

Straight from the "Hart"

Worship Service from November 1, 2020

All Saints Sunday



Welcome

Good morning and welcome to Hartland United Methodist Church's All Saints Worship Service. We are glad you are here to worship -- much refreshed by that extra hour of sleep. Today, among other things, we will continue to talk about the saints in Thessalonica, those brand new Christians whom Paul is encouraging to grow in their "saintliness" more and more, so that they can continue to model to the city and beyond what it means to be Christian. Let's pray.

Opening Prayer

O LORD, the wisdom of your work is shown throughout the earth. Nature is full of animals on land and sea, and they all look to you for their seasonal food. You give, they gather, and they are filled with good things. The cycles of seasons, of life and death, reveal how your Spirit creates and renews the face of the earth. As long as we are able, we will honor your great works by the way we live, and the way we worship in these next moments. Amen.

Theme

[Put a chair in front of the congregation]. Ask them what it is. "A Chair." Chair can mean other things too. In band, a chair is your position among your instruments... The best player is first chair. In marching band, a chair is when lift your knee up higher than the normal step -- high enough to form a 90-degree angle with your leg. A person who leads an important committee or group or organization is also sometimes called the Chair, or Chairperson. The word "chair" can mean several things.

Today is All Saints Sunday. The word "saint" can mean different things too. In New Orleans, it means the football team. On days like this, saints refer mostly to people who have lived and died in the faith of Jesus and set an example for us. Often we think of them as really special people, and they were. In fact, we usually reserve that description for people who were especially gifted in living out their faith in one way or another. But the history of the word is traced back to words that are translated sanctified or hallowed (holy) (which is why "Halloween" was yesterday (hallowed - holy one -- eve) or -- and those words mean anyone who chooses to follow God's call and loves Jesus. That can be anyone, including us.

On a day like today, it could easily be something to be really sad about, and it is -- to think of people who were special to us who aren't with us anymore. But Jesus died and rose from the dead and lives again, and so those who follow him rise and follow him to a new life in heaven too -- so in time that can take some of the sting away, and we honor them with thanks for why they were so special to us... we thank the Lord for everyone who seeks, loves and follows him, and are granted the sure hope of new life -- Because he lives, we live. Sherri is going to come and call us to worship. Because Christ rose, all his saints, including us, will also be risen.

Call to Worship (Lay Reader, **Congregation**)

Come, let us mingle our memories and our hopes together, for today is a special day.

Today we celebrate All Saints' Day.

Saints are made by listening to the call of God and saying, "Yes."

Hidden in an inner whisper -- or proclaimed through the cry of a hurting world -- the call of God touches our hearts.

We give thanks for all who have answered the call.

They were heroes and "ordinary", talented and "unskilled", walking and "wounded".

Give thanks for those who have gone before us and made it easier for us to believe in God and live the life of faith.

We dedicate this service to the celebration of their witness and of their deeds.

Opening Song *Open the Eyes of My Heart*

Being a saint, being holy; begins as we offer our hearts to Christ, our priorities to living with his kind of love and values of loving God and others. This can be done as we keep in front of us what he has already done for us and is continuing to do for us, inviting us into his everlasting holy kingdom. Let's sing that God would open our hearts to his holy presence this morning.

Open the Eyes of My Heart

Open the eyes of my heart, Lord, open the eyes of my heart;

I want to see You, I want to see You.

(Repeat)

To see You high and lifted up, shining in the light of Your glory.
Pour out Your power and love; as we sing “Holy, holy, holy”.

Open the eyes of my heart, Lord, open the eyes of my heart;
I want to see You, I want to see You.

(Repeat)

To see You high and lifted up, shining in the light of Your glory.
Pour out Your power and love; as we sing “Holy, holy, holy”.

(Repeat)

Holy, holy, holy. Holy, holy, holy. Holy, holy, holy,
I want to see You.

(Repeat)

I want to see You.

