

Worship at Home and ZOOM Worship for November 1 2020,
All Saints Sunday

Our Worship at Home this week mirrors our ZOOM worship service. The prayers and reflection here – including communion – are the same as those we will be using together.

To participate in the ZOOM worship over your telephone, call 647-374-4685 or 647-558-0588, and when asked enter this meeting id: **810 3418 3321** and this pass code: **452820**. You will hear the service and even be able to speak when it is appropriate.

If you would like to participate in communion, make sure you have some bread or a cracker and some juice handy!

Rev. Joanne

***Please make sure your microphones are muted during the service.
If you have called in on your phone, press *6 to mute yourself.***

Centering Music: “Bless the Lord” Taizé Songbook
Bless the Lord, my soul, and bless God’s holy name.
Bless the Lord, my soul, who leads me into life. (x3)

Call to Worship and Opening Prayer

One: For all the saints
who went before us
Two: *who have spoken to our hearts
and touched us with your fire,*
One: we praise you, O God.
Two: *For all the saints
who live beside us*
One: whose weaknesses and strengths
are woven with our own,
Two: *we praise you, O God.*
One: For all the saints
who live beyond us
Two: *who challenge us
to change us
to change the world with them,*
One: we praise you, O God.

Take a moment, in your own spaces, to name one of your ‘saints’ – a person, living or dead, that has been a shining light of God’s love for you.

One: Holy and loving God, as we gather around screens or telephones today,
or as we read this service quietly or listen to these voices,
we are reminded of those saints in the faith who worked tirelessly
and faithfully to follow your way despite challenges and over distances.
Two: *Give us the strength and courage to overcome our anxieties,
and find you in new ways and sometimes unexpected ways.
Remind us that nothing at all can separate us from your love,
expressed through the saints that surround us in body and in spirit.*
Amen

Opening Music: “All Hail the Power of Jesus’ Name” VU 334 verses 1, 4, 5

All hail the power of Jesus' name!

Let angels prostrate fall.

Bring forth the royal diadem,
and crown him, crown him, crown him,
crown him Lord of all.

Let every tongue and every tribe
responsive to his call,
to him all majesty ascribe,
and crown him, crown him, crown him,
crown him Lord of all.

Oh, that with all the sacred throng
we at his feet may fall!
We'll join the everlasting song
and crown him, crown him, crown him,
crown him Lord of all.

Scripture Matthew 5:1–12

When Jesus saw the crowds, he went up the mountain; and after he sat down, his disciples came to him. Then he began to speak, and taught them, saying:

‘Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

‘Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted.

‘Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth.

‘Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled.

‘Blessed are the merciful, for they will receive mercy.

‘Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God.

‘Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God.

‘Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness’ sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

‘Blessed are you when people revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account. Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you.

Reflection: All the Blessed Saints

Hymn: "Come Touch Our Hearts" MV 12

Come touch our hearts, that we may know compassion,
from failing embers build a blazing fire;
love strong enough to overturn injustice, to
seek a world more gracious, come touch and bless our hearts.

Come touch our souls that we may know and love you,
your quiet presence all our fears dispel;
create a space for spirit to grow in us, let
life and beauty fill us, come touch and bless our souls.

Come touch our minds and teach us how to reason,
set free our thoughts to wonder and to dream;
help us to open doors of understanding, to
welcome truth and wisdom, come touch and bless our minds.

Come touch us in the moments we are fragile,
and in our weakness your great strength reveal;
that we may rise to follow and to serve,
steady now our nerve, come touch and bless our wills.

Come touch us now, this people who are gathered,
to break the bread and share the cup of peace;
that we may love you with our heart, our soul, our
mind, our strength, our all, come touch us with your grace.

Sacrament of Communion

One: The Holy One is here with us.

Two: *God's Spirit is with us wherever we are today.*

One: Lift up your hearts.

Two: *As God's people we lift them to the Lord.*

One: Let us give thanks to God.

Two: *It is right for us to offer thanks and praise.*

One: O God of many names.

You made a covenant with Noah
and caused nations, in their amazing diversity,
to spread over the face of the earth.
As of old you led your people

out of a land of enslavement to a land of promise,
so, too, you led our ancestors, and some among us,
into new lands of possibility—there to find you anew.

Two: In the fullness of time, you sent Jesus,
in every aspect human as we are.
He grew up in a small town in Galilee,
far from the seat of religious and civil power.
He spoke with a distinct accent.
He learned of the breadth of your grace
from a Gentile mother.
Beside Jacob's well,
he was moved by an encounter with a minority woman.
Therefore, with these and our other ancestors in the faith, both named and
unnamed,
who through the ages and all over the world
have borne courageous witness to the hope within them,
we praise you, singing:

MV 203 (sung)
O holy, holy, holy God, O God of time and space,
All earth and sea and sky above
bear witness to your grace.
Hosanna in the highest heav'n, creation sings your praise.
And blessed is the one who comes
and bears your name always.

One: On the last night he spent with his friends,
Jesus took an age-old tradition of his people
and transformed it into something new.
He took bread, staple food of his land,
blessed and broke it, and gave it to those around him saying, "Take, eat, this is
my body, broken for you.
Whenever you do this, remember me."

Two: After supper he took a cup of wine, common drink of his people, and gave it to
them, saying,
"Drink this, all of you, this is the new covenant in my
blood. Each time you do this, remember me."
By remembering Jesus in this way now,

we claim our common heritage
as we proclaim the mystery of faith:

MV 204(sung)
Sing Christ has died and Christ is risen,
Christ will come again!
Sing Christ has died and Christ is risen,
Christ will come again!

