

Stephen R. Shaver

Episcopal Church of the Incarnation, Santa Rosa, CA

November 6, 2022

Year C, All Saints' Sunday, Revised Common Lectionary

[Daniel 7:1-3,15-18](#)

[Psalm 149](#)

[Ephesians 1:11-23](#)

[Luke 6:20-31](#)

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There's a children's book our family enjoys called *The Invisible String*.¹ In it a mom explains to her two children how even when they are apart from each other, they are still connected. "People who love each other," she says, "are always connected by a very special string made of love." When they're at school and they miss her, they can tug on their invisible string and know she'll be feeling their love from the other end. Families have invisible strings connected to each other; friends do; pets do. There's nowhere too far for an invisible string to reach: at school, out of town, even under the ocean or in outer space—and even to heaven.

Today we celebrate the Church's invisible strings. The Collect for this festival of All Saints begins with this beautiful image: "Almighty God, you have *knit together* your elect in one communion and fellowship in the mystical body of your Son Christ our Lord."

¹ By Patrice Karst; illustrated by Joanne Lew-Vriethoff (Little, Brown; 2018).

The Church is a fabric, a tapestry, each one of us woven into the great picture, each one our own length and texture and color, each one adding something unique to the whole. We are woven into this tapestry when we're baptized into Jesus Christ. St. Paul wrote to the early Christians in Galatia that "everyone who has been baptized into Christ has been clothed with Christ," has put Jesus on like a garment, like the white robes that Alyssa and Ryleigh will put on very soon right after they are born anew in the living waters of baptism, the same robes all of us who have been baptized into Jesus wear invisibly every day as we walk through the world clothed in Jesus, robes we will never take off.

Today Alyssa and Ryleigh are getting their strings. Not that they haven't had strings already in one sense. Every human being is a child of God and is loved unfathomably and beyond measure. Every person and every creature, indeed every atom of creation, exists because of God's love. So there is a fabric of creation we are bound into from the moment we come into being. God's love is not just for Christians, not just for the church.

But God also chose to do something special in Jesus: to come into the tapestry in person. The weaver decided to become a string, one we could touch and get close to. To come in person to begin mending and healing the tears that had formed in the fabric of creation. Not just to reweave it from the outside, but to climb in as a string that could never be torn. And that string, Jesus, has been gathering more strings and binding them to himself ever since.

Some of them are famous. Some have names like St. Mary and St. Peter and St. Mary Magdalene, people who knew Jesus in person in his earthly ministry. But those strings connected to other strings down through the generations. People like Polycarp of Smyrna and Hilda of Whitby and Francis of Assisi and Teresa of Avila. Others' names we will never know. Today is a day to celebrate all the saints, those who have gone before us and shown us ways to live as strings knit to Jesus, totally individual and yet with the same joy, the same love, the same life flowing through them because it flows from the same source. And today is more than that: a day not just to celebrate the saints but also to make new ones; and to renew our own connection to the source, to Jesus whom we have put on forever in our own baptism, and to stir up once again that power in us that is at work to make us, too, saints of God, which is the only goal of life that's truly worth living, to take our place in the living tapestry as it grows strand by strand until the whole universe is gathered together into God's pattern.