Prayers

Everlasting God, through your Son Jesus Christ, you have knit your people together into one communion and fellowship. You have set before us a great cloud of witnesses -- many that have gone before us, and others that live around us every day. Thank you for the love driven virtues of their godly lives. We rejoice in their ultimate victory in you. May we be inspired by their examples.

We rejoice in their celebrations of life, and prayerfully mourn with those who are in need, and compassionately intercede for them -- for your help and strength and comfort in whatever they and we face today. We especially lift up our praise for the progress of Jim Malot, we also pray for Crystal Vines who is struggling with stress from covid-induced unemployment, and for Harold Winegarner who was hospitalized with a stroke. There are others on our minds that have been named in the past weeks, or are named only in our hearts. We lift them up in this next moment of silence. **SILENCE**

Now may the fire of your Spirit kindle that same faith and power of your love in our hearts that we saw and see in the saints, so that we may follow where your saints have led -- that we too may come to those unspeakable joys which you have prepared for those who love you through Jesus Christ. Amen.

All Saints' Special Tribute

Let's begin our tribute to the saints by singing “*Rejoice in God's Saints*”

Hymn # 708 *Rejoice in God's Saints*

Responsive Reading (R1 = Pastor R2 = Lay Reader **C = Congregation**)

R1: This day revives in us memories of loved ones. What happiness we shared when they walked among us. What joy, when, loving and being loved, we lived our lives together. Months or years may have passed, and we still feel near to them. Our hearts yearn for them. Though the bitter grief has softened, a duller pain abides; for the place they once held remains empty. The links of life are broken, but the links of love and longing cannot be severed. Their souls are bound up in ours forever.

R2: We see them now with the eye of memory, faults forgiven, their virtues grown larger. So does goodness live, and weakness fade from sight. We remember them with gratitude. Their memory is a blessing for ever.

R1: We also remember the members who but yesterday were part of our congregation and community. To all who cared for us and labored for all people, we pay tribute. May we prove worthy of carrying on the tradition of our faith, for the task is now ours. We give you thanks that they now live and reign with God and have joined the great cloud of witnesses, surrounding us with their blessings, and offering hymns of praise and thanksgiving. We rejoice because they are alive for ever more.

R2: Hear these words from the book of Hebrews: Our ancestors were commended for their faith. Time would fail to tell [the stories of the saints. Nevertheless], "Since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles, and let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us. Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy set before him endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. Consider him who endured such opposition from the sinful, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart."
(Hebrews 11:2, 32b, "12:1-3 NIV")

R1: Therefore, we remember those who have gone before us: some centuries ago, some throughout various points of the ages, and some in this present day; and we are touched and inspired by their lives of faith. Let us commemorate the day by gathering our hearts and minds around our memories... Read responsively.

R2: We have come here as a people of faith,

C: thankful for all those who have gone before us.

R2: We stand in awe of so many who have served faithfully and shared and lived the good news.

C: May their example and their courage be a guide and model for our living.

R2: Like the faithful ones who have gone before us, let us keep our eyes focused on Jesus,

C: Our hearts set on God's love,

R2: Our hands ready to bind up the hurts of creation and all people,

C: Our feet ready to go the extra mile.

R2: Let our eyes see light even within darkness and glimpse potential where others see dead ends.

C: Give us mouths eager to sing God's praise and hearts yearning to rejoice.

R2: Like the ones who have gone before us,

C: We will follow as part of the communion of the saints.

All Saints Candles (Reader 1 - Pastor Reader 2 - Lay Reader)



R2: 1) First, we remember the saints of the OT, who by God's faithful grace, first entered, and then struggled to maintain a holy covenant with Him. Saints like Moses, who, by faith, chose disgrace for the sake of Christ as of greater value than the treasures of Egypt. He led them out of slavery to freedom. Then Joshua, by faith, led them into the promised land. Saints like Queen Esther, who risked her life for her nation, and ordinary Ruth who demonstrated extra-ordinary true devotion. For the proclamations of prophets, the prayers of priests, and the conquests of kings. For these saints of the Old Testament, we remember, and give thanks. **(LIGHT CANDLE 1 and RING BELL)**

