

## **Sunday, November 3, 2024 – All Saints Sunday**

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### **Introduction**

Of all three years of the lectionary cycle, this year's All Saints readings have the most tears. Isaiah and Revelation look forward to the day when God will wipe away all tears; in John's gospel, Jesus weeps along with Mary and all the gathered mourners before he demonstrates his power over death. On All Saints Day we celebrate the victory won for all the faithful dead, but we grieve for our beloved dead as well, knowing that God honors our tears. We bring our grief to the table and find there a foretaste of Isaiah's feast to come.

### **Prayer of the Day**

Almighty God, you have knit your people together in one communion in the mystical body of your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord. Grant us grace to follow your blessed saints in lives of faith and commitment, and to know the inexpressible joys you have prepared for those who love you, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

**Amen.**

### **First Reading: Isaiah 25:6-9**

<sup>6</sup>On this mountain the LORD of hosts will make for all peoples  
a feast of rich food, a feast of well-aged wines,  
of rich food filled with marrow, of well-aged wines strained clear.

<sup>7</sup>And he will destroy on this mountain  
the shroud that is cast over all peoples,  
the sheet that is spread over all nations;

<sup>8</sup>he will swallow up death forever.

Then the Lord GOD will wipe away the tears from all faces,  
and the disgrace of his people he will take away from all the earth,  
for the LORD has spoken.

<sup>9</sup>It will be said on that day,  
Lo, this is our God; we have waited for him, so that he might save us.  
This is the LORD for whom we have waited;  
let us be glad and rejoice in his salvation.

### **Psalm 24**

<sup>1</sup>The earth is the LORD's and all that is in it,  
the world and those who dwell therein.

<sup>2</sup>**For the LORD has founded it upon the seas  
and established it upon the rivers.**

<sup>3</sup>Who may ascend the mountain of the LORD,  
and who may stand in God's holy place?

<sup>4</sup>**Those of innocent hands and purity of heart,  
who do not swear on God's being, nor do they pledge by what is false.**

<sup>5</sup>They shall receive blessing from the LORD  
and righteousness from the God of their salvation.

<sup>6</sup>**Such is the generation of those who seek you, O LORD,  
of those who seek your face, O God of Jacob.**

<sup>7</sup>Lift up your heads, O gates; and be lifted up, O everlasting doors,  
that the King of glory may come in.

<sup>8</sup>**Who is this King of glory?  
The LORD, strong and mighty, the LORD, mighty in battle!**

<sup>9</sup>Lift up your heads, O gates; and be lifted up, O everlasting doors,  
that the King of glory may come in.

<sup>10</sup>**Who is this King of glory?  
Truly, the LORD of hosts is the King of glory.**

### **Second Reading: Revelation 21:1-6a**

<sup>1</sup>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. <sup>2</sup>And I saw the holy city, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. <sup>3</sup>And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying,

"See, the home of God is among mortals.

He will dwell with them;

they will be his peoples,

and God himself will be with them;

<sup>4</sup>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."

<sup>5</sup>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." <sup>6a</sup>Then he said to me, "It is done! I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end."

### **Gospel: John 11:32-44**

<sup>32</sup>When Mary came where Jesus was and saw him, she knelt at his feet and said to him, "Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died." <sup>33</sup>When Jesus saw her weeping, and the Jews who came with her also weeping, he was greatly disturbed in spirit and deeply moved. <sup>34</sup>He said, "Where have you laid him?" They said to him, "Lord, come and see." <sup>35</sup>Jesus began to weep. <sup>36</sup>So the Jews said, "See how he loved him!" <sup>37</sup>But some of them said, "Could not he who opened the eyes of the blind man have kept this man from dying?"

<sup>38</sup>Then Jesus, again greatly disturbed, came to the tomb. It was a cave, and a stone was lying against it. <sup>39</sup>Jesus said, "Take away the stone." Martha, the sister of the dead man, said to him, "Lord, already there is a stench because he has been dead four days." <sup>40</sup>Jesus said to her, "Did I not tell you that if you believed, you would see the glory of God?" <sup>41</sup>So they took away the stone. And Jesus looked upward and said, "Father, I thank you for having heard me. <sup>42</sup>I knew that you always hear me, but I have said this for the sake of the crowd standing here, so that they may believe that you sent me." <sup>43</sup>When he had said this, he cried with a loud voice, "Lazarus, come out!" <sup>44</sup>The dead man came out, his hands and feet bound with strips of cloth, and his face wrapped in a cloth. Jesus said to them, "Unbind him, and let him go."

Prayers and introductions from  
[SundaysAndSeasons.com](http://SundaysAndSeasons.com)

## Prayers of Intercession

Rooted in God's abundant love for the world, let us pray for our neighbors, the church, and all of creation.

*A brief silence.*

O God of resurrection, you call us by name and raise us to life. Rouse your church from slumber. Where we have held back in fear or shame, unbind us. Embolden us in our proclamation of your good news, that all may know abundant life. Merciful God, **receive our prayer.**

O God of creation, you have founded your world on rivers and seas. Preserve fresh water sources and the creatures who call them home. Heal places of pollution and nourish places of drought. Merciful God, **receive our prayer.**

O God of the earth, you reign over all nations and peoples. Inspire us with wisdom and discernment as we elect legislators and leaders. May they govern with justice and uphold the dignity of all people. Merciful God, **receive our prayer.**

O God of heaven, you make your home among mortals. Come alongside those who weep this day. Befriend all who are lonely, encourage those in despair, and heal any who are suffering. Abide with your faithful ones in love. Merciful God, **receive our prayer.**

O God who serves, you set before us a feast of rich food. Sustain our ministries of fellowship and hospitality. Strengthen the hands and hearts of all who prepare and serve food for our nourishment. Merciful God, **receive our prayer.**

O God, Alpha and Omega, we give thanks for your faithful ones who are now at peace with you all your saints, we praise you, for you have swallowed up death forever. Merciful God, **receive our prayer.**

We offer our prayers to you, gracious God, trusting in your boundless love for all that you have made, through Jesus Christ our Savior.

**Amen.**

## **A reflection for this All Saints Sunday**

### **Unbinding the Living**

On All Saints Sunday we remember loved ones who have been laid in the tomb. We know the acute grief of Mary, Martha, and Jesus. We know the reality of death that lies so close. We know that at any moment the phone call could come with news we dread. We live forever in the shadow of death.

At the same time, we also know the little deaths that take place every day. We know the daily disappointments, the betrayal of a friend, a failure at work, a difficult and tumultuous marriage, the loneliness and pain of one longing for something more from life. Beyond that there are the near-constant reminders that much of this world is far from God's kingdom. How easy it is to look and see poverty and injustice, disease and despair all around. Like Lazarus, we are bound tightly in death's clothes: grief, disappointment, hopelessness.

Yet Jesus speaks the last word for us: "Unbind him, and let him go" (John 11:44). This promise is bursting with resurrecting life. This word is spoken by the one who became human and was put in a tomb, but broke through the pervasive stench of death. In the waters of the font, we hear our God speak this word to us. Lifting us out of the waters, God frees us from the binding rags of death and dresses us in the royal clothing of Christ. At the table, we feast with the God in whom we have waited, the God who swallows up death forever. The last word is not death, but life as a beloved child of God.

Clothed in the righteousness of Christ, God's people are called forth from the grave. Fellow saints rush forward to remove the rotting grave clothes. Together the people of God celebrate the hope and promise of resurrection, rising each new day to joyfully serve in the name of the one who is beyond death, Jesus our Savior.



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LUTHERAN CHURCH