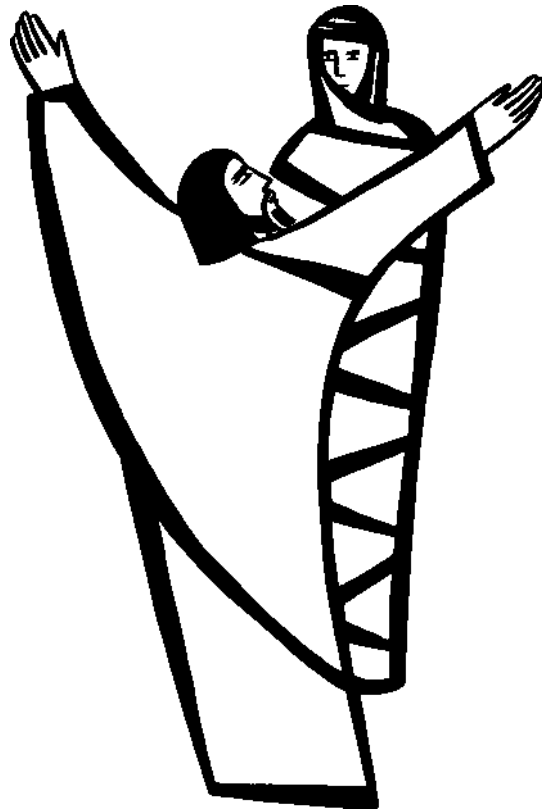


*All Saints Sunday*  
*Adaptive Worship Service*  
*November 7, 2021*



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

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Pastor: Rev. Jefferson Cox

Welcome! Of all three years of the lectionary cycle, this year's All Saints readings have the most 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.

**GATHERING SONG**

*All Are Welcome*

Verses 1 & 2

1 Let us build a house where love can dwell and all can safe - ly  
 live, a place where saints and chil - dren tell how  
 hearts learn to for - give. Built of hopes and dreams and  
 vi - sions, rock of faith and vault of grace; here the love of  
 Christ shall end di - vi - sions: *Refrain* All are wel - come,  
 all are wel - come, all are wel - come in this place.

Text: Marty Haugen, b. 1950  
 Music: TWO OAKS, Marty Haugen  
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2 Let us build a house where prophets speak,  
and words are strong and true,  
where all God's children dare to seek  
to dream God's reign anew.  
Here the cross shall stand as witness  
and as symbol of God's grace;  
here as one we claim the faith of Jesus:  
All are welcome, all are welcome,  
all are welcome in this place.

### **GREETING**

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.**

### **PRAYER OF THE DAY**

Worship Leader: Let us pray. Almighty God, gracious Lord, we thank you that your Holy Spirit renews the church in every age. Pour out your Holy Spirit on your faithful people. Keep them steadfast in your word, protect and comfort them in times of trial, defend them against all enemies of the gospel, and bestow on the church your saving peace, 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**

#### **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: Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth. The first heaven and the first earth disappeared, and the sea vanished. 2 And I saw the Holy City, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared and ready, like a bride dressed to meet her husband. 3 I heard a loud voice speaking from the throne: "Now God's home is with people! He will live with them, and they shall be his people. God himself will be with them, and he will be their God. 4 He will wipe away all tears from their eyes. There will be no more death, no more grief or crying or pain. The old things have disappeared." 5 Then the one who sits on the throne said, "And now I make all things new!" He also said to me, "Write this, because these words are true and can be trusted." 6 And he said, "It is done! I am the first and the last, 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.*

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

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

32 Mary arrived where Jesus was, and as soon as she saw him, she fell at his feet. “Lord,” she said, “if you had been here, my brother would not have died!” 33 Jesus saw her weeping, and he saw how the people with her were weeping also; his heart was touched, and he was deeply moved. 34 “Where have you buried him?” he asked them. “Come and see, Lord,” they answered. 35 Jesus wept. 36 “See how much he loved him!” the people said. 37 But some of them said, “He gave sight to the blind man, didn't he? Could he not have kept Lazarus from dying?” 38 Deeply moved once more, Jesus went to the tomb, which was a cave with a stone placed at the entrance. 39 “Take the stone away!” Jesus ordered. Martha, the dead man's sister, answered, “There will be a bad smell, Lord. He has been buried four days!” 40 Jesus said to her, “Didn't I tell you that you would see God's glory if you believed?” 41 They took the stone away. Jesus looked up and said, “I thank you, Father, that you listen to me. 42 I know that you always listen to me, but I say this for the sake of the people here, so that they will believe that you sent me.” 43 After he had said this, he called out in a loud voice, “Lazarus, come out!” 44 He came out, his hands and feet wrapped in grave cloths, and with a cloth around his face. “Untie him,” Jesus told them, “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,  
thee by faith before the world confessed, thy  
Lord, their captain in the well-fought fight; ..  
name. O Jesus, be forever blest.  
thou, in the darkness drear, their one true light.  
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* outsied the USA© Oxford University Press 1906. All rights reserved.

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## PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

Worship Leader: Alive in the risen Christ by the power of the Holy Spirit, we bring our prayers before God who promises to hear us and answer in steadfast love.

