



All Saints Sunday  
6 November 2022

Ascension Lutheran Church  
Rev. Christian W. Marien

Grace to you and peace from God our Father and from our Lord and Savior Jesus, the Christ. Amen.

Blest are they, the poor in spirit, theirs is the kingdom of God.

Blest are they, full of sorrow, they shall be consoled

Rejoice and be glad, blessed are you; holy are you. Rejoice and be glad, yours is the Kingdom of God

Christ is risen! He is risen indeed! Alleluia!

I am not sure we can spend time remembering and honoring the saints who have gone before us into the Kingdom of God without first being reminded that the promise of eternal life comes to us with the emptiness of a tomb. Christ is risen! He is risen indeed! Alleluia!

“Blessed are you who are poor,” Jesus says, “for yours is the kingdom of God.”<sup>21</sup> “Blessed are you who are hungry now, for you will be filled. “Blessed are you who weep now, for you will laugh.”

On this day, as pictures of loved ones face us through the glow of candlelight, I am in desperate need of the reminder that before Jesus does anything else with the disciples – he blesses them. Before Jesus sends out the disciples two by two, he blesses them. Before Jesus disciplines the disciples with teaching, he blesses them. Before Jesus teaches the disciples to pray, he blesses them. It is an important reminder for us. To know that Jesus wants first to tell us that we are blessed before Jesus sends us out into the world to love others and tell others about what God has done for us.

On this All Saints Sunday, we are reminded of the blessings we ourselves have received from God in the faces and favor of those who loved us in this life. We have been blessed, that we might be a blessing to others. It may be a bit of cliché – this blessed to be a blessing – nevertheless these blessings carry the power of memory, sacrifice, concern, happiness, and hope in the very fabric of the lives we now live. So, today, as you sit among the dancing flames of candles that speak to the name and memory of someone we love who has walked the road of eternal life before us, do not forget that you are blessed in this life for the blessing a loved one bestowed on you.

And perhaps, you would hear, you would feel that blessing in a new way this day as the veil between heaven and earth stands thinner and more transparent than on other days of the year.

Blessed are you, in the terrible wonderful now, fumbling around for the right words. You need so much, and it seems impossible to say at all. Blessed are you for prayer that feels...hopeless. Disappointing. Futile. Blessed are you in your radical honesty. In the ways you speak of your grief – the long sleepless nights in an empty bed. Of the physical pain you feel –the joints that don't work like they used to, your brain fog or chronic pain. Blessed are you who speak of your loneliness, the empty house, or nest or womb. Who have the audacity to ask for the miracles you need. The healing or a new friend or a redeemed family. Blessed are you as you learn to trust. Trust a God who hears, who listens, who hasn't left your side, who prays on your behalf, interpreting those deep groans you



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can't quite put into syllables or sounds. Blessed are you as you settle into acceptance. Blessed are we who live here...in the someday but not yet. Blessed are you who see it all now. The terrible, beautiful truth that our world, our lives seem irreparably broken. Blessed are you who glimpse reality and don't turn away. Blessed are you who have worked hard to keep your heart soft. You who live with courage, fixing what is in your reach, praying about what is not, and loving, still. Blessed are we, somewhere unnamable, fully present to our reality. Blessed are we, dear ones, not calling it too soon. Not settling for the neat and buttoned up, the too tied-up, the not-quite-true. Blessed are we, the ones who have just discovered that others might not look at things the way we do. Blessed are we realizing that our fixes for others might actually be mirrors to hold up first for ourselves. And blessed are we, seeing that you Lord, desire our good above all, we give you our worship and praise through our readiness to turn to you. Bless all of it, Lord God, that we might widen our gaze to encompass and embrace. And bless us, moving into the unknown, waiting, daring to hope. Christ is risen! He is risen indeed! Alleluia!

Rejoice and be glad; blessed are you, holy are you. Rejoice and be glad; yours is the kingdom of God. Amen.