

*All Saints Sunday*

*November 7, 2021*



1812 North Highland Avenue  
Clearwater, Florida 33755  
Ministers: The People of Grace Lutheran Church

727-446-5026  
[office@GraceCLW.com](mailto:office@GraceCLW.com)  
Pastor: Rev. Jefferson Cox

Welcome! 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.

## SERVICE OF THE WORD

### CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

Blessed be the holy Trinity, † one God, whose teaching is life, whose presence is sure, and whose love is endless.

**Amen.**

Let us confess our sins to the one who welcomes us with an open heart.

*Silence is kept for reflection.*

God our comforter:

**like lost sheep, we have gone astray. We gaze upon abundance and see scarcity. We turn our faces away from injustice and oppression. We exploit the earth with our apathy and greed. Free us from our sin, gracious God. Listen when we call out to you for help. Lead us by your love to love our neighbors as ourselves. Amen.**

All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God. By the gift of grace in † Christ Jesus, God makes you righteous. Receive with glad hearts the forgiveness of all your sins.

**Amen.**

### GATHERING HYMN

#### *Shall We Gather at the River vs. 1 & 2*



- 1 Shall we gath - er at the riv - er, where bright an - gel feet have trod,
- 2 On the mar - gin of the riv - er, wash - ing up its sil - ver spray,
- 3 Ere we reach the shin - ing riv - er, lay we ev - 'ry bur - den down;
- 4 Soon we'll reach the shin - ing riv - er, soon our pil - grim - age will cease;



with its crys - tal tide for - ev - er flow - ing by the throne of God?  
we will walk and wor - ship ev - er, all the hap - py gold - en day.  
grace our spir - its will de - liv - er, and pro - vide a robe and crown.  
soon our hap - py hearts will quiv - er with the mel - o - dy of peace.



Yes, we'll gath - er at the riv - er, the beau-ti-ful, the beau-ti-ful riv - er;



gath - er with the saints at the riv - er that flows by the throne of God.

Text: Robert Lowry, 1826–1899  
Music: HANSON PLACE, Robert Lowry

## **APOSTOLIC GREETING & THE PRAYER OF THE DAY**

Worship Leader: The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

**Congregation: And also with you.**

Worship Leader: 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.

**Congregation: Amen.**

## **FIRST READING**

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

Introduction to the Lesson: *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.*

Reader: <sup>6</sup>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.

<sup>7</sup>And he will destroy on this mountain  
the shroud that is cast over all peoples,  
the sheet that is spread over all nations;

<sup>8</sup>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.

<sup>9</sup>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.

*After the reading...*

Reader: The word of the Lord.

**Congregation: Thanks be to God.**

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

Introduction to the Lesson: *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.*

Reader: <sup>1</sup>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. <sup>2</sup>And I saw the holy city, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.

<sup>3</sup>And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying,

“See, the home of God is among mortals.

He will dwell with them;

they will be his peoples,

and God himself will be with them;

<sup>4</sup>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.”

<sup>5</sup>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.” <sup>6a</sup>Then he said to me, “It is done! I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end.”

*After the reading...*

Reader: The word of the Lord.

**Congregation: Thanks be to God.**

**GOSPEL LESSON    John 11:32-44**

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

Worship Leader: The Holy Gospel according to John in the 11th chapter.

**Congregation: Glory to you, O Lord.**

Worship Leader: <sup>32</sup>When Mary came where Jesus was and saw him, she knelt at his feet and said to him, “Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died.” <sup>33</sup>When Jesus saw her weeping, and the Jews who came with her also weeping, he was greatly disturbed in spirit and deeply moved. <sup>34</sup>He said, “Where have you laid him?” They said to him, “Lord, come and see.” <sup>35</sup>Jesus began to weep. <sup>36</sup>So the Jews said, “See how he

loved him!”<sup>37</sup> But some of them said, “Could not he who opened the eyes of the blind man have kept this man from dying?”

<sup>38</sup> Then Jesus, again greatly disturbed, came to the tomb. It was a cave, and a stone was lying against it. <sup>39</sup> Jesus said, “Take away the stone.” Martha, the sister of the dead man, said to him, “Lord, already there is a stench because he has been dead four days.” <sup>40</sup> Jesus said to her, “Did I not tell you that if you believed, you would see the glory of God?” <sup>41</sup> So they took away the stone. And Jesus looked upward and said, “Father, I thank you for having heard me. <sup>42</sup> I knew that you always hear me, but I have said this for the sake of the crowd standing here, so that they may believe that you sent me.” <sup>43</sup> When he had said this, he cried with a loud voice, “Lazarus, come out!” <sup>44</sup> The dead man came out, his hands and feet bound with strips of cloth, and his face wrapped in a cloth. Jesus said to them, “Unbind him, and let him go.”

