

**Wednesday 2 November 2022**

# All Soul's Day



Since its foundation, Christians have recognised that the Church, the assembled people of God, is at its most perfect when it recognises its unity in God's redeeming love with all who have said, who say now, and who will say in the fullness of time, 'Jesus is Lord.' On this day, we remember those who have lived this faith and then passed from this world into the next.

**Sermon** © Revd Dr Paul Monk.

**Some of the liturgy** © 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>

## The Gathering

We meet to remember our loved ones who have died in Christ, and to comfort one another in our sadness

In the name of Christ, who died and was raised by the glory of the Father, we welcome you: grace, mercy and peace be with you.

**All And also with you**

I have set the Lord always before me

**All He is at my right hand, and I shall not fall.**

Show us your mercy, O Lord

**All and grant us your salvation.**

For with you is the well of life

**All and in your light shall we see light.**

Hymn 1 [Amazing grace!](#)

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

## Acclamation

Eternal God, our maker and redeemer,  
grant us, with all the faithful departed,  
the sure benefits of your Son's saving passion and glorious resurrection that,  
in the last day, when you gather up all things in Christ,  
we may with them enjoy the fullness of your promises;  
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 forever.

**All Amen.**

## The Liturgy of the Word

A reading from the book of Wisdom

The souls of the righteous are in the hand of God, and no torment will ever touch them. In the eyes of the foolish they seemed to have died, and their departure was thought to be a disaster, and their going from us to be their destruction; but they are at peace. For though in the sight of others they were punished, their hope is full of immortality.

Having been disciplined a little, they will receive great good, because God tested them and found them worthy of himself; like gold in the furnace he tried them, and

like a sacrificial burnt-offering he accepted them. In the time of their visitation they will shine forth, and will run like sparks through the stubble. They will govern nations and rule over peoples, and the Lord will reign over them for ever. Those who trust in him will understand truth, and the faithful will abide with him in love, because grace and mercy are upon his holy ones, and he watches over his elect.

*Wisdom 3:1-9*

This is the word of the Lord

**All Thanks be to God**

**Hymn 2** [The King of Love my Shepherd is](#) (click on this link to hear the hymn)

Hear the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to John

Early on the first day of the week, while it was still dark, Mary Magdalene came to the tomb and saw that the stone had been removed from the tomb. So she ran and went to Simon Peter and the other disciple, the one whom Jesus loved, and said to them, 'They have taken the Lord out of the tomb, and we do not know where they have laid him.' Then Peter and the other disciple set out and went towards the tomb. The two were running together, but the other disciple outran Peter and reached the tomb first. He bent down to look in and saw the linen wrappings lying there, but he did not go in. Then Simon Peter came, following him, and went into the tomb. He saw the linen wrappings lying there, and the cloth that had been on Jesus' head, not lying with the linen wrappings but rolled up in a place by itself. Then the other disciple, who reached the tomb first, also went in, and he saw and believed; for as yet they did not understand the scripture, that he must rise from the dead. *John 20:1-9*

This is the word of the Lord

**All Thanks be to God**

## **Sermon**

We are all here, all of us, for much the same reason: we've suffered the loss of someone we loved very dearly. Someone special has died. Although we frequently look for them, think of phoning them, want to speak to them, hug them, kiss them, buy them presents, they are no longer here. They have died.

Christians believe the Bible was inspired by God. So, through its ancient pages, God himself seeks to communicate with us if we will listen with the spiritual side of our nature. So what is he saying to us through these Bible readings today? I'll

concentrate on the end of the first reading: 'Those who trust in him will understand truth, and the faithful will abide with him in love, because grace and mercy are upon his holy ones, and he watches over his elect.'

**Firstly**, it's clear this God is neither remote nor uncaring. Rather, the Christian God always speaks of himself as a loving Father with us as his beloved children. It's a common theme in the Bible: Jesus himself, when asked to teach his disciples how to communicate with God—how to pray—started his most famous prayer with the words, 'Our *Father* ...' It's important to note that he speaks as a *good* Father, the best sort of Father, the sort of Father who comforts a child in times of ghastly pain and anger, distraught grief and confusion. God wants us to know that he is here just like the best loving parent embracing a child, saying in effect, 'Don't worry *because* I'm here.' At this time of remembering a loved one, God intends that we too find in his presence a profound comfort. As it says at the end of today's first reading, 'the faithful will abide with him in love.'

**Secondly**, that first reading from the Bible says that while the mortal part of a person has ceased to live, their soul lives on. This means their most important part, the reason they were the loved person we cherish now, is still alive. At the time of Jesus, most people thought that after death a human soul lived in a strange dank limbo, waiting for release at some later time when God intervened in human history. Jesus made it his business to rewrite the entire laws of belief. *He* taught that souls live after death in order to rejoice in a real and beautiful relationship with God. No longer will their experience of God have to filter through fallible human flesh. God says this to us at the end of that first reading: 'He watches over, protects and nurtures, the souls of the elect.'

But even this truth pales into nothing for, **thirdly**, the souls of those we love will no longer have those 'what if' moments. Never again will they lie awake at night wondering what's the point of human existence, or why suffering happens, or why this, or what about that. A human soul in the presence of God will see God in his majestic simplicity and, having seen him as he truly is, will understand why they first came to earth as a human, why they met us their loved ones. In short, they will understand the entire jigsaw of faith because they will have all its component pieces. They will know. Again, to quote from the end of that first Bible reading, 'Those who trust in God will understand truth, because grace and mercy are upon his holy ones.'

Well, we're here because we miss wonderful people who have meant so very, very much to us, but have died. Into the pain of our separation, God speaks through the pages of the Bible, ancient yet still relevant, saying don't worry: God loves us and cares for us and those we love. God loves the souls of his children so much that,

when they die, they can spend eternity with him. And, in the presence of God, God will share everything with them.

