

All Saints Alive

VICAR'S VIEWPOINT



Remembrance ...

Dear Friends,

Remembrance: Is it 'Getting stuck in the Past' or 'Moving forward into Action'?

We have celebrated Harvest, the clocks have been turned back and now the darker evenings of November are rushing in!

One of the major Biblical themes of Harvest is also remembering and this Remembrance is at the heart of All Saints' Day, All Souls' Day, even Bonfire Night, and Remembrance Sunday.

The Old Testament people were encouraged in their Harvest celebrations (the Feast of Tabernacles) not just to remember the goodness of God in the Harvest, but also their delivery out of slavery in Egypt. In the New Testament, the early church didn't just thank God for the bread on their tables, but also for the bread of eternal life; Jesus.

No, God didn't call his people to be stuck in the past! He called them to remember, but also to respond. The Feast of Tabernacles was completed by a day of thanksgiving offerings to God (Leviticus 23:33-43). In the New Testament, the early church was not just told to remember what Jesus did, but to actively respond and tell others of his love, teaching, death, resurrection and gift of eternal life.

This year, as we come to Remembrance Sunday, let us remember not to just go back, but to remember to respond to God's challenge for us to do his will in the world today. What should that response

be? The prophet Micah and the gospel writer Matthew explain God's challenge to us:

"He (God) has showed you, O man, what is good. And what does the Lord require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God." Micah 6:8

"Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age." Matthew 28: 19-20

These two verses remind us to Remember and Respond by loving God and your neighbour as yourself. My favourite part of saying Morning Prayer is the prayer: *'The night has passed, and the day lies open before us'*

What are we going to do with the days that we have been given, how are we going to respond?

Love, Jo

Growing our Church through Mission

Do you want to be part of growing our Church? The statistics for the Diocese are that on average Church attendance has continued to decline in the last five years. At All Saints, on the whole, our numbers have remained static which means in real terms we have grown slightly but I think that

you will all agree it would be great to grow more!

At the heart of The Living God's Love Project which encouraged us all in Going Deeper into God, Making New Disciples and Transforming communities. "Making New Disciples" was perhaps the more difficult aim to achieve but we are now being encouraged to look at in particular.

We will be having an evening, open to everyone, to think about our mission and we hope that many of you will join us. This will happen in Church on **November 15th at 8.00pm**. If you can't make it then please write down your ideas as we would love to hear them.



As you will see on page four, we had a PCC Away Day to think about growing – and you can see what this set of notes

became. We reflected particularly on growing together. Now we are also thinking about a fresh and focussed approach to mission, reaching out to all the people around us.

Growing Through Mission My Tips: Pete Broadbent, Bishop of Willesden

Last year on the Thinking Anglicans website Bishop Pete Broadbent and others corresponded on the subject of growing congregations. Have a look at these ideas. We have certainly put quite a few of these into action, are there any more we can do and what else would you suggest?

- Get a properly trained welcome team - not a bunch of depressed-looking people who stand at the back poring over the hymnbooks.
- Have a back-door policy: keep a track of who's new, visit them early, invite them to a welcome lunch. And if they don't stick around, go back to them, and find out why they stopped coming.

- Provide a menu of service options (it's not new: it always used to be 8 o'clock for the individualists, 10.30 for the families, and 6.30 evensong for the depressives!). Consumerism means that we have to give people a plethora of choices, including café church, ambient worship, traditional.
- Get outside your building. Mission is now centrifugal not centripetal. The old "come to church and discover the Mystery" stuff has less traction when people won't darken your door. Do festivals, mass in the park, acts of kindness in the community. Be known.
- Have a decent website, properly maintained. Most people now search online for a church to attend.
- Carpet your church if you can. And get decent chairs. Nobody goes to rough old pubs any more, and they don't want to sit in a draughty building on wooden pews with moth-eaten cushions and kneelers embroidered at the time of the Battle of Waterloo. Unless, of course, you're medieval and historic. In which case, play it up!
- Serve decent coffee: no more grotty instant in ancient teapots.
- Plant vigorously. Don't be afraid to try stuff and fail. Plant on estates, in schools (and get the Diocesan Education Department onside), in pubs and cafés. Partner with other churches who can help you with this.
- Pray. Pray. Pray. Pray. And pray. Nothing will work unless it's rooted in God and the life of the Spirit.

Let's sow those seeds and grow!

Join us at our **Mission Evening on Tuesday November 15th 8pm in Church**; and prepare with prayer!