

Evening Prayer for All Souls

7th November 2021, from The Book of Common Prayer

Hymn – All my hope on God is founded

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=W2oYTtyBSxk>

All my hope on God is founded
he does still my trust renew;
me through change and chance he guideth,
only good and only true.
God unknown, he alone,
calls my heart to be his own.

Pride of man and earthly glory,
sword and crown, betray his trust;
what with care and toil he buildeth,
tower and temple, fall to dust,
but God's power, hour by hour,
is my temple and my tower.

Still from man to God eternal
sacrifice of praise be done,
high above all praises praising
for the gift of Christ, his Son.
Christ doth call one and all:
ye who follow shall not fall.

Opening prayers

God is love; and he that abideth in love abideth in God and God in him.

1 John 4.16

Beloved, we are come together in the presence of almighty God and of the whole company of heaven to offer unto him through our Lord Jesus Christ our worship and praise and thanksgiving; to make confession of our sins; to pray, as well for others as for ourselves, that we may know more truly the greatness of God's love and shew forth in our lives the fruits of his grace; and to ask on behalf of all men such things as their well-being doth require.

Wherefore let us kneel in silence, and remember God's presence with us now.

**Almighty and most merciful Father,
we have erred, and strayed from thy ways like lost sheep.
We have followed too much the devices and desires
of our own hearts.
We have offended against thy holy laws.
We have left undone those things
which we ought to have done;
and we have done those things which we ought not to have done;
and there is no health in us.
But thou, O Lord, have mercy upon us, miserable offenders.
Spare thou them, O God, which confess their faults.
Restore thou them that are penitent;
according to thy promises declared unto mankind
in Christ Jesu our Lord.
And grant, O most merciful Father, for his sake,
that we may hereafter live a godly, righteous, and sober life,
to the glory of thy holy name. Amen.**

Pause

Grant, we beseech thee, merciful Lord,
to thy faithful people pardon and peace,
that they may be cleansed from all their sins,
and serve thee with a quiet mind;
through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

**Our Father, which art in heaven,
hallowed be thy name;
thy kingdom come;
thy will be done,
in earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread.
And forgive us our trespasses,
as we forgive them that trespass against us.
And lead us not into temptation;
but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom,
the power and the glory,
for ever and ever.
Amen.**

O Lord, open thou our lips
and our mouth shall shew forth thy praise.

O God, make speed to save us.
O Lord, make haste to help us.

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son,
and to the Holy Ghost;
**as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be,
world without end. Amen.**

Praise ye the Lord.
The Lord's name be praised.

Magnificat

My soul doth magnify the Lord :
and my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour.

For he hath regarded :
the lowliness of his handmaiden.

For behold, from henceforth :
all generations shall call me blessed.

For he that is mighty hath magnified me :
and holy is his Name.

And his mercy is on them that fear him :
throughout all generations.

He hath shewed strength with his arm :
he hath scattered the proud in the imagination of their hearts.

He hath put down the mighty from their seat :
and hath exalted the humble and meek.

He hath filled the hungry with good things :
and the rich he hath sent empty away.

He remembering his mercy hath holpen his servant Israel :
as he promised to our forefathers, Abraham and his seed for ever.

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son
and to the Holy Ghost;
as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be :
world without end. Amen.

Psalm 27:1-6,16-17

The Lord is my light and my salvation; whom then shall I fear?
The Lord is the strength of my life; of whom then shall I be afraid?

When the wicked, even my enemies and my foes, came upon me to eat up my flesh, they stumbled and fell.

Though a host encamp against me, my heart shall not be afraid,
and though there rise up war against me, yet will I put my trust in him.

One thing have I asked of the Lord and that alone I seek:
that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life,

To behold the fair beauty of the Lord
and to seek his will in his temple.

For in the day of trouble he shall hide me in his shelter;
in the secret place of his dwelling shall he hide me
and set me high upon a rock.

I believe that I shall see the goodness of the Lord
in the land of the living.

Wait for the Lord; be strong and he shall comfort your heart;
wait patiently for the Lord.

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son
and to the Holy Ghost;
as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be
world without end. Amen.

Epistle

Romans 5:5-11

Hope does not disappoint us, because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit that has been given to us.

For while we were still weak, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly. Indeed, rarely will anyone die for a righteous person—though perhaps for a good person someone might actually dare to die.

But God proves his love for us in that while we still were sinners Christ died for us. Much more surely then, now that we have been justified by his blood, will we be saved through him from the wrath of God. For if while we were enemies, we were reconciled to God through the death of his Son, much more surely, having been reconciled, will we be saved by his life. But more than that, we even boast in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received reconciliation.

Nunc Dimittis

Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace :
according to thy word.

