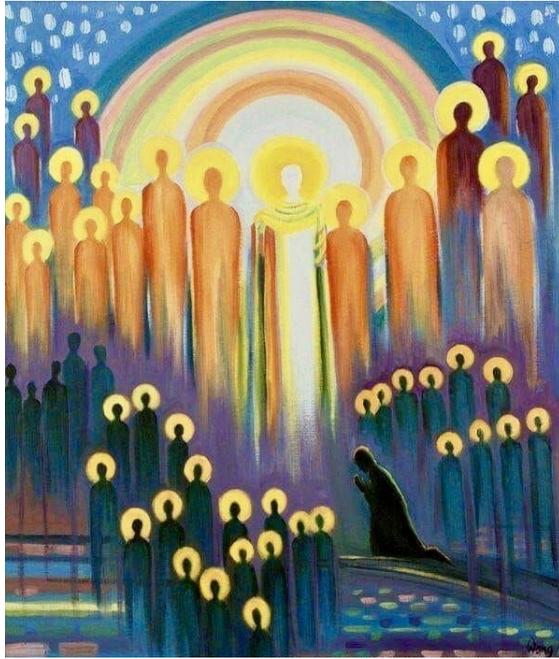


# *All Saint's Day*



## *The Lihu'e Evangelical Lutheran Church of Hawai'i*

*Ka Hale Pule 'O Na Lahui Apau . . .*

*Church Of All Peoples . . .*

*. . . Hele Pu Maʻkou me Iesu Kristo*

*. . . Walking Together With Christ*

November 7, 2021

*The Lihue Evangelical Lutheran Church of Hawai'i*

*4602 Ho'omana Road, Lihue, HI 96766*

*The Rev. Dr. JP Paxton    Tony Kment, Technology*

*Rhonda Pabo, Organist    Mele Brewer, Lector*

*Church: (808) 245-2145    Fax: (808) 246-8626*

*E-Mail: staff@lihuelutheran.com    Website: lihuelutheranchurch.com*

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### *Welcome to Our Guests*

It is always a joy to share our faith and worship with people visiting from around the world. Please know your presence and participation in our service is most appreciated. At Lihue Lutheran we celebrate Holy Communion at every service. You are certainly welcome in joining us as our Lord comes to us in this holy meal.

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### *Prayer Concerns*

Please remember these people in your prayers during the week: The family of Amanda Thayer , Bob & Joann Clash, Sally Rasay, Linda Garrett, Stan Weeks, Ronnie Pacheco, Pagatpatan ohana, Villanueva ohana, Geronimo ohana, David Gragg, Joe Morgan, Zosimo and Virginia Austria, Karen Kinoshita, Jake Whisenhunt, Rick Rentz, Norman Dibble, Kazue Zaima, Virginia Hines-Aflague, John Mattek, Giraldo II (Bobby Giraldo's son), Kristie Schmid (Tony's sister), Lolli Hagen, Abraham Torres, Sr., Kristy Kahananui, Sonny Koerte, Uncle Joe, Mallory Rodriguez, Steve Schantz, Peter Alisna, Tirzah Pope, Pastor Matthew Weber, Joyce Anglemeyer, Stephen Shioi, Peggy Hood, Jason Shimono, Richard Rasay, Nancy Nelson (formely Mandell), Karen & Patrick Pavao, Edward Rasay, Karen Richards (friend of Nancy Mandell), Marcos Larson (Liedeke's son), Dora Jane Rowell, Franklin Parraga, Penny Parraga, Leticia Ancog (Kurt Javinar's sister), Yvonne Shinseki, Al Dressler (Larry's Father), Shirley Hallman (Denese Alcott's Mother), Mercy Ballesteros, Mike LaBerge, Anna Marie & Phil Croghan, Judy Carlson, Caroline Johnson, Sheila Belarmino, Ray Roderick, The Church Council, and leaders in the ELCA. If you have additional prayer requests, please let the church office know. "*Ask it in my name . . .*" Mahalo for your love.

