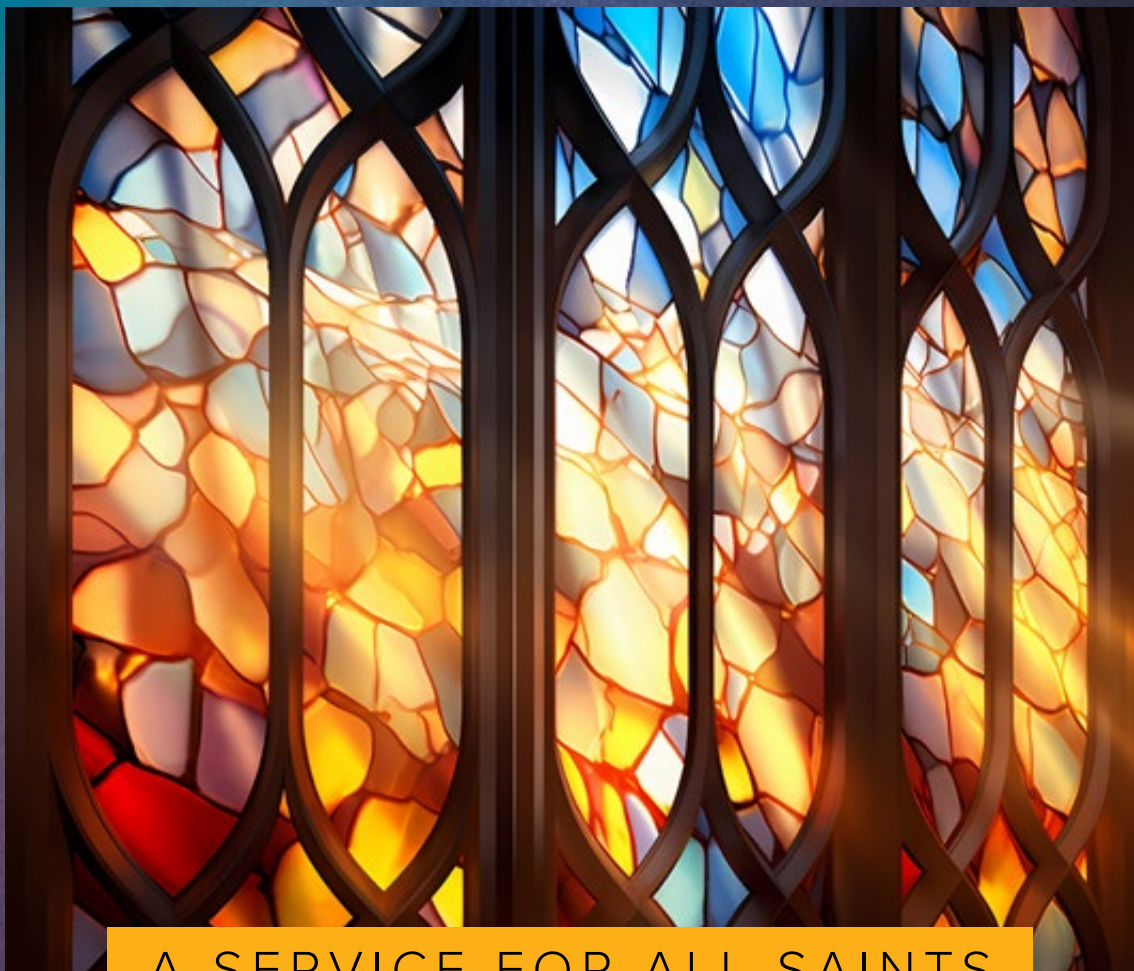


FOREVER BLEST



A SERVICE FOR ALL SAINTS

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ABOUT THIS SERVICE

In this service for All Saints Day, we remember that our loved ones who have departed this earth are now forever blest in heaven with Jesus. His name is forever blest, too, through the lives of saints here on earth and saints above who have put their trust in him. Through word and song, this service will remind us all that we will one day stand with all believers in Christ in everlasting paradise.

This service contains: a complete order of service, a sermon, a children's sermon, prayers, hymns, music for the accompanist, newsletter/bulletin notices, visual media recommendations, contemporary music song suggestions, text of the entire worship service in .pdf (portable document format) and .rtf (rich text format) and PowerPoint documents of the service with images and text (along with a copyright release) for use on screens.

- The **Old Testament Reading**, Genesis 28:10-17, is spoken by the pastor or other worship leader:

Ⓟ Jacob left Beer-sheba and went toward Haran. He came to a certain place and stayed there for the night, because the sun had set. Taking one of the stones of the place, he put it under his head and lay down in that place. And he dreamed that there was a stairway[a] set up on the earth, the top of it reaching to heaven, and the angels of God were ascending and descending on it. And the Lord stood beside him and said, “I am the Lord, the God of Abraham your father and the God of Isaac; the land on which you lie I will give to you and to your offspring, and your offspring shall be like the dust of the earth, and you shall spread abroad to the west and to the east and to the north and to the south, and all the families of the earth shall be blessed in you and in your offspring. Know that I am with you and will keep you wherever you go and will bring you back to this land, for I will not leave you until I have done what I have promised you.” Then Jacob woke from his sleep and said, “Surely the Lord is in this place—and I did not know it!” And he was afraid and said, “How awesome is this place! This is none other than the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven.”

