



A SERVICE FOR
ALL SAINTS

You Were
Their **ROCK**

LEADER'S GUIDE

You Were Their ROCK

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About the Service

The title of this festive celebration of All Saints comes from the second verse of the great All Saints hymn “For All the Saints,” which serves as the anchor for the responsive opening litany. Other hymns include “The Church’s One Foundation,” and a new creedal hymn to the tune “How Firm A Foundation.” The sermon study (included) focuses on the common foundation all of God’s Saints (both living and dead) share—the solid foundation of Christ, the Word.

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Newsletter/Bulletin Notices

Newsletter Notice

Join us for a very special All Saints service entitled “You Were Their Rock.” Drawing from a phrase from the beloved hymn, “For All the Saints,” this worship experience highlights the Rock of our salvation, our Lord Jesus, who is the foundation upon whom all of God’s saints, living and dead, are firmly grounded. A ceremony recognizing the names of all those in the parish who passed away in the past year will be part of the service, along with thematic hymns and prayers.

Bulletin Notice

Today in worship celebrating All Saints Day we proclaim to the Lord, “You Were Their Rock.”

Drawing from a phrase from the beloved hymn, “For All the Saints,” this worship experience highlights the Rock of our salvation, our Lord Jesus, who is the foundation upon whom all of God’s saints, living and dead, are firmly grounded. Let the ceremony recognizing the names of all those in the parish who passed away in the past year and the thematic hymns and prayers in this service remind you that our Lord’s everlasting promise to love and care for us always is forever set in stone.

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Complete Script For Worship Leaders

- If desired, an **Environmental Projection** is shown on a screen or on the walls of your worship space to set the tone for the service before the service begins or throughout the service at various points:

<https://www.shutterstock.com/image-photo/cross-on-rock-72176794?src=2knR-uYTHya-lKiiUqi-gQ-1-9>

- The **Rite of Remembrance** is spoken responsively by the pastor and the congregation with verses being sung by the congregation to the tune Sine Nomine 10 10 10 and alleluias:

For all the saints who from their labors rest,
All who by faith before the world confessed,
Your name, O Jesus, be forever blest. Alleluia! Alleluia!

You were their rock, their fortress, and their might;
You, Lord, their captain in the well-fought fight;
You, in the darkness drear, their one true light. Alleluia! Alleluia!

P For God alone my soul waits in silence, from him comes my salvation.

C **He alone is my rock and my salvation, my fortress. I shall never be shaken.**

P For God alone my soul waits in silence; for my hope is in him.

C **He alone is my rock and my salvation, my fortress. I shall never be shaken.**

P From the depths of the earth you bring me up again, O God, for you are my rock and my fortress.

Oh, may your soldiers, faithful, true, and bold,
Fight as the saints who nobly fought of old
And win with them the victor's crown of gold. Alleluia! Alleluia!

P Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the source of all mercy and the God of all consolation.

C **He comforts us in all our sorrows so that we can comfort others in their sorrows with the consolation we ourselves have received from God.**

P Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also run with perseverance the race that is set before us, looking to Jesus, on whom our faith depends from beginning to end.

Oh, blest communion, fellowship divine,
We feebly struggle, they in glory shine;
Yet all are one within your great design. Alleluia! Alleluia!

P Let us pray. Almighty God, those who die in the Lord still live with you in joy and blessedness.

C **We give you heartfelt thanks for the grace you have bestowed upon your servants who have finished their course in faith and now rest from their labors.**

(The names of those who have died in the past year are spoken before the Lord.)

P Into your hands we commend them, O merciful Savior, the sheep of your own fold, lambs of your own flock, sinners of your own redeeming.

C **Rest eternal grant to them, O Lord, and let light perpetual shine upon them.**

The golden evening brightens in the west;
Soon, soon to faithful warriors comes their rest;
Sweet is the calm of paradise the blest. Alleluia! Alleluia!

- The **Prayer of the Day** is spoken by the pastor or other worship leader:

Ⓟ O Christ, we thank you for being the Rock of our salvation from generation to generation. Keep us firm in our faith. Plant our feet on the solid foundation of faith in you. Let us continue to share your sure Word with those around us and bind us as one as members of your family with the saints here on earth and those in heaven. Fill us with great confidence in you and your promise to carry us through from this life to the next, where we will celebrate around your throne with all the saints in light. Amen.