R1: 2) We remember the saints of the NT, who by God's faithful grace in Jesus Christ, pointed to a radically new, and yet a continuing covenant between God

and His people. For Mary and Joseph, the disciples, the woman at the well, for Paul and Lois, Lydia, and all others who simply could not keep quiet, and by so doing spread the covenant not only around, but through the generations. For these saints of the NT, we remember, and give thanks. **(LIGHT CANDLE 7 and RING BELL)**

R2: 3) We remember the saints of the Early Church, who by God's faithful grace in the Holy Spirit, moved the church to turn the world upside down, often at risk of severe persecution. For Augustine and Thomas a Kempis, and Helena, for Reformers Martin Luther, John Calvin, Elizabeth Fry, For revivalists John Wesley, Thomas Coke, Phoebe Palmer, Catherine Booth, and Anna Shaw. For these we remember, and give thanks. **(LIGHT CANDLE 2 and RING BELL)**

R1: 4) We remember the saints of our recent past, those who have died in the Lord and now rest from their labor. For Reinhold Niebuhr and Catherine Booth, Martin Luther King and Mother Theresa, And all those whom we name in our hearts, global, national, and personal, and for whom we hope for a great reunion on the Day of the Lord. This year specifically, we remember

Mary Margaret Monroe	(light candle and ring bell)
Stewart Oldford	(light candle and ring bell)
Eva Elizabeth Welby	(light candle and ring bell)
Daniel R. Bierer	(light candle and ring bell)

R1: [Open it up for congregation to name more names...] For all these, and for all those who we did not name out loud but whose memories still ring loud in our minds -- those we name in our hearts, for all the excellent and praiseworthy things that they have planted in us that continue to grow and blossom, we remember and give thanks. **(LIGHT CANDLE 6 and RING BELL)**

R2: 5) We remember the saints of the present, those who are still faithfully serving in all parts of the world, sometimes at great peril to themselves; and to those who sit in this very building, faithfully modeling and speaking the life of Christ, encouraging and exhorting, hoping, praying. For all these we acknowledge and give thanks. **(LIGHT CANDLE 3 and RING BELL)**

R1: 6) And we remember the saints to come, those who; if Christ tarries; will carry on the faith to their generation and the next, sometimes at great peril to themselves. For the hope and certain assurance of these saints of the future, for

these we envision, and give thanks. (LIGHT CANDLE 5 and RING BELL)

R1: 7) For all these saints, past, present, and future, we give thanks and praise for the light they have given their world and ours; knowing that they could not have been faithful, that they could not have been saints, if it had not been for God's gracious faithfulness to them, to us, and to those to come -- through the life and light of Jesus Christ our Lord. (LIGHT CANDLE 4 and RING BELL THREE TIMES)

Now for all these we pray responsively --

R1: Now for all these saints, O God, who from their labors rest, who labor on, or are yet to begin their labors...

C: We glorify your name!

R1: Vast has been the number of your saints, some famous, many less noticed in the wider circles; yet special to those who knew them, and lovingly written in your Book of Life.

C: You gather people from every nation, race and tongue; into your kingdom.

R1: They were human, surely, but with the aid of your Spirit, they did great deeds of mercy and offered eloquent witness to your power and love. For the saints that are before us and the saints that are around us, for the ones who have gone before us, and the saints who are with us now -- and even for the saints yet to come --

**C: We thank you for the ones who reflect holy light on our life's journey.
Amen.**

Let's respond to this tribute to the saints by singing about the faithful sacrifice of our ancestors, without whom we may not have even known about Christ.

Hymn – # 710 vv 1,2,3 Faith of our Fathers

Message “Overflowing Love” 1 Thessalonians 3:10 - 4:10

Have you ever *anticipated* a very difficult meeting? It could even be a personal conversation? (Just wanted to be sure I wasn't the only one). You run the imaginary conversation through your head again and again, you might dream about it at night and think about it all day long, trying to anticipate every argument that may come back your way, every objection, every insult; every worst-case scenario you can imagine -- and the plus side is you get a real good handle on the issue -- even if

you never mutter a single word of what you have rehearsed in your heart and in your head.

