

# Grace Episcopal Church Galena, Illinois

**All Saints Sunday**  
November 1, 2020

## Welcome to Grace Church!

It is, as always, a pleasure and privilege to worship together today. Please know that your presence is valued whether this is your first time at Grace or whether you are a regular, whether we are together in person or online on Zoom.

We have chosen to keep our online and in-person congregations together. For those at home on Zoom, links to the bulletin may be found in Friday's e-Blast, the Zoom invitation, and on our website. Printed copies will be available for the in-person congregation. If you are worshipping in the church and wish to use a bulletin on your electronic device, you must download it **before** coming into the church. Please be aware that we are recording this service for later upload to Facebook, YouTube and our website. It is possible that you will be shown briefly in the recording.

***Please remember:***

Masks must be worn throughout your time at Grace for the protection of those near you.

Hand sanitizer is available at each of the entrances.

Sit only in the seats marked by bulletins and leave plenty of space between worshipers/families.

**Please put your smartphone or other device in airplane mode so that our internet capacity is reserved for our online streaming.**

At the time of Communion, the Vestry Coordinator will guide your approach to the chancel steps in the center aisle maintaining distance between communicants.

Reservations are required in advance and you will be checked in by the greeter and admitted through the Parish House entrance. If you did not reserve a seat, please check with the Vestry Coordinator to see if an open seat is available.

Baskets are available at the exits for your pledges/contributions.

**Should you become ill after attending worship, please notify the church so that others present may be contacted.**

At the end of the service, please depart from the church and maintain the six-foot distancing.

Conversations should take place outside.

As life continues to change, let us rejoice in God who continues to be revealed to us and give thanks for our ability to share in worship in hope for the time when all of us can be together again.

***As we prepare ourselves for worship, please sit or kneel in quietness  
as the prelude is offered.***

## MINISTERS OF THE SERVICE

\* Members and Guests, *Celebrants*  
\* Rev. Dr. Gloria Hopewell, *Presider*  
\* Rev. Diane Luther, *Deacon*  
\* Terri Jackman, *Lector*  
\* Elizabeth Ludescher, *Intercessor*

\* Robin French, *Music Director*  
\* Nancy Cook, *Erben Organ*  
\* Lynn Giles, *Vestry Coordinator*  
\* Charlotte Stryker, *Altar Guild*  
\* Charlotte Stryker, *Greeter*

# We gather to worship

## PRELUDE

*For All the Saints*

*Sine Nomine/Hayes*

*Please stand as able as the church bells ring.*

## THE OPENING ACCLAMATION

Presider: Blessed be the one holy, and living God.

People: **Glory to God forever and ever.**

## THE COLLECT

Presider: The Lord be with you.

People: **And also with you.**

Presider: Let us pray.

Almighty God, you have knit together your elect in one communion and fellowship in the mystical body of your Son Christ our Lord: Give us grace so to follow your blessed saints in all virtuous and godly living, that we may come to those ineffable joys that you have prepared for those who truly love you; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who with you and the Holy Spirit lives and reigns, one God, in glory everlasting.

People: **Amen.**

*Please be seated for the readings.*

## THE LESSON

Lector: A reading from **Revelation 7:9-17**

After this I, John, looked, and there was a great multitude that no one could count, from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, robed in white, with palm branches in their hands. They cried out in a loud voice, saying,

"Salvation belongs to our God who is seated on the throne, and to the Lamb!" And all the angels stood around the throne and around the elders and the four living creatures, and they fell on their faces before the throne and worshiped God, singing,

"Amen! Blessing and glory and wisdom and thanksgiving and honor and power and might be to our God forever and ever! Amen."

Then one of the elders addressed me, saying, "Who are these, robed in white, and where have they come from?" I said to him, "Sir, you are the one that knows." Then he said to me, "These are they who have come out of the great ordeal; they have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.

"For this reason they are before the throne of God,  
and worship him day and night within his temple,  
and the one who is seated on the throne will shelter them.  
They will hunger no more, and thirst no more;  
the sun will not strike them,  
nor any scorching heat;  
for the Lamb at the center of the throne will be their shepherd,  
and he will guide them to springs of the water of life,  
and God will wipe away every tear from their eyes."

Lector: Hear what the Spirit is saying to God's people.

People: **Thanks be to God.**

## THE RESPONSE

**PSALM 34:1-10, 22** *(alternately by verse as directed by the lector)*  
***Benedicam Dominum***

I will bless the LORD at all times; \*  
his praise shall ever be in my mouth.

