

## ***Be transformed!***

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### **Gathering**

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*Create a space for worship - perhaps with a small table with a bible, cross and candle. This week, it would be appropriate to find a white cloth or scarf to signify that we are celebrating All Saints Day. Start by lighting the Christ candle. The candle helps to centre us. Take some deep breaths as you gather your thoughts towards God.*

*A video of the readings and reflection for this service can be found here: <https://vimeo.com/474296421/bee24abf60>*

### **Welcome and introduction**

All Saints Day has been celebrated in the church since about the 7th century. Like all our celebrations, the shape has changed over time. In the Catholic and Orthodox Churches this is a day to celebrate the canonised Saints, especially those who have no feast day of their own. But for the reformed traditions, the saints are *all* the followers of Jesus throughout the ages.

So we gather today giving thanks for every heart that has tuned itself to beat of Jesus' heart, every follower who has loved Jesus and who has sought to share God's love in the world.

In particular, every soul who has passed through these doors, who has given of themselves to build this community of faith.

We give thanks for the witness of Christ's love shared in this community for more than 150 years. And we add ourselves to that long line of faith saints - disciples of Christ - committed to God's love, justice, truth and peace.

### **Acknowledgement of Country**

We also recognise the stewardship of the Wodi Wodi people of the Dharawal nation for the land on which we gather today. Our indigenous brothers and sisters have cared for this place since time immemorial and pay our respects to them and their elders, past, present and emerging. We commit ourselves to the continuing work of seeking justice and reconciliation in this land.

### **Call to Worship**

Beloved of God, let us gather in worship.

God gathers all who worship and give thanks;

all who have hungered and who thirst, in body or spirit,

all who grieve and mourn, and strive for healing of the soul,

all who feel meek, who struggle for power and strength in this overwhelming world,

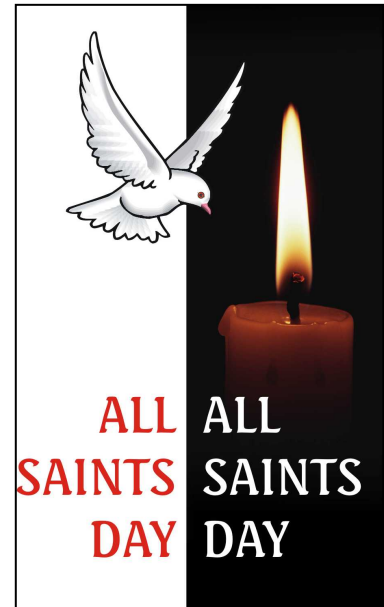
you who have shown mercy, who seek peace, and who stand up for justice.

Beloved are you who follow Jesus' way.

Hear this invitation to be known and seen by God.

Come, let us gather and hear again the affirmations of Jesus as we worship.

*Adapted from Seasons of the Spirit, Resources for All Saints Day, 1 November 2020*



### **A Prayer of Invocation by Cathy Kolwey**

Gather us into your heart, O good and gracious God.

Gather us into this place called Love

Where we can witness the wholeness of your grace

Where we can embody the comfort of your mercy

As we worship you this day.

Gather us into your loving arms and pour your Spirit upon us. Amen.

<https://revgalblogpals.org/2020/10/27/worship-words-for-all-saints-day-2020/>

### **Sing: For All The Saints (TIS 455)**

For all the saints who from their labours

rest,

who in the world their faith in God

confessed,

your name, O Jesus, be forever blest.

Alleluia! Alleluia!

You were the stranger in the dark of night

with whom they strove to find their one

True Light,

to whom you gave God's blessing ever

bright:

Alleluia! Alleluia!

They are the folk who gave with Love

Divine,

always in service did their wills incline,

forgetting self, they did with glory shine:

Alleluia! Alleluia!

They followed you, cast out the city's gate

killed by the eyes and guns of human hate,

yet trumpets sound their resurrection fête:

Alleluia! Alleluia!

And there will dawn a yet more marvellous

day,

the saints with laughter sing and dance

and play,

the Clown of Glory tumbles in the way:

Alleluia! Alleluia!

With earth restored, with this our fragile

star,

in gladness home from pilgrimage afar,

we find in God a joy that none can mar:

Alleluia! Alleluia!

*Words: William Walsham How (1823-1897), adapted by J. Cotter*

*Tune: Sine Nomine, Ralph Vaughan Williams (1872-1958).*

### **Listen - One Body In Christ (Seasons 8-23)**

#### **Prayer**

In a world full of pain and confusion,  
we come seeking your healing and clarity.

In a world overwhelmed with information and ideas, we come seeking guidance about  
which to choose and listen to.