For mine eyes have seen :
thy salvation;

Which thou hast prepared :
before the face of all people;

To be a light to lighten the Gentiles :
and to be the glory of thy people Israel.

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son :
and to the Holy Ghost;
as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be
world without end. Amen.

Gospel Reading

John 6.37-40

Everything that the Father gives me will come to me, and anyone who comes to me I will never drive away; for I have come down from heaven, not to do my own will, but the will of him who sent me. 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. 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.'

The Apostles' Creed

**I believe in God the Father almighty,
maker of heaven and earth:
and in Jesus Christ his only Son our Lord,
who was conceived by the Holy Ghost,
born of the Virgin Mary,
suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, dead, and buried.
He descended into hell;
the third day he rose again from the dead;
he ascended into heaven,
and sitteth on the right hand of God the Father almighty;
from thence he shall come to judge the quick and the dead.**

**I believe in the Holy Ghost;
the holy catholic Church;
the communion of saints;
the forgiveness of sins;
the resurrection of the body,
and the life everlasting.
Amen.**

The Lord be with you.
And with thy spirit.

Let us pray.

Lord, have mercy upon us.
Christ, have mercy upon us.
Lord, have mercy upon us.

**Our Father, which art in heaven,
hallowed be thy name;
thy kingdom come;
thy will be done,
in earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread.
And forgive us our trespasses,
as we forgive them that trespass against us.
And lead us not into temptation;
but deliver us from evil.
Amen.**

○ Lord, shew thy mercy upon us.

And grant us thy salvation.

○ Lord, save the Queen.

And mercifully hear us when we call upon thee.

Endue thy ministers with righteousness.

And make thy chosen people joyful.

○ Lord, save thy people.

And bless thine inheritance.

Give peace in our time, O Lord.

**Because there is none other that fighteth for us,
but only thou, O God.**

○ God, make clean our hearts within us.

And take not thy Holy Spirit from us.

The Collect of the Day

Eternal God, our maker and redeemer,
grant us, with all the faithful departed,
the sure benefits of your Son's
saving passion and glorious resurrection
that, on the last day,
when you gather up all things in Christ,
we may with them enjoy the fullness of your promises;
through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord,
who is alive and reigns with you,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.

Amen.

The Collect for Peace

○ God, who art the author of peace and lover of concord,
in knowledge of whom standeth our eternal life,
whose service is perfect freedom;
defend us thy humble servants in all assaults of our enemies;
that we, surely trusting in thy defence,
may not fear the power of any adversaries;
through the might of Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

The Collect for Aid against all Perils

Lighten our darkness, we beseech thee, O Lord;
and by thy great mercy
defend us from all perils and dangers of this night;
for the love of thy only Son, our Saviour, Jesus Christ.
Amen.

Hymn – In our day of thanksgiving

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7Evrhgc_Pmk

In our day of thanksgiving
one psalm let us offer
for the saints who before us
have found their reward;
when the shadow of death
fell upon them, we sorrowed,
but now we rejoice
that they rest in the Lord.

In the morning of life,
and at noon, and at even,
he called them away
from our worship below;
but not till His love,
at the font and the altar,
supplied them with grace
for the way they should go.

These stones that have echoed
their praises are holy,
and dear is the ground
where their feet have once trod;
yet here they confessed
they were strangers and pilgrims,
and still they were seeking
the city of God.

Sing praise, then, for all who
here sought and here found Him,
whose journey is ended,
whose perils are past;
they believed in the Light;
and its glory is round them,
where the clouds of earth's sorrows
are lifted at last.

Sermon

I don't know about you, but I didn't know the words to that hymn. Having come across it, I felt it was very fitting for today, when we are focussing on the natural sense of loss when someone who is very special to us dies. Sorrow and loss for ourselves, and yet being thankful for who they were, what they did, and also that they are now at peace.

The hymn emphasises thankfulness for all the good things they did, for all they meant to us. Along with an acknowledgement that there were of course perils and problems from time to time.

When it comes to those known to us, many's the time I've heard people say something like "They were no saint, but they were very special people."

However St Paul called all the Christians in the communities he founded "Saints" – to him a saint was someone who was trying to lead a good life, rather than someone who was perfect – only Jesus is perfect. None of us are saints, but all of us are, because of God's love and forgiveness!

This means that at the heart of our Christian faith is the paradox that none of us are worthy of a place in heaven on our own merits, but we will be welcomed to heaven because of God's generosity and love for us – as people doing our best, yet still getting all sorts of things wrong.

It's no different for our loved ones. However good a relationship we had or have with a loved one, from time to time things always go wrong, and cause a feeling of hurt or separation.

When we do feel hurt, at least for a while, there will be sulks, or anger, or silence – making the point that the other person was at fault! But almost always there comes a point when the argument is made up, the breach is healed, and we are reconciled again.

