

All Saints Alive

VICAR'S VIEWPOINT

Lest we forget

Dear Friends,

The longer we live, the more memories we acquire. We all have favourite memories which we prize, and probably a few we wish we could clear from our minds forever!

Either way, they seem to be etched indelibly on our minds and contribute to who we are today and how we feel about ourselves. In the Christian community we remember in our worship the great acts of God in order that we may be more aware of his presence now and be ready to live in the light of all that God has done for us.

November is a month for remembering, and rightly so. There are people and situations which have changed our lives and changed our world. In our Remembrance Service on November 14th at 10.50am at the War Memorial we will stand together in silence remembering those who have died, an act that brings people together as a local community and across the nations. The shared silence reflects awe and respect, and it goes beyond words into the depths of how others gave their lives for our safety and freedom – and still do – as well as remembering the terrible cost of war and pledging to work together for justice and peace.

The Memorial Service on November 28th (Advent Sunday) at 10.00am is about our personal losses, as we remember all those who have died in recent years in the parish, in our community, among those whom we love and care for. Together we enter the depths, and we bring our faith to bear on some of life's hardest challenges, believing that God is with us through the times when we have encountered suffering and loss.



We often talk of going into the depths when pain and death confront us. Our lives are changed, and whether or not we feel we are religious we cannot help but be affected by the deeper issues in life. When we approach these difficulties with faith, or perhaps with just a desire to find faith to begin with, we can find that God meets us in life's harder places, for in Christ he has come among us and experienced our human tragedies and triumphs.

Bishop Alan, (our Bishop of St Albans), has been encouraging all of us to "Go deeper into God". I understand this to mean that we bring our whole selves to God, that we let God be God for us in all parts of life. For God is in the heights and the depths, and in remembering we can pray that we and our world may find the deepest peace. It is there, in places of brokenness and pain, in the hospital or on the battlefield that God is among us. If he were not, he could be no God at all, merely an "easy-living God" for those few people with a comfortable existence.

The God of the Bible is with us in the depths. St Paul writes in Romans 8 that "*Neither death nor life, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord*". And in Psalm 139 the writer asks "*Where can I go from your Spirit? If I go up to the heavens you are there, if I make my bed in the depths you are there. If I rise on the wings of the dawn, if I settle on the far side of the sea, even there your hand will guide me; your right hand will hold me fast*".

In this month for remembering, may God be with you in those deepest feelings, and however tentatively, may we all look to the Lord in hope so that we may become aware

of how he holds us all in his love, living and departed, now and evermore.

Love Jo

Memorial Service – 10.00am Sunday 28th November 2010

We are holding our annual Memorial Service for all the people who have died in the Parish of All Saints in the last two years and anyone else that you may wish to be remembered, on Sunday 28th November 2010 at 10.00am. Names of those who have died will be read out, prayers will be said in the Communion Service and there will be a chance to light a Candle of Remembrance during the service. This is an opportunity to remember those who have died, to give thanks for their lives and remember that they are in God's closer presence now.

I do hope that you are able to join us for this special service and would ask you to invite relatives and friends to join us as well. Tea and cakes will be served in St John's Hall afterwards.

If there are any other names of people that you would like to be remembered please could you fill in the form at the back of Church, writing the names clearly in block capitals so that we can remember them at this service.

Please give the form to Denise Dilley, 39 Ware Road, Hertford, SG13 7EB

A Way ahead for the Churches?

More than forty people from local churches met together on September 23rd in the Friends' (Quaker) Meeting House in Hertford to hear Janet Scott, a moderator of Churches Together in England speak. Her subject, 'Churches together: is there a new way forward?' reminded us of how far historically the churches have come together.

Janet had represented Quakers in Westminster Abbey at the recent united service during the Pope's visit. This was a great visual symbol of the unity that increasingly binds Christians together, just as the Archbishop of Canterbury and the Pope were seen to pray side by side!

Janet urged those present to look again at what is meant by working together. She commended the current shared Bible study groups held during Lent. Janet said that her vision was not of a 'one size fits all' for the Churches but rather as Churches celebrating together, recognising their different traditions. She encouraged everyone by saying that they should cherish each other's diversity. She challenged everyone to look critically at their own religious traditions. She reminded the churches that God was at work in the shared community initiatives in Hertford.

Lively discussion and questions followed the talk. Love was the key to good relationships, whether in recognising all people of faith as 'people of God' or in the service of others. Janet wondered whether in the future every denomination and every faith might be known as The people of God.... known as the Baptists, or the People of God known as Catholics, the People of God known as Muslims ..., what a great sign of unity that would be!

Love,
Jo
(Chair of Churches Together in Hertford and District)

