

**COSSO SPIRITUAL FORMATION
FRIDAY GATHERING**

October 13, 2023

PRELUDE

WELCOME Grace Wallace, COS Coordinator

INTRODUCTION Rev. Dr. Rebeka Maples, Spiritual Formation Director



CELEBRATING ALL THE SAINTS

All Saints' Day is a universal festival of the Church that directs our attention to the richness of Christian history. The custom of commemorating only martyrs of the Church on a single day (Nov. 1) goes back at least to the third century. All Souls Day (Oct. 31) celebrated all who had died, today All Saints' Day (Nov. 1) celebrates not only the martyrs and saints, but all the people of God who together form the mystical body of Christ.

Suggestions: Place a white cloth over a table in the centre of worship with a candle; candles may be added through the service and all light votives at the end. Names of deceased may be read, a candle lit and/or a bell rung after each name. See BOW 413 for service suggestions.

PRAYER FOR ALL THE SAINTS

We light this candle to begin our worship and to remember those who have died this year.

You may say the names of those you remember...

light candle & offer names

God of all life, we light a light as a prayer beyond words.

God of many names, we lift these names to remember those who have died.

Be near to us and bring us comfort.

Walk with us as we learn to live with loss;

help us to comfort and support one another.

May your compassion surround us;

may your strength sustain us,

and in the days to come may we see hope

in the One who died yet lives again. Amen.

OPENING HYMN

For All the Saints

UMH 711 (v 1-4)

REFLECTION ON ALL SOULS' DAY (3 readers)

Reader 1: I don't get the resurrection," she said,
as she sat on the sand looking at the waves,
thinking of the one she loved who had died.
She sifted the sand through her fingers. Ashes to ashes, dust to dust.
How many saints have touched these grains of sand?
"I don't get the resurrection," she said.

Reader 2: "I don't get the resurrection," she said,
as she walked on the ground blackened by fire.
They say that some seeds only germinate after fire has raged: life after death.
But what does that mean for us humans?
"I don't get the resurrection," she said.

Reader 3: "I don't get the resurrection," she said,
as she sat in her winter garden staring at the bare branches of the oak tree,
remembering the one she loved who had died.
"I know, God, you tell me that if I look closely
I'll see tiny green leaves growing on those branches.
but what does this mean for us humans?
"I don't get the resurrection," she said.

She closed her eyes, put her head in her hands, and prayed.
(*pause*)

When she lifted her head and opened her eyes,
she saw her garden and remembered once again the one she loved who had died.
"I don't get the resurrection," she said.
Then she smiled to herself,
and for a little while, she got it.
Her soul was calm and her mind was at peace,
as she remembered the one she loved
and the One who loved her.

WE GIVE THANKS

Let us give thanks for all those we love but see no more:

**For those who lit our lives with joy,
for those who have touched us with tenderness,
for those whose loss fills us with longing,
we give thanks.**

SCRIPTURE READING 1 Corinthians 1:26-29

Consider your own call, brothers and sisters: not many of you were wise by human standards, not many were powerful, not many were of noble birth. ²⁷ But God chose what is foolish in the world to shame the wise; God chose what is weak in the world to shame the strong; ²⁸ God chose what is low and despised in the world, things that are not, to abolish things that are, ²⁹ so that no one might boast in the presence of God.

CALLING ALL SAINTS (moment of reflection)

WE GIVE THANKS

**For those who lit our lives with joy,
for those who have touched us with tenderness,
for those whose loss fills us with longing,
we give thanks.**

PRAYER OF ADORATION

(*based on Isaiah 6:1-8*)

O God who dwells in highest heaven,
yet stoops to touch my life,
I worship and adore you;
my voice joins with the angels, as I cry aloud:
**"Holy, holy, holy are you, Lord of Hosts;
the whole earth is full of your glory."**

I am not worthy to touch the hem of your garment,
yet you call me to work for you here on earth.
You send your angels to me
and their healing touch blots out my sin.
You ask me to stand up and go forth in your name.

**O mighty, radiant, transforming God,
trembling and trusting, I reply:
"Here I am, send me."**

HYMN I'll Fly Away TFWS 2282

WITH ALL THE SAINTS ALIVE (moment of reflection)

WE GIVE THANKS

**For those who lit our lives with joy,
for those who have touched us with tenderness,
for those who showed us the way
and helped us listen when God was calling,
we give thanks.**

HYMN God Be With You Till We Meet Again UMH 672

A BLESSING FOR ALL SAINTS

We join our hearts in a blessing
with all the saints before us and behind us,
beautiful and plain, wise and foolish, weak and strong.

We receive a blessing from each other,
forgiving and forgiven
understanding and understood
healing and healed.

This is God's blessing to us and through us
for the saints on earth and all the saints in heaven.
**May God be with us as we leave this place,
May God's grace heal the wounds in our hearts,
May God's love flow through us as we answer God's call,
May God be with us until we meet again.**

POSTLUDE

Sources:

UMC Book of Worship

Ruth Burgess, *Candles & Conifers: Resources for All Saints' and Advent*, (Glasgow, UK: Wild Goose Pub., 2005).

Ruth Burgess, *Winter: Liturgical resources for November, December & January* (Glasgow, UK: Wild Goose Pub., 2016).