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### *Remembering Our Military*

As we gather for worship, please remember those serving us in the military, and the families of our Hawai'i National Guard. These names have been given by loved ones and family members: Navy – TJ, Javinar, Kristian Matsumoto, Coast Guard - Brian Rodriguez, Navy - Kiana Alisna, Coast Guard - Ke'ale Renta Army - Jason Lumacad, Levi Fajardo: Air Force - Steven Javinar, Ikaika Fajardo, Army - Brandon Perkinson, Drew Cox, Tony Garton: National Guard - Benji MacKenzie, Eddie Resinto, Fred Casticimo, Philip Kamakea, Anthony Y. Torres, Master Sgt. If you know of someone you would like added to our prayer list, please advise the church office.

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### *Lihue Lutheran Spotlight*

a.



## Introduction

Of all three years of the lectionary cycle, this year's All Saints readings have the most tears. Isaiah and Revelation look forward to the day when God will wipe away all tears; in John's gospel, Jesus weeps along with Mary and all the gathered mourners before he demonstrates his power over death. On All Saints Day we celebrate the victory won for all the faithful dead, but we grieve for our beloved dead as well, knowing that God honors our tears. We bring our grief to the table and find there a foretaste of Isaiah's feast to come.

## Overview

### Unbinding the Living

On All Saints Sunday we remember loved ones who have been laid in the tomb. We know the acute grief of Mary, Martha, and Jesus. We know the reality of death that lies so close. We know that at any moment the phone call could come with news we dread. We live forever in the shadow of death.

At the same time, we also know the little deaths that take place every day. We know the daily disappointments, the betrayal of a friend, a failure at work, a difficult and tumultuous marriage, the loneliness and pain of one longing for something more from life. Beyond that there are the near-constant reminders that much of this world is far from God's kingdom. How easy it is to look and see poverty and injustice, disease and despair all around. Like Lazarus, we are bound tightly in death's clothes: grief, disappointment, hopelessness.

Yet Jesus speaks the last word for us: "Unbind him, and let him go" (John 11:44). This promise is bursting with resurrecting life. This word is spoken by the one who became human and was put in a tomb, but broke through the pervasive stench of death. In the waters of the font, we hear our God speak this word to us. Lifting us out of the waters, God frees us from the binding rags of death and dresses us in the royal clothing of Christ. At the table, we feast with the God in whom we have waited, the God who swallows up death forever. The last word is not death, but life as a beloved child of God.

Clothed in the righteousness of Christ, God's people are called forth from the grave. Fellow saints rush forward to remove the rotting grave clothes. Together the people of God celebrate the hope and promise of resurrection, rising each new day to joyfully serve in the name of the one who is beyond death, Jesus our Savior.

## Movie Suggestion

The animated Disney/Pixar movie *Coco* (2017) is a celebration of *Día de los Muertos* and a powerful reminder of the ways our lives are shaped for generations by the stories of our forebears. Incomplete or inaccurate as memories may be, they tell us who we are and what we can or should become. When someone dies with unresolved conflict in relationships, we also lose the hope for reconciliation. People who gather today are shaped by grief for the saints who have died, but also by anger, relief, and other supposedly unmentionable emotions that don't come up in the eulogies. Let this be a day to acknowledge these undercurrents and entrust to God's care our broken hopes for resolution.

# *Announcements and Weekly Events!*

## *Welcome, Check-In, and Announcements*

*In the Facebook chatbox share something good God is doing in your life.*

### *Announcements*

- ◇ **Advent** begins November 28
- ◇ Deck the Halls **December 4**, 9am-4pm

### *Weekly Events*

- ◇ Ghetto Sweet Tarts (Taco Tuesday, on a Monday!)  
**Monday, Nov 8**, 5:30-7pm in the Fellowship Hall
- ◇ BOBS Bible Study—The Forgotten Luther (6-week study)  
**Tuesday, Nov 9**, @ 5:30-7pm in the fellowship hall  
**ADVENT STUDY, Begins Tues, Nov 30**, “The Christmas We Didn’t Expect”
- ◇ Centering Prayer with Liedeke Bulder  
**Saturday, Nov 13**, @ 9-10am via zoom <https://us04web.zoom.us/j/9079773456>
- ◇ Youth Group  
**Sunday, Nov 14**, 5:30-7pm in the fellowship hall

# All Saint's Day

## Order for Worship

### \*Confession and Forgiveness

P Blessed be the Holy Trinity, ✝ one God, whose teaching is life, whose presence is sure, and whose love is endless.