**Hymn 3** [O God, our help in ages past](#) [\(click on this link to hear the hymn\)](#)

## The Prayers

Almighty God, you have knit your chosen people together in one communion, in the mystical body of your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord. Give to your whole Church in heaven and on earth your light and your peace.

Grant that all who have been baptised into Christ's death and resurrection may die to sin and rise to newness of life, and that through the grave and gate of death we may pass with him to our joyful resurrection.

Lord, hear us

**All Lord, graciously hear us**

Grant to us who are still in our pilgrimage, and who walk as yet by faith, that your Holy Spirit may lead us in holiness and righteousness all our days.

Lord, hear us

**All Lord, graciously hear us**

Grant to your faithful people pardon and peace, that we may be cleansed from all our sins and serve you with a quiet mind.

Lord, hear us

**All Lord, graciously hear us**

Grant to all who mourn a sure confidence in your loving care, that casting all their sorrow on you, they may know the consolation of your love.

Lord, hear us

**All Lord, graciously hear us**

May we have strength to meet the days ahead in the joyful expectation of eternal life with those we love.

Lord, hear us

**All Lord, graciously hear us**

Help us, we pray, in the midst of things we cannot understand, to believe and trust in the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, and the resurrection to life everlasting.

Lord, hear us

**All Lord, graciously hear us**

Grant us the grace to entrust those whom we remember to your never-failing love which sustained them in this life. Enfold them in the arms of your mercy and remember them according to the favour you bear for your people.

Lord, hear us

**All Lord, graciously hear us**

We gather together these prayers, using the words that Jesus himself taught us:

**Our Father,  
who art in heaven,  
hallowed be thy Name,  
thy kingdom come, thy will be done,  
on earth as it is in heaven.  
Give us this day our daily bread.  
And forgive us our trespasses,  
as we forgive those who trespass against us.  
And lead us not into temptation,  
but deliver us from evil.  
  
For thine is the kingdom,  
the power and the glory,  
for ever and ever.  
Amen.**

Lord Christ our Redeemer,  
in the day of your coming raise us up,  
and set us at your right hand in the day when your greatness shall appear.

Keep the living by your grace and give resurrection to the dead.

We ask this in your name,

O Lord, our resurrection and our life.

**All Amen.**

## **The Commemoration**

You, Christ, are the King of glory,

**All the eternal Son of the Father.**

You overcame the sting of death

**All and opened the kingdom of heaven to all believers.**

You are seated at God's right hand in glory.

**All We believe that you will come to be our judge,  
Come then, Lord, and help your people,  
bought with the price of your own blood;  
and bring us with your saints to glory everlasting.**

In the Church, we read aloud the names of our loved ones. We do so in four batches during the following litany of prayers and Bible verses. Candles are lit.

I am the resurrection, and the life, says the Lord; those who believe in me, even though they die, will live, and everyone who lives and believes in me will never die.

*(pause)*

We remember: **Group A**

Almighty God, Father of all mercies and giver of all comfort, deal graciously we pray, with those who mourn, that casting all their care on you, they may know the consolation of your love.

I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor rulers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

*(pause)*

We remember: **Group B**

Risen Lord Jesus, draw near to us as we walk the lonely road. Pierce our weary sorrow and gladden our heavy hearts as you go with us, and bring us in the end to your heavenly table.

The eternal God is our refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms.

*(pause)*

We remember: **Group C**

Be present, Spirit of the living God, and renew us in our pain and grief; so that we, who are wearied by the changes and chances of this fleeting world, may rest on your eternal changelessness.

The Lamb who is seated at the throne will be their shepherd and will lead them to springs of living water; and God will wipe away all tears from their eyes.

*(pause)*

We remember: **Group D**

and all those whom we remember today in the silence of our hearts.

*(pause)*

Give rest, O Christ, to your servant with the saints: where sorrow and pain are no more, neither sighing, but life everlasting. You only are immortal, the creator and maker of all: and we are mortal, formed from the dust of the earth, and unto earth shall we return. For so you ordained when you created us, saying: 'Dust you are and to dust you shall return.' All of us go down to the dust, yet weeping at the grave, we make our song: Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia.

**Hymn 4 The day thou gavest** [\(please click on this link to hear the hymn\)](#)

Let us pray, as we say together:

**All Hear us, O merciful Father,  
as we remember in love those whom we have placed in your hands.  
Acknowledge, we pray, the sheep of your own fold,  
lambs of your own flock,  
sinners of your own redeeming.  
Enfold them in the arms of your mercy,  
in the blessed rest of everlasting peace,  
and in the glorious company of the saints of light.  
Amen.**

**Hymn 5 The Nunc Dimittis** [\(please click on this link to hear the hymn\)](#)

Loving heavenly Father,  
may the death and resurrection of Christ,  
which we have celebrated in this service,  
bring us, with the faithful departed,  
into the peace of your eternal home.  
We ask this in the name of Jesus Christ,  
our rock and our salvation,  
to whom be glory for time and for eternity.

**All Amen.**

The eternal God is your dwelling place, and underneath are the everlasting arms.

**All Blessed is the Lord, our strength and our salvation!**

**Hymn 6 Jesus lives! thy terrors now** [\(click on this link to hear the hymn\)](#)



## **The blessing**

May God give to you and to all those whom you love,  
his comfort and his peace,  
his light and his joy,  
in this world and the next;  
and the blessing of God the almighty,  
the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit,  
be upon you and remain with you always.

**All Amen.**

Neither death nor life can separate us from the love of God in Jesus Christ our Lord.

**All Thanks be to God**