



Worship Service Theme: All Saint's Day (day after Halloween)

Welcome: Welcome! It's so good to be together to celebrate faith and community today. My name is ____ and I'll be leading our worship time today. November 1 is the celebration of **All Saint's Day**, established in the 9th century, a day that honors and gives thanks for past saints, known or unknown. (Some churches celebrate this day on the first Sunday after Pentecost.)

In Irish and Scottish culture, the festival of Samhain (pronounced sow-INN) is a celebration of the end of the harvest season. It was the time of year when the veils between this world and the Otherworld were believed to be at their thinnest: when the spirits of the dead could most readily mingle with the living once again.

Later, when the festival was adopted by Christians, they celebrated it as All Hallows' Eve—what we now call Halloween—followed by All Saints Day, which still retained elements of remembering and honoring the dead.¹

Please pray with me as we open our time together.

Opening Prayer: Great and loving God, we ask that your Holy Spirit bless our time together and to refresh us with your presence. In the midst of a world full of trouble and strife, we thank you for watching over us, guiding us, and as we confess our sins, for forgiving us. Enable us to enter your presence joyfully and reverently, and let us depart today with the assurance that our sins are forgiven. Fill us, O God, with the peace which passes understanding. Amen.

Opening Hymn: Doxology

Statement of Faith: Let us affirm our statement of faith by reciting Psalm 23 together:

The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want.

¹ http://www.faithandworship.com/Samhain_praying_though_the_Celtic_year.htm

² He maketh me to lie down in green pastures: he leadeth me beside the still waters.

³ He restoreth my soul: he leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake.

⁴ Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me.

⁵ Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies: thou anointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over.

⁶ Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life: and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever.

Suggested Hymns:

For the Beauty of the Earth

Savior, Like a Shepherd Lead Us

Amazing Grace

First reading: Psalm 24: 1-5

The earth is the Lord's and the fullness thereof,
the world and those who dwell therein,

² for the Lord has founded the earth upon the seas
and established it upon the rivers.

³ Who shall ascend the hill of the Lord?
And who shall stand in his holy place?

⁴ He who has clean hands and a pure heart,
who does not lift up his soul to what is false
and does not swear deceitfully.

⁵ He will receive blessing from the Lord
and righteousness from the God of his salvation.

This is the word of the Lord; thanks be to God.

Suggested Hymns:

Holy, Holy, Holy

Jesus Loves Me

Second reading: Matthew 5: 3-11. This is the first part of Jesus' famous Sermon on the Mount.

Jesus said:

³ “Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

⁴ “Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted.

⁵ “Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth.

⁶ “Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied.

⁷ “Blessed are the merciful, for they shall receive mercy.

⁸ “Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.

⁹ “Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called children of God.

¹⁰ “Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness’ sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

¹¹ “Blessed are you when others revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account. ¹² Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you.”

This is the word of the Lord; thanks be to God.

Suggested Hymns:

Softy and Tenderly

Leaning on the Everlasting Arms

Interactive Homily: Let’s think a little more about All Saints’ Day, which is traditionally the day after Halloween.

- How would you define a saint?
 - *Saint*: from the Latin word *sanctus*, or set apart, made holy
 - An especially holy person, close to God and displaying godly character
 - Original Christian meaning: *any* believer in whom Christ dwells, whether in Heaven or on Earth
 - In many traditions, saints are all faithful deceased in heaven (some worthy of greater honor or emulation).
 - Historically, the Christian church commemorated a martyr’s death with a special day; but with so many, the church eventually appointed a common day for all martyrs, and thus was born “All Saints Day.”

- “Saint” can also be a title: Official “saint” recognition is given to some through canonization in the Catholic Church or glorification in the Eastern Orthodox Church.²
- Who would you call a saint in your life? Examples?
- How many of you believe you’ll be a saint one day? What do you think it takes?
- What does Jesus teach in the Beatitudes? What’s the first one?
 - Blessed are the poor in spirit – for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.
- Do you think being a saint includes being in the kingdom of heaven? (Yes!) And to whom does Jesus say belongs the kingdom of heaven?
 - Poor in spirit
- What, then, does it mean to be “poor in spirit”?
 - Knowing you’re not worthy; knowing that you don’t have all the answers
 - Knowing that you’re poor in spiritual wisdom, practice, truth
 - Needy, empty
- Do we earn our worthiness to become saints? Does God owe us sainthood because of our goodness, our good works, our good heart?
 - No! God graciously bestows love and mercy on us as we seek him from our “poor in heart” state, in our neediness.
- We all struggle day by day to live lives that are holy and according to God’s ways and God’s will. And that’s good – because we NEED God to make us holy, and we SEEK God to give us what we need to have faith and to follow him. That’s what saints have always done!

Let’s take a moment to silently pray and reflect on the blessing of Christian martyrs, leaders, and everyday saints who have gone before us and loved us throughout our lives.

(Silent Prayer) ... Lord, hear our prayers. Now let us pray the Lord’s prayer together:

Lord’s Prayer: Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us.

² <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Saint>

And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, the power, and the glory forever, Amen.

Suggested Hymns:

This is My Father's World

It is Well with My Soul

Standing on the Promises

Third Reading: Quotes on Saints

Keep in mind that our community is not composed of those who are already saints, but of those who are trying to become saints. Therefore let us be extremely patient with each other's faults and failures. –Mother Teresa

All of the places of our lives are sanctuaries; some of them just happen to have steeples. And all of the people in our lives are saints; it is just that some of them have day jobs and most will never have feast days named for them. –writer and speaker Robert Benson

I am not a saint, unless you think of a saint as a sinner who keeps on trying. – Nelson Mandela

All the hungers we have for love, for union, for happiness are given by God to lead us to him. The difference between a saint and the greatest sinner is where they go to satisfy that hunger. – Catholic author and speaker Christopher West

It's depressing how my dog is a better human being than I am. –American author McCall Hoyle

Suggested Hymns:

Come, Thou Fount of Every Blessing

Shall We Gather at the River

Fourth Reading: A Christian Prayer for Samhain³ (sow-INN)

For fruitfulness, we thank you.
For a generous spirit, we thank you.
For wisdom and faith, we thank you.
For old age and new birth, we thank you.

For those who have gone before us
Seeds planted in your rich pasture
With the hope of life eternal
May their enduring spirit live on
Enriching and empowering our lives
May their love linger
And their presence be near
Until we meet once more.

Suggested Hymns:

Blest Be the Tie that Binds

I Need Thee Every Hour

Closing Blessing: (Strike bell as you say the word “Lord”)

The Lord bless you and keep you; the Lord make his face shine upon you, and be gracious unto you; the Lord lift up his countenance upon you, and grant you peace. Amen.

Closing Hymn: Doxology (Reprise)

^{3 3} http://www.faithandworship.com/Samhain_praying_though_the_Celtic_year.htm