



Sunday Oct 31st, 2021 The Fig Tree Worship Resource

Gathering & Lighting the Candle

Today we are weaving a celebration of the saints into our worship resource. As you come into the space, in person, online, gathered or alone, sit for a while, recalling those in your life who have led you in faith, inspired and encouraged you.

Light a candle,
light more than one candle, give thanks.



Call to worship

God, you dwell in all the earth.

God, you dwell in all the heavens.

With all our heart,

And all our mind

And all our strength,

We worship You.

Acknowledging

This land is God's land and God's Spirit dwells here. We acknowledge the _____ people, Traditional custodians of this land under God.

We pay respects to elders past, present and emerging, and honour any Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander People here today.

We commit ourselves again to working for reconciliation in this land.



Uniting Aboriginal and Islander
Christian Congress

Singing - For all the saints TiS 455 (alt)

Used with permission CCLI 206 729 -

Words: William Walsham How (1823-1867) - (alt)

Music: SINE NOMINE by Ralph Vaughan Williams (1872-1958)

For all the saints who from their labours rest,
who to the world, their Lord by faith confessed,,
your name, O Jesus, be for ever blest:
Alleluia, alleluia!

You were their rock, their anchor holding tight;
you, their companion when they took to flight;
you, in the darkness drear, their one true light:
Alleluia, alleluia!

O blest communion, fellowship divine!
We feebly struggle, they in glory shine;
all yours, all joined in unity divine:
Alleluia, alleluia!

And when the pain is fierce, the struggle long,
steals on the ear the distant hopeful song,
and hearts are held again, where they belong:
Alleluia, alleluia!

The golden evening brightens in the west;
soon, soon to faithful servants comes their rest;
sweet is the calm of paradise the blest:
Alleluia, alleluia!

But see, there breaks a yet more glorious day:
the saints all gathered, rise in bright array;
the King of glory passes on his way!
Alleluia, alleluia!

From earth's wide bounds,
from ocean's farthest shore,
through heaven's gate the holy people pour,
The Three-in-One, forever they adore.
Alleluia, alleluia!



Prayer

Loving God, caregiver and midwife of all people,
our hearts are open to the life you give.
May we breathe in your Spirit
through the land we feel,
and may your presence inspire us all
to be one with all those who have gone before.

May we be filled with your grace
to fully become the people you have called.
This we pray in the name of the Spirit
breathing among us.
Amen.

Listening

Read: Revelation 21:1-6a (RCL - All Saints year B)
Mark 12:28-34

In these words, is our faith.
Thanks be to God.

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Reflecting - Rev Deacon Peter Harvey

I'm sure we've all heard about All Saints Day, but it's not something that features prominently in our Uniting Church celebrations. And I'm equally sure that we probably know more about the celebration of All Saints Eve, or All Hallows Eve, or as our American brothers and sisters term it – Halloween. Although there are some exceptions dating back to pre-Uniting Church days (mainly from our Presbyterian heritage), most of our places of worship do not carry the names of saints as do many of the other mainline denominations' dedicated spaces, yet the idea of sainthood is something that, perhaps, we should consider.

What does sainthood mean to you?

For a lot of people with a rudimentary connection with the Bible, a saint is one of those heroes of the faith – whose life has been marked by devotion to God and miraculous impact in the name of their God. But rather than just these canonized people whom are regarded as saints, I want us to consider two definitions of 'Saint' that lie behind the hero status we generally accept.

The first is - a saint is a very virtuous, kind, or patient person. (These definitions, by the way, are taken from the Oxford English Dictionary). During the pandemic, we have all experienced this kind of saint. Immediately springing to mind are doctors and nurses and paramedics who have treated so many, saving lives and comforting those for whom a cure never came. I am sure you will join me in thanking God for all those health workers.

And there are so many others who may or may not be Christians, whose work has been essential during the pandemic: transport drivers, cleaners, teachers, teaching assistants, shop workers, food producers, IT experts, and those with the skill to create vaccinations. The list is endless! And we thank God for their skill, dedication and sacrifice - loving their neighbours as themselves.

And the second definition that has relevance is that – a saint is a Christian believer. A saint is any Christian believer, many of whom fall under the earlier category too – motivated by their faith in God to share their skills. Each of them following both of Jesus's commandments in today's gospel passage – to love God and neighbour.

To me, saints are all the people who do Christ's work on earth – the unnamed, unacknowledged everyday folk who do great and wonderful things through their love of God and neighbour.

Growing up with a Christian church as an influence in my early life, I was privileged to be surrounded by so many remarkable saints: Sunday school teachers, members of the congregation and some wonderful church leaders who nurtured my faith. I thank God for their love on my Christian journey.

And what about you? Who are those who have nurtured your faith and shown you love and encouragement on your journey with Christ? I invite you to give thanks to God for them.

