

*Prayers of the People, 10-30-11, All Saints' Day*

*Based on Matthew 23:1-12*

*By Rev. Dr. Casey G. Baggott, Community Church of Vero Beach*

Alpha and Omega, our beginning and our end, you have brought us into being, God, and you receive us at our passing. Through all the comings and goings of our lives, you stand near to your saints, and we are grateful.

We yearn to be, now and always, among you great community of saints, who through reverence to you and commitment to one another, are able to share in one another's joys, bear one another's sorrows, and finally, mourn one another's passing. Yet we claim, by faith, O God, that while life ends, love does not. So though we are separated from those gone before us, still we are drawn and held near to them, by the precious memories you grant us and the never-ending, ever-binding nature of love.

Today we gratefully acknowledge the saints from our own congregation who have passed from our keeping into yours this year. We have entrusted them to you, daring to believe that the care you offer these saints is more tender and powerful now than ever. Many of them have been for us, living sermons of humble service, or quiet grace, or simple generosity.

As we carry on now, in their absence, we pray that our lives too, will demonstrate the sort of unassuming goodness Jesus asked of his followers. As servants to others, we recognize we will receive your deepest thanks and affirmation. We hope one day to hear the approving words of Jesus spoken to us: well done, good and faithful servant.

While life remains, we will walk faithfully with your great cloud of witnesses, for our trust in your offer of goodness and grace for all the saints rests securely upon your own Son's firm and confident trust in you. And so, in his memory, and in his words, we pray today with his words, saying ... *The Lord's Prayer*.