

**Worship Sheet**  
**Sunday 1<sup>st</sup> November 2020 at 10.30am**

**Welcome** to this week's worship. Today is All Saints' Day and it is an opportunity for us to remember all saints and martyrs, known and unknown, throughout Christian history. Pope John Paul II, on All Saints' Day 2003, said, "We celebrate today the solemnity of All Saints. This invites us to turn our gaze to the immense multitude of those who have already reached the blessed land, and points us on the path that will lead us to that destination".

We may think of saints as being those who have been made saints in the Roman catholic Church, but, as the followers of Jesus, we are all saints. As St Paul writes "*To the church of God that is in Corinth, to those who are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints.*" We are all called to be saints. God equips us, as Paul pointed out to the Ephesians, by sending us his Holy Spirit and "*The gifts he (gives) were that some would be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, some pastors and teachers, to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ,*" (Ephesians 4:11-12).

Today also enables us to remember our loved ones who have died and give thanks for them. Our Bible readings, hymns and prayers will help us do this as we come not the presence of God who gives us eternal life. He is our hope and comfort. In this service there is an opportunity, if you wish, to light a candle as you remember your loved ones. Wherever we are worshipping God today, let us think of those who have gone before us and each other joining in praise and prayer. Isolated, but not alone. May God bless you richly and give you peace.

*Stephen*

**Call to worship**

*We join with God's people in the ancient words of the Psalmist to praise God saying:*

- Praise the Lord!*  
*Sing to the Lord a new song,*  
*his praise in the assembly of the faithful.*  
<sup>2</sup>*Let Israel be glad in its Maker;*  
*let the children of Zion rejoice in their King.*  
<sup>3</sup>*Let them praise his name with dancing,*  
*making melody to him with tambourine and lyre.*  
<sup>4</sup>*For the Lord takes pleasure in his people;*  
*he adorns the humble with victory. (Psalm 149:1-4)*

**Hymn – Sing/ Read /pray /proclaim the words or listen to it here**

- **“See what a morning gloriously bright”**

[www.youtube.com/watch?v=6xM-fpXayUg](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6xM-fpXayUg)

### **Prayers of thanksgiving**

Let us pray together

With all your people, on earth and in heaven,  
we praise your name, O God, for you alone are worthy of adoration. And you  
reign supreme beyond space and time.

In you is the fullness of perfection;

in you is our hope of salvation;

in you is the promise of life eternal.

With all your people, we praise your name, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

**Amen.**

Let us make our confession to God.

God of mercy, forgive us our limited vision and our reluctance to trust in what  
we cannot see.

Forgive our preoccupation with the here and now and our failure to seek the  
things above.

Forgive our earthbound thinking and our feeble sense of the communion of  
saints.

Rekindle in us, by your Holy Spirit, the fire of your love that with clean hands  
and pure hearts we may serve you faithfully on earth

and come at last, with all your saints,

to the peace and joy of heaven;

through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

In Christ we are set free.

Through Christ we are forgiven.

**Amen. Thanks be to God.**

### **Collect of the Day**

Holy God, you have called witnesses from every nation and revealed your  
glory in their lives. Grant to us the same faith and love that, following their  
example, we may be sustained by their fellowship and rejoice in their triumph;  
through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.)**

### **The Lord's Prayer**

Our Father in heaven,

hallowed be your name,

your kingdom come,

your will be done,

on earth as in heaven.

Give us today our daily bread.  
Forgive us our sins  
as we forgive those who sin against us.  
Lead us not into temptation  
but deliver us from evil.  
For the kingdom, the power,  
and the glory are yours  
now and for ever.  
Amen.