Then you get to the meeting, or that personal conversation, and the difficult topic isn't difficult at all. Much to your surprise, and in spite of all the rumors and worst case scenario imaginations, everyone (or that other person) is actually expressing positively the exact same thing you were thinking and the meeting is better than you could have possibly imagined; and you are almost disappointed that all that obsessive worry "speech rehearsal" is down the drain. "I practiced this! and now I don't get to say it!"

Let me remind us where we are in our series. Paul is on his second missionary journey and his team went to Thessalonica where he preached Christ in the synagogues. Some Jews and many Gentiles believed the message and a church was founded. Others in the city did not like that. They stirred up a mob to literally eliminate the team from life. The new church blessed Paul and his team on their way out of town while they themselves got hauled before the city officials. They were released, but clearly it was, and would continue to be, a tense situation. Paul and his team traveled on to Berea, but angry Thessalonians followed them, and they were forced out of that town as well. They moved on to Athens. It was from here that Paul is so concerned about the Thessalonians that he sent his close, young friend and trainee, Timothy back to them to see how they are and to encourage them to stand firm against the negative forces in the city. (They didn't have cell phones and email and etc -- they had to send messages in person). Paul's team moved on to Corinth where they continued their mission work but also anxiously awaited Timothy's return and report. You could hear in last week's text the worst-case fears bubbling up in Paul's words. He begins a letter to tell them how eager he is to come back to them (He has already imagined they have left him and his message and fallen away) He wants to eagerly come back so he can supply what is lacking in their faith. (1 Thessalonians 3:10-11) and persuade them against every argument, every objection, every insult – to turn them back again to God and his instruction -- to accept again what he had taught them, and more importantly to accept Christ again. He assumes they have given in to the pressures of the city and fallen back to their sinful ways, and the church was gone.

But now Timothy arrives, and Paul learns the Thessalonians have neither turned on him nor have they failed Christ. They are remaining as strong as ever in the faith and loving and longing for Christ, and loving and missing Paul and his mission team as much as ever. Paul is thrilled and overjoyed!

But he was in the middle of this letter – and he had this speech all prepared and running through his head – and almost on the paper -- if it wasn't already. And it doesn't apply, because everyone is on the same page and moving positively forward in the right direction – he does what I would not do -- he gives his argument anyway.

So, today's text cycles around and repeats something like this: (Scoldingly commanding:) "You need to do this...!!!" And then Timothy came, (Joyfully celebrating:) "And you *are* doing this !!!" (Then sheepishly trying to figure out how to put this together and justify what he is writing, he concludes: "Just do it more and more." He keeps circling back to his same (seemingly now irrelevant information, arguments that he had practiced over and over in his head. This is what he writes in 1 Thessalonians 3:10-4:10

¹⁰ Night and day we pray most earnestly that we may see you again and supply what is lacking in your faith. ¹¹ Now may our God and Father himself and our Lord Jesus clear the way for us to come to you. ¹² May the Lord make your love [to] increase and overflow for each other and for everyone else, just as ours does for you. ¹³ May he strengthen your hearts so that you will be blameless and holy in the presence of our God and Father when our Lord Jesus comes with all his holy ones. ^{4:1} As for other matters, brothers and sisters, [here is the scolding part now -- what he didn't need to say to them:] we instructed you how to live in order to please God, [joyfully:] as in fact you are living. [sheepishly:] Now we ask you and urge you in the Lord Jesus to do this more and more. ² For you know what instructions [instructions that as it turns out were not needful to give again because they were still following them] we gave you by the authority of the Lord Jesus. ³ It is God's will that you should be sanctified [we heard about that earlier in the service]: that you should avoid sexual immorality; ⁴ that each of you should learn to control your own body in a way that is holy and honorable, ⁵ not in passionate lust like the pagans, [which they used to be] who do not know God; ⁶ and that in this matter no one should wrong or take advantage of a brother or sister. The Lord will punish all those who commit such sins, as we told you and warned you before. ⁷ For God did not call us to be impure, but (to live a holy life). ⁸ Therefore, anyone who rejects this instruction does not reject a human being but God, [Can you hear what he has "rehearsed" to get his argument across? to persuade them even though it turns out he didn't need to, but saying it anyway],. ⁹ Now about your love for one another we do not need to write to you,[but he wrote it anyway] for you yourselves have been taught by God to love each other.