**C Amen.**

P Let us confess our sin in the presence of God and of one another.

*Silence is kept for reflection.*

P Have mercy on us, O God.

**C We confess that we have sinned against you and against our neighbor. We have built walls instead of tables and have turned away the stranger. We have sought glory for ourselves and have treasured that which does not satisfy. Help us to love as you love, to welcome those you send, and to treasure mercy and justice. Turn us from our ways to your ways, and free us to serve those in need. Amen.**

P God who makes all things new, forgives you all your sins for ✝ Jesus' sake and remembers them no more. Lift up your heads and your hearts. Yours is the Kingdom of God.

**C Amen.**



### \*Gathering Song

### For All the Saints



1 For all the saints who from their labors rest, who  
 2 Thou wast their rock, their for-ress, and their might; thou,  
*Stanzas 3-5 on facing page.*  
 6 But then there breaks a yet more glo-rious day; the  
 7 From earth's wide bounds, from o-cean's far-thest coast, through

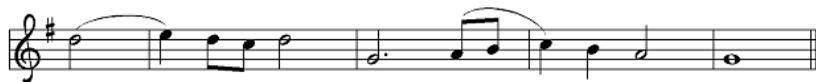


thee by faith be-fore the world con-fessed, thy  
 Lord, their cap-tain in the well-fought fight; . . .  
 saints tri-um-phant rise in bright ar-ray; the  
 gates of pearl streams in the count-less host, . . .

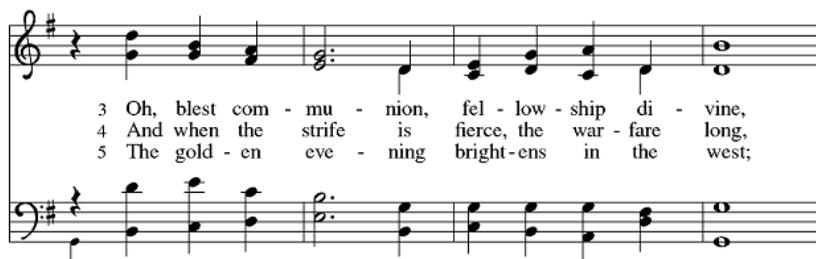


name, O Je - sus, be for - ev - er blest.  
 thou, in the dark - ness dread, their one true light.

King of glo - ry pass - es on his way.  
 sing - ing to Fa - ther, Son, and Ho - ly Ghost:



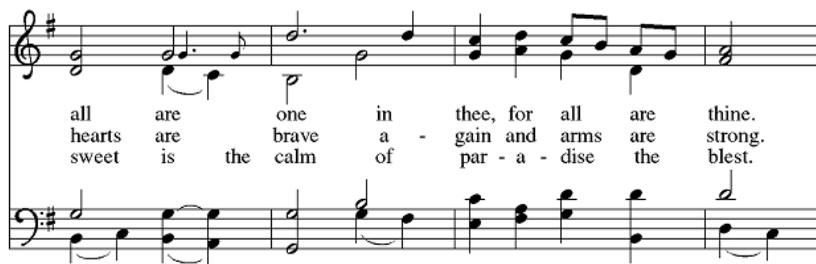
Al - le - lu - ia! Al - le - lu - ia!



3 Oh, blest com - mu - nion, fel - low - ship di - vine,  
 4 And when the strife is fierce, the war - fare long,  
 5 The gold - en eve - ning bright - ens in the west;



we fee - bly strug - gle, they in glo - ry shine; yet  
 steals on the ear the dis - tant tri - umph song, and  
 soon, soon to faith - ful ser - vants com - eth rest; . . .



all hearts are one in thee, for all are thine.  
 are are brave a - gain and arms are strong.  
 sweet is the calm of par - a - dise the blest.



Al - le - lu - ia! Al - le - lu - ia!

## \*The Apostolic Greeting

**P** The grace of our Lord, Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit, be with you all.

**C** **And also with you.**

## \*Kyrie

*Refrain*

Ky-ri - e e - lei - son, on our world and on our way.

