



Call: Psalm 34:1-3 (Contemporary English Version)

I will always praise the Lord. With all my heart, I will praise the Lord. Let all who are helpless, listen and be glad. Honour the Lord me! Celebrate his great name.

Let us pray: Awesome God, as we gather today, we acknowledge that you are worth all our praise. As we spend time with you, help us to experience your presence; teach us from your Word and inspire us to live as your people, every day. Amen.

Hymn: STF 20 : Be still, for the presence of the Lord <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZugvUQ4m90U>

Be still, for the presence of the
Lord, the Holy One is here;
Come bow before Him now
with reverence and fear.
In Him no sin is found, we
stand on holy ground;
Be still, for the presence of the
Lord, the Holy One is here.

Be still, for the glory of the
Lord is shining all around;
He burns with holy fire, with
splendour He is crowned.
How awesome is the sight, our
radiant King of light!
Be still, for the glory of the
Lord is shining all around.

Be still, for the power of the
Lord is moving in this place;
He comes to cleanse and heal,
to minister His grace.
No work too hard for Him, in
faith receive from Him;
Be still, for the power of the
Lord is moving in this place.

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Prayer: Praise and Thanksgiving: We come today to bring you our honour and praise. You alone are worthy of adoration. Majestic and glorious, encircled in light, radiant in splendour, generous in love, rich in mercy and abounding in grace, your reign supreme beyond time and space. Thank you that you have lavished on us your grace and mercy, blessed us with so many gifts, and provided for our every need. With all people on earth and those who have gone before and are in heaven, we praise your name O God, through Jesus Christ our Saviour and our Lord. Amen

Confession: Forgive us, God of mercy, for our narrow and 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 the sacred fire of your love and remind us of the things eternal, 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. Amen

Hymn: STF 447 : Jesus, be the centre <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EG-l1kK-BpU&t=35s>

Jesus, be the centre,
be my source, be my light,
Jesus.

*Be the fire in my heart,
be the wind in these sails,
be the reason that I live,
Jesus, Jesus.*

*Be the fire in my heart,
be the wind in these sails,
be the reason that I live,
Jesus, Jesus.*

Jesus, be the centre,
be my hope, be my song,
Jesus.

Jesus, be my vision,
be my path, be my guide,
Jesus.

Jesus, be the centre,
be my source, be my light,
Jesus.

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Bible Reading: 1 John 3:1-3

See what great love the Father has lavished on 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. Dear friends, now we are children of God, and what we will be has not yet been made known. But we know that when Christ appears, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is. All who have this hope in him purify themselves, just as he is pure.

Message: Today is All Saints Day when we remember those saints that have gone before us. Which are the saints that you remember? St Francis of Assisi, St Patrick, or more contemporary names like Saint Teresa of Calcutta or Saint Carlo Acutis – canonised in September 2025, the catholic church's first millennial saint. These were all faithful Christians who I'm sure deserved their place in the saintly history books.

A young girl was asked by her grandmother "what makes someone a saint?" The girl thought for a moment, "saints are the people who the light shines through," was her reply. She led her grandmother into the church and pointed up at the stained-glass windows. One window showed the nativity scene, another the four gospel writers. The newest window depicted the local congregation, the evening light shining through and colours diffracted around the building.

Who would you have in your stained-glass window? Do you have someone you know who has the light of Jesus shining through them and diffracting into the area around them? Who are your saints?

Our reading from John's letter describes a father and his children. That father is Father God and we are His children. In the context of All Saints Day, this made me think of those who have gone before in my life, particularly in my family. I have on one wall at home a family tree, and surrounding it are series of photos from as far back as my great great grandmother. She is sat with her grandson, my grandfather who was probably aged about 5 or 6 at the time. I never knew either of these relatives, but I do have a bible given to my grandfather in 1891, and inside the cover are various bible references and notes presumably from sermons or bible studies. I know that his son, my grandfather was at one time a church steward and so was presumably brought up surrounded in Methodism. On my mother's side, there were Methodist ministers and local preachers throughout past generations.

As far as I know, none of these people received recognition beyond their own network of friends and family, yet to me they were all saints. They reflected Christ and let His light shine through them down the generations, to people they would never know.

When I look at the images of my long dead relatives, it amazes me that deep within me there is some small part of genetic code that links us, and when I look at my own 1 year old granddaughter again it is amazing that 25% of her DNA originates from me.

John, in his letter, writes of the relationship of God the Father and us as his children, now, not some promise for the future, time yet unknown. We know from way back, in the book of Genesis, that we were made in the image of God. Just as my granddaughter has features of both her parents, and my son, in turn, has features from my husband and I, so we have characteristics of God. We owe our lives to God, he created our physical being.

But being a child of God is so much more than having similar characteristics. It's more than genetics or paternity. Rather it's more about what parenthood means, an intimate and loving relationship. John opens the chapter by saying, "see what great love the father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God." Great love, lavished, already – these are words to describe what has been done by a God who loves us unconditionally, and is not waiting but already calls us children of God.

There are people, for whom the imagery of a Father might be difficult, who perhaps have never known their biological father, or who had a negative and harmful relationship with one or both parents.

