

In case you need last-minute suggestions...

Some Suggestions for Blending All Saints' Sunday and the First Sunday of Expanded Advent –
November 6, 2011

What such a service would look like will, of course, depend upon denomination and local custom. The suggestions below reflect my own ecclesial context (a US Episcopal parish that follows the Revised Common Lectionary), but it is my hope that they are easily adapted, particularly in the more “Free Church” traditions. Please also note that in the Episcopal Church, the Feast of All Saints/All Saints' Sunday is a principal feast of the liturgical year and a baptismal feast. This is not a full service outline; I only include the parts of the service for which I have suggestions.

-Jill Comings

Hymns – Your congregation may have favorite All Saints' Day hymns, but you might also consider using “Lo, he comes with clouds descending” and/or “Sleepers, awake,” two hymns appropriate for Advent that also mention the saints. The closing hymn should probably be a hymn echoing the eschatological themes of Advent. Please also see the hymn suggestions on our Resources page.

Collect of the Day – The collect for All Saints' Day

Scripture Lessons – those appointed by the RCL for All Saints:

Revelation 7:9-17
Ps. 34:1-10, 22
1 John 3:1-3
Matthew 5:1-12

Sermon – the obvious place to bring the themes of the two strands together – in communion with the great cloud of witnesses, we, too, are called to participate in the full manifestation of God's reign of peace and justice.

Baptism or Renewal of Baptismal Covenant would be appropriate on this day.

Prayers of the People – almost any form could be adapted to include both strands, including the form that appears on our Resources page. The following form is only one such adaptation.[\[1\]](#) I have included a place for the reading of the names of those who have died in the past year, which is a tradition in many congregations.

In joyful anticipation of the coming of Christ, let us join with all the saints and all of creation as we pray for the church and for the world. During the course of the silence after each bidding, please add your own prayers of petition and thanksgiving, either silently or aloud.

O Wisdom from the Most High, you order all things and show us the path of knowledge. We pray for your people throughout the world; for our Presiding Bishop/Primate _____, our Bishop _____, our Rector/Pastor _____, for this gathering and for all ministers and people, that we may be faithful ministers of your word and sacraments. [In the Anglican Cycle of Prayer we pray for _____. In the Diocesan Cycle of Prayer we pray for _____.]

[Silence]

We await your coming,

Come and teach us the way of wisdom, O Lord.

O Root of Jesse, you stand as a sign among the peoples and before you the nations fall silent in prayer. We pray for _____, our President, for _____, our Governor; and for all in authority in our country, that they may make wise and responsible choices and that they may lead us to honor one another and serve the common good.

[Silence]

We await your coming,

Come and deliver us, O Lord.

O Prince of Peace, you unite the hearts of all humanity and bid our divisions cease. We pray for the leaders of all the nations, that wars may cease and a spirit of mutual trust, interdependence, and forbearance may grow among the peoples. Be present to all whose lives are ravaged by war and strife and to all who serve their country abroad.

[Silence]

We await your coming,

Come and save the human race, O Lord.

O Emmanuel, you are God-with-us, Expected One and Savior of the nations. We pray for this community, that we may have the grace to do your will in all that we undertake. We give thanks for all the blessings of this life and especially for all those who celebrate birthdays and anniversaries this week: _____. Make each of us ready to receive you into our hearts, to serve you in all whom we meet, and to greet you in the fullness of your glory in the day of your appearing.

[Silence]

We await your coming,

Come and save us, O Lord.

O Key of David, you open the way to healing and close the way to misery. We lift up all who are suffering and in need, especially _____. Tend the sick, give rest to the weary, bless the dying, soothe the suffering, pity the afflicted, shield the joyous and help us minister to them in your love.

[Silence]

We await your coming,

Come and heal us, O Lord.

O Dayspring from on high, radiance of light eternal and sun of righteousness, you put death's dark shadow to flight. Shine your light on those who have died and comfort those who mourn, especially _____.

[Silence]

We remember especially those who have died during this past year: _____-

We await your coming,

Come and comfort us, O Lord.

O Lord of justice, liberator of captives, you bring good news to the oppressed and bind up the brokenhearted. Help us to remember and care for the poor, the marginalized, those who suffer under oppressive rule and those in prison.

[Silence]

We await your coming,

Come and lead us in the ways of justice, compassion and peace, O Lord.

Closing Collect – the “Scripture” prayer for All Saints’ Day provided by the RCL would work very well here: [Click Here For Link](#).

Eucharistic Prayer – Prayer C from the *Book of Common Prayer* or Prayer 2 or Prayer 3 from *Enriching Our Worship* fit particularly well, particularly the last, which mentions “Wisdom from on high”....

Proper Preface, if one is required – the Preface for All Saints works well.

I have not recommended a spot for an Advent Wreath ceremony, because no “ideal” spot leaps out at me. On this day, you might consider having the first candle lit from the beginning of the service, with no accompanying ceremony. If a ceremony is desired, perhaps it might happen as a lead-in to the sermon, between the sermon and the baptism/baptismal covenant renewal or at the end of mid-service announcements.

[\[1\]](#) This form was adapted by Benjamin and Jill Comings for use at St. John’s Episcopal Church, Boonton, NJ during Advent 2009. Clearly and coincidentally the original form was the same one used by Very Rev. Dr. Petersen to frame the form that appears elsewhere on this website. His version rearranges the O Antiphons to work with our proposed sequence of themes for the seven weeks of Advent. This version could also be so rearranged if used throughout the season.