

Wednesday Worship
3rd November 2021
All Saints

Opening words

Come all who give thanks for the gift of life.
Come all who long for a just and happy world.
Come all who seek peace and pursue it;
and together we will work,
transforming pain into hope,
fear into love,
crying into laughter.

All **We join hands with the living
who are learning to love;
we dance with the dead
whose vision still lives;
we pause with the angels in remembrance.**

Hymn: For all the saints

A litany of thanksgiving

Let us bless the Lord.
All **Thanks be to God.**

For Abraham and Sarah, our ancestors in faith,
and all who journey into the unknown trusting God's promises.

For Jacob, deceitful younger brother, yet chosen by God,
the father of all who are called by virtue not of their own.

For Moses the lawgiver and Aaron the priest,
and all who lead God's people to freedom and newness of life.

Let us bless the Lord.
All **Thanks be to God.**

For Esther and Deborah, saviours of their nation,
and for all who dare to act courageously at God's call.

For Hannah and Ruth, and all who through love and devotion
witness to the faithfulness of God.

For Isaiah, John the Baptist and all the prophets,
and all who speak the truth without counting the cost.

Let us bless the Lord.
All **Thanks be to God.**

For Mary the Virgin, the mother of our Lord and God,
and all who willingly obey God's call.

For Andrew and John and the first disciples,
and for all who forsake everything to follow Jesus.

For Mary Magdalene, Salome and Mary,
first witnesses of the resurrection,
and for all who bear witness to Christ.

Let us bless the Lord.

All **Thanks be to God.**

For Peter and Paul and the apostles,
who preached the gospel to Jew and Gentile,
and for all who take the good news to the ends of the earth.

For Barnabas, Silas and Timothy,
and for all who bring encouragement and steadfastness.

For the writers of the Gospels
and for all who bring the faith of Christ alive for each generation.

Let us bless the Lord.

All **Thanks be to God.**

For Stephen, Alban, Agnes, Lucy and the whole army of martyrs,
and all who have faced death for the love of Christ.

For Augustine of Canterbury and Aidan, for Boniface and Patrick
and for all who have carried the gospel to this and other lands.

For Thomas Cranmer
and all who reform the Church of God.

Let us bless the Lord.

All **Thanks be to God.**

For Aelred, Bernard and Cuthbert,
and for all who live and teach the love of God.

For Anselm and Richard Hooker,
and for all who reveal to us the depths of God's wisdom.

For Julian of Norwich, Bridget of Sweden and Teresa of Avila,
and for all who renew our vision of the mystery of God.

Let us bless the Lord.

All **Thanks be to God.**

For Gregory and Dunstan, George Herbert and John Keble,
and for all who praise God in poetry and song.

For William Wilberforce and Josephine Butler,
and for all who work to transform the world.

For Monica and for Mary Sumner,
and for all who nurture faith in home and family.

Let us bless the Lord.

All **Thanks be to God.**

For the martyrs and peacemakers of our own time,
who shine as lights in the darkness.

For all the unsung heroes and heroines of our faith,
whose names are known to God alone.

For all those in our own lives
who have revealed to us the love of God
and shown to us the way of holiness.

Let us bless the Lord.

All **Thanks be to God.**

Let us rejoice and praise them with thankful hearts

All **and glorify our God in whom they put their trust.**

Reading: Hebrews 11.32-12.2

And what more should I say? For time would fail me to tell of Gideon, Barak, Samson, Jephthah, of David and Samuel and the prophets— who through faith conquered kingdoms, administered justice, obtained promises, shut the mouths of lions, quenched raging fire, escaped the edge of the sword, won strength out of weakness, became mighty in war, put foreign armies to flight. Women received their dead by resurrection. Others were tortured, refusing to accept release, in order to obtain a better resurrection. Others suffered mocking and flogging, and even chains and imprisonment. They were stoned to death, they were sawn in two, they were killed by the sword; they went about in skins of sheep and goats, destitute, persecuted, tormented— of whom the world was not worthy. They wandered in deserts and mountains, and in caves and holes in the ground.

Yet all these, though they were commended for their faith, did not receive what was promised, since God had provided something better so that they would not, without us, be made perfect.

Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight and the sin that clings so closely, and let us run with perseverance the race that is set before us, looking to Jesus the pioneer and perfecter of our faith, who for the sake of the joy that was set before him endured the cross, disregarding its shame, and has taken his seat at the right hand of the throne of God.

Reflection

“We join hands with the living who are learning to love;
we dance with the dead whose vision still lives;
we pause with the angels in remembrance.”

These few words sum up what this season of All Saints and All Souls means to me pretty well.

Firstly, the words remind us that in our journey of faith “we join hands with the living who are learning to love”.

This speaks of our journey of faith together as a community of followers, learning to love and live together.

We all struggle and fail at times, but the calling remains unchanged to each one of us and to the Church as a community: to be the saints of God in the world.

In the words of I Corinthians, we are called to be “those sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints together with all those who in every place call upon the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, both their Lord and ours”.

Secondly, “we dance with the dead whose vision still lives”.

This brings to mind the millions of past followers of Christ, who lived and sometimes died for him, and on whom our knowledge of God and understanding of faith depend.

Some of these past followers are famous and named, while most have been ordinary people doing their best in an ordinary life.

We may not realise it, but every act of love, generosity and sharing, every attempt to make a little corner of the world a better, brighter place, is noticed and treasured by God as an act carried out by one of his saints.

God delights in us, as Psalm 16 says: “As for the saints in the land, they are the excellent ones, in whom is all my delight”.

And none of us are forgotten, in this world or the next.

Thirdly, “we pause with the angels in remembrance”.

This is a reminder that we’re not alone in our attempts to walk with Jesus.

We have the community of the Church on earth to support, encourage, guide and warn.

And we have the great company of heaven, cheering us on.

Saints and angels together, around the throne of God, applauding our efforts, sympathising with our struggles, cheering us on when we start flagging, and hoping for the best for us.

I don’t think I can put it any better than Hebrews 12: “Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight and the sin that clings so closely, and let us run with perseverance the race that is set before us, looking to Jesus the pioneer and perfecter of our faith, who for the sake of the joy that was set before him endured the cross, disregarding its shame, and has taken his seat at the right hand of the throne of God”.

So, today and always, may

“We join hands with the living who are learning to love;
[may] we dance with the dead whose vision still lives;
[and may] we pause with the angels in remembrance”.

Intercessions

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 holy priesthood and a holy nation
to the praise of Jesus Christ our Saviour.

Lord, in your mercy
All **hear our prayer.**

Bless all leaders and 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 gift that comes from above,
that all 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.**

Hymn: Holy, holy, holy! Lord God almighty

Closing prayers

May the infinite and glorious Trinity,
the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit,
direct our lives in good works,
and after our journey through this world,
grant us eternal rest with all the saints.

All **Amen.**

Following God's saints in the ways of holiness and truth,
let us go in the peace of Christ.

All **Thanks be to God.**