



# 5 From Every Tribe

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ALL SAINTS SUNDAY, YEAR A

All Saints Sunday can be a glorious celebration of the body of Christ in your local context. There is no church like yours, no collection of gifts and graces, no accumulation of wisdom and experience, no place of joy and sorrow exactly like your congregation. This is a time to celebrate who you are in Christ.

## REFERENCES

Joshua 3:7-17

Psalm 107:1-7, 33-37

1 Thessalonians 2:9-13

Matthew 23:1-12

## COLORS

White

All Saints Day is observed on November 1, after All Hallows Eve. But most of us celebrate it on the first Sunday in November. We chose the texts assigned to All Saints Day rather than those assigned to this Sunday, the Twenty-Third Sunday after Pentecost. This observance is worth taking the time in worship to give thanks and honor the saints of the church.

**The founder of the Methodist movement, John Wesley, loved All Saints Day.** So, we suggest you take this day and let it stand alone as a celebration of the church that was, the church that is, and the church that will be.

You have traditions, no doubt, with which you observe this day. There are those from among you who need to be acknowledged, to be remembered. And yes, there is grief in the recognition

of death, but there is also joy in the promise of eternity and the gratitude for the legacy that remains. On this day, we proclaim that we are who we are because of those who have gone before. But we also give thanks for the saints who are still with us; today is a celebration of the life and ministry of the church. We also hold out hope for the vision of the church to be, the church of every nation, all tribes and peoples. It is a celebration of community.

## PLANNING NOTES

All Saints Sunday can be a glorious celebration of the body of Christ in your local context. There is no church like yours, no collection of gifts and graces, no accumulation of wisdom and experience, no place of joy and sorrow exactly like your congregation. This is a time to celebrate who you are in Christ.

Certainly, a major part of the worship experience is the remembrance of those who died in the past year. Some way of naming is important. Pictures, if they are available, can be displayed. Stories can be told, and families and legacies honored. There can also be an opportunity for remembering those who may have been gone longer than a year as a way of giving thanks for their contributions to the church that you are continually becoming. In so doing, you are not only recognizing and celebrating the church that was, but you are also acknowledging and giving thanks for the church you are and are becoming.

You can, on this All Saints Sunday, say thank you to the saints sitting in the pews, the ones teaching in the Sunday school or preparing the meals or snacks for after church. This is a wonderful day to thank those who have gone before and those who continue to labor in the fields of the Lord.

The other encouragement we want to give for your worship today comes from a phrase in Revelation 7:9: "From every nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages." Today is a great day for recognizing the multicolored, multiethnic, multinational nature of the church of Jesus Christ. There is diversity of various kinds in our local congregations, but the diversity enlarges when we remember that there are brothers and sisters around the world who are part of the body that gives us our identity and our hope. We celebrate the church we may never see but with whom we worship week after week. Today, we acknowledge the glory of a worldwide church.

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