Being a child of God is good news for everyone, irrespective of their own personal family dynamics. In the New Testament, in Romans 8 for example, the idea of adoption is introduced. Rather than relying on genetics and ancestry, as the Old Testament people did, the New Testament believers learnt that they were each chosen by God to be adopted into His family, to have equal rights within the family, to share in the inheritance with His Son Jesus Christ. Being adopted into God's family as children of God, was not a matter of heritage, but a matter of grace, God's grace, freely given.

How wonderful this is, to be chosen, to be adopted by God, as children of God. This gives us all great hope, that we shall receive our inheritance. We do not know when, but we can be assured that just as that little girl, pointing out the saints to her grandmother, that when that day comes the light will shine through us as it shines through Jesus, and we shall see Him as he is, and we shall be like Him.

On All Saints Day, we remember the saints who have gone before, we give thanks that through God's grace we are today, now, chosen, adopted as children of God, and we pray for the future hope that the day when Christ comes again, we will see Him as he is and we shall be like him. Let our lives be a witness to that hope.

On All Saints Day, my mother used to light a candle for a close Christian friend of hers who died young, but who had a great influence on my mother. I invite you now to light a candle for someone who has been or is a saint to you. Amen

Hymn: STF 350 : I cannot tell why.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yB68PSLTrie>

I cannot tell why he, whom angels worship,
should set his love upon us, now or then,
or why, as Shepherd, he should seek the
wanderers,
to bring them back, they know not how or when.
But this I know, that he was born of Mary
when Bethlehem's manger was his only home,
and that he lived at Nazareth and laboured,
and so the Saviour, Saviour of the world, is come.

how he will claim his earthly heritage,
how satisfy the needs and aspirations
of east and west, of sinner and of sage.
But this I know, all flesh shall see his glory,
and he shall reap the harvest he has sown,
and some glad day his sun shall shine in
splendour,
when he the Saviour, Saviour of the world, is
known.

I cannot tell how silently he suffered,
as with his peace he graced this place of tears,
or how his heart upon the cross was broken,
the crown of pain to three-and-thirty years.
But this I know, he heals the broken-hearted,
and stays our sin, and calms our lurking fear,
and lifts the burden from the heavy-laden,
for yet the Saviour, Saviour of the world, is here.

I cannot tell how all the lands shall worship,
when at his bidding every storm is stilled,
or who can say how great the jubilation
when every human heart with love is filled.
But this I know, the skies will thrill with rapture,
and myriad, myriad human voices sing,
and earth to heaven, and heaven to earth, will
answer:

'at last the Saviour, Saviour of the world, is King!

I cannot tell how he will win the nations,

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Prayer: Lives that have shone with God's love on earth are filled with joy as they see their Lord face to face. Knowing our dependence on God in all things, let us pray to him now.

Glorious God, as we celebrate the lives of the Church members who have shone with the brightness of your love, we offer ourselves and our lives in fresh commitment and conscious awareness of our need for you in our churches and in our individual lives.

We pray for our church leaders, for the circuit as it gives thanks for those who have served in ministry in its various forms, in the past and those who are serving now. We pray for the future of the church acknowledging that there may be need for change. In all we do may your will be done.

Powerful God, may your kingdom of love and peace be established in this world and allowed to grow. We pray for both the influential and the ignored, the popular and the disliked, both the ambitious and the vulnerable. May those in power serve with humility, and may those margins be enabled to speak for justice. Teach us all your ways and your values.

Loving God, we call to mind our families and friends, neighbours and colleagues, thanking you for all the loving care that has been shown to us. We pray for those in relationships where past hurts leave deep scars, where misunderstanding has led to division, and where there has been little love. Lord bring healing to those who suffer, those whose lives are darkened by pain, fear or weariness. Help us to bear what must be carried, and take from us all resentment and bitterness, replacing it with the abundance of peace.

Eternal God, we thank you for all the saints; those recognised by the Church, and those known only to a few, and to you. We praise you for their example and rejoice that they live with you in heaven, where every tear is wiped away, and there is everlasting peace.

Gracious God, we come just as we are. Transform our lives, removing all that is not of you, so that your goodness shines through.

Accept these and all our prayers merciful God. Amen

Hymn: STF 503 : Love Divine.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dPbD2G3i-7Y>

Love divine, all loves excelling,
Joy of heaven, to earth come
down:
Fix in us thy humble dwelling,
All thy faithful mercies crown.
Jesu, thou art all compassion,
Pure, unbounded love thou
art;
Visit us with thy salvation,
Enter every trembling heart.

Come, almighty to deliver,
Let us all thy life receive;
Suddenly return, and never,
Never more thy temples leave.
Thee we would be always
blessing,
Serve thee as thy hosts above,
Pray, and praise thee, without
ceasing,
Glory in thy perfect love.

Finish then thy new creation,
Pure and spotless may we be;
Let us see thy great salvation,
Perfectly restored in thee;
Changed from glory into glory,
Till in heaven we take our
place,
Till we cast our crowns before
thee,
Lost in wonder, love, and
praise!

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Blessing: Creator God, you send us out to create signs of hope. Jesus, our Saviour, you send us out to show love and compassion. Holy Spirit, you send us out to bring justice and peace for all. May we bring you glory wherever we are this week, and may we live up to the witness of those saints who have gone before us. Amen