*After the reading...*

Worship Leader: The gospel of the Lord.

**Congregation: Praise to you, O Christ.**

## **GOSPEL MESSAGE—From Sundays and Seasons**

### **Tears Are Holy**

“Jesus wept” (John 11:35). It’s the shortest verse in the Bible (in many non-NRSV versions), popular among Sunday school children trying to pad their stats in Bible memorization games. Only two words, three short syllables: “Jesus wept.” It is also a profound theological statement. Death hurts. Even for Jesus. Even with prophecies and promises to wipe away every tear.

Although we may put it out of mind at times, we have always been dust. We have always known that to dust we shall return. Before rushing to the reassurance of eternal life with God, we honor the sacred finitude of life by honestly naming and feeling the grief of death.

Even as he embodied resurrection power, Jesus felt the sting of death. When he heard that his friend Lazarus had died, he wept. He didn’t immediately bring him back, and he didn’t explain it away. He wept. This is Jesus at his most human *and* his most divine. Life is holy, and its loss is painful. Your tears, like Jesus’ tears, are holy. You are not alone.

The vision of Revelation promises a time when God will wipe away every tear, when death and mourning and crying and pain will be no more. But as Jesus himself experienced, we must first contend with the heartbreak of death. On All Saints Day we remember the saints who have gone before. We celebrate their lives and the promise of a future with God. And we honor them with our tears and mourning, and our honest and complicated feelings for them.

Stories promise endings, but too often death brings relationships to a stop without the closure of an ending. The promise of resurrection and the rituals of All Saints Day

remind us that our stories continue to unfold in mysterious ways—even after death. God shows up in the messiness of loss and mourning, and God’s love carries us through the loneliness and fear. Thanks be to God.

## SERMON

### HYMN OF THE DAY

### *For All the Saints vs. 1 & 2*



1 For all the saints who from their labors rest, who  
 2 Thou wast their rock, their fortress, and their might; thou,  
*Stanzas 3–5 below.*

6 But then there breaks a yet more glorious day: the  
 7 From earth’s wide bounds, from ocean’s farthest coast, through



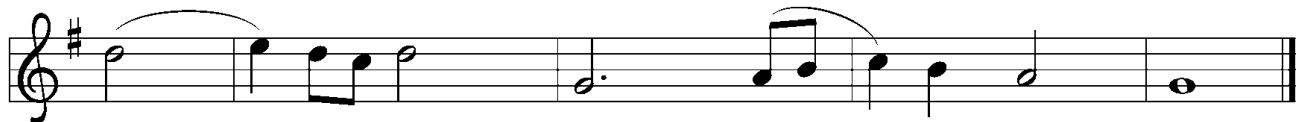
thee by faith before the world confessed, thy  
 Lord, their captain in the well-fought fight; . .

saints triumphant rise in bright array; the  
 gates of pearl streams in the countless host, . .



name, O Jesus, be forever blest.  
 thou, in the darkness drear, their one true light.

King of glory passes on his way.  
 singing to Father, Son, and Holy Ghost:



Al - le - lu - ia! Al - le - lu - ia!

Text: William W. How, 1823–1897

Music: SINE NOMINE, Ralph Vaughan Williams, 1872–1958

Music from *The English Hymnal* outside the USA © Oxford University Press 1906. All rights reserved.

Duplication in any form prohibited without permission or valid license from copyright administrator.

## PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

Worship Leader: Eternal God, you hold firm amid the changes of this world. Hear us now as we pray for the church, the world, and everyone in need.

*A brief silence.*

Prayer Leader: Merciful God, we give thanks for all missionaries who have brought your message of hope to new communities and wiped tears away. Continue to raise up courageous missionaries to share your gospel of hope. Lord, in your mercy,

**Congregation: hear our prayer.**

Prayer Leader: We pray for your creation, for mountains, rivers, streams, cities, homesteads, and neighborhoods. Write in our hearts a new love and care for creation. Give us the will to curb wasteful habits and to hold accountable those who neglect the vulnerable. Lord, in your mercy,

**Congregation: hear our prayer.**

Prayer Leader: Creating God, we praise you for abundant harvests and the goodness of creation. Create communities of care for your earth so that all land, water, and soil will be celebrated and cherished by future generations of saints. Lord, in your mercy,

**Congregation: hear our prayer.**

Prayer Leader: God of peace, we give you thanks for nations of peace that serve as a refuge for all whose homelands are afflicted with violence. Strengthen those who continue to work for peace and support all veterans who carry the scars of war. Lord, in your mercy,

