

Rector's Letter - Rev'd Jeremy Trew - November 2021



Dear Friends,

The autumn is a time of endings and beginnings, to my mind much more so than the New Year. At its start the summer holidays come to an end and children return to school, some start for the first time. Even for those without children there is a tangible change in tone as the roads are busier at different times, the town centres that little bit quieter during the day, and so on. A few weeks later and we mark harvest with our celebrations giving thanks for the crops gathered in and, nowadays, for all that people offer in their providing for the many daily needs of a modern society. We see around us an agricultural industry that seems to lurch from crisis to crisis, yet which contrasts heavily with the seeming changelessness of the British countryside; a contrast which is more than a little naïve. Moving on we come to the festivals of All Hallows and All Souls; celebrated by most as a rather banal Halloween, but used by Christians as an occasion to remember all those loved ones who have died and we still miss. It is a time to mourn afresh and have our faith restored in a hope which is yet to come.

And then we arrive at November. On Remembrance Sunday (Service starts 10.45) we recall all those who have given their utmost for the safety and freedoms we enjoy so blithely today. I am struck each year as we read out the lists of names, held in trust for the whole community by our churches of those who were killed, that these lists represent not just the deaths of individuals, but of a way of life. So many were lost from communities like ours that victorious Britannia could never be the same again. So much good came from their sacrifice, yet we still pay a price to this day. Sadly, a century of remembering seem to have done little to diminish our human folly with regards to conflict. Yet we must remember those who offered us so much by surrendering everything. Finally, as everyone around us joins the mad rush of Christmas preparation – as we do too, let's be honest – the Church celebrates its New Year. Advent is not just a time to switch to a new set of Sunday readings, nor a handy four week warning of the impending celebration. Advent is also a time for new starts. It tells of the story of God's new start for

the human race. After the futility of humanity straining to reach God through the devices of religious laws and holy kings and lands, God finally breaks through to humanity and a new story begins. Advent recounts the beginning of that story and takes us to the wonderful mystery of Christmas.

So that's the Autumn: A time of endings and beginnings. And, a time to remember and give thanks to and for those who have made these transitions possible; thank you then to all who nurture children and who teach them; thank you to all who farm our lands and bring us food to eat; thank you to all who prepare our churches for their celebrations; thank you to all who have touched our lives for good and whom we will remember; thank you to the many who went to fight for our freedoms; and, thank you God that you overcame whatever anger, sadness and frustration you must have felt at humanity's repeated folly in order to send your Son into this world and offer to everyone a truly new beginning.

Yours

Jeremy

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