

Worship at Home - Sunday 31 October 2021 (All Saints)

This short act of worship has been prepared for you to use at home. We invite you to spend a few moments with God, knowing that other people across the Methodist Connexion are sharing this act of worship with you.

Call to Worship

The earth is the Lord's and all that is in it.
Those who have clean hands and pure hearts
will receive blessing from the LORD.
Let us worship God together.

Based on Psalm 24, NRSVA

Hymn: 745 – For all the saints

Sing/ read /pray /proclaim the words or listen
to it here [For all the saints who from their
labours rest \(StF 745\) \(methodist.org.uk\)](https://www.methodist.org.uk/for-all-the-saints-who-from-their-labours-rest-stf-745)

William Walsham How (1823-1867)

Let us pray together

God of all space and time,
you are beyond our human comprehension;
your creation never ceases to amaze us;
and your measureless love and infinite grace
are far more than we deserve.

We have treated your creation badly;
we have failed to love our neighbour
and chosen not to love you with
heart, mind, soul and strength;
yet, through the sacrificial love of Christ,
you still offer us forgiveness.

We give you thanks that,
through the grace of Christ,
our sins are forgiven
and we are set free again to love.

Loving God: Father, Son and Spirit:
accept our thanks and praise this day
as we worship you. Amen.

Today's Reading from the New Testament

Revelation 21:1-6a

Today's Gospel Reading: Mark 12:28-34

Time to Reflect

All Saints Day does not feature prominently in Methodism. Although there are some exceptions, most of our chapels do not carry the names of saints, yet the idea of sainthood is something that perhaps we should consider.

What does sainthood mean to you?

Rather than those canonized people we regard as saints, I want to think about two definitions of 'Saint'.

1. A very virtuous, kind, or patient person*

During the pandemic, we have all experienced this kind of saint. Immediately springing to mind are doctors and nurses 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 the NHS.

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

2. A Christian believer*

A saint is also any Christian believer, many of whom fall into 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 at Altofts Methodist Church in West Yorkshire, I was privileged to be surrounded by so many remarkable: Sunday school teachers, members of the congregation and particularly my grandparents who nurtured my faith. I thank God for their love on my Christian journey.

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, the 'Saints in Light', those everyday Christians who have taught us a thing or two and encouraged, but whose earthly lives have come to an end. We are privileged to be surrounded by a 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.

Take a time to sit quietly

A time of prayer

Let us pray for all people everywhere according to their need.

Silence

We pray for your church; that we may work together to show our love of God and neighbour.

Silence

We pray for your world and all in power; that all may work together for peace and justice.

Silence

We pray for the communities in which we live; that all people may find comfort in their need.

Silence

We pray for all those who suffer and bring before you those on our minds today; that they may find comfort and peace in their troubles.

Silence

We remember those who have died, giving special thanks for that great cloud of witnesses who have lived lives of faith. May we be reunited with them in your eternal kingdom. In the name of Christ we pray. Amen.

The Lord's Prayer

Our Father

Hymn: 746 – For all the saints who showed your love

Sing/ read /pray /proclaim the words or listen to it here <https://youtu.be/7ECJANNFPO>

or sing a verse of a hymn that comes to mind

John L. Bell (b. 1949) and Graham Maule (b. 1958)

A prayer of blessing

May the blessing of God: the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, be with you and those you love this day and forevermore. Amen.

Original Materials by Tom Ferguson

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We are grateful to all the Ministers and Local Preachers from around the Connexion who have contributed to Worship at Home. This resource is administrated by Ministries: Vocations and Worship in the Connexional Team.