



All Saints Sunday 1st November

Father God help us to come to you this morning with open and thankful hearts. Fill us with the joy and peace that comes with knowing you. Be with us as we walk in your light, rejoice in your love and reflect your glory.

Amen

Hymn 177: For all the Saints

Welcome

The Lord be with you,
and also with you

Prayer of Preparation

**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**

Prayer of Confession

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." 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.

Amen. Lord, have mercy.

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.

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

Lord have mercy
Lord have mercy
Christ have mercy
Christ have mercy
Lord have mercy
Lord have mercy

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. **Amen**

Gloria

Glory to God in the highest, and peace to his people on earth. Lord God, heavenly King, almighty God and Father, we worship you, we give you thanks, we praise you for your glory. Lord Jesus Christ, only Son of the Father, Lord God, Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world: have mercy on us; you are seated at the right hand of the Father: receive our prayer. For you alone are the Holy One, you alone are the Lord, you alone are the Most High, Jesus Christ, with the Holy Spirit, in the glory of God the Father.
Amen.

Collect

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. **Amen**

New Testament Reading: Revelation 7:9-17

After this I looked, and there was a great multitude that no one could count, from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, robed in white, with palm branches in their hands. They cried out in a loud voice, saying, 'Salvation belongs to our God who is seated on the throne, and to the Lamb!'

And all the angels stood around the throne and around the elders and the four living creatures, and they fell on their faces before the throne and worshipped God, singing, 'Amen! Blessing and glory and wisdom and thanksgiving and honour and power and might be to our God for ever and ever! Amen.'

Then one of the elders addressed me, saying, 'Who are these, robed in white, and where have they come from?' I said to him, 'Sir, you are the one that knows.' Then he said to me, 'These are they who have come out of the great ordeal; they have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. For this reason they are before the throne of God, and worship him day and night within his temple, and the one who is seated on the throne will shelter them. They will hunger no more, and thirst no more; the sun will not strike them, nor any scorching heat;

for the Lamb at the centre of the throne will be their shepherd, and he will guide them to springs of the water of life, and God will wipe away every tear from their eyes.'

Hymn 590: Seek ye first

Gospel Reading: Matthew 5: 1-12

Hear the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to Luke

Glory to you, O Lord

When Jesus saw the crowds, he went up the mountain; and after he sat down, his disciples came to him. Then he began to speak, and taught them, saying:

Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted.

Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth.

Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled.

Blessed are the merciful, for they will receive mercy.

Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God.

Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God.

Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Blessed are you when people revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account. Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you.

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, O Christ

Sermon: Revd Petra Shakeshaft

In Duxford on a pretty lane from the Green, is St John's Church.

Closed for worship since the late 19th Century, its interior was not 'improved' by enthusiastic Victorians so it remains largely medieval.

On the chancel's west wall are remains of paintings depicting the martyrdoms of Saints.

St Agatha appears, tied by her hair, her breasts pierced with vile looking instruments.

Another group of Saints are speared together – like a human kebab.

Above them, Christ makes his way to the Cross;

images that do nothing, perhaps, to lure the 21st century sensibility towards sainthood.

I wonder what have those ancient tortured bodies on the wall to say to us today.

Blessed are you when people revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account.

These words from the end of the gospel reading this morning;
which was, of course, the familiar opening of the Sermon on the Mount,
known as the Beatitudes – the blessings.
Jesus sits with the disciples on the mountain to teach them.
this is an image, that for Matthew's readers, would be ringing bells.
It would be reminiscent of another encounter on another mountainside long ago,
but carved on the collective memory.
Matthew directs us back to the story of Moses receiving the Law on Mount Sinai;
a focal point in the history of Israel;
the word of God carved in stone letters to seal his covenant with his people.
We are meant to notice;
we are meant to make that connection when we hear the word of God,
this time spoken, from Jesus' mouth.
It confirms who Jesus is *and*, what the Law means in practice in the kingdom of God.
Blessed are the poor in Spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.
Blessed ARE the poor ... theirs IS the kingdom of heaven ... not will be ... NOW.
The Beatitudes are, if you like, the landscape of the kingdom;
the inner landscape of Jesus' mind; of God.