Ky-ri - e e - lei - son, ev-'ry day.

### All Sing

For peace in the world, for the health of the church, for the unity of all;  
 For this holy house, for all who worship and praise,  
 Let us pray to the Lord, let us pray to the Lord. (*refrain*)

That we may live out your impassioned response to the hungry and the poor;  
 That we may live out . . . truth and justice and grace.  
 Let us pray to the Lord, let us pray to the Lord. (*refrain*)

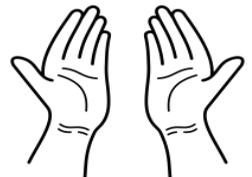
For peace in our hearts . . . For peace in our homes . . . For friends and family.  
 For life and for love . . . For our work and our play,  
 Let us pray to the Lord, let us pray to the Lord. (*refrain*)

For your Spirit to guide, that you center our lives in the water and the word;  
 That you nourish our souls . . . With your body and blood,  
 Let us pray to the Lord, let us pray to the Lord. (*refrain*)

## \*Prayer of the Day

**P** Let us pray. Almighty God, you have knit your people together in one communion in the mystical body of your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord. Grant us grace to follow your blessed saints in lives of faith and commitment, and to know the inexpressible joys you have prepared for those who love you, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

**C** **Amen.**



## First Reading

## Isaiah 25:6-9

*Isaiah sees a vision of the end of days, when God will gather all people on God's holy mountain and will prepare for them a rich feast. At this banquet God will wipe the tears from all eyes. And there will be no more sorrow, for God will destroy death itself.*

<sup>6</sup>On this mountain the LORD of hosts will make for all peoples a feast of rich food, a feast of well-aged wines, of rich food filled with marrow, of well-aged wines strained clear. <sup>7</sup>And he will destroy on this mountain the shroud that is cast over all peoples, the sheet that is spread over all nations; <sup>8</sup>he will swallow up death forever. Then the

Lord GOD will wipe away the tears from all faces, and the disgrace of his people he will take away from all the earth, for the LORD has spoken.

<sup>9</sup>It will be said on that day, Lo, this is our God; we have waited for him, so that he might save us. This is the LORD for whom we have waited; let us be glad and rejoice in his salvation.

A The Word of the Lord

C Thanks be to God.

## Psalm

## Psalm 24

They shall receive blessing from the God of their salvation. (*Ps. 24:5*)

<sup>1</sup>The earth is the LORD's and all that is in it, the world and those who dwell therein.

<sup>2</sup>**For the LORD has founded it upon the seas and established it upon the rivers.**

<sup>3</sup>Who may ascend the mountain of the LORD, and who may stand in God's holy place?

<sup>4</sup>**Those of innocent hands and purity of heart, who do not swear on God's being, nor do they pledge by what is false.**

<sup>5</sup>They shall receive blessing from the LORD and righteousness from the God of their salvation.

<sup>6</sup>**Such is the generation of those who seek you, O LORD, of those who seek your face, O God of**

**Jacob.**

<sup>7</sup>Lift up your heads, O gates; and be lifted up, O everlasting doors, that the King of glory may come in.

<sup>8</sup>**Who is this King of glory?**

**The LORD, strong and mighty, the LORD, mighty in battle!**

<sup>9</sup>Lift up your heads, O gates; and be lifted up, O everlasting doors, that the King of glory may come in.

<sup>10</sup>**Who is this King of glory? Truly, the LORD of hosts is the King of glory.**

## Second Reading

## Revelation 21:1-6a

*Here is a vision of the new heaven and new earth in which God resides fully with God's people so that mourning, despair, and pain have been eradicated. These renewing words from the God who spans all of*

<sup>1</sup>I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more. <sup>2</sup>And I saw the holy city, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. <sup>3</sup>And I

heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "See, the home of God is among mortals. He will dwell with them; they will be his peoples, and God himself will be with them;

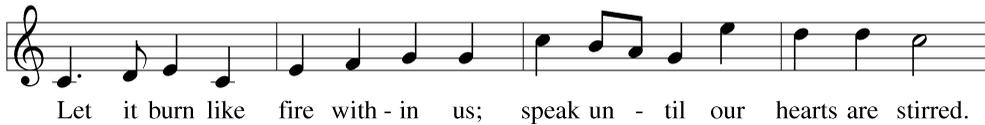
they will be his peoples,  
and God himself will be with them;  
<sup>4</sup>he will wipe every tear from their eyes.  
Death will be no more;  
mourning and crying and pain will be no more,  
for the first things have passed away.”

