

Christ the Lord Episcopal Church - Pinole, CA

The Twenty-fourth Sunday after Pentecost: November 7, 2021

Celebration of All Saints

Good morning, and again welcome to anyone new, and welcome to those returning after a long, imposed quarantine for COVID safety. I want to thank you for being patient today as we adjust to in-person worship with new safety measures in place. I also want you to know that you may be feeling any combination of elation or grief, and anywhere in between as we are blessed and grateful to gather, but remember those we have lost, and the lifestyle before the pandemic.

I do want to reflect briefly on today's Gospel, and then we will move on to remembrance.

Jesus observes his friends weeping. Then Jesus begins to weep. Jesus does not excuse the emotions, or wave them away, already knowing he would raise Lazarus from the dead. Jesus also knew that eventually Lazarus would die, just as we all have to, and just like the thief who was crucified next to Jesus – Lazarus, Jesus' friend, will see him again in paradise.

Yet Jesus weeps. Why? Jesus knows the end of the story, that God already has this, yet he weeps. Jesus knows the Glory of God, and yet he weeps. This I believe is confirmation that God understands our grief and struggle, and he feels our disillusionment with the world. He is merciful as we move forward spiritually toward the Christ life, our main purpose for being on earth.

In this Gospel Jesus weeps, and then he works -- through prayer -- and Lazarus joins the living once again. Today we may feel some grief, some sadness. Today we honor those emotions, as Jesus honored those mourners with Lazarus.

But we are also reminded that those who have gone before us have paved a way for those left behind in various ways. They join in spirit with Jesus and all who have gone before. And those Saints whether formal or not, just like Jesus, they wept, they prayed, they worked, and touched our lives. We are called to honor those who have gone before through the work of our lives and the grace given to us, so we may be grace to another.

So here we are, we will begin by honoring those here at the altar or who we name by getting a light. If there was a loss other than a person, we also honor pets, and the grief of sorrowful situations. I will then call the names on our formal list and then we will pray. We begin weeping, we will pray, and will end celebrating. We will unbind all that holds us back, and let it go. Amen