- The **First Lesson**, Revelation 7:9-17, is spoken by the pastor or other worship leader:

Ⓟ After this I looked, and behold, a great multitude that no one could number, from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed in white robes, with palm branches in their hands, and crying out with a loud voice, “Salvation belongs to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb!” And all the angels were standing around the throne and around the elders and the four living creatures, and they fell on their faces before the throne and worshiped God, saying, “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, clothed in white robes, and from where have they come?” I said to him, “Sir, you know.” And he said to me, “These are the ones coming out of the great tribulation. They have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. “Therefore they are before the throne of God, and serve him day and night in his temple; and he who sits on the throne will shelter them with his presence. They shall hunger no more, neither thirst anymore; the sun shall not strike them, nor any scorching heat. For the Lamb in the midst of the throne will be their shepherd, and he will guide them to springs of living water, and God will wipe away every tear from their eyes.”

- The **Psalmic Response** is sung by the congregation to the tune St. Anne CM:

Come, let us join our cheerful songs with angels round the throne;
Ten thousand thousand are their tongues, but all their joys are one.

“Worthy the Lamb that died,” they cry, “to be exalted thus!”

“Worthy the Lamb,” our lips reply, “For he was slain for us!”

- The **Children’s Message** is delivered by the pastor or other worship leader:

Needed: a marshmallow and a rock

Ⓟ Today we celebrate All Saints Day. We remember those who have died in the faith, the saints above, and we remember those who live by faith, the saints here on earth. That’s you and me and all of us here. What the saints in heaven and those on earth have in common is the Rock of

our salvation, Jesus. He is the solid foundation on which we stand and upon which we build our lives.

To help you see what I mean I have brought two things with me: a marshmallow and a rock. (*Hold up the marshmallow.*) Imagine that I was standing on a floor made of marshmallows like this. What would happen? (*Allow children to respond.*) You would sink down. You would fall over. You wouldn't be able to stand up straight. This is what it is like when we build our lives on something that are not Jesus, things like money and being popular and our own accomplishments. These are things that can come and go and will not last in the long run and will leave you feeling unsteady and unstable in the end.

(*Hold up rock.*) Now what would happen if you were standing on a floor made entirely of one big rock like this. (*Allow the children to respond.*) You would stand firm. You would not fall over. You would have solid footing. This is what it is like when we build our lives on Jesus. He will never let us stumble. He will make sure we are safe. He will make us confident to walk forward from this life through death, when that time comes, and to the life in heaven that awaits all the saints of God.

All the saints of God stand on the Rock of Christ, who suffered and died for our sins on the cross so that we would have a rock-solid standing in the eyes of God as his forgiven sons and daughters.

The next time you take a walk, find a rock to put on your dresser or bedside table to remind you that Jesus is the Rock of your salvation and you are a saint of God because of him.

- The **Second Lesson**, 1 John 3:1-3, is spoken by the pastor or other worship leader:
 - See what kind of love the Father has given to us, that we should be called children of God; and so we are. The reason why the world does not know us is that it did not know him. Beloved, we are God's children now, and what we will be has not yet appeared; but we know that when he appears we shall be like him, because we shall see him as he is. And everyone who thus hopes in him purifies himself as he is pure.
- The **Alleluia Verse** is sung by the congregation to the tune Tallis' Canon LM:

Alleluia! Let praise ascend
To God, whose mercies know no end.
What firm foundation undergirds
All those who build on Christ's sure words.

- The **Gospel Lesson**, Matthew 5:1-12, is spoken by the pastor or other worship leader:

Ⓟ Seeing the crowds, he went up on the mountain, and when he sat down, his disciples came to him. And he opened his mouth and taught them, saying: “Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted. Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth. Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied. Blessed are the merciful, for they shall receive mercy. Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God. Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God. Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are you when others 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 so they persecuted the prophets who were before you.”

- The **Gospel Response** is sung by the congregation to the tune Tallis' Canon LM:

Built on the rock by Christ's own hand,
The Church of God unmoved shall stand,
For Christ, who is the cornerstone,
Has claimed his saints to be his own.

- The **Homily** is delivered by the pastor:

Ⓟ Today as we remember the saints—our own dear loved ones who have been called into the presence of the Lord, as well as that vast multitude of believers in Christ from all locations and all centuries—how do you picture them? How do you picture them all ... together?