**I will glory in the LORD; \***  
**let the humble hear and rejoice.**

Proclaim with me the greatness of the LORD; \*  
let us exalt his Name together.

**I sought the LORD, and he answered me \***  
**and delivered me out of all my terror.**

Look upon him and be radiant, \*  
and let not your faces be ashamed.

**I called in my affliction and the LORD heard me \***  
**and saved me from all my troubles.**

The angel of the LORD encompasses those who fear him, \*  
and he will deliver them.

**Taste and see that the LORD is good; \***  
**happy are they who trust in him!**

Fear the LORD, you that are his saints, \*  
for those who fear him lack nothing.

**The young lions lack and suffer hunger, \***  
**but those who seek the LORD lack nothing that is good.**

The LORD ransoms the life of his servants, \*  
and none will be punished who trust in him.

## THE EPISTLE

Lector: A Reading from **1 John**

See what love the Father has given us, that we should be called children of God; and that is what we are. The reason the world does not know us is that it did not know him. Beloved, we are God's children now; what we will be has not yet been revealed. What we do know is this: when he is revealed, we will be like him, for we will see him as he is. And all who have this hope in him purify themselves, just as he is pure.

Lector: Hear what the Spirit is saying to God's people.

People: **Thanks be to God.**

## THE GOSPEL

Deacon: The Holy Gospel of our Savior Jesus Christ according to **Matthew**.

People: **Glory to you, Lord Christ.**

When Jesus saw the crowds, he went up the mountain; and after he sat down, his disciples came to him. Then he began to speak, and taught them, saying:

"Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

"Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted.

"Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth.

"Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled.

"Blessed are the merciful, for they will receive mercy.

"Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God.

"Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God.

"Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

"Blessed are you when people revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account. Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you."

Deacon: The Gospel of the Lord.

People: **Praise to you, Lord Christ.**

## THE SERMON

The Rev. Dr. Gloria Hopewell

# We reaffirm our baptism

*(Please stand after a brief silence.)*

Deacon: Let us on this All Saints Sunday, reaffirm our Baptismal Covenant by which we share a common heritage with all of the “Saints” that have gone before us.

Priest: Do you believe in God the Father?

**People: I believe in God, the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth.**

Priest: Do you believe in Jesus Christ, the Son of God?

**People: 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 to the dead. 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.**

Priest: Do you believe in God the Holy Spirit?

**People: 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.**

Priest: Will you continue in the apostles’ teaching and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in the prayers?

**People: I will, with God’s help.**

Priest: Will you preserve in resisting evil, and, whenever you fall into sin, repent and return to the Lord?

**People: I will, with God’s help.**

Priest: Will you proclaim by word and example the Good News of God in Christ?

**People: I will, with God’s help.**

Priest: Will you seek and serve Christ in all persons, loving your neighbor as yourself?

**People: I will, with God’s help.**

Priest: Will you strive for justice and peace among all people, and respect the dignity of every human being?

**People: I will, with God’s help.**

Presider: We thank you, Almighty God, for the gift of water. Over it the Holy Spirit moved in the beginning of creation. Through it you led the children of Israel out of their bondage in Egypt into the land of promise. In it your Son Jesus received the baptism of John and was anointed by the Holy Spirit as the Messiah, the Christ, to lead us, through his death and resurrection, from the bondage of sin into everlasting life.

We thank you, Father, for the water of Baptism. In it we are buried with Christ in his death. By it we share in his resurrection. Through it we are reborn by the Holy Spirit.

## We remember those who have died

Presider: We turn now to the names of those who have died over the past twelve months. After each name is read and the chime sounds and fades away, let us silently give thanks to God for each of them.

Intercessor: We remember those members and friends of Grace Church, parents and children, siblings and grandparents, spouses, partners.

Joe Baland  
Rik Fjelde  
Peggy Gladys

Judy Harding  
Gary Holtane  
Rune Josefsson

Jessie Linder  
Bradley Mott  
Beatrice Schuh

Now we remember all those other precious souls who no longer walk by our side in this life, yet whose love and example profoundly touched and enriched our lives. As the names are read.....