¹⁰ And in fact, you do love all of God's family throughout Macedonia. Yet we urge you, brothers and sisters, to do so more and more, (NIV)

What Paul is hoping for is their spiritual maturity, their continued growth. An ability to be so solidly established in God's love that they will have the spiritual and moral compass and strength to continue growing and fulfilling God's will, placing their very lives in God's hands for his service, and modeling what it means to live as a disciple, a follower of Jesus Christ, no matter what pressures they (or we) may face.

Paul was delighted to hear that their faith wasn't lacking, but was holding up in the face of adversity. Paul was not referring to faith as a set of abstract doctrinal concepts. He was talking about proudly naming Christ as our lord and leader and living as fully they could -- the way Christ modeled life to be lived.

A long time ago, the owner of the Dallas Mavericks offered Chicago sports talk radio host David Kaplan 100,000 dollars to officially change his name, for one year, to Dallas Maverick. After much pressure from listeners saying he'd be crazy not to accept the money, he declined, saying "If I accepted, it meant I'd do anything for money. I didn't like that. My name is my birthright, I want to preserve my integrity and credibility."

The name "Christian" is an adopted birth-right of every follower of Jesus. We have a responsibility to live every day without compromise, in a way that brings honor to that name. Sheri Shepherd said, the last thing we want to hear from others observing our life is, "You are a Christian? Really?"

No, we want to think, speak, and act in a way that doesn't make people feel shocked or wonder that we are Christian, and I read Paul's instructions on how to please God. On the other hand, sometimes we are too harsh on ourselves and others. Ken Langley illustrates how we fall into that trap.

He and his wife were at an airport and were worried they would not get on an overbooked flight. That is something we don't have to worry about that much these days -- although some airline companies are jamming people together so that there are less flights. We don't need to worry about that. Anyway, they just got called in to the check-in desk.

Oh, I just remembered a joke from a standup comedian. He went up to the airport desk and said, "bwaak buk buk buk" (sound of a hen), and the person said, "No, this is the *check-in* desk. That was no extra charge. 😊"

The agent said it was their lucky day. To get them on the plane they were going

to bump them up to first class. They were pampered with good food, hot coffee, and plenty of elbow room. Then he and his wife started playing a game – trying to guess who else didn't belong in first class based on their uncouth looks and actions.

It is too easy to let a game become a pre-judgment that sticks on people. Apply the story. We see people who don't seem to represent Christianity well -- who tempt us to feel embarrassed and/or cause us to feel superior. But the truth is, we don't belong there anymore than they do. We are no better or worse than **anyone** else. Our acceptance by God is based solely on his loving grace. We are all at different levels of growth in different areas of our spiritual life. And just because we happen to see what we think is a quirk or a weak spot or a blind spot in someone else, that doesn't give us license to treat it like an open wound that we need to salt in causing even more pain.

A quarrelsome couple sat in front of a fireplace. Sleeping peaceably on either side of the hearth were two cats. The husband said, "Why can't we live in peace with each other like that?" The wife said, "Tie the tails of those cats together and fling them over a clothesline, and see what happens"... It is too easy to judge and fight rather than rest together in peace.

But Paul was overjoyed because the Thessalonians were not in that situation, they were not embarrassed by or feeling superior to each other, or to others around them of Paul and his team (which some had tried to discredit).

The holiness of the mission team nor the young church was not veiled holier-than-thou-ness. It was a sincere, longing love for each other and for everyone, and it was growing up and growing out and that is why we keep adding candles to this altar each week, these children of light keep expanding and expanding and expanding!

