



Second

CHRISTIAN REFORMED CHURCH

“The Prayers of the Saints” Sermon Series **September 13 - November 22**

From Labor Day until Advent, we will be spending time with poems and prayers written and prayed by some of the faithful who have gone before us.

Through these prayers, we can situate ourselves, in our present moment with our present anxieties, in the expanse of time, the tradition of Christian faith. We can let those who have gone before us witness to the faithfulness of God through their prayers.

September 13 - “Easter Wings” by George Herbert, died 1633

Lord, who createdst man in wealth and store,
Though foolishly he lost the same,
Decaying more and more,
Till he became
Most poor:
With thee
O Let me rise
As larks, harmoniously,
And sing this day thy victories:
Then shall the fall further the flight in me.

Sermon scripture: [Romans 6:1-14](#)

September 20 - "Pied Beauty" by Gerard Manley Hopkins, died 1889

Glory be to God for dappled things -
For skies of couple-colour as a brindled cow;
For rose-moles all in stipple upon trout that swim;
Fresh-firecoal chestnut-falls; finches' wings;
Landscape plotted and pieced - fold, fallow, and plough;
And áll trádes, their gear and tackle and trim.

All things counter, original, spare, strange;
Whatever is fickle, freckled (who knows how?)
With swift, slow; sweet, sour; adazzle, dim;
He fathers-forth whose beauty is past change:
Praise him.

Sermon scripture: Psalm 148

September 27 - "Dark Night" by John Donne, died 1631

O eternal and most gracious God, even though you created darkness before light in Creation, you so multiplied that light that it illuminated the day and the night. Though you have permitted some clouds of sadness to darken my soul, I humbly bless and glorify your holy name, for you have permitted me the light of the Spirit, against which the prince of darkness cannot prevail nor hinder the illumination of our darkest nights or saddest thoughts.

Sermon Scripture: 2 Corinthians 4

October 4 - "Out of the Deep" by Christina Rossetti, died 1894

Have mercy, Thou my God; mercy, my God;
For I can hardly bear life day by day:
Be here or there I fret myself away:
Lo for Thy staff I have but felt Thy rod
Along this tedious desert path long trod.
When will thy judgment judge me, Yea or Nay?
I pray for grace; but then my sins unpray
My prayer: on holy ground I fool stand shod.
While still Thou haunts't me, faint upon the cross,
A sorrow beyond sorrow in Thy look,
Unutterable craving for my soul.
All faithful Thou, Lord: I, not Thou, forsook
Myself; I traitor slunk back from the goal:
Lord, I repent; help Thou my helpless loss.

Sermon Scripture: [Jonah 2](#)

October 11 - "The Thief" by St. Ephrem, died 373

The thief gained the faith which gained him,
and brought him up and placed him in paradise.
He saw in the Cross a tree of life;
That was the fruit,
he was the eater in Adam's stead.

This poem is an excerpt from a longer piece, "Hymn IV" from The Pearl: Seven Hymns of the Faith.

Sermon Scripture: [1 Cor. 15:20-28](#); [Luke 23:32-43](#)

October 18 - "Morning Prayer" by St. Gregory of Nazianzus, died 390

The morning breaks, I place my hand in Thine,
My God, 'tis Thine to lead, to follow mine.

Sermon Scripture: Proverbs 3:1-6; Psalm 37

October 25 - "Suscipe" (Receive) by St. Ignatius of Loyola, died 1556

Take, Lord,
receive all my liberty, my memory,
my understanding, my whole will,
all that I have and all that I possess.

You gave it all to me, Lord; I give it all back to you.
Do with it as you will, according to your good pleasure.

Give me your love and your grace;
for with this I have all that I need.

Sermon Scripture:

November 1 - "The Foolishness of God" by Luci Shaw, born 1928

Perform impossibilities
or perish. Thrust out now
the unseasonal ripe figs
among your leaves. Expect
the mountain to be moved.
Hate parents, friends and all
materiality. Love every enemy.
Forgive more times than seventy-
seven. Camel-like, squeeze by
into the kingdom through
the needle's eye. All fear quell.
Hack off your hand, or else
unbloodied, go to hell.

Thus the divine unreason.
Despairing now, you cry
with earthy logic - How?
And I, your God, reply:
Leap from your weedy shallows.
Dive into the moving water.
Eyeless, learn to see
truly. Find in my folly your
true sanity. Then Spirit-driven,
run on my narrow way, sure
as a child. Probe, hold
my unhealed hand, and
bloody, enter heaven.

Sermon Scripture: Mark 11:12-14, 20-25

November 8 - "Let Nothing Disturb You" by St. Teresa of Avila, died 1582

Let nothing disturb you,
Let nothing frighten you,
All things are passing away:
God never changes.
Patience obtains all things
Whoever has God lacks nothing;
God alone suffices.

Sermon Scripture: [Philippians 4](#); [Matthew 6](#)

November 15 - "Easter Wings" part 2 by George Herbert, died 1633

My tender age in sorrow did begin:
And still with sicknesses and shame
Thou didst so punish sin,
That I became
Most thin.
With thee
Let me combine,
And feel this day thy victory:
For, if I imp my wing on thine,
Affliction shall advance the flight in me.

Sermon Scripture: [Philippians 3:1-14](#)

November 22 - "All Shall Be Well" by St. Julian of Norwich, died ~1416

'Sin is behovely, but
all shall be well,
and all manner of things shall be well.'

Sermon Scripture: [1 Peter 1:3-9](#)