

Knox/Trinity Fall Worship ~ 01 November 2020 ~ Communion/All Saints

➤ *This is the day (verse 1)*

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~ Welcome and Land Acknowledgement ~

As we gather in the name of Jesus to worship, we acknowledge with gratitude and respect the Lkwungen People on whose traditional and unceded territory we gather. The Songhees, Esquimalt and WSÁNEĆ continue in relationship with this land and we are mindful of their hospitality.

~ Celebrations / Joys and Concerns ~

God's blessing on you. God's blessing on you. God's blessing, dear friends. God's blessing on you.

~ Call to Worship ~

Laura O God send your light and your truth as we gather to worship.

All *May they lead us to your holy presence.*

Peter Let us bless the Lord at all times;

All *God's praise will always be on our lips.*

Connie Magnify the Lord in all ways;

All *We will lift up God's name together in worship and in service.*

~ Prayer and Words of Hope ~

We are your people, O God, no matter the circumstances of our lives in past or present times. There are many options before us, but not all lead to the abundance of life you have to offer. May we cling to your promise that you are always with us. Open our spirits to the possibilities of new faith as we come together in worship this morning.

God of the ages, your saints who lived in faithful service surround your throne and offer you praise and worship both night and day. May we – your saints on earth – join our voices with theirs to proclaim your peace, which comes to us through Jesus Christ who assures us that as we repent and ask for forgiveness, it comes to us by your abundant grace.

We bring our silent confession, O God of mercy...

Keep us, we pray, in communion with your saints of all time that we may worthily serve you until your will is done on earth as it is in heaven. **Amen**

Hear the good news! Pardon and peace are ours in Jesus' name. Today we walk confidently in a new direction. Thanks be to God!

~ Scripture ~

Isaiah 25: 6-9

On this mountain the LORD of hosts will make for all peoples a feast of rich food, a feast of well-aged wines, of rich food filled with marrow, of well-aged 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 forever. 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.*

Revelation 21: 1-6a

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 as their God; 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."*

This is the Word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God!**

~ Message ~

Today we celebrate the interplay of tradition and transformation as we remember the saints, those who have been faithful to God throughout history and in our congregations. We commit ourselves to embody the living thoughts, values, and actions of our companions and saints of the church. We grieve but also rejoice in their lives and the difference they made in the lives they influenced. They live on with God and in us. We affirm that with God nothing of value is ever lost and whatever is loved shares in God's everlasting life.

Isaiah calls for celebration. The days of exile and sorrow are gone. Now a feast is served. Laughter and merriment replace tears and pain. Loss and death will be no more. Isaiah invites

us to look at our own pain – the pain of our world – and to dream of a banquet where everyone is healed and every life matters.

I think we all yearn for – and do our best to work for – a world in which everyone is safe – to proclaim God’s promised justice. As we celebrate the saints among us, we seek to participate in creating a world in which saints can emerge.

What makes a saint a saint?

We often refer to those who have lead exemplary lives as saints – those who serve as an model to all of us of how to live a good and holy life but who have gone on to a wider life in eternity – people like Sister Theresa, Dietrich Bonhoeffer, and many others. We keep days in their honour and frequently recognize them with the honorific title “saint”: St. Peter, St. Andrew and so on.

There is another aspect to being a saint – those whom we call the saints on earth – the saints mentioned in scripture. It is likely that the apostle Paul – St. Paul – would say baptism is a mark of sainthood. The writer of the Revelation to John in his heavenly vision puts it this way – *the home of God is among mortals. God will dwell with them – they will be God’s people – God will be with them.*

In the Reformed Tradition we are all called saints – the “sainthood of all believers” – because of God’s continuing incarnate presence among the people. It is God who is intimately and fully holy – it is God who came in the flesh, who still dwells in our midst. That presence permeates the entire community of faith. What makes God’s people holy is God’s divine presence – not our behaviour which is so often quite “un-saintly”.

God’s voice continues from heaven, “*See, I am making all things new.*” God is making a promise and we need to be patient as God works in and through us.

We live in a world that often advertises perfection in some interesting ways and so we forget that saintliness is much less about perfection than it is about transformation. We who are God’s saints on earth are called to allow the holy presence of God be a transforming influence in our life. And sainthood is not about externals – piety and looking good – but about the internal person – who we are on the inside.