## **The Bible Readings**

### **Psalm 34**

I will bless the Lord at all times;  
his praise shall continually be in my mouth.  
<sup>2</sup> My soul makes its boast in the Lord;  
let the humble hear and be glad.  
<sup>3</sup> O magnify the Lord with me,  
and let us exalt his name together.  
<sup>4</sup> I sought the Lord, and he answered me,  
and delivered me from all my fears.  
<sup>5</sup> Look to him, and be radiant;  
so your faces shall never be ashamed.  
<sup>6</sup> This poor soul cried, and was heard by the Lord,  
and was saved from every trouble.  
<sup>7</sup> The angel of the Lord encamps  
around those who fear him, and delivers them.  
<sup>8</sup> O taste and see that the Lord is good;  
happy are those who take refuge in him.  
<sup>9</sup> O fear the Lord, you his holy ones,  
for those who fear him have no want.  
<sup>10</sup> The young lions suffer want and hunger,  
but those who seek the Lord lack no good thing.  
  
<sup>22</sup> The Lord redeems the life of his servants;  
none of those who take refuge in him will be condemned.

### **Revelation 21:1-6**

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. <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;  
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."*

<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>6</sup> Then he said to me, "It is done! I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end. To the thirsty I will give water as a gift from the spring of the water of life.

### **John 6:35-40**

Jesus said to them, "I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never be hungry, and whoever believes in me will never be thirsty. <sup>36</sup> But I said to you that you have seen me and yet do not believe. <sup>37</sup> Everything that the Father gives me will come to me, and anyone who comes to me I will never drive away; <sup>38</sup> for I have come down from heaven, not to do my own will, but the will of him who sent me. <sup>39</sup> And this is the will of him who sent me, that I should lose nothing of all that he has given me, but raise it up on the last day. <sup>40</sup> This is indeed the will of my Father, that all who see the Son and believe in him may have eternal life; and I will raise them up on the last day."

### **John 11:25-27**

<sup>25</sup> Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life. Those who believe in me, even though they die, will live, <sup>26</sup> and everyone who lives and believes in me will never die. Do you believe this?" <sup>27</sup> She said to him, "Yes, Lord, I believe that you are the Messiah, the Son of God, the one coming into the world."

### **Reflection – "The Old Boots" – John 6:40**

I love Vincent van Gogh's still life painting of a "Pair of Old Shoes". He painted it whilst he was living in Paris with his brother, Theo, between July and September 1886. Vincent told a student artist that he had found the shoes in a flea market. They had belonged to a pedlar and when he bought them, they were clean and polished. One afternoon, van Gogh wore them for a walk in the rain and when he returned home they were covered in mud. He thought that they then looked much more interesting than they had when they were spotlessly clean. So, he painted them and over the years people have been fascinated by the picture. As I look at them, I wonder what stories they have to tell. Someone once wrote of imagining them belonging to a farm labourer and that the mud had stuck to the boots after working in the fields all day. Another person responded by pointing out that country workers wore wooden clogs or sabots in the fields. So, these shoes belonged to a labourer who worked in the city.

This pair of shoes belonged to a pedlar. So, why would a poor pedlar, who needed his shoes to walk the streets of Paris looking for work, sell his shoes? He obviously does not need them anymore. So, he has probably sadly died. We look at the painting and imagine who wore them and the stories which they invoke because the owner is no longer with us. It is a picture of absence.

This picture came to mind when I was thinking about today's service. As in other years, All Saints gives us an opportunity to remember our loved ones and to give thanks for their lives. This year, I think that it has an extra special poignancy as for many this is the first opportunity that they have been able to gather in church, to remember loved ones. Those whose family member died before lockdown had the pain of parting, but were able to gather with as many family and friends as could attend. It was still a hard time, but those who attended funerals after the middle of March, had not only the sadness of the occasion, but also the pain of having to choose who could and could not attend the service. Thankfully people could take part electronically, but it is not the same as being with loved ones face to face. After the service, there was no opportunity, unless from the same household, to comfort each other with a hug or to celebrate the life of the loved one over refreshments.

Today, is an opportunity to remember our loved ones, but also a chance to grieve. Lighting a candle provides a light shining in the darkness and reminds us of Jesus, who is the light of the world. The light guides us through the darkness and so we look to Jesus for help. In our situation, Jesus would weep. He would grieve and mourn. When he visited his friends Mary and Martha after their brother, Lazarus, had died, Jesus wept with them. On the night before Jesus died, he wept and prayed in the Garden of Gethsemane. After his death on the cross, his disciples wept and locked themselves away for fear of the future.

