

Liturgy for All Saints Day 2021

Opening Prayer for All Saints Day

Healing God, we come to you today acknowledging that this has been a painful year. A year in which so much was lost. A year of grief in which we, too, may have cried out the same words of Jesus and the psalmist of: "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" And yet, we also acknowledge, Almighty God, that in our crying out, we are still calling out for you: to save us, to heal us, to provide a balm for our broken and wounded hearts.

Today we come to you for comfort and healing as we boldly proclaim together the promise of the resurrection in Jesus Christ our Lord. Comfort us in our grief and remind us that your communion table stretches from the church altar to the communion of saints. Open our hearts and our lips to speak once more of your hope that always exist, always perseveres, and always conquers darkness even on our hardest of days. Remind us of the gift of the body of Christ, as we mourn together corporately in this place and across the conference. Heal us Lord, so that we may be your healing hands to the world. In the name of your Son, Jesus Christ we pray. Amen.

- Written by Director of Clergy Excellence, Rev. Jessie Colwell

Intro to the Candle Lighting and Naming of the Saints

God of the Saints

We give you thanks, O God, for every saint who ever worshiped you
Whether in brush arbors or cathedrals,
Weathered wooden churches or crumbling cement meeting houses
Where your name was lifted and adored,
Where your scriptures were studied, your people served.

We give you thanks, O God, for centuries of hands in service:
hands groomed, hands stained with grease or soil,
Young hands, hands marked with age
Holy hands of every shade raised in praise,
Serving hands that cooked, hammered, and held.

We give you thanks, O God, for hardworking saints;
Whether hard-hatted or steel-booted,
Head ragged or aproned,
Blue-collared or three-piece-suited
They ministered on the earth for you, for us, for our children to come.

We give your thanks, O God, for saints in a season of pandemic
Family and friends whose love was taken from us too soon,
Caregivers of every kind who put our safety before theirs,
Employers and landlords who gave us steady wages and roofs over our heads,
Cooks and drivers that kept us fed and stocked.

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So, in gratitude for the gifts of these saints we take a moment to name them before you, and the body of Christ, claiming their lives as a gift to the church:

Name saint

Light candle

Ring bell

(Go in this order for each person)

Today we also light a candle for all the saints who have been lost in this community and in years past that are on our hearts today.

Light candle

Ring bell

Finally, we light one more candle acknowledging all the saints who lost their lives to COVID-19. We acknowledge that over 13,000 people in Virginia have died due to this virus and we pray for their families and friends who are mourning them today.

Light candle

Ring bell

Closing Prayer

Thank you, God, for the sacrifices made by those who have gone before us.
May we walk wisely in their examples of faith, dedication, worship, and love.
We commit to continue their legacy of walking in The Way.
May new generations find us worthy to be called saints in your kingdom.
In the name of the Creator, the Redeemer, and the Holy Spirit,
Amen.

Adapted and revised by Associate Director for Call and Candidacy Rev. Crystal Sygeel and Director of Clergy Excellence, Rev. Jessie Colwell from A Prayer for All saints Day written by Safiyah Fosua as published on IrelandCentral.com

Intro to Communion

God of saints and sinners, we thank you that the communion table is a thin place in our lives. A place where heaven and earth collide as Christ calls us to feast with the saints. As we experience the retelling of the life, death, and resurrection of your son Jesus Christ, through this Holy Sacrament, we confess that we also long to lay our grief and pain at your feet. May your gift of grace nourish our mourning souls, and prepare us to continue the ministry of the saints. In the name of your son, Jesus Christ, we pray. Amen.

- By Rev. Jessie Colwell, Director of Clergy Excellence

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Communion Liturgy for All Saints Day: “The Great Thanksgiving for All Saints and Memorial Services”: <https://www.umcdiscipleship.org/resources/the-great-thanksgiving-for-all-saints-and-memorial-occasions>

(The naming of the saints can also occur in the context of Holy Communion and is in the liturgy)

A Liturgy for Candle Lighting for All Saints Day or For a Community Vigil to Remember the Saints

God Who Made the Universe, God Who Made Us,

We come before you now in a time of remembrance in this time of pandemic. In a season of mourning we remember that it was your son Jesus who assured us our burdens would be transformed into blessings. Together, now, we light candles and echo those assurances from the Sermon on the Mount...

We light candles for the poor...who are on the margins living day by day, wondering how they will care for their children, put food on the table, maintain a roof over their heads...for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

We light candles for those who mourn, who are finding this to be a season of grief and lament, of isolation from loved ones, who are finding this to be a season of deep uncertainty... for they will be comforted.

We light candles for the meek...the ones who committed to be of service to others, who have opened their ears to listen, their hands to help, their hearts to love...for they will inherit the earth.

We light candles for those who hunger and thirst for righteousness...those who dare to ask hard questions of our systems and leaders, those who dream of a future of radical change and neighbor-love...for they will be filled.

We light candles for the merciful...hospital staff, sanitation workers, store clerks, shelf stockers, gas station attendants, line cooks, restaurant servers, social workers, farmers, caregivers, teachers - who put themselves out there for our sake...for they will receive mercy.

We light candles for the pure in heart...ones who bring joy amid sorrow, children who laugh, adults who cry, pets who provide companionship, friends who embrace us as we are, people in the dark clinging to scraps of hope...for they will see God.

We light candles for the peacemakers...ones who offer prayer and solace, ones who march and advocate for justice, ones who work for peace and reconciliation where there is no peace and reconciliation...for they will be called children of God.

We light candles for those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for the sick, the uninsured, the homeless, the incarcerated -who have died from the virus, for those who will die from the virus in the midst of our systems of poverty and healthcare for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

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Radiating God, you have promised us that your light shines in the darkness, and that the darkness cannot overcome it. We offer these flames in memory and honor of every life touched by this pandemic. We offer these flames as signs to any and all that we are indeed children of your light, and the darkness shall not overcome us. Amen.

Adapted and revised by Associate Director for Call and Candidacy Rev. Crystal Sygeel from The Beatitudes in the Time of COVID-19 written by Duke Divinity Pastoral Intern Maggie Thomas, March 2020, while serving The Local Church: A United Methodist Community in Pittsboro, North Carolina.