In a world of diversity and confusion,  
we come wanting to celebrate your exuberance,  
yet needing your wisdom to understand each other fully.

In a world where creation itself moans for new life,  
we come hoping to be guided toward renewal.

Like the multitudes who gathered to listen to Jesus,  
we gather to listen to you, Loving God.

Like the thousands hungry for salvation and wholeness, we hunger for meaning and  
purpose as well.

Like lost sheep in need of direction,  
we have come here for your guiding love.

Show us the way, we pray.

### **Prayer of confession**

God, it seems that it's not "right" in this world to be poor.  
It's not considered "good" to be weak or vulnerable.  
We get the message everywhere that success is measured by wealth, power, and privilege, yet we want you to know, Great Creator, that we hear you speaking clearly about what the "right" road is.  
We hear you inviting us to understand that in our poverty we can find great wealth;  
in our weakness, we can find surprising strength;  
and that in our lost-ness, we are found by you.  
We confess that we struggle to accept these truths,  
but we are here to be forgiven, healed, and guided again on right paths.  
Lead us, we pray. Amen.

### **Words of affirmation**

There were multitudes hearing it from Jesus...  
There will be multitudes gathered hearing it in the new heaven...  
And wherever we are, as one or many, we are offered the same words of healing and renewal: You are blessed. You are loved. You are forgiven.  
*Adapted from Seasons of the Spirit, Resources for All Saints Day, 1 November 2020*

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## **Listening for God's Voice**

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### **Reading: 1 John 3:1-3 (Yvonne Holmes)**

<sup>1</sup>See what love the Father has given us, that we should be called children of God; and that is what we are. The reason the world does not know us is that it did not know him.  
<sup>2</sup>Beloved, we are God's children now; what we will be has not yet been revealed. What we do know is this: when he is revealed, we will be like him, for we will see him as he is. <sup>3</sup>And all who have this hope in him purify themselves, just as he is pure.

### **Reading: Matthew 5:1-12**

When Jesus saw the crowds, he went up the mountain; and after he sat down, his disciples came to him. <sup>2</sup>Then he began to speak, and taught them, saying:  
<sup>3</sup> 'Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.  
<sup>4</sup> 'Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted.  
<sup>5</sup> 'Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth.  
<sup>6</sup> 'Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled.  
<sup>7</sup> 'Blessed are the merciful, for they will receive mercy.  
<sup>8</sup> 'Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God.  
<sup>9</sup> 'Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God.  
<sup>10</sup> 'Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.  
<sup>11</sup> 'Blessed are you when people revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account. <sup>12</sup>Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you.

Hear what God's Spirit is saying to the church.

**Thanks be to God!**

## Reflection

Let us pray,  
Light of the World,  
your words have echoed throughout generations,  
your love has been shown throughout the ages,  
you come to us now inviting us to hear, to see, to respond.  
Nudge us and shape us by your word of love, we pray. Amen.

For much of the past 10 weeks, we have been exploring what it means to “be transformed” - “be transformed by the renewing of your minds, so that you may discern what is the will of God - what is good and acceptable and perfect” (Romans 12:2).

Today, as we celebrate All Saints Day, and reflect on what it means to be a saint, I want to see if we can draw it all together. As we gather once more in a place that is new but familiar, in a way that is different but the same, how have we been transformed and how will we continue to be transformed?

In the reformed tradition of which we in the Uniting Church are a part, a “saint” is anyone who follows Jesus. So when we think about “all the saints” we are thinking of those who are well known like St Mary Mackillop and St Theresa, as well as the many less well known - the Sunday School teachers, the people who work in the food bank, the person who makes a casserole for a struggling family, the musicians, flower arrangers, the cleaners, the lawn mowers and all who share in the work of ministry in our communities. That is, all of us, gathered here (or reading this), we are all saints!

In 1 John 3, we are reminded that God’s love is such that God calls each one of us God’s children - we are received into the embrace of God’s family - not because of who we are, but because of who God is. We *are* God’s children and, as such, we seek to imitate or embody who God is for the world. 1 John 3:3, says “all who have this hope in [God] purify themselves, just as [God] is pure.” Another word for “pure” is “blameless”. In Romans 12:2, the word “perfect” carries the sense of being complete. So there is something about how we work to shape ourselves so that our lives leave little to question - we try to attend to those parts of us that are the cracks or the rough edges.  
Be transformed...

That doesn’t mean that we are complete or perfect.