<sup>5</sup>And the one who was seated on the throne  
said, “See, I am making all things new.” Also he  
said, “Write this, for these words are trustworthy  
and true.” <sup>6a</sup>Then he said to me, “It is done! I am  
the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the  
end.”

**A** The Word of the Lord

**C** Thanks be to God.

### \*Gospel Acclamation



### Holy Gospel

*John 11:32-44*

*Through the raising of Lazarus, Jesus offers the world a vision of the life to come, when death and weeping will be no more.*

**P** The Holy Gospel according to  
Saint John, the eleventh chap-  
ter.



<sup>32</sup>When Mary came where Jesus was and saw him, she knelt at his feet and said to him, “Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died.”

<sup>33</sup>When Jesus saw her weeping, and the Jews who came with her also weeping, he was greatly disturbed in spirit and deeply moved. <sup>34</sup>He said, “Where have you laid him?” They said to him, “Lord, come and see.” <sup>35</sup>Jesus began to weep. <sup>36</sup>So the Jews said, “See how he loved him!” <sup>37</sup>But some of them said, “Could not he who opened the eyes of the blind man have kept this man from dying?”

<sup>38</sup>Then Jesus, again greatly disturbed, came to the tomb. It was a cave, and a stone was lying against it. <sup>39</sup>Jesus said, “Take away the stone.” Martha, the sister of the dead man, said to him, “Lord, already

there is a stench because he has been dead four days.” <sup>40</sup>Jesus said to her, “Did I not tell you that if you believed, you would see the glory of God?” <sup>41</sup>So they took away the stone. And Jesus looked upward and said, “Father, I thank you for having heard me. <sup>42</sup>I knew that you always hear me, but I have said this for the sake of the crowd standing here, so that they may believe that you sent me.” <sup>43</sup>When he had said this, he cried with a loud voice, “Lazarus, come out!” <sup>44</sup>The dead man came out, his hands and feet bound with strips of cloth, and his face wrapped in a cloth. Jesus said to them, “Unbind him, and let him go.”

P The Gospel of the Lord.



☞ Praise to you, O Christ.

## *Keiki Sermon*

## *Sermon*

## *Lights of Remembrance*

At this part of our service we want to honor and remember the Saints who have come before us and those who have gone ahead of us. In addition, we want to claim and participate in, with, and under the promises of God to “wipe away every tear”. We invite you to come forward to the table and light a candle in honor or memory of a loved one.

## *\*Hymn of the Day*

## *Blest Are They*

Leader or All



1 Blest are they, the poor in spir - it; theirs is the  
 2 Blest are they, the low - ly ones; . . . they shall in -  
 3 Blest are they . . . . . who show mer - cy; mer - cy  
 4 Blest are they . . . . . who seek peace; . . . they are the  
 5 Blest are you who suf - fer hate, . . . all . . . be -



king - dom of God. Blest are they,  
 her - it the earth. Blest are they who  
 shall . . . be theirs. Blest are they, the  
 chil - dren of God. Blest are they who  
 cause . . . of me. Re - joice, be glad,



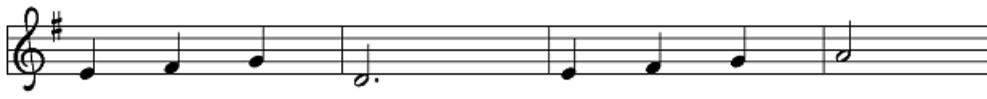
full of sor - row; they shall be con - soled.  
 hun - ger and thirst; they shall have their fill.  
 pure of heart; they . . . . . shall see God.  
 suf - fer in faith; the glo - ry of God is theirs.  
 yours is the king - dom; shine for all to see.