**Congregation: hear our prayer.**

Prayer Leader: God of healing, we give you thanks for health care workers who labor around the clock to answer cries for help. Bring wholeness to all who struggle with post-traumatic stress disorder, anxiety, depression, addiction, and all who long for healing in any way, *especially* those on the prayer list of our congregation, those suffering from violence, terror, and natural disasters, and those we name now with our lips or in our hearts. Lord, in your mercy,

**Congregation: hear our prayer.**

Prayer Leader: God of justice, we praise you for the feeding ministries and for all meals that bring people together for nourishment and fellowship. Bless chefs, bakers, servers, dishwashers, communion assistants, and meal ministry coordinators. Lord, in your mercy,

**Congregation: hear our prayer.**

Prayer Leader: God of the ages, we give you thanks for the saints of this congregation who have inspired, challenged, loved, and taught us (*as those who have died during the past year are named a bell is rung... Robert Powell... Candance McDaniel... Charles Sienkiewicz... all those who have died because of the COVID-19 pandemic... and those we name now with our lips or in our hearts... We remember as well those whose funerals were delayed to this year due to the pandemic - Kathleen Wacker... Ursel*

*Klimke... and those we name now with our lips or in our hearts... ). Wipe away our tears and lead us by their example until we feast together on your holy mountain . Lord, in your mercy,*

**Congregation: hear our prayer.**

Worship Leader: Receive these prayers, O God, and those in our hearts known only to you; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

**Congregation: Amen.**

### **OFFERING PRAYER**

Pastor: Let us pray. God of abundance, you cause streams to break forth in the desert and manna to rain from the heavens. Accept the gifts you have first given us. Unite them with the offering of our lives to nourish the world you love so dearly; through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. **Congregation: Amen.**

### **DIALOGUE**

Pastor: The Lord be with you.

**Congregation: And also with you.**

Pastor: Lift up your hearts.

**Congregation: We lift them to the Lord.**

Pastor: Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

**Congregation: It is right to give our thanks and praise.**

### **PREFACE**

It is indeed right, our duty and our joy, that we should at all times and in all places give thanks and praise to you, almighty and merciful God, through our Savior Jesus Christ; who on this day overcame death and the grave, and by his glorious resurrection opened to us the way of everlasting life. And so, with all the choirs of angels, with the church on earth and the hosts of heaven, we praise your name.

### **THANKSGIVING AT THE TABLE**

Holy, mighty, and merciful Lord, heaven and earth are full of your glory. In great love you sent to us Jesus, your Son, who reached out to heal the sick and suffering, who preached good news to the poor, and who, on the cross, opened his arms to all.

In the night in which he was betrayed, our Lord Jesus took bread, and gave thanks; broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying: Take and eat; this is my body, given for you. Do this for the remembrance of me.

Again, after supper, he took the cup, gave thanks, and gave it for all to drink, saying: This cup is the new covenant in my blood, shed for you and for all people for the forgiveness of sin. Do this for the remembrance of me.

Pour out upon us the Spirit of your love, O Lord, and unite the wills of all who share this heavenly food, the body and blood of Jesus Christ, our Lord; to whom, with you and the Holy Spirit, be all honor and glory, now and forever.

**Congregation: Amen.**



## LORD'S PRAYER

Pastor: Lord, remember us in your kingdom and teach us to pray in the language closest to our hearts.

**Congregation: 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, and the power, and the glory, forever and ever. Amen.**

## TABLE BLESSING

Pastor: The body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ strengthen you and keep you in his grace. **Congregation: Amen.**

## PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Pastor: Let us pray. Lord of life, in the gift of your body and blood you turn the crumbs of our faith into a feast of salvation. Send us forth into the world with shouts of joy, bearing witness to the abundance of your love in Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

**Congregation: Amen.**

## SENDING OF COMMUNION

Pastor: Gracious God, loving all your family with a mother's tender care: As you sent the angel to feed Elijah with heavenly bread, assist those who set forth to share your word and sacrament with those who are sick, homebound, or imprisoned. In your love and care, nourish and strengthen those who will receive this sacrament, and give us all the comfort of your abiding presence through the body and blood of your Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord. **Congregation: Amen.**

## BLESSING

Pastor: People of God, you are Christ's body, bringing new life to a suffering world. The holy Trinity, † one God, bless you now and forever.

**Congregation: Amen.**

## SENDING HYMN

*For All The Saints* vs. 6 & 7

## DISMISSAL

Worship Leader: Together we have heard God's Word and joined in prayer, we have given and have been forgiven. Now as this service of worship is ending, this week's service to the world is beginning! Go in peace. The living Word dwells in you.

**Congregation: Thanks be to God.**