Earl (Lind), Ruth (Martin), Mary (Medemar), Chuck (Medemar), Jack (Burton),  
Nina (Burton), Earl & Frances (Palmer), Rev. & Emma (Elsbree), John (Benson),  
Dorothy (Benson), Cody (Benson), Ollie & Peggy (Ludescher), Alice (Hannaman),  
Donnie (Beadle), Roger (Liljedahl), Lester (Harbin), Mabel (Ferguson), Lester (Johnson),  
Gustav (Pausz), George (Nelson), Robert (Klaus), Craig (Burton), Kim (Burton),  
Pat & Ray (Grandgeorge), Steve (Kreiser), Murley (Severtson), Judy (Severtson),  
James & Ruth (Coates), Debbie (Schuster), Dwight (Longsworth), Miles & Chuck.  
Robert (Kuntz), Holmes (Martin), Warren (Jackman), Steven (Kreiser), Will (Norton) and  
Anne (Green)

Are there others? \_\_\_\_\_

Presider: Holy God of wind and fire, dance through this room today.  
Holy God of hurricanes, accidents, and illness, share our tears of sadness and pain.  
Holy God of creation and new beginnings, show us again your vision of healing and wholeness.

## We share the peace of Christ

Presider: Having renewed our Baptismal Covenant and remembered those loved ones who have died, let us share the peace of Christ with the saints-in-the-making next to us.  
The peace of Christ be always with you.

People: **And also with you.**

# We share the ministries of the church

## DEDICATION OF VESTMENTS FOR THE LITURGY

Altar Guild: We present to you these Vestments to be set apart for the service of Christ's holy church.

**Antiphon:** **You shall make holy garments for Aaron, for glory and for beauty.**

Presider: Clothe your ministers with righteousness.

**People:** **Let your people sing with joy.**

Presider: Let us pray.

O God, you revealed your Son clothed in majesty and glory:

Accept these vestments for the use of the Deacon of your Church, that, being clothed with humility as they minister to you, they may show forth his eternal splendor; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

*(Stand as able.)*

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

## BIRTHDAYS & ANNIVERSARIES

### ANNIVERSARY/BIRTHDAY BLESSING

Watch over your children, O Lord, as their days increase; bless and guide them wherever they may be. Strengthen them when they stand; comfort them when discouraged or sorrowful; raise them up if they fall; and in their hearts may your peace which passes understanding abide all the days of their lives; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

# The Holy Communion

Presider: Walk in love, as Christ loved us and gave himself for us, an offering and sacrifice to God.

## PRESENTATION HYMN 624

*Jerusalem the Golden*

*Bernard of Cluny & Tr. J. M. Neale/*

*A. Ewing*

*As the hymn is played, and the altar is prepared for Communion, you may reflect on these words:*

Jerusalem the golden, with milk and honey blest,  
Beneath thy contemplation sink heart and voice oppressed:  
I know not, oh, I know not, what joys await us there;  
What radiancy of glory, what bliss beyond compare!

They stand, those halls of Zion, all jubilant with song,  
And bright with many an angel, and all the martyr throng:  
The Prince is ever in them, the daylight is serene;  
The pastures of the blessed are decked in glorious sheen.

There is the throne of David; and there, from care released,  
The shout of them that triumph, the song of them that feast;  
And they who with their Leader have conquered in the fight,  
for ever and for ever are clad in robes of white.

Oh, sweet and blessed country, the home of God's elect!  
Oh, sweet and blessed country that eager hearts expect!  
Jesus, in mercy being us to that dear land of rest,  
Who art, with God the Father, and Spirit, ever blest.

*This celebrated hymn is a very small part of an extraordinary poem of nearly 3,000 lines entitled *De Contemptu Mundi* ('On Contempt of the World') written by Bernard of Cluny. Early in the 12th century he became a monk and entered the great Abbey of Cluny—the largest, wealthiest and most powerful religious establishment in France—and remained there till his death. His poem, written about 1145, is a burning invective against the wickedness, vices and follies of the world. From the distressing spectacle of what he saw around him, he turned his thoughts to the heavenly realm where such evils are banished for ever and God reigns supreme.*

*From this long poem, Dr. Neale made translations of selected passages and published them in 1959.*

## THE GREAT THANKSGIVING

BCP Prayer B\*

Priest: The Lord be with you.

People: **And also with you.**

Priest: Lift up your hearts.

People: **We lift them to the Lord.**

Priest: Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

People: **It is right to give our thanks and praise.**

\*The text of Eucharistic Prayer B is from the expansive text approved by General Conventions Resolution 2018-DO78.

Presider: It is right, and a good and joyful thing, always and everywhere to give thanks to you, Almighty God, Creator of heaven and earth.

For you are the source of light and life, you made us in your image, and called us to new life in Jesus Christ our Lord.