Rev Dr Ian Fraser (one of the original members of the Iona Community) said:

*“Saints are a rag-tag-and-bobtail army of those who look to God and fight alongside God to transform the world’s life to fulfil [God’s] creative intention for it. They may be prone to fail and fall, but they take hold of the grace of forgiveness and the promise of reinstatement. They can pick themselves up, dust themselves down and soldier on. Saints are not church-appointed but Spirit-anointed. Their lives may be prominent or quite obscure. They need not fit in with ecclesiastically preferred models. They need not be church-affiliated. They are Kingdom people, intent on Jesus Christ’s will that the whole world be transformed in justice, truth and peace.”*

“They are Kingdom people, intent on Jesus Christ’s will that the whole world *be transformed* in justice, truth and peace.”

Over these 10 weeks we have followed the story of Moses and the people of Israel and we have heard teaching and parables from Jesus from Matthew’s gospel.

We began with the foundation upon which our transformation is held - Moses standing before the burning bush coming face-to-face with “I am” - “I am who I am”, “I will be who I will be”. When the ground beneath us begins to shift, when the world changes irrevocably, when the cracks and rough edges of our lives are being smoothed out, we are reminded that God is who God is.

Then we found ourselves letting go with the people of Israel as they left Egypt and crossed the sea. The past is left behind and the future lies before them. What have we left behind - and how are we looking to God’s future?

It is not long, however, before they find themselves hungry and thirsty and they complain - we’ll starve; is God really with us?! God is faithful to them, providing manna and quail and water from the rock. How often do we complain first and cry out to God for help later?!

And yet God provides for our needs - always.

The story of the people of Israel’s travels across the desert will include a few more times when they lose their way - we also heard the story of their impatience and how it turned into a golden calf! The people became impatient with God and with each other and tried to take matters into their own hands - that didn’t work out so well for them, did it? And yet God is faithful and forgives them.

Then we considered the way in which God seeks to shape the new community through the 10 Commandments. These were intended to guide the people of Israel, to shape them into people who love God and love and care for one another.

But this is not the only part of the Scriptures where community is shaped. Our reading from Matthew’s gospel (5:1-12) is another important point where community is shaped. In what we refer to as “The Beatitudes”, part of what we call “The Sermon on the Mount”, Jesus paints a picture of God’s kingdom that radically transforms the reality of the world of his time, and, that still today is a radical transformation of what the world values and upholds.

Jesus, in these few short verses, turns the idea that blessing is seen in wealth and power on its head.

For Jesus, in God’s kingdom, it is not the rich and the powerful who are blessed. How often do we fall into the trap of saying that someone is blessed because they are comfortable, have a nice house or a seemingly perfect family?

Indeed these are all part of God’s blessings but we need to take care that this path doesn’t take down the road of prosperity-like thinking.

Jesus is clear that in God’s kingdom, it is the people who struggle who are the blessed ones - and you who are persecuted as well.

So you who are poor in spirit, grieving, humble, yearning for justice, who forgive others, who are pure in heart, who seek peace - you are blessed.

[The word translated for us as “blessed” could also be translated a “blissful” - it is a sense of deep contentment.]

And as Jesus paints this picture of God’s kingdom, God’s way, that is radically different from the people’s lived experience, Jesus is also describing for us *who God is*. This is the God who is concerned for the poor and the grieving and the humble - all the folk that get overlooked by the rich and the powerful or worse, beaten down by the rich and powerful in their quest for success.

So be transformed - live *this* story - not the stories told by the world around us, not the stories that tell us that success equals happiness and is measured in beauty, money and possessions.

*This story is about being immersed in the God who is, the God who lived among us, the God who lives among us - the God who is present with us always.*

*This story is about following the way of Jesus - a way that lifts the humble, shows kindness, offers forgiveness, feeds the hungry, holds those who grieve, works for peace. This story holds out hope - hope that the impossible demands of the world about money and power are simply not sustainable and will crumble before the embrace of God's love and grace.*

Hear the words of Ian Fraser again:

*"[The saints] are Kingdom people, intent on Jesus Christ's will that the whole world be transformed in justice, truth and peace."*

How do we embody this way of being?

How is our community shaped?

How will we live together in a way that shows God's love and grace in every encounter, and points always to Jesus?

Eventually, the people of Israel come close to the land God has promised them. They have wandered in the desert for 40 years. Along the way, Moses and the people of Israel are reminded often of God's presence amongst them. But Moses will not take them any further. He dies and is buried in the land of Moab (Deuteronomy 34).

The people who stand on the edge of the land of promise are not the same as the people who left Egypt - many have died (a whole generation) - and those who are left have been deeply transformed.

We leave the story of the people of Israel here for now.

But we are reminded again that transformation is not a one-off, but a continual process - the good news is that as soon as we think we get it, we discover there is more to learn, more to transform!

This worship space is not yet complete, there is work yet to be done. And our worship and gathering here is not complete - and never will be, not in this time and space - we will continue to transform our gatherings as we ourselves continue to be transformed. Our ministry and mission in this community will continue to change and evolve.