One: We pray you, God of Love, send your Holy Spirit upon us and what we do here,
that we, and these gifts, touched by your Spirit, may be signs of life and love to
each other, and to all the world. In this season of social distancing, may you
remind us that we are never spiritually distant from you.

Two: We lift our prayers for others to you, God
At this time, we also remember all those
with whom you would have us share your feast.
We pray for all who are in sorrow or in pain . . .
all who are ill or alone . . .
all who live with fear, oppression, or hunger . . .
all whom the world counts as last and least
We pray for your church and its varied ministries . . .
for the nations as they strive for peace and justice . . .
for the earth, and the fragile web of life we share . . .
for our families and friends

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The Lord's Prayer (sung) VU 960

One: Through Christ, with Christ, and in Christ,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
all glory is yours, God most holy,
now and forever.
Amen

Breaking the Bread and Pouring the Cup

*This would be the moment for you to take your own bread and juice, perhaps sharing
the words "Jesus Christ the bread of life" and "Jesus Christ the true vine." If you are with
another person, you might choose to serve the bread and juice to each other.*

Prayer after Communion

One: Life-giving God,
here we have been fed with your goodness,
in this special space and time we have been given
a taste of life in its fullness.
May the nourishment we have been given
energize us to be the peace-bearing
hands and feet of Jesus in the world.
Amen.

Closing Music: "Give Thanks for Life" VU 706

Give thanks for life, the measure of our days,
mortal, we pass through beauty that decays,
yet sing to God our hope, our love, our praise,
Hallelujah, hallelujah!

Give thanks for those who made their life a light
caught from the Christ-flame, bursting through the night,
who touched the truth, who burned for what is right,
Hallelujah, hallelujah!

And for our own, our living and our dead,
thanks for the love by which our life is fed,
a love not changed by time or death or dread,
Hallelujah, hallelujah!

Give thanks for hope, that like the wheat, the grain
lying in darkness does its life retain
in resurrection to grow green again,
Hallelujah, hallelujah!

Blessing

As you move away from worship and into daily routines, God, who in love sang the
universe into being surrounds you, Jesus Christ, God's love song to the world
accompanies you, and God's Spirit sings God's love into each and every heart, each and
every day. Amen

*For those who wish to remain to visit, you will be invited to turn on your microphones
and
stay on the ZOOM call.*

Reflection for November 1 'All the Blessed Saints'

It is lovely to hear these words that so many of us know so well – they can be a comfort, a reminder of one of Jesus' most revered teachings as part of what we call the Sermon on the Mount.

Yet those who first encountered Jesus in this story shared in Matthew's gospel - and who gathered on that Judean hillside 2000 years ago, would perhaps have heard these as unexpected words, disturbing and new. In the chapters preceding this writing, Matthew introduces a Jesus who is a powerful Messiah – so powerful that his lineage includes King David, so threatening to the established powers that Herod decides to slaughter young children rather than be faced with the threat of him coming to power, and so powerfully holy that God declares him to be God's Beloved One at the Jordan river. Surely those who listened – and those who would later read Matthew's writings – would have been expecting a powerful figure with an equally powerful message of overcoming the oppressors, of God's mighty warrior messiah who would save them and wipe the enemies of the people away.

Instead, they get a very different message – one that calls attention not to war heroes or the powerful, but one that speaks of the blessedness – the God connectedness – of those who are meek, or grieving, or poor in spirit, or peace makers or justice seekers. It was a great upending of the ways in which people were valued not just in Jesus time, but in our own as well. It allowed those who listened, and still listen today, to see themselves as part of the blessed and beloved community – God's community, our community.

On this All Saints day, I think the Beatitudes can help us to identify the saints in our midst, as well as honoring those gone to God, the "prophets who were before you" as Jesus put it. Who do we know, or have known, who struggles with their spirit? Perhaps more than we did before pandemic restrictions. We are told that they are blessed – touched by God in a way, and that they are part of God's eternal reign. The list goes on, and we can continue to ask who do we know, or have known, who is meek, or merciful, or pure in heart? They too are blessed, enfolded in God's love – they are the saints of the faith.

And just like these familiar lines of scriptures, the lives of our saints – the ones gone before us and the ones who still walk with us – can comfort us, inspire us, and sometimes challenge us to think in different ways about Jesus and about our own life's path.

As we think about those whom we would name as saints, I think we can remember that we are potentially saints – those who shine with God's light, who follow God's path, who inspire and witness to God's presence and Jesus' life, in the lives of others. This is both gift and responsibility as we seek to continue our work and our lives together as Applewood United Church.

On this 'All Saints' Sunday, I leave you with a portion of the latest statement of faith created in this United Church, called a Song of Faith:

We sing of a church
 seeking to continue the story of Jesus
 by embodying Christ's presence in the world.

We are called together by Christ
 as a community of broken but hopeful believers,
 loving what he loved,
 living what he taught,
 striving to be faithful servants of God
 in our time and place.

Our ancestors in faith
 bequeath to us experiences of their faithful living;
 upon their lives our lives are built.

Our living of the gospel makes us a part of this communion of saints,
 experiencing the fulfillment of God's reign
 even as we actively anticipate a new heaven and a new earth.

May your saints be with you today, and may you count yourself as one of the blessed ones.
Amen