There is no shame in tears. So often we talk about and practice having a stiff upper lip and so push back the sadness and carry on suppressing our true feelings. This year, like the disciples, we too have experienced being locked behind closed doors, only coming out for our hour's exercise, and to applaud our amazing NHS. Not everyone was even able to do this. However, we do need time to mourn and lament. The pair of old shoes leads us to think about the person who used to wear them. Whenever we see something which our loved one used to wear or do, we are reminded of her or him. We might then pause and think about the person. Something might come to mind now, which hopefully triggers happy memories. If so, we give thanks for those memories. If not, if the memories are painful, we pray for healing of those images, those hard times and for peace.

We look again to Jesus, the light of the world. Centuries before Jesus came to earth, the psalmist sang, "even though I walk through the darkest valley, you are with me. Your rod and your staff, they comfort me." Jesus now gives us even more hope. When we are in the dark, we light a candle, get a torch or switch on a light to show us where we are and to show us the way. Jesus said that he is the light of the world as he shows us the way. The way, not just to get us from A to B, but the way to God, our heavenly Father. It is seeing and knowing Jesus that gives us light in our darkness. The sun may be shining brightly, but we may be feeling the darkness inside in our grief and sadness. Knowing Jesus, may not take away the pain, but knowing that we are not alone and Jesus is there with us is a great comfort and help. Jesus wept for his friends beside Lazarus' tomb and so he has experienced grief as we do.

When we look to Jesus, the light of the world, the light for all people, we remember that he also said, "I am the resurrection and the life. Those who believe in me, even though they die, will live, and everyone who lives and believes in me will never die," (John 11:25-26). If we believe in Jesus then death is not the end, but a new beginning. As Jesus said, "This is indeed the will of my Father, that all who see the Son and believe in him may have eternal life," (John 6:40).

As we look at Vincent's old boots and think of the pedlar who has died, we are reminded of the empty chair or place at the table in our own homes, and we feel sadness and sorrow. It is only natural, but we can do so with hope, knowing that Jesus gives us new life, eternal life. It is comforting and encouraging to know that Jesus has gone to prepare a place for us, (John 14:2), and that he is there to welcome us home. As we light a candle for our loved ones, let us remember them and also that Jesus is the light of the world. He is with us in our darkness and showing us the way to eternal life with God. As we turn to Jesus, he will give us peace as he said, "Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not let them be afraid," (John 14:27). Amen.

**If you would like, please light a candle as you remember your loved ones.**

**Hymn - Sing/ Read /pray /proclaim the words or listen to it here**

- **"For all the saints who showed your love"**

[www.youtube.com/watch?v=7ECJANNFP0](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7ECJANNFP0)

**Take time to sit quietly**

## **A time of prayer**

United in the company of all the faithful, let us pray for the church throughout the world and for all who seek to follow Christ in this generation. Through them and through us,  
Your kingdom come Your will be done.

Let us pray for the world and all its peoples. Let us pray that those in authority in this and all nations may seek justice and peace for all.  
Your kingdom come Your will be done.

Let us pray for those in need, especially . . . ,  
and for all who minister to those in need. Draw near to all with your healing love.  
Your kingdom come Your will be done.

Remember in your mercy all who have gone before us especially those who were significant in our faith journeys. Join our prayers with those of the whole company of saints.  
Your kingdom come Your will be done.

Lord of the church, hear our prayer and make us one in heart and mind to serve you now and always. Amen.

## **Hymn - "For All the Saints"**

**Sing/ Read /pray /proclaim the words or listen to it here:**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1OaBgaMcOvM>

## **A prayer of blessing**

God give us grace to follow his saints  
in faith and hope and love;  
and the blessing of the most Holy Trinity,  
Spirit, Son and Father,  
be among us and remain with us always. **Amen.**