# All Saints' Church

*"Our mission is to bring the good news of Jesus Christ's love to our entire community through traditional Anglo-Catholic worship, fellowship, outreach, and Christian formation."*

**Our Vision:** *"We strive to be a haven of healing, reconciliation, joy and peace in service to our wider community and beyond, so that our example in prayer and practice may reflect Christ's love for us all.*

## This Sunday – November 1st, 2026

## Celebrating The Saints

### God's Grace

*The following is an article from November 2025, originally written by the Rev. Joseph Peters-Mathews, vicar of St. Hilda St. Patrick Episcopal Church in Edmonds, Washington, for www.episcopalchurch.org.*

The redactors of our "new" Book of Common Prayer — which is almost 50 years old — probably didn't imagine



that most of our congregations would only observe All Saints' Day on the Sunday following. On page 15 of the prayer book, they write, "All Saints' Day may always be observed on the Sunday following November 1, in addition to its observance on the fixed date." They most likely hoped that every church would have a celebration for All Saints' Day on November 1 and then a celebration of All Faithful Departed, formerly All Souls' Day, on November 2. Then maybe another celebration of All Saints' Day on the following Sunday.

Then the prayer book got into churches, and the people of God called Episcopalians started using it. Marion Hatchett, the author of the definitive Commentary on the American Prayer Book, recounts attending an early usage Eucharist where all three opening acclamations were used. That didn't catch on, but celebrating All Saints' — joining with most of mainline Protestantism — on the first Sunday in November did. So too, in many of our churches, did we bring some All Souls' to the table, remembering the faithful departed who were and ever will be close to our hearts.

That might lead us to ask, if we're paying close attention to the rubrics, "What are we doing?" "What is the church doing today?" "For what used to be called the Protestant Episcopal Church in the United States of America, what are saints?" "Who are the saints?" "Who are we remembering or celebrating today?" "Why is this day special?" Two beloved All Saints' hymns can help us to see the dual nature of an Episcopal understanding of sainthood and who the saints are.

On the one hand, we have "For All the Saints": "O blest communion, fellowship divine! / We feebly struggle, they in glory shine." While the rest of the hymn draws a broader picture of those who confessed Jesus as Lord, this line highlights the glorious shining, those we look to as examples of our faith best lived. Peter, Paul, Anna, Lydia, Dorothy Day, Martin Luther King, Jr.

On the other hand, we have "I Sing a Song of the Saints of God": "They lived not only in ages past; / there are hundreds of thousands still. / The world is bright with the joyous saints / who love to do Jesus' will." These two hymns can be braided together to understand the church at work and the church at rest, the saints who live now in the community of the baptized — gathered right now and hearing these words — and the saints on whose shoulders we stand and for whose intercession we ask when following Jesus seems a little more difficult than we'd like. "We feebly struggle, they in glory shine" indeed!

So, what are we doing, church? Who are the saints? What is this All Saints' Day about? First and foremost, it is about what every Sunday gathering and every feast of the church is about: Proclaiming that Christ is risen from the dead, trampling down death by death, and upon those in the tombs bestowing life. We look to the examples of the faith — those from ages past and those who formed us to be who we are — and remember that in the Christian story, Jesus' death has defeated death itself.

When we are baptized, we are baptized into the same body as Timothy and Silas, Elizabeth of Hungary and Catherine of Sienna. Many churches will celebrate baptisms today as the church remembers that death is not the end. Others will observe a baptismal remembrance if they don't have candidates for this baptismal feast. Coming through the watery grave, we're joined to Jesus' resurrection and new life with Florence Li Tim-Oi and Alexander Crummel, and with those we know who've died through our lives who showed us how to follow Jesus.

The end of our passage from Luke today summarizes the ethic of following Jesus, an ethic that flies in the face of what we understand as common sense. The ethic of following Jesus is difficult for us because, even having been baptized, we are, as John Wesley put it, going on to perfection. "Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, pray for those who abuse you. If anyone strikes you on the cheek, offer the other also; and from anyone who takes away your coat do not withhold even your shirt. Give to everyone who begs from you; and if anyone takes away your goods, do not ask for them again." Jesus concludes with what is commonly known as the Golden Rule: "Do to others as you would have them do to you," but that's so much more difficult when he's told us exactly what he means!