May we be intent on Jesus' will that the whole world be transformed in justice truth and peace.

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## Responding

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### **Prayer for others**

Let us pray:

Blessed are you, O God,  
for you are holy, gracious, and good, the hope of all the faithful.

Empower the meek  
and encourage the poor.

Comfort those who mourn  
and fill humble hearts with gladness.

Give food to the hungry,  
drink to the thirsty,  
peace to the peacemakers,  
mercy to the merciful,

and honour to the despised.  
Sustain your saints in ministry,  
until at last they see their reward: the joy of eternal life with you;  
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

*Matthew 5:1-12 / Year A  
Office of Theology and Worship, Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)*

God of Infinite Love,  
there are times when we feel our world has gone mad:  
we are struggling to contain this pandemic;  
isolation and illness threaten our sense of safety and well-being;  
people wage war against one another;  
once proud democratic nations are divided;  
our politicians and leaders push the boundaries of truth and fair dealing.

Hold us in our uncertainty.  
Strengthen our resolve to counter the dis-ease of our communities with the love and grace  
of your way.

We pray for people today who are sick in mind, body or spirit - we pray for the presence of  
your healing Spirit.

We pray for people who are grieving - loved ones, lost jobs or businesses, lost dreams -  
we pray for the presence of your Spirit of hope.

We pray for people caught in violence - war, domestic abuse, street gangs - we pray for  
the presence of your Spirit of peace.

We pray for leaders - of our local communities, of our governments, of your church - we  
pray for the presence of your Spirit of wisdom.

We pray for people who are hungry and thirsty - for food and water, for justice - we pray for  
the presence of your Spirit of wholeness.

And help us in this place, not to slip comfortably back into the way things were, but to keep  
our hearts and minds focused on what we can be through you.

Give us courage to embrace the changes we see around us and to pursue possibilities for  
your will, that we may be an embodiment of your way in this place embracing all who come  
seeking you. In Christ's name, we pray. Amen

### **Offering**

*In responding to what we have read and how we have heard God speak to us, we commit  
ourselves to moving with God's Spirit, breathing life in the world around us. If you make a  
regular financial contribution to the Kiama-Jamberoo Congregation, consider putting that  
amount aside now and keeping it safe.*

*Let's pray...*

Because you have loved us, we dedicate ourselves to loving others.

Because you have forgiven us, we dedicate ourselves to forgiving others.

Because you have blessed us, we dedicate ourselves to being blessings to others.

Take these gifts, receive this worship, and know our gratitude and devotion, today and  
always. Amen.

*Seasons of the Spirit, Resources for All Saints Day, 1 November 2020*

**Notices:**

- people to deliver hard copies - they will be ready in about an hour
- notice sheets - please only take one if you do not receive it by email - it is a work in progress to figure out how many we need and who will need them delivered...
- If you are someone who has been receiving the services in your letterbox, if you are here, we won't put the service in your letterbox unless you ask for it and please make sure you pick up a notice sheet. Then, please let me know if you would like us to deliver the service to your letterbox on days you are not here. For people who can access the internet, I plan to make the service available in written form from the website sometime on Sunday.

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**Sending out**


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**Sing - Your Hand O God Has Guided**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=esJ7WWqG-dI>

Your hand, O God, has guided  
 your flock from age to age;  
 the wondrous tale is written  
 full clear, on every page;  
 Your people owned your goodness,  
 and we their deeds record;  
 and both of this bear witness:  
 one church, one faith, one Lord.

Through many a day of darkness,  
 through many a scene of strife,  
 the faithful few fought bravely  
 to guard the nation's life.  
 Their gospel of redemption,  
 sin pardoned, earth restored,  
 was all in this enfolded:  
 one Church, one faith, one Lord.

Your heralds brought great tidings  
 to greatest, as to least;  
 they bade them rise, and hasten  
 to share the great King's feast;  
 and this was all their teaching,  
 in every deed and word,  
 to all alike proclaiming  
 one Church, one faith, one Lord.

Your mercy will not fail us,  
 nor leave your work undone;  
 with your right hand to help us  
 the victory shall be won;  
 and then by all creation  
 your name shall be adored,  
 and this shall be our anthem:  
 one Church, one faith, one Lord.

*Words: Basil Harwood*

**Listen - As We Go Now (Seasons 6-6)****Sending and Blessing**

Saints of God,  
 Precious, children of God,  
 go from this place to grow God's kingdom life amongst this community.

And as you do,  
 May the love of your Creator embrace you;  
 the life of your Saviour inspire you;  
 and the breath of the Spirit guide and enable you;  
 this day and always. Amen.