

All Saints Sunday  
Sunday, November 3, 2024

### **Introduction to the day**

Of all three years of the lectionary cycle, this year's All Saints readings have the most tears. Isaiah and Revelation look forward to the day when God will wipe away all tears; in John's gospel, Jesus weeps along with Mary and all the gathered mourners before he demonstrates his power over death. On All Saints Day we celebrate the victory won for all the faithful dead, but we grieve for our beloved dead as well, knowing that God honors our tears. We bring our grief to the table and find there a foretaste of Isaiah's feast to come.

### **THANKSGIVING FOR THE SAINTS**

O God, our help in ages past and our hope for years to come. We give you thanks for all your faithful people who have followed the light of your word throughout the centuries into our time and place.

We will now call the names of our saints who have died in this past year and as I do, I invite the family to come forward to light a candle in their honor:

Alex Smith, arjorie Roberts, Beatrice Verch, Myrtle Reinke, Randall Schauer,  
Elmer Bochert, Irene and Gary Churchill, Shirley Rosien, Elaine Kregur,  
Norman Zadow, Bruce Kuehl, Mrytle Gust, Ein Neuman and Clare Schauer

As we remember these people, strengthen us to follow Christ through this world until we are carried into the harvest of eternal life, where suffering and death will be no more. Hear our prayer in the name of the good and gracious shepherd, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Amen.

### **PRAYER OF THE DAY**

Let us pray.

Almighty God, you have knit your people together in one communion in the mystical body of your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord. Grant us grace to follow your blessed saints in lives of faith and commitment, and to know the inexpressible joys you have prepared for those who love you, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

**Amen.**

### **FIRST READING: Isaiah 25:6-9**

A reading from Isaiah.

*Isaiah sees a vision of the end of days, when God will gather all people on God's holy mountain and will prepare for them a rich feast. At this banquet God will wipe the tears from all eyes. And there will be no more sorrow, for God will destroy death itself.*

### **PSALM: Psalm 24**

They shall receive blessing from the God of their salvation. (Ps. 24:5)

### **SECOND READING: Revelation 21:1-6a**

A reading from Revelation.

*Here is a vision of the new heaven and new earth in which God resides fully with God's people so that mourning, despair, and pain have been eradicated. These renewing words from the God who spans all of time are trustworthy and true.*

### **GOSPEL: John 11:32-44**

The holy gospel according to John.

*Through the raising of Lazarus, Jesus offers the world a vision of the life to come, when death and weeping will be no more.*

### **ALL SAINTS SUNDAY - Grief Unbound**

We get so much emotive action in this All Saints gospel! There is weeping and more weeping. There is deep regret, “what ifs,” and “if onlys.” We hear how deeply loved Lazarus was, and even Jesus is moved in body and spirit.

Grief is a full-body experience, and it is comforting to know that our God, in the form of Jesus—completely human and completely divine—fully understands this. Death stinks—there is no getting around it. Death stinks for the loved ones left behind, and decay (“Lord, already there is a stench”) signals a finality to all living things.

And yet . . . All Saints Day is a time when we celebrate the finite human existence and how resurrection shows up beyond this. Jesus declares to Lazarus’s loved ones, “Unbind him and let him go,” resurrecting Lazarus back to life. During All Saints worship, we remember our loved ones who have died, and we hold fast to Jesus’ proclamation of resurrection for them. Death is no longer the end of their story, or ours. Jesus has promised eternal life and a love that goes beyond any tomb we find ourselves trapped in.

All Saints Day is a time when you do not have to pretend that everything is okay. Grief is a part of the human experience, and it is a messy, smelly, loud, and overwhelming ride. May you know that no matter where you are on this day, God shows up next to you, weeping and disturbed. There is no stench that keeps God away.

May you know that your grief is holy. May you also know that this grief is not the end of your loved one’s story or yours. Someday we shall be unbound. Someday we shall be whole. Someday all shall be well.

### **PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION**

Rooted in God’s abundant love for the world, let us pray for our neighbors, the church, and all of creation.

O God of resurrection, you call us by name and raise us to life. Rouse your church from slumber. Where we have held back in fear or shame, unbind us. Embolden us in our proclamation of your good news, that all may know abundant life. Merciful God, **receive our prayer.**

O God of creation, you have founded your world on rivers and seas. Preserve fresh water sources and the creatures who call them home. Heal places of pollution and nourish places of drought. Merciful God, **receive our prayer.**

O God of the earth, you reign over all nations and peoples. Inspire us with wisdom and discernment as we elect legislators and leaders. May they govern with justice and uphold the dignity of all people. Merciful God, **receive our prayer.**

O God of heaven, you make your home among mortals. Come alongside those who weep this day. Befriend all who are lonely, encourage those in despair, and heal any who are suffering especially

Linda Boland, Ken Fulford, Sandra Gagnon, Shirley Glickman, Walter Hobden, Donna L. Hoffman, Claude Jeannotte, Bill Lorbetskie, Glenda Panke, Marilyn Schneider, Danny Schultz, Doug Sell, Debbie Thom, Keith Weckwerth, Denita Wolfgram, Elaine Yourth, Harold Yourth, Stephanie Yourth, and those in long term care facilities and senior residences. Abide with your faithful ones in love. In this moment of silence, we name out loud or in the quiet of our hearts, those who need your healing touch. (pause) Merciful God, **receive our prayer.**

O God who serves, you set before us a feast of rich food. Sustain our ministries of fellowship and hospitality. Strengthen the hands and hearts of all who prepare and serve food for our nourishment. Merciful God, **receive our prayer.**

O God, Alpha and Omega, we give thanks for your faithful ones who are now at peace with you, especially those who have died during the past. With all your saints, we praise you, for you have swallowed up death forever. Merciful God, **receive our prayer.**

We offer our prayers to you, gracious God, trusting in your boundless love for all that you have made, through Jesus Christ our Savior. **Amen.**

### **BLESSING**

The Lord bless you and keep you.

The Lord's face shine on you with grace and mercy.

The Lord look upon you with favor and ☩ give you peace.

**Amen.**

### **DISMISSAL**

Go in peace. Christ is with you.

**Thanks be to God.**

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