*Refrain*

All



Re - joice and be glad!



Bless - ed are you, ho - ly are you!



Re - joice and be glad!



Yours is the king - dom of God!

## \*Apostles' Creed

P Let us join together in reciting the Apostles' Creed

**C I believe in God, the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth. I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord. He was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit and born of the virgin Mary. He suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried. He descended into hell. On the third day he rose again.**



**He ascended into heaven, and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again to judge the living and the dead. I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.**

## \*The Prayers of the Church

P Eternal God, you hold firm amid the changes of this world. Hear us now as we pray for the church, the world, and everyone in need.

A Merciful God, we give thanks for all missionaries who have brought your message of hope to new communities and wiped tears away. Continue to raise up courageous missionaries to share your gospel of hope. Hear us, O God.

**C your mercy is great.**

A Creating God, we praise you for abundant harvests and the goodness of creation. Create communities of care for your earth so that all land, water, and soil will be celebrated and cherished by future generations of saints. Hear us, O God.

**C your mercy is great.**

A God of peace, we give you thanks for nations of peace that serve as a refuge for all whose homelands are afflicted with violence. Strengthen those who continue to work for peace and support all veterans who carry the scars of war. Hear us, O God.

**C your mercy is great.**

A God of healing, we give you thanks for health care workers who labor around the clock to answer cries for help. Bring wholeness to all who struggle with post-traumatic stress disorder, anxiety, depression, addiction, and all who long for healing in any way especially Sonny, Penny, and Noreen. Hear us, O God.

**C your mercy is great.**

A God of justice, we praise you for the feeding ministries and for all meals that bring people together for nourishment and fellowship. Bless chefs, bakers, servers, dishwashers, communion assistants, and meal ministry coordinators. Hear us, O God.

**C your mercy is great.**

Here other intercessions may be offered.

A God of the ages, we give you thanks for the saints of this congregation who have inspired, challenged, loved, and taught us. We remember Obie, Franklin, Sioux, and Kahu Rocky. Wipe away our tears and lead us by their example until we feast together on your holy mountain. Hear us, O God.

**C your mercy is great.**

P God our protection and strength, we entrust to you all for whom we pray. Remain with us always, through Jesus Christ, our Savior.

**C Amen***\*The Queen's Prayer*

Piano

O kou a - lo - ha no A i - a i ka La - ni, A  
 No - lai - la e ka - Haku Ma - la - lo kou e - he - u, Ko

6

Pno

o kou oi - a i - o, He he - mo - le - le hoi  
 ma - kou ma - lu - hi - a, A mau loa a - ku no. A - me - ne.

*English Translation*

1. O Lord thy Loving Mercy,  
 Is high as the Heavens.  
 It tells us of thy truth.  
 And 'tis filled with holiness

3. For thy grace I beseech thee.  
 Bring us 'neath thy protection.  
 And peace will be thy portion  
 Now and forever more. Amen

*The Sharing of the Peace*

P The peace of the Lord be with you always.

**C And also with you.**

P Let us share the peace of the Lord with those here locally and those joining us online via Facebook live! As the ushers come forward, take a minute to share "Aloha" with those joining us online!



## Offertory Word

If God puts it on your heart to give, donations can be given here today, mailed in, or given online our website [here](#) or you can copy and paste the weblink below @



[https://www.eservicepayments.com/cgi-bin/Vanco\\_ver3.vps?a\\_pver3=tYgT1GfNxRUIIdiimjHMvORYXmm3bazY6GfrmTtVDZydsksODEa-Up5lt373GHnco2evTpo0mld6BrVzd2nG0p8xSFKZ9u6c4AzLo4CjNx7k=&ver=3](https://www.eservicepayments.com/cgi-bin/Vanco_ver3.vps?a_pver3=tYgT1GfNxRUIIdiimjHMvORYXmm3bazY6GfrmTtVDZydsksODEa-Up5lt373GHnco2evTpo0mld6BrVzd2nG0p8xSFKZ9u6c4AzLo4CjNx7k=&ver=3)

## Offertory Response

## Lord of Aloha

God of the is - lands, Lord of the seas, Ma - ker of beau - ty and source of the breeze,

5 King of Cre - a - tion, an - cient and new, Lord of A - lo - ha we wor - ship you.

9 Auth - or of mer - cy, Giv - er of grace, Bles - sed Re - deem - er who died in our place, Fath - er of one O

14 ha - na are you, Lift - ing our voic - es we sing "Al - le - lu" Lord of A - lo - ha we wor - ship you.

