

This document is from [the website of Rev. Allyson Sawtell](#),

Not Ordinary Church

Please see the [copyright page](#) for guidance on using and sharing website resources.

All Saints Day

Allyson Sawtell, 2/21/21

I haven't actually done this ritual anywhere yet. It could work on Zoom pretty well, as well as in person. If on Zoom, someone could make a list of the names people call out, then post them on the screen, or email them out later to the congregation, as a way to remember. And people could light their own candles at home and hold them up to the screen. All Saints Day, as you probably already know, takes place in the autumn, around the time of Dia de Los Muertos and Halloween.

Lighting the candles and naming our saints

Ritual leader lights a candle (a large pillar candle would work best), talks about their favorite saints. "Saints" is anyone (including critters) who brings us closer to what's Holy, to God, who leads/led a life of exemplary and embodied love. They don't have to be officially canonized or Christian.

Leader encourages folks to call out (or write in "Chat") the names of their favorite saints. Leader or another participant needs to write those names down.

Time of reflection, gratitude, and music

Take a few moments of silent reflecting, giving thanks for the saints in our lives, in our world. Have quiet instrumental music playing (maybe a slow and quiet version of "I Sing a Song of the Saints of God"). Silence is hard anytime, but especially on Zoom. Consider having a few slides of people, or something like that to be shown during this time. Perhaps slides of your church folks.

Reading – a few choices here:

Hebrew 12:1-2

A poem, such as "All Saints Day below; you could make your own list in the paragraph of names

© Allyson Sawtell 2021

All Saints Day

These are my saints, whom I honor but do not worship.

These are my saints, made holy as much by their ordinary
imperfections as by their prophetic lives of love and justice:

Sojourner Truth Fannie Lou Hamer Dolores Huerta Angela Davis Audre Lorde
Malala Yousafzai Evelyn Martinez Youth of Our Children's Trust Brer Rabbit and Jonny 5
Vincent Harding Nancy Rosas Rosa Parks Horace Seldon Nelson Mandela Pam Clifton
Wangari Maathai Pete Seeger Adriana del Mar Rondón Rivero Greta Thunberg Dorothy Day

And there are more. And there will be more. Why should my heart be sad?

Names known to the world – to some – to a few.

No elegant porcelain saints of cosmetic grace, these. More likely of chipped plaster on a crowded shelf, lovingly adorned with plastic flowers and old candles. Certainly more real. Marginalized. Mainstream. Adored. Hunted. All, voices refusing to be silent.

They set the standard,
some simply by living, some by taking on the powerful.
All, by fighting with what they had and who they were

They fought the fight. They keep on fighting.

They are ancestors. They are contemporaries.

They are a movement.

Braving razor-wire borders of hate and greed that would divide and destroy,
they face the wall of despair and stumble over to the other side
and hold out a hand to the rest of us.

And there are more. And there will be more. Why should my heart be sad?

They remind us we're in it for the long haul –
With every choice
With every word
With every step

They witness through:
art tears pain
song dance writing
organizing fighting for the children
marching speaking leading
tearing down and building up
in prisons houses of worship
groves of trees school buses and city buses streets
barren countryside classrooms courthouses
stages halls of power soup kitchens

And they hold out a hand to the rest of you.

Anointing and Blessing

This can happen any number of ways:

- I like the idea of people anointing each other – have small dishes of oil on hand (end of each pew, or at the main Communion table or altar), and people anoint the one next to them, on the forehead or hand (ask permission and allow folks to pass if they are uncomfortable), offering words of comfort, blessing, gratitude, as they “run the race”, assurance that they are surrounded by a great “cloud of witnesses” – words like that. This is obviously to be done once congregations can safely regather in person. On Zoom, households can anoint members; if there's one person in the household, they can anoint themselves, and affirm and bless themselves, or, they can bless in absentia someone not there in person by saying their name. During this time, make sure everyone is on mute (although you might prefer to hear the chaos of all the voices raised in blessing). Once

the anointing is done, the worship leader says words of blessing to the entire congregation.

- Or, people could come forward to the Communion Table/altar, and the worship leader and helpers (if it's a large group) anoint folks as they come forward. Music can be played during this time, too. Again, this is for post-Zoom times.

Close with a song



This document is shared under the terms of [a Creative Commons license](#), which allows reusers to copy and distribute the material in any medium or format in unadapted form only, for noncommercial purposes only, and only so long as attribution is given to the creator. You may contact Rev. Allyson Sawtell at Allyson@RevSawtell.org