

9th November 2020

Dear all



I think Autumn is probably my favourite time of year. It is a time when the days draw in, darkness grows, and the early morning fog/mist (I can never distinguish between them!) covers the world in mystery. It is a time that encourages thoughtfulness and introspection, and leads us up to the season of Advent, and winter. Nature too is changing. Migrating birds are leaving our shores in their thousands, and those that stay are looking harder for food. My new feeding station is getting lots of use. I have identified blue tits, a robin and a magpie! Unfortunately, it also attracts squirrels. I'm finding I'm having to act as a replacement for Nugget – running out, barking at the squirrels (well, perhaps not quite, but I have chased them a couple of times!). But through all of this, and the colder days, we have all those wonderful bursts of colour in the leaves on the trees, and the sun breaking through the mist in its unique Autumn way.

As I have mentioned before, November is a time for Remembrance. This seems to suit that mood of introspection well. It starts with us remembering All Saints, set at this time of year as a Christianising of Samhain, the pre-Christian feast (still celebrated by pagans today), which we call Hallowe'en (itself a contraction of All Hallows Evening – All Saints Eve). Then we remember our own particular dead on All Souls' Day. Then Remembrance Sunday, and Armistice Day – the commemoration of the end of WW1, when we remember too all those lost and suffering as a consequence of warfare. This year events have been somewhat different, but I would like to share 2 very different links I have found:

Firstly, from the choir of St John's, Owlerton, singing 'In paradisum' from Faure's Requiem, accompanied by some very moving images.

https://drive.google.com/file/d/1sxmMuU_2Yucj1HfrWxHhXPTTmmJCVIEs/view?fbclid=IwAR12uQSLV1_iEDQjNXbfOUzCLyxvhCwr6WIPi3ofwkdwdKxnGWRJyKzHw-8

The other, in complete contrast, is a selection of tunes, songs and reminiscences from my old pal, Phil Beer on the theme 'Lest we forget'.

<https://www.facebook.com/philbeermusic/videos/1254899638242233/>



Every year, on the 3rd Tuesday in November, we are encouraged to take part in the PrayDay for schools. If you haven't heard about PrayDay before, it is a day set aside every year for people across Europe to focus on praying for their schools, with events taking place in many countries including the UK. The day is for:



- all types of school from nursery to sixth form
- pupils, school staff, governors, parents, church leaders, youth workers and anyone else concerned about young people
- anyone who believes that God hears our prayers

As we have a significant number of our congregation involved in schools, I would encourage you to take time to be involved.

The first of the following links is some resources for PrayDay. The second link is a very helpful pdf of 10 Ways to Pray for our Schools.

<https://www.prayforschools.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/PFS-PRAY-DAY-RESOURCES-November-2020.pdf>

https://www.prayforschools.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/TWTP-for-Schools_Online-v4.pdf

I hope you're all finding ways to keep healthy in the lockdown, even if it's simply a little potter round the garden. I'm managing (just) to keep up my 5BX exercises. I think however that my smart phone was reading my emails. A couple of letters ago, I was bemoaning the relentless nature of the app, taking me up a level after every 8 days. A few days ago, I reached day 8/8, and resigned myself to even more pain (no pain, no gain... hah!!!) the next day, only to be surprised by finding that I was on day 9/8. Then the next day, 10/8, then 11/8... I was very pleased at the respite. But today, the app sussed it, so it was up a level and day 1/8. Oh well...

On a final note, I recently paid my first visit to the very excellent Vine House Farm. I went there to get the bird feeder and food. But I also looked around the food shop, and bought a pot of mustard. I hadn't noticed what was on the lid (I was looking at the type of mustard, written on the side). It was Helen who pointed out to me...



Stay safe

Blessings and love

Mark