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 8th, 2026

Our Hymns To Him

Glory to God for All Things: A November Hymn

The following is an article from November 2, 2026, originally written by the Rev. Geoffrey Mackey, rector of Trinity Episcopal Church in Parkersburg, West Virginia, for The Living Church's "The Covenant."



I n 1942, in a Soviet labor camp in Siberia, the Russian archpriest Gregory Petrov died. Among his few effects was a copy of an Akathist, a form of extended hymn in the Orthodox tradition, intended to be sung "not sitting" (the literal meaning of the Greek aktathistos). The original Akathist, a hymn to the Mother of God, is attributed to 6th century hymnographer St. Romanos the Melodist. But the text found among Fr. Gregory's possessions is of modern origin.

Sometimes mistakenly attributed to Fr. Gregory himself, it seems to have been written by Metropolitan Tryphon of Turkestan, who also lived and ministered through the hard years of the Soviet Revolution and fell asleep in the Lord in 1934.

Both of these men – Father Gregory and Metropolitan Tryphon – spent their lives in the service of Christ and the life of Beatitude. Both men suffered at the hands of the atheist regime they lived to see come to ascendency, Gregory at hard labor and Trypon under hatred and suspicion of both religious and secular leaders. And yet, as painful as their lives were, the hymn that the Metropolitan wrote and that Father Gregory prayed has become known today as the Akathist of Thanksgiving. It is an extended meditation on the reported final words of St. John Chrysostom, "Glory to God for all things."

Over the course of thirteen sets of stanzas, God is praised for his countless blessings.
Glory to Thee for calling me into being

> Glory to Thee, showing me the beauty of the universe
> Glory to Thee, spreading out before me heaven and earth
> Like the pages in a book of eternal wisdom
> Glory to Thee for Thine eternity in this fleeting world
> Glory to Thee for Thy mercies, seen and unseen
> Glory to Thee through every sigh of my sorrow
> Glory to Thee for every step of my life's journey, for every moment of glory
> Glory to Thee, O God, from age to age.

Each autumn I am put in mind of this literary and spiritual treasure for obvious reasons: in the United States, November is the month of Thanksgiving. But it is also the month of the departed, beginning, as it does, with All Saints' and All Souls' Days.

In my younger years, the long days toward the end of "Ordinary Time" were tiresome. Not only were the days getting shorter, the shadows lengthening, and the weather turning cold, but this part of the liturgical year bored me. The stretch between the start of parish programming in September and Advent and Christmas in December seemed like a slog to bear.

But lately my perspective has shifted, thanks in part to this hymn. Tryphon and Gregory lived in the shadow of death. The difficulties of their ministries, the fear that gripped their nation over so much of their lives, the suspicion in which they were held, and the many difficulties they endured make the words of the hymn all the more powerful:

> How often I have seen the reflection of thy glory in the faces of the dead. How resplendent they were, with beauty and heavenly joy. How ethereal, how translucent their faces. How triumphant over suffering and death, their felicity and peace. Even in silence they were calling upon thee. In the hour of my death, enlighten my soul, too, that it may cry out to thee: Alleluia!

Here death itself – in the forefront of our minds at Hallowtide – takes on a new dimension. As the Proper Preface for Masses of the dead in the 1979 Book of Common Prayer puts it, "For to your faithful people, O Lord, life is changed, not ended; and when our mortal body lies in death, there is prepared for us a dwelling place eternal in the heavens."

The Akathist begins with several stanzas of gratitude for the created order, pregnant with divine life and signifying life eternal:

> Glory to Thee for the depths of Thy wisdom, the whole world a living sign of it. Glory to Thee; on my knees, I kiss the traces of Thine unseen hand. Glory to Thee, enlightening us with the clearness of eternal life. Glory to Thee for the hope of the unutterable, imperishable beauty of immortality.

It progresses then to thanksgiving for the soul's communion with God: "How filled with sweetness are those whose thoughts dwell on Thee; how life-giving Thy holy Word. To speak with Thee is more soothing than anointing with oil; sweeter than the honeycomb. To pray to Thee lifts the spirit, refreshes the soul."

Then it turns to thanksgiving for divine providence, communion with other human beings, the things which serve and provide for us, protection against evil and the powers of darkness, revelation in nature, the receiving of good gifts, the wonders of human creativity, the "scattering our vain imaginations," and "curing our pride of heart by humiliation."

The hymn crescendos, appropriately, at the Cross of Christ and the Church that is gathered beneath its shadow:

> Across the cold chain of the centuries, I feel the warmth of thy breath, I feel thy blood pulsing in my veins. Part of time has already gone, but now thou art the present. I stand by the Cross; I was the cause of it. I cast myself down in the dust before it. Here is the triumph of love, the victory of salvation…
>
> Blessed are they that will share in the King's Banquet: but already on earth thou givest me a foretaste of this blessedness. How many times with thine own hand hast thou held out to me thy Body and thy Blood, and I, though a miserable sinner, have received this Mystery, and have tasted thy love, so ineffable, so heavenly.

This is a hymn of saints, of beatitude: poor and poor in spirit, persecuted and slandered, hungering and thirsting for justice; and yet blessed, even joyful. Whenever I use this hymn for meditation, I am put in mind not only of "our creation, preservation, and all the blessings of this life," and God's "inestimable love," (BCP, 101) but also of "that great multitude that no one could count" that stands before the Lamb with their palm branches, singing their own song of praise and thanksgiving in the eternal throne room. (Cf. Rev. 7.9ff)

I recommend using the Akathist of Thanksgiving as a means of focusing our attention on God's providence, mercy, and grace in this autumn season. To my knowledge there are two recorded musical settings available: John Tavener's masterful 1987 setting sung by the Choir of Westminster Abbey, no longer in print by easily obtainable; and a more accessible, congregational version from St. Ignatius Orthodox Church in Madison, WI. Without the music, it is still a powerful prayer, which can be prayed at once or divided up over the weeks of November between All Saints' and Thanksgiving.

With Metropolitan Tryphon, Father Gregory, St. John Chrysostom, and all the saints, known and unknown, we can join in the song: "We give Thee thanks for all Thy mercies, seen and unseen. For eternal life, for the heavenly Joys of the Kingdom which is to be. Grant mercy to us who sing Thy praise, both now and in the time to come. Glory to Thee, O God, from age to age."

Rev. Geoffrey Macket, Rector of Trinity Episcopal Church, Parkersburg, West Virginia.

Readings for the
Twenty-Fourth Sunday after Pentecost

Amos 5:18–24 + 1 Thessalonians 4:13–18 + Matthew 25:1–13 + Psalm 70

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 8th, 2026 Twenty-Fourth Sunday after Pentecost**
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