- The **Epistle Reading**, Colossians 3:1-14, is spoken by the pastor or other worship leader:

Ⓟ So if you have been raised with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. Set your minds on the things that are above, not on the things that are on earth, for you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. When Christ who is your life is revealed, then you also will be revealed with him in glory.

Put to death, therefore, whatever in you is earthly: sexual immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire, and greed (which is idolatry). On account of these the wrath of God is coming on those who are disobedient. These are the ways you also once followed, when you were living that life. But now you must get rid of all such things: anger, wrath, malice, slander, and abusive language from your mouth. Do not lie to one another, seeing that you have stripped off the old self with its practices and have clothed yourselves with the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge according to the image of its creator. In that renewal there is no longer Greek and Jew, circumcised and uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, enslaved and free, but Christ is all and in all!

Therefore, as God’s chosen ones, holy and beloved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience. Bear with one another and, if anyone has a complaint against another, forgive each other; just as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive. Above all, clothe yourselves with love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony.

- The **Gospel Reading**, John 11:17-27, is spoken by the pastor or other worship leader:

Ⓟ When Jesus arrived, he found that Lazarus had already been in the tomb four days. Now Bethany was near Jerusalem, some two miles away, and many of the Jews had come to Martha and Mary to console them about their brother. When Martha heard that Jesus was coming, she went and met him, while Mary stayed at home. Martha said to Jesus, “Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died. But even now I know that God will give you whatever you ask of him.” Jesus said to her, “Your brother will rise again.” Martha said to him, “I know that he will rise again in the resurrection on the last day.” Jesus said to her, “I am the resurrection and the life. Those who believe in me, even though they die, will live, and everyone who lives and believes in me will never die. Do you believe this?” She said to him, “Yes, Lord, I believe that you are the Messiah, the Son of God, the one coming into the world.”

- The **Sermon Hymn** is sung by the congregation to the tune St. Denio 11 11 11 11, or a selection from the contemporary music song suggestions list at the end of the music guide for this service can be sung instead:

Immortal, invisible, God only wise,
In light inaccessible hid from our eyes,
Most blessed, most glorious, the Ancient of Days,
Almighty, victorious, thy great name we praise.

Unresting, unhasting, and silent as light,
Nor wanting, nor wasting, thou rulest in might;
Thy justice like mountains high soaring above
Thy clouds, which are fountains of goodness and love.

To all life thou givest, to both great and small;
In all life thou livest, the true life of all;
We blossom and flourish as leaves on the tree,
And wither and perish but naught changeth thee.

Great Father of glory, pure Father of light,
Thine angels adore thee, all veiling their sight;
All praise we would render, O help us to see
'Tis only the splendor of light hideth thee.

- The **Sermon** is delivered by the pastor:

☐ Grace, mercy and peace be with you on this celebration of All Saints. This is a day for us to be blessed by the Word of God as we contemplate with sorrow the passing of loved ones in the past year and in years before this one. In Scripture, we read, “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our affliction, so that we may be able to comfort those who are in any affliction, with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God” (2 Corinthians 1:3-4). What a blessing it is to know that we have a God who comforts us in our grief and loss and who gives us the strength to comfort others in their grief and sorrow as we remember loved ones who have passed away.

God’s Word also reminds us, “Weep with those who weep” (Romans 12:15). Our model is Jesus, who wept at the death of his friend Lazarus (John 11:35). Our capacity to cry is, in the end, a blessing from God to release our sorrow and express the pain we are feeling in a way that others can see and feel and commiserate with. Those of you have mourned the loss of loved ones have often told me that you were comforted by the tears of others for you and for the experience you were going through.

The families of those who have died have often said, too, how your cards, letters, notes, meals, treats, flowers and kind words of sympathy brought them peace as well in their time of need. In these actions, you are carrying out the words of Scripture which read, “Contribute to the needs of the saints and seek to show hospitality” (Romans 12:13). Loving the saints here on earth is just as important as remembering the saints in heaven.

The small gestures of compassion you exhibit to those mourning loss are tiny glimpses of the love of Jesus has shown to each one of us in our lives here on earth and in the life yet to come. Jesus told us in the Bible shortly before his own death, “A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another: just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another. By this all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another” (John 13:34-35). Jesus is at work in the moments when we love like him.

How blessed we are to know that Jesus loved us so much that he went to the cross to suffer and die for us so that death is not the end of the road for all who believe in him. It is only a door that opens to a new life forever blest by him. Consider these words from St. John in the Book of Revelation that confirm the eternal and perfect future Christ won for us all in glory above:

“Then I looked, and I heard around the throne and the living creatures and the elders the voice of many angels, numbering myriads of myriads and thousands of thousands, saying with a loud voice, ‘Worthy is the Lamb who was slain, to receive power and wealth and wisdom and might and honor and glory and blessing!’ And I heard every creature in heaven and on earth and under the earth and in the sea, and all that is in them, saying, ‘To him who sits on the throne and to the Lamb be blessing and honor and glory and might forever and ever!’” (Revelation 5:11-13).