Loving people means we are pulling for each other. It doesn't necessarily mean we agree with all choices, words, or actions, but it means that we choose to accept and love them anyway – because they are in the process of growing just like we are. Even when we were outright sinners, God chose to accept and love us.

Paul was elated to know the Thessalonians still loved him like he loved them. He said it gave him life (See 1 Thess 3:8). Remember last week, the limp, half inflated balloon wondering what was going to happen? Was Timothy's news going to inflate or deflate them? He finds out it is inflated, to know they were pulling for each other, and for him, and he for them, as they both struggled in their difficult circumstances and times.

I used to have a monthly meeting with someone who would prepare a list of everything, usually moving targets, of everything that was I was not doing right, according to his opinion, and with everything that was wrong with the church, and other church leaders. Those kinds of meetings rarely give life to a person, getting you excited and ready to go! It sucks the life out of you; and makes you feel like your best efforts are useless, and so it is really hard to get back to that best effort. But when you discover that what you do makes a positive difference in the life of another, it energizes *everything* you do. (See 1 Thess 3:5,8)

Larry Crabb is a popular speaker and Christian psychologist. As a boy, he stuttered. Worse yet, he attended a church where it was customary that young men participate in the communion services by praying out loud. Feeling the pressure of expectation, he stood to pray, it was a terribly confused prayer. He recalls "thanking the Father for hanging on the cross and praising Christ for triumphantly bringing the Spirit from the grave."

When he finished, he felt humiliated, and he vowed that he would never again speak or pray out loud. And not wanting to be confronted by the elders correcting his bad theology, he made a beeline for the exits. But he wasn't fast enough, and Crabb braced himself as Jim Dunbar caught up with him, and Jim Dunbar said to Larry, "Larry, there's one thing I want you to know. Whatever you do for the Lord, I'm behind you one thousand percent."

Crabb wrote later, "Even as I write these words, my eyes fill with tears. I have yet to tell that story to an audience without at least mildly choking up. Jim Dunbar's timely words had power. They reached deep into my being. They were life words." [Pause]

Even when the disciples were faithless, and blameworthy, and loveless condemners, Jesus had every confidence that with his love, and support, and sending of the Spirit – that someday even in the midst of threats, trials and temptations; they would develop the ability to be faithful, and blameless and filled with accepting love. Even on the night he knew one would betray him, and the rest would desert him; he offered them his life -- to establish a new covenant with them, and with us; and in this covenant act, he promises his forgiveness, his love and confidence in us, but mostly, he promises his eternal presence with us, and us with him.

Communion



Invitation The Lord's Communion Table is open, it does not require local or official United Methodist membership. It invites and welcomes to participation all who received, or desire to receive, or receive again, God's grace -- grace to follow the example of everything excellent found in the faithfulness of the saints -- it is open to all who desire to honor the God of creation and of his new beginnings -- open to all who are willing to seek and work for His vision of healing, comfort, peace and wholeness... open for all who want to be found faithful -- this table, this ritual, freely invites you to be involved, in his world. Through these moments, by faith, we receive strength for this life while we continue to look forward to the day when we will sit down at the heavenly banquet with Jesus and the universal church. As we share in this sacrament, we are reminded that God transcends time and life and death, and we are connected with every person who is or has ever been a member of Christian faith. May it nourish our lives as it has nourished the saints throughout the ages.

Song of Preparation

Sanctuary

Lord Prepare Me to be sanctuary, pure and holy, tried and true.

With thanksgiving, I'll be a living sanctuary for you.

(Repeat)

Confession Let's continue preparing our hearts by a time of confession. Holy and merciful God, we confess that we have not always taken up the responsibility of obedience - of being saints -- of setting ourselves apart for you. We have not sought your will. We have not loved you with all that we are, or our neighbors as ourselves. We are not yet the kind of saints we strive to become. We do not always shine out God's light to others as well as we would or could or should. Forgive us and remind us how grateful we are, that even though when we slip and fail and break our promises, you keep your promises to us --

Assurance that you are merciful and gracious, endlessly patient, loving, and true, showing mercy to thousands, forgiving iniquity, transgression, and sin, and granting pardon. You proved that love toward us in that while we were sinners,

your Son Jesus Christ died for us. On the basis of these promises, in the name of Jesus Christ, you are forgiven.