If you have ever watched a potter working clay you will know that as the clay is shaped, what happens on the inside is critical to the finished piece. In the process of making a pot the importance of the inside of the vessel – how the interior space is formed – determines the outer appearance of the piece of pottery. If attention is not given to the inner form, the outer form will be misshapen – and will collapse.

If we focus only on an outward show of piety, then all we get is attention from those around us. If we are truly repentant and seek to be realigned with God's divine purposes, then it is our inner self that must be transformed.

We are called to be good – to do good – not for the glory or the recognition – not to be thought “a saint”. We are good, and do good, as God acts in and through us to cause our own transformation and the transformation – the salvation – of the world.

Today as we celebrate “the saints”, God calls us again to be clay in the hands of the potter – to enable God's holy presence in our midst to continue to shape our lives and our faith as God's saints on earth – saints in a broken world. As saints on earth we are called to live life inside out. Isn't that what the Incarnation is all about? With God there is always more than we can see. Amen

> *The Lord bless you / Aaronic Blessing*

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~ The Apostles' Creed ~

I believe in God, the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth.

I believe in Jesus Christ, God's only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried; he descended to the dead. On the third day he rose again; he ascended into heaven, he is seated at the right hand of the father, and he will come to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen

~ Remembering the Saints ~

> *For all the saints (verses 1 and 2)*

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Today we direct our attention to the richness of Christian history and the varied experiences of the grace of God by lifting up the lives of the saints.

We celebrate saints as those who aspire to the sanctity of God whom they serve. Because the Holy Spirit dwells within them, they too are made holy. A saint, therefore, is one who reflects the blessedness of the God he or she serves: to be a saint in this sense is a sign not of perfection, but of fidelity.

We think of all the people of God, living and dead, who together form the mystical body of Christ and we name those associated with our congregations who have died since our last remembrance of the saints. We remember them in our prayers – we give thanks for their lives – we find strength in their faith and the faith of all the saints both known to us and known only to God.

1 Thessalonians 4: 13-18 **Reid Chudley**

But we do not want you to be uninformed, brothers and sisters, about those who have died, so that you may not grieve as others do who have no hope. For since we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so, through Jesus, God will bring with him those who have died.

For this we declare to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive, who are left until the coming of the Lord, will by no means precede those who have died. For the Lord himself, with a cry of command, with the archangel's call and with the sound of God's trumpet, will descend from heaven, and the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive, who are left, will be caught up in the clouds together with them to meet the Lord in the air; and so we will be with the Lord forever.

Therefore encourage one another with these words.

† Litany for the Saints **Reid Chudley / responsive**

O Rock of ages, we remember with thanks the saints who have gone before. Keep alive their faith in your goodness. Keep before us their strong witness to your gospel. Having around us this cloud of witnesses – these friends in Christ – may we honour their influence by following in the footsteps of Jesus as they sought to do.

For all the Saints who have gone before us,

O God, we give thanks for our ancestors in the faith.

For all the Saints who have been beloved to us,

O God, we give thanks for our loved ones who have died.

For all the Saints who have left us too soon,

O God, we mourn their death, and they remain in our hearts.

For all the Saints who have exemplified the faithful life,

O God, may we learn from their ways and follow you.

On this day, we name all those who are in our hearts: *[recall the names of saints known to you]*

We remember...

Bob Gartshore – October 2019

Barbara Chalk – February 2020

Janet Khan – March 2020

Doreen McIntyre – May 2020

Helena Isherwood – August 2020

Lorne Butler – September 2020

For all the Saints, we give thanks to you, Gracious God. On earth – in heaven – we are one, we are your children. We give thanks for those who have gone before us...

May we forgive those whom we did not have an opportunity to forgive and may we know that we are also forgiven...

May we know that we are loved, from this life into eternity. Give us faith, O Lord, to look beyond touch and sight, and seeing that we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, enable us to run with perseverance the race that is set before us, looking to Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith. Bring us at last to your eternal peace, through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen

> *For all the saints (verses 4 and 8)*

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~ Gathering at the Lord's Table ~

Laura We have heard about God, who loved confusion into order and gave each creature a divine image, making the world.