This is how relationships become so special and important to us – our lives become entwined as we work through the bad times and celebrate the good times together.

So it's no wonder that when someone dies, we suffer such strong feelings of loss and bereavement – we lose something very precious to us, someone who has been part of our lives through all its ups and downs.

Which is why Jesus' words of reassurance are so helpful – that we will “lose nothing of all that he has given us” because the people we lose have safely arrived in heaven.

Over time, as we realise this, we can hope to move from sorrow to thankfulness – thankfulness for all that they meant in our lives; and during the hard times, to trust in God's love for us.

St Paul describes God's love being “poured into our hearts” through the Holy Spirit, and all of us being reconciled to God. It's as if God wraps us up in his love, and no matter what we've lost, what we do, however many things we get wrong, he still loves us.

The more confident we become in God's love, the more peace we will find in our hearts.

Amen.

Hymn – Make me a channel of your peace

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2svZhZT6Pro>

Make me a channel of your peace.
Where there is hatred let me bring your love.
Where there is injury, your pardon Lord
and where there's doubt, true faith in you.

*Oh master, grant that I may never seek
so much to be consoled as to console,
to be understood as to understand,
to be loved as to love with all my soul.*

Make me a channel of your peace.
Where there's despair in life let me bring hope.
Where there is darkness, only light,
and where there's sadness ever joy.

*Oh master, grant that I may never seek
so much to be consoled as to console,
to be understood as to understand,
to be loved as to love with all my soul.*

Make me a channel of your peace
It is in pardoning that we are pardoned,
in giving to all men that we receive
and in dying that we're born to eternal life.

Lighting of Candles

Now we come to the moment of personal recollection of our own loved one or ones who have died. Focus for a little while on them and all the joys that they brought you. Focus on their love for you mirrored in your love for them. Acknowledge the loss of the day to day relationship, but above all give thanks for knowing them and sharing so much with them.

As you move to the altar/table to place your candle, let it remind you of your journey together. As you return, think of them at peace and at rest, still loving you although you are separated for the time being.

Prayers

Let us pray to God, the Lord of all the living and the departed.

Keep your Church on earth ever mindful that she is one with the Church in heaven. Unite her prayers with the prayers of those who stand in your nearer presence. Fill all Christian people with zeal to continue the good work begun by the faithful in past ages.

Lord in your mercy

Hear our prayer

In all striving and planning for the future, give to men and women grace not to forget the wisdom of the past. Let all acknowledge their human heritage, to guide them towards a future where your purposes shall be fulfilled.

Lord in your mercy

Hear our prayer

We give thanks for all those we have loved and see no more, and for our families in past times before our knowledge. We remember all who have helped us by word or example, and pray that we may in our time be good influences on those with whom we share our lives.

Lord in your mercy

Hear our prayer

Be close to those who mourn the death of any whom they have loved.
Give them the comfort of human care, and the strength of your presence
to continue their lives. Bless them with faith in the resurrection of the dead
to the life which holds no sorrow of parting.

Lord in your mercy

Hear our prayer

**God, our shelter and strength,
you listen in love to the cry of your people.**

**Hear us as we remember those
who have gone before us in faith,
and grant us, with them
the fullness of redemption.**

We ask this through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen

Hymn – Thou hand O God has guided

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bLQk7m7Edzq>

Thy hand, O God, has guided
thy flock, from age to age;
their wondrous tale is written,
full clear, on every page;
our fathers owned thy goodness,
and we their deeds record;
and both of this bear witness;
one Church, one Faith, one Lord.

Thy heralds brought glad tidings
to greatest as to least;
they bade men rise, and hasten
to share the great King's feast;
and this was all their teaching,
in every deed and word,
to all alike proclaiming
one Church, one Faith, one Lord.

Through many a day of darkness,
through many a scene of strife,
the faithful few fought bravely,
to guard the nation's life.
Their gospel of redemption,
sin pardoned, man restored,
was all in this enfolded:
one Church, one Faith, one Lord.

And we, shall we be faithless?
shall hearts fail, hands hang down?
shall we evade the conflict,
and cast away our crown?
Not so: in God's deep counsels
some better thing is stored;
we will maintain, unflinching,
one Church, one Faith, one Lord.

Thy mercy will not fail us,
nor leave thy work undone;
with thy right hand to help us,
thy victory shall be won;
and then, by all creation,
thy name shall be adored,
and this shall be their anthem:
one Church, one Faith, one Lord.

Ending

**The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ,
and the love of God,
and the fellowship of the Holy Ghost,
be with us all evermore. Amen.**

God, who has prepared for us a city with eternal foundations,
give you grace to share the inheritance of the saints in glory;
and the blessing of God almighty,
the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit,
be among us and remain with us always.
Amen.