This summation, starting with loving our enemies, comes after Luke has written the Beatitudes as he recalls them. These are different from what you're probably used to from bookmarks and Sunday school posters. Keeping Luke's theme of justice for the marginalized that begins in Luke Chapter 1, it is not only the poor in spirit who are blessed in Jesus' words; it is the poor, period. Not only are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness' sake blessed; it is those who are hungry in their bellies. In God's reign made manifest, they will be filled.

Luke has Jesus saying more than Matthew at this point, too. Jesus today not only offers blessings but woes! "But woe to you who are rich, for you have received your consolation… Woe to you when all speak well of you, for that is what their ancestors did to the false prophets." It's no wonder the leaders of society didn't like his message, and the government didn't want his preaching to persist. As the television show The Gilded Age makes clear, "Society" doesn't like change, and it doesn't like to be challenged, especially in its perception of its own rightness and righteousness.

Saints and baptisms and woes, oh my! So, church: What are we doing today, as we celebrate the saints who walk among us and the saints who've made us who we are and the saints of the church on whose shoulders we will always stand? Even with Jesus' giving us such a difficult ethic for what following him looks like, primarily what we're doing today is preaching God's grace made available to all of creation through Jesus' life, death, resurrection, and ascension. The saints we celebrate aren't celebrated for their perfection; they're celebrated because God working through them showed us the better world that's been made available to us through God's grace and Jesus' defeat of death.

Rowland Taylor wasn't burned at the stake because he thought it would be fun, but because he understood God calling on him to make the reforms of the English church available to those under his cure. Mother Teresa didn't live among the poor of Calcutta because she was just a very good person, but because she understood God calling her to live among the poor and let the world know the truth of poverty. Jonathan Myrick Daniels didn't throw himself over Ruby Sales because he was trying to be a hero, but because God's power working in him did infinitely more than he could ask or imagine.

We feebly struggle to live in God's reign made manifest, but so did the saints of old. Peter and Paul really, really didn't like each other. John Wesley was petty and messy. Having come through the ordeals of their lives, they in glory shine — because of God's grace in their lives and God's love for the world shining through them. This is the grace that God gives us when we are baptized and sealed by the Holy Spirit and marked as Christ's own forever. This is the grace we see when we share meals with one another, and the grace made present when we give to those who ask of us.

The saints of God — people joined to Jesus' death and resurrection in baptism, people the church remembers for their deep faith — lived not only in ages past. There are hundreds of thousands still. We pray for them now on this All Saints' Day as we celebrate all those saints who've gone before – and pray that we might be one too. Amen.

*Rev. Joseph Peters-Mathews, Vicar of St. Hilda St. Patrick Episcopal Church*

## Readings for
# All Saints' Day

Revelation 7:9–17 + 1 John 3:1–3 + Matthew 5:1–12 + Psalm 34: 1–10, 22

# Calendar

Note: We worship in our historic church. The service will also be on Zoom. The service time is 10:00 AM. Tuesday Noon Mass is held in All Saints' St. Mary Chapel.

SUNDAY **November 1st, 2026 All Saints' Day**
**10:00 AM Mass in All Saints' Church**
Join Zoom Meeting from our website at www.allsaintschurch.org
Recording of Mass available before noon at www.allsaintschurch.org

**Christian Formation and First Communion Instruction for Children**
Ages 5 to 12 in the Parish Hall, from 10:00 AM – 10:45 AM

**Christian Formation for Adults (the 2nd and 4th Sundays)**
Youth and adults around noon after the Mass in the Library
Recording of Mass available before noon at www.allsaintschurch.org

# Our Core Values:

- Welcoming strangers like old friends
- Embracing the Anglo-Catholic tradition
- Being dependable members of a caring community
- Respecting each other's differences
- Being faithful stewards of God's gift
- Remembering that God loves everyone unconditionally