A large stadium? Probably not nearly big enough ... and maybe not active enough either, with everyone sitting, confined to an assigned place. The saints should probably be pictured on the move ... together ... like in “Onward, Christian Soldiers” or “Lead On, O King Eternal.”

But on the move to where? Today's First Lesson from the book of Revelation gave us a picture of the saints moving toward the throne of God, clothed in white robes and with palm branches in their hands. There was a sense of movement there, you may have noticed: “These are the ones who have come out of the great [depending on which translation you use] ordeal/tribulation.” It's almost as if now they are finally above all that ... and as if that is the direction they (and we, too, of course) have been moving all the time—“above all that.”

That's a picture we can expand, if we wish, by employing a phrase from one of the most popular All Saints' hymns—a phrase we sang at the beginning of this service; the phrase that serves as the title for today's worship service: YOU WERE THEIR ROCK.

“Their Rock.” Jesus speaks of “building on the rock,” to be sure. In fact, the Sermon on the

Mount, which begins with the Beatitudes that are our Gospel reading for today, ends with Jesus saying just that: “Everyone then who hears these words of mine and acts on them will be like a wise man who built his house on the rock.” He goes on to describe “the great tribulation/ordeal” swirling around that rock: “The rain fell, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on the house, but it did not fall, because it had been founded on rock.” If you picture that rock big enough, you can almost picture the swirling floods as being well beneath its level. That’s why the inhabitants of the house are safe—they are above it all.

Now picture the saints, “all the saints” making their way to such a rock. “YOU WERE THEIR ROCK,” the hymn intones. Picture the saints moving in a steady stream to get to the top of it, where it is safe. They are leading one another, and helping one another where needed, the stronger ones carrying the very young and the very old as the storm swirls beneath them. They are moving together to get “out of the great tribulation/ordeal,” above it all, to find safety on the rock. And who are they? They are the poor in spirit, those who mourn, the meek, those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, the merciful, the pure in heart, the peacemakers, those who have been persecuted for righteousness’ sake. They are the children of God (as the Second Lesson describes us) on their way to discovering at last “what we shall be.”

It would have to be a pretty big rock, wouldn’t it? Big enough to hold all the saints. Perhaps the picture we are looking for here is more like .. well, a big butte like those in the western part of the country ... or, better yet, a MESA. Can you picture that? A large, high mountain that is flat on top, big enough to hold a crowd ... big enough at last “for all the saints.” YOU WERE THEIR ROCK,” the hymn intones—like a mighty mesa, the Rock of our salvation, the Church’s one foundation.

All this is possible, of course, because Jesus Christ himself was once lifted up on a rock, a skull-shaped rock outside Jerusalem—not above the fray (as we shall be someday) but a part of it, finally experiencing it all. Picture all those saints again, all taking their sins (our sins) and hurling them at Jesus there on the cross, like rocks, designed to stone him to death.

Like the rock that indeed he is, Christ took them all, endured them all, and finally died for them all. And then was laid within a rock-hewn tomb ... which, next to the empty cross itself, has become the chief symbol of our redemption. It is the source of our sainthood—for it is the tomb from which he was raised on the third day.

Okay, picture yourself, even now, taking your place with all the saints—with us here in this room today, with those who have worshiped here in the past, with the recently departed loved ones we name before the Lord this day, with your ancestors going back beyond your reckoning into history with the famous saints of ancient times (people who have churches named after them, and books of the Bible), and unknown saints as well, that “vast multitude which no one can number.” They are the poor in spirit, the meek, the merciful, the pure in heart, the peacemakers, those persecuted for righteousness’ sake, those who hunger and thirst

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Music Guide

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- The **Closing Hymn** is sung by the congregation to the tune Aurelia 76 76 D:

The Church's one foundation is Jesus Christ her Lord;
She is his new creation by water and the Word.
From heav'n he came and sought her to be his holy bride;
With his own blood he bought her, and for her life he died.

Elect from ev'ry nation, yet one o'er all the earth,
Her charter of salvation: one Lord, one faith, one birth.
One holy name she blesses, partakes one holy food,
And to one hope she presses with ev'ry grace endued.

Through toil and tribulation and tumult of her war,
She waits the consummation of peace forevermore;
Till with the vision glorious her longing eyes are blest,
And the great Church victorious shall be the Church at rest.

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