19 God of the is - lands, Lord of the seas, Ma - ker of beau - ty and source of the breeze,

23 King of Cre - a - tion, an - cient and new, Lord of A - lo - ha we wor - ship you.

27 Lord of A - lo - ha we wor - ship you.

## *\*Offertory Prayer*

- P Let us pray. Holy God, the earth is yours and everything in it, yet you have chosen to dwell among your creatures. Come among us now in these gifts of bread and wine and strengthen us to be your body for the world through Jesus Christ our Lord.
- C **Amen.**

## *Invitation to Communion*

A feast of love is offered here for you and for all the saints.

## *\*The Words of Institution*

*(All are welcome to share in this meal with us. The sacraments are provided in accordance to synodical guidelines in collaboration with CDC, state, and local precautions. If you do not have sacraments, please raise your hand and an usher will bring them to you.)*

## *\*The Lord's Prayer*

- P Let us pray the prayer our Lord taught us to pray...
- C **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 for give us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the Kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever and ever. Amen.**



## *\*The Post-Communion Blessing*

- P May the body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ, strengthen you and keep you in His grace.
- C **Amen.**

## *\*The Prayer After Communion*

- P Blessed Jesus, at this table you have been for us both host and meal. Now send us forth to extend our tables and share your gifts until that day when all feast together at your Heavenly banquet.
- C **Amen.**

## \*The Blessing

P God, the beginning and the end, who has written your name in the book of life,  
 † bless you and keep you in grace and peace from this time forth and forever more.  
 C Amen.

## \*The Sending Song

## For All Your Saints, O Lord

1 On our way re - joic - ing glad - ly let us go.  
 2 Un - to God the Fa - ther joy - ful songs we sing;

Christ our Lord has con - quered; van - quished is the foe.  
 un - to God the Sav - ior thank - ful hearts we bring;

Christ with - out, our safe - ty; Christ with - in, our joy;  
 un - to God the Spir - it bow we and a - dore,

who, if we be faith - ful, can our hope de - stroy?  
 on our way re - joic - ing now and ev - er - more.

*Refrain*

On our way re - joic - ing; as we for - ward move,  
hear-ken to our prais - es, O blest God of love!

## *Dismissal*

**P** Led on by the saints before us, go in peace to serve the Lord.

**C** Thanks be to God.

## *Upcoming Commemorations*

**Martin, Bishop of Tours, died 397**

**Thursday, November 11, 2021**

Martin's pagan father enlisted him in the Roman army. Approached by a beggar, Martin cut his cloak in half and gave part to the man, whom he later understood as representing Christ. He asked to leave the army, but was jailed instead. After his release, he became a preacher, and later a bishop.

**Søren Aabye Kierkegaard, teacher, died 1855**

**Thursday, November 11, 2021**

Kierkegaard was a Danish theologian whose writings also gave rise to the modern philosophy of existentialism. He frequently attacked the complacency of the state church of his day, as well as its desire to be accepted by polite society rather than be a stumbling block.

The alternate Gospel for this weekend's lectionary is Mark 12:38-44. In it, Jesus levies one of the harshest critiques of the religious leaders of the day. Not only does He call out a core issue with their conduct but He sheds light on issues we (The Church) have faced throughout our institutional history.

While the church faces many issues, sometimes the **worst issues** are those that come from *within* the church. We would do well to examine our hearts in light of this alternative Gospel lesson to discern two things: 1) what am I seeking from church and 2) what is my mission when I'm at church.

The primary issue the religious leaders are indicted for in the text is spiritual pride, but it manifests itself in their religious behavior. Throughout the Old Testament, pride is a significant issue. Proverbs 16:5 teaches us that God "hates" the proud. That is strong language coming from God. Psalm 138:6 says, "the eyes of the Lord are upon the lowly, but the proud He knows from afar."

