,
which is shed for you and for many for the forgiveness of sins.
Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me.

So, Father, we remember all that Jesus did,
in him we plead with confidence his sacrifice made once for all upon the cross.

Bringing before you the bread of life and cup of salvation,
we proclaim his death and resurrection
until he comes in glory.

Great is the mystery of faith:

All Christ has died.
Christ is risen.
Christ will come again.

Lord of all life,
help us to work together for that day
when your kingdom comes
and justice and mercy will be seen in all the earth.

Look with favour on your people,
gather us in your loving arms
and bring us with all the saints
to feast at your table in heaven.

Through Christ, and with Christ, and in Christ,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
all honour and glory are yours, O loving Father,
for ever and ever.

All Amen.

The Lord's Prayer

As our Saviour taught us, so we pray

**All Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your name,
your kingdom come,
your will be done,
on earth as in heaven.
Give us today our daily bread.
Forgive us our sins
as we forgive those who sin against us.
Lead us not into temptation
but deliver us from evil.**

**For the kingdom, the power,
and the glory are yours
now and for ever. Amen.**

Breaking of the Bread

We break this bread to share in the body of Christ.

**All Though we are many, we are one body,
because we all share in one bread.**

**All Lamb of God,
you take away the sin of the world,
have mercy on us.**

**Lamb of God,
you take away the sin of the world,
have mercy on us.**

**Lamb of God,
you take away the sin of the world,
grant us peace.**

Draw near with faith.

Receive the body of our Lord Jesus Christ
which he gave for you,
and his blood which he shed for you.

Eat and drink in remembrance that he died for you,
and feed on him in your hearts
by faith with thanksgiving.

All We do not presume
to come to this your table, merciful Lord,
trusting in our own righteousness,
but in your manifold and great mercies.
We are not worthy
so much as to gather up the crumbs under your table.
But you are the same Lord
whose nature is always to have mercy.
Grant us therefore, gracious Lord,
so to eat the flesh of your dear Son Jesus Christ
and to drink his blood,
that our sinful bodies may be made clean by his body
and our souls washed through his most precious blood,
and that we may evermore dwell in him,
and he in us.
Amen.

Communion is distributed.

Prayer after Communion

God, the source of all holiness and giver of all good things:
may we who have shared at this table
as strangers and pilgrims here on earth
be welcomed with all your saints
to the heavenly feast on the day of your kingdom;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

All Amen

All Almighty God,
we thank you for feeding us
with the body and blood of your Son Jesus Christ.
Through him we offer you our souls and bodies
to be a living sacrifice.
Send us out in the power of your Spirit
to live and work
to your praise and glory.
Amen.