

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 \(StF 745\)](https://www.methodist.org.uk)
([methodist.org.uk](https://www.methodist.org.uk))

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

Thou wast their rock, their fortress and
their might;
thou, Lord, their captain in the well-fought
fight;
thou in the darkness still their one true
light:
Alleluia, alleluia!

O may thy soldiers, faithful, true, and
bold,
fight as the saints who nobly fought of
old,
and win, with them, the victor's crown of
gold!
Alleluia, alleluia!

O blest communion, fellowship divine!
We feebly struggle, they in glory shine;
yet all are one in thee, for all are thine:
Alleluia, alleluia!

And when the strife is fierce, the warfare
long,
steals on the ear the distant triumph song,
and hearts are brave again, and arms are
strong:
Alleluia, alleluia!

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

But lo, there breaks a yet more glorious
day:
the saints triumphant rise in bright array;
the King of Glory passes on his way!
Alleluia, alleluia!

From earth's wide bounds, from ocean's
farthest coast,
through gates of pearl streams in the
countless host,
singing to Father, Son, and Holy Ghost:
Alleluia, alleluia!

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

Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more. ² And I saw the holy city, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. ³ And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, 'See, the home^[a] of God is among mortals. He will dwell^[b] with them; they will be his peoples,^[c] and God himself will be with them;^[d] ⁴ he will wipe every tear from their eyes. Death will be no more; mourning and crying and pain will be no more, for the first things have passed away.' ⁵ And the one who was seated on the throne said, 'See, I am making all things new.' Also he said, 'Write this, for these words are trustworthy and true.' ⁶ Then he said to me, 'It is done! I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end.
NRSVA

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

²⁸ One of the scribes came near and heard them disputing with one another, and seeing that he answered them well, he asked him, 'Which commandment is the first of all?' ²⁹ Jesus answered, 'The first is, "Hear, O Israel: the Lord our God, the Lord is one;" ³⁰ you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind, and with all your strength.' ³¹ The second is this, "You shall love your neighbour as yourself." There is no other commandment greater than these.' ³² Then the scribe said to him, 'You are right, Teacher; you have truly said that "he is one, and besides him there is no other"; ³³ and "to love him with all the heart, and with all the understanding, and with all the strength", and "to love one's neighbour as oneself",—this is much more important than all whole burnt-offerings and sacrifices.' ³⁴ When Jesus saw that he answered wisely, he said to him, 'You are not far from the kingdom of God.' After that no one dared to ask him any question. NRSVA

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**

For all the saints who showed your love
in how they lived and where they moved,
for mindful women, caring men,
accept our gratitude again.

For all the saints who loved your name,
whose faith increased the Saviour's fame,
who sang your songs and shared your
word,
accept our gratitude, good Lord.

For all the saints who named your will,
and saw your kingdom coming still
through selfless protest, prayer and
praise,
accept the gratitude we raise.

Bless all whose will or name or love
reflects the grace of heaven above.
Though unacclaimed by earthly powers,
your life through theirs has hallowed ours.
*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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Local Churches CCCLi363610

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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.

For more worship resources see

[The Bible \(methodist.org.uk\)](http://methodist.org.uk)

[Singing the Faith Plus \(methodist.org.uk\)](http://methodist.org.uk)