Peter We have heard about Jesus, a poor man whose banquet feeds the world, a healer whose wounds give life, a teacher whose wisdom traces love's order in the world, finding the divine in each of us.

Connie We have heard how Jesus died, and how, for those who loved him, he rose again.

Laura We have heard about the Holy Spirit, who breaks the bonds of race and class, of gender and creed, to show God's love for everyone.

Peter And we have heard that love makes all things new. We come to this table asking for the bread of such blessings.

Connie These miracles begin with simple human gestures, bits of bread in a basket, tongues that talk, souls that yearn. And so we bring bread and wine, prayers and our own yearning, that the miraculous may begin in us today.

Laura The Lord be with you.

ALL *And also with you.*

Laura Lift up your hearts.

ALL *We lift them to the Lord.*

Laura Let us give thanks to our Creator God.

ALL *It is right to give God thanks and praise.*

Laura Gracious God, we praise your holy name, giving thanks with our lips and our lives...

For the power and mystery of your Word by which you created us and called us to yourself, we give you thanks.

For the power and mystery of your Word by which you took flesh and lived among us through your Son, Jesus Christ, we give you thanks.

Therefore, with all the company of heaven and all who will come after us, we lift our voices in joyful praise...

ALL *O holy, holy, holy God, O God of time and space. All earth and sea and sky above bear witness to your grace. Hosanna in the highest heav'n, creation sings your praise. And blessed is the one who comes and bears your name always!*

Laura Faithful God, we offer you our praise and thanks as we return to you these holy gifts of bread and wine...

...remembering that on the night of his arrest Jesus sat down to eat with friends. During the meal, he took the bread, said a prayer, broke the bread and shared it with everyone at the table, saying: ***"This is my body which is for you. Do this to remember me."***

At the end of the meal, he took a cup of wine and raised it, saying: ***"This is God's new covenant, made possible because of my death. Drink this all of you, to remember me."***

We ponder, O God, the mystery of his promise that in this meal we are joined to him and to one another as a holy people. We offer you our praise and thanks for Jesus, who took flesh and lived among us, was baptized for our sins, taught us your way of truth, loved us in our lovelessness and died that we may have life.

...We celebrate with great joy the resurrection of our Lord, his presence with us in this feast, and his promise of a new creation as we affirm the mystery of faith...

ALL *Sing Christ has died and Christ is risen, Christ will come again! Sing Christ has died and Christ is risen, Christ will come again!*

Laura God of grace and power, you invite us to share in mysteries that are beyond our understanding...

...in simple trust we seek the transforming power of your Spirit upon us and upon this bread and wine. By the miracle of your grace may they be for us your body – vibrant with your life, renewing and making us whole. And as the bread and wine

which we now eat and drink are changed into us, may we be changed again into you – bone of your bone – flesh of your flesh, loving and caring in the world.

ALL ...In Christ, with Christ, through Christ – by the power of the Holy Spirit – all glory is yours, now and forever and so we sing...

ALL *Amen, amen, O Holy One! Hosanna and amen! Amen, amen, O Holy One! Hosanna and amen!*

~ Sharing Bread and Wine ~

The one who grieved for the death of a friend, shares solidarity through this bread.

The one who is surrounded by the saints in high heaven, offers consolation in this cup.

The bread of life – the cup of grace – we remember and share with thanksgiving these gifts in which God comes to us so that we may come to God.

Everyone consumes the elements in their own space...

~ Prayer and Blessing ~

Loving God, we praise, worship and adore you for the food received at your table. We give thanks for your faithfulness and abundance that fills all creation. We celebrate the gift of your presence among us in Jesus. Trusting in you, we offer all our quiet thoughts and prayers into your care. We pray for our congregations as we seek to live out our faith and struggle to be authentic. May we go from here, strengthened, refreshed, and empowered by your Spirit to be true and joyful witnesses to Jesus Christ – living to your glory in all we do. We sing our prayer together...

➤ *Our Father in heaven (The Lord's Prayer – no repeats)* **469**

➤ *We will go out with joy* **539 (PCUSA)**