God's kingdom is populated with the poor in spirit, the meek,
the hungry, the merciful, the pure in heart and they who mourn.
Jesus turns the expectations of the world upside down.
We navigate our way through the life in the kingdom, not by acquiring wealth,
or power, or status or accomplishment;
nor do we leave the world and its suffering behind,
waiting for some holy moment to arrive.
The kingdom is where the poor in spirit, are;
the broken-hearted and bereft, the meek, the hungry -
and that's where God is.
And holiness is not about running away from the brokenness,
but doing what we can within it, with the realities and all the suffering and joy of the world.
With Jesus' words of blessing, the kingdom of God breaks into the world
and transforms tragedy, emptiness, and loss, because he attends to it and makes it blessed.

We live in a world that seems fragile right now;
apart from continued political turmoil, wars and strife,
we are in the middle of a global pandemic.
We are struggling with restrictions on our lives, a long period of uncertainty
and, to some extent, have been forced to face our own mortality.

There is a deep human need for peace, harmony, order, security and certainty,
even if we sometimes look for them in the wrong places.

A few days ago, one of my visits at Addenbrooke's was to a sixteen year-old girl.
On the wall are photographs of her and her family and a clearly beloved dog.

Someone has written their names underneath in red pen.
On the bed, the girl is still, staring up at me.
The front half of her head is shaved
and she has a livid red scar from ear to ear.
The tracheotomy she had in a few weeks ago has been removed,
but still, she has no words and her eyes look out, uncomprehending.
I hold up my hand as I have done before and she lifts hers slowly and takes mine in hers.
She turns it and studies it. Puts it down ... reaches for it again.
Over and over again, she explores my hand;
holding and letting go in a kind of dance.
There is music playing – Radio One.
Suddenly, I notice the words of the song;

*The way you hold me, hold me, hold me, hold me, hold me
Feels so holy, holy, holy, holy, holy*

Over and over again. A chorus.
This hospital room, a place of unspeakable human loss and shattered hope -
this encounter where words are neither spoken nor understood;
for a moment are given words that make the moment holy;
We are brought into a liminal space;
on the threshold of extreme ugliness and extreme beauty,
extreme brokenness and extreme healing.
Coincidence, happenstance,
or a blessing from God?
What the world sees as tragic or empty, Jesus sees as blessed.

In another song by, the late, great Leonard Cohen, he says,

*Forget your perfect offering,
there is a crack, a crack in everything,
that's where the light gets in.*

We are frail, broken creatures and have known and will know some level of loss and suffering –
All Saints day is, of course, followed immediately by All Soul's;
a day when we acknowledge the pain of loss together.
There is a crack, a crack in each of us and, despite our best efforts,
we all contribute in some small way to the brokenness of the world.
But confronting those failures, acknowledging our brokenness
opens up those cracks and lets the light come pouring in;
a transforming light, a purifying light, the light of Christ.

We're unlikely to endure the cruel sufferings that the Saints on the wall of St John's Church
endured,
though others have done and still do.

Maybe though, their physical brokenness *can* tell us something about sainthood; about the force of their faith and convictions, through the stories of how they managed to navigate through a hostile world with love and hope, for, if the world and its ways breaks *us* open and exposes the cracks in *us*, then maybe sainthood is about how the light transforms us as it pours in to us and in that transformation, we begin to project that light back out into the world through those same cracks. It's how we participate in God's work of creation and recreation; bringing God's kingdom to the little parts of the world we occupy, to the hands that touch ours, the words we speak or don't speak. The things we do for one another, the prayers we pray for one another the attention we give, from our own brokenness, through our own cracks, somehow, by God's grace, makes saints of us all.

Nicene Creed

We believe in one God, the Father, the Almighty, maker of heaven and earth, of all that is, seen and unseen.

We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only Son of God, eternally begotten of the Father, God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, of one Being with the Father; through him all things were made. For us and for our salvation he came down from heaven, was incarnate from the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary and was made man. For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate; he suffered death and was buried. On the third day he rose again in accordance with the Scriptures; he ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead, and his kingdom will have no end.

We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son, who with the Father and the Son is worshipped and glorified, who has spoken through the prophets.

We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic Church. We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins. We look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come. Amen.

Prayers: Rosey Feuell

Our prayers today draw mostly on St. Matthew's Beatitude sayings and St. John's Revelation of the saints in heaven, from today's readings.

"The saints, whom no one can number.."