We have to ask ourselves this question, "Why does God 'hate' pride?" In one of the best explanations I've heard, it's because God "loves people." Think about the relational quality of pride. What does pride do amongst a group of people? Does it increase intimacy, connection, love, and affection? No. It usually creates division, consternation, or competition. James 4:1 asks us, "What causes fights and quarrels among you?" Five verses later the text says, "God gives grace to the humble but opposes all who are proud in heart." Fights and quarrels, division, and other relational issues come from their root source of pride.

I won't go into a detailed explanation of either the social psychology of pride (how it affects us at the social level) or its psychological underpinnings in a psychodynamic assessment of pride (what from our past, like trauma, unforgiveness, resentment, a weak ego, etc.). But I will bring it back to our two questions: "What are you seeking from the church?" and "What is your mission when you come to/are at church?"

First, like the Pharisees, there is a tendency to come to church for selfish reasons. In this way, church becomes about hierarchy, social status and standing (it becomes "clicky" with clear "in" groups), and power. Being a leader of a small group, a ministry, or even church council becomes more about you than it does about others. The biggest problem with the religious leaders is that they had missed the entire point of religion: justice, love (God and neighbor), and service. Religion had turned in on the self and became another source of self-service and selfishness.

Second, the Pharisees didn't come to church with a mission. It was all about them being honored. Church is about the collective worship of God but also a place where we come to love, honor, and serve others. Do you come to church in *this* way?

# For Further Reflection

## TV Show

Perhaps the Canadian sitcom *Schitt's Creek* became so wildly popular during the pandemic because its characters were experiencing a version of what we all experienced in March 2020—the whole world collapsed into four walls, and many social connections were immediately severed. The love and purpose the Rose family discovered in small-town exile from their former life of extravagant wealth can be a model of resurrection life. We lost so much to the coronavirus. But what signs of life are emerging in the newly created space that is hollowed out by loss? After the tears subside, what are the glimpses of new heaven and new earth that we could not have embraced without the loss of much that came before?

## Connections with Creation

Psalm 24 set alongside the story of Jesus raising Lazarus from the dead tells us that God has authority over all aspects of creation, from life to death. The psalmist declares that “the earth is the LORD’s and all that is in it” (v. 1), while Jesus’ command for the dead to rise puts human efforts to dominate nature in perspective. As much as we have attempted to gain mastery over land, water, animals, insects, other humans, and the very processes of life, our hubris has often done more harm than good. Even as we mourn those who have died—and especially those whose deaths resulted from injustice, violence, and ill health due to environmental conditions—we proclaim God’s vindication and draw courage from Jesus to face the tombs of our time. We declare that the Alpha and Omega dwells with us and among us.

## Let The Children Come

All Saints Sunday is a day for remembering. Maybe people bring photos of loved ones who have died. Maybe in worship you read the names of all those who died in the past year. We need to take time to remember those who have gone before us. But children probably need to know a little more than a name or a face. Children build resilience when they hear stories about who they are and where they come from. Is there a narrative about your congregation that hasn’t been told in a while? Who are the saints who first envisioned your congregation? They had flaws and faults, but they also did a brave and beautiful thing. Maybe knowing both those things will be grace for the journey for the children and the adults of your congregation.

## Consideration

Veterans Day is this week, and it is important to find ways to mark the losses of life and wholeness due to wars. Even and especially in faith communities that resist war and violence, we are called to care for those whose bodies and spirits have been broken by their time in armed service. Journalist Sebastian Junger offers insight into the challenges for veterans to reintegrate in society in his book *Tribe: On Homecoming and Belonging* (New York: Hachette, 2016). Consider creating space for one or more veterans to give honest testimony on their service and what it has cost them. If you do not have veterans in your worshiping community, inquire with a local homeless shelter—veterans are disproportionately represented on the streets.

# Worship Reflection

What biblical texts stood out to me and why?

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What do I feel God is trying to say to me in and through this sermon?

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Is the Holy Spirit prompting me to change something in my heart or life? If yes, what is it? What is one step I can take to make a positive change in my life this week?

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Where did I see/hear God in the sermon?

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