Therefore we praise you, joining our voices with Angels and Archangels and with all the company of heaven, who for ever sing this hymn to proclaim the glory of your Name:

*(Stand or kneel as able.)*

Presider and **People**: Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of power and might,  
Heaven and earth are full of your glory.  
Hosanna in the highest.  
Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord  
Hosanna in the highest.

Presider:

We give thanks to you, O God, for the goodness and love which you have made known to us in creation; in the calling of Israel to be your people; in your Word spoken through the prophets; and above all in Jesus Christ, the Word made flesh.

For in these last days you sent Jesus to be incarnate from the Virgin Mary, to be the Savior and Redeemer of the world. In Christ, you have delivered us from evil, and made us worthy to stand before you. In Christ, you have brought us out of error into truth, out of sin into righteousness, out of death into life.

On the night before he died for us, our Savior Jesus Christ took bread; and when he had given thanks to you, he broke it, and gave it to his disciples, and said, “Take, eat: This is my Body, which is given for you. Do this for the remembrance of me.” After supper Jesus took the cup of wine; and when he had given thanks, he gave it to them, and said, “Drink this, all of you: This is my Blood of the new Covenant, which is shed for you and for many for the forgiveness of sins. Whenever you drink it, do this for the remembrance of me.”

Therefore, according to his command, O Father,

**Presider and People:**

We remember Christ’s death, We proclaim Christ’s resurrection,  
We await Christ’s coming in glory;

Presider: And we offer our sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving to you, O Savior of all; presenting to you, from your creation, this bread and this wine.  
We pray you, gracious God, to send your Holy Spirit upon these gifts that they may be the Sacrament of the Body of Christ and his Blood of the new Covenant. Unite us in the sacrifice of Jesus Christ, through whom we are acceptable to you, being sanctified by the Holy Spirit.

In the fullness of time, put all things in subjection under your Christ, and bring us to that heavenly country where, with all your saints, we may enter the everlasting heritage of your children; through Jesus Christ our Savior, the firstborn of all creation, the head of the Church, and the author of our salvation.

By Christ, and with Christ, and in Christ, in the unity of the Holy Spirit all honor and glory is yours, Almighty God, now and for ever. **Amen.**

Presider: Remember, Lord, your one holy catholic and apostolic Church. Reveal its unity, guard its faith, and preserve it in peace.  
Remember the Anglican Community throughout the world, Justin, Archbishop of Canterbury; Michael, our Presiding Bishop; Jeffrey, our Diocesan Bishop, and all who minister in the Church.

Intercessor: Remember those serving in the military, especially Alex (Meade) and Max (Volkommer); birthdays of \*Nancy (Cook), \*Lynn (Giles) and \*Henry (Anderson); our outreach partners Glory Parish in the Diocese of Renk and La Santa Cruz parish in the Diocese of SE Mexico; the United Thank Offering, the Galena ARC, the United Churches Food Pantry, Episcopal Relief and Development, Shelter Care Ministries, Dubuque Rescue Mission; all who worship in this place and those who have not yet walked through these doors. Others? \_\_\_\_.

Remember all those who are shut-in or ill, especially Susan (Haerle) and Bruce (W.) and all who we remember on our Prayer List. Others? \_\_\_\_.

Presider: And grant that we may find our inheritance with all the saints who have found favor with you in ages past. We praise you in union with them and give you glory through Jesus Christ our Lord.

People: **Amen.**

Presider: As our Savior Christ has taught us, we now pray,

People: **Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your Name, your kingdom come, your will be done, on Earth as in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. Forgive us our sins, as we forgive those who sin against us. Save us from the time of trial, and deliver us from evil. For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours, now and for ever. Amen.**

## FRACTION

Presider: Alleluia! Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us.  
People: **Therefore let us keep the feast. Alleluia!**

Presider: The gifts of God for the people of God.

*All are welcome at the communion table to receive a blessing or the wafer. Please approach the steps to the chancel by the center aisle, as guided by the Vestry Coordinator. Hold your hands crossed, palms up, to receive the wafer. And, if you do not wish to receive the wafer, but desire a blessing, simply approach the priest with your arms crossed across your chest. If you require a gluten-free wafer, please tell the priest. Please return to your seat by the side aisles and wait until you are seated before removing your mask to consume the wafer.*

*For those at home:*

### **PRAYER FOR WHEN WE ARE UNABLE TO SHARE COMMUNION**

In union, O Lord, with your faithful people at every altar of your Church, where the Holy Eucharist is now being celebrated, I desire to offer to you praise and thanksgiving. I remember your death, Lord Christ; I proclaim your resurrection; I await your coming in glory. Since I cannot receive you today in the Sacrament of your Body and Blood, I beseech you to come spiritually into my heart. Cleanse and strengthen me with your grace, Lord Jesus, and let me never be separated from you. May I live in you, and you in me, in this life and in the life to come. ***Amen.***

-- The Prayer Book for the Armed Services

### **COMMUNION MUSIC**

*Erben Organ*

Presider: Let us pray.