In the name of Jesus Christ you are forgiven. Glory to God. Amen.

Thanksgiving (Pastor - Congregation)

[Therefore,] The Lord be with you. **And also with you.**

Lift up your hearts. **We lift them up to the Lord.**

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

It is right to give our thanks and praise.

It is right, a good and joyful thing, always and everywhere to give thanks to you, Father Almighty, creator of heaven and earth. We give thanks for the beauty of creation that you share so freely with all the saints through all the generations. You gather your people as one in the body of Christ. Unite us with all people of every time and place who have lived by your Word and died in your love. When we grieve, reassure us that our loved ones are not lost to you. Prepare us for the day when we will join with them in the grand celebration of life everlasting. We have looked back and remembered the saints who have brought our community to this time and place, our spiritual parents and grandparents. We not only look back and remember their work and impact, we also look forward to the reward in which they already share. That day when dying and crying will be no more. A day for which Christ has already begun the work. And so, with your people on earth and all the company of heaven we praise your name and join their unending hymn:

Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of power and might, heaven and earth are full of your glory. Hosanna in the highest. Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. Hosanna in the highest.

Faithful Jesus, you came in his name. In life and death we belong to you. By the baptism of your suffering, death, and resurrection, you gave birth to your church, delivered us from slavery to sin and death, and made with us a new covenant by water and the Spirit. We are thankful that you share our grief in the death of our loved ones. We give thanks for your promises that you are with them and us until the end of the age and that when our time on earth comes to an end, you have prepared a place for us just as you have for them. And so, in remembrance of these your mighty acts in Jesus Christ, we offer ourselves in praise and thanksgiving as a holy and living sacrifice, in union with Christ's offering for us, as we proclaim the mystery of faith.

Christ has died; Christ is risen; Christ will come again.

Almighty God, on this day when we honor the saints, pour out your Spirit on these people gathered here, and on this bread and cup on this table and that the people hold in their hands. Make them be for us the body and blood of Christ, that we may be for the world the body of Christ, redeemed by his blood. By your Spirit make us one with Christ, one with each other, and one in ministry to all the world, until Christ comes in final victory, and we feast at his heavenly banquet. Remind us that the table is not only a memorial, a testament to what was. This table represents the living presence of Jesus in our lives today and in all our days to come. How thankful we are that you come alongside us – binding us together as the Body of Christ, encouraging our faith, calling us to correction, reminding us that our God transcends time, place; and the limits of our humanity; so that -- we may sense your loving presence and can again pray with all the saints the prayer that you taught us to pray: **Lord's Prayer**

We remember that on the night he was betrayed, Jesus gathered his disciples into a upper room for a Passover meal. He took the bread, lifted it up, gave thanks to you, broke it and gave it to his disciples saying, "Take, eat. This is my body given for you, for healing, for wholeness, for life that is full and everlasting." Eat it in remembrance of me. (Eat)

In the same way, after the supper, he took the cup, lifted it and gave thanks, and gave it to his disciples saying, "Drink this, all of you. This is my blood of a new covenant into the family of God, given for the forgiveness of your sins and for the sins of many." As you drink it, drink it remembrance of me. Drink to the nourishment of your soul... (Drink)

All of this table, the things upon it, including the elements you have now received, and the words and ritual surrounding it serve to remind us that God has always been, is, and will always be the source of our hope for life and life everlasting. Let's stand for our final hymn which also reinforces his role in our life, and in the lives of all the saints throughout the ages.

Hymn # 117 *O God Our Help in Ages Past*

Closing Blessing Now may God watch over us as we move into our week, just as he watched over those who have gone before us... with the assurance that his grace and power always goes with us and guides us with his sustaining light.