Lord, give us vision at All Saints to see the poverty and the gifting of your people the church. Help us to remember that "*Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven*". Open our eyes to your calling and your provision, and to the strengths and weaknesses of one another. .

Guide us as we look ahead and seek a new incumbent and prepare for new roles..
Help us to celebrate you now in praise and prayer, and not wait till someone comes to manage us.
Blessed are we poor in spirit, for ours is the kingdom of heaven.
Lord, hear us. **Lord, graciously hear us.**

“The earth is the Lord’s and all that is in it.”

Lord, give us ears to hear the lament and sadness of your world.
Help us now to remember that *“Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called the children of God.”*
Bring peace among all troubled peoples, all contesting causes, and all who only fight to undo what the last politicians and leaders have done.
Hold back, Lord, we pray, the deadly spreading of the Covid virus and the disruption it brings to old and young alike.
Help those who manage the world’s resources to administer fairly and generously. *Blessed are we if we can be peacemakers, for we will be called the children of God.*
Lord, hear us. **Lord, graciously hear us.**

“The Lamb at the heart of the throne will be their shepherd.”

Lord, give us hearts for all in our community, all who are drifting, all who are frustrated.
Help us to remember that *“Blessed are the merciful, for they will receive mercy.”*
Intervene, we pray, for all who cannot determine their way for themselves.
Guide us as we seek ways to share our sense of Christ’s family.
Open our minds and hearts to discern those who are our allies outside as well as inside the church.
Blessed are we if merciful, for we will receive mercy.
Lord, hear us. **Lord, graciously hear us.**

The saints are “those who have come through great trials.”

Lord, show us the needs we can support in one another, for *“Blessed are those who are persecuted by life’s trials and reversals, for the kingdom of heaven is theirs.”*
Heal and comfort those who are sick or in recovery, including Mary Hunt, Isobel Darling, Margaret Grey and Janet Powell.
Give us responsibility and love in supporting those whose needs are known only or mainly to us:
Refresh, Lord, all who are weary, lonely or mentally challenged in these times of infection and frustration.
Blessed are all those who are persecuted by life’s trials and reversals, for the kingdom of heaven is theirs.
Lord, hear us. **Lord, graciously hear us.**

“God will wipe away every tear from the saints’ eyes.”

Lord, give us wisdom and assurance as we remember those we love who have died for *“Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted”*.
We remember and bless you for all who have died recently, including Renee Philips, Tom Stamper, and others known to us:

We thank you for those we remember at this season of remembrance and darkening skies. We trust you for our own departure from this world to the kingdom of your saints. *Blessed are we who mourn, for we shall be comforted.*

Lord, hear us. **Lord, graciously hear us.**

Finally, Lord, we thank you for your saints and ask for grace to follow them: make us open like Mary your mother, our patron; bold like Paul; joyful like Francis and faithful like Clare.

Help us to reflect Mary Magdalene's love of you; St. John's understanding of you, Peter's steadfast devotion to you.

When we have failed, remind us that all your saints knew they were sinners needing your mercy. So, for your love's sake, make us to be numbered with your saints in glory everlasting.

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

The Peace

Take a moment and offer a prayer of thanksgiving to God for each other and our church family church community. Maybe call or text someone who would enjoy sharing the peace with you.

May the God of peace make you perfect and holy, that you may be kept safe and blameless in spirit, soul and body, for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

The peace of the Lord be always with you.

And also with you.

Hymn 686: Through all the changing scenes

Lord's Prayer

**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.**

Hymn 608: Songs of praise

Remembering the Lord's Supper:

Take a moment to remember the final meal that Jesus shared with his disciples. As we think about this meal - with the washing of feet and bread and wine shared with friends - we remember Jesus' offering of himself on the cross. We rejoice in his resurrection from the dead and look

forward to the coming of God's Kingdom. While we cannot receive Christ in the sacraments in the usual way, we can be the presence of Christ in our homes and communities and we can be a praying presence wherever we are.

Hymn 758: Ye watchers and ye Holy ones

Closing Prayer:

Lord God, we thank you for this time of worship; may your love and peace remain with us in the coming days. Be with us in all that we will think, say and do so that our lives may reflect your glory. We ask this in the name of your Son Jesus Christ. **Amen.**

Go in peace to love and serve the Lord
In the name of Christ. Amen

If you have any prayer or pastoral needs, please don't hesitate to contact
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