**People:** Almighty and everliving God, we thank you for feeding us with the spiritual food of the most precious Body and Blood of your Son our Savior Jesus Christ; and for assuring us in these holy mysteries that we are living members of the Body of Christ, and heirs of your eternal kingdom. And now, send us out to do the work you have given us to do, to love and serve you as faithful witnesses of Christ our Savior. To him, to you, and to the Holy Spirit, be honor and glory, now and for ever. ***Amen.***

### **THE BLESSING**

Presider: May Almighty God, to whose glory we have come together to celebrate on this festival of all the Saints, be now and evermore your guide and companion in the way.

**People:** ***Amen.***

Presider: May God, who has given us in the lives of the saints, patterns of holy living and victorious dying, strengthen your faith and devotion, and enable you to bear witness to the truth against all adversity.

**People:** ***Amen.***

Presider: And the blessing of God Almighty, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, be upon you and remain with you forever.

**People:** ***Amen.***

Deacon: Go forth to love and serve the Lord.

**People:** ***Thanks be to God.***

### **POSTLUDE**

*When the Saints*

*Traditional/Johnston*

***The flowers today are given by Bob Burton.***

## PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

**Prayers are Requested:** *Please include the following concerns during worship today and throughout the week:*

### **Cycle of Prayer:**

The Most Rev. Justin Welby, the Archbishop of Canterbury and for our companion Parishes: Glory Parish in the Diocese of Renk and La Santa Cruz parish in the Diocese of SE Mexico.

### **Diocesan Cycle of Prayer:**

for Michael, our Presiding Bishop, Jeffrey, our Bishop and all members of Grace Church.

### **We pray for those who are sick or in need:**

Havyk (Beauchamp), \*Ruth (Beegle), Barb (Bolsen), Vincent (Bucci), \*Bob (Burton), \*Bill (Calvert), \*Kathy (Doig), Matthew (Dowe), \*Renee (Dowe), \*Al (Elsbree), Mary (English), Keith (Ferguson), Daney (Fitzpatrick), \*Jennie (Fjelde), Martha (Furst), Bev (Getz), Susan (Haerle), \*Barb (Hooper), Howell Family, Ginger (Komiskey), Alden (Kuntz), Verity (Liljedahl), Dave (Luther), \*Diann & \*Robert (Marsh), \*Mary (Nelson), Sarah (Newton), \*Bill (Norton), Maureen (O'Dea), Laurie (Parnau), Lisa (Prindle), Steve (Raiman), David (Schaller), Jason (Schaller), Melody (Serwich), \*Pat (Terry), \*Tom (V.), Mina, Stanley, Don, Heather (H.), David (J.), Kathie (O.) and Bruce (W.).

### **We give thanks for the many blessings we have received:**

Max (Vollkommer) and Matthew (Morel) serving in the military: the birthdays of \*Nancy (Cook), \*Lynn (Giles) and \*Henry (Anderson); our Outreach partners: the United Thank Offering, the Galena ARC, the United Churches Food Pantry, Episcopal Relief and Development, Shelter Care Ministries, Dubuque Rescue Mission and all who worship in this place and those who have not yet walked through these doors.

### **We pray for those who have died, especially Tim (Nichols), and the anniversary of the deaths of: Holmes (Martin), Warren (Jackman), Steven (Kreiser), Will (Norton) and Anne (Green).**

## ANNOUNCEMENTS for November 1, 2020

### **Today at 3:00pm CST**

“Holding onto Hope: A National Service for Healing and Wholeness” at Washington National Cathedral. Live streamed on our Episcopal Church and Cathedral’s websites and Facebook page.

### **Season of Prayer: For an Election**

Brief evening worship on Zoom at 5:00pm daily through November 4th. Grace Clergy officiate.

### **Zoom Poetry Meeting**

A Zoom Poetry group is meeting on Mondays at 2:00pm. If you are interested, write Carol Poston at [poston@sxu.edu](mailto:poston@sxu.edu) or call her at 815-777-0220 to receive the link to the meeting.