*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: 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 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 too deep for words; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

**Congregation: Amen.**

**Prayers** are requested for: Dale Willman, Jennifer Martinez, Bobby Crowel, Marc Calhoun, Linda Almond, Barbara Haseley, Duke Tieman, Betty Biddle, Cathi Adams,

Michael Morales, Gloria Holtzclaw, Betty Daege, Dianne William, Rosemarie & George Smith, Rev. Lydia Villanueva and family, Don Eunis, Lorraine Reinhard, Bonnie Redler, Kathy Leotta, Brytt Mathis, Joseph Valentin, Rita Burneik, Bobby Schlegel, Hilda Taylor, Carl Stone, Neftali Garcia & family, Susan Gunn, Roy Pruitt, Deacon Connie Puls, Joan Keeton, Rose Marie Piff, Vicki Kennedy, Gail Elder, Jason Meadows, Bishop Pedro Suarez, Pastor Courtney Erzkus and family, Ralph Burson, Ellen Duncan, Luanne Sekel, Lorraine Chavez, Skylar Favos, Audrey Fisher, April and David, Jennifer Martinez, Sonya and Abigail Stone, Dennis Bruder, Carolyn Milsap, and all those suffering from violence, terror, and natural disasters (including all those impacted by COVID-19 & this hurricane season).

## **OFFERING**

*Offerings to the mission and ministry of Grace can be made online at [GraceCLW.com](http://GraceCLW.com) (look for the "Donate" button), or (for now) by mailing a check to Grace Lutheran Church, 1812 N. Highland Ave. Clearwater FL 33755. Thank you for your continued financial support during these uncertain times. You can fill out your attendance form on our website as well.*

## **OFFERING PRAYER**

Prayer Leader: Blessed are you, O God, maker of all things. Through your goodness you have blessed us with these gifts: our selves, our time, and our possessions. Use us, and what we have gathered, in feeding the world with your love, through the one who gave himself for us, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

**Congregation: Amen.**

## **HOLY COMMUNION**

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.**

Pastor: 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.

By the witness of your saints you show us the hope of our calling and strengthen us to run the race set before us, that we may delight in your mercy and rejoice with them in glory. And so, with Robert Powell, Candance McDaniel, Charles Sienkiewicz, those

within our Memorial Garden and all the saints, with the choirs of angels and all the hosts of heaven, we praise your name.

Pastor: 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.

Pastor: 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.

Pastor: 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.**

### **PRAYERS AFTER COMMUNION**

Prayer Leader: Let us pray. We give you thanks, almighty God, that you have refreshed us through the healing power of this gift of life. In your mercy, strengthen us through this gift, in faith toward you and in fervent love toward one another.

**Congregation: Amen.**

Pastor: Gracious God, loving all your family with a mother's tender care: As you sent the angel to feed Elijah with heavenly bread, help those who go 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 everlasting presence through the body and blood of your Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord.

**Congregation: Amen.**



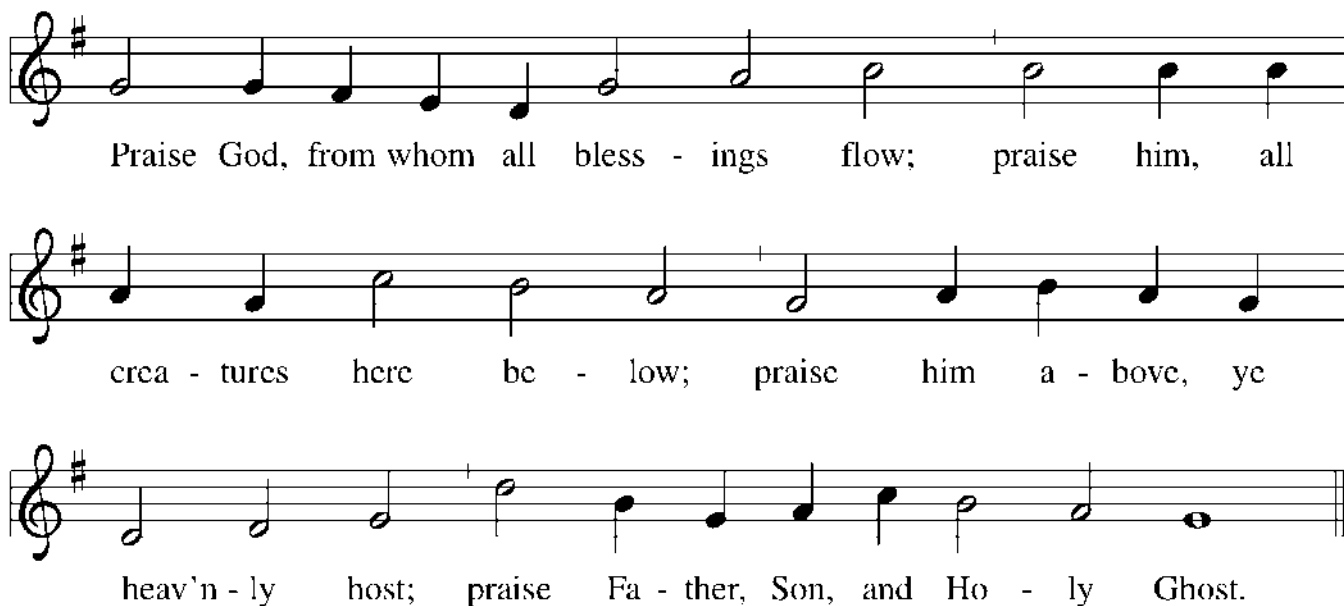
## BLESSING

Worship Leader: 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.

**Congregation: Amen.**

## SENDING SONG

### *The Doxology*



Praise God, from whom all bless - ings flow; praise him, all  
crea - tures here be - low; praise him a - bove, ye  
heav'n - ly host; praise Fa - ther, Son, and Ho - ly Ghost.

Text: Thomas Ken, 1637–1711

Music: OLD HUNDREDTH, Louis Bourgeois, 1510–1561

## DISMISSAL

Pastor: Together we have heard God's Word and joined in prayer, we have given and have been forgiven. Now our service of worship has ended, and our service to the world begins! Go in peace. Be the light of Christ.

**Congregation: Thanks be to God!**

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