Hand in hand with these everyday folk are those everyday Christians who have taught us a thing or two and encouraged us, but whose earthly lives have come to an end. We are privileged to be surrounded by this great cloud of witnesses.

It is in the combined effort of these unsung heroes where we truly see the power of the Holy Spirit working in and through ordinary people like you and me. Through time and space, they are bringing the kingdoms of earth and heaven closer together through love of God and neighbour. Together we move towards that time when God will wipe every tear from our eyes; a time when death, mourning and pain will be no more. Although you may be reading this alone, you are part of that amazing congregation of God's people through time and space. You are a saint!

To the Glory of God, the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end. Amen.



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Responding:

Prayers for World & Community

The response through the prayers is:

**God Who Hears when we call,
answer our prayers.**

Ancient One, in and on the land, the sea,
the mountains and the rocks,
Who forever in ancestors' past,
has shaped the deep and lasting relationships.
We give thanks that as Ruth stood by Naomi
in her vulnerability,
we have been given a model to strive for,
we protect and advocate
for the vulnerable and voiceless,
First Peoples of these many lands
known as Australia,
for refugees and all who are homeless
or stateless.

**God Who Hears when we call,
answer our prayers.**

God of Mercy,
your compassion reaches all people,
even the leaders of nations,
the leaders of religions,
and all of us,
to empower all to lead with grace,
with wisdom and gentleness,
so none are forgotten.

**God Who Hears when we call,
answer our prayers.**

Mother of Wisdom,
you spoke through the wind and in the silence,
you guided the reformers,
you led the founders of the UCA
to union of mind and heart.

May we who are now be guided wisely by
Sharon Hollis our president,
Denise Liersch our moderator,
and all in the body of Christ.

**God Who Hears when we call,
answer our prayers.**

All Knowing God, as some of us begin to emerge
from months of lockdown,
you alone know the fears, the anxieties,
the joy, the sadness,
the lost months, the isolation endured.
Guide us as we relearn and readjust,
and to find trust and strength.

**God Who Hears when we call,
answer our prayers.**

Healing God, as we come to the time of the year
of scorching heat, of endless dry,
may we all prepare our dwellings,
the animals, the bushland and the paddocks.
Protect those who will be called to protect us.
The reminders of past traumas may haunt us still,
may we remember your healing presence
around and within.

**God Who Hears when we call,
answer our prayers.**

The 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.
Save us from the time of trial
and deliver us from evil.
For the kingdom, the power, and the glory
are yours, now and forever. Amen.

Passing the peace

May the peace of God be with you.

May the peace of God dwell in your hearts.

Offering

We bring our gifts to you, loving God,
In gratitude and hope.
In dedicating them, we dedicate ourselves again
To be your people in the world,
In the strength and enabling power
Of Jesus Christ our loving God. **Amen.**



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Notices

As it's the 5th Sunday, the Gippsland Presbytery is hosting our Fig Tree Evening Worship online at 5pm today, Sunday Oct 31st. You're welcome to join - please email gippspreszoom@gmail.com by midday, include your name and ask for the Fig Tree Evening Worship Zoom link.

Singing - Rejoice in God's saints TiS 470

more familiar tune: LAUDATE DOMINUM TiS 96

Rejoice in God's saints, today and all days:
a world without saints forgets how to praise.
Their faith in acquiring the habit of prayer,
their depth of adoring, Lord, help us to share.

Some march with events,
to turn them God's way;
some need to withdraw, the better to pray;
some carry the gospel through fire and flood:
our world is their parish,
their purpose is God.

Rejoice in those saints, unpraised and unknown,
who bear someone's cross,
or shoulder their own;
they shame our complaining,
our comforts, our cares;
what patience in caring, what courage, is theirs!

Rejoice in God's saints, today and all days:
a world without saints forgets how to praise.
In loving, in living, they prove it is true:
their way of self-giving, Lord, leads us to you.

words: Frederick Pratt Green - 1903
suggested music: Charles Hubert Hastings Parry 1848-1918
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Blessing

Go as people of peace,
stewards and healers of creation,
consolers of the afflicted,
and midwives of peace.
From this place where the service is over
may the service now begin, Amen.



Our Gippsland Frontier Services Bush Chaplains have written the worship for this week and will lead our online service (see notices). The Presbytery is delighted to be in partnership with Frontier Services to provide practical care and compassion to people in the bush. Many congregations have faithfully supported the work of Frontier Services over the years. Now that restrictions are easing, have you planned to host a Great Outback BBQ? You can find out more here: <https://greatoutbackbbq.com.au/>

Reflection: Rev. Deacon Peter Harvey
- Bush Chaplain, East Gippsland
Liturgy: Marian Bissett
- Supply - High Country Patrol

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