### **Mid-Week Eucharist** is this Wednesday, November 4th, at 7:30am in the church and online.

### **Wednesday Morning Study Group** is Wednesday, November 4th, at 10:30am online.

**Meditative Prayer** meets Friday, November 6th, at 9:00am online. You are welcome to join, and gentle guidance will be provided for those unfamiliar with this practice.

**SCRIPTURE READINGS**  
*for Sunday, November 8, 2020*  
**Pentecost 23**

Joshua 24:1-3a, 14-25   1 Thessalonians 4:13-18  
Psalm 78:1-7              Matthew 25:1-13



**grace episcopal church**  
**galena, illinois**

The Rt. Rev. Jeffrey Lee, Bishop of Chicago  
The Very Rev. Gloria G. Hopewell, D. Min., Rector  
The Rev. Linda Packard, Priest Associate  
The Rev. Diane Luther, Deacon  
Nancy Kenney, Parish Administrator

**Vestry**

Greg Serwich   Sr. Warden  
Richard Luther   Treasurer

Lynn Giles   Jr. Warden  
Diann Marsh   Clerk

Anita Sands (2018-21)   Tony Packard (2018-21)   Charlotte Stryker (2019-22)  
Elizabeth Ludescher (2019-22)   Nancy Cook (2020-23)   Eric Kallback (2020-23)

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## All Saints Day

# *Lives shaped by The Beatitudes*

BY MARY MACGREGOR



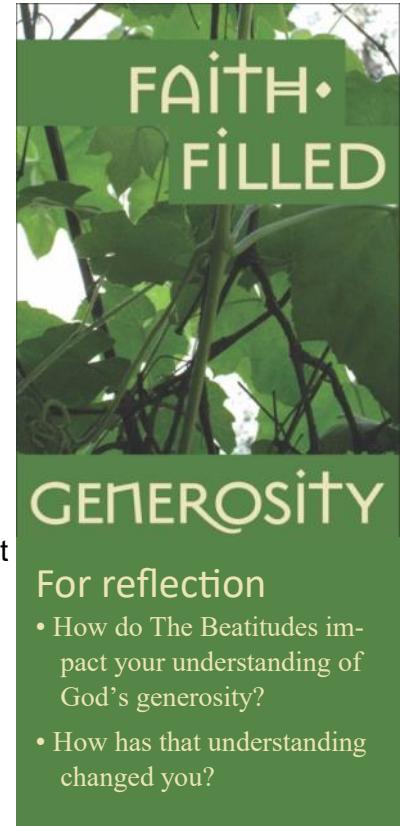
Today's Gospel recalls Jesus' sermon on the mount, commonly referred to as The Beatitudes. In his usual manner, Jesus surprised his followers by uttering godly, countercultural truth. In essence, his teaching that day laid the foundation for what it means to live a Christian life.

What does it mean to be merciful, pure in heart, meek, poor in spirit, mournful, to be a peacemaker, to hunger and thirst for righteousness and be willing to be persecuted for it? The Beatitudes are a guide that, when studied, reveal layers of meaning for us as believers. They challenge many of our basic human desires and behaviors. Of ultimate importance, they clearly reveal what God seeks to bless.

Aren't we fortunate that our God is forgiving and full of grace as we strive to be transformed by these teachings? Our journey of formation requires change and opening our eyes to see God in action all around us. Included in this change is seeing God's endless blessings poured out upon us and developing a posture of gratitude in return.

Being thankful changes us for the better. Being thankful changes our perspective on life and can profoundly impact our understanding of God's generosity. Being thankful can shape us to be stewards of all God has entrusted to us. Being thankful softens our fears. Being thankful turns fear of scarcity into joyful gratitude for God's abundance.

We remember the saints who have gone before us on this All Saints Day. Some were revered as saints of old. Some were modern day saints. Some were simple folks like you and me. One distinguishing characteristic of saints is that we can see how they embodied and lived Jesus' teachings, these very Beatitudes. They generously gave of their lives so much so that we remember them today. We are confident they were blessed by God for their faithfulness. May we be thankful for their witness and see in them lives shaped by The Beatitudes and be willing to do the same.



### For reflection

- How do The Beatitudes impact your understanding of God's generosity?
- How has that understanding changed you?

*Canon Mary MacGregor is a member of the board of The Episcopal Network for Stewardship. She has been deeply involved in congregational development for over 25 years, and served as Canon for Congregational Vitality and Mission Amplification for the Diocese of Texas.*

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